

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (smc) Provision  
in the Learning and Skills Sector

# TRAINING VOICES

Smsc and the Workforce of the  
Future



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NATIONAL COUNCIL  
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EXCELLENCE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## SMSC and Vocational education:

### Training Voices – smsc and the workforce of the future

Contents page	1
Section One: The Case for SMSC	2
Section Two: Overcoming the barriers and including SMSC in the curriculum	13
Section Three: How some colleges are embedding smsc	18
Section Four: Case Study: Blackburn College	22
Section Five: Additional Resources	23

## Section One: The Case for SMSC

### Introduction

In a crowded curriculum, when FE professionals are under great pressure to show that their learners are making rapid and sustained progress, do they also need to be paying attention to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their courses? Smc development and vocational training may not look like natural bedfellows. So what is smc and does it make any difference to the quality of vocational courses?

Training Voices unpacks what smc means in the vocational sector. It shows how some colleges have realised its potential and are making sure that smc is included in their thinking about vocational training. It also shows that Ofsted inspectors and employers are expecting young people to have a range of skills, abilities and attitudes which are directly related to smc.

This document has been prepared in response to the FBFE research into provision for SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) development in the learning and skills sector. The findings show that few colleges identify vocational programmes as the place where they promote smc development. However, it is possible that much is going on, but it is not being recognised. This document shows the ways in which FE settings can identify what they are already doing. This will help to get more synergy when curriculum provision becomes more aligned with aspects of smc. The good news is that there are a number of settings which recognise that smc can add value to the quality of vocational courses and this has been recognised in their Ofsted reports.

Training Voices has been written for professionals working with students in vocational education and it shows how smc development relates to these courses. The resource draws on conversations with FE professionals about the skills and dispositions they aim to develop in students following their courses. Training Voices shows that smc contributes to high quality vocational provision. It also shows that it is possible to provide a light touch way of thinking about and identifying skills and attitudes essential for employment within vocational education contexts.

Smsc is also a very good opportunity to develop learner voice – learners might be asked, “Are there things you would like to be doing?” Would they like to be given more opportunities to discuss their beliefs and values and how to work well with people whose backgrounds and viewpoints are different from their own? A sample questionnaire is included in Section 5.

## **What is smsc?**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is more than ticking the skills boxes. It relates to an understanding of self and of others, together with an obligation on providers to develop their students as individuals and enhance their personal qualities. It provides the space for talking about what is right and wrong, and how the context of work relates to the wider world and different people.

Spiritual development encourages respect for different people’s feelings and beliefs. It relates to all human beings, and may or may not involve a specific faith commitment. It relates to those aspects of ourselves which wonder about purpose and meaning in our lives and respect for alternative views, whether these are religious or otherwise. Opening up discussions about our beliefs and those of others also links with the importance of team working within vocational contexts. In terms of spiritual development in the vocational and educational context, every learner has the right to have his or her ideas about life heard. In turn spiritual development expects learners to listen to and respond to others. Developing the spiritual element also develops the team working aspects of vocational courses – the ability to listen to and respond to others is an essential skill for team working. It is well acknowledged that thoughtful and respectful engagement and effective collaboration with others in the workplace, results in higher quality outcomes.

Moral development relates to an understanding of right and wrong, rights and responsibilities and the readiness to apply this to life. It is also concerned with an appreciation of the consequences of our actions. It relates to a framework, whether religious, humanist or other which help decisions about what is right. When this is properly encouraged it helps to develop an appreciation of what it is like to be in someone else’s shoes. It is the framework within which people make moral decisions. As recent scandals have shown, there is a high price to pay when individuals and organisations

do not act from moral values. The BBC's business editor Robert Peston, had this to say about Starbucks avoiding paying the full amount of tax: *"Companies perceived by people, politicians and media as, in some sense, not making a proper contribution to the societies from which they extract their revenues and profits, will over time become marginalised within those societies"*. Moral development also refers to the ability to understand the consequences of one's actions – that there is usually a price to pay for cutting standards and a lack of giving best possible value for services.

Social development relates to the ability to work in a variety of social settings, co-operating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively. There is also the notion of how to respond and behave appropriately in different contexts and students need to know why this is important. Students following vocational courses need to develop faith and cultural literacy in order to function effectively in different social and work contexts. This applies both to the people they will be working with and the people they will be working for. The document 'Making space for faith: values, beliefs and faiths in the learning and skills sector' ([www.fbfe.org.uk/?page\\_id=368](http://www.fbfe.org.uk/?page_id=368)) provides the following example: 'Students on a catering course were told that different approaches to the preparation of meat, for instance, would need to be discussed. This is an important aspect of a number of religious and cultural traditions and students were aware that they needed to know how this might affect some of the students following the course, as well as future clients.'

Cultural development relates to how we understand the diverse influences both on ourselves as individuals, the wider society in which we live and the background to the projects we are working on. It is important for students to have a sense of where an idea or a project has come from, how it has evolved and the factors which are influencing it. This helps them to understand the context we are working in.

Cultural development provides opportunities for learners to explore, understand and celebrate diversity. It helps them understand and appreciate the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and the projects they are learning about. When a student wonders 'Why am I doing this? What is the background?' they are asking questions which relate to cultural development. When courses provide the space for considering these questions, learners' engagement, motivation and understanding becomes deeper.

## Why should colleges take smsc seriously?

The best colleges recognise that vocational courses are more than training in work-specific skills. These colleges recognise that preparing trainees or apprentices for their future contribution to society should include opportunities to discuss and develop a critical awareness of contemporary social, cultural, faith and belief issues and their impact on local communities. They appreciate that they have an obligation to develop not just the 'softer' skills required by employers but also attributes which contribute to a more successful and satisfying life. They know that vocational courses must reflect approved vocational qualifications which, in turn, reflect national occupational standards, but the curriculum should also ensure learners are aware of the implications of cultural change and religious and non-religious beliefs for the services they will provide.

A curriculum which prepares learners for employment in vocational disciplines needs to take account of the world in which they will be working. Students are not adequately prepared for work in a pluralist society, if they are not aware of the implications of culture, faith and belief for the services they will provide for customers and the teams in which they will work. The claim in this resource is that employability is more than just the award. It argues that qualifications are necessary but not sufficient. There is a difference between preparing someone to be qualified in construction and also being prepared to be successful in the working environment. We also need to consider employers asking the question, not just whether an employee can do the job but also how well they will fit into the team. It is the territory of SMSC that bridges this gap.

Opportunities for promoting SMSC development arise from a number of activities, such as tutorials, enrichment programmes, foundation learning, the curriculum, whole institution events, pastoral support, and volunteering. Elements of SMSC development activities will also occur within programmes covering citizenship, student health and well-being, community cohesion, equality and diversity, and equal opportunities.

Talking to professionals we found that colleagues are keen to incorporate wider skills and attributes beyond the core material. They know that in order to succeed, young people need to be able to talk about their own beliefs and values and to appreciate those of others. They say that they want their students to complete their courses with a sense of fairness, right and wrong and understanding the consequences when these are not in place.

Training Voices recognises that there may be barriers to including smsc within vocational education. These difficulties include: time and pressures on staff to achieve qualification outcomes, resources, the attitudes of students, and a lack of professional knowledge. However, there are as many opportunities as challenges to including smsc within vocational courses. These will be addressed in section 2.

## **Opportunities for smsc within vocational education**

Vocational courses are increasingly viewed by government as the key to national economic competitiveness. Vocational education is broad. It refers to all those courses, full or part time which lead to accredited qualifications with a particular vocational focus. From Vehicle Technology, Floristry and Horticulture, Retail, Logistics and Transport to Child Studies, Health and Social Care, Service Industries and Business and Management, the offer is wide ranging. The field is growing, with an increase of more than 60% for 2012 in the numbers of apprenticeships.

The mission and values of FE colleges are often expressed in terms of inspiring learning, creating opportunities and changing lives – they offer a large vision of human development within which employability skills are set. While the goal of employability is high, there is also the question, much considered by FE professionals, about the wider skills and attitudes which are requirements for a successful life. The world needs people with imagination, insight and flexibility to flourish in a diverse and fast changing society with unpredictable future employment markets. Every course followed by learners must provide more than the subject knowledge and skills appropriate for that sector. Students need to become flexible, resilient and able to work in increasingly complex environments. Since it is no longer the case that jobs are for life, in order to be prepared for a changing work landscape, learners need to have 'soft' skills if they are to thrive. So where

does smsc fit into this? Courses which provide opportunities for students to ask the big questions about why they are training in a particular field, to consider the viewpoints of others, to work intelligently and wisely, to develop transferable skills, qualities and knowledge, and to understand the wider cultural story of their field are all essential to giving students an experience which is beyond the narrow demands of the course specification.

## **Making the case for smsc: wider factors**

There are implications for smsc in the new Ofsted FE framework. The 2009 Common Inspection Framework for Learning and Skills gave smsc education significant prominence. There were explicit references to smsc requirements and links to inspection judgements contributing to a limiting grade for Equality and Diversity. Although most of these references and the limiting grade have disappeared from the 2012 Inspection Framework, the current Inspection Handbook still makes it clear that smsc will continue to feature in inspection judgements under each of the three main inspection headings as follows:

In the section on outcomes for learners the Handbook confirms that: “where relevant, inspectors should take into account learners spiritual, moral, social and cultural development”. In teaching, learning and assessment: “inspectors will be required to take into account the impact that teaching has in promoting learners’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development”. For leadership and management: “inspectors will be required to take into account how effective curriculum planning is in meeting learners’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development needs”.

The Equality Act 2010 strengthens the previous law on discrimination to promote equality. While the law, among other things, protects the rights of students with protected characteristics, its purpose is also to promote tolerance and good relationships. For colleges, this means they have a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act. And beyond this they need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This means that when opportunities to talk about similarity, difference and tolerance in the



college curriculum, the principles of the Equality Act are being met. The framework for smsc is one way to do this.

The Dearing Report (1997) and QCA, (2002) recognise 'personal, thinking and learning skills' as an essential contribution to preparation for life, learning and work. Six groups of skills are promoted each with their own attributes. These are reflective learners; creative thinkers; independent enquirers; team workers; self-managers; and, effective participators. 'There is therefore "a significant alignment between smsc and PLTS" in the context of adult learning and work based learning. "PLTS are an important element of the whole curriculum and are embedded in BTEC specifications "' (Emerging Voices, LSIS./fbfe, 2011).

In addition, the Foster Report ('Realising the Potential', a review of the future role of further education colleges, 2005) and the White Paper ('Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances' 2006) recognise the learning and skills sector's economic mission. These reports also say that in addition to delivering the skills needed for employability, providers should help learners develop attitudes and values that provide the basis for a successful and rewarding life.

The new Study Programmes for 16 to 19 year olds emphasise the importance of providing a fully rounded experience for learners. The Study Programmes will be implemented from September 2013. FE minister Matthew Hancock said that traineeships are being introduced to help young people with the skills they need to get and hold down a job. Traineeships will be designed to provide young people with the experience they need to compete for apprenticeships and good jobs. The DfE devised the plan after a CBI survey showed that 61% of employers thought many young people lacked 'work-related skills and attitudes they need to sustain employment'.

STEMnet promotes Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths and the careers which can be available through such subjects. STEMnet asked a range of UK-based companies including NOKIA, Shell, Accenture, EDF and Siemens to define what employability skills mean. Their responses included, among other aspects: communication and interpersonal skills, teamworking,

the ability to learn and adapt, valuing diversity and difference and negotiation skills. All these relate to smsc and examples are provided in Section 5 to show how these can be developed in a light touch way within vocational courses.

When the qualities identified by industry are expanded they relate to: the ability to listen and relate to other people, and to act upon key information and use that to understand oneself and others. It is important that learners develop the capacity to understand themselves and develop a frame of reference for wise decision-making, working well with other people from different disciplines, backgrounds, cultures, traditions and expertise to accomplish a task or goal. They need to know the value of diversity and what it can bring. To be employable they need to understand and be considerate of the different needs of different individuals. The ability to take on board other people's feelings and express your own requirements in an unemotional clear fashion are significant elements in achieving win-win outcomes.

What is interesting about the key employability skills is that they relate as much to life in general as to the workplace. They are key attributes of fully developed human beings.

## **Making the case for smsc: wider society**

Smsc is in the news. Questions about equality, diversity faith, belief and morality make the headlines every day. This relates back to incorporating smsc within work related programmes, because it helps students to think about the wider moral and social aspects of their courses. The focus on compassionate nursing, ongoing questions about ethics in the financial sector, conflicts and tensions between different groups in society and the lack of accountability by some companies are all relevant to the smsc agenda.

This is also recognised in the CBI's call for a relevant curriculum. The First Steps report encourages a shift away from exam league tables to new Ofsted reports which assess academic rigour and the broader behaviours and attitudes that young people need to get on in life. This is increasingly important, as young people need to develop the skills to operate in an

increasingly complex world where they will be expected to engage with people from a wide range of backgrounds.

The 2012 CBI/Pearson education and skills survey showed that employers identified weaknesses in employability skills, including school leavers' self management, business and customer awareness and attitude to work. Also identified were weaknesses in team working and problem-solving.

These are highly relevant considerations for the training of learners within the vocational sector. Research for 'Making space for faith: values, beliefs and faiths in the learning and skills sector' ([www.fbfe.org.uk/?page\\_id=368](http://www.fbfe.org.uk/?page_id=368)) found that almost three quarters of staff surveyed thought that there should be a legal entitlement to spiritual moral social and cultural development for all students over the age of 16 regardless of their place of study, work or training.

## **Making the case for smsc: values in business**

*'Our aim is to try harder for our customers than anyone else and to treat them as we would like to be treated.'* Tesco Customer Care

This section makes the case that smsc is at the heart of good business practice. Where organisations take account of their higher purpose, treat customers and employees as intelligent and worthy of respect, then success follows. While the examples show how spiritual, or moral, or cultural or social aspects are important aspects of good business, in fact where one aspect is well done, it is usually reflecting one of the other elements. The key message here is that a light touch way of working and promoting smsc principles is about a frame of mind and a way of thinking, rather than heavy duty or driven by a tick box.

The smsc values are evident in businesses which understand that their long-term sustainability is not secure unless they pay attention to customer care, the views of stakeholders, sustainability and integrity. While such values are not described as smsc, they have a close correlation with them. So, for instance, Tesco's commitment to treating customers as we would like to be treated has clear connections with the smsc agenda. Knowledge, understanding and an interest in people's backgrounds will result in higher standards of customer care. Students following courses which create space

for the development of faith and cultural literacy will enhance their ability to create good customer relations in whatever sector they work.

In his book 'To Sell is Human' Daniel H Pink sets out the case that everyone, in every context is 'selling' to someone else. Beyond those who are involved in traditional sales, people at home and in the work place are encouraging other people to part with resources, time and effort. As part of this he argues that it is only by understanding what is in it for the other person, that we are going to be successful. In other words, we need to consider 'what's in it for the other person?' We need to be skilled in understanding what motivates another person, whether it is a child at home being persuaded to tidy their room, to asking someone at work with help to complete a project or providing a service or product to a customer. Conversations with others need to be sincere, or it will feel like manipulation.

Pink gives an extremely interesting example of how awareness of the other person results in differences in success in business. He describes how he spent two days in two different second hand car salesrooms in the USA. He chooses this business because traditionally it has had a poor image of not meeting customer needs. The first day he spends in a sales room where the salesmen 'don't say much' and put little thought either into attracting customers or in meeting their needs when they do come to the salesroom.

On the second day he goes to another outlet. This had been set up with the intention of overcoming the perceptions of the public about second hand car sales. The biggest difference, according to Pink, is the amount of information which is offered to customers. There is no haggling. There are transparent commissions as all sales people make the same commission regardless of the price of the car they are selling. Customers are informed – where in most sales rooms the customer looks at the back of a computer while the sales person looks at the screen, in this company computers are set up so that both sales staff and customers can see the information. A small shift but signaling a big difference in attitude to the customer. The first outlet made two sales in the day, the second sells over 400, 000 cars a year.

Is it far fetched to make links from the account above to the smsc agenda? As we shall see in other examples, a well thought through position on the

needs of the 'other' results in better business. It is becoming increasingly clear that successful companies are driven by values first, then success and profits follow from that. In the case of CarMax they say that when they started:

*'Before anything else though, we laid the foundation upon which our car-selling venture would be built: INTEGRITY. Integrity in the way we treat customers and each other. Only then did we move forward with the business of changing the way America buys cars...When we asked customers what they wanted, we acted on what we heard.'*

Is there anything which can be transferred from the example above? Perhaps the most important is that successful companies think beyond the immediate task. They know that success and profit flow from good practice. Their work is underpinned by the bigger vision of why they are doing things. So, can learners following vocational courses do the same? Where lecturers and trainers are already doing this, it is worth also letting students know that this is best practice. When asked, learners say that they want to see the bigger picture, to know how things fit together and their role in the wider enterprise. When given opportunities to do this, it is embedding the spiritual aspect of their learning. Spiritual as defined by curiosity, ability to ask questions and to think about the standpoints from others' point of view.

The CBI publication, First Steps, referred to above, says education should develop the characteristics, values and habits that last a lifetime. Included in the list are an understanding of the value of work, allowing others to speak, being eager to explore new things, ask and answer questions to deepen understanding. It goes on to emphasize the importance of recognising and showing appreciation for others, being willing to try new experiences and meet new people, find solutions during conflicts with others, know when and how to include others.

There are increasing examples of business making the case that moral behavior is the only way for long-term success. To consider some further examples – David Jones book 'Who Cares Wins' argues that only companies who believe moral issues count as much as, if not more than, merely financial ones, will succeed. The new focus on the way business works is the result of two factors – the increasing understanding that corporate social responsibility is good for business and the impact of social media, which

mean that when companies do not live up to their values, they are very quickly exposed by social media.

*In 'Who Cares Wins' David Jones says: 'The most successful leaders and businesses in the future will be those who are the most socially responsible. Social media is forcing businesses, politicians and leaders to be more socially responsible. It will reward those who are. And remove those who aren't.'*

These ideas are echoed in The Good Work Project. The project was started by psychologist Howard Gardner who, with colleagues, set out to find out how people working in different jobs approach their work when market conditions are changing rapidly and when there is increasing pressure from financial markets to be profitable. As a result, they set out to identify individuals and institutions that exemplify good work—work that is excellent in quality, socially responsible, and meaningful to its practitioners—and to determine how best to increase the incidence of good work in our society. Two of the indicators of good work are where employees are recognised as providing high quality work and in addition they attempt to act in ways that are social and morally responsible and find personal meaning in their work. Resources to help with discussions about what makes for good work are included in Section 4.

Beyond these examples, many companies are including work ethics as part of their training. While such training provides a framework for employees to work responsibly and ethically, Training Voices is more concerned with an open hearted, generous way of working, rather than following a narrow set of rules.

## **Making the case for smsc: self-employment and running a business.**

The recession is creating more young entrepreneurs and FE settings need to consider the possibility of young people becoming self-employed. According to AXA<sup>1</sup>, more than three-quarters of 11-18 year olds say they would like to run their own business.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the Prince's Trust found that 30 per cent of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.journalism.co.uk/press-releases/young-brits-mean-business-eight-in-ten-want-to-become-entrepreneurs/s66/a545359/>

young people are considering becoming self-employed and setting up their own business within the next five years.<sup>2</sup> Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that there was an increase of nine per cent over five years, of young people between the ages of 18 to 34 year olds.<sup>3</sup> If young people do decide to become self employed, they will need resilience and stamina and an ability to say clearly and simply what motivates them and how they can meet the needs of a wide range of customers. The chance to talk and experience these requirements through smsc in their courses will make a big difference to their confidence and ability to thrive.

## **Section 2: Overcoming the barriers and including SMSC in the curriculum**

How should colleges go about securing smsc – through lectures and assignments which do not allow interaction and engagement, or through offering wider opportunities for learners to develop as human beings? Can we say that supporting the development of the whole person also creates better employees and future leaders? Conversations with professionals in the FE sector indicate that they are concerned with preparing young people with a wide ranging of experiences to equip them for future life. They link employability with important concepts such as trust, sensitivity and being open to new ideas. While these are important skills for human development, professionals also made the direct link with better outcomes for businesses and organisations. For example, sensitivity to the backgrounds of fellow workers and clients mean more inclusive workplaces and higher levels of customer satisfaction. Key among these was the willingness to be open to new ideas, to respect others' beliefs and traditions and being prepared to ask sensitive questions.

Delegates at an LSIS/FBFE conference were asked what they wanted their courses to provide for young people, beyond the qualification. They said that they wanted their students to have a wide preparation for opportunities and challenges in their future lives. They also want them to be aware of the uncertainties in the work environment: that we are preparing young people

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about\\_the\\_trust/what\\_we\\_do/research/1305\\_youth\\_business\\_boom.aspx](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about_the_trust/what_we_do/research/1305_youth_business_boom.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1077310/young-people-aspire-self-employed-jobs-market-remains-tough>

for a workplace that will not remain the same. They want them to have discussions about the contributions they hope to make, to talk about some of the difficulties in meeting the needs of different groups of customers. They recognise that to thrive in the work place young people will need to have high levels of skills and adaptability. Their aspiration is that their courses will also teach them about ways of working, negotiating with others and finding purpose and meaning in work.

They recognise the impact that smsc can have on their students' ability to relate well to others, to know the implications of right and wrong actions and to see the bigger picture of what they are doing. They also said that there are some challenges to making this work secure. A number of their concerns are addressed in the document *Challenging Voices*: [www.fbfe.org.uk/?page\\_id=77](http://www.fbfe.org.uk/?page_id=77) Many of the concerns which staff working in the FE sector may have about including smsc in their courses are addressed at greater length in *Challenging Voices*.

Colleagues said that they would like to make sure that they include smsc but identified the following as potential difficulties:

Lack of confidence: suppose I get it wrong?

Making sure smsc is in the curriculum is not a matter of getting it 'right or wrong'. The lecturer does not need to have all the answers. What is important is that they make sure that they are their students are working in a climate which is positive and allows for open-ended discussions. The bottom line for this is that discussions are respectful both to those in the room and wider society. In other words, would someone coming in to this conversation be insulted by what we are discussing? If not, then it is fine.

The research which came through 'Challenging Voices' showed that students value the chance to have big discussions about aspects of their work. They say that they do not always have enough opportunities to do this and say that they would like more. Research also shows that most students do not abuse the chance to have their say.



'I am not sure about my own spiritual position. How can I create space to develop this for my students.'

It is not necessary for FE professionals to disclose their own personal beliefs. There are four aspects of spiritual development. The first is that smsc development in students is shown by the 'beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings and values'. What is important is the students are given the chance to talk about what they believe and why. They are free to talk about this, or not. The lecturer is free to share their perspective, or not. The important thing is that space is created for this, not that everyone is obliged to disclose their deepest feelings. What is important is that all concerned are prepared to take an interest in and show respect for different people's feelings and values.

The second strand is for students to have a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible. What is important here is that students are encouraged to ask questions and relate questions to how their subject relates to the wider world, including the contribution it makes to wider society.

The other strands encourage students to be imaginative and creative in their learning and to be willing to reflect on their experiences. This means having the chance to bring something of themselves to their work, be encouraged to give personal insights, and to think about how they have gone about their work and reflect on their developing understanding of themselves and others.

I am concerned about how students will respond to smsc

Smsc is primarily concerned with the wide personal and intellectual development of the individual. Wide ranging research shows that young

people want more opportunities to talk about what they are learning, why they are learning it and the contribution which they can make to the subject and the wider world. The experience of fbfe is that young people respond positively to opportunities to discuss faith, belief and culture and the importance of these issues for then selves and their studies.

I don't have enough time

This is a real concern. There are considerable pressures to cover course content and to meet demanding targets. Those settings which have included the smsc agenda successfully have integrated it in to the programmes in a way that is light touch. They don't believe that they have to do it all to begin with and they know that it will grow over time.

One of the ways to overcome the time problem is to use the smsc curriculum examples in Section 5 and invite students to think about them outside the session. Their thoughts and ideas can be incorporated into the beginning of a session, when they are ready. It is not essential for the lecturer to provide all the resources, the important thing is that they have an expectation that students will want to think and talk about the wider implications of what they are learning and that time will be created for this.

BTEC courses expect development of the personal, learning and thinking skills. One way of doing this is to provide opportunities for students to think and research more widely about their subject. This should not be set as formal extra curricular study or homework, but should be offered more on the lines of 'I expect you will find this interesting. Would you like to think about and find out more about...'

I am not sure how to include it in my scheme of work

Smsc is a way of thinking, rather than having to prepare and include

complicated additional materials. It is about spotting opportunities and seeing potential. Often it is about taking the discussion just a stage further. For example, not just teaching important knowledge about community diets or hairstyles, but going on to ask why they are different. Above all, it is about letting young people have their say: why are we doing this? How does this course help me reach my goals, not just for a good job and plenty of money, but in developing as a person? How does following this course make life better for other people? How can I provide best practice? What is the history of this aspect of training ie what were the significant changes in thinking and understanding? Who were the first people to develop these skills? Are these skills different around the world?

The lecturer does not need to answer these questions. They just have to pose them and see what the students come up with.

The smsc curriculum examples will help to show how it is possible to include this in a light touch way.

It is also worth checking the Ofsted reports of colleges which have been recognised for their work in embedding equality and diversity through smsc: See page Section 3 below.

### **Section 3: How some colleges are embedding smsc**

Smsc emerges from high quality practice and should not be seen as another checklist of things to do. Colleges express their values through mission statements and where these are carefully thought through and implemented, they provide a strong basis for smsc. One example from North Warwickshire and Hinckley College shows this:

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College mission statement says it continues to strive for excellence which includes: to carry on valuing each member of the college community and treating them with dignity and respect, to carry on trusting and supporting each other, to continue to encourage co-operation with others in the development of provision.

What is distinctive about this mission statement is that it makes a commitment to ongoing improvement. It emphasises the importance of continuing to live out its values. This gives it much great agency and commitment. On a practical level student volunteers are encouraged to contribute their vocational learning to the wider college. For example, catering students run refreshments and floristry students involve others in craft activities. These learners find that they rise to the challenge of real responsibility and they see how much their work impacts on the life of the college.

Accredited courses expect personal, learning and thinking skills to be embedded in courses. For example the specification for the Btec Health and Social Care for first teaching from September 2012, expects students to explore issues, events or problems from different perspectives. This links clearly to aspects of smsc where students are encouraged to consider the views of others. In order to be creative thinkers, students should be generating ideas and exploring possibilities; they should be connecting their own and others' ideas, collaborate and show fairness: in all these they are also meeting expectations for the smsc agenda.

In FE colleges with good and outstanding practice recognised by Ofsted, it is evident that the learning offer goes beyond the provision of qualifications. These colleges pay particular attention to learning which allows opportunities for active engagement, for teamwork and negotiation in groups, which means learners can practice and develop these important attributes.

Ofsted inspection reports are making reference to the Equality Act and the extent to which colleges are meeting their obligation to promote equality and diversity. While the judgements are about equality and diversity, the evidence is drawn from the extent to which colleges are promoting smsc development. For example, in the Ofsted report for Cambridge Regional College in October 2012 inspectors noted: 'Learners have a good understanding of diversity in the context of the hair and beauty industry. Teachers make positive efforts to develop learners' understanding of diversity in lessons, for example by comparing racial characteristics of skin structure and function and the impact of perming on Afro-Caribbean hair.'

In another report Ofsted found 'The promotion of equality and diversity has improved since the last inspection so that most teachers have a much

clearer idea of how they can reflect equality and diversity within their subject context. Schemes of work and lesson plans focus fully on equality and diversity but occasionally teachers miss opportunities to develop issues raised by learners during lessons.'

Ofsted acknowledges the importance of smsc in a further report: 'Diversity is promoted well through initiatives including a multicultural cuisine event planned in conjunction with sub-contracting partners. A successful 'diversity in apprenticeships' project helped to increase the participation of females in hospitality and catering.' 'The majority of teachers give a high priority to promoting equality and diversity in their lessons. Inspectors observed some excellent examples where learners challenged stereotypes and demonstrated empathy with vulnerable people. However, this highly effective practice has not been widely shared so that some teachers promote equality and diversity much more successfully than others.'

These examples show how Ofsted inspections are taking equality and diversity seriously. They expect to see it embedded securely within the programmes which students follow.

At Cambridge Regional College, the construction course was radically changed after an Ofsted inspection in 2004. The course was described as 'dull and uninspiring'. This resulted in a complete rethink of teaching and the curriculum. When it was inspected a few years later, the college's teaching was good and provision to meet the needs of learners was outstanding. So what had the college done to make such substantial improvements? It prioritised the improvement of the quality of teaching and this included developing smsc. As a result 'Learners enjoy their learning. Classrooms have a buzz about them. Teachers can see how much their learners enjoy their learning and this reinforces teachers' confidence and enjoyment.' Part of the success is that skills for life are contextualised within programmes. One example is in Construction, where the students remind themselves at the start of a session, what is expected of them when they are in the workplace – how they should respect the setting where they might find themselves. In the most recent Ofsted inspection it was noted that 'Equality and diversity are integrated well into teaching and learning. Lessons encourage learners to consider the diversity of the people they may carry out work for, including sensitivities during religious festivals.' What is evident here is that the quality

of talk, openness to alternative ideas and willingness to take part in open-ended activities create the conditions for students to ask questions and take risks.

Senior leaders at Cambridge Regional College take the smsc development of their learners very seriously. They recognise that they are not just delivering a qualification, but are making a contribution to personal development. As they prepare for the study programmes for 16-19 year olds, they use the CRC Passport to Success. This concentrates on 'developing learners to be skilled, confident and enterprising, and thereby to have the employability, enterprise and study skills to secure progression to employment, self-employment or higher learning', The college makes sure that the five elements of the Passport to Success are fully integrated – these are specialist skills, core skills, personal learning skills, employability skills and social and community skills. They ensure that there are underlying elements which are fully blended rather than being set in silos. The promotion of smsc is embedded in management structures, within the curriculum and is closely aligned with standards framework.

So what does this look like? The college uses the Pacific Institute programme to help students set goals, develop self-management and to think in ethical ways. Elements of self-understanding, thinking about consequences are built in to programmes such as 'new to learning'. There is a commitment to creating a positive culture of learning and collaboration. The college believes that the new Study programmes have implications for rethinking the tutorial programme. Tutorials will look different and it is likely that traditional tutorial content will be blended within vocational courses. It has recognised that Public Services students need additional practice to develop their skills. As a result they have developed a rota system for these students to maintain standards in the social areas, checking identity badges etc. This reflects what the Ofsted good practice website identifies, that the most effective providers are able to evaluate what 'value they add to learners' experience' as well as measure success rates.

In another context, the Young Offender Institution Glen Parva has successfully used sport to raise awareness of racism amongst prisoners and staff while challenging racist views and behaviour. This has largely been through staff within the prison's Sports Academy (the physical education department). The initiative is called Parva Against Racism. It has a committee

whose membership includes volunteer representatives from the staff, young offenders and external agencies. The aim of the initiative is to raise awareness and educate both staff and young offenders through sport, education and a variety of activities to combat racism. Many of the interventions outlined can also be supported through resources and guidance from FBF (www.fbf.org.uk) and All Faiths and None (www.afan.uk.net)

## **Section 4: Case Study: Blackburn College**

An imaginative approach to creating opportunities for smsc development has been developed by Blackburn College. It has been developed by the chaplaincy and it shows how a wide range of curriculum areas can engage with big ideas about the individual's role in meaningful work.

The 'For Life' project follows six areas of interactive study: Arts for Life, Bread for Life, Construction for Life, Environment for Life, Sport for Life and Volunteering for Life. The content reflects the values of active citizenship and social enterprise, respect and pastoral responsibility. The programme fosters understanding and cohesion amongst people and helps them find and develop their skills and talents in the community through practical activity and voluntarism. Involvement in the community fostering cohesion is apparent from the practical ways in which the project is delivered by Chaplaincy together with partners in the community. The 'For Life' project provides a progression route from conversation in the curriculum, practical activity out in the community to work readiness and social enterprise.

Delivered through tutorials and additional curriculum sessions, the project uses the stimulus of big questions, quotes from faith traditions and dilemmas to engage students in wider conversations about the courses they are following.

For example, the 'For Life' hospitality and catering project asks students to think about the importance of bread in their diets. It shows how bread has been important to people over the centuries and it asks them to think about bread as a symbol of hospitality and necessary for life. It asks students to think about malnutrition and what makes a healthy well balanced diet. At the end of the session students are invited to think about how they can make a

difference – ‘Think of a project you would like to do to help your community’ and ‘How would you like to use your skills to earn a livelihood?’ Students also have the chance to bake bread in an Indian restaurant.

The Construction element asks students to think about creating not just buildings but also building families and communities. Using quotes from scriptures it helps students to think widely about the meaning for instance, about the stone which the builders rejected became the corner stone. Using quotes from Christian, Muslim, Sikh and Jewish traditions, it encourages reflection on the importance of well-crafted work, considering how people become homeless. Good questions such as ‘ How can we grow and improve ourselves by building for, and with others.’ ‘How would you like to use your skills to earn a livelihood? What sort of help would you like to do this?’

Through working in this way, the college is working creatively to integrate opportunities for smsc development within mainstream courses. The college endorses this element of students’ experiences recognising the importance of including practical opportunities for engagement within the curriculum.

### Section 5: Additional resources

i. Examples of smsc across the curriculum – page 25

ii. Learner questionnaire:

This resource will help colleagues gather ideas about what students would like to discuss further.

<i>What do you think about your course?</i>	
What part of the course you are following do you enjoy most?	
How does your vocational area choice make society a better place?	



Do you get the chance to say what you think is important about your course? Can you give examples?	
How do you think your course helps the customer have a better life?	
Can you give some examples of how you take into account the different backgrounds of people you will be working with?	
Does your course provide advice on how to work through disagreements with other people?	
How are you encouraged to work with people from different backgrounds from you?	
Is there anything else you would like to say?	

### iii. References:

Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education (FBFE) [www.fbfe.org.uk](http://www.fbfe.org.uk)

All Faiths and None (AFAN) [www.afan.uk.net](http://www.afan.uk.net)

Challenging Voices [www.fbfe.org.uk/?page\\_id=77](http://www.fbfe.org.uk/?page_id=77)

David Jones: Who Cares Wins [www.whocareswinsdavidjones.com](http://www.whocareswinsdavidjones.com)

Howard Gardner: Good work <http://goodworktoolkit.org/about>

SMSC examples across the curriculum

Course	We promote <i>spiritual</i> development	We promote <i>moral</i> development	We promote <i>social</i> development	We promote <i>cultural</i> development
<b>Health and Social Care</b>	By encouraging our students to think about what they are doing, questioning their motives and values. By helping them to view their services from the patient's or client's point of view.	By using case studies from the news or the soap opera to consider what can go wrong at work and what we would do in a similar situation. Eg Jo Brand in 'Getting on'.	By encouraging students to mix with people from different backgrounds from their own.	Through asking our students to be prepared to ask sensitive questions about the people they come in touch with.
<b>Construction</b>	We promote <i>spiritual</i> development	We promote <i>moral</i> development	We promote <i>social</i> development	We promote <i>cultural</i> development
	By asking them to think about the wider context in which they are working. We provide opportunities for learners to consider the diversity of the people they may carry out work for, including sensitivities during religious festivals.	By asking them to work out different strategies for solving problems and difficulties with other people.	By talking about what makes the difference between working in a good team and a poor team and how they could contribute to making a difference for the better.	By helping students to understand the tradition in which they are working – its historical and wider influences. How are they contributing to a larger piece of work? We use stimulus such as Grand Designs in India to encourage students to ask questions about different construction contexts: <a href="http://planningissue.com/tag/grand-designs/">http://planningissue.com/tag/grand-designs/</a>
<b>Vehicle Maintenance</b>	We promote <i>spiritual</i> development	We promote <i>moral</i> development	We promote <i>social</i> development	We promote <i>cultural</i> development
	By encouraging students to ask big questions about transport and the place of maintenance in this and to show curiosity in the work they are doing. By helping them to see that it is important	By raising questions about the effect of technological change on human life and the world around them. By asking questions about whether it ever acceptable to cut corners in	By encouraging students to work in different groups.	By considering cultural influences on design  By asking questions about functionality compared with aesthetics

	to think about the services they are providing, and impact on the end consumer.	order to get a job done quickly.		
<b>Hospitality and Catering</b>	We promote <i>spiritual</i> development	We promote <i>moral</i> development	We promote <i>social development</i>	We promote <i>cultural</i> development
	Through being curious about learning about and from celebrations, rituals and food from different cultures. By asking students to compare their own background cuisine with others and to be curious about the similarities and differences.	By exploring what is right and wrong, whether it is ever right to cut corners and to work out what we need to do to make sure everyone thrives.	By encouraging respectful behaviour both in the college and the workplace.	By planning multicultural cuisine. Diversity is promoted through initiatives including a multicultural cuisine event planned in conjunction with sub-contracting partners. A successful 'diversity in apprenticeships' project increases the participation of females in hospitality and catering events
<b>Sport Leisure and Recreation</b>	We promote <i>spiritual</i> development	We promote <i>moral</i> development	We promote <i>social</i> development	We promote <i>cultural</i> development
	By delighting in movement, particularly when students are able to show spontaneity  By taking part in activities such as dance, games and gymnastics which help students to become more focused, connected and creative.  By being aware of one's own strengths and limitations	By discussing fair play and the value of team work. By challenging stereotypes and showing empathy with vulnerable people. By developing qualities of self-discipline, commitment and perseverance  By developing positive sporting behaviour	By developing a sense of belonging and self-esteem through teamwork.  By developing a sense of community identity through taking part in wider community events  By appreciating the links between exercise, personal fitness and community health	By learning about the history of sports, and where they originate from  By making links with national and global sporting events such as the World Cup and the Olympics  By exploring rituals surrounding sporting activities
<b>Media and Communication</b>	We promote <i>spiritual</i> development	We promote <i>moral</i> development	We promote <i>social</i> development	We promote <i>cultural</i> development
	We make sure our students	We encourage our students to	By encouraging students to	By helping our students to

	encounter a wide range of materials which encourage them to be curious about other people's perspectives, to think about their own beliefs and values and to realise that some things are intangible. Eg <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/series/eyewitness">www.guardian.co.uk/world/series/eyewitness</a>	research examples where injustice and wrongdoing have taken place. We use news stories, dilemmas, case studies and examples from students' experience to open up discussion about issues of right and wrong.	work in different groups, to collaborate with students from other courses and to connect with students from around the world through facebook, twitter and blogging.	take a wider view of the history of communication eg to revisit texts such as 'Wired Society' and compare how much predicted has come true. To consider what future developments might look like and to consider how these might have an impact on remote communities around the world.
<b>Business</b>	We promote <i>spiritual</i> development	We promote <i>moral</i> development	We promote <i>social</i> development	We promote <i>cultural</i> development
	We encourage our students to take account of the points of view of people with different backgrounds to them. We expect them to ask questions about the purpose and meaning of their work.	We talk about ethics and morals in business, using case studies and dilemmas from the news. We also refer to projects such as the 'Good work project' and ask students for their interpretations of the ideas	We provide assignments where the learners identify for themselves the equality and diversity criteria that they needed to consider. Learners who produce the "Banter" magazine at Cambridge Regional college regularly include articles which cover disability, legal, ethical, social and cultural issues. <a href="http://www.camre.ac.uk/Our-Publications/banter.asp">www.camre.ac.uk/Our-Publications/banter.asp</a>	Equality and diversity has a high priority and is mostly promoted well. Teachers develop specific learning materials to improve learners' awareness and most lessons contain references to equality and diversity. Learners frequently share information and discuss the cultural differences  By appreciating the importance of culture, vision and values in business organisations

