



HEART OF WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Annual Report 2024-25

98% of our learners stated they are treated with respect in College.

[HOWCOLLEGE.AC.UK](https://www.howcollege.ac.uk)



HEART OF
WORCESTERSHIRE
COLLEGE

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 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.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made, to ensure students are not being placed at a disadvantage.

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 Academic Skills Support 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.

OUR VISION. OUR VALUES.

2023 - 2028 STRATEGY

MISSION

Improve lives through learning

VISION

HoW College is recognised for nurturing the brilliance of every student & addressing the skills needs of local and regional employers, through innovative & impactful education

STRATEGIC THEMES							
	PURPOSE	PLACE	PEOPLE	PROSPER	PARTNERSHIP	POTENTIAL	PLANET
How will we achieve our vision?	Providing a high-quality curriculum, focussed on careers and the delivery of excellent outcomes for all.	Delivering from inspirational and safe learning environments.	Offering a culture of support, kindness and engagement for staff and students with high expectations of ourselves and others.	Focussing on appropriate growth opportunities and efficient and effective delivery.	Being an anchor institution for Worcestershire employers and our communities.	Preserve and innovate today to thrive tomorrow, ensuring we meet skills needs and have a reputation for technological advancement.	Raising awareness of, and delivering on, our sustainability commitment.
OUR AMBITION							
When will we know we have achieved this?	Top quartile results.	Estates strategy implemented.	Recognised in Times Best Companies.	Achieve FE Commissioner EBITDA recommendations.	Extensive list of employers engaged in every curriculum area for design, development and delivery. Stakeholder feedback.	Recognised as STRONG for skills and industry leaders in technology.	Reduce carbon footprint by 50% by 2030.



OUR VISION. OUR VALUES.

VALUES

#HOWCARES

Honest
Optimistic
Welcoming
Collaborative
Ambitious
Respectful
Empowering
Supportive



Honest	We are open and transparent and recognise, accept and take action when things aren't working or would benefit from change. We are confident to respectfully challenge others.
Optimistic	We see opportunities in challenge. We are positive and passionate about our College and the communities we serve, and are aspirational for our students.
Welcoming	We create positive first impressions and foster loyalty.
Collaborative	We work as a team and leverage diverse skills and perspectives. We pursue partnerships to benefit the communities we serve.
Ambitious	We seek to improve, build on our strengths and expand. We are innovative and consistently encourage and inspire our colleagues and students to achieve their best.
Respectful	We value all contributors, acknowledge diverse opinions and foster inclusion.
Empowering	We delegate authority and encourage decision-making and initiative, to increase engagement and productivity. Through fostering a culture of accountability, we promote resilience in a no-blame culture.
Supportive	We help others with empathy and kindness at our core. We are responsive, enabling colleagues, students and stakeholders to find solutions and achieve.

Equality and Diversity in Worcestershire

Worcestershire is a varied and diverse county with a total population of 614,185 people, of which 300,176 are male and 314,009 are female. 17% of the population is aged 0-15, 60% aged 16-64 and 23% aged 65+.

The number of people from an ethnic minority groups in Worcestershire is almost 68,200., around 11.3% of the population. This is notably lower than the national average of over 26%. The proportion of ethnic minority groups in the county in 2021 has grown from 7.6% in 2011. Proportions of ethnic minorities are relatively high in Redditch and Worcester. Proportions of ethnic minorities in all districts are lower than the average across the whole of England. The population of 'Other White' ethnic group now represents almost 25,500 people, the 2nd largest ethnic group in the county. It contains many people from Europe including eastern Europe.

2021 Census results show that 18% of people in Worcestershire are disabled under the Equality Act, representing almost 109,000 people.

Children in need and care in Worcestershire

- At 31 March of the financial year 2023/24, the number of children in need in Worcestershire was 3,841, a rate of 321.0 per 10,000 children.
- At 31 March of the financial year 2023/24, 596 children and young people were subject of a child protection plan, which is greater than the figure for 2022/23 (569).
- At 31 March of the financial year 2023/24, 1,044 children were being looked after by the local authority (a rate of 87 per 10,000 children). Of this number, 19% were placed for care outside the Local Authority and further than 20 miles from where they used to live.

(<https://iginform.local.gov.uk>)

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

In 2024 there are a slightly higher percentage of pupils in Worcestershire schools with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), (4.9%) than the national average and the average among statistical neighbours (4.8% and 4.6% respectively). Proportions have increased from 3.0% in 2016, although this is in line with increasing national trends. Proportions of total pupils with an EHCP split by school type are:

- 2.5% in state-funded primary schools
- 2.6% in state-funded secondary schools
- 95.7% in state-funded special schools.

Educational attainment of pupils in 2023 Worcestershire schools with an EHCP is mixed with slightly improved rates compared to previous years but lower rates than national:

- 5.3% for KS2 – percentage reaching expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2023, lower than national average and statistical neighbours.
- 2.2% KS4 average Attainment 8 score, lower than national average and statistical neighbours. Compares to 11.9% in 2022.

Children in Poverty

Almost 19% of children aged under 16 are living in Relative low-income families, compared to over 20% in the UK

- Almost 14% of children are living in Absolute low-income families, compared to almost 16% in the UK.
- Proportions of children living in poverty are highest in Redditch, Worcester and Wyre Forest.

(Worcestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2024)

Our Partners



Subcontractors

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

- Audit and compliance checks
- 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).

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 work-based assessment and progress reviews.

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 was reviewed and updated on a regular basis, with the continuing involvement of college learners, staff, partners and community groups. Progress is reported twice yearly to Corporation and monitored through the Equality and Diversity sub-groups.

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 Executive Leadership Team and College Corporation.

HoW College 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.

The College has continued to strengthen its commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) throughout 2024-25.

The updated Employee Wellbeing Policy was shared with all staff and managers.

- A reduction in the mean Gender Pay Gap compared to national averages in education and public sectors.
- Fewer performance management cases and a decrease in sickness absence.
- Positive staff feedback from CPD days and wellbeing initiatives, indicating increased engagement and satisfaction.
- Wellbeing initiatives such as the Menopause Support Group and signing of the Menopause Pledge for the second consecutive year.
- Continued commitment to the AoC Mental Health Charter.
- A wellbeing-focused pulse survey was conducted.
- Increased focus on neurodiversity as part of EDI and wellbeing efforts.
- Enhanced CPD activities, supported by the new VP Quality, to align with improvements in teaching, learning, and assessment.
- Reintroduction of face-to-face inductions and improvements to the onboarding process.
- Support for managers in creating a work environment that reflects the College's new values.

Our Staff



HR has developed and updated several key policies to support the College's EDI approach.

Volunteering

In line with the College's community-focused ethos, staff are encouraged to request paid time off to participate in volunteer work.

Agile Working Policy

The College supports flexible working practices enabled by technology, aiming to improve service delivery and work-life balance. Significant investment has been made in modern working solutions to enhance team performance and productivity while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Menopause Policy/Guidance

The College is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for staff experiencing menopause. The policy provides clear guidelines for staff and managers to ensure appropriate support is available. A Menopause Champion has been appointed, and regular drop-in sessions are held. By signing the Menopause Pledge for the second year, the College reaffirms its commitment to open, respectful conversations and proactive support.

Wellbeing Support for Staff

The College remains deeply committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of its employees. We strive to cultivate a culture where all staff feel valued, motivated, and well-informed, and are equipped to manage their wellbeing with the support of leaders and managers.

A key focus is on identifying and reducing workplace stressors, while promoting a positive and inclusive working environment. We recognise that effective stress management is rooted in strong leadership and good management practices. To this end, employee wellbeing is embedded in all aspects of College life.

- Our comprehensive wellbeing offer includes Occupational Health Services
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – providing 24/7 access to free, confidential telephone counselling

Rolling programme of wellbeing and healthy lifestyle events - open to all staff, regardless of role or level

This proactive approach is designed to work in partnership with staff to promote wellbeing, prevent sickness absence where possible, and manage absence constructively when it occurs.

Over the past two years, our commitment has been further demonstrated through the introduction of new support measures and targeted activities aimed at enhancing staff wellbeing. HR and Marketing teams collaborate closely to deliver and promote a wide range of health and wellbeing resources.

Engagement with the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) remains strong, with staff consistently accessing its person-centred support.

Wellbeing is now a core theme of all staff development days, ensuring that staff feel supported and empowered in their roles.

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.

We have introduced a regular newsletter for Mental Health and Wellbeing called - Let's Talk, recent communications have included:

- Suicide Prevention Day
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Take a PAUSE for Menopause

Throughout the 2024-25 academic year, the Employee Wellbeing EDI subgroup has made significant strides in fostering a culture of care, support, and mental health awareness across the College. A key milestone was the distribution of the updated Employee Wellbeing Policy to all Line Managers, supported by wider staff communications to ensure visibility and understanding.

Interest in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training was met with a coordinated effort to identify staff across College locations. As a result, staff now have greater access to trained colleagues who can offer informed, immediate support, helping to cultivate a more open and supportive working environment.

Following the staff wellbeing survey, departments received tailored feedback and support to address areas with lower wellbeing scores. Staff are now more aware of available resources, including how to connect with Mental Health First Aiders and access the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). These initiatives have had a noticeable positive impact, with staff reporting feeling more supported and engaged in conversations around mental health.

This year's work has laid a strong foundation for continued progress, and we aim to build on this momentum in the next academic year.

Mental Health Support

The College has signed the AoC Mental Health Charter for the second consecutive year, reaffirming its commitment to creating an environment that promotes both student and staff wellbeing.

A network of Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAiders) is now in place across College locations, providing accessible, informed, and immediate support to staff.

HR has led initiatives to improve understanding and perceptions around mental health, encouraging open conversations between managers and employees.

Line manager training in mental health support is a key focus for the upcoming academic year, informed by feedback from the staff wellbeing survey.

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity has been a growing area of focus within the College's EDI and wellbeing strategy.

- Awareness campaigns and inclusive practices are being developed to ensure neurodivergent staff feel supported and valued.
- CPD activities have been enhanced to include training and resources that promote understanding of neurodiversity in the workplace.

Menopause Support

The College has signed the Menopause Pledge for the second year, committing to:

- Recognising menopause as a workplace challenge.
- Encouraging open, respectful conversations
- Actively supporting and informing employees affected by menopause.
- A Menopause Champion has been appointed, and regular drop-in sessions are held to provide peer support and guidance.

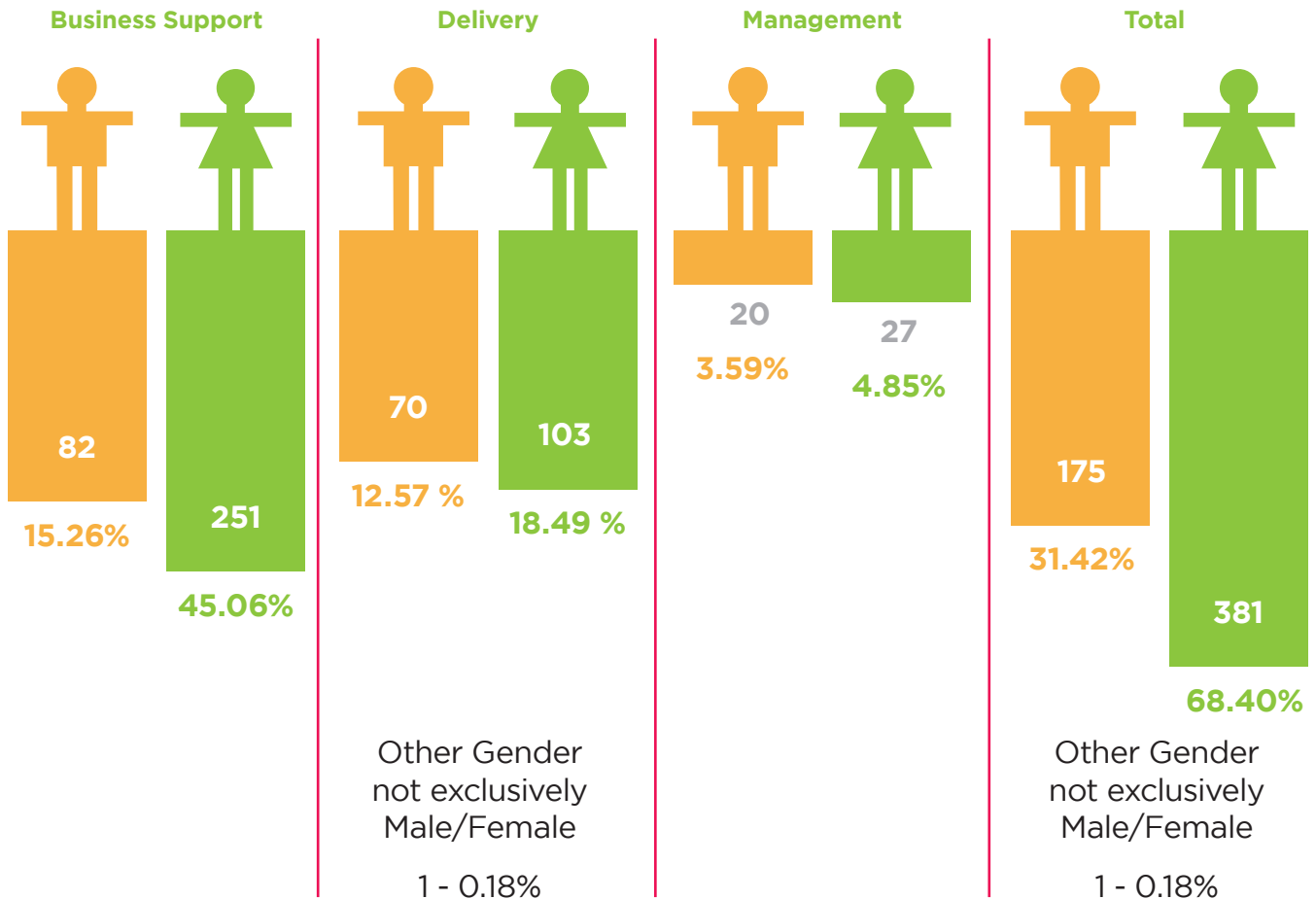
Staffing Profile

Staff Profile 557

2024-25

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+	Total
Business Support	6	49	77	68	75	42	19	336
Delivery	0	16	27	52	48	19	12	173
Management	0	1	3	25	17	1	0	47
Total	6	66	107	145	140	62	31	557
%	1.08%	11.85%	19.21%	26.03%	25.13%	11.13%	5.57%	

Staff by disability

Prefer not to say	Yes learning difficulty	Yes physical impairment	Yes rather not say	Yes - Mental ill health	TOTAL
1	3	7	9	0	20

Staff by ethnicity

Our staffing profile is slightly more diverse than the demographic profile of residents of Worcestershire (census 2011) with 86% of our staff identifying as white compared to 95.7% of Worcestershire residents.

Ethnic origin	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other Ethnic Group	White	Not Provided	Total
Business Support	8	5	10	3	287	23	336
Delivery	7	5	3	0	150	9	174
Management	0	0	0	0	47	0	47
Total	15	10	13	13	484	32	557
%	2.69%	1.80%	2.33%	0.54%	86.89%	5.75%	



Gender Pay Gap

Heart of Worcestershire College, like many institutions in the education sector, employs a higher proportion of female staff. The sector has traditionally offered flexible working arrangements that support work-life balance, and many female employees at HoW College have opted for part-time or term-time-only contracts. While this flexibility positively supports staff wellbeing, it does influence Gender Pay Gap reporting figures.

The College remains proud of its diverse, multi-disciplinary workforce and the inclusive environment it fosters. We are committed to promoting gender equality and ensuring fair pay for all employees.

To support this commitment, we continue to monitor the full employment lifecycle—from recruitment and career development to promotion and salary progression—ensuring that all processes are fair, consistent, and inclusive.

Key actions taken to address and reduce the Gender Pay Gap include:

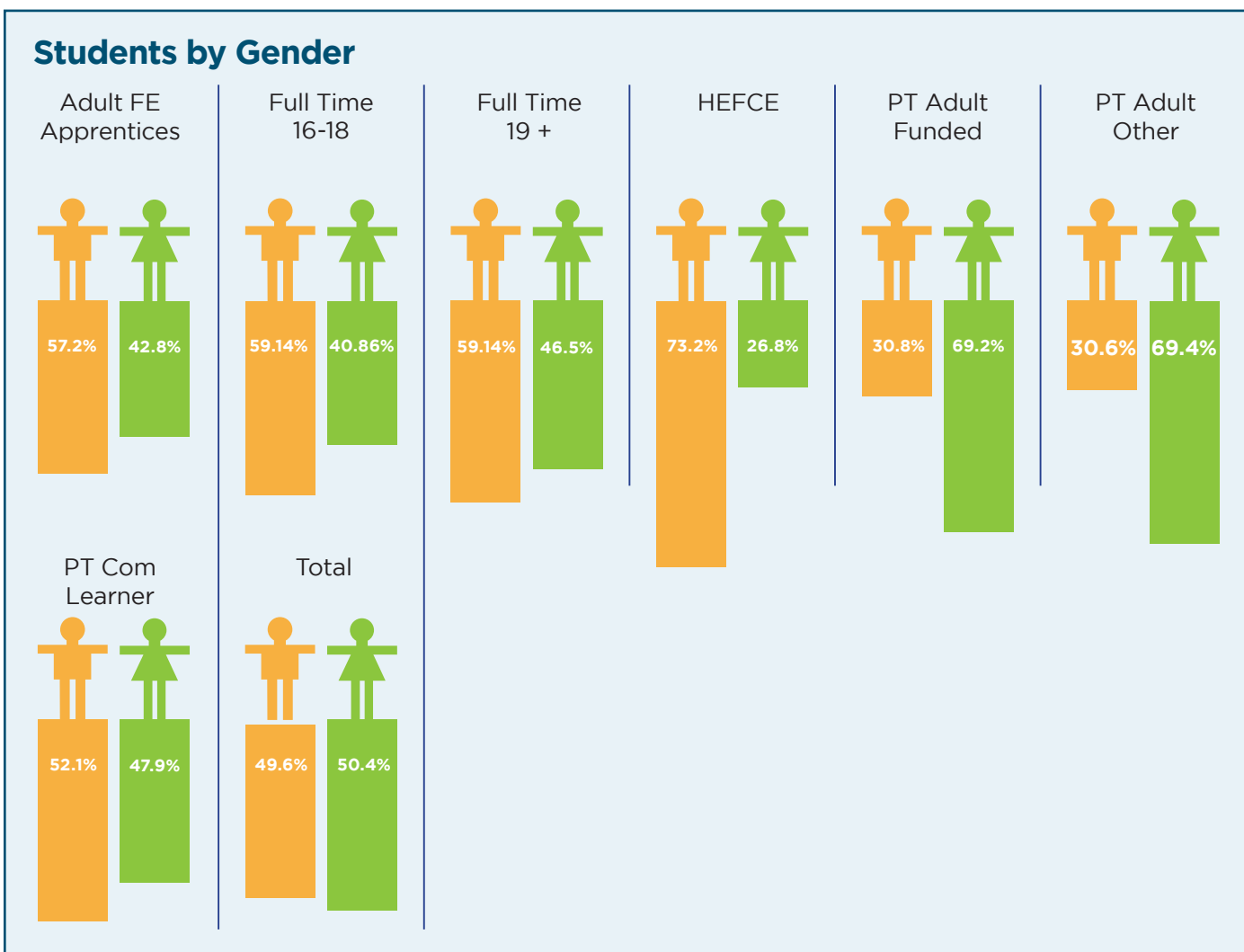
- Actively working to remove gender bias from roles and contract types.
- Maintaining fair and equal recruitment processes and a strong commitment to continuous professional development.
- Strengthening communication with sector networks to share and learn from best practices.
- Exploring more diverse working patterns, including compressed hours, permanent remote working, and increased flexible arrangements—tailored to departmental needs.
- Ongoing review and development of relevant policies.
- Promoting the uptake of Shared Parental Leave.
- Conducting regular workforce data analysis to inform decision-making.

These efforts reflect our ongoing dedication to creating a fair, inclusive, and supportive workplace for all staff.

Our Students

Students Profile 24-25

Overall Student Cohort position for HoW College students
24-25 (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

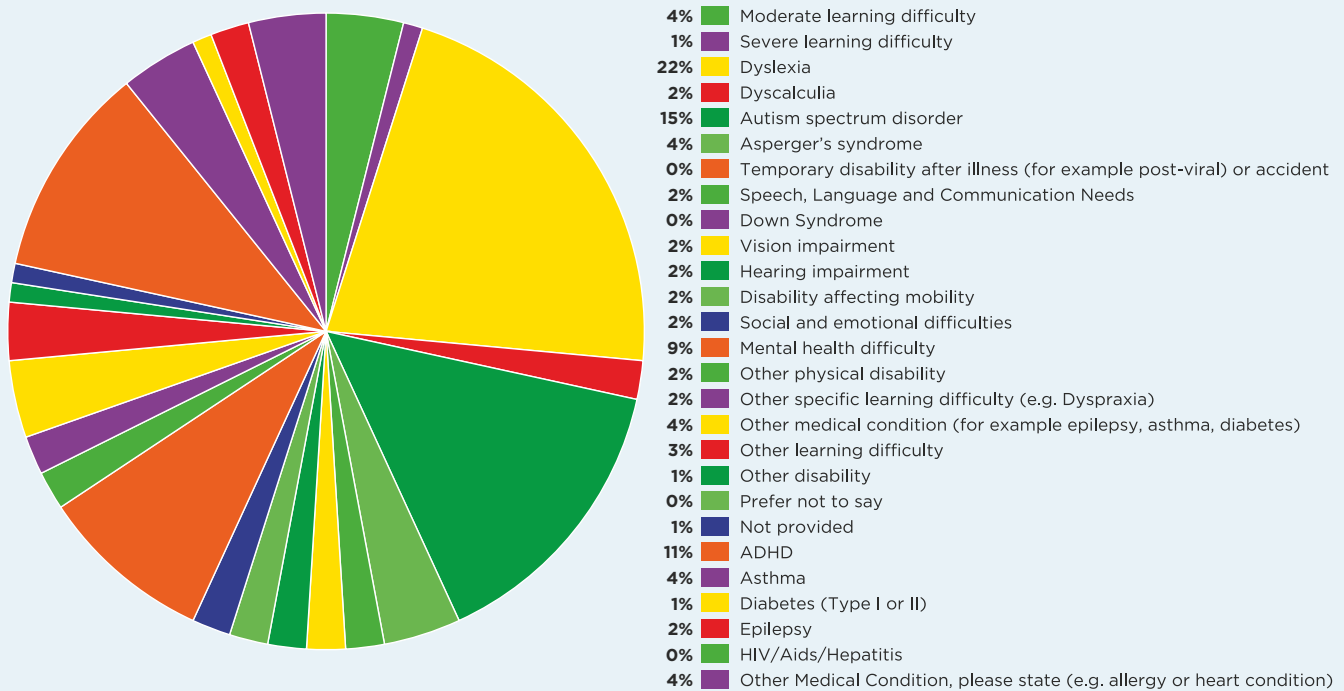
(Worcestershire Demographic Report-Census 2021)

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

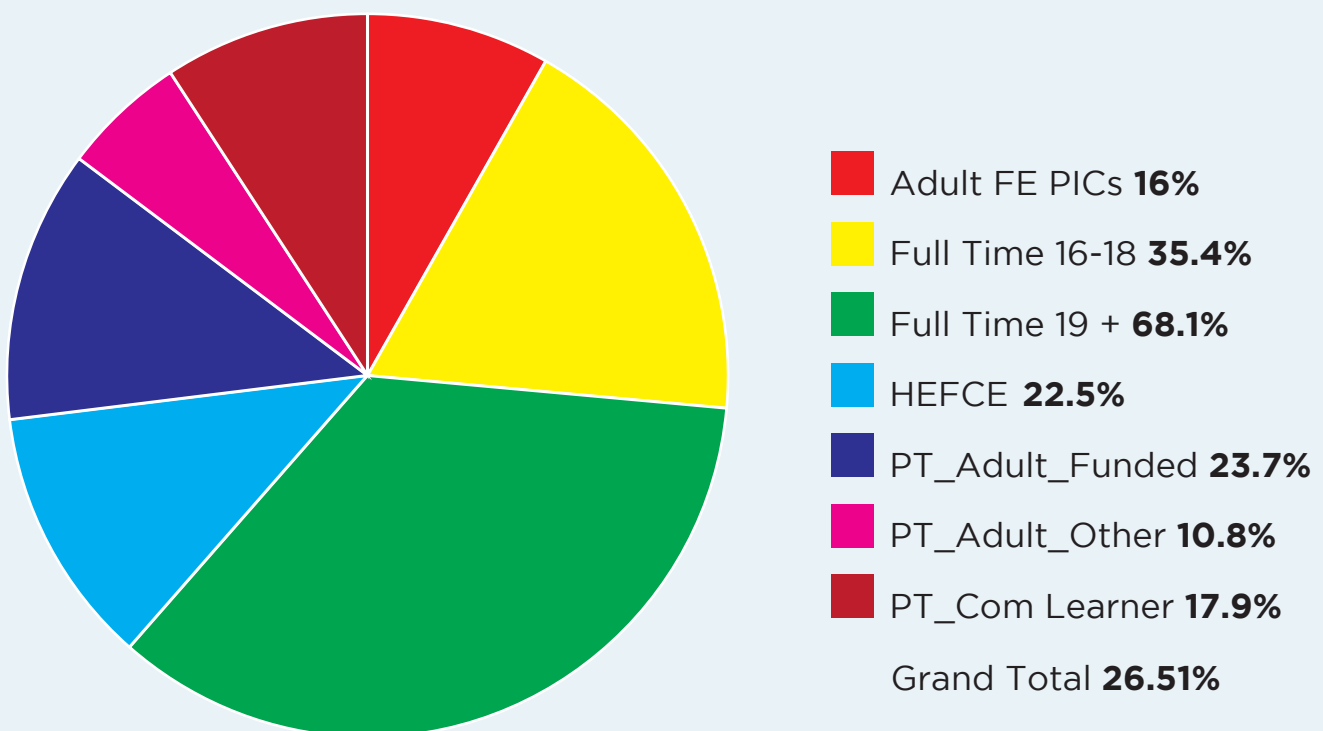
	Asian	Black	Mixed	Not Provided	Other	White
Adult FE PICS	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%	95%
Full Time 16-18	5%	5%	1%	1%	1%	87%
Full Time 19 +	6%	8%	3%	1%	0%	82%
HEFCE	6%	2%	1%	1%	1%	89%
PT Adult Funded	17%	7%	1%	1%	1%	74%
PT Adult Other	9%	4%	0%	0%	1%	86%
PT Com Learner	10%	3%	0%	2%	0%	85%
Total	8%	4%	1%	1%	0%	85%

Students by disability

26.51% of our overall learners declared having a disability, difficulty or medical condition.



Declared LLDD BY Learner Category



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Groups

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is supported by a structured framework of dedicated sub-groups. Each sub-group is tasked with delivering specific objectives outlined in the EDI Action Plan and is led by a member of staff who oversees implementation and progress. Actions are reviewed and documented on a termly basis to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

This collaborative structure enables us to maintain clear communication, monitor impact, and meet our responsibilities under public sector equality duties. Through these efforts, we continue to cultivate an inclusive environment where every individual is respected, valued, and empowered to thrive.

The groups will:

- Ensures 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;
- Ensures that information regarding Equality and Diversity is communicated effectively to the College community;
- Monitors, review and contributes to the College's Equality and Diversity Objectives and Action Plan;
- Makes recommendations as to how the promotion of the equality duties can be further enhanced and improved through the curriculum and service provision;
- Monitors additional equality and diversity operational meetings to share and develop best practice and ensure whole organisation 'buy in';
- Reviews and revises the College's Equality Policy annually;
- Contributes to the College's annual Equality and Diversity Report, published in January;
- Monitors the progress made against college EDIMs;
- Monitors any complaints pertaining to Equality and Diversity;
- Champions inclusive practice.



Our Policies

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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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 was reviewed and updated on a regular basis,

with the continuing involvement of college learners, staff, partners and community groups. Progress is reported twice yearly to Corporation and monitored through the Equality and Diversity sub-groups.



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, Academic Skills Support Mentors, High Needs Coordinators and specialist external agencies.

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 287 learners with an Education Health Care Plan in 2024-25, with 142 enrolled in discrete SEN provision, 34 in Progressions, and 102 in vocational and technical programmes across the College, studying at Entry Level 3 and Levels 1, 2 and 3. In addition to these learners, there were 2 learners studying adult skills, 1 learner studying AAT, 1 apprentice and 5 learners at National Star with an EHCP.

Specialist Learning Support



The Specialist Learning Support team offer a personalised support package for learners with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The support offered strives to remove barriers to learning and to provide a level playing field by providing effective learning support, access to specialist assistive technology, and by providing learners with study skills to develop and work independently.

The team offers tailored support strategies to meet the needs of the individual during their learner journey. As a result, this encourages learners to reach their full potential, and progress to their next intended destination, including work, further education, higher education, and adulthood.

During 2024-25 the Specialist Learning Support team delivered academic learning support to 102 learners with an EHCP. Adult learners and apprentices with an EHCP were supported by the Academic Skills Support Coaches.

A range of assistive technology and resources are used by the Specialist Learning Support team to support learners, such as reader pens, Read & Write specialist software, Microsoft text to Speech and voice dictation software, coloured Cerium overlays, writing pads and reading rulers.



Academic Skills Support Mentors

The Academic Skills Support Mentors provide support to learners across education programmes for young people (EPYP) (excluding SEN and Progressions) who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD). The coaches support adult and apprentice learners.

Support is personalised to the individual learner's needs. Examples of the type of support provided are 1:1 meetings to breakdown assignments, demonstrating and providing assistive technology and aids, processing exam access arrangement referrals, supporting with study skills such as note-taking strategies and planning/organisation.

The service aims to remove learning barriers and enable learners with learning difficulties/disabilities to have a level playing field with their peers to achieve and have a positive experience at College.

This is part of the vision of the College, “nurturing the brilliance of every student”. We also aim to empower learners to access support, building their self-confidence and independence to prepare them for their next steps in education or employment.

Learners who have a support need can refer themselves into the service using the Help button on the student portal, or they can be referred by their teacher or personal tutor. The primary needs supported are Dyslexia, ADHD, Autism and Mental health difficulties.

The team are based in the welcoming, safe and accessible Learning Centres across the College. Each Academic Skills Support Mentor is assigned to a caseload of curriculum areas to ensure that learners and staff have a consistent point of contact. The Academic Skills Support Mentors and Coaches work closely with the Personal Tutor and teaching staff in their curriculum areas, and English and maths teams to share information on the progress of learners. The team also work closely with the Wellbeing team to ensure support needs of learners are shared and met appropriately.

The team supported by the Exam Access Arrangements Co-ordinator manage and process referrals for support during assessments, in 24/25 695 learners received exam access arrangements, including 25% extra time, readers, rest breaks and smaller rooms, ensuring that each learner was given the opportunity to have a level playing field at point of assessment.

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 learners who will be progressing onto HE courses and external those 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 is not 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 Level 4 – Level 7 students through the proofreading service and academic support with assignment writing as required. The College collects feedback from all our HE student body in several different ways across the academic year. This feedback is then used to improve the student experience for all learners, including those with specific needs.

The Careers Catalyst, engaging FE learners in research informed practical CV applications

During the 2024-25 academic year the HE Coordinator was tasked to develop the 'Career Catalysts: CVs' project, this has led to the development of an educational resource, comprising a structured lesson plan and an accompanying PowerPoint presentation, which explores how gendered conventions in CV writing can influence the candidate application review and selection process. Drawing on academic research into linguistic and presentational differences in CVs authored by both men and women, the materials interrogate how these stylistic nuances may inadvertently shape reader perception and introduce bias into the candidate selection process.

The sessions run via Thrive will encourage critical reflection on established CV writing styles while offering clear, inclusive strategies for professional self-presentation. The central aim is to help learners internalise best practice in CV writing that is effectively gender neutral. Rather than erasing stylistic variation, the approach synthesises valuable traits commonly associated with gendered writing (for example: blending assertive, verb-heavy language with nuanced storytelling) to create CVs that are highly readable, informative, and resistant to potentially biased interpretation.

The lesson plan fosters peer discussion and reflection through practical activities and comparative analysis, supporting students to identify implicit cues in sample CVs and explore methods for mitigating them. By bridging theory and practice, the project empowers students to craft CVs that speak clearly, confidently, and without the cues which could lead to unintended bias.

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. 1,801 learners accessed wellbeing support. Support for vulnerable learners is effective, with a very large majority being retained in year 90.5% overall.

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.

There has been a 12.8% increase in mental health disclosures from 478 in 2023-24 to 579 in 2024-25 Emotional wellbeing continues to be the primary cause for concern, accounting for 43.5% of all cases. There has been an 8% increase in anxiety to 26% of incidences. Suicidal thoughts decreased by 1.5%.

Mental health support remains a key focus of the team. Robust triaging of cases is completed and tailored options of support, both from the team and external partners is offered to the individual. In addition to this, the weekly Calm Zone sessions, Thrive + Campaign weeks and Exam Stress support sessions complement the mental health support offer, by teaching learners positive coping strategies and grounding techniques.

Students are encouraged to engage with activities that empower them to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and positive mental health.

86.1% of students with disclosed mental health, were retained in year increasing the retention rate by 4.9% compared to 2023-24.

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.

Mental health support remains a key focus of the team. Robust triaging of cases is completed and tailored options of support, both from the team and external partners is offered to the individual. In addition to this, the weekly Calm Zone sessions, Thrive + Campaign weeks and Exam Stress support sessions complement the mental health support offer, by teaching learners positive coping strategies and grounding techniques.

Students are empowered to engage with activities that support them to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and positive mental health. 91% of students with disclosed mental health, were retained in year.

Protected Factors

Learners with a Protected Factor indicator are closely monitored by support teams and academic staff. Regular meetings with support teams and Curriculum Managers have increased the understanding of barriers to learning with these cohorts.

Attendance and retention are monitored via the EDI strategy group.

Protected Factor	2024-25
Child Looked After	42
Care Leaver	33
Young Carer	23
Young Parent	4
Independent Liver	18
Child In Need	17
Child Protection	3
Total	140

	Care Leaver	Child Looked After	CIN	CP	EHCP	Home Schooled	Independent Liver	Mental Health
Attendance	74.36%	85.02%	79.08%	80.68%	89.63%	80.31%	74.99%	80.87%
Retention	85.7%	89.7%	76.5%	66.7%	96.3%	95.7%	81.3%	91%

	Pupil	Refugee	Young Carer	Young Parent	Young Parent	Safeguarding	Young Carer
Attendance	82.22%	83.1%	81.63%	81.65%	81.24%	82%	84%
Retention	88.4%	87%	90.3%	90.9%	100%	86%	83%

Student Ambassador Training

As part of the College's strategic commitment to learner development and democratic engagement, LoudSpeaker was commissioned to deliver high-impact training workshops for Student Ambassadors. These sessions focused on enhancing public speaking, communication, and teamwork skills, and were attended by 141 students;

64 from Worcester/Malvern and 77 from Redditch/Bromsgrove.

The workshops were well received, with **96.4% of participants reporting enjoyment** and **94% stating they had gained new communication skills**. Notably, confidence in public speaking increased significantly:

- Not at all confident" dropped from 14.5% to 4.8%
- "Extremely confident" rose from 12% to 19.3%

Additional outcomes included:

- 88% understanding effective body language
- 76.6% feeling more confident in achieving goals
- 75.3% feeling more confident in being themselves

Social Action Ambassadors

Social Action Ambassadors wanted to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day, spreading awareness about its significance and raising funds for the Royal British Legion. Students across Worcester, Bromsgrove and Redditch felt it was important to remind their peers about this event.

Student Ambassadors teamed up with the Student Experience team to successfully deliver bake sales for the Royal British Legion. An amazing £210.21 was the total raised.

Over 90 staff and students participated by donating and purchasing the baked goods.

"The organising was super fun, it was really great to sell confectionery to raise money for the Royal British legion. We've raised a lot and I think that is an amazing achievement in itself."

An afternoon tea was organised on Tuesday 6th May which saw our Student Ambassadors joined by residents and staff members from Regent Care home. Level 2 Hospitality students made the cakes for the day, any spares picked up for other care home residents to enjoy. The two age groups exchanged their experiences with enriching discussions and storytelling. The residents and staff that attended the event praised the efforts made by our students and the college, thankful for how welcomed they felt and hopeful that VE Day will continue to be celebrated in the future.

Seeing the residents has made me feel more aware of our history. It's shocking that the war started when they were all 8 or younger and have had to grow up whilst it was all happening - really must've been so difficult to go through. They all deserve to be honoured and remembered"

Two Student Ambassadors from the Redditch T-level Early Years course collaborated with the Student Experience team to plan, resource, and host an event in the SUB for students from the SEN department. A fun filled afternoon was hosted and all students that attended had the option to get involved in a variety of different interactive activities. These included Bingo, Protect the egg, making monsters, Mindful colouring and 'get the ball in the cup game'.

The event was a huge success with around 30 students participating.

“Helping to organise this event gave me an insight into event management”

“It was good to gain experience of putting on activities for a different age group other than childcare”

ECO Ambassadors

Eco Ambassadors shared their concerns on how society tends to disregard sustainability and not give it the importance it needs to have in our daily actions. To spread ECO awareness across college, they crafted a poster and a list with tips for the Student Newsletter on HoW to be more sustainable:

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Try to reduce waste by buying second-hand items and reusing what you can. Always recycle paper, plastic and glass.
- Use a Reusable water bottle: Instead of buying bottled water, invest in a good reusable water bottle. This cuts down on plastic waste and saves you money.
- Shop Locally and Seasonally: When buying groceries, try to shop at markets or local farmers markets. This not only supports local farmers but also reduces the carbon footprint associated with transporting food and generally offers higher quality produce

Choose Sustainable Transportation: If possible, walk, cycle or use public transportation instead of driving. This reduces your carbon emissions and is often healthier.

- Be Mindful of Energy Use: Turn off lights and unplug devices when not in use. Consider using energy efficient bulbs and appliances.
- Get Involved: Join Sustainability clubs or initiatives on campus. This can help you connect with like-minded individuals and get involved in larger sustainability efforts.
- Educate Yourself and Others: Stay informed about Sustainability issues and share your knowledge with your peers. This can create a more Eco-conscious community.

ECO Ambassadors have helped promote and deliver the 2025 Clothes Swap Shops across Worcester, Redditch and Bromsgrove. Student Ambassadors have contributed to its success with a wide range of clothing donations.

Student ambassadors have been regular attendees of the staff ECO group, creating posters for ‘switch it off’ campaign and recycling.

Students that are part of the college’s ECO group alongside staff were tasked with coming up with a college wide Planet Earth Games challenge that would get as many staff and students involved as possible. Students Ambassadors have participated in a project where they have fed hedgehogs at our Bromsgrove tiny forest.

“ECO is not touched enough on the world and people think it’s not something that would suit their lifestyle. I want to change that”

Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors

Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors wanted to help students fill their free time between lessons and over lunchtime periods doing something competitive. They organised singles and doubles pool tournaments to take place where students across all courses could get involved. These tournaments have been extremely successful with students reporting that they have really enjoyed getting involved. The student involvement has paved the way for other tournaments to take place such as table tennis or Xbox.

"I really enjoyed getting involved in the doubles pool tournament because I was paired with someone I didn't know so it has helped introduce me to getting to know new people"

"The tournament has been good fun because I like doing things that are competitive"

"I've enjoyed taking part in the pool tournament as it's kept me busy during lunchtime, we should do more like this"

Students wanted to make use of the ball court in Bromsgrove to help support mental and physical health. Student Ambassadors helped the Student Experience team to order new basketballs and footballs. The ball court has been used regularly during lunchtime periods each day.

Ambassadors wanted to contribute to the mental health of students across the college and do something that would put a smile on everyone's faces whilst they got their lunch. EDI and Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors teamed up to deliver a series of pop-up positivity stands which were organised and took place in the cafes across each campus. Pocket sized positive quotes were created and given out to be put into the back of student lanyards so they can be used as positive encouragement on a difficult day, along with sweets and positive affirmations.

Student ambassadors shared kind words and random acts of kindness to both staff and students. A big poster with examples on how to spread the wave of positivity was created to challenge other students to pass the positivity onto others.

"Taking part in the positivity pop-up stand was fun and it made me get out of my comfort zone"

"It was fun to try something new, I wouldn't have done this if I wasn't a student ambassador"

"The positivity stand today has definitely put a smile on my face"

"These quotes are a really good idea, I'll look at this when I'm having a bad day"

"Working on a project like this made me more aware of my strengths and weaknesses. I will be more confident on what to do in the future"

"I like how spontaneous and easy it can brighten up your day"

Student Ambassadors have helped gather information with a Mental Health Survey done by the Mental Health and Wellbeing EDI staff group. Wellbeing Student Ambassadors have also written down a short piece for the Student Newsletter:

“Depression can be more than just feeling sad. It’s a deep, ongoing struggle that messes with your emotions, energy, and even how you see yourself. It can make everyday things, like hanging out with friends or doing hobbies, feel exhausting or pointless. People with depression often feel drained, numb, or stuck in their own thoughts, and it can mess with their sleep, appetite, and motivation. It’s not always caused by one thing—sometimes it’s past trauma, stress, brain chemistry, or even genetics. The worst part is it can make you feel alone, even when you’re surrounded by people.”

“Depression isn’t a dead end: therapy, talking to someone, and even small daily habits can help. It’s tough, but it’s not impossible to get through.”

Digital Innovation Ambassadors

Digital Innovation Ambassadors have helped to inform the implementation of the Canva workshops that recently took place across Bromsgrove, Redditch and Worcester. Student Ambassadors have collaborated with the college’s blended learning and digital skills team and are helping them to set up and deliver more workshops.

Students discussed with the Digital Programmes and Blended Learning teams how can they support each other, how to better support the Digital literacy of students and to keep contact for any shadowing or similar opportunities in the future. BLC gathered ideas from students on how to improve student support. Students suggested the BLC team to implement knowledge of keyboard shortcuts for students to learn, as well as THRIVE content on Doomscrolling, Digital Footprint Impact and sharing tips on how to properly use applications such as Office 365.

EDI Ambassadors

EDI Ambassadors have expressed interest in being an active part of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at college by helping gather information and supported staff by gathering information on surveys either via QR code or a form link.

LGBTQ+ Ambassadors

LGBTQ+ Ambassadors wanted to represent the LGBTQ+ community within college and mark LGBTQ+ history month, so they created display boards in each SUB through regular meetups. These displays included quotes from the LGBTQ+ community chosen by student ambassadors and information on inspirational figures within the LGBTQ+ community.

Student ambassadors have been encouraging students that drop into the SUB to add a quote to flags that can be added to the display.

Student ambassadors have been working with staff members to make LGBTQ+ support across college more visible. Student ambassadors have helped to identify and deliver lanyards to staff members that are allies of the LGBTQ+ community.

Student ambassadors wanted to decorate different areas in College with LGBTQ+ flags to show visibility, educate and celebrate the community at college. Students had a say in how to decorate the space and helped put LGBTQ+ flags up.

“Many people don’t know what each flag is for and don’t bother to learn”

“It’s good to have more awareness and support. It’s not okay to joke or harass someone for how they look or which toilet they go”

Neurodiversity Ambassadors

Neurodiversity Ambassadors felt like they needed to raise awareness across college on the difficulties that those with neurodiverse conditions can experience. Based on their experiences, posters and pieces of writing were created for the Student Newsletter as part of a campaign to raise awareness and a show of support.

“A challenge I personally have faced through college because of autism is communication. There have been numerous times which I have been asked a question and I either simply don’t understand it or I can’t put across what I want to say when I speak. There was one specific moment I remember clearly where the group had to confirm what their coursework project would be and I had a really clear idea of what I wanted to do, but in the moment I fumbled my way into getting my best idea turned down by the lecturer. I was so frustrated at myself that I had struggled so hard that I spent a few minutes internally shouting at myself.

I messaged the lecturer about it and because I was writing it rather than thinking of how

to say it quickly in the moment, I had gotten clearance from them that now that it was more clearly explained, I could go ahead with my idea. I was incredibly thankful, and I still am as after that project was finished, I was really happy with the end product. this brought about a conversation between us that I could write down my ideas rather than say them aloud so that I could say what I mean”

Neurodiversity Student Ambassadors supported neurodiversity week (17.03.25-21.03.25) by creating an awareness display and putting up posters of various neurodiverse famous celebrities across campuses. They created informative leaflets that were printed and shared with other students to educate everyone on the challenges faced by neurodiverse students. This included information such as myths vs facts, spot the difference activities and specific information educating students on specific neurodiverse conditions.

“It’s been a great experience”



Student Conference 1

The first Student Conference was delivered in Redditch and Worcester, and was attended by 143 learners;

63 from Redditch/Bromsgrove and 80 from Worcester/Malvern.

Facilitated by LoudSpeaker, the sessions focused on developing resilience, confidence, and self-awareness.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

- **98%** found the workshops enjoyable
- **96%** reported learning new communication skills

Confidence in achieving personal goals improved markedly:

- **“Not at all confident”** dropped from **12.9% to 0%**
- **“Extremely confident”** increased from **23.8% to 35.6%**

Other key outcomes:

- **83%** feel more confident overcoming life challenges
- **82.8%** understand how to tell their personal story
- **76.8%** have a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses



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 (89%) 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, Potential Pathways, participation in THRIVE 1:1 sessions for short interactions and newsletters, student participation in specialist guidance sessions has increased from 842 to 940, resulting in a 11.6% increase from 2023-24.

There is a clear focus to support learners who have a protected factor, signifying a recognised vulnerability or potential barrier to achievement.



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 standardised 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, reflect, revisit, and check their understanding on topics.

Personal tutors can and are encouraged to 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. CPD opportunities for Personal Tutors are offered throughout the year to maintain accurate delivery and information.

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.

Thrive + Campaign Weeks

Throughout the year the Student Experience Team organise themed Thrive+ campaign weeks to enhance each learners' knowledge on various subjects. These include internet safety, cyber bullying, Prevent, healthy relationships and mental health and resilience. The weeks include tutorials, guest speakers and activities to promote the theme and support the vlearners. Learners are reminded how to access support during these weeks.



Learning Centres

Reading Hub

Within the Reading Hubs at Redditch & Bromsgrove, new collections of E&D books are purchased annually. For the academic year 2024-2025, the collection of titles purchased feature titles which both support and celebrate diversity. Examples of titles purchased include:

- **Funny, You Don't Look Autistic** - an autistic comedian's personal experience shared through comedy slaying stereotypes one joke at a time!.
- **The Young Autistic Adult's Independence Handbook** - guidance on managing your own money, looking after your home, organising your social life to tips on self-advocacy and important life skills such as driving, voting and volunteering.
- **Sophie's World Volumes 1 and 2** - Sa graphic, current, comic adaption bring Sophie's charming exploration of meaning and existence to a whole new medium.
- **The Mind Manual** - a complete mental fitness toolkit.

A new 'Corner of Calmness' has been created in the Reading Hub this academic year. The corner is positioned by the sofas and has resources on the shelves from colouring books and pencils, fidget toys, stress balls and rainbow scratch cards for students to write encouraging quotes. There are books on origami and poetry and also a poster on a rainbow breathing technique to help students who may be experiencing anxiety. The area has been used regularly by students since its launch.

In Worcester the collection of books has been augmented especially in relation to materials suitable for SEN learners. This has been done in collaboration with staff and includes:

- **Books Beyond Words** - books relating to life skills illustrated but without words. They have been used to instigate discussion within class around topics such as visiting the dentist and have helped to allay anxieties relating to these social interactions.
- **Rapid Plus books** - graded reading books for adults with comprehension and SPaG activities relating to the text.

We are investigating High Impact plays for adults too. In addition, more graphic novels and poetry books have been purchased and books have been reorganised by genre to increase accessibility.

All resources for these promotions have been covered in the student newsletters, displayed on the TV screens within the Learning Centres and also as focus feeds on the new Library Catalogue.

ESOL

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, 6 presentations to a total of 81 students were delivered to ESOL classes at Redditch on library services and promoting graded readers. This has once again resulted in a successful uptake in reading by ESOL students.

A lot of hard work has taken place with ESOL and Functional Skills students, promoting resources beyond our book stock such as ClickView as well as providing support in accessing Teams and other MicroSoft applications such as PowerPoint for presentations so improving their digital skills.

SEN

The Learning Centre at Redditch asked for book suggestions from the SEN learners who are regular visitors in the Learning Centre. Based on the requests, a whole collection of dyslexia friendly reads from Barrington Stoke were purchased and the books have proved to be very popular.

There were also individual requests from SEN students including Five Nights at Freddy's short story collection and Tik Tok books of the year Its Starts With Us and It Ends With Us.

A collaborative programme has been introduced in Worcester for SEN students to visit the Learning Centre on a weekly basis. Three groups attend (a total of 25 students). Tutors can use this time for one-on-one reading with students while others choose reading materials or do a simple craft activity. On occasion, the whole class may read a book/chapter as a group and discuss topics. Learning Centres staff have been involved in discussions with SEN students around what they enjoy about reading, what they find difficult, barriers they face etc. and are looking at ways to overcome/reduce barriers to develop a love of reading in students. Students borrow books each week and can either renew or return them when they next visit.

One group were registered for Worcestershire County Council BorrowBox from which they can borrow audio and eBooks so widening accessibility and participation.



The Learning Centre team ran a Christmas Quiz competition. There were 41 SEN entries across the campuses for the Christmas competition which was a quiz based on how to have a 'Green' Christmas. Plus an activity where SEN learners were invited to create their own Christmas bauble to decorate the Learning Centre tree. This was a creative activity and the quiz embedded awareness of sustainability at SEN level promoting one of the seven P's of the college strategic themes - Planet. Five classes participated in Redditch.

At Easter, the sustainability theme was continued and SEN participated in activities run in the Learning Centre to create bird feeders and Easter bookmarks. This activity involved following visual instructions and included sensory stimulation through the use of sticky marmalade and bird seed. Fine motor skills were developed in the creation of the feeder. This activity was very much enjoyed by the SEN groups.

The Learning Centre Promotions Team have had regular meetings during the year and the following topics have had special promotion:

- **Quick Reads** – A collection of short, engaging fiction books by bestselling authors to encourage people who find reading difficult to pick up a book and enjoy reading. Suitable for a range of reading levels.
- **Book Swap** – an ongoing inclusive initiative, available to all levels of readers; promoting to swap books, demonstrating that reading is for everyone and does not have to be expensive.
- In October, Mental Health Week was promoted with a selection of books positioned in student areas such as the Eden Café, the Student Sub and the main Reception with notes of positivity on the book covers to promote how reading helps your mental health.
- Neurodiversity Celebration Week in March was also promoted focusing on Neurodiversity.
- LGBT History Month was also promoted in February, the theme being Activism and Social Change.



Financial Support

Effective financial support packages are in place to support learners and the College effectively manages its free college meal programme. 91.3% who received financial support were retained in 2024-25 an increase of 2.1% from 2023-24.

91.3% of learners receiving free college meals were retained which is 2.3% increase from 2023-24.

91.1% of learners receiving 16-19 bursary fund were retained.

505 learners qualified for support from the government funded Free School Meals free meals with 449 still current at the end of the year: 88.9% retention. The demand for government funded meals has increased by 17.2% compared to 2023-24.

During 2024-25 the College supported 555 learners with payments towards meal costs during the holidays. Learners received £15 per week during half terms, Christmas and Easter. This was part funded by Worcester City Council, where Edenred vouchers were provided.

Aldi vouchers were purchased and distributed to the most vulnerable learners, particularly to those without access to bank accounts or experiencing severe financial hardship. During 2024-25 21 learners received support through this initiative.



Student Feedback

Of the 2,179 learners who completed the Arrivals survey 2024;

95.6% confirm they are receiving the support they need to learn successfully.

97.5% confirm their learning environment makes them feel welcome and safe.

98% confirm they are treated with respect.

99.2% know how to keep themselves safe online.



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: Chinese New Year, National Apprenticeship Week, Safer Internet Day, LGBTQ History Month, International Women's Day, World Down Syndrome Day, World Water Day, Easter Sunday, Earth Day, World Fairtrade Day, Mental Health Awareness Week World Environment Day, World Blood Donor Day, International Men's Day, Black History Month and many more.

For each campaign, the team spend time researching each subject in depth to provide a brief history, discuss statistics and key facts and acknowledge any key figures connected with the specific subject. The team also highlight the support the College and external companies offer for anyone who is struggling with any of the topics being discussed.

And where appropriate student case studies have been used to highlight key areas. This ensures that people are educated on the subject and know where/ who they can turn to if they need any support.

The purpose of each EDI post is to help raise awareness, celebrate diversity, drive change, educate others and encourage opportunities for people to learn from different perspectives and have meaningful conversations. The Colleges social media posts and website content work together with the work the Student Experience Team do to celebrate and recognise each of the occasions mentioned above.

To enhance our EDI marketing further, the College has a specific EDI section within the main college website to share resources and further information about a range of topics, this can be found here: [Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity | Heart of Worcestershire College](#)

Update on developments for 2024-25

Staff Support Initiatives:

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA): 16 staff members qualified as Mental Health First Aiders. A dedicated support group has been established to provide ongoing peer support for MHFAiders.
- Wellbeing Pulse Survey: All staff were invited to participate in a wellbeing pulse survey. Managers actively engaged with teams to identify and address areas for improvement.
- Manager Training: Line managers received targeted training to better support their teams' mental health needs.
- Suicide Prevention: The Wellbeing Team achieved Orange Badge status, enabling them to identify and assist individuals at risk of suicide.
- Wellbeing themed days: Dedicated wellbeing day was well received from staff.
- Wellbeing newsletters: Regular wellbeing newsletters are produced to support staff with their wellbeing and how to access support.

Student Wellbeing:

- Mental Health Disclosures: There has been a continued increase in student disclosures related to mental health, with emotional wellbeing and anxiety being the most prevalent concerns.
- External Referrals: Referrals to external mental health services remain consistently high.
- Support Activities: Students are encouraged to engage with Wellbeing Wednesdays, exam support sessions, and individual wellbeing appointments.
- Thrive+ Programme: Thrive+ campaigns and tutorials continue to promote positive mental wellbeing and resilience.
- Future Developments: "HoW R U" hubs are being introduced for 2025-26 to offer a holistic wellbeing approach, integrating physical, mental, social, and spiritual support.

Neurodiversity Initiatives

- Staff Development: A dedicated staff group was established to enhance understanding of neurodiversity-related issues. Whole-college training sessions were delivered to raise awareness and build inclusive practices.
- Celebration and Communication: Regular newsletters were circulated to celebrate neurodiversity and share resources. A cross-college Neurodiversity Celebration Week promoted a strengths-based approach to neurodivergent experiences.
- Staff Support: A bi-weekly "Power Hour" was introduced to support both neurodivergent and non-neurodivergent staff with motivation, focus, and productivity.

LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and Support

- **Visible Allyship:** Rainbow lanyards were distributed to staff to visibly demonstrate support for the LGBTQIA+ community.
- **Student-Led Initiatives:** Student Ambassadors organised HoW Pride, celebrating LGBTQIA+ identities and history through inclusive decorations, flag displays, and student-written affirmations.
- **Community Building:** Regular meet-ups were held to provide LGBTQIA+ students with safe spaces to connect, socialise, and build friendships.

Support for Students Eligible for Free School Meals

- **Identification and Encouragement:** Eligible students were proactively identified and encouraged to take up their entitlement to Free School Meals.
- **Discreet Monitoring:** Students were discreetly flagged on ProMonitor using a Protected Factor badge, enabling staff to be aware of potential barriers to achievement while maintaining student privacy.
- **Positive Outcomes:** Retention and achievement rates for these students remained in line with their peers, reflecting the effectiveness of targeted support measures.

Race Equality and Achievement Monitoring

- **Targeted Focus:** The college prioritised reducing achievement gaps for students from White Non-British and Other Asian ethnic backgrounds.
- **Race Equality Group:** A dedicated Race Equality group was established to lead and coordinate efforts across the college.
- **Data Monitoring:** Attendance and retention for these groups were closely monitored via the college dashboard. No achievement gaps were identified during the academic year, indicating positive progress in equity and inclusion.



CWM Celebrating Inclusive Employment Across the West Midlands

14 December, 2024 Companies across the West Midlands who have led efforts to create career opportunities for young people with disabilities have been praised by education leaders at a special awards ceremony.

The inaugural West Midlands Supported Internships Event brought together colleges and some of the region's biggest employers for a celebration of job creation for students with special education needs.

The event was arranged by Skills West Midlands & Warwickshire.

Delegates heard about innovative partnerships which were delivering both invaluable work experience placements and paid employment opportunities for young people who had successfully completed a supported internship programme.

Colleges nominated employer partners for recognition awards, and Ricardo Mantovani ACA CA(SA), Deputy Chief Executive Officer of BNP Paribas Personal Finance, delivered an inspirational keynote speech where he talked about his own struggle with profound dyslexia.

The award-winners were:

- GMi – nominated by South & City College Birmingham
- Savills – nominated by Dudley College
- Webbs – nominated by Heart of Worcestershire College
- HSBC – nominated by Queen Alexandra Sixth Form College
- Compton Verney – nominated by Solihull College & University Centre
- The Eastside Rooms – nominated by Halesowen College
- Black Country Living Museum – nominated by Halesowen College
- Low Hill Nursery – nominated by City of Wolverhampton College
- Whitbread – nominated by Hereward College

Thanks to Shoosmiths for hosting the event and to Whitecap Consulting for being one of the sponsors.

The awards were made by the team at Birmingham mental health charity Better Pathways Mental Health Charity, which supports people with learning disabilities into employment within a social enterprise structure.

Areas of focus for 2024-25



- Creation of HoW R U hubs
- Creation of Inclusion Strategy
- Creation of Inclusion Dashboard
- Further enhance SEN IAG offer
- Reviewing EHCP consultation process
- Identify any achievement gaps and include them in EDI action plan

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	LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Questioning (or queer), intersex and asexual (or allies)
CLA	Child Looked After	LI	Living Independently
CPD	Continued Professional Development	LLDD	Learner with Learning Difficulty or Disability
DSA	Disabled Students' Allowance	PT	Part Time
EAA	Exam Access Arrangements	R/B	Redditch/Bromsgrove
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme	RSVP	Rape and Sexual Violence Project
EDI	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion	SEN	Special Educational Needs
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan	SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
GPs	General Practitioners	WEST	Wellbeing and Emotional Support Teams
EDIM	Equality and Diversity Impact Measures	W/M	Worcester/Malvern
FE	Further Education	YSS	Youth Support Service