



**NEW COLLEGE  
LANARKSHIRE**

# **Interim Lanarkshire Outcome Agreement 2020 – 2021**

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# Overview

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The Lanarkshire Colleges aim to be Scotland's leading provider of college education and training, recognised for their achievements in empowering people and enriching lives through learning. We want to ensure learners are well prepared for the future by providing innovative, high quality, relevant learning for careers, life and success, and to support the people, business, economy and sustainable development of Scotland.

The Lanarkshire College region, with New College Lanarkshire (NCL) and South Lanarkshire College (SLC) is committed to plans made pre-Covid-19, however, does recognise there may be some delays in realising them. Despite the current situation, the College region will work with SFC on an ongoing basis, keeping it under review as the situation evolves. This interim outcome agreement between the Lanarkshire College region and SFC has been prepared to provide reassurance on the use of allocated funding in 2020-21.

A 'Lanarkshire Protocol' was jointly developed by NCL, SLC, University of the West of Scotland and NHS Lanarkshire to ensure those testing positive for Covid-19 are correctly handled and supported. This has ensured all organisations are clear on the course of action to take if cases emerge.

Both colleges remain focussed on the health and safety of students and staff. As the colleges have moved between Levels 3 and 4, the precautions required have been reviewed and adjusted accordingly, which has had a direct impact on curriculum delivery.

# Fair access and transitions

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## Deprivation

Both North and South Lanarkshire have significant levels of deprivation. Figures based on National Records of Scotland (NRS) 2019 mid-year estimates show that 12.3% of the population of North Lanarkshire and 9.5% of South Lanarkshire live in the 10% of postcode areas which are classed as most deprived (known as SIMD 10).

The Lanarkshire colleges have high levels of engagement with students from the most deprived local communities and the level of activity being delivered is steadily increasing. For AY 2019/2020, the Lanarkshire region delivered 18.5% of activity to students from the SIMD 10 postcode areas. This is testament to the colleges' investment in supporting and delivering on this national ambition.

<b>Proportion of activity delivered to SIMD postcode 10 areas</b>				
<b>Academic year 2019/20</b>	<b>SIMD 10 postcodes in South Lanarkshire</b>	<b>SIMD 10 postcodes in North Lanarkshire</b>	<b>SIMD 10 postcodes in other council areas</b>	<b>Total</b>
New College Lanarkshire	3.0%	12.1%	3.6%	18.7%
South Lanarkshire College	10.5%	2.1%	5.1%	17.7%
Lanarkshire Region	5.1%	9.4%	4.0%	18.5%

Source - Further Education Statistics (FES) data return 2019/20.

NCL delivered 18.7% of activity in 2019/20 to students from SIMD 10 postcode areas, however 51% of students who attend NCL live in the 30% of postcode areas classified as most deprived (SIMD 30).

NCL recognised that some of our students were not eating breakfast before commencing the college day. In 2020 we began a pilot project called “Breakfast on Us” which provided a simple, free breakfast for all students. The pilot was a great success, and plans were in place to roll this out to other campuses when the college had to close due to Covid-19 restrictions. We intend to resume the roll-out of “Breakfast on Us” once campuses reopen.

We are determined that by AY 2027-28, 75% of full time students from the most deprived 10% of postcode areas will be supported to successfully gain their qualification.

SLC is a “Leader in Diversity” and has supported students from the most deprived postcode areas to successfully apply and attain at a high level well above the Scottish average, as shown above. SLC students from the most deprived SIMD 10 areas have attainment rates of 74.6%, and there is a continued and unrelenting focus to ensure that these students succeed. SLC’s Student Association was keen to further support students and help to alleviate student poverty by offering free soup to students.

The colleges deploy funds provided by SFC and the Scottish Government to support students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. These funds include SFC student support funds, training allowances for SDS funded programmes, Educational Maintenance Allowance for students meeting the eligibility criteria, and discretionary funds for crisis support for students experiencing financial difficulties.

## **Student carers and care-experienced students**

The Lanarkshire colleges are 'Care Aware', which includes both students who are care-experienced and student carers. Both colleges are working actively with partner agencies to enable the best outcomes for these students.

Participation for both care-experienced students and student carers has increased over the last year. Each college has developed its Equality Mainstreaming Report and associated action plan to meet its specific equality objectives.

SLC adopted the "Standalone Pledge" in 2019, and was awarded the Pledge Award in 2020 for our support for estranged students. SLC also signed the Armed Services Covenant in 2019 to demonstrate its commitment to supporting veterans, reservists, cadets and their families. SLC also has a self-refer mechanism on the Student Portal that allows veterans to indicate to the Student Services Team that they are a veteran.



At NCL, the Corporate Parenting Team oversees support for carers and care-experienced students. In 2019/20, 3.2% of student activity was delivered to care-experienced students which has risen steadily over the years.

Both colleges have specific Student Carers' policies to drive this work. Both colleges are adapting existing policies and procedures to ensure that the needs of estranged students are addressed as part of their core policy documentation. SLC achieved the Carers' Trust Going Further Award, showing their support for student carers. NCL is currently working towards the award.

Both colleges aspire to deliver the best possible outcomes for students in terms of attainment and positive destinations at the end of each course. The colleges monitor equality of outcomes for under-represented groups, at a college-wide level through to course team level, and report these to their appropriate committees. This enables focused action to be taken if required.

## Enhancing the Student Experience during Covid-19 restrictions

In 2019/20, NCL created our Student Experience directorate in order to ensure student voices were heard, and that a cohesive, multi-stakeholder approach was being taken to the provision of services and support for students.

Student Advisers, NCLSA, Learner Engagement, Quality, Catering and Halls of Residence were brought together to better align activities to support students. In 2020/21, Educational Learning Support was another welcome addition to the team.

The team was responsible for a number of key projects and activities which were originally devised in reaction to the Covid-19 lockdown, but have now become a key part of ongoing NCL service provision.

In partnership with Hey Girls, free period products are made available to students via a home delivery service, despite various campus closures. Students order supplies of products every three months, which are delivered to them directly by Hey Girls. All products are plastic free, organic and vegan friendly, in-line with NCL's commitment to sustainability.

Student mental health was at the forefront of plans, given the devastating impact of the global health emergency. Through partnership with The Talking Rooms, a suite of remote services are now available to students including: one-to-one counselling or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), larger group workshops examining issues such as stress management, mental health first aid, resilience and mindfulness, and access to a range of online resource and materials.

Students can self-refer to The Talking Rooms using a hyperlink promoted on the NCL website and social media platforms, with alternative referral mechanisms available to academic and professional services staff.

In addition, to this service, NCL are members of Togetherall (formally the Big White Wall), which provides students and staff with a safe and anonymous online platform where they can share, talk and support others 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Togetherall provides a range of self-assessment tools and resources, as well as access to a repository of supporting materials and links to other organisations and services.

Digital inclusion is a key priority for NCL, and in March 2020 a Laptop Lending Library was established to provide ICT resources and Wi-Fi access to students struggling to engage in their studies. To date, around 1,000 laptops have been distributed and approximately 30 students supported with Wi-Fi access. Where Covid-19 restrictions have prohibited campus access, the team have worked to ensure that resources are delivered direct to students at their place of safety.



Remote careers education, advice, guidance and support is essential at this time, given the uncertainty within the labour market and inability to engage on campus with advisers. NCL student experience and faculty representatives are working collaboratively with Skills Development Scotland and local authority colleagues to develop three unique tools in support of CEIAG activities. These are a dedicated careers portal which will be hosted on the MyNCL app, a staff development programme focused on CEIAG, and a learner portal which aligns My World of Work tools and resources with NCL systems in order to provide tailored support to individual students throughout the learner journey.

SLC have had a very similar approach to supporting our students during the pandemic to support them with the transition to online learning, for example, all new and progressing students were briefed on how to access content online as well as how to access Teams during an extended induction. There were new website pages and updates (including regularly updated FAQs) highlighting latest news and guidance. Laptops were made available for both long-term and short-term loan to students. Mifi devices, with internet service contracts in place, have been provided to students where requested, as have headsets in order to address digital poverty. A combination of the use of webcams, Clevertouch interactive boards and MS Teams allows a class to be taught with some students on-campus and some connected remotely.

SLC is aware that evidence suggests that the pandemic is significantly worsening mental health and wellbeing across our communities and there is real concern about being able to support students appropriately, especially with many presenting with complex support needs. For example, many students are struggling with home schooling, financial issues, poverty, rising debt, relationship issues and domestic violence, which are all drivers feeding the rise in poor mental health. As a result, the counselling service has had to support students for longer periods of time with many continuing to be supported beyond the recommended six sessions. The online mental health resource "Togetherall" is available to staff and learners and provides additional support, as well as referrals to external agencies.

SLC Student Services has continued to offer emotional and counselling support and financial advice and guidance, as well as face to face support for those students who cannot access services from home. We have new designated webpages created to support health and wellbeing providing greater accessibility to learners. In addition, Covid-Resilience online workshops were provided by the counselling team to students and staff, which were very well received with incredibly positive feedback and excellent interaction from participants. As well as this SLC also have free mindfulness sessions for students.

The SLC Student Services team has maintained its excellent approach to SDS Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and has been delivering sessions via Teams either on a one to one basis or as group sessions. SLC was also instrumental in supporting the campaign to provide free access to period products in Scotland and has been providing free products to students since 2017. SLC worked closely with Central Scotland MSP Monica Lennon and local organisations like the Lanarkshire Carers Centre and Women's Aid South Lanarkshire to support the campaign.

## Widening Access

We work with many partners to increase the participation of students, particularly those from protected characteristic groups and those requiring additional support to return to learning for up-skilling and re-skilling. Both colleges adapt existing policies and procedures to ensure the needs of disadvantaged groups, such as estranged students or Veterans are addressed as part of their core policy documentation.

Both colleges are working towards implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission for Widening Access. Work with SWAPWest includes delivery of a wide range of Access programmes to increase participation of adults in successful learning. This allows articulation to university degrees in various subjects including those with an emphasis on STEM provision. This includes nursing, health sciences and science, as well as a pilot of a two-year, part-time course for senior phase pupils at NCL, giving access to HNC and then second year of a degree in Engineering.

Collaborative and franchise partnerships with universities allow both colleges to deliver degree courses articulating from specific HNC or HND courses. This enables students to continue to access this learning locally in a familiar setting, which encourages those without role models in their family to continue to progress their learning to a higher level. Further partnerships with universities or colleges delivering degrees are being developed, including routes for Art and Design and Football Performance.

NCL has secured an additional 160 Chromebooks for its Laptop Library, which are to be distributed to students in a household with children, and care leavers.

NCL, which hosts the Digital North Lanarkshire website, has been involved in the Connecting Scotland initiative, which supports everyone in Scotland to get online. Throughout the current pandemic, the need to stay connected to family and friends has become crucial to the wellbeing of many people.

Those supported by the initiative included students from the Prince's Trust and Employability Fund programmes as well as students from the North Lanarkshire Council Activity Agreement, undertaking introductory IT programmes.

SLC works with South Lanarkshire Community Learning and Development specifically on behalf of ESOL students. Through the Senior Phase provision SLC also delivers HNs to school pupils which include Business, Police Studies and Quantity Surveying.

Our facilities and estates teams help support students to study close to home and/or at a level and time that is suitable for their needs. Part-time, evening and flexible access was promoted across the curriculum. Community-based courses appeal to beginners and others who may be experiencing disadvantage, to get them started on their learning journey. Most of our community-based programmes are delivered in partnership with other agencies and organisations. These partners include: SDS, North Lanarkshire Council Community Learning, South Lanarkshire Council Community Learning Service, Prince's Trust Scotland, Routes to Work, NHS and Glasgow Homelessness Network.

Each college has strong links with several local authorities, Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and other key strategic groupings, such as the local authority economic growth board and task forces to support sustainable economic growth locally. There are excellent links regarding partnership work to support pupils from disadvantaged areas, pupils with additional support needs and others who wish to opt into a school-college vocational curriculum option through Developing the Young Workforce.

## Engaging school pupils

Both colleges work with almost all schools in North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire and some schools in East Renfrewshire and Glasgow. They offer a part-time schools portfolio to senior phase pupils to include Foundation Apprenticeships, customised work-based learning, as well as Skills for Work provision, NPAs and tailored Winter Leavers' Programmes.

Both colleges have implemented significant developments with the aim of:

- engaging a broader range of school pupils
- expanding Foundation Apprenticeship provision and its associated embedded work placements
- expanding the vocational offer that broadens the options and choices available to senior phase pupils.

To encourage pupil engagement, some of the curriculum is delivered in colleges and some is delivered in purpose-built vocational settings in local schools. Where pupil numbers may be low for a programme, the colleges work with the local authority to draw groups together from different schools, in order to enable access to a wider range of viable provision. SLC is proud to have grown its FA provision in conjunction with South Lanarkshire Council and now offers FAs in Social Services Children and Young People, Social Services and Healthcare, Business Skills, Accountancy and Digital Media. SLC also engages in senior phase provision with East Renfrewshire Council.

Both colleges work with FocusWest on transition activities to support pupils in schools with under-representation in higher education. This valuable work was reduced due to Covid-19 restrictions in 2020, but will be a focus once restrictions are eased.



# Quality, learning, teaching and participation

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At NCL, students are given the chance to contribute their views on learning and teaching twice a year through a formal student survey.

In 2019-20:

- 93% of students were satisfied with their college experience (up 1% from the previous year)
- 91% were satisfied with the quality of learning and teaching materials
- 89% were satisfied with the feedback they received and the way they are taught (up 1% from the previous year)
- 92% agreed that they were developing knowledge and skills for the workplace (up 1% from the previous year).

Staff also formally evaluate their learning and teaching three times a year, with improvements and changes implemented where required.

NCL has a cross-college Student Experience/Learner Engagement committee, reviewing all aspects of the student journey. This committee reports to the Lanarkshire Board. The Learner Engagement Team and Student Association works with faculties and class representatives in 'Be Heard' events, held with members of the college Executive Board, to get the student view on learning and teaching, facilities, student funding and resources. These campus-based events are a positive way to ensure the student voice is heard.

SLC has a cross-college Student Voice Working Group (SVWG), which is part of the Equality Group, and is active in continuous improvement activity to promote student voice accessibility. In 2019-20, the biannual in-course questionnaires were language graded to SCQF 4 literacy level, and SCQF Level 2/3 models were developed, including Pictorial Communication System (PCS) versions. The SVWG worked in partnership with SFC and colleagues to develop SCQF Level 2 and 3 versions of the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey 2019-20, which was published nationally in early 2020. Further work was undertaken by SLC, in January 2021, to adapt three additional questions which will be published by the SFC in Spring 2021.

To date 97% of students at SLC reported that they are treated fairly, and given equal opportunities. 94% of students reported that the feedback they receive after assessments helps them improve, and that they can access extra help with their learning if needed. Student views are embedded in college via the e-self-evaluation process at course team level, with a feedback loop between course teams and their class representatives. The system is built upon the triannual student view reports, with development and enhancement actions cascaded throughout the process and informing the college level annual self-evaluation.

At SLC the Learning and Development Team continued to provide much needed support for students who were identified as having barriers to attainment. Despite the ongoing pandemic, support was provided such as Learning Assistants to participate in live Teams sessions to take notes, or a signer to support students virtually. The team also ran focused and open workshops to offer support for example to ESOL students on mainstream courses; support for CV writing, essay or report writing, referencing and writing personal statements for UCAS applications. There are also open workshops where students can bring one-off or repeat challenges and receive support. SLC has discrete programmes at SCQF levels 2 and 3 for students with mild to complex needs.

At NCL, to strengthen students' skills for employment or further study, core skills of communication, numeracy and ICT are built into the delivery of most FE programmes, either as self-standing units or as developed work within other units. Meta skills were built into three awards for senior phase pupils in Automotive, Construction and Hospitality subjects, as a forerunner for the new Level 4 and 5 Foundation Apprenticeships, now being offered in NCL in Automotive and Construction.

Student retention in NCL improved to 82.9% in 2019-20, which was up by 1.7% on the previous year. Both retention and attainment were on track to improve in all areas prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, however despite the issues related to lockdown and suspension of work placements, student successful completion rates for HEFT improved by 4.4% and HEPT improved by 3.6%.

Despite it being such a challenging year attainment rates remain consistently high at SLC with 2019-20 overall achievement standing at 78.1%, which includes outcomes for our deferred students. In addition, overall college retention has increased by 3% to 87.8%.

Both colleges delivered in-house staff development sessions on e-technology and digital methods of delivery. This was increased in March 2020, when lockdown occurred, to build the skills of the academic staff in delivering effective blended learning. This has been a steep learning curve but has had positive benefits that will continue to be evident in future planning and delivery.

SLC recognised the exceptional sharing of e-learning and teaching approaches across and between faculties as the college stopped face to face teaching in March through to July. Staff and students adjusted well to this new way of approaching learning and delivering teaching. Lecturers across the college developed innovative and engaging approaches to keep students connected and to facilitate them attaining their qualification.

The SLC Quality team at the college responded quickly and effectively to develop a new quality assurance and holistic assessment model to ensure that the integrity of the qualifications was maintained and that awarding body guidelines were met. They also supported staff by setting out the following:

- Setting out mandatory e-learning training at the start of this session delivered by the Open University.
- The following staff development was offered including; blended learning, questioning techniques, making learning more accessible, managing changes in a virtual environment, class notebook and teaching software register.

SLC also has a learning and teaching observation support model in place called Professional Discussion of Learning and Teaching (PDLT). Lessons delivered on digital platforms are being observed, discussed in terms of what worked well and “even better if”. The process is a three lensed approach and has equal input on reflections from the students, the observer and the lecturer.

Both colleges support staff to develop their skills, using various preparation and development courses, such as PDA Teaching in Scotland’s Colleges and Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE). This strengthens the skills of staff to deliver high quality learning and teaching. 87.5% of permanent academic staff at NCL currently have the full TQFE. 100% of permanent teaching staff at SLC have TQFE.

## Student mental health & wellbeing

Both Colleges are committed to supporting individuals who are experiencing mental health issues and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health. Student Mental Health Agreements (SMHAs) are being adopted at both colleges and Mental Health Steering Groups have been set up to implement and develop the agreements. The groups meet regularly and include academic and support staff, students and community pastoral support. The groups are reviewing the SMHAs in collaboration with the Student Association to support joint priorities and goals for improved mental health and wellbeing, in line with the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy 2017.

Student Services continue to provide immediate support to those students with mental health issues. They refer students to a wide range of specialised support agencies whilst continuing to offer ongoing emotional support. Students can also access a wide range of internal support including community pastoral support, counselling services and mindfulness classes.

This year the SLC "Student Mental Health Agreement" is focused on the challenges of blended learning and how the College and Student Association can support students who are studying remotely, may be struggling with the emotional impact of COVID or facing financial challenges. SLC has invested in staff development to increase the number of staff trained as Mental Health First Aiders. This has increased the level of support available to staff and students. A series of Mental Health Covid Resilience workshops have been delivered to both staff and students.

The Student Association at South Lanarkshire College works with Student Services in a joint initiative that delivers suicide awareness training to all male students studying construction. There is a mental health information point in the Library and Advice Centre, where a wide range of information on mental health is available. A number of digital campaigns have been delivered to support positive mental health and highlight referral pathways including support on positive thinking, mental and physical health, community support, GBV prevention support.

A series of Mental Health Covid Resilience workshops have been delivered to both staff and students. There are staff trained in both Mental Health First Aid and ASIST (suicide intervention and prevention). A list of ASIST trained staff and how to contact them is on display in the Library and Advice Centre and through the College portal telephone directory. The College also delivers a wide range of events and activities to support mental health and raise awareness. These events are embedded into the College calendar on annual basis and include: Health & Wellbeing Week, Mental Health Awareness and Equality & Choices. Many of the campaigns tie-in with national agendas ensuring maximum impact. In addition, at SLC, there were a range of measures aimed at supporting staff through the pandemic, which included staff well-being packages including exercise and mindfulness as well as signposting to support agencies such as employee assistance or Togetherall, a mental health service.

As part of National Mental Health Week, NCL and its Students' Association worked together to create a social media campaign to increase awareness of the mental health and wellbeing services available in Lanarkshire. The campaign promoted NCL's partnerships with organisations such as Togetherall, Chris' House and Talking Rooms, and other local services such as Andy's Man Club as well as in-house services. Following on from this, the NCLSA has established a regular online coffee morning called 'Morning Minds' to allow students to have an online chat with the Students' Association on topics that will vary with each session. In addition, this approach has given the NCLSA a better understanding of what support our students need.

NCL signed 'The Pledge' in January 2018, in conjunction with Stigma Free Lanarkshire, to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination whilst positively promoting equality and inclusion for all staff and students. The steering group established to promote good mental health and wellbeing has representation from the faculties, support areas and Students' Association. The group created an action plan to support improved mental health and includes an ongoing training schedule for Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and ASIST Training across faculty and support areas with dedicated Mental Health Champions. Feedback from staff trained in MHFA indicates more effective signposting for students and increased confidence when dealing with student mental health issues as first responders.

In addition, NCL has several external partners who deliver appropriate training and information sessions to staff and students across the academic year. The NUS 'Think Positive' project was piloted across specific faculty areas to support increased disclosure of mental health issues/concerns.

As part of induction, all students viewed the See Me 'It's Okay' campaign. The 'MyNCL' student app contains a tile specific for mental health which includes effective signposting to internal and external support such as Student Adviser/Key Support teams, counselling services, Lanarkshire Links and See Me. Our aim is to establish a peer-to-peer support group, which will be supported by guest speakers from external organisations.

# Learning with impact

Students are equipped and ready to take up appropriate employment in the future.

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Both colleges work with SDS, employers and local authorities to understand the needs of business and industry, to ensure there is a pipeline of appropriately skilled students going out into the labour market.

NCL is the joint Chair of the Lanarkshire Chamber of Commerce and hosts meetings of employers monthly in the Lanarkshire Business Hub. NCL's work with employers over 2019-20 was recognised in the College Development Network Awards for 'Connecting with Lanarkshire to Develop the Workforce of Tomorrow'. This highlights our commitment to meeting the needs of the local business community and encouraging economic growth throughout Lanarkshire. This commitment supports students in gaining employment after college. SLC are a major partner in Smart Sustainable East Kilbride, supporting key employment opportunities in the region.



In 2018-19 (the latest information available), 94.3% of college qualifiers in NCL and 86.4% in SLC confirmed their destinations in follow-up surveys. Of those who confirmed, 94% from NCL and 93.7% from SLC were in positive destinations.

The percentage of college leavers gaining advanced standing from HNC or HND programmes has steadily increased year-on-year. For those going on to Higher Education, University of the West of Scotland (UWS) and Glasgow Caledonian University provide the most progression routes for students. Work continues to improve the pathways for our students. At SLC a pathway example is that childcare students across the region receive a guaranteed interview at the UWS. In both colleges staff work in partnership with UWS to support the interview process.

To build on the skills being developed in college courses, NCL provided substantial work placements on 32.4% of its courses in 2019-20 – up from 27.7% in 2018-19. College programmes build in employability skills, including industrial visits and speakers. NCL has used the Erasmus+ programme to increase work placement opportunities across a wide range of programmes. Unfortunately, a large number could not undertake their planned Erasmus+ international placement, due to Covid-19 disruptions.

At SLC 32.3% of our full-time provision includes work placements, and all courses focus on the necessary employability and meta skills required for students to progress onto their chosen destinations. SLC works with a vast number of employers across a wide range of sectors who provide guaranteed interviews for our students before the end of their courses.

NCL was recognised recently at the annual DFN Project SEARCH awards, for the work done to develop 'Project SEARCH', in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire. The project has delivered sustained success over several years in helping learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) earn rewarding long-term employment. More than 60% of the graduates from the project's first cohort are still in long-term employment 10 years later.

Both colleges work closely with NHS Lanarkshire in securing vital placements for Healthcare Practice students across the region.

Significant charitable funding has been secured by NCL to ensure that student entrepreneurial activity can be maintained in 2020/21. Our previously award winning programme "Market Day" has had to be reviewed, as no on-campus 'stalls' are possible due to Covid-19 restrictions. This has led to the creation of the enterprise hub.

# Student participation and engagement in their educational experience.

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Both colleges are committed to meaningful student participation, consultation and engagement in quality enhancement processes which help improve educational experience.

In March 2020 the NCL Students' Association was restructured to reflect the need to address the identified needs of students, key themes emerging from the pandemic response, and need for a strong community base. The new structure consists of three full-time Student Presidents, with each officer based at one of the three main campuses to ensure that the Students' Association is visible, accessible and an active part of students' lives across the college. As well as campus responsibilities, each President has a theme: Learning and Teaching, Health and Wellbeing, and Community and Sustainability. These three officers have worked tirelessly since their election to ensure that the new structure is focused on the provision of a strong feedback mechanism between the Students' Association, student voice and quality processes, and to embed partnership working at all levels. This includes supporting the Student Satisfaction Survey and working with NUS Scotland and SPARQS on improving democracy and representation and including students as partners in course and assessment design.

In September 2020, SLC's Student Association conducted a review of student questions to make them further relevant to COVID. The in-course questionnaires and course team's report on student views were mapped against the suggested questions, and updates agreed for delivery in 2020-21. All updates were language graded and approved by the SLC's Student Voice Working Group to promote continued inclusion.

SLC's Student Association continue to create innovative ways to engage digitally with students during the blended learning approach and have introduced weekly email communications and fortnightly forum sessions for students. Themes include COVID updates and health and safety, support for carers, health and wellbeing, IT, finance and employability skills. They successfully delivered a digital Freshers' 20 in August and a Refreshers' 21 event in January. They reach out effectively on social media platforms and continue to boost morale and motivation across the student and staff community. A number of digital chit-chat lunch sessions have been delivered to vulnerable students including care experienced learners and carers.

In December 2020, Education Scotland and SPARQS published 'A Toolkit for Effective Learner Engagement' with the aim of supporting effective student engagement during the recovery year. NCL were among the first adopters of the tools provided: adapting the semester one 'Be Heard' student consultation event to focus on the 'Learning, teaching and assessment' theme of the toolkit. A subsequent semester two event will focus on Student Experience and Services to Support Learning. A report and action plan will follow the completion of these consultative exercises, with actions owned by faculty leadership.

NCL offers a range of opportunities for students to engage in extra-curricular activities, which are promoted on the MyNCL platform. This online app hosts the student magazine, information on opportunities to engage in projects and campaigns, and regular consultative surveys on the student experience. Extra-curricular activities are supported by a range of public, private and third sector stakeholders such as North Lanarkshire Council, Ravenscraig PLC, Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, Prince's Trust, The Simon Community, Student Sport Scotland, Think Positive and Nil-By-Mouth.

The 'Be Engaged' programme, introduced in 2017, was impacted by the move to remote learning, and during recent months work has been ongoing to review and adapt the programme to a blended model which can be supported through MyNCL. The programme will be re-launched in August 2021, offering students an opportunity to engage in a renewed range of thematic activities which are recognised and rewarded. Key themes include sustainability, enterprise, volunteering and sports. One of the important 'Be Engaged' themes is Enterprise, and recent successes include student engagement in a joint project with North Lanarkshire Council to deliver the 'Step Up to Start Up' competition. The project involved students creating a business case and competing for the rent and rate-free use of brand-new business incubator units for 12 months, with Business Gateway mentor support and start-up grants. The project runs until 2024, with two business opportunities offered to NCL students annually.

Students from both colleges also benefit from masterclasses from leading professionals and industry experts. These serve to enhance the educational experience through raising awareness of current trends or issues faced by industry and provide direction towards building successful career pathways. Due to Covid-19, these classes are now virtual. This has broadened the scope and ambition of the events, as geography and participant numbers are no longer a barrier.

# Equalities and inclusion

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The Lanarkshire colleges address all the general and specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The colleges have worked together to develop Equality Outcomes over an extensive period and will continue to review outcomes and progress for the next reporting cycle in April 2021.

A review and refresh will be undertaken of NCL's Equality Diversity and Inclusion group this session, to ensure it is representative of the College and includes people who have the responsibility and authority to effect change. This will include representatives from the Students' Association, Learner Engagement Team, and Student Advisers. This group will influence the EDI training programme, relevant policies, and our equality impact assessment process.

For individuals from our local community with a range of additional support needs, NCL strives to provide programmes that enrich their educational experience with a variety of life-skills classes, core skills consolidation and opportunities to prepare them for life, learning and work.

The curriculum must be diverse to meet the needs and aspirations of all. Many of our students are amongst the most vulnerable in society and, as such, we have a duty of care to provide education for them within a college setting, with detailed planning in place to ensure an appropriate delivery. Planning began in May 2020 when a scenario planning document was produced for consultation. This remains an evolving process as more information is obtained in relation to the Covid-19 virus, safe-working practices, and public health guidance.

Ongoing college partnerships remain key to enabling people with additional support needs to participate in education and build appropriate employment skills. We work with a wide range of organisations, including Enable, One Parent Families Scotland, National Autistic Society, NHS Lanarkshire, SERCO, ISS, and North and South Lanarkshire councils.

Recognising that the impact of Covid may be more significant within some groups (such as women, people with a disability, people from minority ethnic groups, lone parents and young people), NCL will continue to review the curriculum offering and services to mitigate this impact as far as possible. Acknowledging that mental health and wellbeing of young people has been negatively impacted because of the Covid-19 pandemic, NCL has constantly reviewed and increased the support services to ensure no student has to wait to access them.

NCL publishes annual updates to its Corporate Parenting Action Plan for care-experienced students. Significant progress is being made in this area, and the plan will be reviewed and updated in 2021. An action plan for Student Carers is currently being consulted on.

Following a period of review and consultation with internal and external stakeholders, SLC published an updated Corporate Parenting Plan 2020-23 in December 20. This included a review process undertaken by SLC's Student Association, ensuring the student voice helped shape content and that future activity meets the needs of our care experienced students.

SLC was awarded the Stand Alone Pledge Award in 2020 on the final day of Estranged Students Solidarity Week which took place 23-27 November 2020. This year, the award recognised the overall institutional support for estranged students during COVID and personal commitment of individual staff members and teams. Staff across the College and the Student Association work closely with estranged students to understand the barriers and ensure support is in place throughout the student journey and beyond.

SLC's Student Association received the LGBT Silver Charter Mark Award in November 20. This follows a significant amount of activity that takes place across the College and wider community to support LGBTQ+ Equality. This award demonstrates the positive work taken to ensure SLC's learning environment is inclusive for everyone, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. The College works closely with LGBT Youth Scotland and other support agencies to promote inclusiveness, equality and diversity. The active LGBTQ+ Champion Group meets regularly to progress actions and annual LGBT celebrations are embedded into the annual calendar of events. This Group along with the Equality Group have both staff and student membership and seek to promote and embed these core values into all aspects of college life.

Recognising the ongoing impact of COVID across the College community there has been a continued focus to support those who may be experiencing GBV during the ongoing lockdown restrictions. We have delivered digital campaigns to promote and highlight referral pathways including offering an accessible, confidential contact route for those impacted. This also included delivering the Equally Safe First Responder Training to staff and the Student Association.

SLC's "Access and Inclusion Strategy" has equity for all our learners at its core, and the British Sign Language Plan is in line with the Scottish Government's BSL National Plan. SLC has made adaptations to the campus for learners who are hearing impaired with hearing loops, as well as those who are wheelchair users, with automatic door opening pads placed on both sides of corridor doors. In addition toilets have been adapted across the campus.

SLC continues to be proud to have been reaccredited as Investors in People Platinum in August 2019, and is the only college in the UK to be awarded this twice in succession. This award recognises our staff for their skills, passion, enthusiasm, focus on successful students and clear grasp of what makes the College outstanding.

# High quality research and innovation

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Both Lanarkshire colleges strive to provide innovative, dynamic and fulfilling environments with the intention of promoting direct involvement, empowerment and pride where success and hard work is recognised and celebrated. The two colleges have a strong and demonstrable culture of innovation, with current focus and prioritisation on supporting economic recovery. This helps to future-proof learning and extends our reach into the wider communities, resulting in students and employers in Lanarkshire having the best possible access to innovative and complementary skills-based curriculum options across the two colleges.

South Lanarkshire College used ESP funding to deliver airtightness-testing training, smart metering as well as ground source and air source approaches which help drive up standards in the thermal characteristics of new buildings. It is also helping deliver the Green Energy Fund initiatives through the Scottish Government. The College also hosts Topic Support Networks in Construction and Energy and provides a meeting space for Smaller Institution meetings for the EAUC, as appropriate. This enables participants to view the college's pioneering low-energy approaches and supports speakers at the events in disseminating best practice across colleges and universities.



NCL, in partnership with the University of Strathclyde, North Lanarkshire Council and the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland, successfully secured funding from the Scottish Government's Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund to create a centre of excellence for manufacturing and robotics at Motherwell Campus. Smart Hub Lanarkshire will support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to improve their manufacturing capacity. The centre will include a training facility with six-axis robotic arms with adaptive grippers, controllers and polyscope software, and facilities for manufacturing companies to meet, learn, access business support and academic or partner agency expertise. The University of Strathclyde will provide business engagement resource one day per week at the Hub. The project will run until 31 December 2022.

In 2020, NCL became one of only two colleges in Scotland to be selected to work with the WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence. This is organised in partnership with education and skills charity NCFE, and has been established to mainstream world-class standards in skills development in the UK. It will contribute to a skills-led recovery, which is driven by international benchmarking and rightly values high quality apprenticeships and technical education to enable all young people to develop the employability skills that will provide them with a rewarding future. NCL has been named 'Best in the UK' at the WorldSkills UK trade skills competition in Birmingham in November 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2019, in addition to finishing in the top three places in 2015, 2017 and 2018.

The Heavy Vehicle/PCV training facility at NCL has created opportunities to meet the needs of industry and foster a new generation of heavy vehicle technicians in Scotland. The state-of-the-art facility, which is unique within Scottish further education, delivers a training opportunity for students as well as individuals employed within the road transport industry. Within the centre there is a dedicated computer lab, classroom and bespoke training workshop, fully equipped with the latest vehicles and diagnostic aids.

Both Colleges support the continuing development and drive towards nurturing innovative students and staff, and engaging in new stakeholder partnerships to support innovation in our economy. We continue to support the work directed by the College Innovation Working Group (CIWG) Action Plan staff.

Innovation and enterprise are deeply embedded within our skills-based approach to learning. Learning in industry and career-relevant realistic environments are central to this philosophy; nurturing confidence, curiosity and enterprise through activities as part of the wider college experience will be built upon and further explored. In partnership with Young Enterprise Scotland, Bridge to Business, Business Gateway and North Lanarkshire Council, NCL offers all students the opportunity to engage in the Step Up to Start-Up programme. This programme offers business start-up advice, support and guidance through mentorship with experienced Business Advisers, culminating in a competition offering rate and rent free use of business incubator units for 12 months along with a start-up grant.

South Lanarkshire College constructed the UK's first BREEAM (2014) Outstanding Building. It will continue to use it to demonstrate to public sector bodies, construction companies, planners, architects, universities, students and other colleges the importance of reducing the carbon footprint of both industrial and domestic buildings, which continue to be a major source of carbon emissions across Scotland and the UK. The approach has won multiple awards for innovation and achievement. SLC has reduced its carbon footprint year by 55% since 2009. The college also has 400 solar panels spread over its three buildings and uses ground source heat pumps reducing dependence on carbon-based fuel. All the buildings on South Lanarkshire College's campus now have micro-renewables fitted and these are used to demonstrate how to reduce dependence on fossil fuels through retro-fitting suitable low-carbon technologies. This is an area of growing interest in the construction industry.

# Meeting future skills needs, including upskilling and reskilling

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The Covid-19 pandemic has caused economic disruption at a regional, national and international level. Both NCL and SLC recognise the immediate and urgent need for an education-led recovery. This should address the needs of the Lanarkshire region and focus on future skills needs including upskilling and reskilling within a changed landscape, using labour market information to align provision, and providing pathways to employment for a pipeline of appropriately skilled people.

Skills Development Scotland's medium term forecast for 2020 –2023 predicts that Lanarkshire will hold 10% of all Scotland's job openings in that period. The greatest requirement (in terms of both expansion and replacement demand) will be for people with higher level qualifications (SCQF 7-10), which will be needed for 43% of roles, followed by intermediate qualifications (SCQF level 5 & 6), which will be required for 37% of roles.

Regional qualification levels do not currently align with these forecast opportunities, so there is a need to offer a curriculum which supports the demands of industry. Within Lanarkshire, 11% of those aged 16–64 currently hold no recognised qualifications, slightly higher than the Scottish national average of 10%. In addition, the region has fewer residents with advanced qualifications and HE qualifications (SCQF level 7 and above), as well as higher levels of elementary qualifications (SCQF level 1–4) than the Scottish national average.

Both colleges have traditionally enjoyed positive relationships with local communities and businesses, and each is well regarded by employers. The global pandemic had a significant impact on the nature of employer engagement, and physical presence has been replaced by strong virtual connections. NCL Business Hub has hosted virtual meetings since June 2020, and this platform has proven invaluable in consulting with employers on their future skills requirements.

Demand for skills has shifted due to the impact of the pandemic, and both colleges continue to invest in developing vocational areas where there is identified demand. Data from SDS job postings highlights that employers within the region are seeking softer skills as well as technical knowledge; requirement for customer service and teamwork/collaboration ability are prominent, as well as job-specific skills. In addition, Covid-19 and the resulting rise of homeworking has highlighted the importance of digital skills, particularly for those in rural areas for whom opportunity may correspond with connectivity.

SLC works in partnership with Smart Sustainable East Kilbride, and has established external wall insulation provision through the creation of internal wall skills academies, which is a growing skills gap in the region.

Sustainability is another key theme of mid-term forecasts (2020-2023), which suggest that there will be some jobs growth and opportunities created as a result of replacement demand.

Over the longer term (2023-2030) the Lanarkshire labour market is expected to continue to grow and create opportunities. The occupations forecast to have the greatest growth due to new job creation are Caring Personal Service, Health Professionals and Culture, Media and Sports Occupations.

There is a strong focus on the delivery of Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships, the Future Workforce Development Fund, and other work-focused programmes.

# Responding to the climate emergency

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The colleges both contributed actively to the voluntary carbon reporting arrangements in November 2015, and have met ongoing mandatory requirements. Both are monitoring their emissions against a historical baseline to track progress towards their 2020 target for carbon reduction.

Data shows that there has been a general reduction in the estimated tonnes of carbon produced, partly due to positive actions the colleges are taking combined with the significant national changes in the standard emissions factors used to calculate emissions from the raw data. Both colleges reported a significant reduction in carbon emissions and are on track to meet their 2020 target. Both are members of the EAUC, and will collaborate with officers over the review and updating of their carbon management plans and the associated annual public sector reporting requirements on energy use and carbon emissions. Both colleges work closely with the Energy Skills partnership (ESP), using cross-sectoral funding to invest in pioneering curriculum development.

NCL's Estates Strategy (2018-2023) commits the college to develop sustainable management practices and outcomes. Current activities are driven by the following objectives:

- Provide a fit for purpose, environmentally sustainable built environment while embedding environmental and sustainable practices in all estates operations.
- Support and contribute to the Scottish Government's Greener Scotland strategic objectives.
- Ensure the College achieves value for money and secures improvements to economic, social and environmental wellbeing.
- Facilitate the involvement of stakeholders including staff, learners, SMEs, third sector bodies to promote innovation and commitment.

In 2019, the Scottish Government established the Just Transition Commission to provide Scottish Ministers with practical, realistic, and affordable recommendations for action that will:

- maximise the economic and social opportunities that the move to a net-zero economy by 2045 offers
- build on Scotland's existing strengths and assets
- understand and mitigate risks that could arise in relation to regional cohesion, equalities, poverty (including fuel poverty), and a sustainable and inclusive labour market

NCL is committed to the recommendations of this commission. In 2019/20, work commenced to:

- increase recycling points across campus sites
- contribute to a green economy by striving for zero waste
- support the circular economy by reducing consumption, reusing products and recycling more waste across the region.

In addition, sustainability for social impact is at the heart of NCL Students' Association activities, with a focus on personal care, care and repair of clothing, and provision of meta skills. A range of sustainability themed resources, advice, guidance and support will be launched in April 2021, with full roll-out in August 2021. Aligned with the personal and community-based activities in this area is ongoing activity to raise awareness of social justice, such as marking World Poverty Day and introducing staff and students to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which are now being embedded in curricular areas.

The Just Transition Commission Young Scot report (2020) highlighted the concerns of young people that educational provision does not cover environmental issues. In addition, they shared their wish for there to be more alliances between institutions, companies and researchers to upskill students to deal with the challenges. NCL is committed to addressing these concerns, through the development of materials which have contributed to national campaigns. This includes those that seek to improve awareness of global poverty.



NCL also participates in the North Lanarkshire Partnership (NLP) “ACT Now” Plan – Action on Climate Together, working with key stakeholders on a range of activities such as:

- the provision of training
- review of NCL and partner Covid-19 recovery plans
- identification and sharing of good practice
- promotion of NLC campaigns
- contributing to the development of the proposed “Lanarkshire Community Concordat”
- a review of NL resilience in respect to future climate events

In support of these activities, and as part of the groundwork for developing our Strategy 2025, NCL will establish a sustainability working group and intends to privilege sustainability as a core element, ensuring investment decisions are carefully considered through a sustainability lens.

Working in partnership with Cycling Scotland, NCL will be installing additional bike shelters and stands once current restrictions are lifted. Utilising Campus Internship Fund, Dr Bike sessions will be delivered remotely for NCL students. NCL is working with staff and stakeholders to develop a structured approach to our future activities, building in the United Nations Sustainable Goals, particularly focusing on actions that support (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Wellbeing, (4) Quality Education and (5) Gender Equality. Initiatives such as ‘Breakfast on Us’, reducing carbon emissions and addressing gender imbalances within our curriculum offering, demonstrate our commitment to improving sustainability and future actions will be driven by these goals for our community.

SLC has an established sustainability group, which meets four times a year and has representation from across the College; is a member of the Alliance for the Sustainability Leadership in Education (EAUC); and attends the EAUC Small Institutions Meetings.

SLC's sustainability group co-ordinates, promotes, monitors and reports on sustainability initiatives and activities within the College. These include, sustainability competitions, the development of HR systems, materials donated from local business and the promotion of the use of the VLE. The five key priorities that the group works towards, and which are included in the Climate Change Report, are:

- Reduce the amount of energy used
- Increase the amount of waste recycled
- Promote sustainable behaviours to staff and students
- Encourage more environmentally friendly travel
- Increase the use of VLE

SLC's next steps are to further review and update its Climate Change Disruption Plan, and to further develop the embedding of sustainability in the curriculum.

# Contribution to economic recovery and social renewal

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Both colleges are community anchors, supporting inclusive economic growth, delivering professional, technical and vocational skills by providing learning opportunities for all. We work with our partners to ensure our students reach their full potential.

Lanarkshire's colleges are committed to supporting the Scottish Government's (SG's) ambitions to grow, enhance and widen the Scottish Apprenticeship family. We are determined to further enhance the quality and flexibility of the provision we offer to ensure that people have the correct skills to mould and negotiate the future labour market to help support and sustain economic growth in Scotland.

The colleges recognise their key role in delivering the introduction and scaling of Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) for senior phase pupils. We have many Modern Apprenticeship (MA) candidates completing each year and work closely with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust (SECTT), Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and Remit who provide structured apprenticeship programmes in a range of industry sectors.

The colleges continue to be adaptable and flexible to meet industry needs for apprenticeship training and are proactively engaging with university partners to develop future pathways to Graduate Level Apprenticeships (GLAs). At present only one university (University of the West of Scotland) is directly engaging with NCL to deliver part of the vocationally relevant qualification in computing, which forms part of the GLA. Funding for GLAs cannot be accessed directly by colleges, and as such any college participation in delivery of GLAs is as part of a subcontracted delivery.

Improving students' employability prospects is achieved through:

- active engagement with employers through apprenticeship programmes
- the SDS Employability Fund
- part-time employer sponsored programmes
- work placements in full-time programmes
- the development of bespoke courses to meet employers' needs

When both colleges' data is aggregated, the Lanarkshire Region is above average for students going directly into employment.

Employer engagement is crucial in developing a highly skilled productive workforce, as well as developing qualifications, and providing certification for industry employees in recognition of their skills, and to facilitate mobility in the employment market. For example, SLC has worked in partnership with industry to develop a range of SVQ2 qualifications for specialised construction crafts.

We work closely with our partners from Skills Development Scotland, JobCentre Plus, local authorities and industry to maximise our ability to have productive and effective engagements. We proactively encourage local businesses to work with us and our partners to help them recognise that their knowledge and experience can direct and shape our curriculum delivery and help create the high quality, highly motivated employees they need for future success.

All Higher National, Vocational Qualification and Apprenticeship programmes are designed in conjunction with employers. Employers are also consulted on industry-specific certification which, integrated within courses, helps students become more employable. Examples include 'Project SEARCH', an internship programme created in partnership with local employers, helping young people with learning difficulties develop employability skills. This was highlighted by Education Scotland as excellent practice in partnership working. One of NCL's most recent employer engagements in the design of curriculum involved Babcock International at their Rosyth facility. This involved the design of a CAD curriculum directly aligned to the specific industry needs.

We report on work placement activity as part of the national measure. NCL and SLC have rates of progression to employment of 20.9% and 23.5% respectively, which are above the national average of 20%.

# Engagement with stakeholders

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Successful stakeholder engagement can help translate need into short and long-term goals and inform effective strategies. To this end, both colleges engage with a range of stakeholders and partners at a local, regional, national and international level. These include the Federation of Small Businesses, Business Gateway, Skills Development Scotland, Lanarkshire Chamber of Commerce and Colleges Scotland.

Further to the Scottish Government Review, colleges have entered into extensive discussion with HE partners to find new ways of working together to support coherent, sustainable provision, which ensures financial viability and creates a pipeline of technically skilled people able to support economic recovery.

Extensive engagement exists between both colleges and the Lanarkshire Local Authorities in terms of planning, school-college partnerships, apprenticeship provision, employability programmes and welfare support. This collaborative approach is essential to ensure a cohesive approach to strategic planning which can support individuals across the region to reach their potential.

Within NCL, as part of a safe return to on-campus working, weekly meetings between NCL's Executive Board and Trade Union colleagues were established. This positive working relationship ensured key issues such as Health and Safety, adoption of new working practices and co-creating timetabling guidance for learning and teaching were actioned timeously for the benefit of students, staff and external stakeholders.

Engaging with industry is also essential to inform curriculum development, ensure real-world relevance, and understand the needs of business in order to support economic recovery. NCL is currently engaging with 63 levy-paying employers, through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF), which represents 15 different business sectors including healthcare, manufacturing and technology. Each employer has a dedicated NCL contact who understands their current and future development needs, which enables us to shape our provision accordingly.

We also listen to the changing needs of employers through our Lanarkshire Business Hub – a business engagement forum with more than 500 members (79% of whom are from SMEs) and 40-60 businesses/partners. The Hub runs monthly information and networking events, which have moved online since the pandemic. We have hosted focussed business listening events to identify immediate and future skills needs, with representation from organisations including NHS Lanarkshire, Liberty Steel, XPO Logistics and Inver House Distillers. This consultation was extended by circulating an economic recovery survey to our wider employer database, with a focus again on identifying business skills needs.

SLC works with a range of levy employers and SMEs through the FWDF and works across a range of sectors including, business, construction, housing, food and drink, manufacturing and technology and engineering. SLC has undertaken three projects with more than 50 employers, as well as BRE and Glasgow Caledonian University, focusing on the adoption of more sustainable approaches in the construction and operation of domestic and commercial buildings in Scotland.

SLC has started working with CITB and SDS to pilot the new Pathway to Construction Apprenticeship programme. 56 students will enrol in Jan 2021 and participate in a work placement. If the student gains an apprenticeship through this, their study on the pathway programme will shorten the duration of their apprenticeship.

# Specific needs employers/ industry identified, both short-term and longer-term

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Through previously mentioned approaches, we have identified short-term, specific business needs which include uncertainty around complying with health and safety requirements in a new Covid world, staff mental health and digital abilities to support home working. NCL immediately responded by offering access to free remote information sessions/workshops in these key areas. Our follow-on digital skills provision was also adapted to ensure it suited a range of abilities and was designed to build confidence in home working through use of a variety of IT tools including Office 365, Microsoft Teams, Zoom and other communications platforms. Remote delivery is now available offering greater flexibility, including shorter bite-size sessions to aid learning in a home environment. Where accredited provision such as IOSH Health and Safety accreditation was requested, but awarding bodies were not yet set up to support online assessment, NCL dedicated its Hamilton Campus to support the safe face-to-face delivery and assessment of training to businesses. More than 60 businesses attended a recent event on cyber security. Both employers and their staff welcomed this move, and this facility will continue to be used for this purpose when government guidelines allow.

NCL is currently rethinking how it engages with business especially in relation to the economic recovery. The NCL Task Group is working on refreshing its offering to communities and re-establishing strong contacts with local organisations such as the local authorities.

Longer-term, the feedback NCL has received from businesses is around the real need for management and leadership teams to adapt to and lead change, develop greater resilience and have the skillset to effectively manage teams remotely. The content of our provision has been adapted to focus on these areas and is delivered remotely, again at times and durations most convenient for the business and their staff. In addition, to support the greater business need for IT security and effective future planning, accredited and non-accredited provision has been developed in cyber security and data analytics as a result of employer feedback.

Both colleges are members of the Lanarkshire Economic Forum, a public private partnership established to support a regional response to social and economic recovery, responding to industry need and sectoral opportunity. SLC has employed a graduate researcher to consider the opportunities and gaps in its current industry engagement and curricular provision.



# Groups and issues that the colleges are particularly responding to

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With the national focus on 16 - 24 years and 25+, through our Work Based Learning Directorate, we work with national and local partners to support these strategies. Through the National Transition Training Fund (NTTF) managed by Skills Development Scotland, NCL is supporting those who were made unemployed after March 2020 and are aged over 25. These learners have been engaged in online learning for Civil Service Sector Based Work Academy (SBWA).

Through the Youth Guarantee, NCL is working in partnership with the Local Authorities and the local LEP partners to support young people who are:

- unemployed (excluding those in full time education)
- about to leave school without a positive destination
- school leavers without a positive destination
- in low paid employment
- at risk of redundancy
- at risk of losing an apprenticeship
- leaving training, volunteering, college or university without a positive destination
- low-skilled without qualifications at SCQF 5 or above or underemployed

There are 11 programmes supporting all of these learners with NCL having a specific focus on Business Start-Up Essentials.

Through the Skills Development Scotland Employability Fund contract, NCL is supporting 189 learners at various points on the Employability Pipeline. Stage 2 covers those who are furthest from the job market, Stage 3 supports those nearer to the job market with vocational and personalised interventions, and stage 4 is for those who are job ready but require reskilling.

NCL continues to offer Prince's Trust Team programmes remotely from within the Motherwell, Cumbernauld and Coatbridge campuses. These programmes target unemployed 16–25-year-olds, many of whom have a range of personal, social, academic and economic challenges.

SLC is working in partnership with local authorities, PACE partners and the Lanarkshire Employment Partnership to develop further programmes that actively support young people through the Youth Guarantee. It is also delivering a Pathway to Apprenticeship in Construction Crafts for 56 young people, after completion of this programme they can progress onto a modern apprenticeship.

These are aimed at those who are:

- unemployed (excluding those in full time education)
- about to leave school without a positive destination
- school leavers without a positive destination
- in low paid employment
- at risk of redundancy
- at risk of losing an apprenticeship
- leaving training, volunteering, college or university without a positive destination
- low-skilled without qualifications at SCQF 5 or above or underemployed

Close collaboration with Smart, Sustainable East Kilbride has emerged in the development of a number of employability initiatives for the development of our "green" curriculum.

Through the Skills Development Scotland Employability Fund contract, SLC is supporting 68 learners at various points on the Employability Pipeline. Stage 2 covers those who are furthest from the job market, Stage 3 supports those nearer to the job market with Vocational and personalised interventions. Recruitment and engagement on both programmes have remained buoyant. Participants have responded very positively to on-line support and outputs are positive.

SLC is engaging with unemployed residents in rural South Lanarkshire through the Rural Academy. A team of dedicated employability experts have supported an average of 100 participants every year since 2018. Working from premises in Lanark, the Rural Academy provides employability support and delivers accredited courses linked to job opportunities. A PDA Support Assistant is currently being delivered through DWP sector-based work academy.

# Work-based learning and practical aspects of course provision

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Modern Apprenticeship provision is shaped around the needs of the apprentice and employer as businesses continue to adapt to current demands and changing guidelines. Both NCL and SLC have many modern apprentices and we work closely with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust (SECTT), Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and Remit, who provide structured apprenticeship programmes in a range of industry sectors.

The SLC Training and Employment team have maintained on-going engagement with modern apprentices and employers through continuous pastoral support. Monitoring of furlough and redundancies has allowed for support to be extended to identifying appropriate support for individuals, including additional training opportunities relevant to their work environment and their career plans, and with the view, in some cases, to seeking new employment opportunities for those losing their job.

SLC has further developed its modern apprenticeship offer through working with a construction organisation to support 23 apprentices in a range of sectors and crafts, as well as establishing External and Internal Wall Insulation academies.

Both apprentices and their employers have access to our online portfolio tool, OneFile, to support portfolio building, engagement with their Work Based Assessor and to monitor progress. Given the differing needs and varying engagement levels of apprentices during these times, Work Based Assessors are also providing individualised and 1:1 support via video/voice calls, emails and text. That support has extended to finding other employment opportunities for some apprentices who have been made redundant, enabling them to continue with their apprenticeships. To support this type of activity, we have also partnered with Lanarkshire Housing Association who have been offering funding to sponsor apprentice wages as a means of assisting both the business and apprentice. To date, one of our apprentices has benefited from this partnership, with other possibilities in the pipeline.

During the summer, NCL consulted with local businesses to gain a greater understanding of the immediate and ongoing impact of Covid-19. We asked how the college could play a greater role in supporting them, for the benefit of their business, the individuals in their organisation and the local economy.

We undertook a further survey of businesses in November to understand:

- if the pandemic had an impact on their current skills gap
- the top three skills required to support their pain points
- the top three priorities to support business growth
- whether they required information on the funding available to them support upskilling and economic growth

This information continues to be the driver of our immediate and future plans.

Placements for full-time FE and HE courses have been delayed, however regular dialogue has been maintained with key stakeholders on when appropriate placements will recommence. Guidance related to specific industry requirements has been followed in relation to practical aspects of course provision, which has changed the delivery pattern of the curriculum.

# Quality of the student learning experience

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Measuring the quality of the student learning experience continues to play an important role for both colleges in shaping and adapting our provision. For example, as part of our delivery to businesses and their staff, we have an evaluation process in place to understand the learner distance travelled and the impact of the learning experience, both on the individual and on the business. Given the move to remote learning, this process has also moved online to ensure we can continue to collect, analyse and respond to this valuable data.

In response to Covid-19, the Prince's Trust Team programme was reviewed and developed into an innovative programme which aimed to keep the learners engaged. We recognised that the current inability to offer residential community projects and work placements would impact on the diversity and quality of the programme. In response, alternative units were developed and delivered including Personal Projects and Preparing for a Healthy Lifestyle. This involves learners purchasing and cooking a healthy meal online, a fun online learning experience which they can share with their fellow team members.

We are maintaining the quality of the student learning experience for Prince's Trust learners by delivering daily online sessions by the Team Leaders. These involve team delivery and follow up individually if any learners are experiencing any issues.

We recognised that Prince's Trust learners may have financial issues which result in them not eating lunch, therefore affecting their ability to learn. Where learners had previously been allocated college lunch vouchers, we are now transferring lunch money to them through BACS. This has also assisted in keeping learners engaged.



We are continually monitoring student engagement, attendance and timekeeping remotely and follow up individually on any issues. Student progress is monitored through a unit progression spreadsheet and course submissions are uploaded to Moodle.

Because we recognised that some learners did not have the resources or internet to learn from home, through a successful application to the 'Connecting Scotland' scheme we were able to issue them with an iPad and wi-fi box.

NCL's Learner Engagement Team, as part of the Be Heard programme, are currently using the Toolkit for Effective Learner Engagement, a resource co-created by SPARQS and Education Scotland to support student engagement in Scotland's colleges in this 'recovery year'.

SLC worked hard to continuously motivate and enthuse students to enable them attain their qualifications during the pandemic. Lanarkshire, like other regions, is affected by digital poverty and as such the college provided students with digital devices to ensure that they could continue to engage in learning. Mifi devices, with internet service contracts in place, were provided to students where requested, as were headsets. Laptops and appropriate equipment were also provided to all staff to enable online and on-campus working. This enabled the staffing teams to offer a hyflex mode of learning, with students being taught on campus and online simultaneously, or via blended or flipped methods. A combination of the use of webcams, Clevertouch interactive boards and MS Teams allowed classes to be taught with some students on-campus and some connected remotely. There was an increase of e-resources available through the Learning Resource Centre.

SLC's Student Voice activities seek to continually offer vehicles for students to share information regarding their learning experience. The annual Student Question Time event offers a platform for students to ask their questions to a College Leadership Team Panel. The 2021 event will also include members of SLC's Board of Management. Actions from Student Question Time are embedded in Quality Enhancement activities across SLC. Themes arising from SLC's first In-Course-Questionnaire of 2020-21 indicate that the majority of students are experiencing a positive learning environment underpinned by a clean and safe COVID environment. 96% of students report that they feel safe and secure in the college environment, despite the current challenges.

NCL's 'Be Heard' events are continuing online due to Covid-19 restrictions. They have been further developed within faculties to look at common experiences, reviewing with Faculty Management Teams, class representatives and Executive Board members, as well as course tutors.

As Strategy 2025 is developed, NCL will focus on strengthening the curriculum, enabling whole person education, whilst serving as an anchor for our community. Resources closest to our students will be prioritised, with the intention of raising aspirations and fulfilling the life potential of our students.

College Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data		Actual Delivery				Targeted Delivery		
		Region	NCL	SLC	Region	NCL	SLC	Region
		2018-19	2019-20		2020-21			
A	Credits Delivered (Core)	171,910	127,245	44,669	171,914	126,729	43,816	170,545
	Credits Delivered (ESF)	12,217	6,163	5,808	11,971	5,714	5,385	11,099
	Credits Delivered (Core + ESF)	184,127	133,408	50,477	183,885	132,443	49,201	181,644
B	Volume of Credits Delivered to 10% most deprived postcode areas	33,685	24,974	8,955	33,929			
	Proportion of Credits delivered to 10% most deprived postcode areas	18.3%	18.7%	17.7%	18.5%	18.7%	17.1%	18.3%
C	Volume of credits delivered to care-experienced learners	4,363	4,534	1,942	6,476			
	Proportion of credits delivered to care-experienced learners	2.4%	3.4%	3.8%	3.5%	2.1%	2.8%	2.4%
D	Number of senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	708	1,078	534	1,612	674	574	708
E1	Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time FE)	65.1%	61.7%	71.4%	64.4%	63.0%	69.0%	65.1%
	Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time FE)	3,624	2,148	956	3,104			

<b>College Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data</b>		<i>Actual Delivery</i>				<i>Targeted Delivery</i>		
		<b>Region</b>	<b>NCL</b>	<b>SLC</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>NCL</b>	<b>SLC</b>	<b>Region</b>
		<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>		<b>2020-21</b>			
	Total number of FTFE students	5,567	3,479	1,339	4,818			
E2	Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time FE)	80.2%	68.8%	78.4%	70.6%	79.2%	78.0%	80.2%
	Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time FE)	7,985	4,822	1,242	6,064			
	Total number of PTFE students	9,960	7,007	1,585	8,592			
E3	Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time HE)	69.2%	71.3%	77.9%	73.2%	66.9%	75.0%	69.2%
	Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time HE)	2,436	1,852	806	2,658			
	Total number of FTHE students	3,521	2,599	1,034	3,633			
E4	Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time HE)	77.6%	77.7%	85.6%	80.6%	74.6%	83.0%	77.6%
	Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time HE)	863	454	292	746			

<b>College Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data</b>		<i>Actual Delivery</i>				<i>Targeted Delivery</i>		
		<b>Region</b>	<b>NCL</b>	<b>SLC</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>NCL</b>	<b>SLC</b>	<b>Region</b>
		<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>		<b>2020-21</b>			
	Total number of PTHE students	1,112	584	341	925			
F	Number of students achieving an HNC/D qualification articulating to degree level courses	796	*	*	*			
	Number of students achieving an HNC/D qualification articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing	409	*	*	*			
	Proportion of students achieving an HNC/D qualification articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing	51.4%	*	*	*	48.5%	59.1%	51.2%
G	Total number of full-time FE college qualifiers (in confirmed destinations)	3,208	2,406	726	3,132			
	Number of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	3,021	2,259	686	2,945			
	Proportion of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	94.2%	93.9%	94.5%	94.0%	81.4%	93.1%	84.3%

<b>College Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data</b>		<i>Actual Delivery</i>				<i>Targeted Delivery</i>		
		<b>Region</b>	<b>NCL</b>	<b>SLC</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>NCL</b>	<b>SLC</b>	<b>Region</b>
		<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>		<b>2020-21</b>			
	Total number of full-time HE college qualifiers (in confirmed destinations)	2,161	1,746	491	2,237			
	Number of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	2,022	1,644	454	2,098			
	Proportion of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	93.6%	94.2%	92.5%	93.8%	79.5%	93.4%	83.0%
H	Percentage of students overall satisfied with their college experience (SSES survey)	88.4%	93.0%	91.0%	92.5%	85.6%	85.6%	85.6%

\* Data not published for academic year.