



Northumberland College Access and Participation Statement

Given our locality and mission, widening participation is at the forefront of everything we do to engage with groups who would not otherwise enter and benefit from higher education.

Our engagement with students, families and local communities is deep-rooted and substantial and supports social and community cohesion in the area. Northumberland College has a key role to play in raising aspirations and awareness of the educational, progression and subsequent employment and study opportunities available to potential students. The nature of the student population is such that the provision of information about the different forms of student support available is an important component of the services we make available to them.

In line with HEFCE targeting guidance and given our context, we define widening participation criteria as: lower socio-economic groups; learners from areas of deprivation where participation is low; learners with a disability; care leavers and looked after children; young carers; ethnic minorities and other groups under-represented in higher education. These criteria accord with the target groups identified and outlined in OFFA's strategic plan 2015-2020.

Given that our record on widening participation already demonstrates significant success, we believe our focus should continue to develop around the whole student experience ensuring students are prepared to progress into, and through HE, and on to employment or further study. With an unswerving focus on employability and graduate destinations, particularly within the technical professional sphere, we will continue to work with employers to co-create curriculum to meet the needs of individuals, the community, business and the economy.

Retention and student success remain absolutely central; we will continue to explore mechanisms to enhance our support infrastructure, ensuring that we target resources coherently and effectively.