Learner
HANDBOOK

2025 -2026

North Tyneside Council

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Ofsted Good Provider

Entitlement

North Tyneside Council Employment and Skills values all learners and diversity among our students and actively opposes discrimination.

You are entitled to:

1. A wide choice of courses and activities across the borough
2. Help, information and advice to support you to choose the right course or activity
3. High quality teaching, learning and assessment which helps you to achieve
4. Individual support throughout your learning
5. A learning environment which is accessible, welcoming and respectful to everybody.
6. To decide how you wish to express your identity within our learning environments by informing us of your chosen name and preferred personal pronouns
7. A chance to give your views about any part of our service and your learning.

Welcome to Employment and Skills

Thank you for choosing to learn with us.

Whether you have studied with us before or are learning with Employment and Skills for the first time, we are very pleased that you have joined us.

This handbook is designed to help you get the most from your learning and give you information about the services we offer - simply and accessibly. It also explains what you can expect from us and what we expect of you.

If you need any help or have questions about any aspect of your learning, please call us.

We hope you enjoy your time with us and achieve all you hope from your learning.

How to contact us

For all enquiries about courses, the support available or anything to do with your learning, including reporting an illness or absence:

Phone: (0191) 643 2288

or email: curriculum.support@northtyneside.gov.uk

or visit: www.skillsnorthtyneside.org.uk

Support services

We want to give you the information and support you need at the right time: when you start your course, during the course and when you finish learning with us.

- **Specialist help**
  Specialist equipment, assistive technology or help with an additional need or disability may be available to help you on your course. Please ask at (0191) 643 2288

- **Help with English or maths**
  For help with English and maths please contact the enquiry and enrolment telephone line on (0191) 643 2288

- **Help with course costs**
  Discretionary support is available if you are in receipt of an income based benefit or are completing an English or maths qualification

  Learner Support Funds are available to help with exam costs, childcare or dependent care costs, and in some circumstances, transport costs

  Ask an adviser on (0191) 643 2288 or your tutor/assessor or go to www.skillsnorthtyneside.org.uk if you need help with course costs.

Please note financial support will have to be repaid if you don't complete your course.

- **Enrichment**
  As part of your course, you will be taking part in a range of personal development activities that will improve your overall wellbeing.

- **Support for assessments or examinations**
  Your tutor/assessor will give you all the information you need and support your preparation for assessment or exam(s). If you have any concerns, please talk to your tutor/assessor

  Special arrangements can be requested from awarding bodies and can include:

  - Extra time for an examination
  - Readers and/or writers to help you during an examination
  - Examination papers in enlarged print

  These take several weeks to organise and require a medical certificate or proof of a learning disability, so speak to your tutor/assessor as soon as possible.

- **What to do after your course**
  For advice and information or to book a session with a careers adviser:

  - **Ring Connexions North Tyneside**
    (0191) 643 6965 or email: ConnexionsNT@northtyneside.gov.uk

  - **Ring What's Next Service**
    (0191) 643 2288
    Email: whatsnext@northtyneside.gov.uk

  - **Working Well**
    Pop into one of our Working Well Hubs: **North Shields, The Beacon Centre and Wallsend, Customer First Centre**

How to get the most from your learning

What you can expect from us

- Teaching and assessment of the highest standard which promotes learning, addresses your needs and supports your achievement
- Tutors/assessors who are well qualified experts in their field
- Additional support to help you achieve
- A learning environment which is respectful, safe, fair and free from abuse and discrimination and does not tolerate bullying or harassment
  - A welcoming and supportive environment where you can feel safe and comfortable to be yourself and ask for any help or support you need
  - Safe access to online learning environments and resources.
- Fair and transparent assessment of your skills and knowledge. We will not tolerate deception or dishonesty in relation to exams or assessment

All these commitments are underpinned by our policies and procedures which are available at: www.skillsnorthtyneside.org.uk or ask the Business Support Team on (0191) 643 2288 for a copy.

What we expect from you

That you will:

- Take responsibility for your learning
- Let us know if you are unable to attend a session or want to withdraw from a course by ringing (0191) 643 2288
- Treat others with respect
- Think about your own and others' safety
- Come to classes/sessions on time and regularly (courses have an attendance requirement of at least 80% to achieve the learning or qualification)
- Take good care of equipment and buildings
- Behave responsibly, follow instructions from your tutor/assessor and abide by our policies
- If your class is on-line, you should be logged on to your PC before it starts.

If you are disruptive, rude, fail to follow health and safety instructions or attend sessions under the influence of substances such as alcohol or drugs, we have a learner disciplinary procedure which will be applied. This could lead to you being asked to leave the course.

Staying safe

How you can help

1. Follow all instructions given by your tutor/assessor
2. Respect health and safety requirements including any Government health restrictions or recommendations in place
3. Report any faulty or broken equipment to your tutor/assessor
4. Use protective equipment where required
5. Keep walkways and areas clear at all times
6. Report any medical condition or disability which may put you (or others, if they are unaware of your condition) at risk including any requirement to self-isolate due to contagious illness or infection
7. Keep yourself safe on the internet by following the steps given in the e-safety guide
8. Speak to a member of staff if you are concerned about your own or another person's safety. Your tutor/assessor can help or use our reporting systems on page 13.

Safe learning environments

1. Check at reception to see if you need a visitor's pass and find out where you need to go to meet your tutor/assessor
2. Remember the site is a learning environment so be respectful during your visit
3. Do not be offended if someone approaches you and asks why you are there – people are only thinking of everyone's safety

4. If you have concerns about unacceptable behaviour, report it straight away to the tutor/assessor or your line manager.

On school and college sites

1. Do not instigate or respond to verbal abuse or physical contact with young students

2. Do not give any personal information to young students e.g. a mobile phone number or accept personal information from them.

What we are doing to promote safe learning environments

1. Providing health and safety information at induction and throughout the course

2. Providing e-safety information

3. Recording all reported injuries or incidents

4. Enforcing our policies on no smoking, respect and consideration for others and the Prevent Agenda on radicalisation and extremism

5. Working with other agencies to ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and adults

6. Providing fire and evacuation procedures and intruder alert awareness

7. Providing Personal or Group Emergency Evacuation Plans where requested.

Safeguarding and PREVENT

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. It might mean that you are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse or being radicalised by an individual or group.

Safeguarding adults means:

- Protecting people's rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- People and organisations working together to prevent the risk of abuse or neglect, and to stop it from happening.
- Making sure people's wellbeing is promoted, taking their views, feelings and beliefs into account.

What is Prevent?

Prevent is part of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy and aims to stop people being drawn into or supporting terrorism, radicalisation and extremism.

The strategy focuses on three key areas which are to:

- Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism.
- Safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support.
- Enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

What should I do if I am concerned for my own or someone else's safety?

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call the Police on 999.

Your tutor can provide contact details for our Designated Safeguarding Leads who can support or advise you to ensure you are safe.

To report a concern about sexual abuse or safeguarding you can use the following email address: ESsafeguarding@northtyneside.gov.uk

Alternatively, if you are worried about an adult complete the online form on:

Safeguarding Adults| North Tyneside

Safeguarding adults | North Tyneside Council

0191 643 2777 (office hours) or 0330 333 4745 evenings and weekends)

Or if you are concerned about a child go to:

Are you worried about a child? | North Tyneside

Are you worried about a child? | North Tyneside Council

0345 2000 109 (office hours) or 0330 333 7475 (evenings and weekends)

Internet safety

Online safety for our learners

We encourage all of our learners to use computers to improve and extend the quality of their learning experience with us. You may be using the internet or learning platform to access course materials recommended by your tutor/assessor, for independent research or just for fun. It is very important to know how to protect yourself and your family from a range of potential threats.

If you are concerned about any e-safety issues, please raise the matter with your tutor/assessor, who will assist you or direct you to a suitably qualified person who will advise you.

For comprehensive and detailed advice on how to stay safe and avoid problems, have a look at the websites listed below.

www.getsafeonline.org

www.ceopeducation.co.uk

Giving us feedback ...

We want to know about your experience of learning with Employment and Skills, whatever it is, because we value your views and want to know how you think we can improve.

We want to offer excellent services and courses with staff that understand and meet your needs and centres that are welcoming to and respectful of you.

We take careful note of your views and will let you know what we've done in response to feedback.

Let us know what you think by:

- Complete end of course evaluation forms'
- Participating in learner forums
- Talking to your tutor/assessor
- Using the Comments, Compliments and Complaints form

What if my concerns aren't addressed?

We would always expect that any problems with your learning will be resolved with the tutor/assessor.

If the problem is not sorted out and you want to make a formal complaint, you can use the Employment and Skills Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure.

Your tutor/assessor can give you a copy of the form or you could pick one up from display boards or at reception in any learning centre.

The form explains how complaints will be handled to ensure they are dealt with promptly and efficiently.

Your information

Why collect your personal information

We understand that you are wary about disclosing information unnecessarily and want to safeguard your personal information. We need to collect information from you for very practical and important reasons:

- So we can contact you quickly when a class is cancelled because of tutor illness, bad weather, etc
- To ensure we meet all of your learning needs
- So we can account for public funding which subsidises the costs of your course
- So we can prove that you are eligible for public funding.

How we use your information

Employment and Skills will use your information to contact you:

- To ensure everything is running smoothly in your course/learning
- To inform you about course related matters, such as a change of time or venue or tutor illness, etc
- To allow us to send you course publicity
- To find out about your learning experience for example surveys asking for your views on our venues or courses
- To follow up after the course and find out about what you got out of it and how you've used your new skills or qualification.

We are also legally obliged to share your information with the Education Skills Funding Agency (who fund our courses). For more information on how the Education Skills Funding Agency use your information go to Personal information charter - Department for Education - GOV.UK

For information on how we use your information go to: www.northtyneside.gov.uk/dataprotection

Please rest assured we treat your information with the utmost confidentiality and never pass it on to anyone other than our funders or use it in any way other than to support your learning.

Carbon Net Zero

North Tyneside Council has ambitious plans to become carbon neutral by 2030. The council's Employment and Skills service supports this ambition by developing learners'skills and knowledge which helps them contribute to sustainability and climate change in their lives and future careers.

Our adult learning programme incorporates a range of awareness raising strategies and seeks to ensure learners actively participate in a range of projects throughout their studies.

ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE NORTH TYNESIDE

Volunteering with the Adult Learning Service

Volunteer Learning Support Workers work with a tutor to give extra support to our learners.

These are just a few of the opportunities that may be available:

- Supporting in English, maths and IT classes
- Supporting learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are many benefits that come from volunteering

Benefits to learners

Volunteers help to support skills and personal development of our learners.

Benefits to you

Being a volunteer means you can discover something you are really good at and develop a new skill. Volunteering reflects who you are and gives a real example of your commitment, dedication and interest.

You will receive training in how to support teaching and learning and we will help you gain expertise and experience in supporting teaching.

If you are interested in joining our vibrant team of volunteers, contact the Adult Learning Service on 0191 643 2288 or email alavolunteering@northtyneside.gov.uk

This is your chance to show people what you are passionate about.

North Tyneside Council

matrix quality standard for information advice and guidance services approved by the matrix Accreditation Body

North East Combined Authority

Education & Skills Funding Agency