

# NCG

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 130552

**Name of lead inspector:** Russ Henry, Her Majesty's Inspector

**Inspection dates:** 24–25 March 2021

**Type of provider:** General further education college

**Address:** Rye Hill Campus  
Scotswood Road  
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit focused on safeguarding arrangements and was undertaken as outlined in the [operational note on visits carried out from January 2021](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook.

The visit focused exclusively on the Newcastle College campus of NCG. At the time of the visit, the campus was open to learners. Not all learners were in attendance because of a phased return following COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions.

The impact of COVID-19 has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

### Themes

**How well do leaders promote an effective safeguarding culture, and ensure that staff and learners understand the nature of safeguarding risks, are able to identify potential concerns, and take effective action to minimise risks?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have established an effective safeguarding culture. They have developed a very clear and comprehensive set of safeguarding policies and procedures that are understood by staff. They made appropriate amendments in response to COVID-19, setting out clear expectations for keeping learners safe while they study remotely.

Leaders have employed a suitable range of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding. They hold frequent meetings at which designated safeguarding leads from across the group can share their experiences, and this helps to strengthen arrangements at each individual college, including Newcastle College.

The college's designated safeguarding lead and her team have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They work closely with other agencies in Newcastle to ensure that responses to safeguarding concerns are appropriate and effective.

Managers ensure that all staff undertake training in safeguarding every two years. They also require staff to familiarise themselves with statutory safeguarding guidance. The safeguarding team provides updates as appropriate throughout the year. As a result, teachers and managers have a good understanding of a wide range of safeguarding topics, including those that are most relevant in the local area. They understand how to recognise signs that a learner may be at risk, and how and when they should report their concerns.

Designated safeguarding staff manage safeguarding concerns effectively. They ensure that learners receive appropriate support, either within the college or through external agencies, and they record their actions well. They work tirelessly to address difficult and challenging cases and follow up their initial actions to ensure that learners continue to receive the support that they need. Learning mentors provide effective coaching and guidance that helps learners to overcome difficulties with well-being and mental health.

Leaders and managers carry out appropriate pre-recruitment checks on staff. They follow up references to ensure that any gaps in employment history are explained and verified.

Staff explain a range of safeguarding topics to learners when they join their courses. They provide further lessons on a range of safeguarding topics through a programme of regular tutorials. However, although learners can remember these lessons, in a few instances they are not able to recall the details and are uncertain about the safeguarding risks in the local area.

When learners miss individual lessons or days at college, staff respond swiftly to find out where they are and that they are well. If the learner is under 18 years of age, they contact their parents or carers to ensure that they know about the absence and can confirm the reasons for it. However, processes to monitor what happens to learners who stop attending altogether are not strong enough. In some instances, staff do not record clearly the reasons for a learner's absence or the actions taken to support them. Records are sometimes kept within subject departments and managers do not have an easy way to review them. This creates the possibility that the welfare of these learners will be overlooked.

**How successfully do leaders and managers ensure that learners are protected from discriminatory behaviour, including bullying and harassment?**

**Significant progress**

The atmosphere at Newcastle College is calm and welcoming. Learners behave well in classrooms and around the college. They display a mature approach to interactions with peers, teachers and other staff. There is a culture of mutual respect among learners and staff, and learners feel safe. They know to whom they should speak if they have concerns about their own or others' safety and well-being. They have confidence that staff will deal appropriately with any concerns that they raise. They value the presence of security staff and recognise that when security officers enforce the wearing of identity badges, they are protecting learners from unwanted visitors to the campus.

None of the large number of learners spoken to could recall any occasions when they had been victims of or witnesses to bullying or discrimination. Staff deal effectively with the few concerns that learners raise about other learners' behaviour. They swiftly identify the causes and speak to all learners involved. They provide additional training to learners where their behaviour is related to lack of knowledge about a

subject. For example, they provide training on the positive use of social media and highlight the potential impact on others of learners' online behaviour.

Safeguarding staff are very aware of new and emerging risks in relation to discrimination. For example, they recognise the increased number of transgender learners who study at the college. They have provided training that enables support staff to help these learners to feel safe and comfortable at the college.

Safeguarding officers work successfully with local agencies to identify and mitigate local risks. For example, they attend a local hate crime and community tensions board so that they are aware of the nature of discrimination and harassment within local communities. However, while managers and teachers are vigilant in relation to these risks, a few learners do not fully understand them.

Learners who have high needs are provided with effective support to help manage relationships. Tutors intervene when learners fall out and help them to develop their social skills. As a result, learners who have high needs are able to act in a more mature manner when challenged by the behaviour of others.

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