



GRŴP COLEGAU

NPTC

GROUP OF COLLEGES

THE GROUP

more than just an education





THE GROUP

In 2021-22 NPTC Group of Colleges celebrates 90 years of excellence in education and training.

The NPTC Group of Colleges came into existence on 1 August 2013 as a result of the merger between Neath Port Talbot College, which was originally two separate colleges until 1999, Afan College and Neath College; and Coleg Powys, which was originally three colleges until 1989, Montgomery College, Radnorshire College and College Howell Harris.

The history of each of the Colleges that form the Group is incredible. It was on September 28, 1931 that the Neath Mining and Technical Institute opened its doors as the industrial revolution continued. Those humble beginnings were just the start of the story that would take the College on the path it finds itself today.

All the Colleges in the Group have their own story to tell too and include Margam Technical College which opened its doors in 1952, to support steelworks apprentices. Ye Wells Hotel in Llandrindod Wells that became a training college after the war in 1947, and then a residential school for hearing impaired students in 1950. It wasn't until 1973 that it became a FE college. Brecon College opened in January 1965 as Coleg Howell Harris. Newtown College was purpose built in 1981 after changing from Montgomery College, and Hafren opened its doors in 1983, and they are now all part of the NPTC Group of Colleges - one of the largest groups of colleges and education providers in Wales in terms of student numbers and has an annual turnover of circa £65 million.

The NPTC Group of Colleges provides almost every conceivable vocational area of education and training, including an outstanding Sixth Form Academy based at Neath College. The Group delivers a wide range of bespoke training for industry and business all over Wales and England via the Business Development Unit. The College is also the contract holder for Skills Academy Wales. This is a partnership of eight very experienced training providers who deliver between them a £14 million work-based learning contract, one of the largest public sector contracts in Wales. The Group also owns and runs an international language school in Hampshire, LSI Portsmouth.

The school has been independently assessed as 'exceeding expectations in all areas' in the recent ISI inspection of private Further Education Colleges. It is ranked No 1 in the UK by The British Council and the ISI and thousands of overseas students attend the College from almost 50 different EU and non-EU countries.

The Group covers over one-third of the land mass of Wales. It operates on four community colleges: Afan College, Brecon Beacons College, Neath College and Newtown College. The Group also has smaller centres including: Pontardawe College; Maesteg Construction Centre; Swansea Construction Centre; Llandrindod Wells Campus; and a state-of-the-art Sports Academy in Llandarcy Park. Geographically, this means that there are approximately 100 miles between our furthest campus north and our furthest campus south. However, our subsidiary companies also operate at various venues in Swansea, Llandarcy, Llanelli, Swindon and Portsmouth and were set up in a bid to reduce reliance on government funding. They include LSI Portsmouth; Llandarcy Park Limited, which was the company that operated the site where the College's Llandarcy Academy of Sport is located and it now owns the premises at Llandarcy Park as opposed to previously operating under a lease arrangement; JobsForceWales Ltd; Learn Kit Limited; JGR Educate; Green Labyrinth (including EngageCRM); NPTC Enterprises, which is a holding company for social enterprise opportunities; and the Cycle Academy Wales.

PROVISION AND DELIVERY

The NPTC Group of Colleges has an outstanding university education programme delivered in partnership with the University of South Wales, University of Wales Trinity St David, Glyndŵr University and Pearson. We deliver BSc (Hons) and BA (Hons) degrees, Foundation Degrees, HNCs HNDs, Certificates/Diplomas of Higher Education, the Certificate in Education (PCE) and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

Successful achievement data published by the Department for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government indicates that the NPTC Group of Colleges has some of the best results in Wales for post-16 education and training.

EXAM SUCCESS

In the face of another year disrupted by the global pandemic, the College achieved an incredible overall pass rate of 100 per cent. The College also gained a record number of A* results.

The Colleges A*- A are an exceptional 34.6 per cent with students achieving a remarkable 100 per cent pass rate in all 38 A Level subjects, over half achieved A*- B grades and 82 per cent achieved A*- C grades.

For the students who followed the Gifted and Talented Excellence (GATE) programme it is also good news with 92% achieving A*- A grades and 100% achieved A*- B grades. Our overall A*- E pass rate at A level stands at 100% and 101 students achieved triple distinctions grades in the Extended National Diploma qualifications, with 33 of our students achieving the highest possible grade profile of triple distinction stars (D*D*D*) which is the equivalent to three A* at A Level.

Eleven of those top passes were in sport, which is even more amazing, as Llandarcy Academy of Sport was transferred to the Health Board as a temporary Nightingale hospital during the pandemic. In addition to this, a staggering 354 learners successfully achieved the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate with an outstanding pass rate of 100%, with 68% achieving A* to C grade.

The Group has an excellent reputation for: academic results; the quality of teaching and learning; its support for students; its work with industry and its work in the community. It is also renowned nationally for the sporting success of its current and past students and for the achievements of its catering students in winning many national competitions including Skills competitions and challenges, and it was voted as the Best Training Provider in Wales and in the top ten of the entire UK at the recent School Leavers Awards 2020. The School Leaver Awards is unique, in that the majority of the winners are nominated due to feedback given directly from apprentices enrolled on their programmes, rather than relying on an independent judging panel. The awards celebrate the top employers and training providers for school leavers on apprenticeship programmes. The NPTC Group of Colleges was also ranked as the second Best Further Education College for Apprenticeship Training in the UK and tenth in the UK for Best Learning Experience.

We pursue an active 'accessible and inclusive college' policy and provide for students with Additional Learning Needs of all ages. Students with Additional Learning Needs can choose to follow foundation studies, pre-vocational or mainstream courses. An extensive Student Support service that includes student finance, wellbeing and study support and specialist assessment and support services operates across the college sites, through onsite and online support options. The Group has in the last year been presented with the Careers Wales Quality Award for careers education and guidance and the Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support. We have also gained Beacon Award Status twice, for the delivery of Business Education, through its business practice companies, who have won international awards and also for the outstanding support we provide for looked after children and care leavers. The College has recently been shortlisted for the TES FE Awards for the support it provides to its armed forces veterans and the families of those that are serving. It has also reached the finals of the CIPD Wales Awards for Best Learning and Development/ Organisation Development category and for the GovNewsDirect Smarter Working Lives Awards for Digital Transformation.

FACILITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

The Group has witnessed a major estates building and reconfiguration programme over the years. This includes an £8.5m extension to the sports facility at the Llandarcy Academy of Sport. The facility provides a hard court arena and has 150-seating capacity, an outside multi-use games area, a 60m six-lane indoor bounding track, outdoor third generation IRB approved artificial pitch, climbing wall, classroom space, ICT suite and a library. We have outstanding links with the National Governing Bodies for sport and professional sports teams such as the Ospreys and Swansea City Football Club and the Celtic Dragons. We have had visits from international rugby and netball teams using the facilities for training purposes and matches. More recently, the facility was transformed into a 340-bed field hospital and handed over to Swansea Bay Health Board in response to the COVID pandemic. The facility has now been handed back to the Group and is once again fully functional.

The A/B block of Neath College on Dŵr-y-Felin Road, which is known as our maths and science building, has been completely transformed. The three-storey refurbishment includes a new glazed extension and complete recladding of the existing building.





The interior has seen a complete transformation with a new open plan student hub where students and staff can work or relax. The ultra-modern facility has touchscreen capability, free Wi-Fi and charging points as well as a Starbucks Coffee shop and catering facilities, and a lift to allow access to the upper floors. The sustainable refurbishment has improved energy efficiency too on Neath College in line with the College's commitment to improving energy use and the reduction of CO2 emissions. The refurbishment won the coveted 2019 Education Buildings Award for the "best student experience."

In 2020, the College expanded its vocational provision in Neath College by building a new £1,100,000 purpose built brick workshop for the construction department. It means students have additional covered floor space where they can take part in practical sessions including brickwork and tiling.

The Group is currently also involved in two exciting building schemes that are set to transform education in Neath Port Talbot and Brecon. In Port Talbot, the proposal is to build a new campus as part of the Harbourside development and regeneration scheme for Port Talbot. This is part of the wide-ranging development linked to the new £110m peripheral distributor road and the new £10m Parkway Railway Station. The new campus will accommodate what is currently at Afan, including our centres of excellence in Health and Social Care and our Building Engineering Services. Hair, Beauty and Holistic Therapies will be located in a "lifestyle" building. The building will be run as a self-supporting business providing a key service sector to the town centre. The main educational buildings will be a state-of-the-art resource. The development will not have the traditional refectory facilities, although it will have a franchised specialist coffee shop. Instead, all of the 1,000 students per day will use the existing town centre at Port Talbot, providing much needed life and investment to the area.

In Brecon, work has already been completed on the refurbishment of the Tourist Information Centre as a community based venue. The CWTCH opened its doors to the community earlier this year offering state of the art computing for students and the public with Ultra-fast 1GB internet connection; video conferencing facilities; flexible working areas and teaching spaces.

There are further plans to relocate Brecon Beacons College into Brecon town. Discussions are currently taking place over the acquisition of two buildings in the town. We will be able to give our students access directly to the town centre and the facilities provided by local business on a daily basis.

The NPTC Group of Colleges delivers Land-based Studies from Fronlas Farm in Newtown and Cefnybryn Farm at Sarn. The teaching complex and the main farm complex are situated less than 0.5 miles from the main Newtown College site. The teaching area consists of a modern purpose built teaching and administration block. The block gives access to four teaching rooms, an IT suite, cloak and shower rooms, a common room and staff office facilities. There is also significant workshop space for agricultural engineering and agricultural machinery provision.

The College farm has a range of cattle and sheep housing and handling facilities and has benefitted recently from a new purpose built sheep housing facility which has enabled the farm to demonstrate up to date commercial practice in the housing and lambing of the sheep flock. Fronlas Farm at Newtown is 55 hectares and is mainly grassland. It is mainly an upland farm with small areas of lowland and varies between 130 and 230 metres area above sea level.

This unit provides grazing for the spring calving suckler herd and is the main area for winter forage conservation providing winter forage in the form of silage for the suckler cow herd, their progeny, the associated beef finishing enterprise and for the sheep during their winter housing period. All the winter livestock housing is situated at Fronlas Farm. The farm area includes small areas of woodland, steep banks, riverside, footpaths, dykes and a Celtic Enclosure. These are well utilised as part of various countryside projects.

Fronlas farm is run in conjunction with Cefnybryn Farm at Sarn which is 62 hectares and is an improved upland/hill farm. This is used mainly for sheep grazing with some areas used for winter forage conservation and also small areas of root crops for finishing lambs in the autumn months. The farm has basic livestock handling facilities and is used by students to carry out many of the annual sheep husbandry tasks such as shearing. This farm rises from 300 to over 400 metres above sea level.

COMMERCIAL

Our commercial income is increasingly important to the Group and we embark on a number of ways to attract non-core income. Training for employers is provided by the Colleges' commercial arm under the Business Development Unit (BDU).

The BDU provides bespoke training and development solutions for employers and businesses. It strives to offer an excellent user experience to ensure employers and individuals are receiving the training necessary to stay ahead whilst building relationships and developing partnerships to benefit the region.

The BDU has adapted its delivery during COVID and introduced more E-Learning options.

The College is also very successful in tendering for work through the Sector Priorities Fund and other open tenders. This is a successful and diverse part of the Group which operates totally commercially without the support of core funding. Our commercial course information can be found by logging on to www.nptcgroup.ac.uk/business.

The Group also runs Hafren, the premier theatre, conference and meeting venue in Newtown, mid-Wales. Seating up to 556, the auditorium has full staging, sound and lighting facilities, raked public seating, and a discrete "Mobile Connect" state of the art, Bluetooth hearing assist system. A full on-site professional technical service ensures the optimum sound, lighting and staging for your presentation. With catering to suit all requirements, the venue offers a business-like and professional environment, flexible in accommodating a large range in attendance numbers from 50 upwards. The theatre gallery- bar can be used as a small meeting area (up to 20 people), an exhibition space, and as a break-out room or for catering/ refreshments. The Venue Foyer is also available for receptions and small displays.

There is a suite of three conference/meeting rooms available accommodating between 10 and 70 people. These facilities can be used as additional rooms for events taking place at Hafren. In line with new legislation for public buildings, the heating and Air Ventilation System is being replaced to accommodate the reduction in airborne diseases act, so that all users of the facility are safe.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

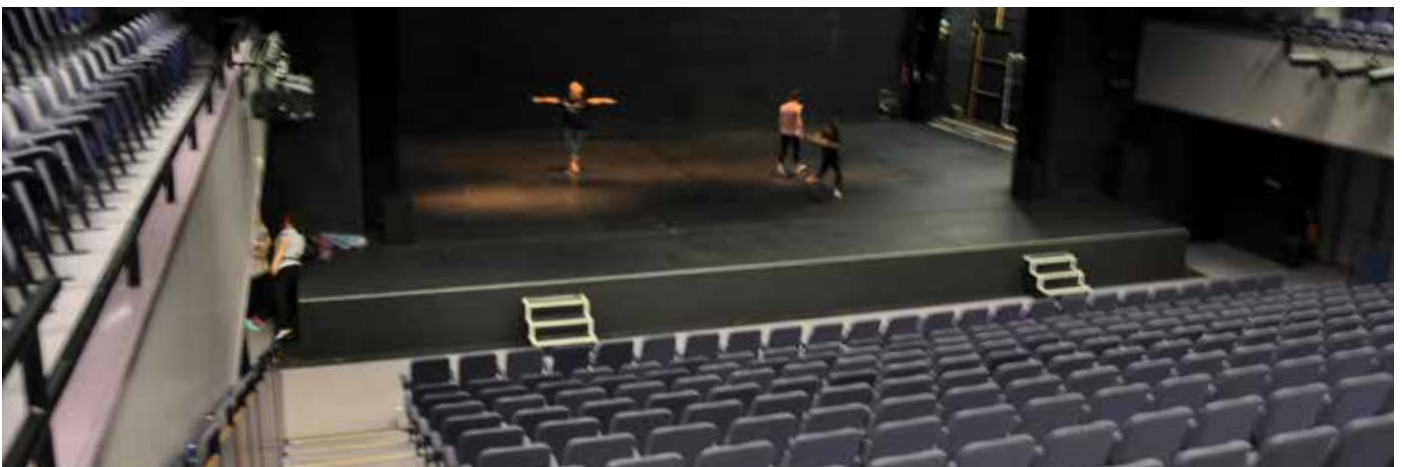
The NPTC Group of Colleges is committed to working through real and effective partnerships with many other organisations. As well as having strong working relationships with both Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Powys County Council the College works closely with Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service. Partnership working in the Neath Port Talbot County Borough is considered to be an exemplar in Wales. In Powys, there are also effective relationships with mid-Wales Businesses, the mid-Wales Work-based Learning consortium and the Mid Wales Manufacturing Group and further partnerships continue to be forged.

The Group strives to strengthen its links with the community and ensure it is recognised as a responsible business with ethical, environmental and community goals. It aims to do this by developing strong, collaborative relationships with our stakeholders and creating a sense of shared purpose built on fairness and sustainability, that empowers people with the skills they need to succeed in life, supports productivity and innovation of businesses and strengthens our communities' sense of place.

The Group aims to offer the best training, qualifications and accreditations to our learners, therefore we have shaped and built partnerships with other industry leaders to make sure we are able to deliver exceptional courses. Courses where our learners can learn not just the skills, but also gain the qualifications and accreditations to be able to use and excel, whether that's out in the field with drones or inside fitting fire doors.

The Group teaches the vital skills from the ground up through key industry areas, such as fire safety with courses on offer through the Group's very own Fire Academy. This Academy is currently being developed to offer a one-stop conduit for fire training, through a collaborative partnership of recognised expertise and skills.

The Group believes that close engagement between the further education sector, employers and the community will be a key part of the green industrial revolution. In terms of green jobs, we are entering a new skills challenge, a revolution of the new skills, which will become core over the next 10 years. We do not have all the answers or solutions, but approach the challenge through working with stakeholders, as we have done in the delivery of innovative fire safety procedures and hybrid cars for example.



We have already engaged with leading building engineering organisations and manufacturers, looking at competency levels needed and how best to deliver these skills for Wales and partnerships have been formed to find solutions.

The Group is on the Board of the optimised Retrofit Welsh Government programme, and chairs the skills and training group to support companies and individuals in the skills needed. The Group also chairs the Sustainability Supply Chain School in Wales, the only FE college partner in the UK and we are playing a leading role in skills training in UK sustainable practices.

Another key area is the built environment which is rapidly changing with Welsh Government launching the Optimised Retrofit Programme (OPR) as they play their part in aiming for net zero by testing a new approach to decarbonising Welsh homes. This programme will set the standard for retrofit schemes in Wales and has the potential to enable private homes to meet the 2050 decarbonisation target and deliver a green low carbon economy and create 15,000 new jobs in Wales over the next 10 years. Therefore, a skilled workforce is needed to be ready and prepared to meet industry standards and competencies.

Green jobs are not an overnight fix, we need to build a quality skills programme, which can only be achieved by working collectively to deliver for the region. These jobs will continue to develop, as equipment, materials and technology evolves, and we need to constantly adapt to meet this challenge. These partnerships also enforce our mission to work with organisations and companies to help build a greener future. By engaging with industry leaders in different key areas, we can look at the competency levels needed and how we can work together to support and develop courses and skilled workers which will meet the demand of the region.

GOVERNANCE

Governance is to do with those ideas, structures, and systems that shape the strategic direction and management of the College for the benefit of all its stakeholders – the students, their parents, current and future employers, the staff and the wider community of interests that are taken as whole reflect and represent Neath Port Talbot and Powys.

Governors, via the Corporation Board and its Committees, are responsible for the mission, strategic direction, and financial security of the College. The Senior Management Team, led by the CEO, is responsible for the strategic management of the College and implementation of Corporation policy.

Part of the management ethos of NPTC Group of Colleges is a commitment to openness, transparency, honesty, and accountability by putting as much information into the public domain as reasonable without compromising business confidentiality and the legal right of the individual.

The NPTC Group of Colleges is led by a strong and diverse Senior Management Team. The senior managers have always operated to a strong team ethic being mutually supportive and taking both individual and collective responsibility for the strategic development and general operation of the College. The Senior Team comprises of the Group's Chief Executive Officer; Deputy Chief Executive Officer; Vice Principal - Academic Services; Vice Principal - External Relations; Vice Principal - Financial Services; Vice Principal - Operational Services and the Assistant Principals for Quality; Curriculum; Students; Student Recruitment; HE; Worldwide Operations and Skills.

The work of the senior managers is supported by a group of senior middle managers. These individuals are key academic and functional unit managers who act as the interface between the strategic and operational domains. The College prides itself in the high qualifications and experience of all of the staff, including lecturers, assessors, instructors and all of the essential business support staff.



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