

NNECL Northern Group (NorthCLASS) - Terms of Reference

NB: The Terms of Reference for this group were written by Wendy Price and last updated on 21 January 2021. They are, with consent from members, subject to changes and updates as necessary.

**Rationale and aims**

* To maximise opportunities for any professionals, who are working to support the further and higher education progression of young people in care, care experienced students, estranged students and care leavers. To provide an effective network to share opinions and expertise which supports the navigation of sector challenges.
* To provide professional development and networking opportunities – for group members, and for the colleagues they work with.
* To share good practice and consult colleagues on projects supporting young people in care, care experienced students, estranged students and care leavers.
* To identify, promote and support areas of collaborative working and priorities.
* To promote the inclusion and progression of care experienced students and estranged students, into, through and beyond higher education.
* To provide a platform to develop advocacy which represents practitioners and professionals perspectives on the needs of care experienced students and those estranged from their parents/carers.
* To contribute to the work of the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL).

**Membership criteria**

* NorthCLASS is a network created for people working in the Northern region (North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside) who work with young people in care, and estranged students, and support their progression through education.
* Membership includes professionals from the areas of outreach, student support services, academia and admissions within HEIs and FE institutions, UniConnect, Local Authority professionals including social workers, virtual schools and Leaving Care teams; and third sector professionals.
* Wherever possible, the care leaver/student voice will also be represented in meetings. Ideally this will be represented within the group members, but in addition host institutions will be asked to invite guest members to their meetings – care experienced students, colleagues, or Student Ambassadors.
* NorthCLASS welcomes and supports members of staff who are new to this area of work.
* Membership implies a commitment to being able and willing to participate in and contribute to the activities of the group. Meetings will only go ahead with a fair representation of geographical areas and sector in order to maximise the value of discussions.

**Activities**

* Meetings will be held at least termly (minimum of three meetings annually).
* Where meetings are held in-person, they will be distributed geographically evenly, to minimise frequency of longer travel journeys.
* The NorthCLASS JISCMail service will be used as a platform for dialogue, advice, support and sharing emerging practice.
* The care leaver voice will be involved wherever possible.
* Areas of training and development will be identified and shared for members.
* Resources and information will be shared via JISCMail, network events, other HE networks and external speakers.
* Projects, proposals and feedback will be agreed and, where appropriate, taken to the NNECL National Strategy Group for further attention or action.
* All members should be aware there may be network members who have lived experience and should act accordingly.

**Organisation of NorthCLASS meetings**

**Where meetings are held in person, the host institution will:**

* Book a room and provide directions.
* Book car parking or provide car parking advice.
* Book and pay for catering (limited to drinks and biscuits).
* Provide resources as required e.g. PC, Projector.
* Provide the housekeeping and welcome.

**The regional representatives will:**

* Send invitations to the group and external guests.
* Arrange CPD/staff development workshop following the meeting.
* Devise and circulate an agenda together with minutes of the last meeting.
* Produce a register of attendance in advance of the meeting and circulate to members on the day.
* Chair meetings or arrange a suitable Chair from the network.
* Arrange for someone to take minutes of the meeting and circulate these to members of the network.
* Provide final numbers to the host.

**Online meetings:**

* From 2020 NorthCLASS Meetings have been held online and many members have expressed a preference to continue with this format. Regional representatives will continue to consult with members to ensure maximum attendance and interaction at meetings.
* Where meetings are held online the regional representatives will work together to prepare and circulate documents prior to and following each meeting, co-chair meetings and respond efficiently to any network queries.

**NorthCLASS regional representatives**

* **North East**

Wendy Price, Head of Widening Access and Participation, University of Sunderland

* **Yorkshire and Humber**

Ruth Cohen, Schools and Colleges Liaison Officer, University of Huddersfield

* **North West**

Becca Hughes, Student Wellbeing Project Officer, University of Chester

* **NorthCLASS Coordinator and support for meetings**

George Kenyon, Outreach Hub Assistant, Greater Manchester Higher

Wendy Price

V2 21 January 2021