

Careers Strategy 2025/2026

Reference/version:	V2
V1 Owner:	Careers Coordinator
Date	September 2025
Equality Impact Assessed:	September 2026
Review Interval	Annual
Audience	All staff, learners, parents & Governors

The aim of a strategic careers plan is to enable the 'Strategic Careers Leader' to implement a strategic, sustainable and progressive career programme, which:

- is aligned to the college improvement priorities
- meets the needs of 'each & every' learner
- improves and tracks the impact of careers provision
- connects provision to the needs of the local economy

Vision:

South Staffordshire College is committed to offering a planned programme of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance to our learners. As an organisation we have high aspirations and celebrate creativity, difference, and diversity of all the people we support. We aim to enhance, enrich and develop their lives by empowering them to make the most of opportunities within and beyond curriculum.

The 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 learners have both the aptitude and skills to effectively add value within the workplace and their local community.

We work in partnership with the Stoke and Staffordshire Careers Hub and the Careers and Enterprise Company to ensure all learners develop the skills and outlook they need to achieve career wellbeing, including adaptability and resilience. We do this by following the **8 Gatsby Benchmarks framework** to deliver Matrix accredited guidance by experienced staff; evidence shows that good career guidance in college supports learners to

develop an understanding of the world of work. We believe this has become even more important because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the advancement of technology and the changes in the workplace environment that this has produced.

1. **A stable career programme** - to prepare learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life so they can make well informed decisions about education, training, apprenticeships and employment options.
2. **Learning from careers and labour market information** - providing learners with detailed information about progression routes, relevant courses, digital skills, employers and useful networks strengthens their capacity to make effective choices and transitions
3. **Addressing the needs of each pupil** - the careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking, raise awareness and recognise barriers to improving social mobility and raising aspirations to maximise learners' life chances.
4. **Linking curriculum learning to careers** - learners are 18 times more likely to be motivated to learn if their tutors make their course more relatable and relevant to everyday and working life.
5. **Encounters with employers and employees** - learners should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. Research shows by the Education and Employers Taskforce suggest that a young person who has four or more encounters is 86% less likely to be unemployed, or not in education or training, and can earn up to 18% more during their career.
6. **Experiences of workplaces** - every learner should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience so they are well prepared for the workplace involvement they are about to have
7. **Encounters with further and higher education** – all learners should understand the full range of learning opportunities available to them. This includes academic and vocational routes, such as apprenticeships, and learning in colleges, universities, and the workplace.
8. **Personal Guidance** - every learner should have opportunities for careers guidance with a career advisor– a career advisor can be internal or external provided they are trained to an appropriate level.

Objectives:

- To give learners the opportunities to explore the various options available to them, for example, university/apprenticeship/employment/next level of course - this includes our 14-16 learner cohort
- To reduce the risk of learners becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) through an effective referral process between curriculum and the career team, and by working with other providers
- To ensure that learners understand University entry requirements, how to complete a successful UCAS application to apply for study at a Higher Education level, if applicable.
- To support learners to successfully apply for their next level course of choice, if applicable
- To support learners to successfully apply for apprenticeship vacancies.

- To ensure that learners have exposure to a wide range of meaningful encounters with employers and employees to help them make informed decisions on various routes/options available to them.
- To support all learners - including adult learners and apprentices - to successfully apply for employment, self-employment, or entrepreneurial opportunities by providing tailored guidance, meaningful employer encounters, and personal development activities that build confidence, resilience, and the skills needed to navigate modern recruitment and business start-up processes.
- To ensure learners can develop the skills needed to understand how to be successful in modern day recruitment processes for university, apprenticeship and employment.
- To enhance the personal development of learners' characteristics via the college tutorial programme to increase their confidence, resilience and knowledge so they can reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently with others.
- To ensure equality of opportunity to careers education for adult learners and apprentices, adapting processes and engagement techniques to ensure needs are met.

The college offers differentiated support for learners including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Learners with SEND have access to specialist impartial advice and guidance about education, training and employment opportunities, and specialist provision. This support also extends to children in care, ensuring they receive tailored guidance and opportunities to help them achieve positive outcomes through termly Personal Education Plan meetings to monitor progress and ensure tailored support.

Careers Programme Objective:	Careers Activity Programme:	Outcomes for Learners:
To give learners the opportunities to explore the various options available to them, for example, university/apprenticeship/employment/next level of course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 1-1 career referral ▫ Open events ▫ Interviews ▫ Taster Days ▫ A Level/GCSE day guidance ▫ Enrolment ▫ Right Choice Interview ▫ Employer encounters ▫ National Apprenticeship Week ▫ National Careers Week ▫ Work experience/work placement ▫ Work experience unit as part of study programme ▫ Progression tutorial ▫ Exit tutorial ▫ College website ▫ MySSC app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ To explore the full range of options available to them – <i>further FE study programme/apprenticeship/ work or training</i> ▫ To be prepared to make individual choices regarding their next steps, which are best suited to them through a comprehensive tutorial programme of personal development ▫ To successfully apply for a place at either university/Further Education provider/apprenticeship vacancy/apply for a job ▫ To have exposure to a wide range of meaningful encounters with employers and employees to ensure accurate LMI (labour market information) to help them make informed decision on the qualifications and skills required for their next steps

<p>To ensure that the CEIAG for adult and apprentice learners is bespoke to their needs and helps them make more informed decisions about their future careers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 1-1 career referral ▫ Open events ▫ Interviews ▫ Taster Days ▫ Enrolment ▫ Right Choice Interview ▫ Employer encounters ▫ National Apprenticeship Week ▫ National Careers Week ▫ Work experience unit as part of study programme ▫ Tutorial Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adult learners on a Full Time study programme will have the same tutorial as all other learners on their programme. ○ Part Time adult learner will have a Right Choice Interview during induction and a Next Steps meeting as part of the exit tutorial ▫ College website ▫ Adult Learner Handbook ▫ MySSC app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ To explore the full range of options available to them – <i>further FE study programme/apprenticeship/ work or training</i> ▫ To be prepared to make individual choices regarding their next steps, which are best suited to them through a comprehensive tutorial programme of personal development ▫ To successfully apply for a place at either university/Further Education provider/apprenticeship vacancy/apply for a job ▫ To have exposure to a wide range of meaningful encounters with employers and employees to ensure accurate LMI (labour market information) to help them make informed decision on the qualifications and skills required for their next steps
<p>To reduce the risk of learners becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) through an effective referral process between curriculum and the career team, and by working with other providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Curriculum/careers referral process ▫ Working with external providers, for example Entrust, Local Authority SEN. ▫ Swap Don't Drop initiative ▫ A Level/GCSE day guidance ▫ Right Choice Interview ▫ Withdrawal calls ▫ January course starts ▫ Introduction to College programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ To reflect and question career pathways to ensure it is the most suitable option ▫ To consider other internal and external pathways
<p>To enable learners to understand the entry requirements for Higher Education studies and to develop the skills needed to complete a successful UCAS application, where applicable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Annually updated UCAS resources provided to all learners and teaching staff to support successful application. ▫ Tutorial time for exploration, advice and completion of applications. ▫ Group Workshops (Research, Personal Statement, Finance) ▫ 1-1 career referral ▫ 1-1 tutorials ▫ MySSC app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ To have developed the key research and evaluation skills needed to choose a study options which meets learner's key criteria and longer-term career goals. ▫ To understand course types, entry requirements and recruitment techniques including how to successfully prepare an application and for interview where applicable. ▫ To understand how to write an effective, high quality UCAS application and personal statement to increase chances of securing their 1st choice study option.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Visits to Universities and contact with Higher Education providers through careers fairs, drop-in sessions and workshops whilst at college. 	
To support learners to successfully apply for their next level course of choice, if applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 1-1 career referral ▫ 1-1 tutorials ▫ Progression tutorial ▫ Exit tutorial ▫ Open events ▫ College website ▫ A Level/GCSE day guidance ▫ MySSC app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ To understand how to complete a course application and the enrolment/induction process
To support learners to successfully apply for an apprenticeship vacancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 1-1 career referral ▫ 1-1 tutorials ▫ Progression tutorial ▫ Exit tutorial ▫ Cross college tutorials ▫ Apprenticeship IAG enquiry ▫ MySSC app ▫ A Level/GCSE day guidance ▫ College website ▫ Group Workshop activities(Including Mock Interviews) ▫ Employer talks/visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ To ensure learners gain a clear understanding of apprenticeship pathways, including how they are structured, the benefits they offer, and the application process. ▫ To understand how to write effective apprenticeship vacancy applications and to understand recruitment techniques to increase their career opportunities ▫ To practice interview techniques in advance of apprenticeship interviews to be better prepared for actual interviews
To ensure that learners have exposure to a wide range of meaningful encounters with employers and employees to help them make informed decisions on various routes/options available to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Employer encounters throughout the academic year. ▫ Work experience/work placement ▫ National Careers Week ▫ National Apprenticeship Week ▫ Careers Fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ To understand how to write effective job applications to increase their career opportunities ▫ To gain an understanding of the local labour market in relation to careers ▫ To learn about different career pathways, including T levels and apprenticeships, local training providers, FE colleges and universities ▫ To plan forward, and subsequently, reflect on the learning experience during a work experience placement, whether this is virtual or face-to-face
To ensure learners can develop the skills needed to understand how to be successful in modern day recruitment processes for university, apprenticeship and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ National Careers Week ▫ National Apprenticeship Week ▫ Enrichment employer encounters ▫ Work experience/work placement ▫ Cross college tutorial sessions ▫ Use of the Skills Builder Platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ To practice interview techniques in preparation for university, apprenticeship, job or course interviews to increase their career opportunities. ▫ To be aware of the range of techniques that employers may use when recruiting including Applicants Tracking Systems, the use of digital technology including AI to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Group workshops (including the use of technology such as Virtual Reality Programmes) ▫ Mock Interviews 	<p>short list candidates, assessment centres, application forms and assessment tests.</p>
<p>To enhance the personal development of learners' characteristics via the college tutorial programme to increase their confidence, resilience and knowledge so they can reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently with others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Tutorial programme (Including use of Skills Builder Platform) ▫ Induction programme ▫ Pastoral support via mentoring/safeguarding service ▫ Learning support from Progression Coaches and Learning Support Assistants ▫ 1-1 career referral ▫ 1-1 tutorial ▫ Employer encounters ▫ Volunteers Fairs ▫ Freshers Fairs ▫ MySSC app ▫ Enrichment activities ▫ National Careers Week ▫ National Apprenticeship Week ▫ Tasters Days 	<p>To develop the following personal development skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Communication ▫ Interpersonal ▫ Organisational ▫ Problem solving ▫ Self-confidence ▫ Adaptability ▫ Resilience ▫ Work ethic ▫ Responsible ▫ Respectful ▫ Integrity
<p>To ensure equality of opportunity to careers education for our adult learners and apprentices, adapting processes and engagement techniques to ensure needs are met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Adaptation of the tutorial and induction programme to ensure that learners are aware of the services that are available to them and how to access these services. ▫ A bespoke Adult Learner handbook will be emailed to all 19+ learners in September which details all the services available in college and how to access. ▫ Visits to specific adult classes, termly adult information email bulletins, information video to promote careers service. ▫ Liaison with curriculum and apprenticeship team to ensure that information is shared and sessions developed which meet the needs of adult and apprentice learners. 	<p>Adult and apprenticeship learners will have access to the information, advice and support needed to make informed and aspirational decisions about their future career progression.</p> <p>Adult and apprenticeship learners will have the skills needed to meet their future career progression goals.</p>

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Review of current provision (August 2025):

COMPASS – score as of 2nd July 2025		
Benchmark 1	Stable careers programme	100%
Benchmark 2	Learning from career & labour market information	100%
Benchmark 3	Addressing the needs of each learner	100%
Benchmark 4	Linking curriculum with careers	100%
Benchmark 5	Encounters with employers & employees	100%
Benchmark 6	Experience of workplaces	100%
Benchmark 7	Encounters with FE & HE	100%
Benchmark 8	Personal guidance	100%

Key Strategic Objectives:

Objective one	To continue to improve the CEIAG for adult and apprentice learners to help them make more informed decisions about their future careers
Objective two	To continue to work with the Careers & Enterprise Company and Curriculum Managers to ensure 100% achievement on all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks is maintained.
Objective three	To roll out further developments in the use of digital technology to aid the development of careers related activities and the impact of digital changes on the future of work.
Objective four	To actively involve parents, carers, and guardians in the career decision-making journey of their child by providing accessible information, guidance, and meaningful opportunities for engagement. This ensures they are well-informed about the full range of post-college options and feel confident in supporting their child's career development effectively.

The Careers Leaders at South Staffordshire College are:

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