

NOVEMBER 2020

## COLLEGE REMAINS AT THE HEART OF ITS COMMUNITY

**BY MARION PLANT, OBE FCGI**  
PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE, NWSLC

While almost every aspect of our lives has changed during 2020, NWSLC remains at the heart of our communities, maintaining a constant presence for our students, and supporting them in ways that go beyond simply delivering skills and qualifications. This academic year has brought unprecedented challenges to the way we operate, and we have worked hard to make sure we comply with government guidance on social distancing. We have reduced the number of days on which our students are physically present in college and have invested extensively in technology to maintain continuity using 'mirror teaching' which enables those who are not present in college to participate in learning remotely.

As the impact of COVID-19 makes itself felt across the UK employment market, developing the right skills will improve our students' prospects and help them to secure fresh opportunities and start on the road to new careers.

We continue to support over 3,000 young people, 10,000 adults and 1,500 apprentices across a wide range of industry-related subjects at our six campuses – Nuneaton, Wigston, Hinckley, Harrowbrook, MIRA Technology Institute and at our Digital Skills Academy in Coventry.

**As valued members of our college community, our students benefit from:**

- Accredited qualifications that can be studied both online and on campus
- Wraparound support to help erase any barriers to studying
- Help with the cost of coming to college
- Routes into employment with local, regional, and national employers
- Help to make the transition from further to higher education.

**Our aim is to make it easier to access all the available options in one online space.**

**HERE WHEN YOU  
NEED IT MOST -  
WELCOME TO OUR...**

## COMMUNITY SKILLS HUB PART OF NWSLC

NWSLC has launched its Community Skills Hub in response to the Government's 'Plan for Jobs' which includes a package of measures and cash incentives for businesses and a new 'kickstart' scheme to fund jobs for young people at risk of long term unemployment. The Community Skills Hub will help to signpost individuals to a range of support as well as creating links between skilled jobseekers and vacancies that are hard to fill.

**Key opportunities include:**

- A new 12-week traineeship scheme for those not yet ready, or unable to find, an apprenticeship
- A wide range of apprenticeship opportunities with support to find vacancies and succeed in interviews
- Pathways to the new Kickstart Job Scheme for those at risk of long-term unemployment
- Free distance learning short courses leading to Level 2 qualifications that help individuals to improve their skills or retrain
- Opportunities to gain professional accredited qualifications
- Help with English and maths qualifications including both GCSEs and functional skills
- Ways to prepare for university and routes into higher-level studies.

**For more information visit our  
Community Skills Hub  
[nwslc.ac.uk/skills-hub](http://nwslc.ac.uk/skills-hub)**



# FORMER STUDENT WORKING AT THE **NHS** FRONTLINE

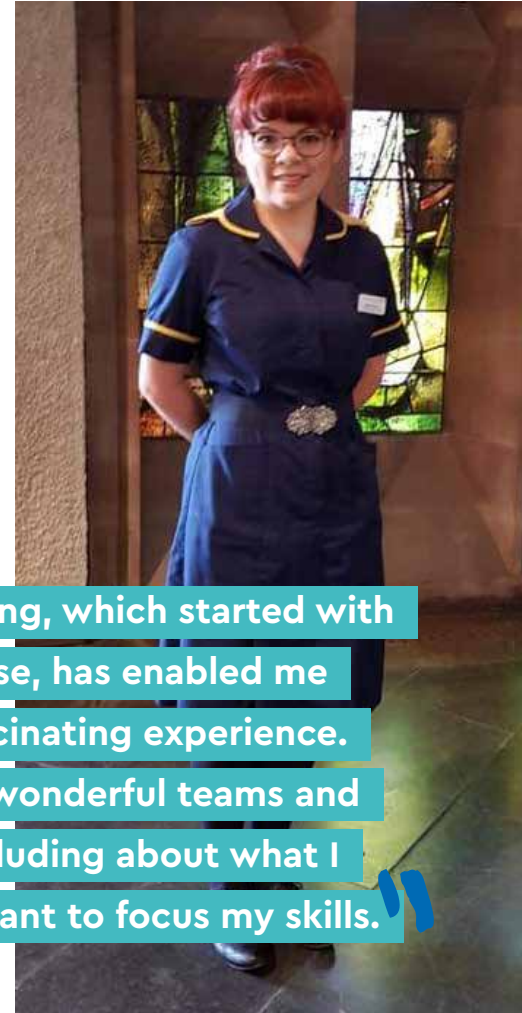
Katie Morrison's nursing experience was never in more demand than when she worked to support nurses returning to practice during the coronavirus pandemic. As a team leader at South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust, Katie and the team have been supporting colleagues in developing their knowledge and skills, helping them to feel safe as they tackled the challenges of COVID-19.

During a career with the NHS that has spanned over 14 years, Katie has become skilled in leadership, education, training and mentoring, and become qualified to Master's level. She credits the starting point of her career on her experience at NWSLC. Joining the college in 2000, Katie qualified in Health and Social Care and went on to study nursing at Southampton University. Katie's first post as a registered nurse was at Bassetlaw Hospital in the emergency admissions unit. Katie eventually moved back home to Nuneaton where she now works at Warwick Hospital.

Katie returned to study at Coventry University and became qualified in mentoring so that she could support

student nurses on placement enabling them to successfully develop their competencies and move on with their careers.

As a lead in Practice Development Team, Katie returned to education once more, completing an MA in health studies on a part-time basis at Coventry University and graduated in cap and gown at Coventry Cathedral. Katie now works with nurses and medical students, helping them to develop their clinical skills and also supports nurses from overseas to become registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.



**"The route I took into nursing, which started with my choice of college course, has enabled me to gain a great deal of fascinating experience. I have worked with some wonderful teams and have learned so much, including about what I really enjoy and where I want to focus my skills."**



## CHAPLAIN BRINGS COLLEGE COMMUNITY CLOSER

NWSLC is a nurturing community that offers all kinds of support to its staff and students including through its chaplaincy service which operates across all campuses. We talked to our chaplain, Rev Stephen Blyth, about his role. He said, "I act as a listening presence for everybody within the college, and also as a critical friend where required, helping people to make sense of what they are experiencing at this difficult time. Although I am not currently on site as much as usual due to coronavirus measures, I try to make contact with as many colleagues and students as I can. From a practical point of view, I oversee a Food Bank service for those who need extra support. I lead our efforts to mark Remembrance in an appropriate way each year. I also publish regular Thoughtful Thursday articles for staff and highlight a range of festivals from around the world, helping everyone to explore new perspectives and learn something about themselves in the process." Rev Blyth is a minister of the Wesleyan Reform Union and attends Heath End church in Nuneaton.

# APPRENTICESHIP PUTS DESH IN POLE POSITION

As part of his exciting role with precision engineering company, MP Engineering UK Ltd, Hinckley, Desh Ramji helps to produce the highly complex components that the Formula 1 Red Bull team relies on to maintain the edge over its competitors. Having completed his advanced apprenticeship earlier this year, Desh now works as a junior manufacturing engineer.

Desh, 24, from Kirkby Mallory spent two years working to achieve his qualification attending college on a day release basis and completing projects at work and in the evenings at home. He has already worked on helping to produce parts for the Red Bull team and is pleased that the season is finally able to get underway.

Desh had always been interested in cars and started his working life as a mechanic. He then secured a job with family-run MP Engineering

and, having achieved his apprenticeship, is undergoing in-house training as an 5-axis programmer.

MP Engineering, based in Hinckley, provides precision engineering to the motorsport, aerospace, and defence sectors. The company has been working with the college for over five years to train engineering apprentices, enabling them to acquire high-level skills and secure exciting future careers in the industry.

Desh loves his job and really enjoyed his time at college. He said, "Each individual project is a challenge and you're learning something new every day. I also find it very rewarding when I have completed a task that contributes to the success of a big project. The college tutors were very supportive, and I would recommend an apprenticeship as a great route in to engineering."



## COUNSELLING CAREER CHANGE FOR FORMER NURSE

Now studying the Level 4 therapeutic counselling programme at our Wigston Campus, Pippa Tite is making the transition from nursing to an alternative people-centred profession. Pippa said, "I used to be a nurse so when I left medicine I decided to begin a career in counselling as I still wanted to work with people. I wasn't sure what coming back into education would be like as it had been over 20 years, but I was immediately hooked. I am comfortable at the college, each tutor can see what we are good at and what we struggle with and they have helped me to find my confidence and continue to encourage me to progress both academically and personally. The most important thing for me is that, as an adult learner, I am autonomous; I have a choice in my education and the college supports that."

# SOCIAL CARE SUCCESS STORIES

## SUE AND SAM KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

We often hear about generations of the same family coming to study at one of our campuses. The story of Sue Adcock and her daughter Sam Jackson is even more special because Sue works for us a tutor in health and social care and both she and her daughter studied for the same higher education qualification.

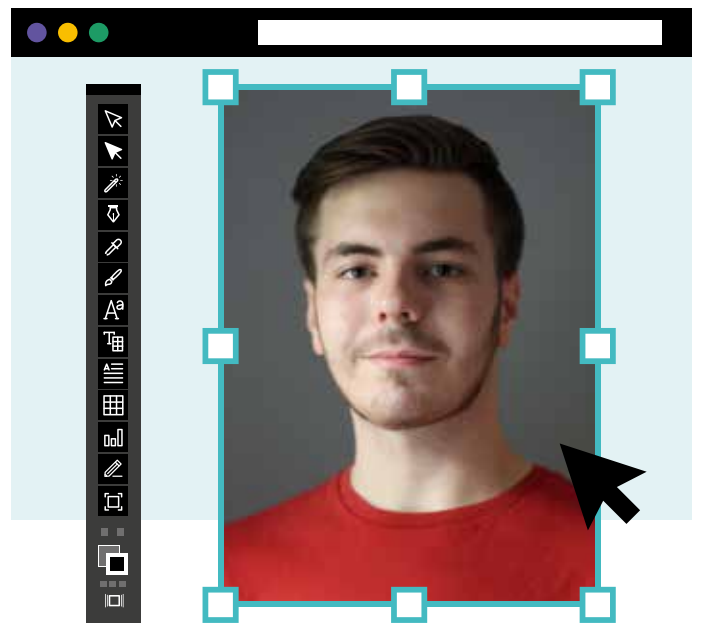
After raising a family and taking a break from the workplace through illness, Sue returned to college to study for a four-year social studies degree. Once qualified, she secured her dream teaching role at the college's Nuneaton Campus.

Sue said, "Teaching is taking time with students perhaps when they've had a bad result and feel they can't carry on. I'll ask them to say what they really want their future to be so that they can then reengage with their learning and meet their ambitions. FE teaching is also about treating all students as adults, whatever their age."

Sue's daughter Sam from Nuneaton started the 2+2 BA Hons in social studies just as her Mum was completing it. Sue had recommended the course to her daughter after Sam was made redundant when the funding for her youth work was withdrawn.

Sam has recently completed her degree at the University of Warwick, earning a 2:1 and has also been awarded a grade 7 for her English GCSE which she also studied at NWSLC. She has just started work as a support officer for a national regulator based in Coventry and is currently going through the induction process.

Sam said, "I was inspired by my Mum's success to take up the degree and the study arrangements were flexible enough to enable me to look after my son who is now aged five. Both my Mum and I had positive experiences of studying for the 2+2 degree. The support within college is fantastic; it feels like being part of a family. I would definitely recommend this route to others who are thinking about returning to education."



## DESIGNED FOR A GREAT CAREER

Lewis Dowell, 20, from Earl Shilton has completed an HND in Graphic Design in difficult circumstances during the coronavirus lockdown. Now with skills and experience in branding projects, motion graphics and editorial design, Lewis is starting to showcase his portfolio as he looks for freelance work.

He said, "I have really enjoyed my college experience but of course, thanks to the impact of the pandemic, now is not the best time to be looking for work. However, I am feeling positive about getting freelance work because although businesses might not be able to offer me a job, there is always work available if you work hard to find it."

Lewis started college studying art and design and progressed on to the Level 3 graphic design course achieving distinction grades before taking the higher education route at the college's creative arts Hinckley Campus. He decided not to go to university but followed the Higher National Diploma option instead because it was more affordable and enabled him to continue living locally at home.

Lewis has always been interested in creative projects and started off by learning about CGI which sparked his interest in all aspects of graphic design. Lewis has gained skills in a range of techniques and is proficient in Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and After Effects.

Lewis said, "I have really enjoyed my time at college and I am sorry to leave especially in the circumstances but I am now spending time building my online presence and my personal brand and I am looking forward to starting work on a freelance basis. I am also applying for jobs and would love to work either in-house or with a creative agency. I am in a good position to top up my HND to a degree with one further year of study at university in the future."