

Preston Cooperative Education Centre and Preston College Meeting

23rd September 2021, 3-4pm

Present: Andrew Birchall, Louise Doswell, Mick Mckeown, Julian Manley, Janet Newsham, Mick Noblett.

Apologies: Cilla Ross, Cllr. Lynn Brooks

Purpose of the meeting: to find synergies, areas of mutual help and support between PCEC and Preston College, share ambition and direction of PCEC with Preston College

PCEC's background, initial timelines, keystones:

- PCEC was inspired by Mondragon University where students study to open a co-op business.
- PCEC wants to get back to the times where there was a labour movement and worker education.
- A lot of work is for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- PCEC will be encouraging co-op ethos throughout their education.
- Ambition for PCEC is to become an engine for employment.
- PCEC is a first union co-op in the UK.
- Start face-to-face education in September 2022.
- Get on with online learning between now and then.
- Coop college has a starting module which PCEC intends to do.
- With Cooperative College and Social pedagogy colleagues at UCLan think outside the box to try and change the learning experience for students, governance structure-participation with students, delivering participatory and experiential work.

Learning demographic: adults, no age limit, anyone with a need

Areas of partnership:

- Students need mentoring and support when they finish college. As an example, Preston College graduates who can't find a job in construction could come to PCEC for help to start a construction co-op.
- Preston College is a funded body and has to abide by rules, but there is a shift. PCEC can inspire a discussion for change.
- Funding criteria set by government is quite restrictive and constrained. One way to do a partnership would be to come together to bid for some of the funds available.
- Other possible partnerships would be to work with Preston vocational centre, Gateway, Centre for SME Development at UCLan that could link to an incubation unit and Mondragon. There are also possibilities for having lecturers from other countries.
- Guest lecturing adds a lot of value to Preston College's curriculum. PCEC could speak to a group of students directly in an open, constructive way.
- Some of the partnership could also be around a shared space.
- National Lottery funding would be able to demonstrate the partnership with Preston College.

Action: send bullet points about the things PCEC talked about in more detail to Preston College (PC), and PC will think about opportunities to enable that to happen.