

HEART OF WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Annual Report 2022/23 98.1% of our learners state they are treated with respect



HEART OF WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE

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Our Commitment and Intent

Heart of Worcestershire College has a proactive and positive approach to Equality and Diversity. We aim to go beyond our statutory duty.

Overview of equality legislation

Public Sector general and specific duties:

The general equality duty as detailed in the Equality Act 2010 requires us to give due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Meeting the needs of Learners

Heart of Worcestershire College strives to be an outstanding inclusive college and ensures that learners' needs are assessed and responded to appropriately and effectively. An essential part of the College experience for a learner is to be prepared for working and living in a diverse society.

- All teaching and training resources reflect and promote Equality and Diversity as appropriate to raise awareness and understanding.
- Staff will actively promote British Values throughout college life and empower students to challenge stereotypes, assumptions and discrimination within a culture of mutual respect and tolerance for others. Admission processes and initial assessments are used to ensure that the correct support is available

to learners at the beginning of their course. Learners are given opportunities throughout the year to disclose any disabilities or other protected characteristic they may have.

• Information, guidance and support is delivered in ways accessible to different groups with protected characteristics and in ways that challenge stereotypes.

Learners are able to access support from a range of staff including Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officers, Personal Tutors, Personal Learning Coaches, Learning Support Assistants and Learning Mentors to reduce barriers to achievement.

Financial support is available to assist learners who may have difficulties in completing their course due to financial reasons.

The Learner Voice process is designed to be a crucial mechanism for understanding and responding to the learner experience to ensure that the College is inclusive in all aspects of the service it delivers.

There are extensive policies in place for equality and diversity that are fully embedded into all procedures and practices e.g. recruitment of staff and learners. The College's observation feedback requires that observers make a judgement on the promotion of Equality and Diversity within the learning activity.

Vision and Mission

The Principal, Governors and senior managers have a clear vision and strategy for improving all aspects of the College's work. Senior leaders communicate the ambitions and direction of the College well to staff and students, ensuring that everyone works in alignment with its mission and values.

Our Vision

Heart of Worcestershire College (HoW College) offers distinctly vocational, technical, professional and community education. Our purpose is offering and delivering education and the development of skills to empower individuals and strengthen our local communities and businesses. Our ultimate achievement is the success of our students: educated, skilled, confident, happy, agile and achieving their full potential.

College Mission 'Inspire, Innovate, Advance'

We will know we are delivering our mission when:

Students from a wide range of backgrounds and starting points complete their courses, achieve their qualifications and progress into employment or further/ higher education.

Students' satisfaction survey feedback is very positive. Staff are willing and able to develop their talents and progress successfully in their careers.

External bodies consistently judge what we do to be inclusive, relevant and to be providing value.

Employers and community groups want to partner with us because they recognise the quality of our provision.

The College operates as a successful business – generating cash each year to reinvest in its education provision.

College Values

The College's four values of: integrity, trust, inclusivity and partnership, serve as the underpinning framework for its mission articulating how the College behaves and guides every aspect of the business by demonstrating what the College needs to accomplish in order to continue delivering a sustainable and quality offer.

The College values create a long-term cultural foundation for its work, and provide the College with a formula for winning and working together with the College's community, learners and staff.

Our Values

Integrity

integrity
Working with
integrity;
demonstrating
openness and
transparency at
all times. Placing
the interests of our
students at the
heart of all College
activities.

Trust

Inspiring students to achieve success through quality learning and assessment.

Challenging and supporting staff so that they continue to be effective and successful.

Inclusivity

Promoting equality and diversity through inclusive practice.

Partnership

Engaging with Worcestershire's communities to develop stronger partnerships with sustainable benefits.

Listening to our stakeholders in order to provide responsive and informed services.

Equality and Diversity in Worcestershire

Worcestershire is a varied and diverse county with a total population of 603,600 people of which 295,800 (49%) are male and 307,900 (51%) are female [sic data.worcestershire.gov]. 16% of the population is aged 0-14, 61% aged 15-64 and 23% aged 65+. Since the previous census in 2011 the county has seen an increase in population of 37,431 reported in the 2021 census.

93.8% of Worcestershire population identifies as a UK National with 92% stating the UK is their country of birth.

92.6% of the county identify as white with 6.2% of the population being in a minority ethnic group.

56.2% of the population are Christian, 40.3% have no religion, 1.9% are Muslim, 0.5% other religion, 0.3% Buddhist, 0.3% Hindu, 0.4% Sikh and 0.1% Jewish.

Suicide is a significant cause of death in young adults and is seen as an indicator of underlying rates of mental ill-health. Suicide rates for males aged 10+ are significantly higher compared to females and higher than the England average at 20.7 compared to 15.9. Females aged 10+ are below the England average at 3.9 compared to 5.2 (rate per 100,000)

	Worcestershire	West Midlands	England			
Suicide rate - Female 10+ yrs	3.9	5.2	5.2			
Suicide rate - Male 10+ yrs	20.7	16.5	15.9			
Date:2019 - 21 Source: PHE						

Hospital admission rates as a result of self-harm for those aged 10-14 years and 20-24 years are higher than the England average (per 100,000)

20.7% of the population self-reported having high anxiety.

22.5% of adults feel lonely in Worcestershire.

15% of households in Worcestershire are in fuel poverty.

Worcestershire has higher than England averages for young people in the youth justice system. (Rate per 1,000)

	Worcestershire	England
15 years	10.7	9.8
16 years	13.5	12.3
17 years	17.4	15.6

Domestic abuse related incidents and crimes has continuously risen from 2015/16 and is inline with England figures.

Index of Multiple Deprivation | Worcestershire

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England. The IMD ranks every small area (Lower Super Output Area) in England from 1 (most deprived) to 32,844 (least deprived). For larger areas we can look at the proportion of LSOAs within the area that lie within each decile. Decile 1 represents the most deprived 10% of LSOAs in England while decile 10 shows the least deprived 10% of LSOAs.

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Date: 2019

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines information from seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The domains are: Income; Employment; Education; Skills and Training; Health and Disability; Crime; Barriers to Housing Services; Living Environment. Each domain is given a weighting and is based on a basket of indicators.





This dataset provides Census 2021 estimates that classify households in England and Wales by four dimensions of deprivation: Employment, education, health and disability, and household overcrowding. The dimensions of deprivation used to classify households are indicators based on four selected household characteristics.

- Education A household is classified as deprived in the education dimension if no one has at least level 2 education and no one aged 16 to 18 years is a full-time student.
- Employment A household is classified as deprived in the employment dimension if any member, not a full-time student, is either unemployed or disabled.
- Health A household is classified as deprived in the health dimension if any member is disabled.
 Housing - A household is classified as deprived in the housing dimension if the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating.

Almost a half of households in Worcestershire are classified as deprived in at least one dimension. This is slightly lower than the national average of 51.6% and represents almost 129,100 households across the county.

- Proportions of households that are deprived in at least one dimension are particularly high in Wyre Forest, at just over 54%, and Redditch, at just over 53%. Proportions are lowest in Bromsgrove, at just over 45%.
- Just over 16% of households in Worcestershire, representing over 41,800 households, are deprived in at least two dimensions. This is lower than the national average of just over 18%. At a district level, proportions are particularly high in Wyre Forest and Redditch, each at around 19%.
 Almost 9,000 households in Worcestershire are deprived across three dimensions, representing just over 3% of all households. This is lower than the average across England of almost 4%. Proportions are relatively high in Wyre Forest, Redditch, and Worcester.
- Just under 460 households in Worcestershire are deprived across all 4 dimensions. This represents 0.2% of all households, similar to the national rate. Proportions are highest at a district level in Redditch.

Our Partners



Employers

Equality and Diversity is monitored with our sub-contracting partners on a regular basis through the following methods:

- Audit and compliance visits
- Learner and employer surveys
- Observation of teaching, learning and assessment (including joint observations with partner leadership and management team)
- Review of policies, procedures, strategies and staff development records (areas for improvement are addressed at senior leadership level with action plans agreed, where required).

In addition to the above, the management team provide partners with resources to promote and discuss Equality and Diversity with learners during learning activity and through progress reviews, which check their understanding and monitor their place of work for legal compliance and good practice. Within College a question bank has been developed to target specific vocational sectors with relevant and current topics for discussion during progress reviews. The outcome of these reviews is monitored through the audit and quality monitoring process. The College observation process will also capture evidence of the promotion of Equality and Diversity during workbased assessment and progress reviews.

A handbook with questions for specific subject areas has been created to help assessors to embed Equality and Diversity into their work. This has been linked to the review document to enable effective tracking. A handbook has also been devised for learners in work based learning to aid their understanding of Equality and Diversity.

Our Partner Agencies

Heart of Worcestershire College strives to be inclusive in all aspects of the services it delivers and recognises the importance of strong relationships with the community. With this in mind we practice a collaborative approach to keeping our students safe with external agencies.





Our Policies

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the College's overarching plans, as set out in its Strategic Plan, and is embedded throughout the College in many ways such as sharing and celebrating good practice and participation and consultation.

The Equality Action Plan sets out the strategy for establishing how the College intends to ensure equality for all and build upon existing practice. It is intended to be flexible to respond to new developments and changes in legislation, and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, with the continuing involvement of college learners, staff, partners and community groups. Progress will be reported twice yearly to Corporation and monitored through the Equality and Diversity strategic group meetings taking place each term. The College strives to ensure that all learners enjoy an excellent experience whilst at college and monitors this by analysing data regarding people with a protected characteristic. The EDIMs [Equality and Diversity Impact Measures] are incorporated into the College's Equality Objectives and are reported on to the Senior Leadership Team and College Corporation.

We will provide equality of opportunity for all our learners and staff by:

- Taking effective action to prevent discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- Listening to our learners;
- Providing flexible learning and working opportunities to support differing aspirations and goals;
- Promoting equality of access to all college services;
- Taking all reasonable steps to provide a safe, accessible, inclusive and equitable learning environment.

Our Staff



The HR department has created and updated a number of key policies to continue to contribute and support the College's approach to Equality, Diversity and inclusion.

Volunteering

In keeping with the ethos of the College serving its community, staff are able to request paid time off work in order to undertake volunteer work.

Agile Working Policy

The College supports the adoption of new ways of working, to provide more flexible teams and teamwork enabled by technology, who can work more efficiently to deliver excellent service whilst improving the relationship between work and home life.

The College has recognised the need to develop modern working practices and has invested significantly in technology driven solutions to enable our students, our work teams and the people within them to maximise their performance and productivity and deliver the greatest value to the organisation, whilst maintaining a good work life balance.

Menopause Policy/Guidance

The College is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment. We aim to create an environment in which all our employees feel informed about the menopause and are comfortable and confident talking about its impact.

The introduction of this new policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work

Wellbeing Support for Staff

Alongside our organisational mission 'inspire, innovate, advance' the college is committed to the health and wellbeing of employees, developing a culture where all staff feel valued, motivated and well informed as well as feeling well equipped to manage their health and wellbeing with support from leaders and managers to perform their roles effectively.

The College is also committed to supporting ways to reduce stress in the workplace. It recognises that the key to managing stress is reliant on good management practice. The College ensures that employee health and wellbeing is at the core of all College activities by having in place a comprehensive combination of wellbeing measures including Occupational Health Services, an Employee Assistance Programme, and a rolling programme of wellbeing and healthy lifestyle events available to all members of staff regardless of job role or level of responsibility.

This approach aims to work in partnership with employees to promote wellbeing, to prevent sick absence wherever possible and to manage cases of sickness absence where they occur, within a constructive framework of policy and procedures.

Within the past two years this commitment has been increasingly evident with a number of additional support measures and implementation of specific activities to promote and encourage the positive health and wellbeing of staff which are further outlined and discussed in the following sections.

The College ensures that employee health and wellbeing is at the core of all college activities. Across both HR and Marketing the teams work in collaboration to implement and promote a programme of health and wellbeing activities and resources to all staff.

The HoW4U reward platform includes a wellbeing platform. As part of this, staff have access to a 24-hour, free telephone counselling service, as part of the Employee Assistance Programme.

The College's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) delivers a person-centred approach to health and wellbeing. Staff engage well with this service with beneficiaries able to access support year on year.

Staff also self-referred for support via Able Futures, introduced to employees via staff development days across the year. Able Futures work with the College to make adjustments to help support mental health at work.

Staff development days have continued to include a wellbeing focus, this is now a key theme for all Staff Development Days so that staff feel supported.



The college has introduced a regular newsletter for Mental Health and Wellbeing called -Let's Talk; recent communications have included:

- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Walking Fitness Social
- Learning Week
- Easter Wellbeing
- Now and Beyond Wellbeing advice and support Q&A session Feb 2023
- Energy Update Myth busting and cost of living advice

The College also has a nominated Menopause Champion – regular menopause drop-in sessions are regular held for any staff wanting to attend.

The College has also signed the Menopause Pledge, by signing the pledge, we have committed to, recognising that the menopause can be a challenge in the workplace and anyone going through it may need support. Encouraging to talk openly, positively and respectfully about menopause. Actively supporting and informing employees affected by the menopause.

More recently the College has also signed the AoC Mental Health Charter, recognising that our college has responsibility to create an environment that promotes student and staff wellbeing and that we proactively support our students and staff mental health.

To support staff and retain talent, HR have been engaged in running initiatives to support staff's understanding and perceptions around Mental Health and Wellbeing and to enable an open discussion between managers and employees.

Staffing Profile

2022/23

Staff by gender

How College is consistent within the sector in terms of 2/3 of staff are female, 1/3 are male, according to the AoC College workforce survey 2017.



Staff by age	16-21	22-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-65	66+
Management	0	0	4	18	22	4	0
Business Support	12	58	75	83	111	53	20
Delivery	1	13	39	61	53	27	13
Total	13	71	118	162	186	84	33
%	2%	10%	17%	23%	27%	12%	5%

Staff by disability

Prefer not to say	Yes learning difficulty	Yes physical impairment	Yes rather not say	Yes - Mental ill health	TOTAL
2	6	13	14	0	35

Staff by ethnicity

Our staffing profile is slightly more diverse than the demographic profile of residents of Worcestershire (census 2011) with 94% of our staff identifying as white compared to 95.7% of Worcestershire residents.

Ethnic origin	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other Ethnic Group	Not known
Management	0	0	0	47	0	1
Business Support	7	4	12	363	2	24
Delivery	7	7	4	179	1	10
Total	14	11	16	589	3	35
%	2%	2%	2%	84%	0.43%	5%

Gender Pay Gap

Heart of Worcestershire College, in line with many colleges, has more female employees. The education sector has also always provided a range of flexible working patterns to suit the work/life balance of its staff. At HoW College a greater number of female staff have taken advantage of this flexibility, choosing to work less hours or taking on term time only contracts. This does impact on Gender Pay Reporting calculations, however we have always, and will continue to support and provide flexible working patterns. At HoW College we are proud of our diverse and multi-discipline workforce and the range of facilities we provide. For many years the College has also supported the benefits that salary sacrifice schemes bring to its staff.

However, for the purposes of gender pay gap reporting this does not reflect favourably on our calculations as historically more female members of staff than males have participated in these schemes.

The College is committed to inclusion and the promotion of gender equality. Moving forward, we will continue to keep our HR policies and processes under regular review to ensure we are making steps towards removing any existing gender pay gap and ensuring that there is a balanced representation of different genders within the workforce and across all roles.

We will continue to monitor the employment 'lifecycle' of our staff; from initial recruitment ensuring that we have fair and consistent selection processes; career development opportunities for all job roles; clear and consistent promotion and salary processes; with equitable and flexible working practices.



Other actions the College has agreed to pursue in order to close the gender pay gap include:

- Work towards removing the gender bias associated with certain roles and contract types.
- Better communications with the education sector network channels to understand how other colleges are tackling their gender pay gap challenge.
- Explore the possibility of encouraging more diverse working patterns, in addition to the Agile Working introduced in 2021, this might include 25 compressed hours, permanent working from home, increased flexible working arrangements. This will be more appropriate in certain departments within the College but will recognise the recent government consultation on flexible working extending these rights.
- Encourage the uptake of Shared Parental Leave.
- The roll out of Unconscious bias and Diversity training.
- Leadership development training. Leadership development programmes aim to teach qualities including management skills and self-confidence

Our Students

Students Profile 22/23

Overall Student Cohort position for HoW College students 22/23 (classroom based)





Students by Ethnicity

Heart of Worcestershire College continues to attract learners from minority ethnic communities, this is reflected in the student cohort profile.

Demographic profile of residents of Worcestershire

(Worcestershire Demographic Report-Census 2021)

White	93.8%	British	1.9%
Asian	3.1%	Other ethnic group	0.6%
Black	0.7%		

	Asian	Black	Mixed	Not Provided	Other	White
Adult FE PICS	3%	2%	0.10%	0.20%	0%	95%
Full Time 16-18	4%	4%	1%	1%	0.38%	90%
Full Time 19 +	6%	4%	1%	1%	0%	89%
HEFCE	6%	6%	1%	0%	0.54%	87%
PT Adult Funded	17%	11%	1%	2%	1%	68%
PT Adult Other	5%	4%	1%	1%	0.08%	90%
PT Com Learner	12%	0.46%	0.23%	3%	0%	85%
Total	7%	5%	1%	1%	0.35%	86%

Students by disability 28.54% of our overall learners declared having a disability, difficulty or medical condition.



4.04%	Moderate learning difficulty
1.01%	Severe learning difficulty
25.49%	Dyslexia
1.19%	Dyscalculia
11.23%	Autism spectrum disorder
5.29%	Asperger's syndrome
0.30%	Temporary disability after illness (for example post-viral) or accident
1.54%	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
1.90%	Vision impairment
2.08%	Hearing impairment
1.90%	Disability affecting mobility
2.44%	Social and emotional difficulties
11.65%	Mental health difficulty
0.89%	Other physical disability
1.54%	Other specific learning difficulty (e.g. Dyspraxia)
3.57%	Other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)
5.23%	Other learning difficulty
1.13%	Other disability
7.19%	ADHD
3.57%	Asthma
1.19%	Diabetes (Type I or II)
1.60%	Epilepsy
3.39%	Other Medical Condition, please state (e.g. allergy or heart condition)

Declared LLDD BY Learner Category



Our Planning

The Heart of Worcestershire College strives to be an outstanding inclusive college where all staff and learners feel valued and respected, having a fair and equal chance to reach their potential.

We aim to respond to the diverse profile of needs expressed by our learners, staff and stakeholders and celebrate the diversity of the College community. We aim to go beyond statutory requirements to ensure our learners, staff and partners have the best experience possible. Through our Equality Action Plan we will work with the College community and beyond to make the College a truly inclusive organisation. We believe that Equality and Diversity is an essential ingredient for overall quality improvement.

The College ethos to Equality and Diversity includes the:

 Involvement of the various communities of interest - so that their priorities and concerns can be identified and inform college practice and policy.

- Data gathering for analysis and monitoring - to establish what different groups experience in terms of recruitment, retention and success as a student or as a member of staff. Any significant differentials will be further explored and actions agreed accordingly.
- **Raising awareness** through staff and learners induction, bespoke training and by having thematic weeks to celebrate diversity
- Action planning The College will set equality objectives at least every 4 years to move forward its aim to be an outstanding college. The objectives will be translated into an Equality action plan which will be agreed every year and monitored on a regular basis.
- **Publicise the scheme** to ensure transparency in our approach and practice regarding Equality and Diversity. This will enable learners, staff and the College's community to be informed of progress and give stakeholders the opportunity to respond.



Equality and Diversity Strategy Group

Heart of Worcestershire College has an established Equality and Diversity Steering Group to lead on the organisation's strategic approach to equality and diversity. Key post holders from across college attend these meetings each term.

This group will:

- Ensure the College meets its responsibilities with regard to its public sector general and specific duties;
- Ensure Equality and Diversity is promoted effectively through teaching and learning;
- Ensure that information regarding Equality and Diversity is communicated effectively to the College community;
- Monitor, review and contribute to the Colleges Equality and Diversity Objectives and Action Plan;

- Make recommendations as to how the promotion of the equality duties can be further enhanced and improved through the curriculum and service provision;
- Monitor additional equality and diversity operational meetings to share and develop best practice and ensure whole organisation 'buy in';
- Review and revise the College's Equality Policy annually;
- Contribute to the College's annual Equality and Diversity Report, published in January;
- Monitor the progress made against college EDIMs;
- Monitor any complaints pertaining to Equality and Diversity;
- Champion inclusive practice.



Supporting Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Learners with Special Educational Needs are well supported at Open Days and through the admissions processes. Close working relationships with local specialist and mainstream schools enables learners to explore their options early and helps ensure a successful transition to college. Learners identified with additional learning needs and disabilities receive personalised support that meets their individual needs. Learners can access support by declaring their needs through the Admissions and Enrolment process or at any time during their course. Tutors will also refer learners for support at any time. Support staff provide tailored support to learners, they actively promote independence, support future progression and ensure learners are prepared for adulthood.

Support across college is provided by a range of Staff including Learning Support Assistants, Personal Learning Coaches, Learning Mentors, SEN Profilers High Needs Support Co-ordinators, Specialist External Agencies and Volunteers.

The High Needs Support Co-ordinators ensure that the College can meet the needs of a student with an EHCP via the consultation process with the Local Authority. They can meet with parents/ carers to discuss support requirements and they can also be involved with Year 10 and 11 reviews at school as and when required. They arrange school visits and help to facilitate the transition from school to college. They are also able to arrange appropriate training for staff as required for specific needs.

An annual review is carried out for each learner with an EHCP, and learners are encouraged to attend and give their views. Paperwork is adapted for learners with more complex communication needs to allow them to express their views independently. A discussion will take place around the needs of a learner, suggesting amendments to the plan if needed, and to look at the progression for the next academic year. We will give parents/carers information regarding options available for the learner once they finish college.

HoW College works closely with Worcestershire County Council to deliver education to a high number of learners classified as requiring high support needs (normally those learners have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) plan in place).

The College had 250 learners with an Education Health Care Plan in 2022/2023, with 122 enrolled in discrete SEN provision, 25 in Progressions, and 103 in vocational and technical programmes across the College, studying at Entry Level 3 and Levels 1, 2 and 3.

Support for Success

The Support for Success Team promote and offer a strong personalised support package for vulnerable learners with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and individuals with declared learning difficulties and disabilities. The support offered strives to remove barriers to student learning, and to provide a level playing field for students with declared learning difficulties and disabilities through providing effective learning support, access to specialist assistive technology, and by providing learners with the study skills to develop and work independently.

The team offers tailored support strategies to meet the needs of the individual during their learner journey, and as a result encourages learners to reach their full potential, and move to their next intended steps including work, further education and training, and adulthood.

During 2022/2023 Support for Success delivered academic learning support to 113 learners with an EHCP, including 4 EHCP apprentices. 624 learners with recognised learning difficulties and disabilities received learning support, including 90 adult learners and 16 apprentices.

The team support students with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities, such as:

Autistic Spectrum

- Emotional and social difficulties
- Disorders, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia or Dyscalculia
- Physical difficulties
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Sensory needs such as hearing or vision impairments
- Mental health

Communication difficulties

A range of assistive technology and resources are used by Support for Success to support our students, such as reader pens, Read & Write specialist software, Microsoft text to speech and voice dictation software, coloured Cerium overlays, writing pads & reading rulers.

The Support for Success team also supports learners where there is a need for specialist assessments allowing for exam access arrangements to be granted, such as 25% extra time, readers, rest breaks and smaller rooms. 551 exam access arrangements were approved for 2022/2023.

Higher Education learners

HE Learners

A key part of the HE Engagement Officer's role is to meet the needs of students with a disability. Overall the College has an increasing population of students declaring disability at the point of application.

A student is considered to have a disability or be disabled with the following conditions;

- Long-term physical health condition
- Permanent or long term impaired mobility
- Mental health difficulties
- Specific learning difficulty (SPLD) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia
- An Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) such as Asperger's
- Hearing or sight impairment

Support can take some or all of the following;

- Meeting the legal requirement to make reasonable adjustments to enable the student to be able to study and access services
- Pastoral and academic support
- Assistance in seeking diagnosis and evidencing of disability
- Assistance in applying for relevant funding including Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- Assistance in ordering and using assistive technology
- Assistance in implementing exam access arrangements
- Supporting curriculum staff by creating and disseminating course profiles

Information evenings are held to explain what support is available for students with disabilities, this includes inviting current level 3 students who will be progressing onto HE courses and external applicants who have identified themselves as having a disability through the application process. The HE Engagement Officer invites identified students to an individual meeting to discuss their needs, including what reasonable adjustments they may require and whether they are eligible for DSA funding and explaining the process of applying. Reasonable adjustments can be physical and environmental adjustments such as holding classes on a ground floor when a lift isn't available. Other reasonable adjustments relate to teaching, learning and assessment needs, which can include exam arrangements and providing learning materials prior to class sessions. At this meeting, students are asked to complete a Consent to Share document which enables the HE Engagement Officer to create a course profile to assist curriculum staff in supporting the student effectively.

Academic support from the HE Engagement Officer is available to all L4 – L7 students through the proof-reading service and academic support with assignment writing as required.

The College collects feedback from all our HE student body in a number of different ways across the academic year. This feedback is then used to improve the student experience for all learners, including those with specific needs.

Support for Learners with safeguarding, wellbeing and mental health needs

The Wellbeing Service safeguards and supports the wellbeing and mental health needs of learners, to empower them to build resilience and confidence to make positive decisions to enable them to achieve to the best of their ability. The support is student centric and is individually tailored to meet the learner's needs and can vary from offering low level mental health support to attending multi-agency meetings to collaborate on how to keep a student safe. Vulnerable learners are identified from application and throughout the year, with targeted cohorts, such as Care Experienced, those living independently aged 16-18, young parents or young carers, those on a Child in Need or Child Protection plan, those with a wellbeing or mental health concern with an Educational Health Care Plan, receiving extended monitoring of their retention on the course and achievement. Student support and wellbeing remains a strategic priority across the college and is effective at ensuring that learners at risk or those with personal and social needs are swiftly identified and receive timely intervention. Within the department there is a strong culture of inclusivity with a range of services that are accessible to learners to support personal and social needs. Academic and support staff work collaboratively to swiftly identify those learners who are at risk of not achieving and who would benefit from support and intervention. 1,261 learners accessed wellbeing support of which 35.7% were

classified as vulnerable. Support for vulnerable learners is effective, with a very large majority being retained in year 89.4% overall.

Due to collaborative working with the High Needs Team and Support for Success Team, 107 learners with an Educational Health Care Plan accessed wellbeing or mental health support. Poor mental health has been evidenced as a factor in under achievement and therefore in addition to 1:1 support and referrals to external services, the team have created self-help resources to promote positive mental wellbeing and mental fitness for learners experiencing poor mental health, as well as promoting the benefits of mental wellbeing to all learners.

In addition to wellbeing support, students are able to access support for their mental health through the Act On It programme, delivered by Onside Advocacy.

Exam support sessions were delivered in multiple locations before and after each GCSE exam, offering a safe place for learners to access support in a calm environment to enable them to reduce their stress levels before attending an exam, giving them the best opportunity to succeed.

91% of learners who completed the wellbeing survey confirmed the support they received had helped them.

This service has been able to help positively support me and given me the opportunity to succeed in my course and also helped me be able to manage the challenges I have not only had in college but also in everyday life. The only comment I have is I have a great deal of gratitude towards this service and the staff.

The welfare service has enabled me to access someone to talk to on a weekly basis, which has reduced feelings of loneliness, brought increased productivity and allowed me to properly reflect on the events of a given week. This has been valuable.

I'm going through a lot but thanks to everyone that I have support off I'm doing well

Everything's been amazing, I feel very listened to and am so happy that I can now go to someone and talk to them if somethings happened inside or outside of college.

I learnt that wellbeing is a good place to talk to staff who listen and help you sort out problems or anything else that needs to be sorted out and looking for solutions on how to solve the situation.

When I've been to support or had someone help me before, I felt like I made one step

forward and two steps back, but with college I feel I am making three steps forward every time. That has never happened to me.

Student Experience – EDI campaigns

The Student Experience Team promote and support Equality, diversity and inclusion across college. The team develop and co-ordinate a yearly enrichment calendar of activities starting with Freshers and Induction and including Mental Health, Healthy Living, Healthy Relationships LGBTQIA+ Sexual Violence and Harassment, Equality and Diversity, Prevent and Safeguarding. The campaigns and activities are developed to support and enhance the knowledge of learners. In addition to raising awareness of key subjects they are designed to challenge myths and stereotypes by means of guestioning and debates and informing students on how to access support in and outside of college. The team are able to respond quickly to emerging trends and their partnership working with kev stakeholders has extended quest speaker opportunities for learners and have enhanced their communication to all learners by the implementation of monthly student newsletters.

LGBTQ+

Students from the LGBTQIA+ community are encouraged to attend the regular 'meet ups' designed to bring members of the college community together, to access peer support, share lived experiences and to celebrate diversity in a safe space.

Working together with the student LGBTQIA+ group, the team held a celebration for LGBTQIA+ community which linked with national pride month. The aim of the celebration was to encourage students and staff to take part in all activities to learn about the community and to feel welcomed and accepted. Within all Campuses displays included: large LGBTQ+ flags, bunting, quotes from well-known celebrities, facts about the different LGBTQ+ flags, definitions and book suggestions.

Staff and students were encouraged write a positive quote about why it is important to celebrate LGBTQ+ .





"

Throughout my time in education I have never experienced schools celebrating my community, and as a young lad this has been difficult for me to express. Being part of a college to celebrate and welcome the LGBTQ+ community has allowed me to express who I am. FE student

It is nice to see that the college are making the effort to include the inclusive LGBTQ+ flags as these are something that not many organisations use. **HE student**

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

The College has a zero tolerance of sexual violence and harassment (including sexualised language). Abuse should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". In dealing with disclosures of this nature, the College adheres to the Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment guidance and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Students receive THRIVE sessions on sexual violence and harassment, healthy relationships and consent and are able to participate in extended learning via the campaign sessions.

Feedback from the campaigns and focus groups confirm students feel safe on campus. They are aware of what constitutes sexual violence and harassment and are able to articulate the strategies they adopt to keep themselves safe in their community.

Through the deep dive quality process in the College, single sex and LGBTQIA+ focus groups were conducted, further confirming students feel safe on all campuses and know who to go to for support and how to report any concerns.



Careers

Due to a comprehensive and inclusive offer, all students are able to access individualised 1:1 guidance sessions with qualified Careers Advisors, with a large majority (87%) of learners stating the College has helped them to plan their next steps and prepare them well for a future career. (Satisfaction survey).

The service is responsive to students needs and offers a variety of support methods, including telephone and Teams appointments as well as short interactions and full guidance sessions. To further complement the service, students can access personal statement checking, support with CVs and opportunities to engage with employers and guest speakers during National Careers Week.

IAG is delivered by a range of personnel across the college and referral is used very well to ensure needs are understood and specific expertise is employed in order for students to move forward both academically and personally, as confirmed in the Matrix Standard reaccreditation report.

As a result of strong promotion and targeted interventions, through induction, THRIVE, careers drop ins, National Careers Week, participation in THRIVE 1:1 sessions for short interactions and newsletters, student participation in specialist guidance sessions has increased from 423 to 523, resulting in a 23.6% increase from 21-22.

There is a clear focus to support vulnerable learners both pastorally and through careers guidance. All vulnerable learners were targeted to further promote the careers guidance service and offer of support, with care experienced (CE) and living independently (LI) learners receiving an extended offer of careers mentoring for 22/23, of which 67% of CE/LI took up the offer and received at least one careers guidance session. The retention figures for these cohorts have significantly increased from 21-22.



THRIVE Tutorial Programme

THRIVE resources and tutorial sessions add value to the 16-19 full time study programme and address learner's personal development needs through introducing and encouraging learners to discuss themes that enhance their role as positive citizens in the College, their local communities, and wider society. A standardized set of quality resources are provided for personal tutors to use in their group tutorial sessions to stimulate discussion and debate. A range of independent activities are provided on Moodle for learners to inform, revisit and check their understanding on topics.

Personal tutors can adapt resources to contextualise to their vocational or technical area and the learning needs of their group, to enhance learners understanding of how the topic's principles apply to them in their industry and in the wider context of societal responsibility.

The programme supports the strategic priorities of the College to develop 21st century skills and prepares learners for employment, supports personal development and mental wellbeing, promotes equality and celebrates diversity and explores issues of social exclusion. The strategic KPI "We will go beyond skills and ensure students benefit from personal and social education including mental resilience, self-development and agility to support their success in further study, work and life." is measured by the outcomes of the THRIVE survey and how students feel they benefit from the topics discussed.

For 22/23, 75% of 630 learners agreed that "I feel I have benefitted from the knowledge I've gained from the topics covered in the THRIVE programme"

77% of 630 learners agreed that "I feel my knowledge of mental resilience has improved as a result of completing the THRIVE session and activities on the topic". Satisfaction levels are highest amongst level 2 and level 3 year 1 learners, this echoes the feedback from level 3 yr 2 learners who would like to see a greater range of topics and content made available to them.

Tutorial content for 22/23 was planned in a schedule showing what topics would be covered each week. The half-terms were planned on general themes, Safeguarding, Citizenship, Wellbeing, Employability and Personal Growth. A consolidation week takes place before each half-term for Personal Tutors to explore a topic with their groups in more depth and recall the topics covered during the previous six weeks. Themes are revisited across the year with a focus on related information, for example, mental wellbeing is covered in sessions including safeguarding, wellbeing, coping with stress, and building resilience.



The THRIVE programme is responsive and flexible to cross-college themes and external events and can be adapted to accommodate topics. For example, a session was introduced in the Autumn term on contextualised safeguarding focused on right-wing extremism as there had been incidents of graffiti in the local area and on campus.

There is good practice in Art, Hair and Beauty, Sport and Public Services and Access to HE. The Deep Dive in Hair and Beauty found that in most cases learners enjoy and value the variety of topics covered, they feel they are worthwhile and mostly relevant to their programme of learning and stage in life. The separate scheme of topics for Access reflects time to spend on building higher level study skills and to allow for effective sequencing of UCAS support. A high degree of contextualisation takes place in Sport/ Public Services. Within THRIVE learners look at the principles of safeguarding and then in Elements they look at how Worcestershire County Council apply safeguarding principles in their service area, this will also then be covered in their vocational lessons. Students can see the links between the different parts of the study programme and they are supporting one another to build them as an active citizen.

The link between THRIVE sessions and the work of the Student Experience team is strong through promotion of campaign weeks and extra-curricular activities and timely delivery of relevant THRIVE sessions. For example, the citizenship theme coincides with the nomination and elections of Student Ambassadors, so students can see their learning on democracy and values in practice.

The Deep Dive found that "Personal Tutors introduce THRIVE topics well, they set out learning objectives, explain the importance of the theme and describe the evidence source resources are based on. Consequently, the quality of most sessions is good. Students explore with peers, personal attitudes and values and learn to challenge the basis of pre-conceived ideas and concepts of bias. In the best lessons tutors use direct questioning to draw responses from all students in the group, although in the main students respond and participate freely. The large majority of students can identify potential risks to themselves and their communities, they can explain how they would support their peers in matters relating to the Prevent agenda, personal relationships, mental health and have developed skills that support their learning such as time management, or the use of sector relevant software and activities that aid their progression."

The THRIVE scheme for 23/24 has been updated to include greater differentiation between year groups to enhance the student experience of tutorial.



Learning Centres

Resources are provided in both print and electronic format and elements of the collection are suitable for all cohorts in College, including FE 16-19, adults, apprenticeships, SEN and high needs learners, and HE and Professional.

The physical spaces are positive, safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environments and are a combination of IT and traditional study spaces in modern facilities, including a TalkPod, breakout areas for discussions, high tables, and comfortable seating. We support and encourage learners to be confident in developing their independent study skills to transition effectively between levels of study or progress to university or employment. The team are the first port of call for any digital skills support and assist learners with accessing College systems and supporting their use of software and developing their digital skills. The team supports, guides and monitors learners during blended learning and online activities including Elements sessions. We effectively collaborate with the Digital Learning Advisors and IT services to retain current awareness of digital skills including tools related to accessibility.

The team set high expectations of behaviour and responsibility for learners. We effectively collaborate with other support services to promote College wide themes via visual and digital displays and relevant resources during campaign weeks and signpost learners to financial support services, Support for Success and the Wellbeing team as needed and in doing so support the College strategic aims to encourage learners to improve their personal development and mental wellbeing.

Some examples of displays this year were:

- LGBTQ+ History Month (February 2023).
- Stephen Lawrence
- Climate Change / Sustainable Living
- Celebrate Diversity

A Foodbank collection promotion was also ran in the Learning Centre before Christmas. A donation box was created themed with the items needed. Staff and students were encouraged to donate with all items collected being donated to the local Foodbank at the start of the new year. The reading hubs collection continues to grow, new EDI titles have been purchased this year, additionally there has been a spotlight on themes such as sustainability and the Stephen Lawrence 30th Anniversary Memorial for which collections of books were purchased and promoted. Some examples:

- Love from A Z A love story of a young people from different faiths and culture.
- A Time to Dance The story of a talented young Indian dancer who loses her lower leg after a tragic accident. This story is about religion, faith and overcoming challenges.
- Jerk A story a teenager with Tourette's and his struggle for acceptance and understanding.
- A Mango Shaped Space A touching story of a girl with a neurological condition and her unique way of experiencing the world and demystifying a fascinating condition.
- All About Colour Blindness A guide to colour deficiency for both adults and children.
- Not So Different Shane Burcaw a writer living with Muscular Dystrophy explores what you really want to ask about having a disability.
- Inspector Chopra fictional series of detective stories based in Mumbai.
- Amazing Muslims Who Changed the World Extraordinary stories of incredible Muslim people.
- Serena Williams Serena's life story from sport to fashion, activism & motherhood.
- And still, I rise A mother's search for justice. Read about the brutal murder of Stephen Lawrence.
- The life of Stephen Lawrence The story of Stephen Lawrence before he was murdered.

This year, the Learning Centres have also initiated a working group which have specifically focused on the aim of promoting reading. The group met and discussed different topics for promotion. One example chosen by the group was LGBTQ+ History month with the following titles being promoted:

- Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda Story about a 16-year-old boy is trying to figure who he is and who he is looking for.
- Gender Explorers Young transgender people share interviews on how they came out as trans and what they have to do in order to through the transformation.
- A beautiful Boy A story about Mohsin, brought up in a strict conservative household and overcoming barriers to be his true self.
- LGBTQ + Rights Discover the history of LGBTQ activist from the around the world who have fought for equal rights.
- From prejudice to pride Read about the history of the LGBTQ movement and how they fought for equal rights.
- Trans Survival Workbook Explore the Trans survival guide with quiz's, puzzles, and different types of exercises.



All collections have been promoted in the student newsletter as well as visual and digital displays in the Learning Centre.

We held a Borrowbox promotion in Worcester in May collaborating with Worcestershire public libraries to encourage reading for pleasure and lifelong learning.

The annual World Book Night event was again promoted this year to encourage students and staff to explore reading for pleasure to improve wellbeing and a range of Quick Reads were purchased to support the event.

We recognise the development and progress of learners in relation to their digital and academic skills by awarding the Endeavour Award for Digital and Independent Learning to two FE learners each year. This year's nomination for Redditch and Bromsgrove is a Level 1 learner studying a Diploma in Employability and Development Skills. This learner has been an absolute ambassador for reading in the Learning Centre and his enthusiasm has been inspiring having borrowed a record number of fiction books.

The Reading Hubs also provide a full collection of Graded reader titles which are enjoyable reading material for all learners of English.

At the start of the academic year, 4 presentations were delivered to ESOL classes at Redditch on library services and promoting graded readers. This has resulted in a successful uptake in reading by ESOL students. Statistics collected throughout the academic year on the loan of these resources have confirmed ESOL to be the second highest curriculum area for loaning library resources.

This year, the existing collection of ESOL books have also been extended with 26 new titles plus the purchase of 4 Ukrainian dictionaries to assist with English exams.

This year we have undertaken targeted activities for SEN learners to encourage them to use the Learning Centre spaces. An Easter egg hunt competition in Redditch was organised and facilitated by the Learning Centre apprentice. In Worcester, craft sessions were held before Christmas and Easter break. All events engaged the learners and were successful. The team get to know the learners during these events and as a result the students return to the Learning Centres to look at resources or use the study spaces.



The Learning Centre at Redditch purchased three books from the Talkabout series for SEN students. The Talkabout series are a collection of books written by a speech and language therapist with the aim of developing self-esteem, social and friendships skills for students with learning difficulties. Titles purchased include:

- Talkabout theory of mind: teaching theory of mind to improve social skills and relationships.
- Talkabout for children: developing self-awareness and self-esteem.
- Talkabout sex & relationships 1: a programme to develop intimate relationship skills

The books were promoted to the tutors of the SEN department who have actively used the resources and activities this year with their students.

The Learning Centre team also ran an Easter Egg hunt specifically for SEN students. This was a visual activity encouraging the students to explore their book collection and find as many cardboard eggs hidden within the books in a limited time frame. Four classes participated. The students were then asked to count their eggs embedding numeracy into the activity with a prize awarded to the highest number collected.

As a result of working closely with the Support for Success team and the HE Engagement Officer we support learners to make use of assistive technologies in preparing for exams, progression on to the next course or employment. This includes the use of Read and Write software, Overlays, dictation software, and the loaning of reading pens and laptops. We have also created dyslexia friendly signage on the bookshelves for learners to easily navigate around the reading areas.

This year for the first time we utilised the RNIB Bookshare service, assisting six partially sighted learners to access resources from L2 to L4 counselling.

"Firstly, thank you very much in arranging this to be set-up. I have heard from my other visually impaired friends that this is a great resource and makes accessing textbooks a lot easier. Previously I would have had to email the publisher to access a textbook, but as the main book is available, I have access to it straight away. I am very grateful for you looking into this for me and I'm sure it could help a lot of other people to access books and resources in the future."



Financial Support

Effective financial support packages are in place to support learners and the College effectively manages its free college meal programme. 94% of learners who received financial support were retained for 22/23. The retention rate for learners who received the 16-19 vulnerable bursary was 89.1%.

During 22-23 the college has supported over 450 learners with payments towards meal costs during the holidays. Learners received £15 per week payment during holidays. This was part funded by Worcester City Council, where Edenred vouchers were provided.

HoW College are now part of the 'Good for Me Good for FE' national scheme. 2 successful food bank collections at Christmas and the staff summer BBQ were held with over 500 being items donated to local food banks in Worcester, Malvern, Redditch and Bromsgrove. A successful MacMillan coffee morning was held in September with over £200 raised across all sites. Staff and students also participated in the yearly Christmas Jumper day in December raising over £100 for Save the Children.

For 2022-23 we've added further EDIMs to monitor retention, attendance and achievement of home educated, pupil premium and refugees. Retention for 2022-23. Home Educated (18 Learners): 78% Pupil premium learners (472 learners) 89%, and Refugees (16 learners) 89%.

Student Feedback

Of the 1,559 learners who completed the Arrivals Survey 2022;

95.9% feel they know 97.9% where to go for support.

feel their learning environment makes them feel welcome and safe.

98.1%

feel they are treated with respect in College.

99%

confirmed they know how to keep themselves safe online.



INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND BIPHOBIA

Marketing Campaigns

The Marketing team have continued to assist in the creation, promotion, organisation and distribution of EDI content to internal and external members of the HoW College community; producing content (including the production of graphics, distribution of external opportunities and social media campaigns) for a variety of different celebration/ information days and events to help improve awareness for important EDI dates on the calendar.

EDI dates/events included: Holocaust Memorial Day, LGBT+ History Month, National Apprenticeships Week, International Women's Day (Fearless Females campaign), International Nurses Day, International Day of the Midwife, Autism Awareness Month, World Fair Trade Day, International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, Mental Health Awareness Week, World Refugee Day, International Women in Engineering Day, the Black History Month, International Men's Day (Magnificent Males campaign) and many more.

For 22/23 the team introduced a new 'Brilliant Non-Binary' campaign dedicating a week around International Non-Binary People's Day to raising awareness and celebrating the non-binary community. Topics included the importance of Non-Binary Awareness, misgendering and appropriate responses and further education around what it means to be nonbinary. The campaign was well received and praised by stakeholders and other colleges across social platforms.

FEARLESS

For each campaign the team researched each subject in depth, pooling useful digital resources, a brief history into each area and relevant statistics/figures of interest. In addition, the team also worked with student and staff within the HoW College community to share their stories and insights into EDI. These were shared across our social channels in various week-long and month-long campaigns encouraging our stakeholders to actively educate themselves on these important EDI topics.

To enhance our EDI marketing further, the team also created a specific EDI section within the main college website to share resources and further information for each specific EDI campaign which can be accessed here: Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity | Heart of Worcestershire College (howcollege.ac.uk) The College has previously received a Highly Commended Award at the FE First Awards for their EDI communications campaigns.

Update on developments for 2022/23

LGBTQIA+

- Students and the Student Experience team collaborated to develop LGBTQIA+ friendly spaces on campus, further promoting inclusivity and acceptance.
- The development of the Trans toolkit involved student consultation on what content should be included.

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

- Orange button scheme was promoted to all staff through CPD newsletters.
- Suicide awareness training opportunities cascaded to staff.
- Staff development days have continued to include a wellbeing focus, this is now a key theme for all staff development days so that staff feel supported.
- The college has introduced a regular newsletter staff on Mental Health and Wellbeing called - Let's Talk, recent communications have included:
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Walking Fitness Social
- Learning Week
- Easter Wellbeing
- Now and Beyond Wellbeing advice and support Q&A session - Feb 2023
- Energy Update Myth busting and cost of living advice
- The College has a nominated Menopause Champion – regular menopause dropin sessions are regular held for any staff wanting to attend.

- Students are able to access additional mental health support through the Act on It programme, delivered by Onside Advocacy.
- Dedicated Thrive tutorials on mental health and resilience delivered to students, complemented by campaign sessions to further enhance student's knowledge.

Social Action and Volunteering

 Benefits of social action promoted to staff and students. Students encouraged to take part in community events and feedback. Special leave policy relaunched to staff highlighting leave for volunteering.

Cost of Living Crisis

- Cost of living information cascaded to parents via parents' newsletter
- EDIM categories aligned with College strategic objectives

Glossary of Acronyms

ADHD	ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	FT	Full Time
AoC	Association of Colleges	HE	Higher Education
AMHS	Adult Mental Health Services	HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	HR	Human Resources
CAMHS	Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services	L4	Level 4
CE	Care Experienced	LGBTQ	 IA+ Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Questioning (or queer), intersex and asexual
CLA	Child Looked After		(or allies)
CPD	Continued Professional	LI	Living Independently
DSA	Development Disabled Students' Allowance	LLDD	Learner with Learning Difficulty or Disability
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme	РТ	Part T
EDI	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion	R/B	Redditch/Bromsgrove
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan	RSVP	Rape and Sexual Violence Project
GPs	General Practitioners	SEN	Special Educational Needs
EDIM	Equality and Diversity Impact	SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
	Measures	W/M	Worcester/Malvern
FE	Further Education	YSS	Youth Support Service