

Practical approach toolkit: Building engagement with adult social care providers overview

Who is the toolkit for?

It's for

- colleges
- adult social care providers
- partners delivering LSIPs or wider skills programmes.

It supports organisations to build practical, long-term relationships with care providers so training reflects real practice. The model, developed by Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges (HRUC), shows how structured engagement improves learner readiness and strengthens local workforce pipelines.

What the toolkit offers

It provides a clear, practical model for creating consistent, meaningful engagement between colleges and adult social care providers by:

- establishing simple, repeatable routines that make partnership working straightforward
- using realistic simulation spaces and digital tools to strengthen learner preparedness
- expanding access through hybrid sessions and multi-campus delivery
- building mutual value by linking facility use, placements and curriculum shaping
- embedding feedback to ensure training keeps pace with workplace expectations.

Why this approach matters

Adult social care providers often have limited capacity to engage with education partners, creating gaps between classroom learning and real-world practice. This approach demonstrates how listening first, co-designing content and building predictable engagement ensures training reflects real care environments, improves learner transition into work and increases employer confidence.

Key features include:

- **Predictable engagement routines:** Regular, structured interactions that build trust and embed collaboration into everyday practice.
- **Hybrid involvement:** Flexible options such as “screen-in” sessions that enable multisite provider participation with minimal disruption.
- **Mutual benefit:** A reciprocal model where providers gain facility access and influence over curriculum, while colleges gain placements and sector insight.

- **Consistent facilities and delivery:** Standardised equipment and learning environments across campuses for reliable training quality.
- **Continuous feedback loops:** Placement observations and curriculum reviews that keep teaching aligned with real-world expectations.

Overarching lessons

- Engagement must be intentional, regular and well-planned to remain effective.
- Genuine co-design strengthens alignment between learning content and workforce needs.
- Authentic learning spaces reduce placement shock and support learner confidence.
- Digital tools can widen participation, but sustained involvement relies on mutual benefit.
- Partnering with sector bodies helps reach smaller providers and widen participation.

Key takeaways

- Begin engagement early and set clear routines so collaboration becomes embedded, not ad hoc.
- Use immersive and digital tools to prepare learners for modern care and demonstrate how training connects to real practice.
- Pair investment in facilities with staff development and partnership activity to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Build reciprocal relationships where both providers and colleges gain clear, practical benefits.

You can find the full toolkit including the building blocks that shaped the approach and practical recommendations to help you adapt the model, alongside a recorded presentation on [our website](#). Together, these resources provide a practical route for strengthening adult social care provider voice and embedding it effectively in local or national initiatives.