

# North Kensington Centre for Skills

*A guide for stakeholders*





## Welcome

We have a long tradition of delivering local learning opportunities in North Kensington, beginning life on this site as a Victorian school. For over 150 years, we have united generations of diverse individuals and W10 residents through the power of education. Today, our vibrant community is still at the heart of everything we do.

This shared history is what saved the North Kensington Centre. Community activism ensured we remained a learning space after the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire, which led to a multi-million-pound renovation in 2023. Our transformed estate now matches our ambition: to offer the best student environment and experience available in London.

Our unique Centre has been helping local people to access tailored support and learning for decades. We teach the transferable and vocational skills for people to reach their goals – whether that's returning to education after a long break, achieving a maths or English GCSE, changing careers, being the first person in a family to go to university, or reaching a dream job. We teach Access to HE courses to prepare people without traditional

qualifications for study at university. We also offer several Level 4 HNC qualifications and a Level 5 Foundation Degree in Early Years. In 2023, Morley College London was awarded a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) gold rating for outstanding higher education experiences/outcomes and our links with exceptional partners.

With the support of our incredible stakeholders, we are changing the lives of hard-to-reach learners. Aspirational placements and experiences with global brands make seemingly impossible careers and employers attainable and within reach.

**Craig Hanlon-Smith**  
**Centre Principal, North Kensington**  
**Centre for Skills**

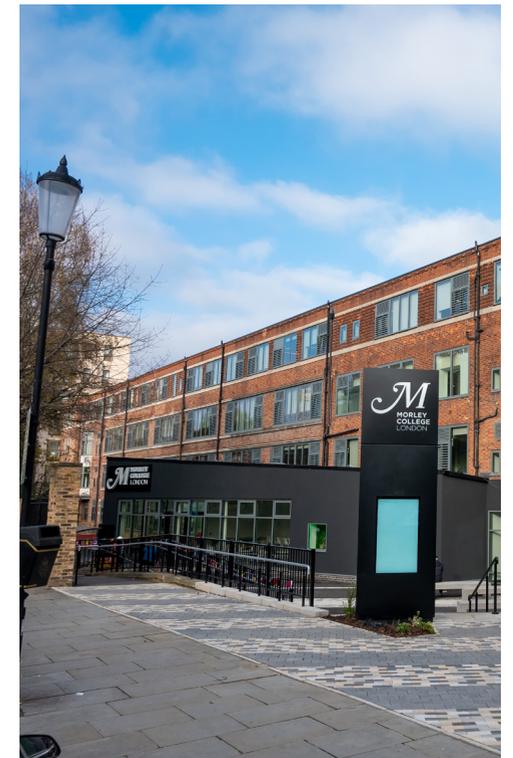
## 2024 Priorities

**Maximise educational impact of facilities.** After extensive refurbishments, the North Kensington Centre boasts a mock hospital ward, recording studios, networking labs and more. We want students and stakeholders to be creative and use our facilities in new and innovative ways.

**Reach diverse audiences and widen participation.** We strive to make vocational education more accessible. Tactics have included working with Rugby Portobello Trust to deliver sessions for local parents looking to transition into full-time education (particularly Early Years training).

**Expand our provision at Levels 3 & 4.** We're developing more courses that fill skills gaps and offer progression routes to higher education. This includes T Levels in Health (Science) and Digital Business Services, with additional Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) planned for September 2024.

**Embrace new technologies to amplify innovation.** We are passionate about using technology to meet industry needs, reach diverse learners, and boost sustainable employment. We continue to introduce in-demand STEM subjects such as IT technologies and cyber securities.



## Our Curriculum

At the North Kensington Centre, we create opportunities for local people to improve their lives through learning. We offer a warm, inclusive welcome and benefit from smaller class sizes and tailored training and support options.

**We teach a range of qualifications such as 16-to-18 provision, short courses, and adult education classes designed in partnership with employers. These include creative programmes, essential skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), digital & business skills, urban music, humanities, counselling and psychology, health and social care, early years, and applied sciences.**

Our training incorporates career boost courses for those looking to enhance job prospects. Our innovative market trader taster course is a unique vocational programme, delivered in partnership with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, and an example of how we listen to stakeholders.

A termly Stakeholder Advisory Group - including Rugby Portobello Trust, The Harrow Club, The Grenfell Foundation, and charity Open Age - shapes our curriculum to align with sector requirements today. Advisors challenge processes to give students the edge in entering the jobs market.

Students also benefit from masterclasses, workshops, live briefs, trips, and work experience with global names such as British Esports and The V&A. We work closely with local employers to ensure that what we offer is what the community needs while giving students incredible experiences.



## Exceptional Facilities

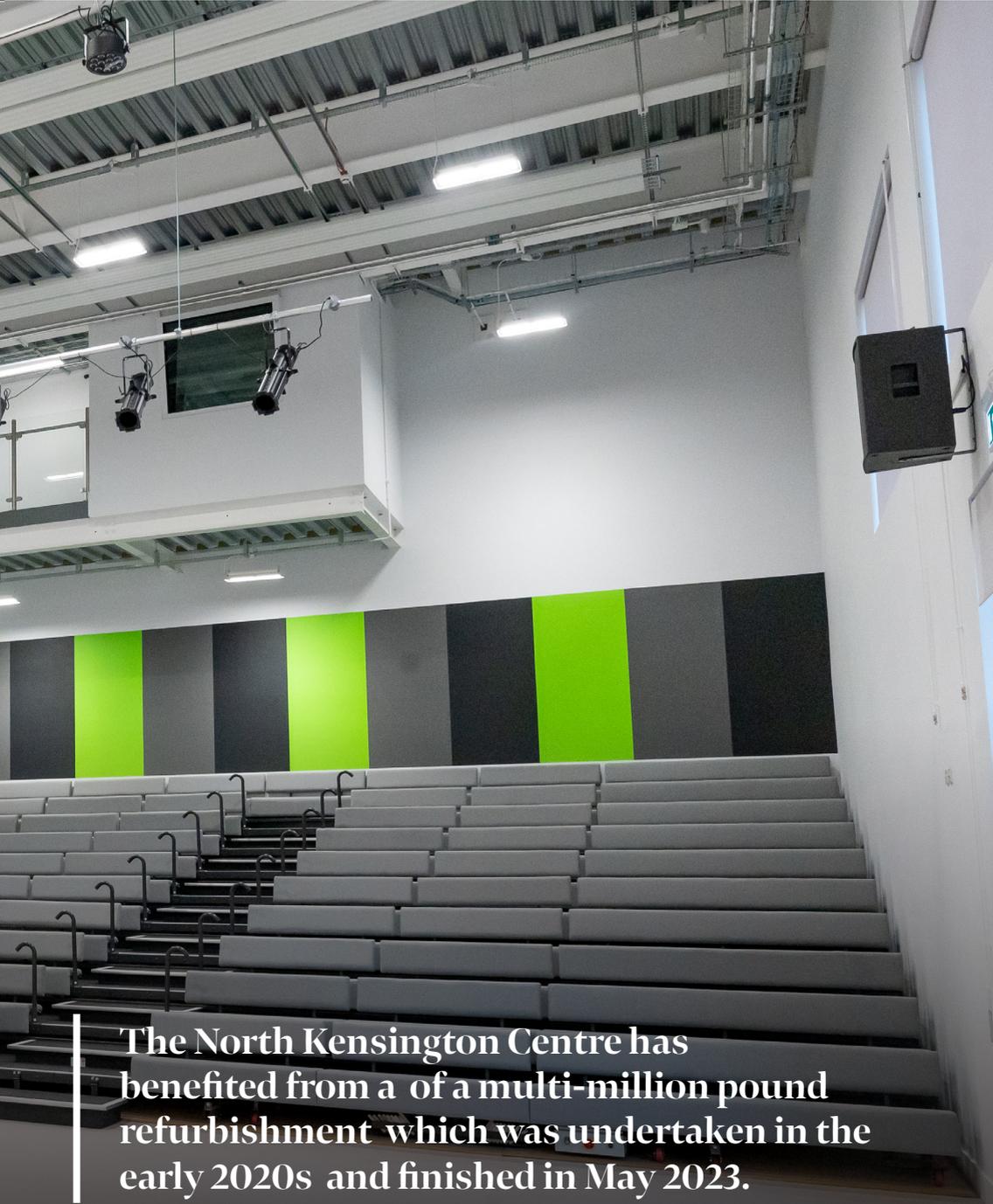
Thanks to £13.5 million funding from the Department for Education, new fully glazed front and rear extensions transform the open aspect of our building design. Contemporary facilities now include:

- A refurbished **crèche** that is free to parents who study, supporting inclusive learning.
- **State-of-the-art** science labs and well-equipped, modern classrooms.
- **Creative studios** for glass-making, jewellery, design, and ceramics.
- Sound-proofed music studios, radio production suite, and Mac IT suite for **music technologies**.
- Digital gaming and Esports **suites**.
- A multi-use community **performance hall** to develop performing arts opportunities.
- A bright, glass-fronted **café** and social space for staff, students, and the community.
- Re-instated **Morley Heart Gardens** with new landscaping.

- A new branch of **Morley Gallery**, offering dedicated exhibition space for visual arts students.
- Additional secure **bicycle storage** to encourage green modes of transport.

We're proud to be the home of the Portobello Business Centre, which supports SMEs, entrepreneurs, sole traders, and start-ups in achieving their aims. We're open to business events of every kind, recently hosting Nanny Con (a convention for aspiring childcare specialists). We also nurture local businesses like Grow2Know (not-for-profit horticulturalists).

We want to share these incredible facilities with students and the community. We're eager to hear from stakeholders about uses for these new spaces, such as taster days, conferences, local art exhibitions, and more. We are open to ideas and excited to explore new opportunities.



The North Kensington Centre has benefited from a of a multi-million pound refurbishment which was undertaken in the early 2020s and finished in May 2023.



## Claire's Story

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## Inspirational Partners

We work with many partners who help us deliver industry-leading qualifications and experiences. Together, we mould the next cohort of industry professionals and help them to explore their passion.

A long-standing relationship with the world-renowned National Theatre continues to deliver inspiring opportunities for our students. The National is one of the UK's most prominent publicly funded performing arts venues. Our shared belief in diversity and sustainability has led to many joint initiatives centring around community projects.

As well as advising our performing arts provision and running theatre workshops, the National Theatre is collaborating with us on a multi-year creative project in conjunction with local people and community organisations across North Kensington. This work links to the National's production of Grenfell: in the words of survivors.

The young people's programmes for the project are being run locally, specifically aimed at students who live, work, study, or socialise in North Kensington. We were delighted that both 'Space to Create' (the National Theatre's programme for young people aged 16-21 to devise and create bold new theatre) and 'Writing for Theatre' (a free playwriting course for 16-25-year-olds) took place in person at the North Kensington Centre for Skills.

The National Theatre has used our venue for dress rehearsals and will also be the site for future school performances as the project continues into 2025/2026.

# National Theatre

## Why work with us?

Together with our partners, we can act as a catalyst to nurture character and amplify student talent. We are open to mutually beneficial long-term partnerships, and our responsive and flexible model allows us to provide agile stakeholder solutions. Just some examples include:

**Business advice** – our advice centre, run in conjunction with Portobello Business Centre, is open to the community and offers local SMEs and employers a range of business guidance and training.

**A talent pipeline** - help us decide what and how we teach to shape your future workforce. With your input, we can address skills gaps and produce the talent you need now and in the future.

**Corporate hire** – explore our remarkable new spaces and choose the North Kensington Centre for your next event, project launch, exhibition, meeting, staff away day, or team-building initiative.

**An intellectual asset** – students can act as a project research tool, sounding board, or problem-solving resource, helping to tap into fresh ideas and completely new perspectives.

**A platform for change** – we're delighted when experts agree to give talks, workshops, and host placements. We want you to debate issues from ethics and values to green skills and sustainability.

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** – joint projects help you achieve corporate social, environmental, and widening participation business objectives while making a genuine difference.

We understand that every partnership is different, but each enriches our curriculum and offers life-changing experiences. Work with North Kensington Centre and join us in transforming communities and lives.

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