

Careers Strategy 2025 - 2028

Purpose of Policy/Document	This strategy sets out the Colleges key approaches, both internally and externally to continuously develop and improve Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
Target Audience (staff/students/ visitors/contractors)	Staff/students and stakeholders
Particular Legal Requirements/Issues outside of EDD	Statutory requirement to provide CIAG
Links with Other Policies/Documents	Personal Development Framework
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Communicated via/Location: (Policy Acceptance software/website/ portal etc)	Portal
Equality Impact Assessment Statement	The Equality Act 2010 does not require public authorities to carry out EIAs by law. The College does, however, carefully consider the impact, when creating or amending its policies, on all concerned parties regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and records this at SLT meetings in order to demonstrate compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

1. Introduction

Heart of Worcestershire College (HoW) is fully committed to ensuring that all learners and apprentices acquire the skills, knowledge and behaviours to manage their learning and career progression in support of our vision to nurture the brilliance of every student, and to meet skills needs. One demonstration of this commitment being recognised is the whole College accreditation to the Matrix Quality Standard which includes ensuring high quality provision for all our learners and apprentices.

2. Personal Development Framework

Ensuring learners are **Career Ready** is a key strand of the College's new Personal Development Framework.



- 2.1 This strategy sets out the Colleges key approaches, both internally and externally to continuously develop and improve Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)
- 2.2 The core aim is to ensure that learners are prepared for and informed effectively about their next steps and can therefore aspire to achieve their full potential. We want to ensure that our students have both the aptitude, resilience and skills to make the transitions through their education journey and enabling them to enter the workplace or gain their independence.

- 2.3 High quality career guidance is a crucial part of improving social mobility. Students make choices based on what they know and what they think is available to them. If students are aware of the career options available to them, they will be more able to make informed choices about which qualifications and routes to take.
- 2.4 The College will collaborate with a range of external agencies to deliver these key outcomes in partnership. These will include The Careers Enterprise Company, Uniconnect, the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership), Worcestershire County Council, Chamber of Commerce, the Careers Hub, local Schools, National Careers Service and other education providers.
- 2.5 The Careers Strategy includes measures to ensure that the College continues to meet the eight 'Gatsby Benchmarks 'as required, the priorities set within the Ofsted Education Inspection framework and any funding requirements. This will involve co-ordinated external support in addition to appropriately skilled and experienced careers leadership within the College.

3. Current position

- 3.1 The College aligns its services to specific guidance from the Department of Education for college leaders and governing bodies:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools/careers-guidance-and-access-for-education-and-training-providers>
- 3.2 There is an appointed member of ELT (Executive Leadership Team) designated as the Careers Lead - DSL & VP Student Experience.
- 3.3 There is an appointed Lead Governor for Careers who will have oversight of the Careers strategy on behalf of the Corporation.
- 3.4 The following resource and services provide holistic, professional and impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance across the College:
 - Careers Team
 - BLC Team
 - LSDOs / Personal Tutor Teams
 - Work Experience and Job Coach Team
 - School Liaison Team / Marketing
 - Customer Services and Admissions Team
 - Curriculum Teams
- 3.5 The College is responsive to the careers and skills agenda, demonstrating high level of initiative-taking dialogue with key stakeholders. One example of this is the collaborative partnership is the establishment of the Redditch Youth hub working with DWP, LA and Careers Worcestershire.

"Partnerships are well-developed, highly appropriate, nurtured and used effectively to make a difference to students' experience achievements and progression. HoW is a trusted partner, considered transparent and effective in its collaborative work. Both strategic and operational partnerships are sought and maintained, resulting in a wide range of IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) development activities, including those which have become exemplars" (Matrix 2022).

- 3.6 The College has been proactive in supporting Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce in the development of the Local Skills Improvement plan (LSIP).
- 3.7 Effective collaboration with external partners leads to specific programmes targeting vulnerable learners or those at risk of NEET. The College has developed short courses for at-risk young people to re-engage them in learning.
- 3.8 Courses are designed and developed using LMI data and information from employers. The College prospectus has creatively used LMI data to ensure learners can access good quality information and an understanding of careers information before they join the College formally. The website contains course information and signposting links. In addition the College actively collects and reviews destination data to inform curriculum planning.
- 3.9 Careers support is tailored to meet the needs of each young person, paying particular attention to any additional or different support that may be needed by vulnerable young people, or those with SEN.
The DWP are closely linked with the college and support SEND learners by coming into sessions each term.
- 3.10 The College website uses Career Coach effectively to give learners and visitors to the site high quality careers and LMI data (Lightcast) data. Career Coach is also sign posted for use by Personal Tutors throughout the year in Thrive topics linked to Careers for learners to access.
- 3.11 Before joining the College formally, learners have access to a range of pre-enrolment activities including 1:1 appointment, open days/evenings, school visits themed around careers, school taster days, and interviews with curriculum staff who are vocational specialists and Welcome Days.
- 3.12 Students benefit from a well-resourced careers title on the student portal where they can access a diverse range of resources to support them to achieve the next steps of their career path. The resources are differentiated so students can easily choose their level of study, for example: FE learner, HE learner, Apprentice, SEN learner or Access student.
- 3.13 Students can self-select subject matters that are targeted to their level of study such as higher education and UCAS, apprenticeships, employer engagement videos, local market information (LMI), student finance, employability skills, CV writing, Careers Coach, as well as requesting a 1:1 guidance session.
- 3.14 GroFar is a newly acquired web app for learners to track their work encounters, it gives learners the opportunity to see what experience they have had during their time in college, what they have coming up and also opportunity to reflect and use their experiences for future career opportunities. Using GroFar for Work experience and the Careers Programme shapes the learners journey and Work and Career Readiness.
- 3.15 There is an explicit focus on the learners' Careers Programme. Aspirations and Intended destinations are a crucial part of understanding the journey learners are on. At timely points in the year learners are encouraged to complete their Aspirations and Destinations through Career information on ProMonitor. This data is fed to teams in college, Careers, Solutions, to focus support and outreach as well as build on information delivered to learners through curriculum and the Thrive Programme.

3.16 In 25-26 the Careers Programme has been updated to reflect the changes to the Gatsby Benchmarks as well as the development of the Personal Development Strategy. It seeks to meet the needs and opportunities available to learners at HoW College.

3.17 As per the updated Gatsby Benchmarks the language around Work Encounters centers around the word “meaningful”. Meaningful experiences shape learners Career journey. Having the opportunity to go out to experience places of work, having employers as guest speakers, virtual tours/talks, and more broadens a learner's experience. The Grofar system will allow students to record their reflections on their encounters and for staff to review these

3.18 The college hosts Apprenticeship week, with a timetable of talks aimed at learners on their Apprenticeship pathway. As part of the Thrive tutorial programme Apprentices take part in the 3 weeks of Potential Pathways. Apprentices have access to IAG referrals, as well as Short Interactions being booked with PTs (where applicable) or LSDOs. This in turn continues to keep Careers woven through the apprenticeship journey.

3.19 HoW College is dedicated to supporting learners from across all courses in their career goals. Adult learners are able to refer to the Careers Team for Specialist Guidance to support with course choices, employability skills, CV and interview support and more. We also work with Careers Worcestershire (16-24 years old) and National Careers Service to support with referrals for further Careers Guidance.

3.20 A renewed Parent Engagement Strategy is launched for 25/26.

3.21 Learners are encouraged and given the opportunity to interact with Universities and gain insight from HE providers through a wide range of opportunities. The college hosts a HE Fair each year, inviting in HE providers, learners are booked into slots to meet with, ask questions and gain valuable insight. The college also encourages the UCAS Discovery Day trip, taking learners to a larger expo for them to have further opportunity to meet with HE providers, providers or degree apprenticeships and more. The college also hosts a HE evening for Parents and NOK to promote our internal HE provision. HE information is embedded into the Thrive tutorial programme, and on a department-based level individual areas/groups actively seek guest speakers or visits to Universities.

3.22 The College hosts and attends a wide range of external events and opportunities for both its own learners and prospective learners. Open events highlight College facilities and provision offer. For example, The Worcestershire Careers Road show in Redditch.

3.23 The College has a close working relationship with the Careers Worcestershire Hubs. In Redditch, this is based on site, and the team work with Careers on referrals and support for learners, as well as external enquiries. In Worcester, the Hub is close to our Town Centre campus, located in The Hive. As a working initiative learners who are referred through the LEOP process, if consenting, are referred to the Careers Hubs, and information share between them and College on the journey that learner then may take to seeking new opportunities.

3.24 The Potential Pathways weeks combine a range of talks from external speakers, internal staff members, skills campaigns and activities available in a 3-week calendar for groups to book onto. Input from employers, Universities and organisations. 25-26 focus on Life Ready, Opportunity Ready, Work Ready and Career Ready. National

Careers Week is included in Potential Pathways. As part of looking toward Career Pathways the College hosts a HE Fair for groups to book onto and meet with several universities to discuss courses, entry requirements, student finance, career options and more. Potential Pathways links with EPYP students Thrive Tutorial Programme.

- 3.25 The College maximises engagement with employers where possible i.e., through further developing existing relationships, LSIF, Industry forums, Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholder networks.
- 3.26 The Personal Development Framework and the Careers programme are published on the college's website so that students, parents, college staff and employers can access and understand it.
- 3.27 The Wellbeing, Specialist Learning Support and High Needs Teams organise transitional visits prior to learners starting College to support learners with additional needs and to ease their transition from school into college.
- 3.28 There is an effective Careers referral process, working links with Careers Team, all staff making appropriate and timely referrals for course advice, and progression and careers guidance when required.

- 3.29 All students have access to high quality, impartial careers information, advice, and guidance from qualified staff to help clarify their aspirations for work, to understand the options available to them and to take control of and make informed decisions in terms of job and career change, training and promotion.
- 3.30 National Careers Week activity is planned and organised each year to further develop students' knowledge and understanding of careers options. Students can participate in a range of sessions including industry guest speakers, university graduates and specialist careers guidance.
- 3.31 The Marketing Team attend a variety of events throughout the year including, mock interviews, careers fairs, assemblies, parent's evenings and options evenings. In addition, the team also actively offer a bespoke programme of events to schools to help them fulfil the Provider Access Legislation and Gatsby Benchmarks
- 3.32 Monthly newsletters to Career Advisers continue with general college updates, including open events and latest news. Posters and promotional literature for open events is issued to schools to display for learners and the Marketing team work in close collaboration with our local school network to fulfil any school liaison needs they may have.
- 3.33 In addition, the College is also represented at several county-wide events including the Worcestershire Skills Show and Careers and Apprenticeship Roadshow, providing information and guidance for students who are considering their post-16 options.
- 3.34 The College hosts an annual Career Advisor Conference that is open to Career Advisors, and those who have a responsibility for Careers in their role, to attend. This is done in collaboration with our curriculum teams to give advisors key information (including curriculum updates, tours of new facilities, etc.) to help students make informed decisions about their futures.
- 3.35 There is an established Mentoring Programme for care experience learners and those that live independently aged 16-18. Students are offered specialist support throughout their career journey. The support is designed to reduce barriers to opportunities and ensure those vulnerable learners are fully informed about their next step options. Vulnerable learners are identified from application, enrolment, staff, external agency referrals and student referrals.

4. Key Objectives 2025–2028

- 4.1 The College has 5 key objectives designed to continue to deliver a collaborative, accessible, high quality, careers programme which is integrated into the curriculum and aligns to local skills needs:

The objectives are as follows:

- **Continue to cultivate a responsive and aspirational curriculum:**
To cultivate a curriculum that remains responsive to Labour Market Information (LMI), responsive to the needs of employers and enhances students' employability skills in accordance with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), elevates student aspirations, and empowers them to make well-informed decisions about their next steps.

- **Maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders:**
To maintain and strengthen relationships with educational institutions, employers, parents, and other external stakeholders, fostering an environment of effectiveness and continuous improvement in our careers programme.
Action:
Deliver the new Parent Engagement Strategy
- **Deliver a Quality-Assured Careers Programme:**
To deliver a robust careers program that undergoes stringent quality assurance processes, consistently meeting and exceeding the benchmarks set by the Gatsby framework.
Action
Raise the profile of Careers Programme
Ensure effective use of the new Grofar system
Career team to record one to ones on Grofar system
Collaborate with National Careers Service to support learners
Ensure effective quality assurance methods to assess the impact of the careers program
- **Advance Blended Learning and Resource Development:**
To further advance the integration of blended learning methods and expand the availability of comprehensive careers resources, particularly in support of curriculum delivery and the THRIVE programme. Explore opportunities for the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance the careers learning experience.
- **Ensure Equitable Access to Careers Opportunities:**
To ensure access to careers guidance for all learners, regardless of their provision type. Ensure learners have an understanding of their potential pathways and progression routes .
Action;
IAG team to focus on SEN learners leaving the college for targeted IAG support and track learners who are considering HE to have 2 HE visits
- **Advance Industry-Aligned Expertise Among Staff:**
To ensure our staff maintain and enhance their industry knowledge, with a focus on continuous professional development in alignment with evolving industry trends. This includes staying current with advancements in green skills, automation, AI, and changing workforce needs. By doing so, we will foster an environment of effectiveness and continuous improvement in our careers programme, enhancing our ability to prepare students for the future workforce.
Action:
Train EHCP staff with IAG skills including impartiality.
HR to establish plan to encourage staff to record and participate in industry updating

5. **Impact measures**

5.1 All CEIAG will be highly responsive, well resourced, accessible and engaging.

This will be evidenced by:

- Improved progression and destination outcomes
- Increased number and high-quality work encounters and work experience

opportunities

- Increased in careers service delivery and careers related events engagement figures.
- Maintaining quality standards e.g., matrix
- High levels of student satisfaction
- Quality assurance processes e.g., corridor conversations, learning walks etc.
- Aspiration and intended destination capture.

Appendix 1

Background information

The Government's Careers Strategy, published on 4 December 2017, set out a long-term plan to build a world class careers system to help young people and adults choose the career that is right for them. In 2023 the Careers strategy was updated in to include a new duty 'provider access legislation'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

The Government's reforms to technical education and skills have led to an increasing need for colleges to work in partnership with employers, careers advisers, local authorities and other education and training providers to support students to prepare for the workplace and to make informed choices about their next step in education or training.

A stable careers programme allows a college to meet legal and contractual careers requirements by offering a range of high-quality and inspiring, progressive careers activities that enable all students from the full range of provision types to make well-informed decisions about their future education, training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities. There should be an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for careers and is embedded in college structures through the development of a strategic careers plan.

Every college should ensure that those young people aged 16–18 or 19–25, or with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan are provided with independent careers guidance that:

- is presented in an impartial manner, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option.
- includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes.
- guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the students to whom it is given.

Colleges also have a legal requirement to provide all college learners with guidance materials and a wide range of up-to-date reference materials relating to careers education and career opportunities as per section 45 of the Education Act 1997 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/44/section/45>

Colleges should also collect and maintain accurate data for students on their education, training or employment destinations.

Appendix 2

The Gatsby Benchmarks

The eight Gatsby benchmarks were developed in 2014 by Professor Sir John Holman on behalf of the Gatsby Foundation and set out what good career guidance looks like. The benchmarks are non-statutory, but the Department of Education's guidance sets out that colleges are expected to use them to develop their careers programme. These Benchmarks develop a careers programme that increases opportunities for students to access everything from experiences of the workplace and personal guidance with a career's adviser, to engagement with training providers and universities.

