

The Association of  
**Distance  
Learning  
Colleges**



# Newsletter

## March 2021

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# **The Association of Distance Learning Colleges**

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## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

### ***Glass half full Glass half empty***

More than a year of difficulties, but it looks as if we are just seeing the beginning of the end of the Covid pandemic and the attendant problems. Expecting the best, which for ADLC could mean that 2022 would see us planning a good old-fashioned face-to-face AGM conference.

That is in the future and for this year we are having to make the best of a Zoom AGM. There is a certain amount of business matters that we have to deal with during the AGM but it would be a pity to miss the opportunity to hear something about members' experiences during this exceptional year.

My opening phrase really encompasses peoples' personal perception of the past few months and from what I have heard our members have tackled the problems as if the glass were more than half full. Enthusiasm and innovative thinking have been the order of the day and I am sure that new study topics and ways of working will be further developed and used in future.

Stories from our clients make inspirational reading and ought to be more widely known. Their successes are obviously down to their own efforts, but



we must not forget that our tutors and administrative staff have played a most important part in both stimulating and supporting the learners and keeping our work on track – a big 'thank you' should go out to all of them.

We are still in business, for which we should all be grateful.

**Max**

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## LOCKDOWN LEARNERS: COULD THE PANDEMIC LEAD TO A SHIFT IN ADULT PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING?

**The coronavirus pandemic may have increased the value adults place on learning, for work and their wider lives, writes Emily Jones Head of Research, Learning and Work Institute**

This week is [Lifelong Learning Week](#), a chance to celebrate the difference that learning can make to people's lives. And there may have never been a more important time for adults to engage in learning.

Faced with unprecedented economic and technological change, many adults will need to upskill or retrain to find new work; others will need to develop their skills and adapt to new ways of working within existing roles. But learning is about much more than just work. Evidence on the wider benefits of learning is clear: adult learning has an important role to play in supporting health and wellbeing, in addressing inequalities and 'levelling up', and in connecting people and tackling social isolation.

Every year, Learning and Work Institute runs the [Adult Participation in Learning Survey](#), providing a unique and rich evidence base on patterns and trends in adult learning across the UK. The survey adopts a broad definition of learning, that's not limited to courses, but includes learning at home or at work. 5,000 adults – who are representative of the population as a whole – are asked whether they are currently learning or have done so in the last three

years.

This year, the pandemic has had a huge impact on our lives. Following the government's lockdown in March, many millions of people worked from home or were furloughed, and parents home-schooled their children. Adult learning providers suspended in-person teaching, and where possible, learning was delivered online instead. We therefore wanted to use the 2020 survey to understand whether people used this time at home for learning, and explore the motivations for and barriers to learning.

Many adults (43 per cent) embraced this opportunity to learn through lockdown. This probably reflects reduced barriers to learning associated with time pressures and the convenience of online learning. But the pandemic may have also increased the value adults place on learning, for work and their wider lives. Could this be an indication that lockdown learning may lead to longer-term shifts?

The survey does however highlight stark inequalities in who engaged with learning during lockdown. Younger adults, full-time workers, those in higher socio-economic grades and those who stayed on in initial education until an older age were all more likely to be learning. Among full time employees, those who continued to work during lockdown were more likely to learn than those who were furloughed.

These deep inequalities in participation in learning are of serious cause for concern



given the unequal impact of the pandemic on the labour market. We know that workers with fewer qualifications and those in lower skilled or lower paid roles were more likely to have been furloughed or to have lost their jobs. Despite facing a greater need to upskill and retrain to find work in the post-covid economy, these workers are least likely to be accessing learning opportunities.

The government has recently announced a 'lifelong learning guarantee' to support people to retrain and upskill, including an entitlement for adults to their first level 3 qualification. While the survey suggests that many adults are ready to engage in learning, it also emphasises the

need to ensure these opportunities are targeted at those who are most likely to need to retrain and upskill – but who currently are least likely to take part. Doing so will be vital if we are to ensure that nobody is left behind in the post-covid economy.

We also know that learning is addictive; once adults start learning, they are more likely to continue. Indeed two in three of those who took part in online learning said they were very likely to continue doing so in the future. As we return to 'normal', we need to make sure that adults who had a go at the learning during lockdown are supported to continue, helping them to secure rewarding and fulfilling work, and maintain their health and wellbeing.

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## WORKING FROM HOME - TWO VIEWS

**Covid: 'People are tired of working from home'**

**BBC News**

***People are keen to return to the office because working from home has left many "fatigued", says a boss at Britain's biggest office and retail complex.***

Howard Dawber, head of strategy at Canary Wharf Group, said people will still want to divide time between the workplace and home.

But they are missing office and city-centre life, he told the BBC.

The Canary Wharf financial complex, in London, has only about 6,000 people on site, against 100,000 pre-Covid.

Canary Wharf Group is the developer behind roughly 7.5 million square feet of office space and would stand to benefit financially if there is a surge in demand

once lockdown restrictions ease.

But Mr Dawber argued on the BBC's Today programme that people will be eager to get back in the office after so long away from the workplace.

"We've got to the point where there is a lot of fatigue out there," he said.

"Working from home for the first couple of months of last year when the sun was shining and people were enjoying perhaps a more flexible environment, there was a sense that this was going to be a short-term process.

"I think now people are really missing that opportunity to collaborate with and just see their friends in the office, to get your hair cut, to go and get a good coffee at lunchtime, and to do all the life admin things you can do in a city centre."

In the government's roadmap for ending





coronavirus restrictions, it recommends that people in England continue to work from home where possible

It is hoped, however, that all legal limits on social contact can be removed from 21 June.

## **Coronavirus: Why some people want to keep working from home**

**By Sam Proffitt**  
**BBC News**

***When lockdown started in March, workers across the UK packed up their office equipment and set up work stations in their own homes.***

Bedrooms, kitchen counter-tops and dining tables became the new way of working for millions of people.

According to the ONS, 30% of adults in the UK were exclusively working from home at the start of July.

From 1 August, employers in England can allow staff back into offices at their own discretion when they feel it's safe to do so.

But now it's time to return to those communal workplaces, research from Eskenzi suggests that 91% of the UK's office

workers would like to work from home at least part of the time.

So why are so many office staff keen to keep working from home?

### **'It's like getting a pay rise'**

For Jon Williams, who is 43 and a software developer from Lyme Regis, working from home has helped him save both time and money.

"I was spending £65 on petrol every two weeks before lockdown," he says. But because he no longer has an hour-long daily commute, he hasn't had to fill his car up since March.

Jon also noticed he's saving money on his food shop, because he's not stopping at the supermarket on the way home from work. "It's like getting a pay rise without receiving any more money", he says.

"I've saved about £1,600 overall, and I'm putting extra money into my ISA every month and plan to spend it on taking a holiday when it seems safer to do so."

Now restrictions are easing, Jon's employers are open to the idea of remote working in the future too. Currently there are no plans to bring staff back into his office. "The tech has been working so well, this is likely to be more of a permanent move," he says.

### **'We're spending more time together as a family'**

Nirali Amin, a qualified bookkeeper from Watford, has discovered that working from home gives her more quality time with her sons.





“It’s so nice to be working from home and looking after the kids,” says 39-year-old Nirali. With both parents in full-time work, she felt they were missing out on their children growing up.

It wasn’t all plain sailing at first, though. “The first two weeks at home together were a little awkward,” she admits. It took a while to work out who was going to use which space in the house. With both children using the dining table for school work, their parents were left to sort their working routines around them.

But now, Nirali believes the bond she has with her children is stronger than ever before. Prior to lockdown, she feels they had less time to discuss family matters in depth together. “We were either stressed or

extra tired all the time - now we understand their needs better.”

Nirali’s husband, Tushar Patel, 43, agrees. “We’ve never had so much time off together as a family. We both really feel that we lost some time together when the kids were younger.”

They’re making up for it with family board game nights and helping the children with their studies during the day.

Both Nirali and Tushar think working from home should be an option for all parents where possible - although Nirali will be returning to her office on 3 August. Tushar, who works for Harrow Council in Greater London, doesn’t yet know when he’ll be back in his workplace.



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER COLLEGE

***UKCPD has been a Signatory Member for the past year, but is now ready for full Membership.***



***The UK College of Personal Development*** has been developing and delivering award winning personal and professional training for over 20 years.

We believe that our twenty years of award-winning delivery has given us the experience and the skills to ensure all students enjoy their studies and achieve their personal and professional outcomes.

### **Specialist CPD College**

Our courses lead to qualifications from a range of professional and national accrediting bodies including the ILM, the Association For Coaching and the Association For NLP

Our experienced tutors help students gain the skills needed to complete the course. They are available by phone, email or Skype/Zoom.

Our online training material is delivered via our bespoke online learning platform, accessible via a smart phone, tablet or PC.

We are accredited and recognised with the following professional organisations:

- ILM – City & Guilds Group
- The Association for Coaching
- The International Association for NLP
- The General Hypnotherapy Standards Council
- UK Register of Learner Providers  
Number: 10042455



**Leadership and Management Qualifications**  
Coaching and Mentoring Qualifications



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## NEWS FROM MEMBER COLLEGES

### **ATC**

We are continuing to operate as close to normal as possible within all Government guidelines – with many of our staff continuing to work from home.

As before, we hope we have implemented all of the right measures to ensure a seamless service for you, and one which ensures safety for all involved and we continue to accept new enrolments onto courses and welcome back past students.

We receive postal assignments daily, but please remember you can also submit your assignments by email to [info@accountingtrainingcollege.org.uk](mailto:info@accountingtrainingcollege.org.uk), this will be marked and returned to you as soon as possible.

We consider learning to be a great source of comfort and fulfilment and home-study is a great way to make positive use of any free time you may have. We are here to support you and your self-development in any way we can.

### **BSY Group**

A new lockdown came into force in England on 6th January, which sadly comes with separate implications for us all.

This means close contact services are required to close.

Here is some important information that practitioners may find useful.

Close contact services include beauty and makeup, spas and wellness businesses, sports and massage therapy, well-being and holistic locations.

Those who provide close contact

services from a mobile setting including their own home, in other people's homes and in retail environments (such as a concession in a larger, separate business) must also stop operating.

All of Wales is currently also in lockdown (alert level 4), meaning close contact services here must also not operate. However, this does not include treatments or services providing medical treatments for illness or injury, and therapists who are working alongside or in conjunction with a statutory regulated health professional.

Mainland Scotland is also in a temporary lockdown with new guidance to stay at home except for essential purposes. Premises which provide a close contact service and mobile close contact services must close except where they are ancillary to medical, health, or social care services.

Additional restrictions are in place in Northern Ireland, requiring people to stay at home. Close contact services are not permitted to operate, with exceptions including sport massage therapy and services ancillary to medical, health and social care services.

Healthcare and medical services are able to continue and it is our understanding this includes podiatry and chiropody.

Unfortunately it is not entirely clear whether practitioners of Foot Care would also be exempt from restrictions, so we would strongly advise our graduates to contact their insurers to check if they are able to practise under the current

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restrictions and if so, ensure they are covered to do so.

Any practitioners who are exempt from restrictions and able to practise must follow all safety precautions including PPE where applicable and strictly adhere to all other relevant guidelines in place to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus.

As the COVID-19 virus is primarily spread through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, it is vitally important all precautions are taken when carrying out any essential close contact services.

### **Distance Learning Centre**

#### ***October 2020 Feedback Prize Draw Winner!!***

Congratulations to Claire Felgate who was the winner of our October Feedback Prize Draw:

Claire completed the Introduction to Social Care - Level 2 Course gave the following feedback:

“The course was very enjoyable and learnt so much about social care. This has really helped me understand more about health and social care. The assignments, although needing a lot of research, was very interesting and wished I had completed the course much earlier.

My study tutor was always very helpful and the turnaround from submitting my assignments to receiving his feedback was so quick. I really appreciated this as it meant I could then start the next one within a week of finishing the last. I gave myself two months per assignment so did not have to rush and also had two months

at the end of the year just in case I needed to resubmit an assignment but this was not needed.”

#### **Congratulations Claire, I hope you enjoy the Kindle Fire HD!**

### **Fitness Courses College**

We are pleased that many of our students have found comfort and fulfilment in home study – whether they have been studying with us for a while or recently decided to learn something new. We would like to congratulate all of our students on their successes and achievements in these difficult circumstances. We are looking ahead to 2021 and helping new and existing students achieve their goals.

We have strived to do our utmost to support you with as little disruption as possible and we will continue to do so as we all move into the New Year.

### **HCC**

#### ***RHS Qualifications updates***

The RHS are in the process of updating their qualifications and have recently released some information on the key changes they're planning to make, please visit their dedicated page for further information:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/articles/rhs-qualifications-statement>

You can still enrol now onto the current RHS qualifications and complete your examinations; RHS have recommended that the qualifications will remain available until the end of academic year 2021-22 and transitional arrangements will be



confirmed as soon as they have been published.

Horticultural Correspondence College is reviewing the changes and will be accepting enrolments onto the revised qualifications from their planned release date and further details will follow.

Initially, the new qualifications were going to be launched this year for delivery from September 2021. However, with the ongoing challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic and in consultation with our approved centres, the response indicated that the preference was to delay implementation until 2022. During this time, our existing suite of qualifications will continue to be delivered by our centres.

We appreciate that some learners may have concerns about the validity of qualifications they have either fully or partially completed. We can confirm that

no learner will be disadvantaged by the introduction of the new qualifications and will be able to achieve the qualification on which they have enrolled.

### **Health and Safety Training College** ***Examinations update***

NEBOSH's first 'Open Book Examinations (OBE)' took place on the 6th August 2020. We will provide further dates as soon as they become available from NEBOSH.

In the absence of OBE for some examinations and due to Covid 19 we have carefully reviewed our examination processes for written examinations in order to ensure the safety of both our staff and our students when visiting our examination centres.

NEBOSH have provided an examination date for these written examinations in

September, however, we have reluctantly made the decision not to hold these examinations at any of our usual venues until we can establish a fully robust Covid secure examination setting for the safety of all.

We are intending to be able to offer written examinations at all venues for the December examinations and information will be provided to our students on how to book onto these in the coming weeks.

When we are in a position to safely run examinations it is highly likely that students will be asked to wear a face covering during their examination to mitigate risks. Any additional instructions on safety measures when visiting any of our centres will be provided with booking confirmations 2 weeks prior to the examinations; this is to ensure that we adhere to applicable government guidance.

Should there be any developments that impact the examinations going ahead, we would transfer any students who have booked on to the examinations to the next available session.



## **Ideal Schools**

### ***Kathryn Cowin From farming to finance...***

Following study with IDEAL toward the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers,

#### **Counting sheep**

IT'S perhaps the most unusual example of diversification The Bottom Line has stumbled across.

South Lanarkshire-based Kathryn Cowin has reconciled her love of animals and numbers by simultaneously running a pet services business with a bookkeeping venture.

Ms Cowin, who studied mathematics at St Andrews the University, recently launched Black Blaze Bookkeeping – named after the Zwartbles sheep she raised in her small holding in South Lanarkshire – after completing a course with e-learning college Ideal Schools. The former tax consultant runs the firm alongside a pet services businesses she established in 2004.

She said: “I needed to find the balance between my love of numbers, and my love of animals. It’s taken a while, but I think I’ve got there. I’ve enough clients to keep my mind occupied, and looking after the animals and the sheep keep me moving.”

Not a baad effort, we are sure you will agree.

Kathryn has forged a successful career as a self-employed bookkeeper.

#### **iPhotography**

##### ***Lucy Mcalpine***

Since starting the iPhotography courses I have gone from being someone with a decent camera and an interest in photography,

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to a Professional Photographer earning a steady income and able to work around my two young children.

I still have a lot to learn, but I feel that these courses have given me a solid foundation for my Photography work.

I bought my first DSLR camera when I was pregnant with my first child as I wanted to be able to capture decent photos once my baby arrived, however I had never used anything more fancy than a good old point and shoot compact digital camera, and after being completely disappointed with my first attempt at taking photos on my shiny new DSLR, I thought I'd better learn how to use it, so I signed up to the iPhotography Course.

Although I had always loved taking photographs, it was merely an interest, and I was a complete beginner, but it wasn't long before my knowledge had

broadened and I started being able to capture photographs that I was happy with.

I enjoyed the flexibility of the course and being able to dip in and out of it as and when I had the time.

## **NCT**

Many companies and businesses are avoiding training during the pandemic for various reasons, they:

1. have all staff working from home
2. have some staff on site and some working from home
3. want training in a group
4. cannot access training in a particular discipline
5. want a course tailored to a specific requirement
6. are waiting until the pandemic is over.







OakCAD NCT provides training in a wide variety of ENGINEERING disciplines directly on your site, on our site or by distance learning. We also provide training tailored to particular requirements.

In the current situation, all of this training can be provided through flexible training (standard or tailored) delivered to staff at home and/or on site, through distance learning material, supported by group on-line video tutor support, allowing your company to prepare for maximum benefit when everything is back to normal.

### **London Art College**

#### ***A Student's Story - Jean Hodgkiss***

When Covid came in April 2020 I came across the LAC courses in a magazine and thought this would be a good way of continuing my painting with some guidance. This was the best decision I could have made. The course was well structured and better than I had expected. My tutor, Paul Weaver, was supportive

and encouraging and I always looked forward (with anticipation) to listening to his detailed feedback and his advice on how I could improve. His feedback was so detailed that even when he explained why something had worked, this was an eye opener, as I hadn't realised how I had achieved it, (I understand so much more now). I was sorry when the course came to an end, Paul's encouragement has given me confidence to continue with my Art and try new things. A whole new world has opened-up to me and I have a lot to learn. I shall certainly be signing up for future courses.

### **Oxbridge**

#### ***An important update for all students due to take exams this summer:***

As expected, all final grades for 2021 exams will be decided through teacher assessed grading, using grades from your completed assignments and practise papers. If you're due to take your exams



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this year, you must complete as much of your course as possible before 1st May 2021. If you haven't completed the course, you may be asked to complete further assessment materials to allow us to give you an overall grade. Details for any further assessments will be sent out in April.

Please note that Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE) have now also decided that exams will not be going ahead as usual, and we're awaiting a decision from them as to how the awarding process will take place.

For those not enrolled on exams this year, please continue to work through your learning and assignments as normal ready for exams 2022 onward.

### **Regent Group**

We are continuing to operate as close to normal as possible within all Government guidelines – with many of our staff continuing to work from home.

As before, we hope we have implemented all of the right measures to ensure a seamless service for you, and one which ensures safety for all involved and we continue to accept new enrolments onto courses and welcome back past students.

We receive postal assignments daily, but please remember you can also submit your assignments by email to [info@regentacademy.com](mailto:info@regentacademy.com), this will be marked and returned to you as soon as possible.

We consider learning to be a great source of comfort and fulfilment and home-study is a great way to make positive use of any free time you may have. We are here to support you and your self-

development in any way we can.

We will continue to communicate any updates and we wish you and your loved ones all the very best during this period.

### **School of Health**

#### ***Nutrition and Covid 19 – a personalised approach***

Earlier this year the results of one of the largest and most detailed nutrition studies in the world were published. The PREDICT study made a detailed investigation of the body's metabolic response to food, using large numbers of twins to verify that everyone reacts to food in their own unique way.

One of the surprises in the data was that identical twins responded very differently on a metabolic level to exactly the same foods. This emphasises the highly individual basis that the body works on, and why tailored nutrition will always be superior to generalised advice.

So how does this relate to Covid 19? Well, in the same way that we each have unique responses to foods, it has become clear over the past months that there is a vast range of different responses to coronavirus infection. We already have a good idea of the main coronavirus risk factors, and interestingly the big three - obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes - are all very treatable with nutrition. Even so it is still difficult to predict which individuals are most at risk, with some apparently 'high risk' people having almost unnoticeable symptoms while other, more healthy counterparts have been hospitalised.

There are a number of similarities between an individual's response to food

and to coronavirus – the following have been put forward by the Covid Symptoms Study team working alongside King's College London:

- People respond to food and coronavirus infection in a highly personalised way.
- Many of the risk factors for severe COVID-19 are very similar to the risk factors for unhealthy responses to food (obesity, diabetes, inflammation, age, gut health and poor diet).
- One-size-fits-all advice about COVID-19 risks doesn't work, and neither does one-size-fits-all advice about nutrition.

Following the results of the PREDICT study, the team are now considering the role played by gut bacteria (the microbiome) in our personal coronavirus response. This is heavily influenced by our diet and a healthy microbiome is crucial for a normal metabolic response to food. It is not yet known whether the microbiome is also the key to determining individual coronavirus risk, but it does play a major role in the immune response so there is likely to be a connection.

More research is clearly needed to fully understand the body's unique reactions, but one thing is sure – at the School of Health we are right to focus on an individualised approach to all aspects of health.

## ABCC to The Association of Distance Learning Colleges



It is now a year since we made the great change – I admit that I didn't wait for the delayed AGM in June 2020, but went ahead after the meeting we *didn't* have in March! The change has certainly been a success – it has made it much clearer what the Association is and what it does. This

has been reflected in several enquiries from potential new members, and a lot more traffic in my inbox and on the website.

However, I notice that despite my repeated requests, several of our Member Colleges have not made the change on their own websites. Please can I ask you all to do this, before I start naming and shaming? I'm sure you know who you are. Thank you!

The Association of  
**Distance  
Learning  
Colleges**

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## NEWS FROM ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

### AAT

As National Apprenticeship Week (8–14 February 2021) begins, AAT is urging people of all ages to consider taking up apprenticeships to boost their skills and employability in the face of the ongoing coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Previous research by AAT has shown that there is significant interest in the accountancy profession as a stable career choice, with 19% of respondents in a recent survey saying they believed accountancy, banking and finance were the most stable professions. AAT has also seen an uptick in interest in apprenticeships, particularly from young people interested in studying vocational qualifications as alternatives to university, as well as a rise in enquiries from school leavers.

This is echoed in findings from KPMG released this week, which show how the firm has been supporting its apprentices throughout the pandemic. This includes strengthening support to help apprentices gain their qualifications following the company-wide move to remote working, maintaining engagement with existing apprentices and adapting their onboarding process for new apprentices who joined the business in October 2020.

Anthony Clarke, Business Development Manager, (Employers) at AAT, said: “During the last 12 months apprentices and their employers have faced huge challenges, but they have been able to adapt and progress despite this and we applaud them for their resilience and determination. AAT is encouraged by the commitment

to apprenticeships our clients continue to show in recruiting and developing apprentices, both now and in the future.

“The past year has led many people to reconsider their options, including pursuing a role in a more stable profession with in-demand skills such as accountancy. An apprenticeship can be an ideal way to gain these skills through studying with AAT alongside working, enabling apprentices to implement what they’ve learned whilst on the job and see how their studies can be applied practically.

### ICB

#### **The Importance of Sisterhood and having a strong network**

From supporting you through your struggles to celebrating your successes, the best support and ideas come from those around you. Pursuing your bookkeeping career or running a business doesn’t mean you have to rely on yourself for everything. International Women’s Day on 8 March serves as a reminder that a close sisterhood of women in the same boat as you can be your greatest resource. Sisterhood is strengthened by an unbreakable bond of collaborating with women in your profession, the challenges you share and the milestones you celebrate.

With 78% of ICB Bookkeepers being women, ICB has a strong history of fostering dedicated support networks of hard-working women. Research from the Harvard Business Review finds



that although both men and women receive help from networking with like-minded peers, women who also have a support network of female contacts are more likely to earn positions with greater authority and pay.

If 2020 and 2021 have shown us anything, it's the power of community. Finding strength in sisterhood could be the foundation of getting a promotion, growing your practice, achieving more time off, or being the best version of yourself. A survey by JobsForHer found that 94% of women felt they needed networking groups that focussed on helping female workers progress in their careers. This same survey also shows that 49% of women believe a platform that enables them to highlight their leadership skills will help them seek senior positions in their organisations. Keeping this in mind taking advantage of the ICB

community could be the best way for female bookkeepers to advance in their careers and push through the challenges they face.

### HighGround

Our 2021 programme starts on 22nd March with our first Virtual Rural Week of 2021.

They will never replace Rural Weeks with their combination of presentations from subject matter experts and visits to farms, golf courses, forest schools and more (and the students bar..!) but are proving popular with service leavers and veterans researching employment and self-employment opportunities in the land-





based sector and on the strength of last year's response to them, we will continue to offer them as part of our programme beyond the pandemic.

Horticultural Therapy at DMRC Stanford Hall continues apace; it is the main rehab centre for all military who have been unfortunate enough to contract CV-19 and Mother Nature is playing a big part in their recovery.

## **MARINE SOCIETY**

### ***Marine Society awarded qualification project by the Maritime Skills Commission***

Marine Society has successfully bid to the Maritime Skills Commission for a project to develop a new accredited qualification that introduces school and college leavers to the wide range of shore based roles in maritime.

Project lead, Darrell Bate and curriculum consultant James Bullar plan to revise the existing Open Awards Level 3 Certificate in Maritime Studies to reach a new audience of school leavers for young adults and attract them into the maritime sector. A steering group comprising shipping firm Casper Shipping, the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers and Stockton Riverside College has been formed to guide the process through to completion in April

2021.

The qualification will include brand new modules covering; maritime trade, port operations and commercial shipping. These will sit alongside existing modules such as navigation, boat handling, marine stability and running a maritime business, allowing students to follow a 'wet' or 'dry' side maritime pathway. First teaching is expected in September 2021 at Stockton Riverside before wider rollout to the post 16 sector.

The Maritime Commission is a representative body of maritime professionals and leaders tasked by the Department for Transport to implement the key themes of the Government's Maritime 2050 strategy.

## **PET**

***2020 was a particularly tough year for people in prison: locked up for over 23 hours a day with no visits, education classes suspended, and limited activities to do in their cells.***

Despite this, Prisoners' Education Trust was able to fund just over 1000 people to take distance learning courses last year, enabling them to work towards their dream of a better life.

In total, we funded 162 different courses

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in 2020 – here we'll share the top ten and hear from some of our learners about the impact studying has made on them.

**1. Open University People, Work & Society Access Module (2019: 1st) – 52 learners**

**2. Business Start-up (2019: 3rd) – 47 learners**

**3. Certificate in Understanding Substance Misuse (2019: 7th) – 38 learners**

**4. Open University Science, Technology and Maths Access module (2019: 2nd) – 33 learners**

*The reason I decided to do this course was to challenge my insecurities surrounding my confidence in my own abilities. Over the time I've been studying for this module, not only has my confidence improved, but my ability to focus on what I'm doing, my motivation to want to learn and my studying techniques as well.*

**5. NEBOSH National Certificate in Construction Health and Safety (Level 3) (2019: 58th) – 32 learners**

Adam, who successfully completed the course in October 2020, wrote:  
*The NEBOSH Level 3 Certificate has already gifted me with so much wellbeing and optimism. A real chance to turn a negative time in my life into positivity, self-worth and pride.*

**6. NEBOSH Award in Health and Safety at Work (Level 2) (2019: 10th) – 31 learners**

**7. Gym Instructing – Passport to Level 2 Certificate (2019: 4th) – 30 learners**

**9. NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (2019: 16th) – 28 learners**

This course is perfect for those embarking on a health and safety career, as Matthew demonstrates:

*PET funding enabled me to pass my NEBOSH General Certificate which allowed me to get a full time job on day release as a Health and Safety Officer in the rail industry. I am now doing my fire safety certificate again with PET funding which opens up other opportunities.*

**Equal 9. Book-keeping (2019: 13th) – 28 learners**

**10. Creative Writing (2019: 5<sup>th</sup>) – 25 learners**

Writing can be a fantastic boost for mental wellbeing and outlet for creative expression, something Michael found when he took the course during lockdown:  
*It is helping me to cope with being locked up for 23 hours a day. Both with my mental health and giving me a positive way to use my time.*

(Learner names have been changed.)

## **Royal Forestry Society**

To celebrate International Women's Day today (March 8) meet Eve Over, the new Honorary Warden for the RFS Charles Ackers Grove and Naylor Pinetum, as she describes how taking a forestry course was the 'best decision' of her life and why more women should consider forestry as a career.

Eve has a Masters and PhD from Bangor University, ran her own forestry management company for 20 years and now works with Natural Resources Wales on future land management schemes and in particular on woodland management and creation schemes.

In a year when International Women's Day is celebrating Women in Leadership – she is an inspiration.

She has taken over the role of Honorary Warden from David Williams who is



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stepping down after a remarkable 42 years' service and who, along with Gordon Griffiths, will continue to support Eve.

### **Skills and Education Group (ABC Awards)**

National Apprenticeship Week is a yearly campaign that draws attention to the importance of apprenticeships in upskilling the workforce and the impact this has on employers and individuals across the country.

This year's theme, 'Build the Future', has inspired us to consider how our own apprentices are helping to shape not only their futures, but the future of our organisation. We wanted to catch up with our apprentices and find out how they have progressed within their apprenticeships, and the challenges they have had to overcome during the last year.

#### ***The Apprentices***

##### ***Tom – Compliance and Regulation Assistant***

"I am around three quarters of the way through my apprenticeship and I'm really starting to build up the knowledge, skills and behaviours that relate to the apprenticeship standard.

"It has been tough since the COVID-19 pandemic struck last year. While on furlough I was able to take part in online workshops and keep up my reading, however it did feel frustrating that I wasn't able to progress as quickly as I wanted due to the circumstances. Since I have returned to work, I have picked up where I left off and I'm now happy to be heading towards Gateway and my end-point assessment in the next couple of months.

"2020 was a tough year but I now have renewed determination to get the best

possible grade in my apprenticeship and I am looking forward to what the future holds at the Skills and Education Group." Tom is doing a Level 4 Regulatory Compliance Officer apprenticeship.

##### ***Emily – Brand Officer***

"I am currently approaching the Gateway stage with my end-point assessment due in the next few months. The last year has been challenging to the say least, but I feel like I have gained invaluable insights about adapting to difficult circumstances. Like Tom and Chris, along with a lot of apprentices across the country, being placed on furlough proved to be another obstacle to overcome in terms of a continuation of learning.

"I am grateful that my training provider and the Group were very supportive during this time, ensuring that I was still able to progress through my scheme of work. I think this year has really proved how resilient the apprenticeship sector is, and how dedicated employers and apprentices are to building a strong workforce for the future. I'm really looking forward to finishing my apprenticeship this year, and I'm excited for what the future holds."

#### ***The Employer***

**Paul Eeles, Chief Executive of Skills and Education Group** shared his thoughts on how apprentices have become an integral part of the development of the Group.

"We have a commitment to employing and developing apprentices and, over the last decade for a relatively small organisation, we have developed a significant number of apprentices. In the vast majority of cases these apprentices have gone on to become extremely valuable members of our team with many of them gaining promotions.





## **A message from our Honorary Member Chris Middleton**

***As you know I am an ex foster care leaver, I am currently mentoring and working voluntary with current foster care leavers and the charity that supports them, The National House Project.***

*I have been providing them and the Care Leavers National Movement with some business insight and strategy, however one of the key initiatives is for care leavers to have companies support them for their first 12 months when they leave care with free Wi-Fi. This will enable them to search for work or undertake their studies. Due to current internet poverty, they cannot afford it, thus cannot search for work or study and therefore they are at a further disadvantage. Could I ask members to visit their website, and if anyone has questions or wants to support, please contact me directly; my email is taitaantonio@gmail.com.*

### **About**

**The National House Project was incorporated as a charity in August 2018. It provides support and expertise to local authorities around the country to set up and manage Local House Projects so that young people leave care in a planned and supported way. Young people experience leaving care together and this peer community supports them to develop the practical and emotional skills that they need to live independently. They work on houses which become their homes to live in for as long as they want.**

**<https://thehouseproject.org>**

## CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

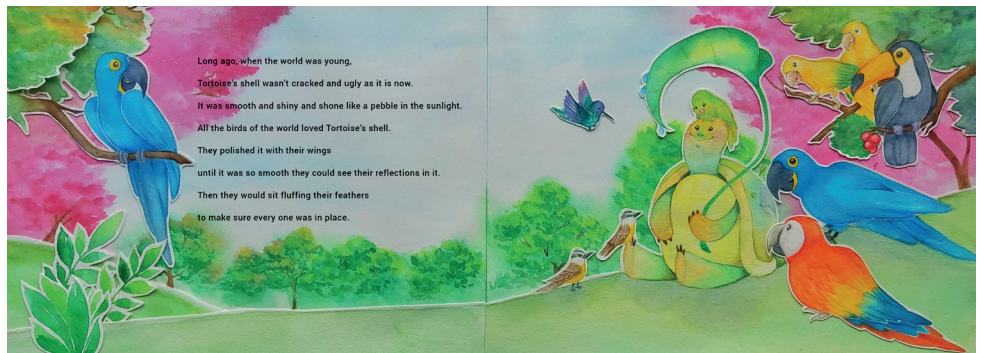
### Some of our students' stories

**Roberta Goncalves da Silva**

**Student with London Art College**

**studying Illustrating Children's Books**

**Roberta lives in Brazil and has just completed the course with a Distinction. She is a very talented student. She has been struggling with the pandemic situation over there; we are impressed by her determination to complete the course.**



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## **Mia Blackmore**

### **Student with Oxbridge**

## ***A Journey to Becoming a Teaching Assistant***

### **Early Success**

In the North West of England there is a metropolitan borough called the Wirral, a place where Mia Blackmore has lived since the age of two. When 17-year-old Mia finished secondary school in May 2019, she was ready to turn her passion for teaching into a career shaping little minds. So, she enrolled on our Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching & Learning during the summer, ready for the new school year to start.

Last month, Mia posted a picture on Instagram to celebrate passing her course, featuring her certificate and 'congrats' balloons in the background. She captioned it: "18.04.2020... I'm on cloud 9! I did it... I'm a primary Teaching Assistant. 8 months of hard work and dedication, I've learnt so much, grown so much and realised that teaching has my heart more than ever."

This is the story of her learning journey, overcoming personal challenges and following her passion and dreams no matter what obstacles stood in her way.

### **School Life**

In the Wirral, Mia has a strong support network. She said, "I love the area I live in, especially being so near my grandparents. I'm just grateful for the family and friends I have around me." And yet, school wasn't easy for Mia. She explained, "I had a very turbulent high school experience due to setbacks in my childhood, this had an

impact on my overall mental health and school was a very anxious time. I was meant to go to college after high school, but just a few weeks before starting I felt overwhelmed by the thought of it all.

After talking with my family and seeking professional advice, I decided that I wouldn't be able to cope with the demand and pressure that college life brings. I thought it would just put a strain on my mental health difficulties when I was already making progress. I was sad thinking that my dream future didn't look so bright anymore, but mostly, I just felt relieved that I wouldn't have to go to college at that time."

### **The Perfect Plan**

It's a brave thing to listen to your intuition and do what's best for you. Even if that means straying from the traditional path. By recognising what would help and what wouldn't, Mia had already taken a big step towards her goals. She just didn't know it yet.

"I had to find a different way to get qualified and not let my problems hold me back. I needed to be more confident too, so I could reach my dream career. When I came across Oxbridge, I knew it was the perfect way to get to where I wanted to be whilst I worked on the things that triggered me about college life. But it was important that Oxbridge understood my needs and could fully support me.

Luckily, I felt reassured after speaking with a lovely course adviser and I grew confident about the support I would get. When my course folder arrived in the post, I was so excited to get started, yet still so nervous, wondering if I would really be capable of completing it. Looking back,



I know that's a natural feeling, and it soon passed once I got stuck into my work. I still can't believe how far I've come since that day."

### **The Learning Journey**

The great thing about home learning is that you can fit your studying and assignments around your personal commitments. To complete her course and become a qualified Teaching Assistant, Mia was also required

to do practical work to demonstrate her knowledge on the job. For Mia, studying around her placement hours helped her hone her skills and boost her confidence profoundly...

"My daily routine was perfect because I could complete my qualification around my placement and personal life. For example, if I wanted to spend time with friends at the weekend, I made sure I completed an assignment before doing so. And during the week, I worked as a Teaching Assistant at my local primary school. Studying around my placement gave me a good structure to base my timetable and work ethic on."

### **Flexible Learning**

Mia's motivational notebook for studying says 'you can never dream too big.' She benefited from the freedom to set her own targets; "Oxbridge made the whole process of studying much more relaxing, mainly because I didn't feel any pressure to meet deadlines. I feel like my

Oxbridge experience was totally tailored to my requirements, so when I completed work, it was on my terms and felt like my own achievement. What helped me is just being in my own home. It's important to find a separate place to study though, somewhere where you can chill out, focus and feel driven to work free from distraction."

Mia knew she was developing the knowledge and skills to do what she loves most, so every topic was insight she relished.

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Mia reflects, “My favourite part of my course was learning about the strategies and techniques used to support children with different learning abilities. Based on the help I’ve received, adapting my teaching to student’s needs is something I feel passionate about because I know it can make all the difference.

I also found it interesting to look back over my own development within my teaching role throughout my placement. Monitoring my progress, whether it’s based on communication, responsiveness or teaching methods, I can see how far I’ve come.”

### **Becoming a Teaching Assistant**

Mia’s students made her smile every day. There is nothing more rewarding than experiencing the results of your hard work. For Mia, this feeling came during her placement. The children in her class reminded her that she was on the right path and had made the right decision to study with Oxbridge and pursue a teaching career.

Mia added, “I loved working with my year two class and had so many moments where my heart just melted! It made me realise that teaching has my whole heart. On one occasion, a six-year-old left a note on my desk which said, ‘be happy, never change, always be yourself.’ It was adorable. There was also another time when a child pulled me aside and whispered, ‘thank you for helping me learn, you’ll make a lovely teacher one day.’

Those are moments I will always cherish. I’ve learnt to believe in myself and believe in my own ability despite my early doubts, now that I know how rewarding teaching is! I’ve grown so much as a person,

and still, this is just the beginning! I know that I can and will make a difference to children’s lives.”

### **Believing in Herself**

It’s no small thing! It’s so easy to give up when something doesn’t quite work or go to plan. But Mia was determined to find a way to reach her goals; she never let the fear of failing keep her from giving it a go. Looking back, Mia said, “Enrolling with Oxbridge was always going to be a huge step for me. Yes, I still experienced setbacks through my course due to my mental health, it didn’t just go away. There were days I felt like I’d never qualify, but in those moments, I turned to my tutor, my family and friends. They gave me such amazing encouragement and support to carry on and then it just got easier.”

“For me personally, it was always my lack of confidence and self-belief that was holding me back. I knew it was something I needed to overcome, not just to finish my course but to be successful in the job role afterwards. In the past year, I’ve really focused on my strengths. I know my main strength is my ability to make a difference to children’s learning. I’ve also become better at being part of a team and others have described me as determined, driven, and made for this career. Now, I can honestly say I believe I am on the right path, I believe I am good at what I do and I believe in myself. I know I can achieve anything I set my mind to.”

### **The Future is Bright**

Mia was thrilled after submitting her last assignment for marking.



“Now that I’ve qualified, I’ve promised myself I will NEVER doubt my abilities again! I’ve learnt that with the right support and people around you, anything is possible. I hope to work as a Teaching Assistant part-time from September. Also, I’ve recently been accepted for a place at the Open University to start my BA Honours Primary Education degree!

So that means I’ll be gaining more experience on the job whilst achieving

a higher-level qualification to teach unsupervised. For now, I’m just proud of my journey so far and excited for where my career will take me next.”

We hope Mia’s story has inspired you. Her advice for those of you that struggle with self-doubt is to remember, “anything is possible and although taking the first step is daunting, it’s so exciting once you get started. Just go for it, it will all be worth it in the end.”

## ***Alexandra Strong***

### ***Student with The School of Health – alternative and complementary therapies***

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“Alexandra is one of those special School of Health students whom you just know that you will never forget. We were unanimous here in her being our first choice for Student of the Year.

Her severe mental challenges mean she was hospitalised for 5 years, is on medication and is now living in an assisted home. She is just 27. And yet Alex found the courage to come to our office to find out about homeopathy in January 2016. Barely able to look us in the eye, I spoke largely to her mother at that time, but it was clear that Alex was present and engaged.

None of us knew how she would cope. But here we are two and a half years later, and Alex is regularly

and consistently producing fantastic work. Her pace is faster than many home study students and she is nearing the end of Year Two. Whilst her confidence is extremely low and she is aware of her limitations, she marches forwards regardless with a determination of spirit I



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feel we could all learn from.

Her tutor Jude has been the perfect match, and I see Alex thriving and growing at each step with Jude's incredible care and attention. We manage her anxiety by delivering the course in small bites, Units sent one by one, and I send her gentle encouragement when she worries before each Unit is posted out. We always share our pet stories with one another!

Alex surprised us all this year when she announced that she would like to come to the School's May event with Rajan Sankaran, our biggest event ever with nearly 200 people. Not only did she attend,

but she looked after our blind graduate, Laura, (and her dog) all weekend and she sat right in front of Rajan, at the front.

We never know what is next with Alex and she constantly impresses me with her courage and conviction and her ability to keep moving forwards in this challenging course which asks for a commitment on both a personal and practical level. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Alex is one of those students who get me out of bed in the morning and I feel so privileged to be able to walk beside her on this incredible journey".

### **The Certificate of Merit is our way of recognising the achievements of some of our Member Colleges' most remarkable students.**

The Certificate is very simple and has no monetary value, but it gives great pleasure to those who receive it - one student said that he mounted his on his study wall and looked at it whenever he felt his enthusiasm for learning slacken.

The nominations also gives us a fascinating insight into the lives of our students and their motives for learning.

We would like to urge all our Members to look out for remarkable stories among their learners, and nominate them for the Certificate.



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## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

### **AAT - The Association of Accounting Technicians**

[www.aat.org.uk](http://www.aat.org.uk)  
020 37352468

### **ABC AWARDS**

[www.abcawards.co.uk](http://www.abcawards.co.uk)  
0115 854 1620

### **HIGHGROUND**

07951 495 272  
<https://highground-uk.org>

### **ICB - The Insitute of Certified Bookkeepers**

[www.bookkeepers.org.uk](http://www.bookkeepers.org.uk)  
020 7398 4440

### **THE MARINE SOCIETY**

[www.marine-society.org](http://www.marine-society.org)  
020 7654 7050

### **NEBOSH**

[www.nebosh.org.uk](http://www.nebosh.org.uk)  
0116 263 4700

### **PETbc - The Pet Education, Training and Behaviour Council**

[www.petbc.org.uk](http://www.petbc.org.uk)

### **The Prisoners' Education Trust**

[www.prisonerseducation.org.uk](http://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk)  
0203 752 5680

### **RFS - The Royal Forestry Society**

[www.rfs.org.uk](http://www.rfs.org.uk)  
01295 678588

### **RHS - The Royal Horticultural Society**

[www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)  
01483 226500

## LIFE AND HONORARY MEMBERS

**Al Vanden Akker**

**Ian Campbell**

**Peter Fisher**

**John Mercer**

**Christopher Middleton**

**Diana Nadin**

**Mike Rigby**

**Carol Vick**

**Walter Vick**

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## MEMBER COLLEGES

### **The Animal Care College**

[www.animalcarecollege.co.uk](http://www.animalcarecollege.co.uk)  
0800 041 8500

### **ATC (Accounting Training College)**

[www.accountingtrainingcollege.org.uk](http://www.accountingtrainingcollege.org.uk)  
0800 988 0065

### **The BSY Group**

[www.bsygroup.co.uk](http://www.bsygroup.co.uk)  
0800 731 9271

### **Careers in Travel (Digital Sea)**

(website currently under reconstruction)  
0845 643 8442

### **Distance Learning Centre**

[www.distance-learning-centre.co.uk](http://www.distance-learning-centre.co.uk)  
0845 129 7238

### **DLA Ltd**

[www.distancelearningassociation.co.uk](http://www.distancelearningassociation.co.uk)  
0114 2326279

### **Esoteric College**

[www.esotericcollege.com](http://www.esotericcollege.com)  
01672 511427

### **Fitness Courses College**

[www.fitnesscoursescollege.co.uk](http://www.fitnesscoursescollege.co.uk)  
0800 781 6188

### **Foot Health Practitioner College**

[www.fhpcollege.co.uk](http://www.fhpcollege.co.uk)  
01553 768661

### **HCC (Horticultural Correspondence College)**

[www.hccollege.org.uk](http://www.hccollege.org.uk)  
0800 083 9191

### **Health and Safety Training College**

[www.healthandsafetytrainingcollege.org.uk](http://www.healthandsafetytrainingcollege.org.uk)  
0800 977 4007

### **Ideal Schools**

[www.idealschools.co.uk](http://www.idealschools.co.uk)  
0141 248 5200

### **iPhotography Course**

[www.iPhotographyCourse.com](http://www.iPhotographyCourse.com)  
0845 643 8442

### **London Art College**

[www.londonartcollege.co.uk](http://www.londonartcollege.co.uk)  
0800 3280 465

### **NCT National College of Technology**

[www.nctonline.net](http://www.nctonline.net)  
08456 345 445

### **Oxbridge**

[www.oxbridge.uk](http://www.oxbridge.uk)  
0121 630 3000

### **Premier School of Building**

[www.premierschool.co.uk](http://www.premierschool.co.uk)  
01244 311609

### **Regent Academy**

[www.regentacademy.com](http://www.regentacademy.com)  
0800 378 281

### **The School of Health**

[www.schoolofhealth.com](http://www.schoolofhealth.com)  
01453 765956

### **The UK College of Personal Development**

<https://ukcpd.co.uk>  
01793 511 180

### **Write Story Books for Children**

[www.WriteStoryBooksForChildren.com](http://www.WriteStoryBooksForChildren.com)  
0845 643 8442

# **The Association of Distance Learning Colleges**

## **Code of Ethics**

Members of the Association pledge themselves to maintain the highest standard of integrity in all their dealings and, in particular, they undertake:

1. To ensure that any information they give about the choice of a career, the prospects in a particular career or a prospective student's studies shall be accurate to the best of their knowledge, and that any advice they give to prospective students and others shall be given in good faith and the best interests of the persons to whom the advice is tendered.
2. To take every reasonable care to enrol students only for courses that are suited to their individual needs and educational status, or for tuition for examinations for which the students are likely to be eligible.
3. To inform students in their prospectuses and/or enrolment application forms of the conditions on which they are enrolled and to include in advertisements only statements which accurately reflect such conditions.
4. To make fair regulations governing their relationship with students, and to treat equitably those who, through circumstances beyond their control, are unable to comply strictly with their regulations.
5. To provide efficient tutorial service, to maintain adequate and appropriately qualified tutorial and administrative staff and to issue to their students without undue delay adequate and reasonably up to date tutorial literature and instruction suitable to each student's needs.
6. To encourage their students to complete their courses of study and to do everything reasonably possible to enable the students to derive full benefit therefrom.
7. To issue only certificates or diplomas that fairly represent the instruction given and not to make any statement or to imply that any such certificates or diplomas are equivalent to a degree or to a certificate awarded by a recognised examining body.
8. To maintain the highest ethical standards in their publicity by making no statement in any advertisement, prospectus or publicity literature, or by correspondence or orally, that is knowingly untrue or wilfully misleading; and in particular by publishing no examination results or statistics or particulars of their tutorial service of staff that are knowingly inaccurate or misleading.
9. To encourage fair, dignified and honourable competition.
10. To ensure that all examinations and assessments related to accredited courses are administered and supervised to the standards as laid down by the appropriate external body.
11. To prepare and maintain a record of the working procedures of the business that can be readily available to a responsible person in the event of the sudden death or major illness of the principle manager of the business. According to the set up of the business alternative arrangements are acceptable. The Association is prepared to hold confidentially a copy of such a document.
12. To arrange for the Association to be notified immediately if such an incident occurs that might cause the business activities to be in jeopardy.
13. To ensure that their staffs are acquainted with this code, that they are given all facilities for complying with it, and are encouraged to honour it in the spirit as well as the letter.