

1. Introduction and Rationale

NCG's mission is to 'enable social mobility and economic prosperity through exceptional education,' the vision is 'to be the UK's leading college group recognised for our local impact, national influence and reach' and we exist to create life-changing opportunities for individuals that strengthen the prosperity of their local communities.

We are committed to creating inclusive communities of excellent learning and teaching which benefit from sharing best practice developed across NCG.

Together, our colleges and partners are creating the workforce of the future by enabling all people, regardless of their background, to develop the skills that our local communities need to be successful and sustained.

NCG is committed to putting stakeholders first by listening and responding to their views, and firmly believes that stakeholders should be involved in evaluating and improving the quality of the learning opportunities the Group provides.

This policy outlines NCG's approach in seeking, listening to, and acting on stakeholder views so they are involved in the decision-making processes at all levels. The variety of methods available to provide feedback (both formal and informal) will ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to engage with and/ or contribute to reviews of all aspects of the Group.

2. Aim

The overall aim of this policy is to ensure that NCG takes active and deliberate steps to engage stakeholders both individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of the educational experiences it provides. This policy will address its aims by ensuring that:

- The range of opportunities for stakeholders to engage in enhancement and quality assurance are promoted and accessible.
- An environment in which stakeholders engage in discussions to enhance their educational experience is created and maintained.
- Arrangements exist for the effective representation of the collective stakeholder voice at all levels.
- The effectiveness of policies and procedures associated with stakeholder engagement are regularly monitored, reviewed, and enhanced.

As such, the framework will involve a number of differing strategies to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to express their views and opinions.

3. How NCG engages with different Stakeholder Groups

3.1. Learners

3.1.1. Direct engagement

Learners are pivotal to NCG; they are the main business and the primary consumer of our services. Our learners have a voice which must shape the way in which NCG conducts its business.

At Corporation Board Level:

The Corporation Board has 2 Student Governors, appointed from colleges within the Group. The Student Governors provide an unbiased student view on projects, initiatives, and strategy before they are implemented, allowing the Board to consider the opinion of the representative members of the student body to ensure decisions are informed and consider any potential impact on learners.

At Local College Board Level:

Each College Board has at least 1 Student Governor appointed from within the College. The Student Governors provide an unbiased student view on projects, initiatives, and strategy before they are implemented, allowing each College Board to consider the opinion of the representative members of the student body to ensure decisions are informed and consider any potential impact on learners.

At Group Level:

Across the Group we have a number of surveys issued to learners at various points across the academic year, examples include:

- Induction survey.
- First term survey.
- Apprentice mid-year survey.
- Term 3 survey.
- Apprentice Exit surveys.
- Destination survey.

At College Level:

Each College has its own mechanisms in place to obtain learner views. Example activities include:

- “Around the College” surveys (Kidderminster College).
- London Devolved Authority survey (applies in London and for Adult Learners).

- “Tell Us Now” (Newcastle College University Centre).
- NSS Survey (HE Learners).
- Internal HE Survey – HESS (HE Learners).
- Student Councils / Forums.

3.1.2. Indirect engagement

Over and above the current learners of the Group, NCG aims to engage with a number of current / previous / potential learner groups indirectly including schools, parents, overseas agents, and alumni.

3.2. Staff

Staff members are another group of pivotal stakeholders of NCG, providing and delivering the services offered by NCG.

The ways in which NCG engage with Staff are as follows:

At Corporation Board Level:

The Corporation Board has 1 Staff Governor appointed by their peers across the group. The Staff Governor provides an unbiased staff view on projects, initiatives, and strategy before they are implemented, allowing the Board to consider the opinion of the representative member of staff to ensure decisions are informed and consider any potential impact on staffing.

At College Board Level:

Each College Board has at least 1 Staff Governor, appointed by their peers across the respective college. The Staff Governors provide an unbiased staff view on projects, initiatives, and strategy before they are implemented, allowing each College Board to consider the opinion of the representative member of staff to ensure decisions are informed and consider any potential impact on staffing.

At Group level:

Across the Group we have a number of ways in which we engage and capture the views of staff, including:

- Annual Staff Engagement Survey.
- Roundtable / town hall events.
- Safeguarding Council.
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Working Group.
- Communities of Practice.
- Committees as set out within the Curriculum & Quality Policy.

At College Level:

Each College has its own mechanisms in place to obtain staff views. Example activities include:

- Staff forums.
- CPD / Professional Development Days

3.3. External Stakeholders

External stakeholders are the final group of pivotal stakeholders for NCG, this group includes subcontractors, communities, external employers, Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs), Sector based Employer organisations, independent governors, local authorities (Including Lead Authorities and Combined Authorities), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), NGOs, funding bodies, trusts and foundations, external awarding bodies, trade unions, relevant regional and national agencies

At Corporation Board Level:

As per our Instrument and Articles of Government, the Corporation Board may have up to 11 independent governors with a range of different skills and experience to allow the Corporation to perform its duties effectively.

At College Board Level:

Each College Board are required to have at least 6 independent governors, and we ask the for recent skills and experience in the following areas:

- Quality and Curriculum (from an education, and preferably FE, background).
- Education and Training.
- Working with learners.
- Apprenticeships.
- Higher Education.
- Safeguarding.
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- Representation of local employers, community, and regional bodies.

NCG conduct a range of activities to obtain engagement with external stakeholders, for example:

- Corporation / College Board meetings and governor related events.
- Employer Advisory Boards.
- The Synergy Hub and College Business Centres/ Skills Hubs.

- SAR peer review
- Policy consultation.
- External board membership of the Group Executive Board.
- Annual Employer Engagement and Apprenticeship specific employer surveys (also access to IFATE employer ratings on Find an Apprenticeship website).
- Targeted engagement with, and representation in the development of regional policy and developments – including LSIPs. Membership of national, regional & local professional bodies and authorities (LEP, local authorities etc).