

Date: 04/03/2021

Update: COVID-19 return to classroom-based learning with Adult Learning Service

As you may be aware, the Department of Education have advised a re-introduction of classroom-based learning from 8th March 2021. We are looking forward to welcoming all of our learners back into classrooms and have been reviewing our Covid Secure processes. To ensure we keep everyone as safe as possible we will continue to follow social distancing guidelines, apply our Covid-Secure Classrooms Charter and repeat the cautious and phased approach we have previously adopted when returning learners to classrooms. Our planned phases for return to learning are:

From 8th March:

- full-time, study programme groups (Ignite Your Potential, Working Roots, Phoenix Programme)
- vulnerable internship or apprenticeship learners.

From 12th April

- Gradually re-open classroom learning for adult learning courses
- Re-introduce classroom sessions for qualificatory learning using blended learning approaches to manage class numbers and contact time
- Maintain online or distance offer for all other learning

From Sept 2021 (pending restrictions and guidance)

- Reintroduce full adult learning offer in classrooms
- Retain blended learning approaches to support access and flexibility
- Maintain extended distance learning offer

In line with Government guidelines, we have made the following key updates with regards to our procedures from 8th March:

Face coverings

- Face coverings will continue to be worn in communal areas and corridors, unless exemptions apply
- For classrooms, face coverings will only be worn where social distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. supervising safe use of a tool or providing 1:1 support with a learner)
- This will be determined on a case by case basis by the tutor in which case both learner and tutor should wear unless exemptions apply.

Testing

- Testing for full time, study programme learners will continue from Norham Adult Learning Centre (ALC) during March with attendance at the test site coordinated by the tutor/ supervisor.
- Staff will also be provided with weekly testing based on their roles and risk of exposure

- In line with guidance for Adult Learning providers, the service will move to the issue of Home Testing kits for staff and learners from the end of March
- Adult learners returning to or enrolling on programmes from 12th April will be issued with home testing kit prior to their first attendance then be issued with further test kits by their tutor
- Testing frequency will be determined in line with attendance mode and hours
- Positive results must be notified to the Employment & Skills Service to enable contact tracing
- If necessary, we will retain a small-scale testing site in the Norham ALC for anyone who is unable or unwilling to test themselves at home from 1st April
- Testing continues to be voluntary for learners and staff.

Clinically extremely vulnerable students:

- Are advised to not attend their FE provision, until further notice, because the risk of exposure to the virus may remain high.
- Arrangements are in place for these students to be able to continue their education at home, please contact your tutor for further details of particular arrangements if this is applicable to you.
- At present, these students should continue to shield, and self-isolate if they have symptoms or are identified as a close contact of a positive case, even if they have been vaccinated
- Students who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves should still attend their educational setting if eligible for face-to-face education.

We look forward to welcoming learners back into classroom learning and would be happy to answer any queries which you have. Please contact your tutor or our curriculum support team for further advice.



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