

## West Sussex Alternative Provision College's First Careers Fair

**Aim:** To link students with businesses and training providers for developing their future prospects and influencing their next step pathways.

**Gatsby Benchmarks:** Gatsby Benchmarks 2 (Learning from Career and Labour Market Information), Gatsby Benchmark 5 (Encounters with Employers and Employees) and Benchmark 7 (Encounters with Further and Higher Education Providers).



### Skills Builder:

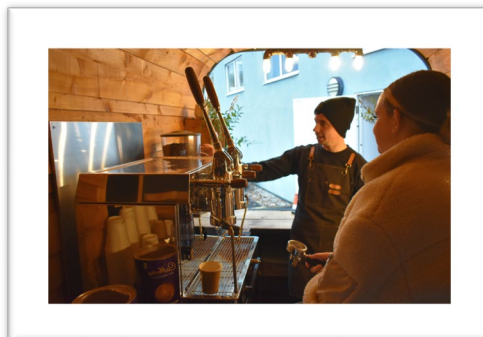
**On the day:** West Sussex Alternative Provision College hosted their first Careers Fair on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023. We were extremely fortunate to be supported on the day by representatives from West Sussex & Brighton and Hove Careers Hub who did a fantastic job greeting our exhibitors, students, and staff throughout the day. At the start of the day our wonderful exhibitors arrived with booklets, leaflets, pens, treats and other resources and set up their stalls ready to get started. Following a quick briefing from Kelly Parkhouse (from West Sussex & Brighton and Hove Careers Hub) we were ready to get started and the first group arrived.

During the day, the exhibitors engaged with the students talking with them about their career options available within their organisation and training routes the students could follow. The exhibitors responded brilliantly when feedback was given to make the stalls more interactive for the students, especially when the West Sussex Fire Service went and retrieved some of their equipment from their fire truck. They aimed to encourage the students to get into the fire kit within their usual expected timeframe, unfortunately, the students didn't get chance to try this out because the fire crew had to leave. However, this would be an incredible addition to next year's event.

The students, staff and their parents interacted well with the exhibitors, and they had positive conversations with them. This was an informative and positive experience for the students.

**Employer/Training Provider feedback:** The Employers/Training Providers reported that the positive aspects were that the careers fair was very well organised and they enjoyed talking with the students, with some of the exhibitors describing the conversations with the students about their career aspirations as being fantastic.

**Staff feedback:** The staff reported that the positive aspects were that there was a wide variety of providers present that were appropriate for the students, they stated that the exhibitors were engaging, friendly and approachable. They reported that the hall was an excellent space, and the stalls were well resourced. They fed back that the students who attended the careers fair found it really useful and it was a great opportunity for students to think about their options. The staff highlighted that the *'coffee stand proved a good example of how a practical activity increased engagement and conversation'*.



**Parent feedback:** One parent who attended in the afternoon fed back that her son had engaged in ‘*a wonderful chat with the gentleman regarding apprenticeships*’, which she reported was very positive and continued by saying that ‘*the event was incredible for him, he walked out with a spring in his step*’.



**Developments for the future:** To develop this further for next year, following feedback from both staff and the exhibitors, we will:

- ✚ Increase the number and variety of trades people and training providers in attendance.
- ✚ To use the projector screen to show the promotional videos of each organisation, to provide the students with a greater understanding of what the organisation does & offers.
- ✚ Make the stalls more interactive for the students to generate a greater engagement.
- ✚ Make the event more ‘teenager friendly’ e.g. a fun interactive career assault course/more interactive resources.
- ✚ Increase attendance by encouraging students to attend from Year 10 as well as Year 11.
- ✚ Staff members to walk around with the students to focus their attention and conversations.
- ✚ To provide pre-preparation planning in advance to focus the students questioning.
- ✚ To consider the timings between the different centres to make the day flow more fluidly.

**With many thanks to:** West Sussex & Brighton and Hove Careers Hub, Chichester College Group, Brighton MET College, Plumpton College, Howie’s Coffee & Co., Jace Training, Aldingbourne Trust, SCTP Apprenticeships, Get Career Confident, Steve Willis, CAA, Little Barn Owls, Gatwick Airport, Bespoke Law Services and Wills in Plain English, WSCC Fire Service, The King’s Church and to the staff and students from each of the units.

# WSAPC Careers Fair 2023

