

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION & STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT 4.30 PM ON 31 MARCH 2025**

Present: Alan Aston (Chair), Mark Ormerod (Teams), Becky Bagguley (Teams)

In attendance: Andy Bailey (Head of Compliance and Governance), Georgina Barnard (Vice Principal – IoT and HE), Gavin Barker (Assistant Principal – Teaching, Learning and Quality), Shelley Brown (Deputy Principal), Carl Riding (Vice Principal – Employer Partnerships and Adult Provision), Denise Haney (Assistant Principal – Student Services)

### **25.1.1 Election of Vice-Chair of the Committee**

Andy indicated that we are having ongoing conversations with Committee members about this post and will update everyone once the position can be confirmed.

### **25.1.2 BTEC Results Presentation**

Shelley introduced her presentation which provided the latest results information.

On achievement rates, Ian advised that the latest DfE results have now been published which highlight NSCG's strong position.

Members noted the latest data and Shelley advised that further analysis would be undertaken to drill down in all areas. Members were delighted that all our results are really strong, in particular in Apprenticeships and at Level 3, and thanks were extended to all the staff involved for their hard work.

Regarding progress, Gavin advised that we have compared ourselves to local providers and we are delighted with the outcome which places us in an exceptionally strong position at Newcastle in particular, the best we have ever achieved.

Maths and English data was considered and members recalled that our numbers are strong against the national average, with the latest November resit results being very pleasing.

Shelley Brown joined the meeting at this stage.

There is no national data available for Level 2 provision, therefore, we compare against our own performance. We have seen a very slight decline in a few areas and are already focussing on making the required improvements.

Regarding the proposed qualification reforms, Shelley confirmed that although the information released in December was in part positive with one year reprieves given to certain AGQs, there remain some areas of concern which will impact on our retention data, although it should be noted that this applies to all providers. For NSCG, potentially 60% of health students would be unable to access T Level Science because of the need for GCSE Maths and Science.

She added that our views have been voiced to local MPs with a request for them to lobby ministers.

Ian referred to the National Audit Office report where the DfE have provided evidence that they are planning 48,000 students to undertake T Levels which leaves c100,000 students falling through the cracks.

Members noted the uncertainty that remains relating to the national curriculum reform situation and the long term future of some courses and it was agreed that updates will be provided as further information emerges.

#### **25.1.3 Apologies for absence**

Received from Sam Barber and Sarah Burns.

#### **25.1.4 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **25.1.5 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2024**

Approved as a true record of the meeting.

#### **25.1.6 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **25.1.7 Student Data Report : March 2025**

The Learner Data Report was considered along with the headline summary information highlighting the current status, RAG rating and the direction of change against elements contained within 16-18 study programmes, work based learning and higher education. Members agreed that this provided a very useful summary sheet.

Members noted the information in the report, in particular the key strengths and areas for improvement.

The Committee agreed that the current position is, on the whole, extremely strong and noted that there is never any complacency at NSCG. They commended the College on its approach in terms of seeking continual improvement, something that is led from the top through all levels of the organisation.

Regarding work based learning, Carl discussed the difficulties with obtaining apprenticeship placements following the latest government announcements which are affecting the position nationally and it was agreed that the College's Work Placement Team will provide a presentation on the challenges of their role to a future meeting. Mark added that the changes in policy coming through from Government and the consequent uncertainty is all adding to this situation.

Shelley asked if members had any particular questions relating to the report, and there were none, but once again the Committee commended Shelley and the team and producing an excellent, very useful and easily readable report.

#### **25.1.8 Annual Safeguarding Report**

Denise took members through the latest Safeguarding Report and members were very pleased to note the impact that the financial support provided by the College has on students' learning and attendance. Members particularly noted the year on year increases in demand for one to one support in lessons and exams and the logistical pressures these demands put on the team.

The latest Safeguarding concerns were noted, along with the increase in mental health issues and domestic violence at home, particularly on the Newcastle campus. Members noted the programme of training and counselling available so that we can provide students with the tools to support themselves with a view to bolstering their resilience.

Alan referred to the serious nature of some of the referrals and reminded members of the Endsleigh online referral that had been offered by the College but which had not been particularly successful. Denise confirmed that staffing at both campuses and face to face counselling opportunities have both been increased since then.

#### **25.1.9 Quality Improvement Plan : March 2025**

Shelley referred to the Plan which has been considered throughout the year and which has been updated to reflect the latest information.

Members noted that the T Level Electrical course had been withdrawn as we feel that this is not fit for purpose in that it is not providing students with the skills and knowledge they need to become electricians. We are offering an alternative L3 qualification and we have invited students in to meet with staff to discuss alternative pathways.

Alan thanked Shelley for the Plan which is really helpful and shows the amount of work that the college has done and the progress made against areas identified.

#### **25.1.10 Risks – Education**

Shelley drew attention to the risks included in the Risk Register which fell within the remit of the Education and Standards Committee. She advised that there is nothing significant that we had not anticipated or that is not already an area of focus.

She reminded members that these excerpts from the College's Risk Register reflect the discussions that take place at the Risk Management Group and represent the high level risks considered by the College.

**25.1.11 Any other business**

There were no items of other business.

**25.1.12 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

2 July 2025 at 4.30 pm in the Boardroom at Newcastle College