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| **Digital Development Programme for Adult Community Education Providers (Digital ACE)** |

Top Tips from the sector for the sector

Digital ACE Policy – Top Tips

1. Don’t over complicate your policies. They should be user-friendly, useful and used.
2. Don’t feel you have to start from scratch – take what you have and adapt it. Your organisation may already have digital policies you can use as a starting point.
3. Instead of separate sub policies – you may prefer to add a digital subsection to your existing policy.
4. Make sure you know who you need to liaise with in your authorising body to approve/sign off your policies – as required. (If a local authority provider, is it just at officer level or does it need political engagement?)
5. Communicate your digital policy to staff and learners and make sure that they know their role or responsibilities in implementing it.
6. Make sure your policies don’t overlap but ensure that they all align with each other.
7. Learn and adapt. Whilst a policy highlights one’s intent in terms of parameters, values and principles, it should also be a living document and not a dogmatic code.
8. Make sure you use the policy cycle and evaluate what is working and what isn’t.
9. Include the most stringent key policy measures in FAQ on your website.
10. Seek peer support and best practice in the sector.

Safeguarding and Prevent – Top Tips

1. Organisational culture is key to keeping learners, staff and visitors safe online. A Safeguarding Group with representatives from across the organisation is a useful way to coordinate adjustments to your policy and practice.
2. You should involve HR, where relevant, when agreeing policy and procedures to keeping your staff safe online.
3. Give learners time and space to reflect on the COVID-19 situation in class. This should help them to ‘be in a good space’ for learning and may prompt disclosures.
4. Ensure your tutors frequently reinforce the messages on e-safety, safeguarding and Prevent, and provide regular updates.
5. Tutors and support staff should adapt how they listen to learnersusing their professional curiosity and gut instinct when they feel things are not right online.
6. Communicate your safeguarding and Prevent messages to learners in as many ways as you can online, including through induction slides or videos and embedded in course learning materials.
7. Provide learners with opportunities to talk to someone confidentially, such as through a tutor staying logged on for 10 mins or signposting learners to pastoral, safeguarding teams.
8. Provide regular updates to staff on local information, such as scamming, local radicalisation threats, online fraud, online grooming, gaming etc.
9. Provide opportunities for learners to engage with staff whilst they are working remotely, such as through an ‘open virtual room’, welfare call, or an online welfare form for self-referrals.
10. Keep staff safe online such as by providing mentoring support and guidance on home or lone working.

Developing Resources – Top Tips

1. Work together to understand the impact of the teaching, learning and assessment being offered to learners.
2. Give staff and learners support for any technical issues.
3. Introduce features and facilities on systems incrementally.
4. Check how resources appear on different hardware, e.g. laptop, phones or tablets.
5. Experiment and learn from your mistakes.
6. Plan for the failure of systems, e.g. connectivity, equipment, systems – have a plan B.
7. Less is more – too much teacher talk is often a weakness of classroom-based teaching – this is an even greater challenge online.
8. Help staff to provide mutual support, helping to reduce anxiety and develop a shared experience and understanding which helps to build confidence.
9. Build resources in small blocks so they are easier to adapt, share and re-use.
10. Don’t re-invent the wheel – use what you did in your face-to-face classroom and adapt it and use or adapt resources and ideas from others.

Quality Assurance – Top Tips

1. Ask the question, ‘How is our online learning different from face-to-face provision?’and then ask is it meeting our (high) expectations? Then go one step further, how do we know?
2. Keep it simple. Think first about what you need to quality assure and what capabilities and tools you need to ensure that you have an effective online experience.
3. There is no need to start from scratch. Build on your current quality assurance procedures so that you quality assure your online provision.
4. Make sure that all your quality assurance activities include your subcontracted/ partnership provision. Check that your online quality assurance arrangements are compatible with the technology used by your subcontractors, partner providers and work-based provision.
5. Quality assurance is about bringing about improvements**.** The best way is to identify and share good practice in teaching and learning. Recording online learning sessions can provide a ready-made training tool.
6. Encourage online peer assessment.
7. Create templated documents that cover online induction, safeguarding etc. to ensure consistency and support tutors. This also provides a benchmark for course expectations around course/learner induction and documentation.
8. Having more quality assurance tools is not always best. Question and test which ones are appropriate and effective.
9. Test new sessions and platforms beforehand – have a quality assurance check list, try a mock audience, use the rehearse setting in PowerPoint.
10. Set a standard for staff’s digital skills to a level required by your organisation and monitor this.

Low Skilled Learners – Top Tips

1. Adapt your delivery approaches to suit your learners**.** Be flexible in the way you deliver online and your use of technology.
2. Make people feel comfortable and safe with online learning. Provide opportunities for one-to-one discussion to reassure people. Offer flexible and friendly support to learners in different ways and be clear about when support is available.
3. Offer pre-course sessions to go through essential skills of online learning. Provide joining information in simple language on paper, by video and by phone. Be patient.
4. Adapt your teaching approaches for online – length, amount of content, visuals, methods of assessment. Have clear messages so learners know what to expect and what actions to take.
5. Create videos for both in class and additional work, including practical elements and demonstrations so learners can access them freely.
6. Develop ground rules and basic study skills for on-line learning to reassure learners.
7. Develop the skills of all staff and volunteers and use them flexibly to support learners and other staff. You could create new volunteer or paid roles of Digital Champions or Tech Buddies. Train LSAs to support online.
8. Adapt your approaches for different learners. Remove pressure on learners by differentiating assessment. One-to-one contact, separate from taught sessions, helps tutors to assess need and support learners.
9. Build in opportunities to create a community through less formal activity, discussions, chats and social interactions. Use social media to engage people through fun and interesting short activities.
10. Don’t underestimate your learners’ potential to engage in online learning! Work with the positive. 'Everyone can do something; find out what that is and work from there'.

Underpinning Technology – Top Tips

1. Build from what you have.
2. Take your staff with you.
3. Test and review systems with roll out and beyond (build in time delays initially).
4. Build on staff’s skills by using existing staff who are IT savvy to deliver training and development.
5. Set up a student buddy system so students support each other.
6. Develop a group of digital champions to support staff.
7. Systems should be easy to navigate and support users with weakest IT skills and most barriers.
8. Build in feedback systems.
9. Use web-based platforms as they can be accessed from tablets and phones.
10. Consider working with partner organisations such as the local university to open up your offer more widely.