

## WALSALL COLLEGE – Case Study

Walsall College's Careers Guidance Service is free and available to all students and prospective students. Students and prospective students can access the Careers Guidance Service in many different ways i.e. by telephone, face to face and e-guidance. There is also a dedicated Careers Centre located on the ground floor in the Atrium where we operate a Quick Queries Drop-in service for current students on a daily basis. The college provides an extensive vocational provision for students aged from 14 years old and over to no upper age limit.

The Senior Management and Curriculum team are all fully aware of the Careers Guidance Service and curriculum staff actively encourage students to attend or take part in activities or refer students to the Careers Team for further support, when they have surpassed their expertise.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

### *A Whole College Approach*

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The Careers Team previously delivered a series of events for students “we used to deliver events we believed were useful for students”, but they found that attendance was decreasing and wanted to find a way of ensuring what they were doing was actually meeting the needs of students. At the time, there was a framework of young people’s careers IAG that was used to help frame the offer. Starting with asking curriculum areas to identify the activities they were already undertaking in their area, a gap analysis identified the gaps in provision – it was these gaps, rather than perceived need, that led to Partnership Agreements being developed with each curriculum area. Partnership Agreements ensure that the support provided is tailored to each curriculum area and recognises the role of both the Careers Team and curriculum area; staff described how this has helped to raise the profile of the Team and curriculum based staff, who have an expertise in their own area, know when to refer to specialist careers support.



***Careers education is everyone’s job, not just the Careers Department***



As a result of the gap analysis and implementation of the Partnership Agreements, the team found that the activities they were delivering were more relevant to students, it reduced duplication and increased the attendance at those events that were held. Another change was to move from a ‘satisfaction’ based evaluation model, to one where the impact on students was measured, for example how events helped to make informed decisions, greater awareness of options etc. The College also report an increase in applications to higher education and positive destinations. The Partnership Agreements have continued to develop with discussions now taking place with Curriculum Leaders Managers who are responsible for single vocational areas, rather than Head of Cluster Managers who oversee a number of different areas, ensuring that the CEIAG offer is even more tailored.



## Using quality benchmarks:

As identified above, the team have sought to use different quality frameworks to develop their work, such as the Careers Education Framework (CEG) 7 - 19 and now work with both the matrix Standard, one of the Quality in Careers Standards and the Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Careers Guidance.

Carol Egan (Director of Student Journey) stated:

*"The matrix Standard is for all our IAG, all aspects across the College – it helps to inform our staff throughout the student journey from initial contact through to progression. The Quality in Careers Standard highlights the specific work of the Careers Team and is recognised by schools.*

*Using the standards gives credibility of the service; having an external, impartial view helps to verify the good service we offer and gives us suggestions of areas to continue to develop.*

*We really do have the students' best interests at heart, we are impartial, and if that means them not coming here – then so be it"*