

LEARNER WELFARE POLICY

Prepared by:	Head of Learner Services		
Policy approved by:	Academic Board	6/5/03	Minute 226
	Strategic Management Team	7/5/03	Minute 768
		21/05/07	Minute 1244
	Operational Management Team	9/5/03	Minute 23
	Curriculum and Quality Committee	19/5/03	Minute 70
		14/11/07	Minute 193
Policy implemented:	2003		
Review date:	May 2011		

Preamble to the Policy

Equal Opportunities

The College shall comply with all statutory duties in respect of equal opportunities in the areas of sex, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, transgender religion, belief and the rehabilitation of offenders. The college shall also comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and any subsequent enactments or modifications.

Learner Welfare Policy

1. What is the aim of the Welfare Policy

- 1.1 The College is committed to ensuring learners have access to a range of help.
- 1.2 It offers an independent impartial support service with extensive links and contacts to professional advisors and welfare resources by specialist external agencies.
- 1.3 It offers a practical service to referral systems to get the earliest possible help.
- 1.4 It aims to support learners through a variety of difficulties, which could create a barrier to them continuing their learning, training or education.

2. Welfare

- 2.1 The College offers help and advice on practical problems needing attention to ensure the well being of all learners. These may include benefits issues, financial matters, learner grants and legal issues. They can also offer help on many topics including; housing and homelessness, examination stress, bullying and relationship problems.
- 2.2 Learners may find themselves in difficult situations where they may need urgent help or maybe referred to the College welfare officers.
- 2.3 Welfare staff will be able to help access specific material and information on help.
- 2.4 Situations may occur whereby staff representation is required. Circumstances that entail advocacy should instil discretion where other members of staff are concerned. The Welfare staff can offer a suitable advocacy service for learners if their welfare is paramount.

3. Health

- 3.1 Confidential advice and information is available on health and social care issues including STD's smoking, diet, health and well being.

- 3.2 In addition the College works with local Drug and Alcohol services to provide information and promote health awareness campaigns.

4. Accommodation

- 4.1 Accessing independent accommodation may prove to be difficult. The College may be able to offer up to date advice, information and accommodation lists from our Welfare Officers. Whilst the College does not offer accommodation, where applicable it can help access local Area Housing Offices.

5. Early leaving Help

- 5.1 If learners feel they have to leave the College then Campus Services can provide re-direction advice, all accessible from learner services.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1 The College respects the learner's rights to confidentiality. It works strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the law on Disclosure. However, basic information may need to be passed on to bodies to whom they are being referred. When producing annual reports on Welfare Services, only specific references will be made, insuring the individual's rights to privacy are protected.

7. Record keeping

- 7.1 All personal data and information held will be kept in a safe and secure manner in accordance with the college data protection policy.

8. Evaluation

- 8.1 The welfare staff will make use of questionnaires and college wide Learner Perception of College surveys (SPOC) to annually evaluate the quality of the service and report the findings to the Learner Services Officer.

9. Complaints

- 9.1 The College has a well-established formal complaint procedure that is included in the Learner Handbook. Where appropriate, concerns and complaints should be resolved promptly and informally by informing the counsellors of any concerns. If this is not possible, a formal complaint can be made either in person or in writing to the Learner Services Officer.

10. Access

- 10.1 Learners can access information on this service by contacting staff on main College sites, or in their centre of education. Alternatively the web site, the Learner Handbook, or Policy Handbook, available from the learning resource centres on the main college sites contains the information.

10.2 The College will also ensure that its staff and new learners will be informed during its induction program.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 The Learner Services Officer will monitor this policy periodically and formally review it every four years unless circumstances warrant an earlier review.