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Press Release

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAISES CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg visited Cambridge Regional College yesterday, praising its apprenticeship programmes as a model for the rest of the country.

The leader of the Liberal Democrat Party toured its SmartLife construction training centre and brickwork department, where he talked to apprentices – and even tried his hand at bricklaying.



Nick Clegg having a go at bricklaying, helped by apprentice Nico Cox...



...and talking to carpentry apprentices in the SmartLife construction centre

Mr Clegg picked up some tips from 19 year-old apprentice Nico Cox before having a go at the job himself, getting to work with a trowel as he laid a brick watched by the professionals.

The deputy prime minister, who was visiting the college to find out more about its successful apprenticeship scheme, was shown around the campus by Cambridge MP Julian Huppert and CRC principal Anne Constantine, along with vice-principal Steve Caley and head of construction John Malone.

Mr Clegg, who last year launched the £1 billion Youth Contract to provide new work opportunities for young people, said he was very impressed by the college's "ambitious" apprenticeship provision, with more than 2,000 apprentices currently in training.

"I think Cambridge Regional College is a real model of the kind of expanded apprenticeship approach that I would like to see up and down the country," he said.

“In a place like Cambridge, which is so famous for its university, it’s worth remembering that vocational skills and vocational qualifications should be supported, cherished and celebrated just as much as a university degree.

“Employers say to me they would take on more young people if only they had the right skills. It is crucial the government works hand in glove with colleges like this so that young people do have the right skills, because that in turn will help them find work.”

During his visit, Mr Clegg talked to carpentry apprentices working on the erection of a timber-frame house in the award-winning SmartLife construction centre. He chatted to the students about their courses and their employment as apprentices, finding out more about the details of their programme.

And he met the CRC’s newest governor, James Hutt, a former apprentice at the college who now runs his own successful heating company, employing a number of apprentices.

Mr Clegg also took time out to be interviewed by young student reporters from CRC’s *Banter* magazine and Core Radio station, answering questions on politics, football and the new Youth Contract.

Afterwards, he described his visit as “wonderful” and said it was great to see Cambridge Regional College’s “ambitious apprenticeship programme”.

CRC Principal Anne Constantine said: “We were delighted to welcome the deputy prime minister to the college and show him some of our extensive apprenticeship provision. Nick Clegg talked to several apprentices about their employment and training, and visited the fantastic facilities we have at the College.”

The deputy prime minister also held a private meeting with members of CRC’s senior management team and governors, before moving on to a meeting with senior Liberal Democrats from across the region, held in the College’s restaurant.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES

For more information, please contact Lynn O'Shea, Communications & PR Manager, on 01223 418773 or email loshea@camre.ac.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

Cambridge Regional College is one of the largest providers of full-time further education for 16 to 19 year-olds in the eastern region. The College has more than 4,000 full-time and 6,000 part-time students, coming from a 40-mile radius, covering Cambridge and its surrounding villages, eastern Bedfordshire, northern Essex and western Suffolk.

Over 80 per cent of full-time students are aged 16 to 18 years old and come to the College after secondary school; the rest are mature students, studying on a range of Access to Higher Education and vocational programmes. The College offers the largest and most comprehensive range of vocational courses in Cambridgeshire, and has one of the largest work-based learning contracts in the Eastern Region.