

**LOVE OUR  
COLLEGES**



**Shaping  
communities**

Colleges and social action

**acc**  
ASSOCIATION  
OF COLLEGES

# Foreword

Colleges are the beating hearts of their communities, supporting people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to learn, train, and thrive. But they are about much more than what goes on in the classroom - they also do so much outside of it too.

From supporting foodbanks to empowering victims of modern slavery, this booklet is just a small snapshot of some of the things that staff and students in colleges

do every single day to make their communities better places to live and work in.

You cannot help but be impressed by the brilliant work that colleges do, so I would encourage you to visit yours and see for yourself just how they're transforming lives and communities.

**David Hughes**  
*Chief Executive, AoC*

**Colleges**  
educate and train  
**2.2 million**  
people

**685,000**

16 to 18-year-olds  
study in colleges

**1.4 million**

adults study or train  
in colleges

An additional

**76,000**

16 to 18-year-olds  
undertake an  
Apprenticeship  
through colleges

# Embedding social action into the culture of the college

## Dedicated annual weeks to doing community work

### EKC Group

Staff and students engage in community social action during the group's 'Community Weeks'. They work collaboratively with local stakeholders including councils, voluntary groups and residents to ensure that projects meet community needs.

The projects picked aim to solve problems faced by those in coastal communities living in areas of high deprivation, building a greater sense of connectedness between students and their hometowns. Recent examples include working to restore community buildings, pamper days for the elderly, and projects run in conjunction with a local primary school.

*It is a really important part of each student's experience, as it cements the skills of self-confidence and empathy whilst building a sense of personal responsibility to the local community*

Lauren Anning, Executive Director of Student Experience and Wellbeing for EKC Group



## Acts of Charity initiative

### Christ the King

Christ the King students take part in charity events and community work through the 'Acts of Charity' initiative. This year students donated goods and volunteered their time at a local foodbank and raised money for a social enterprise coffee shop that provide meals for the homeless.

positive contribution to their area they live and study in. At a time, where young people are often represented in a negative light in the media, contributing to their local community goes a long way to changing people's perceptions of teenagers and demonstrates the good that they can do.

Helping the local community helps Christ the King students to make a



## Giving something back day - getting staff involved

### Havant & South Downs College

Havant & South Downs College dedicates a day in June for staff to give something back to their community.

Staff have been involved in a range of activities such as sponsored cycles, walks, charity football games, working in charity shops and campaigning for better mental health. They also put together care packages for the charity Stop

Domestic Abuse, so that families have a welcome pack when they arrive to their 'safe house', and they have donated food and toiletries to a local foodbank via an adult student who volunteers there.

It takes hard work, commitment and a lot of organisation to run events and raise money for these worthy causes, however the rewards are remarkable.

## Preparing for life after college

### Portsmouth College

The pioneering E6 programme is an initiative made up of courses, training and experiences that focus on developing soft skills in preparation for life after college.

As part of this programme, the team engage with local schools to deliver workshops focusing on social and societal themes relevant to young people. Workshops have included mental health and wellbeing, managing finances, online professional image, teamwork and problem solving.

The objective of this project is to better equip young people for life beyond school and raising aspirations by focusing on skills needed for their futures. The

programmes were designed to coincide with the Portsmouth Education Partnership's vision that young people should be well prepared for adulthood and involvement within their communities.

*The college has been excellent. It was well planned, with a range of activities for the pupils to participate in to allow them to have an understanding of the work beyond school.*

**163,000**

16 to 18-year-old students in colleges are doing A Level courses

**668,000**

students in colleges are taking STEM subjects

**204,000**

students in colleges retake GCSE English and/or maths



## Addressing community needs

### Women-only swimming lessons

#### Colchester Institute

Colchester Institute's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) department and Colchester Citizens have helped tackle an important local issue; the need for women-only swimming sessions.

The college is a founding member of Colchester Citizens, an organisation made up of a diverse range of civil society organisations across Colchester.

The lack of women-only swimming, raised by the Bangladeshi Women's Society, was discouraging members of the community, many of whom had been prescribed swimming by their GP to take part in regular

exercise. Supporting women in the community to access swimming became a mission for members of staff. This took over a year of negotiation - but they did not give up.

Following their persistence, the first truly women-only swimming session, staffed by female lifeguards, took place on December 2018 at Colchester Leisure World. Many who did not swim before have now built up their confidence in the water and are learning to swim - whilst helping them to create friendships having a lasting impact on their lives and their communities.

## Supporting mothers with hearing difficulties

### Hull College Group

The Goodwin Doula and Breastfeeding Project supports both expectant and breastfeeding mothers. Within the service it became apparent that they were receiving very low referrals of mothers with hearing difficulties because existing volunteers have no sign language skills. The college worked collaboratively with Goodwin to create a bespoke sign language course to better equip staff to support mothers with hearing difficulties.

Following this training, Goodwin Doula and Breastfeeding Project can advertise their new service.

As more staff receive the training they hope to support even more mothers with hearing difficulties.

This project was supported through the college's Skills Support for Workforce Project which is a fully funded training programme part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and co-financed by ESFA. Aimed at employed people and volunteers to upskill them and make them more productive and effective in the workplace.

## Free courses to upskill adults

### Bath College

At Bath College, the Adult Community Learning programme provides a wide range of free courses aimed at those who want to improve their chances of finding work, support their family, or

live independently. The courses provide skills in business planning, marketing, IT, budgeting, customer service as well as developing practical gardening skills.



# Supporting vulnerable people

## Empowering victims of modern slavery

### Northern College

Northern College in South Yorkshire runs a pioneering 'Free Thinking Programme' that prepares survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking for living and working in the UK. These survivors have very little or no access to further education. This lack of access could be a significant factor in their re-entry into modern slavery or exploitative work.

As well as aiming to rebuild self-confidence and trust and encourage independence, the programme provides opportunities to develop their English language and ICT skills, applying for work, interview techniques, rights and responsibilities in the workplace, team skills, dealing with conflict and living in the UK.

The students stay at the college for short intensive periods, in a supportive learning environment which allows them to focus on a future of freedom either in the UK or in their country of origin.

## Providing access to shelter, food and services over Christmas

Since 2015, City of Westminster College has donated its Paddington Green Campus to Crisis at Christmas, a charity providing immediate help for homeless people at a critical time.

Thanks to Crisis, each year thousands of guests are welcomed into centres across the UK. Throughout their stay, guests are able to receive healthcare and specialist advice on housing, work and benefits. They are also

given access to doctors, opticians, dentists, hairdressers, showers and are able to get clothes or bags repaired.

At the Paddington Green Campus, a few hundred guests are given beds for the night and provided with three cooked meals and endless amounts of tea and coffee. They are also given clean clothes donated by both the public and members of staff of the college.

## Supporting one of the largest foodbanks in the UK

Newcastle West End Foodbank opened in March 2013, and has grown to be one of the largest foodbanks in the UK, feeding more than 40,000 people in the last year.

Students from Newcastle College first became involved in supporting the foodbank in 2017. Students wanted to learn more, so went on a trip to the Foodbank to learn more about the work they do and how they could help.

Following their trip, the students took action and worked with their tutors to raise awareness and encourage donations. Many of

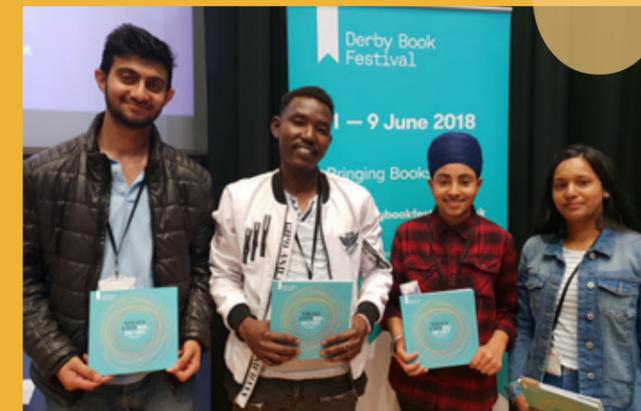
the college's students have been recipients of the Foodbank, and appreciate the opportunity to be able to support a cause which has helped their families.

As a result of the college's work, they have received support from the Pears #iwill Fund, a match fund created by Pears Foundation, the National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, to pilot new approaches to encourage and support youth social action.

## Supporting local school breakfast clubs

Derby College Group supports Derby Breakfast Club. The scheme, to offer funded breakfasts through local businesses to children across Derby city schools, is a collaborative project between Derby City Council, leading City entrepreneur Kavita Oberoi OBE, Aaron Thalmann, Mike and Dana Copestake, Derby County Football Community Trust and HIS Church.

Staff and students at Derby College Group have so far raised nearly £12,000 to ensure that young children across the city start the day ready for learning.



*Our ambition is to raise £50,000 over the coming years and support our students with their enterprise and entrepreneurial skills*

April Hayhurst, Derby College Group Deputy Principal

*The Breakfast Club is starting to improve attendance and has definitely improved punctuality, both of which are a huge focus for the school*

Paula Martin, Firs Estate Headteacher

# Raising awareness in the community

## Raising awareness of HIV testing

### Croydon College

Croydon College has been involved in a local campaign working with Croydon Council to support HIV testing. Students work alongside a health worker who provides training on how to administer the test. Students were involved in handing out HIV testing kits on behalf of the local health trust and travelled to different parts of the local area to support this campaign.

Social action can have a big, lasting impact on those who are involved. Croydon College students feel empowered getting behind a cause and offering support. It can also allow students to move outside of their comfort zone and find their voice.

## Students identifying social issues and developing social action projects

### ShIPLEY College

ShIPLEY College is located in an area that has significant social and economic deprivation, with a high proportion of adults with no qualifications. Unemployment is much higher than the national average and youth unemployment is the highest in Yorkshire.

The college works hard to enrich the students' experience and develop their skills, whilst nurturing strong relationships in the community.

Recently the college received support from the Pears #iwill Fund, a match fund created by Pears Foundation, the National

Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Their support has helped develop projects such as First Give.

The First Give programme encourages students to identify social issues in their area and engage with charities to address them. Currently 100 students are working with local charities such as Haven, StayingPut, Cellar Trust, Kirklees & Calderdale Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (KCRASAC), Forget Me Not Children's Hospice & Yorkshire Air Ambulance.

# Working with local community groups

## Partnership with Rape Crisis South London

### Merton College

Working in partnership with Rape Crisis South London, Merton College students were tasked with producing a new college group-wide policy to tackle sexual harassment. The group pulled the draft policy together following brainstorming sessions. The policy was then presented by students Tania Dias and Alisha Pereira to Group Principal and CEO, Peter Mayhew-Smith, Head of Student Services for

Merton College, Andrew Beardall and the course facilitators from Rape Crisis South London.

The policy will now be implemented across the South Thames Colleges Group by the end of the academic year.

## Supporting the rebuild of historic buildings

### New College Stamford

New College Stamford has been involved in the restoration of an historic building following a community campaign to have it rebuilt. The college was contacted by Stuart Hall the Chairman of the St James Deeping Signal Box Group about three years ago. After securing planning permission, lottery funding and after numerous charity fundraising events the group are now ready to move forward with the relocation and rebuilding of the signal box.

The college's carpentry and joinery students have refurbished the old railway gates, manufactured new windows and bricklaying students have started building the foundations as part of their work experience.

Student involvement in community projects helps build a sense of pride and ownership in their local area.

# Building positive relationships with blue light services

## Drink Driving Campaign

North Hertfordshire College

In 2018, North Hertfordshire College collaborated with the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) to design and produce their Christmas Drink Drive Campaign. HFRS staff worked with students to create potential campaign slogans and a winning slogan was selected by HFRS. To exhibit the impact of drink driving, the students sprayed their winning slogan onto a used 'crash' car displayed outside Stevenage fire station on a primary commuter road, throughout the Christmas period.

As a result of the college's work, the college has received support from

the Pears #iwill Fund, a match fund created by Pears Foundation, the National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, to pilot new approaches to youth social action.

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*The students were incredibly professional throughout, and injected the campaign with energy and creativity. Feedback from members of the public was very positive and the message had a real effect on their driving*

Julie Springett, Fire Prevention Coordinator at Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Services

## Strengthening the college's relationship with local police

Colchester Institute

Colchester Institute has introduced an initiative aimed at strengthening the college's relationship with Essex police and the local community. By collaboratively raising awareness on safety topics with Essex police, students now have more information available about potential risks they could face when out in the wider community. A key aim has been to improve students' perception of the police and reassure them that they are there to help and protect. The perceptions that students gain at this age about the positive face of policing could be the ones that they carry with them into adulthood.

By carrying out college safety days a few times a year, it keeps the profile of this work high and the police can engage with students in their normal study environment. It has received a lot of engagement from students and in turn improved the reputation of the police as students learn to feel more comfortable with seeing police officers around campus and approaching them to ask questions.

*At this time of heightened risk associated with knife crime, this is a key strength in our work to help inform students about ways to keep themselves safe*

Maeve Borges, Vice Principal, Colchester Institute

*This started as an operation to communicate directly with students and show them the human side of the police. It has been great to build a stronger relationship with Colchester Institute and provide support to students if they need it*

PC Rosanna Walker, Essex Police

# Supporting communities through sport

## Bridgwater & Taunton College

### BTC Activators

A volunteering programme delivered through BTC Active gives students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience working in sport development and sports coaching roles. The aim is to support student development alongside their course by offering additional opportunities to gain sports coaching knowledge and skills.

The college currently has 25 student volunteers who collectively have supported delivery of 1,337 hours of delivery to around 1000 students since September 2017.

In return for their time the college commits to supporting students gaining access to external opportunities through Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP) school games programme and the AoC Sport Leadership Academy.

As a group, students have successfully delivered a multi-sport launch event which attracted over 40 female students and staff and the college's annual Summer Event raising over £100 for local LGBT charity 2BU in the form of a colour run.



*Being an activator has developed me as a person within my time at the college. It has given me the opportunity to build and develop my skills and confidence in a safe and supportive environment*

Jess Bull 2017-18 Activator of the Year (studying Level 3 Sport and Exercise Science).

## Empowering students through sport

### Walsall College

Walsall College has designed a project in collaboration with The Inspire Group to develop the skills of young people to help them take skills back to their own communities. The college worked on sports leadership and coaching skills, but with a bigger focus on how to integrate different communities and different people into activities.

The project includes working on sessions that empower their communities in mental wellbeing,

physical fitness and wider community engagement. The community engagement aspect of the programme has been the most impactful as it has meant participants actively going out to their local communities and making a difference for local people. This work has been important as for many of the participants, creating innovative and appropriate provision in the community is something they themselves can benefit from.

## Delivering activities to young, disadvantaged and disabled participants

### Merrist Wood College

In the last three years, Merrist Wood College has developed relationships with local coaching companies, local organisations and internal groups across partner colleges to provide college students the opportunity to deliver a variety of activities for young, disadvantaged and disabled participants.

The college is part of a network of coaches across Surrey offering practical activities at Schools, Local Sports Clubs and Supported

Learning Programmes, including the college's own Woodlands Centre where 15 students have set up a football session for Supported Learning Students on a weekly basis outside of their college timetable.

Students are also invited to the Choices and Decisions event for Surrey's Severe Learning Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Schools each year to deliver practical activities to participants.

# AoC Sport Leadership Academy

The Leadership Academy is a new initiative that started in September 2018. It is the first over-arching programme that encompasses all AoC Sport volunteering projects and opportunities.

The aim is to empower students to volunteer in sport and to support their local community to get active. Sport has a wide range of roles and skills which means that any student can get involved.

This year students have had access to a range of training including working with people with disabilities and learning about mental health.

The academy has also invested in an online platform to share resources and promote campaigns and further opportunities to the volunteers.

2018/19  
statistics  
so far

**20**

training events  
delivered

**168**

This Girl Can  
Ambassador recruited

**200**

ECFA Football Activators  
recruited

**260**

students have volunteered  
at AoC Sport events



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