

Community
Learning and Skills
Learner
handbook
2017/18

July 2017



Strengthening and
sustaining the people
and communities of
Cumbria through the
power of learning.

Be
inspired



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Welcome

Community Learning and Skills (CLS) wish you every success in achieving your learning aims. We hope that you find your learning experience rewarding and fulfilling. CLS welcomes learners from all backgrounds and abilities and our staff will give you the opportunities to develop your learning and skills. Please take a moment to read through this handbook as it outlines what you can expect from us as a training provider.

This handbook signposts you to important information about our service and tells you what you need to know to complete your course successfully.

Community Learning and Skills (CLS) 2017/2018 - term dates

Autumn Term 2017

Starts Monday 4 September	Ends Friday 15 December	Half Term Holiday Monday 23 to Friday 27 October
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Spring Term 2018

Starts Thursday 4 January	Ends Friday 29 April	Half Term Holiday Monday 12 to Friday 16 February
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Summer Term 2018

Starts Monday 16 April	Ends Friday 20 July	Half Term Holiday Monday 28 May to Friday 1 June
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Bank Holidays

- Boxing Day - Tuesday 26 December
- New Year's Day - Monday 1 January
- Good Friday - 30 March
- Easter Sunday - 1 April
- Easter Monday - 2 April
- Early May Bank Holiday - 7 May

Your learning journey

What you can expect from CLS and your tutor:

- Your tutor will work with you to plan your learning programme and will carry out an initial assessment to identify your starting point.
- Your tutor will develop a learning plan with you and recognise and record your current level of knowledge and skills.
- Your tutor will support your development by delivering high quality teaching to enable learning.
- Your tutor will encourage you to complete your learning programme and achieve your learning aim or qualification.
- Your tutor will offer appropriate information and advice before, during and at the end of your learning programme.

Learning Support

Learning Support is provided to meet the needs of learners who have an identified learning difficulty and/or disability. If eligible you will have access to a support package designed to help you achieve your set learning goals. This includes providing funding for reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Learning Support is available to individuals enrolling on qualification courses and certain targeted non-qualification community learning courses. If you feel you are eligible for this support or require further information then please discuss this with the relevant Community Learning Centre.

What we expect from our learners

Learner Commitments

- To attend classes on a regular basis and be willing to join in. If you cannot attend, notify the tutor /centre in advance.
- To value the rights of all those you encounter in your learning experience, treating staff and other learners with politeness, fairness and respect.
- To be punctual for the start of the session, and if you need to leave before the end, let your tutor know. If you need to leave the course before it is complete, tell the tutor, as we need to know why learners leave.
- To meet any deadlines for work set and discuss with your tutor if you have problems with this.
- To adhere to any ground rules that are agreed within the classroom.
- To inform us of any medical conditions which may affect your attendance, learning or that you feel we should be made aware of.
- To take an active part in learner forums and respond to adult education and Ofsted learner surveys. This will help us to improve the standards of our service.
- Always seek help if you need it and tell us if you have a disability or learning difficulty so we can offer support.
- To follow all safety rules and help to make your place of learning a safer place by reporting any incidents or concerns.
- To respect the property CLS provides to support teaching and learning.
- To not disrupt teaching and learning of other learners and staff.
- To let us know at any time if you are unhappy about any aspect of our service by emailing us at communitylearningsupport@cumbria.gov.uk or use the Learner Feedback Form available in our centres or in Word format on our website at cumbria.gov.uk/learningandskills

Behaviour

Below are examples of behaviour which is considered as misconduct and may result in further action being taken:

Examples may include:

- Failure to follow Health and Safety regulations.
- Conduct which prevents obstructs or disrupts teaching, learning or the administration of the business of CLS.
- Failure to follow the reasonable instructions of a member of staff.
- Smoking in a non-smoking area.
- Disorderly behaviour or the use of bad or abusive language.
- Causing damage to CLS buildings, equipment, books or furnishings.
- Interference with software belonging to or used by CLS or misuse of computer facilities.
- Drunkenness or the use of illegal drugs.
- Behaviour or language which is racially or sexually offensive or which is offensive to those with disabilities.
- Posting offensive messages, attacking staff or other learners, on web-based networking sites.
- Violence or the threat of violence.
- An illegal act on or off CLS premises which may harm CLS.

Action may be taken against learners whose behaviour is considered by CLS to constitute misconduct in line with current learner disciplinary policy and procedure. (If this happened repeatedly or there is a single very serious violation, the learner may be suspended or expelled).

Where learners are seriously misbehaving and causing disruption to the learning of others, they may be required to leave the classroom/premises immediately. This action by a tutor or member of CLS staff dealing with the incident does not constitute suspension or expulsion and will not prejudice the subsequent handling of the case.

Attendance

You will gain most from your course if you attend regularly; also for many qualification courses there is a minimum attendance requirement in order to achieve. Course information Sheets set out what you can expect to achieve on your course – this assumes that you are present throughout the course. However, we do appreciate that sometimes absence is unavoidable. 80% attendance is required and if are going to be absent it is your responsibility to inform your tutor or centre manager.

If you cannot attend a class, please let us know by phoning the centre (or appropriate main centre) where your class is running. If you do not attend your class for four consecutive sessions and we are not notified, you will be automatically withdrawn from the course, so please stay in touch!

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

Your tutor will work with you to develop an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). This sets out what you will learn on the course and gives you a chance to set some goals for yourself. It includes an assessment of what you know and can do at the start of the course, a record of the progress you are making, and what you have achieved by the end of the course. The ILP also gives you a chance to let your tutor know about anything that may be affecting your learning. Your tutor will use all of this information to help them plan their teaching.

RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement)

Our service is funded by the government through the Skills Funding Agency and is regularly inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). A requirement of both bodies is that we operate the RARPA system to improve the learning process and to monitor the quality of provision.

The system enables learners to reflect on their progress and achievement at key stages in the course.

- Stage 1:** Decide what you want to be the outcome of the course for you.
- Stage 2:** Find out what you can already do or not do and if you have any special requirements.
- Stage 3:** Set some specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART) targets to enable you to achieve your outcome.
- Stage 4:** Record the assessment of your learning (by yourself, your tutor and your peers) on how you are progressing throughout your course and determine if you need to change or add new SMART targets.
- Stage 5:** Review your overall learning, progress and achievement and think about what you may wish to do next.

There will be some forms to complete, with the help of your tutor, to record these stages but we try to be as brief and straightforward as possible. Not everything has to be written down as such things as photos, notes, paintings, audio recordings and examples of work can all count as evidence of learning.

Safeguarding

Cumbria County Council Community Learning and Skills is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all its service users.

'Safeguarding' relates to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding legislation requires policy, procedure and preventative measures to be in place to protect young people and vulnerable adults from risk of harm.

Safeguarding of both children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance and Cumbria County Council Community Learning and Skills seeks to ensure that a safe learning environment is available to all learners. Community Learning and Skills as part of Cumbria County Council will follow the Council's Multi Agency Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures.

Posters are displayed at all centres. If you want to discuss a concern, you may also want to talk to the designated safeguarding person for the service. The named person for the service is Donna St Claire at donna.stclaire@cumbria.gov.uk You can also contact the deputy safeguarding person Kraig Reeves-Brown at kraig.reeves-brown@cumbria.gov.uk

Preventing Violent Extremism

Prevent is the Government's strategy to discourage and prevent people from becoming involved in violent extremism or supporting terrorism, in all its forms. The Prevent duty requires educational establishments like us to model British values in their practice and to use opportunities to explore British values and to challenge extremism.

British Values

British values include: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

- The prevent programmes works with people who are vulnerable to exploitation.
- Use early engagement activities to encourage individuals and communities to challenge violent extremist ideologies and behaviours.

British values are also embedded within the schemes of work and lesson plans.

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Cumbria Community Learning and Skills provides all learners with free and impartial Information and Advic. This will help you:

- make the right choice of suitable course and to redirect learners who do not meet our eligibility and/or entry requirements.
- At the start of the course programme with a comprehensive initial assessment to agree individual learning plans and a detailed course induction.
- During the course programme reviews with learners using their Individual Learning Plan will ensure retention and completion of the course programme and achievement of the qualification.
- At the end of the programme to support learners to progress into employment, education or further course.

Learners will:

- Have an individual discussion/interview and/or course information sheet about the course before the start.
- Have an initial assessment.
- Agree an individual learning plan.
- Be given review dates for the action plan.
- Receive IAG information about progressions and job search support and careers advice at the end of the course.
- Be provided with information about safeguarding and the Prevent agenda.

As a result of our Information, advice and guidance, learners can expect:

- To know more about their strengths and areas for development.
- To know more about the options available to them.
- To be able to make better decisions.
- To feel more confident about their learning.
- To be able to plan their next steps.
- To develop their employability skills.

Take Part in Surveys

- **FE Choices:** this is a mandatory survey that all learners at further education colleges / providers must complete. See posters in your centres for details.
- **Ofsted Learner View:** this is an online optional survey by Ofsted, who inspect schools and colleges to ensure quality of provision; another chance for you to have your say learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk
- **Course Evaluation and Outcomes Survey:** your tutor/ assessor will ask you to complete it towards the end of your course. It gives you a chance to tell us what you enjoyed about your course, what impact it had on you and your future plans, and what we need to improve.
- Additional feedback opportunities about specific services we provide e.g. IAG, Enrolment, etc.

Equality and diversity

Equality Statement

CLS is committed to ensuring that all learners, staff and visitors are treated equally and, where possible, have full access to our sites and services. Please help us to achieve this by bringing to our attention any potential discrimination. If you are a disabled learner or have any specific needs, we will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to the learning environment to ensure that you will not be placed at a disadvantage. By disclosing your specific needs to us at the earliest opportunity, you will enable us to put in the required support. If you do not wish to disclose your needs or request that this information remains confidential, we cannot guarantee that appropriate adjustments will be made.

Continuous quality improvement

By carefully monitoring our service quality, we can ensure that we are giving you the best possible value for money. We develop an annual all service quality improvement plan which is reviewed regularly to monitor our performance.

We write an annual self-assessment report, which includes gaining feedback from learners and other service users. You may be invited to join a focus group to give your views on your experience. The annual self-assessment report informs our quality improvement report.

Inspection of our Service is by Ofsted. The Skills Funding Agency, which provides our funding, uses the outcomes of the inspection and our own self-assessment to judge the quality of what we do. The quality improvement process includes making classroom observations, walkthroughs and gathering information from you in the form of questionnaires. (Thank you for completing our survey questionnaires; these help us to measure your satisfaction with the service we are offering).

We are also involved in national surveys which aim to assess learner satisfaction with the service we provide.

FE Choices

One of the national surveys is called FE Choices go to:

fechoices.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk

Ofsted Learner View

Ofsted Inspectors also operate a Learner survey, called "Learner View". You are invited to give your views about your learning experiences with Cumbria County Council Community learning and Skills. You need to enter an email address and a password to complete the questionnaire. On registration, users have to verify their application via their e-mail account, as a security measure. There are posters in the classrooms and your tutors will also assist you in logging on to the site.

Compliments, comments and complaints

CLS accepts that sometimes things go wrong and it is important that you contact us if you are unhappy with a service. Please also let us know what you would like us to do to put things right. We would also like to hear your feedback on the services we provide or if you have a suggestion on how we can make improvements. Your comments will be passed on to the services involved.

Contacting Us

Email: **complaints@cumbria.gov.uk**

Email: **compliments@cumbria.gov.uk**

Online: **cumbria.gov.uk/complaints/onlinecomplaintsform.asp**

Telephone: **01228 221234**

By Post: Corporate Complaints
Cumbria County Council
FREEPOST NWW6059A
The Courts
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA3 8NA

