ConnectED Apprenticeships Business Continuity Plan

Version No.	Changes made since previous version	Date used	Date to be reviewed
2.3	Owner CEO ConnectED Apprenticeships	September 2019	September 2021
2.4	Head of Apprenticeships	September 2021	September 2022
2.5	Rebranding	Sept 2022	Sept 2024
2.6	Review - amendment to staff	Sept 2024	Sept 2026
2.7	Name change and contact details update, changes to financial reserves statement	August 2025	Sept 2026

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1. Purpose

1.1. Our Apprentice Contingency Plan has been developed to reflect the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Funding Rules. This plan is designed to provide assurance that we have considered a wide range of risks that could impact apprentices' ability to successfully undertake or complete their programmes, and that we have contingency plans in place to eliminate, mitigate or manage these risks.

2. Aim

2.1 Leigh Academies Trust (ConnectED Apprenticeships) overarching aim is that apprentices should start our programmes in the expectation of completing their apprenticeship successfully.

3. Programme structure

3.1 ConnectED Apprenticeships offers a range of approaches to delivery of apprenticeship training programmes in order to best address the needs of each employer and their apprentices. Some programmes have components that are delivered on ConnectED Apprenticeships premises, online or at employer's locations. For this reason, these continuity plans consider a wide range of arrangements that may be drawn on to address the needs of individual employers and their apprentices, should contingency arrangements need to be implemented.

3.2 In turn, ConnectED Apprenticeships acknowledges that individual apprentices will be affected in different ways if any of the risks detailed in this plan materialise. For this reason, the Apprenticeships team will communicate directly with staff, apprentices and their employers where additional support, advice or guidance is required and will work with any apprentices who have approved reasonable adjustments or identified additional needs to ensure actions and options meet their individual requirements.

3.3 The contingency plan will be communicated to in the most efficient and effective way using the most appropriate communication channel. These include but are not limited to: email, phone call, text message, social media channels, Google Meets, face to face and website updates.

4. Continuity of study

4.1. ConnectED Apprenticeships will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruptions to apprentices' studies by:

a. re-scheduling any affected components of study in agreement with apprentices and employers

b. delivering a modified version of the same course or access to the same course via a different mode of study if required and an appropriate solution to the disruption (e.g. distance learning)

c. providing assistance to affected apprentices to move to a new training location for sessions that would have been onsite at ConnectED Apprenticeships premises (where possible) or relocating sessions to employers' premises when appropriate

d. where training sessions were scheduled to be onsite at the employer's premises, arranging to move trainers to alternate locations provided by the employer

5. Travel

5.1. Apprentices are required to make their own arrangements to attend their place of work and study. Where a change of location of study is required for contingency reasons, ConnectED Apprenticeships would seek to provide an alternate location that is as close as practicable to the original place of study. Where alternate arrangements have to be made that could not easily be accessed by the usual forms of transport, ConnectED Apprenticeships will work with the employer to consider the nature and impact of alternate transport arrangements on individual apprentices and agree on an appropriate solution.

6. Redundancy

5.1. In line with ESFA Apprenticeship Funding rules, there may be circumstances where, if an apprentice is made redundant, ConnectED Apprenticeships must make reasonable efforts to find the apprentice a new employer. The Apprenticeships team will work with the apprentice to help assist with identifying career opportunities as well as preparing them to apply for positions. While assisting to secure alternate roles for apprentices who have been made redundant, ConnectED Apprenticeships can provide assistance in updating CVs and interview techniques so that apprentices are well positioned to secure alternate roles when they become available.

7. Risks to continuity of study

6.1. ConnectED Apprenticeships ceases to operate

6.1.1. Where viable, ConnectED Apprenticeship will implement contingency plans which will allow existing apprentices to continue to complete their current programmes of study. The measures ConnectED Apprenticeships has in place to manage this risk means the likelihood of an imminent closure of ConnectED Apprenticeships is low. ConnectED Apprenticeships manages this risk by having in place:

a. business plans that are reviewed by our Board of Governors & the Senior Management Team for ConnectED Apprenticeships
b. annual external auditing of finances that provides independent assurance of our business's performance and forecasts
c. engagement of legal and financial advisors

6.1.2. Where viable, ConnectED Apprenticeships will maintain key staff to allow current apprentices to complete their programmes of study via the enrolled mode and timeframe. Where necessary, following consultation with employers and their apprentices, apprentices may be transferred to a ConnectED Apprenticeships - run distance learning mode of study for the same programme (where available), with ConnectED Apprenticeships drawing on its existing experience in delivering programmes via a distance learning mode of study.

6.2. Failure to secure or maintain Registered Apprenticeship Training Provider status

6.2.1. In the event of termination of funding agreements with the ESFA as a result of ConnectED Apprenticeships   being removed from the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) and therefore becoming unable to continue the delivery of apprenticeship programme, ConnectED Apprenticeships will engage with the ESFA to make arrangements for effective exit to minimise the disruption to both apprentices and employers.

6.3. Closure / inaccessibility of ConnectED Apprenticeships premises

    6.3.1. Access to ConnectED Apprenticeships premises could be affected by matters in ConnectED Apprenticeship's control, such as an issue with the premises itself, or matters external to ConnectED Apprenticeships, such as a major incident closing access to the surrounding areas. Given the risks are both within and outside ConnectED Apprenticeships's control, the risk is considered moderate. ConnectED Apprenticeships manages this risk by having in place:

        a. Several alternate teaching locations spread across the multi-academy trust. These sites are accessible and are set up for some face to face teaching.

        b. Several alternative locations spread across the multi-academy trust, from where operations to provide remote classes, administrative services and/or coordination of contingency plans could be run.

        c. Where necessary, employers would be approached to provide training facilities onsite at their businesses locations if this were a suitable means of addressing the loss of a ConnectED Apprenticeships teaching location.

6.4. Withdrawal of programmes or modules/units

    6.4.1. ConnectED Apprenticeships might make a strategic decision to withdraw a programme or module of study if it has been superseded by a new programme or module; if it cannot be resourced, the content is no longer fit for purpose or current, or if insufficient numbers can be achieved. The ongoing viability of programmes is monitored via the quality assurance processes of ConnectED Apprenticeships. As programme closure is a strategic, planned event, the risk is considered low. ConnectED Apprenticeships manages this risk by having in place:

        a. Every effort will be made to ensure that stakeholders are consulted, not disadvantaged in any way, have every opportunity to complete any programmes or modules they have been registered for or that suitable arrangements are made where the withdrawal of a programme or module is required;

        b. A process of consultation with those affected including employers and apprentices and with Programme Leads on the potential impact of withdrawal of programmes and modules;

    6.4.2. Where viable, a teach-out process will be proposed where current apprentices would be given the opportunity to complete their current programme of study. The timing of the implementation of any proposed withdrawal would also consider prospective apprentices and where in the recruitment cycle they were.

    6.4.3. All proposals would be considered by the ConnectED Apprenticeships Apprenticeship Board of Directors and could not be implemented without their oversight and approval

6.5. Unable to recruit or retain suitably qualified staff, including tutors, assessors or key programme support staff

    6.5.1. The impact of an inability to recruit suitably qualified staff is low given our programme specialties are not niche. ConnectED Apprenticeships manages this risk by having in place:

        a. A Talent Management Strategy and Succession planning;

b. A Remuneration and Nominations Committee who regularly reviews pay and benefit packages to ensure that ConnectED Apprenticeships is positioned well to recruit and retain suitably skilled staff (as part of our membership of Leigh Academies Trust);

c. Regular systems of appraisal and career development opportunities;

d. A strategic focus on raising and maintaining the profile of ConnectED Apprenticeships ;

6.5.2. ConnectED Apprenticeships will seek to fill gaps in staffing as quickly as possible by initially drawing on suitably skilled and experienced staff from within ConnectED Apprenticeships to temporarily cover vacancies, until permanent members of staff can be recruited.

6.6. IT infrastructure

6.6.1. ConnectED Apprenticeships maintains its IT infrastructure and has in place processes and protocols for the ongoing monitoring and management of risks to our systems such as malicious attacks or hacking but remains as vulnerable to these and new threats as other organisations. ConnectED Apprenticeships manages these risks to business-critical systems and the back-up and restoration of data by having in place:

a. Firewall protection and a skilled and up-to-date team of IT specialists who monitor system risks and maintenance;

b. Regular Business Continuity testing to ensure business systems can be supported from one or other site;

c. Out of hours protocols that have been tested and found to be resilient.

6.6.2. ConnectED Apprenticeships will implement its business continuity plans to reinstate IT services as soon as possible. Remote classes or workshops that were scheduled during a system outage will be rescheduled and recordings and/or additional support material provided for apprentices who were unable to attend sessions due to a ConnectED Apprenticeships IT system issue.

6.7. De-registration/loss of Awarding Organisation Powers

6.7.1. ConnectED Apprenticeships is aware of the requirements to maintain ongoing centre registration with the awarding organisations, such as Pearsons. By working proactively to ensure requirements are well understood and met this risk is considered low. ConnectED Apprenticeships manages this risk by:

a. Having a Quality Assurance Team that reports directly to the Head of Apprenticeships and retains ongoing oversight of regulatory requirements, and ensures requirements are captured in policies and embedded in practice across the organization;

b. Having a well-defined governance structure which reports into the Board of Directors;

c. Engaging fully with the various external awarding organisation's documents to ensure our programmes are fit-for-purpose and align to these requirements;

d. Having an active and transparent relationship with our regulators so that we can keep abreast of reguConnectED Apprenticeships ory requirements and discuss queries in a timely manner, if and when they arise;

6.7.2. Where applicable, ConnectED Apprenticeships will appeal any decision made to de-register or remove AO powers, or would re-apply for the lost status or interim status to allow students and apprentices to be taught-out. We will work with the awarding body to ensure that the impact to apprentices was minimised and, if possible, an interim teach-out plan could be agreed to allow those studying to complete their current programme of study. If an

appeal or reapplication was unsuccessful, we will seek a validation agreement with another awarding body to allow ConnectED Apprenticeships to continue to teach-out registered apprentices.

8. Communication

7.1. ConnectED Apprenticeships hold both the work and personal contact details of apprentices on our management information systems and has apprentice's next of kin information. In addition, we hold contact details for the apprentices' employer organisations including the line manager or supervisor responsible for overseeing apprenticeship programmes who can enact their internal emergency contact procedures.

9. Contact details

Head of Apprenticeships & Designated Safeguarding Lead for ConnectED Apprenticeships

Esther Cook - esther.cook@theleighinstitute.org.uk

Mobile   - 07729 608145

Leigh Academies Trust Head Office & Admin Support

Email   - info@connectedhub.co.uk

Tel   - 01634 412200

Apprentices should also keep the following key contact details with them:

- line manager's contact details
- employer's HR contact details

Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

Email   - SDE.Servicedesk@education.gov.uk

Tel   - 0370 267 0001

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

Tel   - 08000 150 600