



Northumberland  
**SKILLS**

## Policies and Procedures 2023-24

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Approved by			
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## **Section 1–Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This Quality Improvement Framework for Northumberland Skills aims to clearly identify all the activities and information that are used to support Quality Improvement within the Service. At the heart of the Quality Improvement Framework is the Service's annual Self-Assessment Report and the resulting Quality Improvement Plans (QIP).

The framework is based on a rolling programme of activities carried out throughout the year. Wherever possible, clear performance targets are set. These are reviewed at regular intervals throughout the year.

All staff within Northumberland Skills are expected to take personal responsibility for their own quality and standards in all their activities.

### **1.2 Scope of the Framework**

This framework covers all Education & Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funded provision, delivered both internally by Northumberland Skills and externally by delivery partners. It provides information and guidance on the planning of, the development of and the delivery of programmes of learning. It explains the monitoring and support arrangements that Northumberland Skills manage to ensure the quality of delivery.

This framework aligns to other quality monitoring frameworks, the major one being the Education Inspection Framework.

### **1.3 Quality Improvement Policy**

Northumberland Skills aims to provide its learners with an outstanding learning experience that enables them to make positive changes to their lives.

### **1.4 Process**

To achieve this, we will:

- Set targets for quality standards and share them with all staff and providers
- Monitor performance against these targets
- Measure our performance against local, regional, and national benchmark figures
- Produce an annual Self-Assessment Report and share it with all staff and providers

- Produce an annual Quality Improvement Plan and share with all staff and providers
- Monitor progress towards actions identified in the Quality Improvement Plan
- Identify and share good practice across our service
- Identify a designated member of the Management Team with overall responsibility for Quality

### **1.5 Principles**

The Quality Improvement Framework is supported by the following principles:

- The Quality Improvement Framework provides the guidelines for all activities connected with quality improvement
- A culture that motivates and inspires all staff to provide a learning experience that fulfils the Service's vision
- All learning will be delivered in an environment where learners and staff feel safe
- All staff will be made aware of the Quality Improvement Framework
- All the activities within the Framework are underpinned by the principles of Equality and Diversity
- Resources will be provided to implement the procedures for quality improvement
- Support will be available to all staff to implement quality improvement

### **1.6 Review**

The Quality Improvement Framework will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Leadership & Management Team.

## **Section 2—Our Approach to Quality**

### **2.1 Quality Assurance & Improvement Framework**

Our aim is to have a set of quality assurance procedures that are relevant across Northumberland Skills. This framework sets out how quality development is managed, explains how evidence is collected and how the quality of the service is evaluated.

An electronic copy of the Framework is available and shared with all staff.

All quality documents, including the Quality Improvement Framework are reviewed annually.

### **2.2 Lecturer Course Documentation**

Every lecturer is issued with course documentation and procedures. The procedures give guidance on what must be done to deal with every aspect of the learners' journey in which they have direct involvement.

This includes:

- Preparing schemes of work and lesson plans
- Learner enrolment
- Induction
- Attendance registers
- Undertaking initial assessment
- Completing personal learning records
- Giving developmental feedback to learners in their learning logs
- Reviewing and recording learning outcomes and achievements
- Conducting learner evaluations and contributing to self-assessment
- Recording details of early leavers
- Completing an end of course review

Quality assurance of lecturer course files is monitored through:

- Observation of teaching & learning visits
- Walkthrough visits
- Quality audits
- Spot checks by Curriculum Leads

### **2.3 The Self-Assessment Process and Quality Improvement & Development Plan**

Self-Assessment is at the heart of the Quality Improvement Framework. It allows us to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in our provision.

Information from the Self-Assessment Report is then used to inform our Quality Improvement Plans. The information and activities detailed in this Quality Improvement Framework are used to inform the Self-Assessment Report.

The activities take place throughout the year. The range of information and activities ensure that all staff, learners, and lecturers have the opportunity to contribute to the process. The Self-Assessment Report is built up progressively with all partners using a wide range of consultation processes. All staff have the opportunity to contribute to the Self-Assessment Report through consultation during standardisation meetings, one to one meeting or Business Reviews. All these inputs contribute to the overall report. In addition, consultation takes place with key stakeholders and learners using questionnaires and meetings

#### **Self-Assessment is based on:**

- Data analysis benchmarked against targets
- Retention & Achievement data
- Provider performance
- Course reviews
- Observation of Teaching & Learning
- Improving Teaching & Learning walk reports
- Learner feedback
- Lecturer and Staff Feedback
- Employer Feedback
- Quality Support visits

The final Self-Assessment Report is produced in the autumn term following the end of the academic year. The Self-Assessment Report is used to identify strengths and areas for improvement in each subject sector area. This information is then used to identify development activities with lecturers at team meetings and sharing good practice events.

The latest version of the Self-Assessment Report is available on the shared drive.

## **2.4 Quality Improvement Plan**

The main purpose of the self-assessment process is to improve quality. As a result of the findings contained within the Self-Assessment Report, a Quality Improvement Plan is drawn up.

Curriculum Leads are responsible for maintaining their own QIP.

The plan identifies actions to be taken, with areas for improvement given greatest priority. However, actions relating to strengths are also identified in order to consolidate them and, where possible, implement them in other parts of the Service.

The plan contains clear actions to be taken, by whom, by when and what the measurable outcome will be. All staff receive a copy of the plan. Progress towards completing actions in the Quality Improvement Plans is monitored by the Leadership & Management Team.

The latest versions of the Quality Improvement Plans are available on the shared drive.

## **2.5 Staff Appraisal**

Staff Appraisal follows the County Council's performance and appraisal scheme. This explores how to further develop performance and improve service delivery by recognising contribution, developing performance and motivation, clarifying expectations and planning for the future.

It is an opportunity to discuss and agree targets and the priorities between those targets, standard of performance required and how that will be measured, and the resources needed to deliver those targets. This is followed up with a 6-month review.

## **2.6 Staff development**

Information received from staff appraisal, training needs analysis survey, observation of teaching & learning is used to identify development needs. Professional development of staff is planned according to the individual staff professional development plan

These needs are met either through the teaching and learning weekly sessions, specific identified training relating to vocational area to meet Awarding Organisation requirements, webinars and sharing best practice events.

These opportunities encourage the sharing of good practice and development opportunities which will improve the quality of delivery, teaching & learning resources for our learners.

## **2.7 Quality Support visits**

The Curriculum and Skills Manger and Curriculum Leads have established a range of quality support visits to Lecturers and Site & Team Administrators.

Quality audits are undertaken during these visits including monitoring course files, registers, personal learning records, schemes of work, lesson plans, group profiles,

## **2.8 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)**

Northumberland skills has IQAs to:

- Act as a link between Northumberland Skills and EQAs
- Access practice against awarding organisation expectations
- Feedback findings to service managers and other staff
- Monitor the progress and achievement of learners against individual learning plans and awarding organisation requirements
- Implement the action points of external quality assurance
- Liaise with tutors and learners regarding issues in learning delivery
- Share good practice
- Observe assessment
- Support assessors

### **The process to ensure quality in IQA comprises:**

- IQAs being trained to accrediting organisations standards

- Regular standardisation meetings between IQAs and lecturers /assessors
- The IQA team meet and work to Northumberland Skills quality assurance processes and procedures as well as accrediting organisations standards
- Each IQA works with lecturers/assessors to ensure standardisation of assessment.

## **2.9 RARPA**

Recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning (RARPA) is a priority measure and is a broad and coherent set of measures to recognise and celebrate all learners' achievements across Northumberland skills and gauge the success of providers.

RARPA is a five-stage process which measures and records learners' progress and achievements. It is a national quality measure for non-accredited courses.

The RARPA process describes what is considered as good teaching and learning. The Education & Skills Funding Agency requires that all courses supported by SFA funding show evidence of the five stages of RARPA. Northumberland Skills reviews the RARPA staged process, using documentation in the lecturer's course file during both the formal and informal Observation of Teaching and Learning class visits.

## **2.10 Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG)**

Northumberland Skills aims to provide all learners with an outstanding learning experience that enables them to make positive changes to their lives.

We aspire to ensure that Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) is an integral and valued part of the provision at induction, as a part of on-going monitoring and as participants progress. IAG is provided in order to promote the value of learning and we will ensure it is accessible to all learners regardless of circumstance and background, and to provide them with the help they need to enter and progress in learning and work. It is the responsibility of all staff and delivery partners to provide information, advice, and guidance within the remit of their role, including referral to National Careers Service and signposting participants to other services/sources of information as appropriate.

## **Section 3 –Improving Teaching, Learning & Assessment (ITLA)**



### **3.1 Rationale**

Monitoring the quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment is a vital part of the quality process of our service. We aim to provide the very best service we can to the people who choose us as their learning provider.

### **3.2 Aims**

- To provide a safe, stimulating learning environment for all learners and lecturers.
- To enable learners to achieve their full potential by learning in a variety of ways and through challenging learning experiences
- To provide a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum that will motivate, engage, and challenge learners whilst also equipping them with the skills required for progression or employment.
- To set high expectations for all learners in order to raise their aspirations.
- To raise standards of both teaching and learning. Improving teaching, learning and assessment (ITLA) is a key process in driving quality improvement across the service.

We all strive for the highest standards for our diverse groups of learners. As a service we are spread across a large geographical area; ITLA contributes to consistency of standards at all of our Campuses. Northumberland Skills uses learning walks of teaching and learning as a means of ensuring the quality of delivery by promoting reflective practice and continued professional development of our staff. This is achieved by working together to identify areas of strength, for development, and for sharing good practice.

Its aim is to drive up the standards of our learners' work and ensure progress towards identified goals and achievement. It also promotes our culture of support for our lecturers, checking for any support requirements or training needs our staff may have.

The ITLA process feeds into appraisals and one-to-ones and is used as a key performance measure.

### **3.3 Expectations**

Our mission is to provide a service with a belief in educational excellence: 'Lead Inspirational Learning Locally.'

To attain educational excellence, we have high expectations from our staff, that they proactively seek inspirational teaching and the highest standard of learning. We hold the development of our teaching staff as a Service priority.

It is our expectation that our teaching staff strive for a grade 2/Good equivalent as a minimum, it is not acceptable to be below this.

### **What we expect of our teaching staff:**

- To provide the observer/s somewhere to sit
- To introduce the observer/s to the class
- To provide the observer/s with: Lesson plan; Scheme of work; Group profile; Personal Learning Records; Learners' files with evidence of previous work (if appropriate); Register; Course file

### **What we expect of the observer/s:**

- To be as unobtrusive as possible
- To arrive punctually
- To review learners' work via the lesson itself (if appropriate)
- To conduct a "Learner Voice" session
- To carry out a post-observation feedback discussion at a mutually agreed time
- To produce an action plan resulting from the observation with clearly defined dates for achievement
- To conduct a review of the actions within an agreed timescale
- To notify the lecturer once the report has been moderated

## **3.4 ITLA Quality Improvement Process**

Sharing of good practice will be used to raise standards across the Service. Lecturers may be asked to mentor other lecturers and/or allow their colleagues to peer observe their lessons or examples of their practice –such as planning, managing learning, embedding English and maths, using IT effectively etc. –this will also be shared across at department standardisation meetings or across Northumberland Skills as a whole.

During the Teaching and Learning weekly sessions, lecturers will also be called upon to deliver CPD sessions to model best practice. Strategies for sharing good and outstanding practice might include:

- Department team meetings
- Northumberland Skills staff newsletters

- Coaching & Mentoring
- Resource sharing
- Staff development activities
- Digital Teams for Education Teaching and Learning Ideas area
- Showcasing course files/developing case study examples

### **3.5 Protocol for Observation of Lecturers**

- The aim of the observation process is to be supportive and developmental for lecturers to raise the quality of learning throughout the Service
  - Themed Learning walks planned every ½ term-each lecturer will receive a visit as per the plan
  - New lecturers will receive a Walkthrough within 6 weeks of starting to teach.
  - Notice will not be given of Learning walk, themes for each term will be shared in advance.
  - Learners will be asked a series of standardised questions (Learner Voice) thereafter and this information will also be collected and analysed.

If appropriate, employers will be asked a series of standardised questions also (Employer Voice).

- The observer will use the criteria to complete a report, identifying good practice and areas for improvement with a clear action plan (with timescales). The observer will also complete the Learner Voice identifying good practice and areas for improvement
- Lecturers will receive verbal feedback either immediately or by an arranged face-to-face or telephone discussion within 24 hours of the observation. A copy of the whole report and action plan will be given to the Lecturer and their line manager within 7 days.
- Lecturers will be invited to complete an evaluation of the process and feedback will be analysed to make further improvements.

### **3.6 Action Plan**

Each learning walk will result in an action plan for development. A clearly defined set of actions with a date for their completion will be agreed. It is up to the lecturer to ensure they achieve the actions within the agreed timescale. They are also responsible for providing evidence of completion to their line manager.

The action plan will be monitored by the Curriculum Lead.

### **3.7 Paired observation**

The process for a paired observation is identical to that of the Learning walk. A second observer will be present to provide consistency and moderation of judgements. Paired observations are a vital part of the quality process to ensure standardisation and consistency across the service. On occasion, the secondary observers will be from outside our organisation for training, peer review or standardisation purposes.

### **3.8 Peer observation**

One of the ways we promote the sharing of good practice and support our staff is to encourage peer observations. The purpose of the peer observation is to encourage reflective practice, gain new approaches and ideas and to see the same or similar subject delivered by another teaching professional

A peer observation is an excellent way of promoting staff working together towards developing practice. Peer observations are strongly recommended for all staff. Peer observations should be agreed with the line manager. Peer observations should be recorded using the Peer observation form).

All new staff are offered a peer observation

### **3.9 Walk-through observations**

The purpose of this type of observation is to sample the quality of the lessons and to focus on key aspects / themes such as the use of the Personal Learning Record, the use of ICT and resources, learners' behaviour, and comments etc. These observations can be conducted by a Line Manager or Curriculum Lead. They may visit any session without notice. They will normally be shorter than a full observation, involve quality checklists provided to managers across the provision and will not result in a grade.

### **3.10 Stop the Clock Weeks**

The focus of these is on learner work and progress. Curriculum Leads will drop into sessions and complete an evaluation form that enables them to check learner progress, tracking, quality of work and assessment.

### **3.11 Observation Team**

Northumberland Skills observation team will include the Curriculum and Skills Manager, Curriculum Leads and Senior Lecturers. All observers are required to attend observation training and standardisation activities. The observation team will consist of sufficient members to meet the demands of the overall spread of curriculum and size of the provision.

The observation team will be qualified teachers with current practice.

### **3.12 Moderation of Teaching and Learning Observations**

To ensure consistency and validity of judgements being made by observers we have a robust moderation process in place. All reports are moderated by a panel of Curriculum Leads each quarter.

This involves one whole group moderation so that standardisation can take place. This is followed by paired moderation, ensuring that the person who carried out the observation is not involved in the moderation of that report. Areas for development are disseminated back to observers to support their development and lecturers are notified of the results of moderation.

### **3.13 Moderation of Learner Records**

To ensure consistency and check quality of Learning Records we have a robust moderation process in place. Learner records are checked during quality audits and these records are then moderated by the Curriculum Leads.

## **Section 4-Use of Feedback**

One of the most effective ways of judging our performance and informing quality improvement is to listen to our learners, lecturers, employers, and other stakeholders.

Feedback is obtained by:

- Staff feedback at regular team meetings, staff forums, evaluation forms and text walls
- Employer feedback gathered through Employer Voice Padlet
- Learner feedback gathered through Learner Voice Padlet, PLRs and Learner Voice Forms
- Lecturer feedback gathered through ITLA process and evaluation
- Quality Visits
- Self-assessment process

### **4.1 Learner evaluation forms**

All learners are given the opportunity to complete Learner Voice digital questionnaire each term in addition to a Learner Course Evaluation Form on completion of their course.

The form is used to gather information on how learners feel about:

- The quality of the teaching
- The level of support
- The information and advice they received
- The way they were treated

It also provides an opportunity for learners to make suggestions for improvements and new courses.

Information gathered from these evaluations is reviewed by the Curriculum and Skills Manager and Curriculum Leads.

Recommended actions based on learner evaluations regarding quality improvements are monitored through the Curriculum leads and feed into the SAR and QIP.

Learners also completed the FE Annual Learner Survey and have the opportunity to feedback at a "Learner Voice" during the ITLA process, along with Learner Feedback Padlet

## **4.2 Employer Evaluations**

Northumberland Skills ensures that all employers have the opportunity to complete an evaluation and feedback form to evaluate specific aspects of the programme/course we have provided. This information is incorporated into Self-Assessment process and used to improve the quality of our learning provision. An annual FE Employer Survey is also completed.

## **4.3 Comments, Compliments, Complaints**

To ensure Northumberland meets the needs and expectations of its user's comments, compliments and complaints are welcomed. Tell us what you think leaflets are available in all campuses so that learners can give feedback instantly. Learners are encouraged to discuss any concerns they have about their course with their lecturer.

However, if they feel unable to do this, they can contact the Curriculum Lead to discuss the matter in person, by telephone or email. Learners are made aware of this during induction.

The complaints procedure is:

### **Step 1**

- Speak directly to the person who is responsible or to the lecturer. We hope to resolve most complaints at this stage.

### **Step 2**

- Write or talk to the Curriculum Lead. They will investigate the complaint and use their best endeavours to respond within 10 working days.

At this stage, you must make your complaint in writing.

### **Step 3**

- If you still feel the response to your complaint is not satisfactory, you can then write to:

Curriculum and Skills Manager, Northumberland Skills, Alnwick Campus,  
Lindisfarne Road, Alnwick NE66 1AX

#### Step 4

- If you still feel the response to your complaint is not satisfactory, you can then write to:

Senior Manager – Innovative Curriculum Development, Northumberland Skills,  
County Hall, Morpeth NE61 2EF

At this stage, your complaint will also be considered by the Director of  
Education and Skills

If you still feel the complaint has not been resolved, you can take the matter  
to the courses funding organisation. Before you do this, you must have  
followed steps 1-4

We will let you know who the awarding organisation is for your course,  
provide contact details and help you to make your approach putting forward  
your complaint.



## **Section 5-Management Information Data**

We effectively use a number of Management Information Systems to electronically manage and analyse our data.

We can carry out in-depth analysis on our learner data enabling us to benchmark our performance nationally and set targets to inform the strategic direction for the Service.

We analyse our provision at course and learner level enabling us to manage and steer the curriculum across the County to meet both service, regional and national priorities.

The Management Information System (MIS) is used to produce data that can help to support various aspects of the Quality Improvement Framework. In doing so the data is used to support judgements made in the Self-Assessment Report.

### **5.1 Retention & Achievement targets**

Retention and success targets are set by Northumberland Skills.

Information on retention and success can be supplied to show rates by course, provider, sector subject area (SSA), sex, age, ethnicity, and disability

### **5.2 Curriculum Planning**

Data from the MIS is used to inform curriculum planning. This includes data regarding learner profiles in each SSA. This helps to identify the SSA where courses aimed at particular groups of learners need to be developed. For example, courses to attract male learners in SSAs where targets for male learners are not being met.

### **5.3 Widening participation**

Management data is able to identify the super output areas that learners are from. This helps to ensure that Northumberland Skills is attracting learners from the areas of highest disadvantage.

### **5.4 Equality and Diversity**

Retention and success rates of learners from various groups are monitored by the Curriculum Leads.

## **Section 6—Leadership & Management**

### **6.1 Leadership & Management Team**

Northumberland Skills Curriculum Management Team meetings take place weekly. Northumberland Skills Leadership Team attend meetings, led by Senior Manager Innovative Curriculum Development weekly.

The aims of the meetings are to monitor and review progress towards targets set in the performance plan for the Service and discuss strategic needs and developments. Effectiveness of leadership and management

- demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all learners can achieve, and attain high standards of quality and performance
- improve teaching and learning through rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development
- evaluate the quality of the provision through robust self-assessment, taking account of users' views, and use the findings to promote and develop capacity for sustainable improvement
- successfully plan, establish and manage the curriculum and learning programmes to meet the needs and interests of learners, employers, and the local and national community
- actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination, and narrow the achievement gap
- Safeguard all learners

### **6.2 Management team meetings**

Northumberland Skills Management Team meetings take place weekly.

The Management Team attend these meetings, led by Senior Manager Innovative Curriculum Development.

The aims of the meetings are to monitor and review progress towards targets set in the performance plan for the Service and include discussion around budget allocations, staff development, marketing, quality etc.

The team review progress towards targets including learner numbers and Learner Evaluation Form results and establish action plans where required.

Progress with quality improvement plans is discussed and monitored.

### **6.3 Sector Team meetings**

Curriculum Leads meet with their teams weekly to discuss curriculum, share good practice, monitor performance, review caseloads, and standardise.

It also provides a forum for the team to be kept up to date on issues discussed at Management meetings. Issues can also be taken back to the Management team meeting

### **6.4 Quality Meetings**

The Curriculum and Skills Manager meets quarterly with the Curriculum Leads to discuss performance management, identify underperformance, and assign coach/mentor, moderate quality audits, identify key themes and discuss areas for staff development. Reviews of the Quality Management Systems are also discussed.

### **6.5 One to one meetings**

Meetings between line managers and staff take place monthly.

## **Section 7-Safeguarding**

### **7.1 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**

The Service is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety for all its learners, staff, and volunteers. It is paramount that we create a culture of vigilance where learners' welfare is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken for learners who need extra help, or who may be suffering or likely to suffer harm. Lecturers are required to report all safeguarding incidents via our online reporting system, Tootoot in a timely manner. All incidents are monitored by the Northumberland Skills Designated Safeguarding Lead

All staff complete annual Safeguarding training, both online and face to face.

### **7.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

All staff are DBS checked in line with the Council procedure, checks are reviewed every 3 years and data is recorded and monitored in the Single Central Record

## **Section 8—Health & Safety**

Northumberland Skills is committed to providing a safe working and learning environment and has very effective Health and Safety management teams and systems in place to highlight the importance of health and safety to all staff, including lecturers and learners.

Lecturers are accountable for the health and safety of the learners and any support assistants and volunteers on the course as well as their own health and safety.

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that safe working practices are adopted and that vigilant checks on H&S are recorded in the course file.

To ensure that Health and Safety is given its due importance, lecturers are required to complete a H&S assessment checklist for each course that they teach. Any additional risks can be considered and noted on the Risk Assessment in the course file.

This involves checking that the information given is relevant to the course and making amendments and additions. The reasonable risks that will be taken in teaching the course are then recorded and the appropriate control measures to reduce those risks are identified and will be put in place.

The completed course risk assessment is kept in the course file and checked by the Site & Team Administrator, so that any concerns that the lecturer has identified can be discussed and resolved.

## **Section 9: Equality & Diversity**

Northumberland Skills is committed to providing equal opportunities for all who engage with us. We seek to provide high quality learning opportunities that are inclusive and free from discrimination.

Equality of opportunity is an important aspect of raising aspirations, self-esteem, and achievement.

We aim to provide provision that is safe and welcoming.

We respect and value differences in ability and disability, culture, race, faith gender, sexual orientation, and age.

We require all our staff to comply with equalities legislation in their interactions with our learners.

We expect all out learners to comply with this policy.

Discriminatory behaviour and harassment will not be tolerated, and all learners are asked to sign a Behaviour Policy during Induction

## **9.1 Equality & Diversity Strategic Aims**

### **Equality**

Northumberland Skills aims to ensure equality for all of its learners, staff, and users of all of its services on offer.

Northumberland Skills will ensure that no learner, staff member, or user of our services receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibility for dependants, disability, race, ethnic origin, age, religion, political or trade union affiliations, or socio-economic background.

Northumberland Skills is committed to ensuring that the promotion of equality and diversity underpins all of its business planning processes, learning delivery and recruitment and selection of both staff and learners.

### **Diversity**

Diversity embodies the principle of fair treatment for all whilst understanding and respecting differences.

Northumberland Skills believes that the principles of equality and diversity are central to learning delivery and to all other services on offer.

By promoting diversity an environment will be created whereby everyone feels valued and able to give of their best.

This will also improve learner recruitment, retention, and achievement as well as employee relations.

Our aim is to ensure that everyone can benefit from all of the services which we can offer to achieve their full potential.

### **Our core values include:**

- Improving the social, economic, and environmental well-being of Northumberland.
- Working through collaboration
  
- Delivering Quality through new ways of working and continuous improvement.
- Valuing and developing everyone and realising their potential.
  
- Promoting equality and treating people fairly
  
- Maintaining the highest standards of conduct and open decision making
  
- Providing a fair and consistent approach to decision making

- Striving to be the best, in addition we will:
- act promptly to address any complaints of harassment and/or discrimination
- promote diversity and social inclusion across all activities
- deliver accessible learning programmes relevant to learner and employer need and to contribute to the reduction of local skills shortages
- Continue to encourage vocational learning in non-traditional sectors and without stereotyping
- Accommodate where possible religious belief
- contribute to breaking down gender segregation in vocational education and training
- seek the views of learners, staff and employers on the quality and accessibility of the services on offer
- monitor and review all Policies and Procedures within the QA system from an equal opportunities perspective
- meet in full our legal obligations in respect of current legislation
- ensure that all learners, staff, and employers are fully informed of our commitment to equality of opportunity, our Equality and Diversity Policy and their responsibilities in this direction

## **9.2 Commitment to Equality and Diversity**

We are all responsible for working towards inclusion, Equality and diversity is not an additional extra but part and parcel of everything we do.

Both learners and staff can show commitment to equality by:

- Showing respect and dignity to others.
- Being open and honest, expressing any criticism in a sensitive and constructive way.
- Taking a stand against discrimination by showing personal responsibility: e.g., speaking out against discriminatory jokes and remarks.
- Reporting cases of harassment that are on the basis of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, or faith.
- Seeking information about other communities, their history, and achievements.
- Finding out about the Council's equality and diversity policies and providing comments and suggestions for improvements.

- Reviewing teaching materials regularly and adapting them to make them either neutral or non-discriminatory

### **9.3 Inclusive Learning**

As well as having a legal duty, we also have a duty to make the classroom feel safe and welcoming for everyone in it –learners from different social classes and cultures, with different religions, abilities, and backgrounds, and of all ages.

Learners who feel left out, who are made to feel different or inferior, who are intimidated or bullied by other learners, will not be happy and they will not learn or stay.

Including learners with additional needs and disabilities in our courses means making sure everyone is treated as an individual. The Service encourages an attitude in the classroom where all differences and difficulties in learning can be openly discussed

### **9.4 Differentiation**

Differentiation is the process of planning and delivering teaching and learning which considers the known individual needs, abilities and learning styles of each learner in the group. By tailoring teaching and learning to meet the needs of each individual learner, this will lead to greater progress for each learner and maximise achievement.

The theory of differentiation is part of being learner-centred –an important concept in creating effective teaching and learning.

It is essential to understand how all learners learn to design and deliver effective teaching. After initial assessment differences will be considered when agreeing learning goals with the learners.

### **9.5 Cultural Diversity**

Northumberland Skills provision should reflect an appropriately diverse range of styles and cultures and explore the rich source of materials from other cultures. Cultural diversity should reflect the wider agenda of access, equalities, equal opportunities, social inclusion, and community cohesion by:

- Raising awareness and understanding between different cultures
- Celebrating the similarities and differences between cultures
- Encouraging community cohesion
- Challenging racism, xenophobia, and intolerance

- Supporting and promoting activities and events celebrating diversity
- Raising awareness of concerns and issues around barriers to learning
- Intergenerational learning –differences between the older and younger generation in relation to learning
- Representing diversity in the broadest sense and promoting all equalities
- Staff are expected to draw on perspectives from different cultures when planning and delivering their teaching.

## **9.6 Supported Learning**

Discrete classes for learners with specific needs and disabilities are delivered as part of Northumberland Skills. These classes enable learners with learning difficulties, mental ill health, physical disabilities, and sensory impairment to access a wide range of learning. The Service also gives advice, and organises support, to enable learners with additional needs and disabilities to access mainstream classes.

Our service is inclusive and, where appropriate, learners from the discrete classes are supported into mainstream classes.