

Pennine Camphill Community

Independent specialist college

Interim visit report

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Interim visit

Context and focus of visit

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out 'interim visits' to further education and skills providers. Interim visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners in this period, including those with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

We intend to return to routine inspection in January 2021 but will keep the exact timing under review.

The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below and the findings are based on discussions with leaders, managers, staff and learners.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, we made this visit remotely to reduce pressure on the provider.

Information about the provider

Pennine Camphill Community is an independent specialist college that provides further education and training for learners aged between 16 and 25 who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college is located near Wakefield on a 54-acre site. It offers residential and day provision for up to 48 weeks a year. There are 51 learners on study programmes, of whom six attend as residential learners. On the college campus, there are community houses, practical craft workshops, a market garden, a farm and a riding school.

What actions are leaders taking to ensure that they provide an appropriate curriculum that responds to the reasonable needs of learners and stakeholders and adapts to changed circumstances?

Leaders and managers reported that learners did not respond well to working from home during the initial period of the COVID-19 restrictions. Teachers delivered online activities and posted paper-based work to learners, but learners did not readily associate being at home as a time to learn, so they were reluctant to complete the work. In response, teachers identified other practical activities that learners could complete at home to continue with their learning. Learners reported that they found this approach helpful in supporting them.

Leaders and managers explained how they have responded to the challenges in providing a curriculum that enables learners to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours during the period of COVID-19 restrictions. Their biggest challenge has been the decrease in the number of opportunities for learners to carry out external

work placements. They have responded to this by creating enterprises at the college and craft sales in the community. For example, a new catering business has responded to a business need on-site and provides work experience for learners.

Leaders and managers have also continued to work with other organisations to provide work experience for learners. For example, they worked with 'The Real Junk Food' project during the period of COVID-19 restrictions to plan future placements for learners. The project will offer work experience for learners in warehouses and in distributing food boxes.

Leaders and managers described the actions that they have taken to develop the curriculum. Teachers use vocational lessons as a vehicle for learners to achieve the skills and objectives outlined in their educational and healthcare (EHC) plans. They also use project activity in vocational sessions to develop learners' enterprise skills and their ability to work collaboratively, as they would need to in a workplace.

What steps are leaders, managers and staff taking to ensure that the approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of learners?

Initially, as learners returned to college, teachers focused on learners' understanding of the COVID-19 health and safety measures. Staff used techniques such as social stories and frequent recapping to ensure that learners knew what to do to stay healthy and safe in college.

Staff have now increased their focus on building learners' confidence and self-esteem as, for many, this declined during the initial period of COVID-19 restrictions. The return to routine and structure has been important in enabling learners to make progress in developing their knowledge and skills. Most learners are very pleased to be back at college with their friends and teachers.

Learners' progress during the initial period of COVID-19 restrictions was most successful when teachers supported learners to develop their practical skills at home. Teachers identified activities that learners could carry out at home and tried to use them to help learners to meet the targets in their EHC plans. For example, learners worked with their parents to make scrub bags for the National Health Service and teachers identified mathematics work that learners could complete as part of this activity. However, leaders and managers said that, for a few learners, these home-based activities did not enable them to work rapidly enough towards achieving their targets.

Leaders and managers reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the skills and confidence that learners need to prepare for employment. Teachers use careers lessons to provide activities that enable learners to rebuild their confidence in making job applications and participating in interviews.

Leaders and managers told us that the recent tightening of COVID-19 restrictions limits the taught curriculum for learners. For example, if learners need travel

training, teachers can help them to read bus timetables and plan journeys, but learners cannot make the journey. Learners are not able to benefit from the wider experiences that they would normally undertake in the community, such as visiting leisure centres.

How are leaders ensuring that learners are safe and well informed about potential risks, including from online sources?

Leaders and managers have implemented a number of measures to keep learners safe in response to risks identified as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have delivered training to staff and learners about online safety, mental health and how to minimise the risk of contracting the virus.

Teachers made weekly welfare calls when the college was closed to most learners and provided them and their parents or carers with contacts of external agencies. Leaders and managers completed a risk assessment of each learner, and enabled learners whom they considered to be at high risk to attend college during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

Learners said that they understand the COVID-19 health and safety arrangements. They were able to explain the measures in place to keep everyone safe, including social distancing, wearing masks and washing hands regularly. They know who to contact if they have a safeguarding concern.

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