



Careers Strategy

Issued: September 2024

Review: September 2025

Mission Statement:

To enable young people to live and work without barriers.

Fairfield College Careers Strategy

There has never been a time when careers guidance has been as important for young people as it is today. Fairfield College has a critical role to play in preparing learners for the next stage of their education, training or employment pathways.

The Special Educational needs and disability code of practice 0 - 25 years January 2015 identifies - Colleges and schools should raise the career aspirations of their SEN learners and broaden their employment horizons. They should use a wide range of imaginative approaches, such as taster opportunities, work experience, mentoring, exploring entrepreneurial options, role models and inspiring speakers.

Career related goals may come in different guises for young people with learning difficulties, but they are all equally valid to the individual and their family.

'Careers' must be viewed in a wider context and more holistically to include the elements of 'Preparing for Adulthood'. For this reason, at Fairfield College, we focus on preparing learners in four specific areas:

1. Work/employment and further education.
2. Independent living and living skills.
3. Community friends and relationships.
4. Good health.

Fairfield College has a Careers Strategy and belief that all learners, regardless of their educational needs, can make positive and meaningful contributions to society, whether this is through paid work, voluntary work, part or full time or through joint community enterprise activities which benefit the local community.

With the greater choices of education, training and employment, our aim is to prepare learners for these ever-changing opportunities, responsibilities and experiences and to equip them with the skills to manage the choices, changes and transitions ahead of them.

In December 2017, the Department for Education released its new career guidance strategy and introduced the Gatsby Benchmarks that set out a mechanism to ensure high-quality careers and enterprise provision. Careers provision became part of Ofsted inspection framework in September 2019. Fairfield College employs an Employment Manager/Careers Leader to implement, lead on and oversee the Careers Programme and ensure that Fairfield College is working towards the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The Gatsby Benchmarks set out a framework for schools and colleges to deliver 'good careers guidance':

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces

Fairfield College Careers Strategy

7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

As set out in the Department for Education's Careers Strategy Fairfield College is required to have a designated member of staff named as Careers Lead, supported by the College Leadership Team. The Careers Lead will have responsibility to ensure Fairfield College meet mandatory requirements and work towards achieving all eight Gatsby Benchmarks. Darren Barber (Employment Manager & Careers Leader) undertakes this role and has completed the level 6 Careers Leader qualification and training.

Fairfield College embeds careers education into our curriculum and work-based learning areas taking a whole college approach. At Fairfield learners develop themselves and their skillset through work-based learning, work experience, vocational subjects, independence skills, personal growth & wellbeing and enterprise. Each learner develops employability skills whilst at Fairfield College. Learners on the Work Skills Programme gain a deeper understanding of rights & responsibilities, behaviour at work, interview preparation and take part in a mock interview with real employers.

Our careers programme embeds each of the 8 Gatsby benchmarks and is reviewed on an annual basis considering the views of learners, parents, staff and employers. Fairfield College offers vocational and specialist qualifications that will support the learner journey.

The DFE statutory guidance for schools and colleges published 25th March 2015 and updated 31st August 2022 '*Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*' states that careers guidance is the full range of activity delivered under the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. This guidance refers to the following legislation:

- Section 42A, 42B, 45 and 45A of the Education Act 1997
- Section 72 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- Schedule 4 (15) of the School Information (England) Regulations 2008

Every learner at Fairfield College and where suitable has access to impartial advice and guidance from our Employment Manager and once learners are 19+ and where suitable they can receive impartial advice and guidance onsite from the National Careers Service. Each learner has a pathway planning booklet and those learners that have met with the National Careers Service Advisor will receive a personal action plan and usually a CV.

Work based learning and work experience is an important part of the study programme at Fairfield College and the learner journey. Learners that have proven that they are ready are supported to access work experience placements in areas of interest to prepare them for the world of work, future pathways and employment opportunities. Learners are supported on their work experience journey by a designated Fairfield Job Coach.

As a first step into the world of work learners are given the opportunity to access work-based learning within the college reception, bakery, canteen, dog day-care, market garden, Fairfield Animal Centre and Weavers Pub. Work Based Learning is provided in a safe and supportive learning environment to meet individual learner

Fairfield College Careers Strategy

needs. Work Based Learning serves a real purpose to Fairfield Trust's business needs. Work Based Learning Leads, Job Coaches and support staff are available every step of the way to support the learner journey.

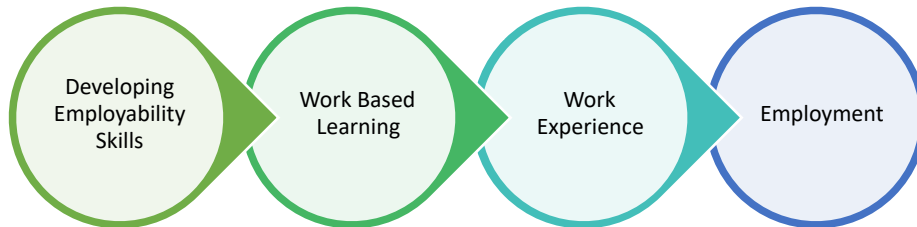


Fig 1. Progress through the world of work journey

Ofsted inspections evaluate careers information, education, advice and guidance under Personal Development. The Ofsted 'Further Education and Skills handbook' states that:

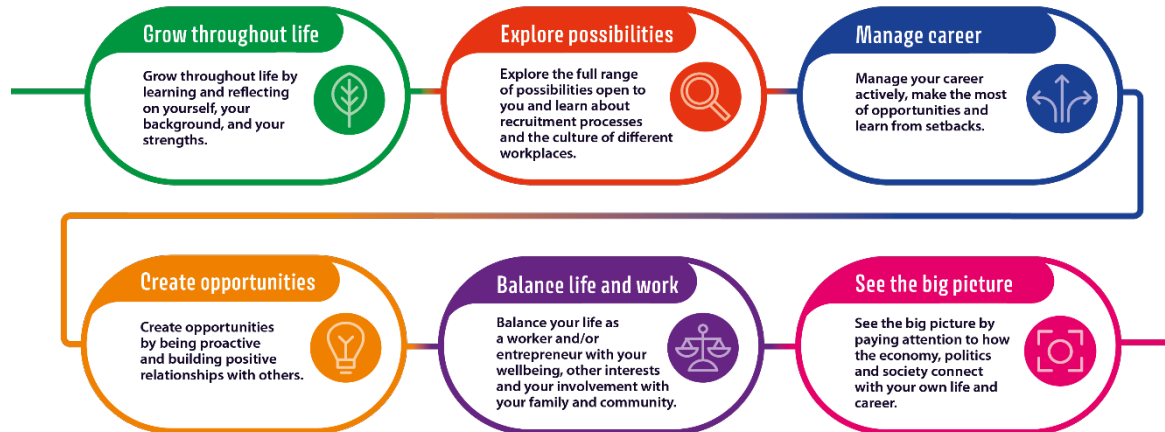
- Inspectors will review how well high-quality impartial careers guidance enables learners to make progress and move on to a higher level of qualification, employment, further training or independent living when they are ready to do so.
- Inspectors will judge, where appropriate, how well the curriculum, including the wider curriculum, for each strand of a provider's adult learning programme has a clearly defined purpose that is relevant to the education and training needs and interests of learners, and to local employment opportunities, and supports local and national priorities.
- Inspectors will judge how effectively leaders, managers and governors focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in education and training, and work with other partners to widen participation and support learners' progression to further learning and/or employment relevant to their personal circumstances.
- Inspectors will judge how effectively staff work with learners, employers and other partners such as Jobcentre Plus, to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment enable learners to develop personal, social and employability skills that prepare them well for their intended job role, career aims and/or personal goals.
- Inspectors will judge how successfully learners develop skills to enhance their employment opportunities and independence in their everyday lives in real-life situations, including meaningful work experience, and how well they take an active part in their local communities.

Fairfield College therefore must:

- Provide an effective careers programme that offers advice, experience and contact with employers to encourage learners to aspire, make good choices and understand what they need to do to reach and succeed in their chosen career.
- Support readiness for the next phase of education, training or employment so that learners can make the transition to the next stage successfully.
- Monitor the quality of careers information, education, advice and guidance, and how well these benefit learners in choosing and deciding on their next steps.

Fairfield College Careers Strategy

Fairfield College embeds the Careers Development Institute (CDI) 'Career Development Framework' by giving learners the opportunity to learn and develop their strengths, to explore what possibilities are available to them, to make the most of their career opportunities, to create opportunities and build positive relationships, to learn about balancing life and work and to see the bigger picture in society and how they fit within it.



Talentino

developed the 'Same and Different' model that enables careers practitioners, employers, families and others to better understand the aspects of early career development for 18-year olds with SEND. All aspects underpin the delivery of the Gatsby Benchmarks, and they are categorised in three ways:

1. **Same** – this is an aspect that will have the same value to a young person with SEND as to those without SEND
2. **Same and Different** – this is an aspect that will have the same value to a young person with SEND but will need to be delivered differently
3. **Different** – these aspects will only be relevant to the young person with SEND and will not be relevant to young people without SEND.

This model can be used to support understanding with all stakeholders around young people with SEND.

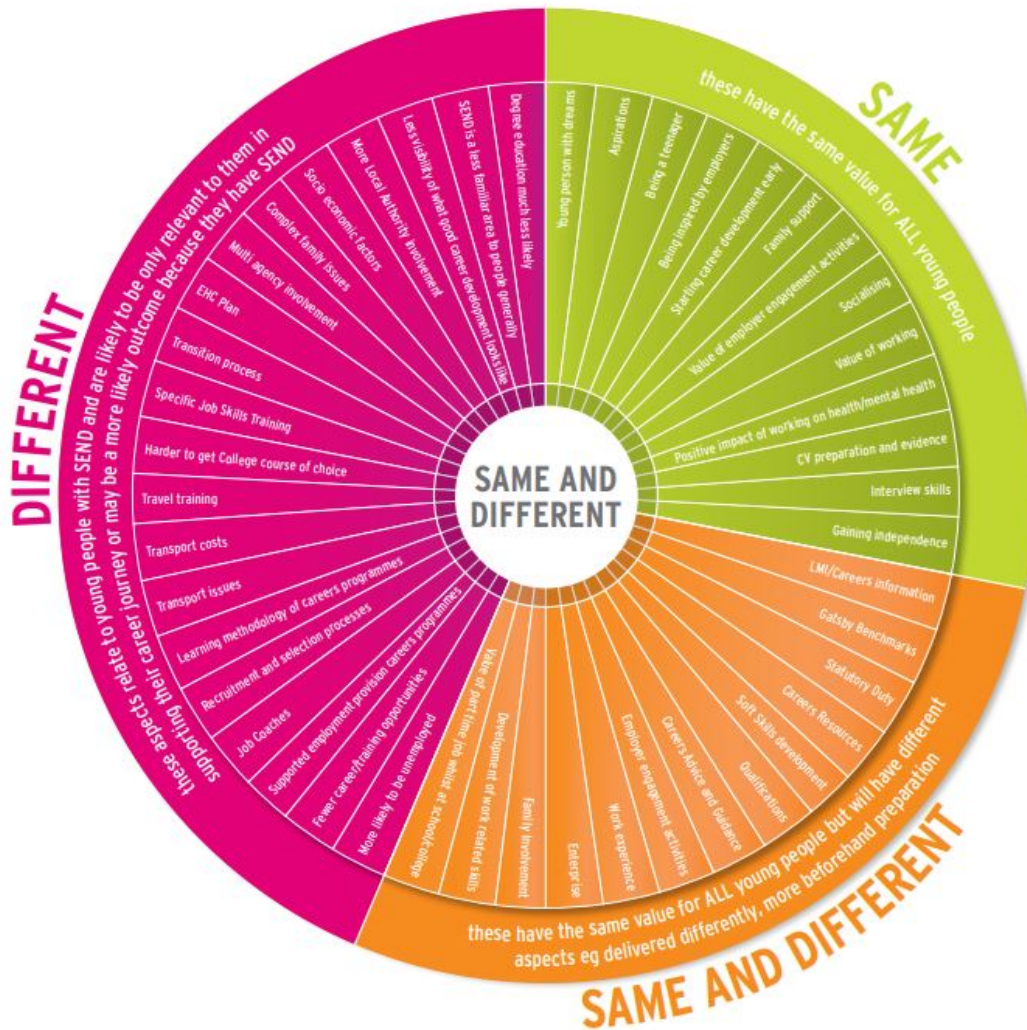
<https://www.talentinocareers.co.uk/same-and-different.pdf>

With the government's reforms to technical education and skills and the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market, there will be an increasing need for schools and colleges to work in partnership with employers, careers advisers, local authorities and other education and training providers to support students to prepare for the workplace and to make informed choices about the next step in their education or training.

To support this, the DFE has funded The Careers & Enterprise Company to support schools and colleges to develop careers programmes in line with their career's requirements and the Gatsby Benchmarks. Fairfield College is part of the Swindon and Wiltshire Careers Hub and the lead provider for SEND in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Fairfield College Careers Strategy

#sameanddifferent is an early career development model for young people with SEND who will typically not take GCSEs or Level 2 qualifications.



Fairfield College evaluates its performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks termly using the Compass Tool developed by the Careers and Enterprise Company and submits its performance percentages.

Fairfield College learners take part in a careers provision survey on an annual basis and staff, employers, parents and stakeholders on a two-year basis. The findings from these surveys help us evaluate, modify and improve or careers provision.

Fairfield College 2024-2025 Careers Programme will aim to raise the aspirations of all learners whilst being tailored to individual needs. The programme will inform learners of the range of opportunities available to them, encouraging them to aim higher and make choices relevant to what they feel they can achieve. All forms of stereotyping will be prohibited in careers advice and guidance that is provided to learners. Fairfield College learners will have the opportunity to take part in a range of career related activities, employer engagements and work-based learning and work experiences.

Learners attending Fairfield College will study for a BTEC qualification in Work Skills, Hospitality & Tourism, Business Studies, Health & Social Care, Land based Studies or

Fairfield College Careers Strategy

Vocational studies alongside functional skills maths and English. Fairfield College has changed to a BTEC qualification to provide learners with a career focussed, industry recognised qualification that enables learners to develop and apply the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers or Further education or training providers are looking for.

Additional standalone qualifications such as basic food hygiene will be offered to individual learners that need additional qualifications for their programme of study or work experience placement.

Fairfield College keeps comprehensive and accurate records to support the career development of learners. Each learner's world of work journey is captured and tracked in a career's tracker held by our Employment Manager. Destination data is retained where possible for each learner by Fairfield College for a three-year period.

Fairfield College 2024-2025 Objectives:

Gatsby Benchmark 1: A Stable Careers Programme

- To ensure the careers programme is delivered by individuals with the right skills and experience. Fairfield College will use qualified careers professionals to offer advice and guidance to all students during their time at college.
- To enable students to understand the range of opportunities available to them, the skills that are valued within the workplace and to have first-hand experience of a work environment.
- To develop and publish a careers programme that will raise the aspirations of all students regardless of academic ability and is tailored to meet their individual needs wherever possible.
- Ensure our Careers Strategy is fully supported by the Senior Leadership Team within the college and is approved by the board of Trustees.
- To ensure there is a clear focus on the activities which support enterprise, employability skills, workplace experiences and qualifications which employers' value.
- Regularly evaluate our careers programme to determine the impact of our careers related activity based on the feedback provided to us by students, staff, employers and parents.
- To maintain high quality careers provision endorsed by the Careers and Enterprise Company and to review the improvement of our programme by using the Compass evaluation and Tracker tools.

Gatsby Benchmark 2: Learning From Career and Labour Market Information

- To encourage and increase the use of online careers tools across all study programmes.
- Working with our own careers team, key partners, stakeholders, local and national professional bodies.
- To utilise and then support the development of labour market information to ensure staff and students are informed in their decisions and the advice being

Fairfield College Careers Strategy

given. Work with the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, Wiltshire Supported Employment Forum and Wiltshire Council Enterprise Co-ordinators to establish key priority areas which need to be developed.

- To promote the values of labour market information to parents /carers (where appropriate) to access and understand this information. To investigate careers and opportunities in learning, work and apprenticeships and how these meet the local and national priorities.

Gatsby Benchmark 3: Addressing The Needs of The Pupil

- To develop mechanisms to report, track and monitor compliance in relation to the Careers Strategy objectives.
- To provide careers related information to student EHCP reviews.
- Ensure that a programme of activity takes place which raises the aspirations of all students and challenges stereotypical thinking in terms of equality and gender.
- To ensure that careers guidance for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is differentiated, where appropriate, and based on high aspirations and a personalised approach. Careers guidance for learners with SEND should be based on the student's own aspirations, abilities and needs.

Gatsby Benchmark 4: Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers

- To ensure that subject tutors across the whole college support the delivery of careers education and guidance and can link the content of curriculum with careers, even in sessions which are not specifically occupation led. Subject specialist staff can be powerful role models to attract students towards their field and the careers that flow from it.
- To ensure that careers related activities are built in throughout the school year and not just towards the end of any given topic / subject being delivered.
- Specific focus will initially be placed on linking curriculum to careers in English, Maths, and PGW lessons.

Gatsby Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees

- To ensure that students receive at least ONE meaningful encounter with an employer during every year they are at college.
- Increase the number of activities which are conducted within college with the support of local employers.
- To ensure that students can improve employability skills and their understanding of and awareness of the world of work.
- To enable learners to gain the confidence to compete in the labour market by providing opportunities to gain the practical know-how and attributes that are relevant to gaining employment.

Fairfield College Careers Strategy

- Develop marketing materials for employers which will help them easily understand the impact of their involvement, the breadth of options available to them and the ways in which they can show they meet their corporate social responsibility.
- Provide opportunities for learners to visit careers fairs and moving on events to gain a greater understanding of the world of work.
- To provide learners with an annual employer engagement morning where learners can meet employers from the world of work and take part in employer led activities.

Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of the Workplace

- To ensure that all students take part in work-based learning sessions as part of their study programme at college.
- To ensure that students (where appropriate) take part in independent or supported offsite work experience placements. Especially students on Work Skills, Hospitality, Health & Social Care and Business studies programmes.
- To provide our learners on work placement and the employer with support from our well trained and experienced Job Coach team.
- To increase the number of employer workplace visits which will take place to enable students to gain more of an understanding of the wide range of employment opportunities available within specific industry sectors based in Swindon & Wiltshire.
- To strengthen our links with local employers.
- To take part in running an annual 'Ability not Disability' Webinar with Wiltshire Council and other partners to help local employers better understand young people with SEND and the benefits to an inclusive workforce.

Gatsby Benchmark 7: Encounters with Further and Higher Education

- Provide students and parents where applicable with information about further study options post Fairfield College.
- Support learners with any college applications, visits and inductions.

Gatsby Benchmark 8: Personal Guidance

- Ensure all learners (except students in their first year of study) have a careers meeting with a professional and level 6 qualified impartial careers adviser each academic year. At Fairfield College this is Darren Barber.
- Provide learners over the age of 19 (and where appropriate) with access to the National Careers Service Careers Advisor Emma Hurren.

Please see the '*Fairfield College Careers Programme September 2024 to July 2025*' document for the range of careers activities on offer and how each activity links to the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Please see the '*Fairfield College Work Experience Policy*' for more details relating to work experience placements.

Fairfield College Careers Strategy

Destination Data 2022-2024:

Destination	2022 (28 leavers)	2023 (40 leavers)	2024 (42 leavers)
Paid Work	7	8	5
Voluntary Work	3	3	2
Further Education	0	9	4
Social Care Provision	13	11	25
STEPs Programme	5	9	6

Destination	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)
Paid Work	25%	20%	12%
Voluntary Work	11%	8%	5%
Further Education	0%	23%	10%
Social Care Provision	46%	28%	60%
STEPs Programme	18%	23%	14%

When you compare that the national statistic of people with a learning disability in paid employment is 4.8% then Fairfield College student destinations is strong in the employment outcome field. We work closely with Wiltshire Employment Support Team (WEST) who work with our leavers who are ready to move into paid work and provide Job Coach support to help the young person apply for jobs, attend interviews, travel training and then support the young person and the employer until they feel they are at the stage where they can fade out the support. We encourage our alumni to come back to college and talk about their success within the world of work.

A large number of college leavers move on to local authority social care provision which may include work placements with organisations such as Shaw Trust Palmer Gardens, Able Hands Together Community Farm and Larkrise Community Farm.

Some leavers work with Wiltshire Council service Community Connecting to find Volunteering opportunities locally. This has also led to paid employment for some alumni.