



DEFINING FUTURES

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1 /// NOVEMBER 2021

Welcome to the Defining Futures Newsletter.
This half termly publication aims to bring stories of College news to you.

Staying safe!



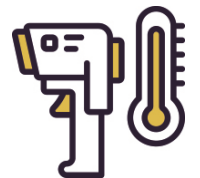
The College is operating fully with face-to-face teaching being accessed by all students and apprentices. Some areas continue with online studies as this way of working enabled students and apprentices to be more independent and support achievement.

Some COVID-19 protocols continue to remain in place. Compliance levels have been nothing short of fantastic by staff, with the majority of students and apprentices complying. However, we are aware of the changes in government guidance which is difficult to enforce.

Business Support Teams have been phased back to support the student or apprentice experience and are on site through rotated patterns.



COVID cases *update*



Numbers of positive COVID-19 cases remain low, although increasing this is not by significant numbers.

We have had 22 reported positive cases since the start of term across staff, students and apprentices.

We have had no reported outbreaks and all reporting measures remain in place with the College continuing to monitor in liaison with the local authority Public Health Team.



Asymptomatic Testing



The College was able to provide circa 2,800 rapid lateral flow tests from January to July for staff, students and apprentices.

In line with Government guidance, the College continued to provide a testing centre at Wellington Road and Paget Road Campuses to support students when first attending the College.

Uptake was very low as testing remained optional, however students and apprentices still collect home testing kits to help us maintain a safe environment.

Thank you again to all the staff volunteers for manning the centres and completing 'shifts' on top of their day jobs.



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Students and apprentices are back!

Enrolment has been positive and busy!

This year the enrolment of 16-18 year olds will exceed the funded target for the fourth successive year. The ambitious growth in devolved Adult Education funding from the WMCA looks on track.



Apprenticeships are beginning to be a priority for local employers and we are seeing growth in demand, which we now need to match with quality candidates.



Our **Sport** department has partnered with Plyofit to support the new Boxing Academy and sports qualification, leading to our first cohort of boxing students this year. [Read more here](#)

Further development with Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Academy has meant a record number of students have enrolled on the programmes this year. A Basketball Academy has run this year with its first cohort and the College now has 2 teams, with 19 players in the squad. Good luck everyone!



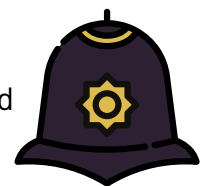
Hospitality and Catering have now established themselves both at Paget Road and Wellington Road Campus, learning not just skills needed to make the food, but encompassing a fully operational commercial experience, with students working front of house and in the kitchens on a daily basis.

Our Bakery students have also started to contribute to the food options at Wellington Road campus, but are now honing their crafts to start producing baked goods to all students, apprentices and staff plus the general public - watch out for the cakes and fresh bread!

In addition, this term has seen the start of the Foundation Degree in Bakery. This is the first HE course for the area, staff have written the whole degree, with validation during the summer by The University of Wolverhampton.



Public Services have already started their enrichment activities with students being involved in a DRIVE event, which is for diversity, race, inclusion, versatility and equality. This enabled our students the opportunity to meet and work with military and blue lights services from a diverse range of talents and backgrounds. Our students marshalled the event and gained high praise from the organisers.



Health and Social Care have partnered up with four charities this year to raise awareness of the important work the charities do and to support the students to develop their employability and personal skills.

The students are fully immersed in the planning and implementation of events with all of the course levels working together and mentoring each other. The charities are The Haven, who supports women and children who have been subjected to Domestic Abuse, and women who are at risk of homelessness; Sunnyside Kennels, a rescue centre for dogs; Beacon Centre for the Blind and Cruse, Bereavement Care.



Health and Social Care have also opened the doors this year to a Health and Social Care Academy at Wellington Road campus which provides a practical experience for all of the students within their courses. There has been excellent feedback on this new facility already.



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Hair and Beauty have been welcomed into their new home at Paget Road campus and are working well in their new facilities.

Beauty have signed a new Partnership with Eve Taylor, an aromatherapy body and skincare prestigious house. They will be giving practical and theoretical training to both staff and students and working with them to be able to perform advanced treatments in line with current industry standards.

Hair have renamed the existing commercial Hair Salon within the old Metro One campus to New Era. This is in line with the new training salons at Paget Road. A launch day has taken place, which was very successful with new and old clients visiting. The commercial salon still houses the apprentices and some part time courses, as well as providing realistic all year round work experience for all of the full time students. Watch this space for offers!

[Read more here](#)



ICT have become champions for Microsoft. Following a very successful pilot that started last year with Azure Fundamentals, where the College was chosen as only one of a few providers to deliver.

Now all students are working through the courses alongside their qualification to gain badges to support them in their employability and be industry ready!



Business have strengthened the links with Healthwatch, Wolverhampton, this year. Already Tracey Cresswell, Healthwatch Manager, has been on site for a workshop with the students, getting them ready for placements with her, which includes event management.



We are thrilled that **A Level** students have achieved an impressive 97% pass rate. After another challenging and difficult year students have remained committed and driven to gain the best results under unprecedented circumstances.

A Level student Mackenzie who received A*, A, A said: "Tutors were really supportive during the pandemic; I would recommend studying A Levels at City of Wolverhampton College."

Kelvin, another A Level student receiving exceptional grades of A*, A, A, said: "I am grateful for the college as when I first came here I didn't have good grades but after speaking to tutors they made me feel confident that I could do it."

All students have gone into a positive destination including universities such as University of Birmingham, Queen Mary's London and University of Warwick, some into apprenticeships and a few into employment.



Mackenzie Spittle



Kelvin Owusu

Electric Vehicle training has been a significant success in recent months and the College is really looking forward to see this continue to grow this year.

[Read more here](#)

Training from Level 1 to Level 4 is available and we are seeing a range of businesses coming on board to work with us to meet their training needs, as well as media interest from [The BBC One Show](#), The Guardian, Sky News and soon ITN who plan on visiting us in November.



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Creative industries continue to be acknowledged as a lead in creative training in the City and the region.

All areas of creative have submitted individual student responses, from art work and short documentaries to music and performance pieces, for a BBC led project focused on climate change and the COP26 conference in Glasgow.



A project partnership has been developed with Flexus dance company which sees our performing arts staff and students as the lead College on a series of workshops which will be developed for theatre in education.

As some of you may know the British Art Show will be arriving in Wolverhampton next year, all of our Art and Design students will gain work experience as part of this national show.

Music and Media students are working closely with BBC introducing, which will see them create music videos of selected unsigned artists to be shown on the BBC iPlayer.



A new development this year is our L2 Esports qualification and we have now launched our Esports team ready for national school and college tournaments that start next week.

The BBC continue to support our apprenticeship programme in Journalism and in January will see 27 new apprentice journalists enrol and be placed across all areas of the BBC.

Engineering continues to deliver to a range of students and apprentices from Level 2 through to Level 5 with significant support from the local sector.

A review of the curriculum delivery is underway with support from local and national firms to ensure that we deliver what employers need in 2021 and beyond. This will feed into the development of the new campus to ensure we serve this growing sector.

One such area being rail engineering, which will link very closely with the new facility that opened at Wellington Road.

Another area of success is the Drinks Dispensing apprenticeship. We are the only provider in the country currently for this apprenticeship standard and this has seen us develop some fantastic employer relationships, more recently with brewer Budweiser who are working with us to create a training cellar at Paget Road Campus.



Our **Construction** department has seen a significant number of enrolments this year, with particular success in 16-18 year olds.

Apprenticeships have had an increase across all areas of Construction and this is set to increase only further as we add more pathways to our offer, such as Plant Operative and Gas Engineer.

The Gas Centre which has been closed for a number of years is now reopening following the successful appointment of a Gas Centre Manager. This will expand our offer and allow us to address a need across the sector for well qualified, trained employees.

Our employability offer continues to grow in numbers and success with the Plant training facility and plastering programme being supported by a number of national companies including Sunbelt, JCB and British Gypsum. Working closely with West Midlands Combined Authority and Job Centre plus we have in recent months been able to successfully place 33 trained Plant Operatives into the infrastructure sector.



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Our **Functional Skills and GCSE Maths and English** teams have recently been working with Century Tech to embed a new maths and English diagnostic tool which allows students to see which skills they need to develop and implement a learning programme that can be accessed during sessions and while away from the college. It uses artificial intelligence to ensure that learning is targeted to the needs of the student. The college has been working closely with Century Tech to develop a process for initial assessments to be used with our adult students and apprentices. Staff and student feedback has been extremely positive so far.



The GCSE team recorded a marked improvement in high grades. However, it is the stories of how people’s lives have been made richer that the team finds particularly rewarding. One lecturer was approached by a 16-18 student who said that before he was taught by them he had never read a book and now loves to read.

Our **Futures** team have been developing the vocational element of the curriculum. This allows our students with educational health and care plans, or EHCPs, to access a range of vocational subjects. This includes care, construction and sport. This offer will be extended to local schools to allow smooth transitions into College for students with EHCPs. We have also seen an increase in supported internships where students spend time learning in a workplace, coming to college only to develop their employability and maths and English skills. One of our supported internees from last year went on to gain full-time employment and we hope to build on the success with our greater numbers.



College’s new training centre get on track!

Our new Rail Training Centre was opened by Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands and Councillor Ian Brookfield, leader of City of Wolverhampton Council in September.

The centre, at the Wellington Road campus , boasts more than 40 metres of railway track so students can get hands-on in learning the skills needed to build and maintain rail lines.

The facility is also the first in the UK to offer training on slab track technology which is used in the construction of high-speed rail lines like HS2. It will also provide training on traditional rail and tram lines, with the facility equipped with installation and maintenance equipment.

The centre will deliver rail training programmes – from beginner to advanced level – in partnership with National Infrastructure Solutions, a leading training provider in the rail, civil engineering and utilities industries.

[Read more here](#)



(L-R) Dave Carns, Owner National Infrastructure Solutions (NIS); Stuart Anderson MP Wolverhampton South West; Cllr Ian Brookfield, Leader City Of Wolverhampton Council; Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands; Tony Kearns, Chief Operating Officer



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Physical Open Events are back!

Our first physical Open Evening took place in October – marking the start of new applications for the next academic year, however we still provided the opportunity for those wanting to study now to get themselves enrolled.



It was great to be able to get back to a physical open event and it was a busy evening! Footfall was massively up compared to last year and near enough matched footfall to the pre-covid event in October 2019.

Virtual events will compliment physical open events until December. Those joining the sessions will be able to have individual face-to-face discussions with tutors about full-time and part-time qualifications, apprenticeship opportunities with employers in the local area and sector-based training programmes enabling people to re-train to improve their employment prospects.

Apprentice scoops two awards in College Celebration

A business administration apprentice triumphed in two categories at the online apprenticeship awards ceremony.



Andrea Clarke

Andrea Clarke, aged 19, a business administration apprentice at DENSO Manufacturing UK Ltd in Telford, beat off tough competition to be named Apprentice of the Year 2021 after her nomination demonstrated that she shows real professionalism, is a role model for apprenticeships and has a can-do attitude, going above and beyond what is required of her in the workplace.

Andrea was also one of three winners of Rising Star awards – with apprentices nominated by their employers – which recognise those who have made excellent progress in their career to date and have the potential to go on to successful future careers in their chosen industry.

Phil Tomlinson, head of the Monozukuri Skills Promotion Centre at DENSO, said: *“The Monozukuri Skills promotion Centre at DENSO was established, in part, with a remit to attract and develop next generation talent.*

Andrea and her peer group of apprentices are a fantastic example of the centre’s strategy being put into action across a range of disciplines to ensure that DENSO remains a ‘sustainable’ company, fit for the future. DENSO’s partnership with the College is really bearing fruit.”

College assessors also nominated apprentices for a series of level-based awards, with Vicky Licence, a hairdressing apprentice at Umberto Giannini in Stourbridge winning the level 2 category, Lucy Heathcock, a business administration apprentice at the College topping the level 3 category, and Kath Hennes, a leadership and management apprentice for housing association GreenSquareAccord, coming first in the category for programmes at level 4 or above. [Read more here](#)



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College staff receive University Awards

Our staff have been praised for the support they have given to post-graduate students at The University of Wolverhampton.

Tutors Leanne McBean, Richard Jones, Jessica Pope and Ray Truby were nominated for Excellent Mentor awards by students training to become teachers through the University’s Postgraduate Certificate in Education programme.



The tutors were assigned individual university students to mentor throughout the academic year, advising them on how to structure lessons and make content engaging, as well as passing on tips, hints and advice gained through their many years of teaching experience.

Ray Truby, who teaches English at the College, said: *“I do this role as it is an opportunity to pass on some of the knowledge I’ve gained from over 30 years in the teaching profession.*

It’s great to see the PGCE students gain in confidence as the year progresses and to be part of their journey to becoming effective and innovative teachers – to receive the award shows that the advice and support given is appreciated.”

Support for the College

Our three local MPs continue to support the College. Recently Pat McFadden visited Wellington Road with Toby Perkins, the Shadow Minister for FE and Skills, to have a tour and speak to students.

At the Prime Minister’s Question Time event on 27 October, it was great to see Jane Stevenson MP and Stuart Anderson MP wearing College colours.



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Student Success Stories

58-year-old Tracey is set to prepare the next generation for the world of work after completing a free course run by the college's employability team to recruit new staff for the Prince's Trust programme which aims to improve young people's chances of moving into a job, further education or training.

The pre-recruitment programme covered how to engage with young people and teach them important skills in communication, teamwork and timekeeping, as well as how to produce a CV and prepare for an interview.

In an added boost, on completion of the training, participants were guaranteed a job interview with the Prince's Trust team leading to Tracey being offered a job with the team.

Tracey, a former photography lecturer, said: *"After moving back to the area I was looking for a new role and signed up for the course to enable me to revive my old skills, gain the confidence that I had lost and get me back to normality after the pandemic."*

It was a really rewarding course – the tutors were extremely supportive and motivated me to continue. I learnt how to be more proactive with young people and, on completion of the course was offered a job as a team leader on the Prince's Trust programme."



Tracey Burgoyne

Signing up for a new rail training course has led to 32-year-old Richard getting a job with the organisation that actually provides the training!

Richard said: *"During the first lockdown I was furloughed from my job in security and when I went back to work I was on reduced hours so needed to look for something that would enable me to support my family."*

With the amount of development in the rail industry going on locally I realised that this would be a good route to take and enrolled for a course at the College's new Rail Training Centre at the Wellington Road campus in Bilston.

The course covered health and safety, leadership, and training in the use of small tools and once I had completed the course I worked on the rail for a short time before being offered an interview with National Infrastructure Solutions – the company that provides the training on behalf of the College – and was offered a job as a business support co-ordinator working alongside other staff to arrange and promote training to others.

When I look back at the progress I've made in 18 months I feel really proud of myself. I took the initiative to learn new skills to help myself and now I can help others to improve their own skills and knowledge too."



Richard Thomas-Robinson

Have a story to share? Email marketing@wolvcoll.ac.uk



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