

**Barnsley College**  
**Student Protection Plan 2021-22**  
**UKPRN 10000536**  
**Church Street Campus**  
**Church Street**  
**Barnsley**  
**S70 2AN**



**Contact:** Andrea Clarke, Director of Quality (Higher Education)  
andrea.clarke@barnsley.ac.uk

## **1. Introduction**

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires higher education providers to maintain and publish a Student Protection Plan. This plan aims to protect students' interests in the event of material changes such as programme closures or changes. The plan sets out how the College will mitigate against potential risks to the quality and continuation of programmes.

The College has successfully delivered higher education programmes over a number of years and our Student Protection Plan builds on this experience and is intended to assure current and future students of the quality and continuation of their programme.

The College will have in place arrangements to protect the student interest when material changes occur. Depending on the circumstances this may include:

- The commitment to "Teach Out" programme(s) for existing students
- Offering students an alternative programme / facility / venue
- Making arrangements for affected students to change to an alternative provider at the same point in their studies
- Making full or partial refunds **only** where the College is unable to support continuation of studies

## **2. Structure of the Student Protection Plan**

The Student Protection Plan outlines the types of risks and explains the measures in place to mitigate their impact. The plan acknowledges that there is not one single measure that will be suitable for all and will take into account the individual needs of all students.

This plan forms an important part of your [Student Charter](#).

Potential risks and actions to mitigate/minimise are detailed in Appendix 1.

To minimise potential risks to continuity the College operates a robust Business Planning and Performance Management Process. Together these ensure that appropriate resources (including staffing) are in place to deliver the programmes, potential risks are identified and actions taken to mitigate them through our risk register.

### **3. Closure of programmes**

Closure of programmes are rare, but in such an event the College is committed to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to complete their studies. This is facilitated through a commitment to 'Teach Out'. Teach Out refers to the phased closure of a programme to ensure that the impact upon students is minimal and that students are able to complete their studies. There may be certain circumstances where teach out is not possible but this will only be in exceptional circumstances. In the event of this the College will support students by offering transfers to alternative programmes within the College or to alternative programmes with other providers. This is a last resort, which will be avoided if at all possible.

### **4. Maintenance of the Student Protection Plan**

The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure currency and appropriateness. This will involve both staff and student consultation.

### **5. Communication with Students**

The Student Protection Plan will be available on the website for both current and future students. It will be drawn to the attention of future students in our offer letter correspondence. Any changes to the plan will be notified via the [College website](#), student Virtual Learning Environment (HE general area) and the Microsoft Teams HE portal.

Programme handbooks will contain introductory information relating to the Student Protection Plan and signposting to this document.

In the event of any of the risks identified materialising the College will communicate with the students at the earliest opportunity. This will be no later than **5 working days** of a decision being reached by the College. This will be via both verbal and written communication. Students will be signposted to our Complaints Policy and Procedure should they wish to make a complaint regarding the way the College is implementing the Student Protection Plan.

The College will liaise with affected student groups regarding mitigation measures, together with the Students' Union. Students will be able to discuss the matter on a group and/or individual basis with a named contact. Independent advice and support will be available to all students.

### **6. Communication with Staff**

The plan will be available for staff on both the [College website](#) and the staff intranet. Staff will be briefed about the Student Protection Plan and any subsequent changes annually.

The Student Protection Plan is referenced on both our [Course Changes and Programme Closure](#) and Higher Education [Refund and Compensation](#) policies.

### **7. Refund and Compensation Policy**

The College has a [Higher Education Fees, Refund and Compensation Policy](#) which details the circumstances in which refunds and compensation will be given in the event of a

programme being discontinued. Refunds and compensation are considered as a last resort and the College will do everything possible to ensure that these are not necessary.

The Barnsley College Refund and Compensation policy has made provision for:

- Refunds for students in receipt of a tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company
- Refunds for students who pay their own tuition fees
- Refunds for students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor
- Additional travel costs (for students affected by a change in the location of programme)
- A commitment to honour student bursaries

The Barnsley College Refund and Compensation policy also includes the provision of payment of compensation to cover instances such as:

- Tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer programme or provider

In order to meet any financial implications of our Student Protection Plan, Barnsley College has adopted a Student Refund and Compensation Fund in the unlikely event of this plan being invoked. This fund will be established from tuition fee income.

## **8. External References**

This policy has been designed with consideration of the following guidance:

[Office for Students Regulatory Advice 2: Registration of current providers for 2019-2020 Higher Education course changes and closures: statement of good practice](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority- [Higher Education Consumer Law Advice for Providers and Students](#)

## **9. Related Policies and Documents**

[Barnsley College Higher Education Terms and Conditions](#)

[Barnsley College Higher Education Fees Policy](#)

[Barnsley College Higher Education Course Changes and Closure Policy](#)

[Barnsley College Complaint Policy and Procedure](#)

### Appendix 1 RISK REGISTER AFFECTING PROGRAMME CONTINUATION

Appendix 1 lists a number of risks which may affect the continuation of programmes. This list is not exhaustive but details the more probable risks and the measures taken by the College to mitigate their impact.

RISK	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigating Actions
<p><b>Programme Suspension/Closure</b> <b>High</b></p> <p>Enrolment to a programme is suspended, most likely due to insufficient applications</p>	Likely	Harmful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Robust Business Planning cycle</li> <li>2. Robust Performance Monitoring process</li> <li>3. Monitoring of applications during application cycle</li> <li>4. Early notification to potential applicants</li> <li>5. Identification of alternative courses for applicants</li> <li>6. Teach out of current students</li> <li>7. Communication with current students to minimise concern</li> <li>8. Course Changes and Programme Closure policy outlines consistent procedures to follow</li> <li>9. Refund and Compensation policy in place</li> </ol>
RISK	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigating Actions
<p><b>Major Material Changes to Programmes</b> <b>Medium</b></p> <p>Combining delivery routes / pathways within programmes</p> <p>Change of validating partner</p>	Likely	Minor Harm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Robust internal and external approval processes to ensure currency of programme</li> <li>2. Annual Planning cycle to ensure quality and approval minor modifications (avoiding curriculum drift)</li> <li>3. Changes usually implemented for future cohorts <b>not</b> current students. In extreme circumstances, if affecting current students – would only take effect following consultation and approval by student body</li> <li>4. Consultation with students</li> <li>5. Early communication of planned changes to both prospective and current students (if applicable).</li> <li>6. Course Changes and Programme Closure policy outlines consistent procedures to follow</li> </ol>

<b>RISK</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>
<p><b>Loss of key staff (temporary or permanent)</b> <b>High</b></p> <p>Loss of staff may impact on specialist delivery. Planned losses include workforce reduction or restructuring activities. Unplanned loss includes staff sickness and resignations</p>	Likely	Harmful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Robust Business planning process ensures sufficiency of staffing at planning</li> <li>2. Seek temporary or permanent staffing replacements internally or externally</li> <li>3. Provide cover from existing staffing</li> <li>4. Make temporary adjustments to delivery or content (such as the College VLE, Microsoft Teams)</li> </ol>
<b>RISK</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>
<p><b>Withdrawal of validation arrangements from a partner HEI</b> <b>High</b></p>	Possible	Extreme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Barnsley College has established relationships with validating HEIs</li> <li>2. Barnsley College currently has 5 partner HEIs and a Pearson Higher National offer, and could look to utilise existing partnerships to establish a replacement programme(s)</li> <li>3. Work with validating HEI on exit arrangements to ensure that students are not affected and are able to complete their programme.</li> </ol>
<b>RISK</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>
<p><b>Unexpected campus closure – full or part</b> Loss of specialist teaching facilities <b>High</b></p>	Possible	Extreme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The majority of HE provision is based at the Church Street Campus; there are no plans to move any provision</li> <li>2. Property strategy in place to ensure that any move is well planned and involves student consultation</li> <li>3. Seek alternate premises (within College or externally)</li> <li>4. Make temporary adjustments to delivery or content (such as the College VLE, Microsoft Teams)</li> <li>5. Specific consideration of impact for the different needs, characteristics and circumstances of students.</li> </ol>