

Post 16 Offer

Walsall Virtual School



Walsall Council



Post 16 Walsall Virtual School Offer

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As a Virtual School, we aim to ensure that all young people are accessing appropriate post 16 education that meets their needs and interests, whilst supporting them into further education or employment in preparation for their future transition into adulthood. We hold high aspirations for our young people and want to empower them to make informed decisions around education, whilst building confidence and self-esteem through enrichment and activities both inside and outside of education.

We passionately believe in the potential of our young people and feel that with the right support, within the right course, at the right time, they can achieve aspirational outcomes. Post 16 is a vital part of the education journey, where important decisions are made that can impact longer term choices into adulthood.

Below is an overview of some of the interventions and support we offer our young people, schools, colleges and training providers.

Supporting Young People to Access Education, Employment and Training



Transition from Year 11 to Post 16 Education

We know how important the transition to post 16 education is and how different it can be to secondary school.

The Virtual School supports young people to make informed decisions around post 16 options by offering specific education, employment and training support in Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings from year 9 upwards. We also ensure that schools are meeting their responsibilities to provide comprehensive careers advice to young people. Year 11 PEPs are attended by Virtual School staff, who will also refer young people to our Education, Employment and Training Officer if it is felt that additional careers and post 16 planning support is needed. We can also advocate for and support the young person in any additional transition meetings that are needed.

We encourage all young people to investigate a range of education pathways and expect them to attend open days at training and/or education providers with support from carers. Virtual School will provide signposting, advice and guidance to both young people, schools, parents/carers and professionals working with the young person to ensure the right course, and right provision are explored and secured.

Young people who hold an EHCP should have a yearly Annual Review. We work closely with the SEN professionals and schools to ensure this is done in the autumn term of year 11 to ensure their EHCP is fully up to date and reflects their current needs. This ensures that post 16 provisions have the information they need to make decisions around offering education. The Virtual School also work closely with SEN professionals to ensure provisions are appropriate, can meet need and are consulted within appropriate timescales, ensuring young people feel secure in their transition. Virtual School will attend and support in transition meetings as required.

Support For Young People Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)

All young people who are not in education, employment or training will be supported by our Education, Employment and Training Officer who will provide bespoke advice and guidance through direct work. This is an individualised offer, with possible support including careers action planning, liaison with education provisions, support in making applications and support to transition back into education. If young people want to explore employment, they will be supported to write their CV, make applications and we can make referrals to outside agencies to support with finding the most appropriate options in employment and apprenticeships.

Application to University

The Virtual School supports young people who wish to attend university to ensure that they are fully supported to make their application to university through the UCAS process. We monitor and support schools as they guide young people through this and ensure that it happens within the required timescales. Our Education, Employment and Training Officer will also support our young people to write their personal statements or check them through before submitting to UCAS.

We can also provide advice and guidance to young people, education providers and carers around student loans, bursaries and accommodation available at university.

Initial Assessments

For young people who may have been out of education for some time or may have not sat their GCSE exams, we offer Initial Assessments through BKSB to ascertain what their current levels of English and Maths are. This information supports in being able to make informed decisions around the right level of course for the young person post 16.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

The Virtual School ensures that all Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) are placed on courses to support the development of English and maths skills to ensure that they can communicate effectively within the community and to support them onto future appropriate education in a field that meets their aspirations. We aspire for young people to be placed within education within the first half term of their first Personal Education Planning meeting taking place. Where this is not possible, we can offer resources for learning in the home, including online tutoring sessions when appropriate.

We aspire for all UASC young people to also be engaging in a vocational element of learning in conjunction with developing English skills, alongside participation in enrichment activities within their local community.

Post 18

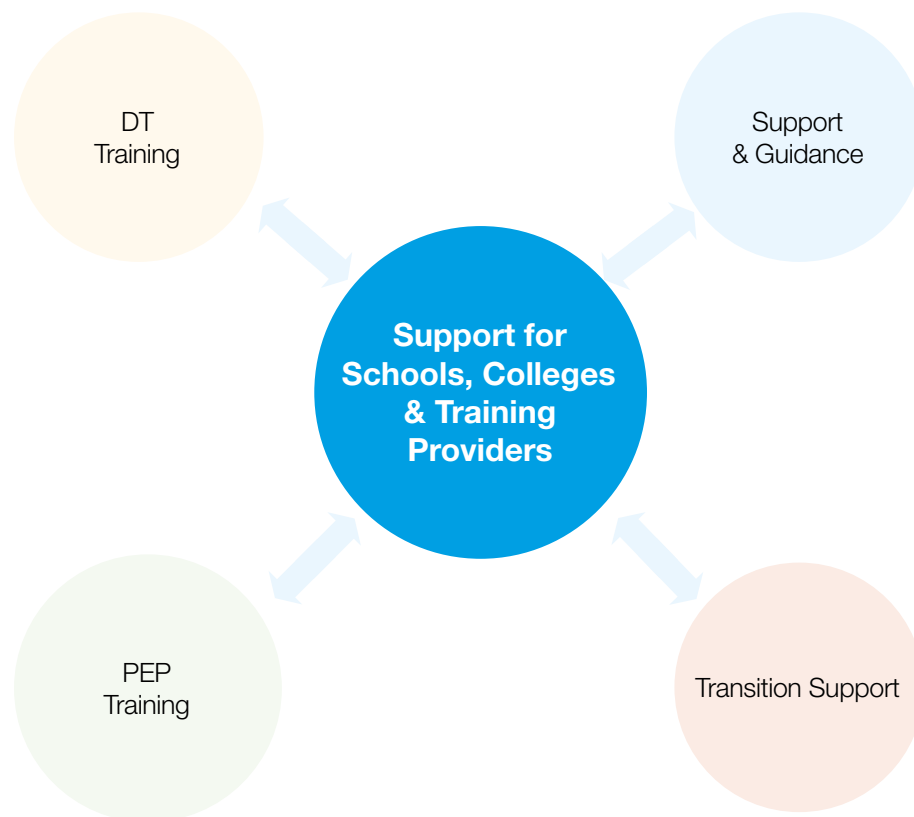
The Virtual School is available to provide advice and guidance in relation to education post 18 to all our young people around transition to university, further college courses, apprenticeships and traineeships. We are able to provide support to professionals who continue to support care experienced young people into adulthood with any queries relating to education and will continue to do so up to age 25 where needed. We work closely with the Transition and Leaving Care Team Personal Advisors to support young people Post 18 with employment and education, giving advice and signposting to external agencies for support.

Care Leavers Covenant

The Care Leavers Covenant is a national inclusion programme that supports care leavers aged 16-25 to live independently. We work with the Care Leavers Covenant to make referrals so that they can support young people with opportunities relating to education and employment.



Support for Schools, Colleges and Training Providers



Support and Guidance

Once in post 16 education all young people and education provisions have the support of a dedicated and experienced post 16 Education Support Officer. They attend PEP meetings when required to support with facilitating the process and to discuss, plan and implement interventions.

The Education Support Officer is a point of contact for any concerns such as attendance or attainment. The Education Support Officer acts to ensure that all working with the young person are communicating effectively and working together promote the education of the young person.

Our Education Support Officer provides support in regards to queries around Vulnerable Bursary applications, work experience and volunteering, opportunities and resources available for young people in the community, enrichment and personal development.

Training

We offer training for designated teachers as part of our offer to schools, colleges and training providers.

The designated teacher should be a central point of contact and it is their responsibility to promote the educational achievement of young people in care .

As a Virtual School, we provide information and advice to designated teachers on meeting the needs of our young people - this may be general information, including training opportunities, or specific information and advice on how to support the individual needs of a young person. We provide termly training sessions that designated teachers are encouraged to attend to support their professional development and build connections with other designated teachers.

PEP Support

As part of our continuing programme of professional development, the Virtual School provides training to drive forward improvements in the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs). The aim of the training is to enrich the planning and provision that will enable children in care to make accelerated progress. We want to ensure that these documents detail what needs to happen for the child or young people to fulfil their full potential.

Transition

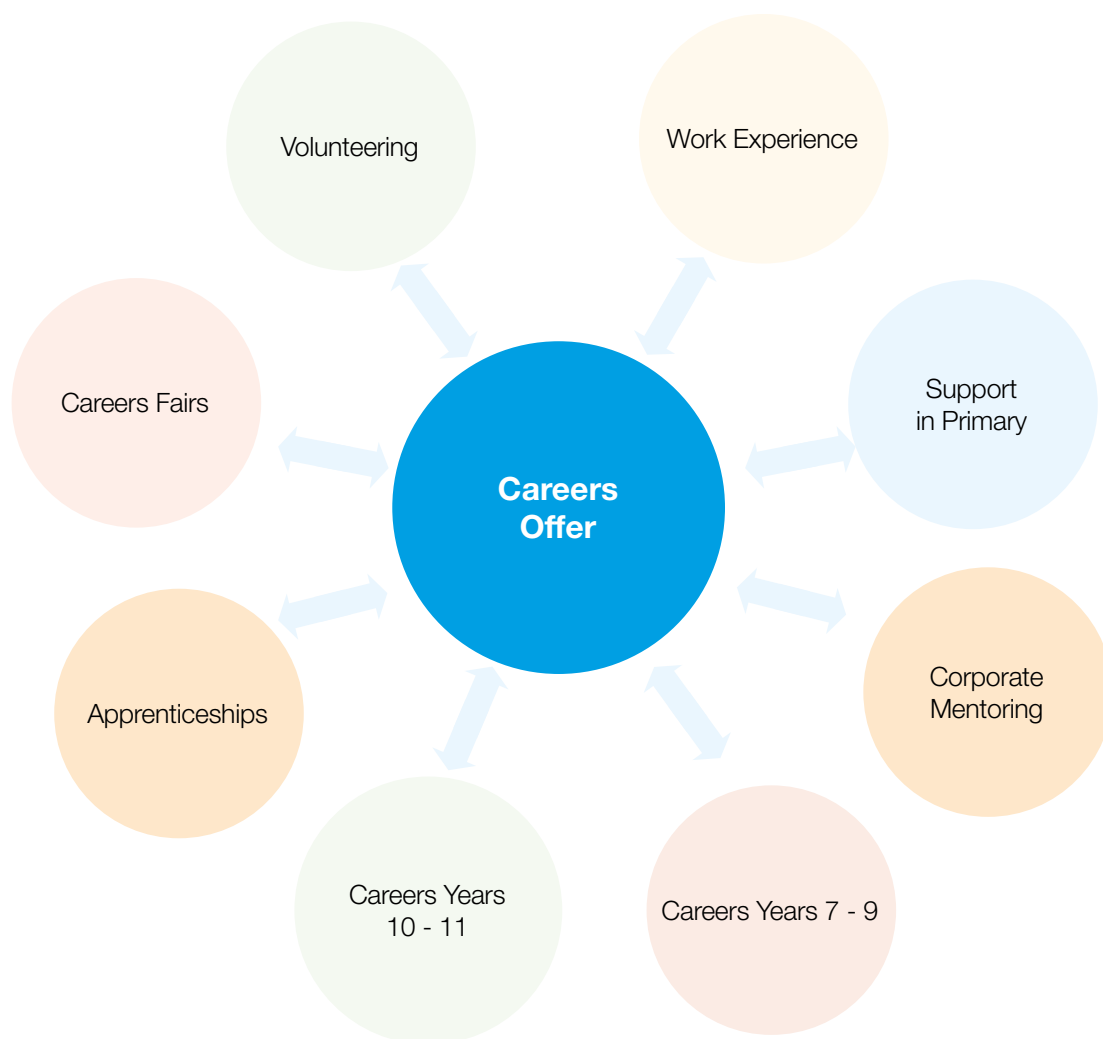
The Education Support Officer will support young people to transition successfully from compulsory education to post 16 provisions. They do this through careful planning prior to the transition, including all key stakeholders but holding the young person at the centre.

However, we also know that the reality of post 16 can be different to the young people's expectations so a key part of our role is to support young people who want to change their pathway and need support to find a new direction that suits them more.

The Education Support Officer remains in place until the end of the academic year that the young person turns 18 to ensure consistent support is available. The Education Support Officer also works closely with the young people's Personal Advisors to support their transition to adulthood.



Careers Offer



Careers in Primary School

Walsall Virtual School understand the importance of supporting aspirational and achievable career paths from an early age. With this in mind, we offer primary aged children various experiences of career opportunities. These experiences can range from visits designed to widen children's horizons by offering cultural capital opportunities to specific arts and sports workshops. We aim to offer a blend of education and entertainment to encourage and foster independence, confidence and empower children to consider wider horizons early on in life. We also offer visits to local universities to allow children opportunities to experience options at an early age before they must make decisions.

At the end of Year 6, Virtual School select a number of children who have shown an interest in attending university to take part in the Aspire2Uni programme in secondary school, please see below more information on this.

Careers in Years 7 – 9

Our offer continues through Years 7- 9 with continued conversations about future aspirations and an enrichment programme that offers experiences in different career opportunities. We can support young people when choosing GSCE/ Functional Skills and/or BTEC programmes of study. We are also working to expand opportunities to visit employers and work experience placements, within the council.

The Aspire2Uni scheme is an awareness raising programme with the aim of increasing the number of children in care achieving successful outcomes pre and post-16 and consequently entering university.

To support young people to progress to higher education, Aspire2Uni designs and delivers a programme of informative and engaging outreach activities that give the young people more information and advice about what university is about, how to get there and what to study.

They also offer work experience opportunities and support young people to achieve their qualifications by providing mentors and a tutor if needed. We have 5 cohorts running at present from Year 7- 11. Each cohort has 3 outreach activity days a year, 1 per term. Our young people are offered opportunities to explore a range of different faculties where they can meet current students, lecturers and mentors, in areas such as Science and Engineering, Sports, Performing Arts, Education and Health and Well-being. They also have the opportunity to visit Birmingham City University and University of Wolverhampton (Walsall Campus). Additionally, the children attend Jaguar Land Rover to share with them the different pathways into higher education such as apprenticeships or Vocational studies. There are further opportunities such as a visit to the Houses of Parliament, opportunities to be ball boys and flag bearers at Walsall Football Club and residential camps to support with their studies and preparation for their exams.

Careers in Years 10 -11

In Years 10 and 11, the PEP has a section for planning for the young people's future career. The Virtual School provides the support of an experienced Careers Advisor if that resource is not able to be provided through the school provision, or the young person is not in education. Our Education, Employment and Training Officer can provide support and guidance around the choices for post 16 to all young people, their carers and teachers.

We also support young people as they source and apply for post-16 options, this support includes preparing young people for interviews, open days, and understanding the enrolment process. At each stage, our Education Support Officer and Education, Employment and Training Officer are on hand to provide support and career planning sessions.

Pre Apprenticeship Scheme/Apprenticeships

Part of our Post 16 Offer to children in care is the opportunity to engage in a 12 week Pre-Apprenticeship Scheme for those who prefer the practical aspect of learning, but may not have achieved the grades required for a full apprenticeship. We provide young people with a placement in an area within the local authority that meets their needs and interests, with the full support of an allocated mentor. We remain available for support and guidance throughout the process, and will facilitate regular meetings for updates on progress.

Once the Pre-Apprenticeship Scheme is successfully completed, the young person would then be transitioned onto a full Apprenticeship at the appropriate level within the Local Authority.

Volunteering and Work Experience

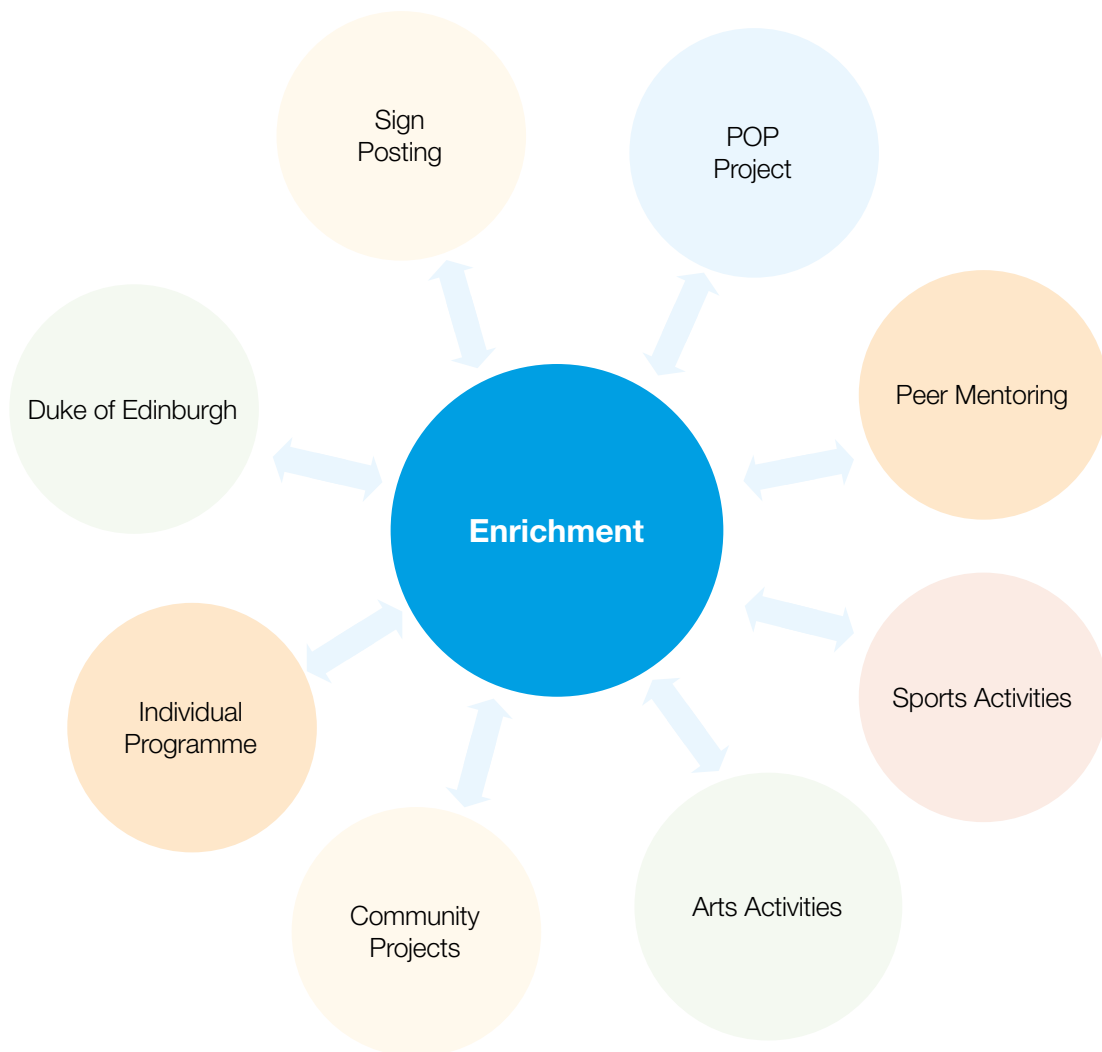
We understand the value of volunteering and work experience to build the knowledge and skills required to move towards employment.

We will work to source appropriate volunteering opportunities for our young people, working with both council volunteering sectors and external charities. We can support young people to participate in work experience both through the Local Authority Employment and Skills Officer and by building relationships with key businesses and charities within our community.

Corporate Mentoring

Walsall Virtual School operate a Corporate Mentoring Scheme for care experienced children aged 14-19, where senior managers within the local authority provide career focused mentoring to young people who have an interest in work based learning opportunities. The mentoring scheme supports care experienced young people to realise their potential and build their futures through support provided by 'the family firm'. The aim of the mentors is to enhance the understanding and experience of their mentees by assisting them to have a work based experience that will help them gain an insight into the world of work and how organisations work which will in turn support young people in making informed choices about their career pathway. The Corporate Mentoring Scheme is available to young people in Years 9-13.

Enrichment and Engagement Opportunities



Enrichment Activities

Enrichment activities are key to developing confidence, self-esteem and peer relationships for young people. We offer a wide range of enrichment for post 16 young people and provide activities throughout the academic year such as sports activities, arts and music workshops, cinema trips, STEM opportunities and outdoor pursuits.

We believe that every young person should have the opportunity to engage in at least one activity outside of their education. We support young people on an individual basis to source enrichment activities and can provide funding for this where appropriate.

Duke of Edinburgh Aware and NCS

We are delighted to be able to provide the Duke of Edinburgh Award and support young people to participate in this award with the guidance of staff within the Virtual School. This provides experience around volunteering, skill development, independence, confidence and the opportunity to participate in an expedition with peers. The Duke of Edinburgh award is recognised and respected by further education provisions and employers, giving young people extra opportunities in these areas.

We also work with National Citizenship Scheme and encourage and support our young people to participate. We are able to fund the cost of this scheme and it also works in conjunction with some elements required to be completed for Duke of Edinburgh award.

Peer Mentoring

We are able to provide young people with a care experienced Peer Mentor who can provide support and guidance from their perspective, alongside an understanding of the experiences and challenges that our young people face. This can be through online meetings and discussions on a regular basis, or through face to face contact and discussion. The Virtual School provides training and guidance to both the mentor and the mentee and monitor the progress of this relationship.

Positive Outcomes Project

Virtual School will refer young people to the POP project which is a health and wellbeing service catered for young adults aged 16-25 in Walsall. They aim to create an accessible support network that is welcoming and will mentor young adults by exploring challenges together and any issues that are affecting them. The service is co-produced and designed by the young people, which adds ownership and creativity. Mentoring and 1:1 support is provided, along with employment, training and volunteering support.

Signposting

We provide sign posting to outside agencies in relation to charities and resources that are available to support young people who are currently in care or are care experienced. We consider the individual needs of the young person and will signpost to agencies that are experienced and appropriate to individual and tailored support.

Sports, Arts and Community Projects

Virtual School will share with young people sports, arts and community project opportunities as we become aware of them, and will build and create opportunities for young people to engage in.

Individual Programme

Where a young person has a specific interest in one area, we will work with that young person to source an appropriate enrichment activity that meets their interest or needs.

Support for Parents / Carers

We recognise the key role played by carers, and as such we are happy to support carers to understand the world of post 16 in any way we can. If there is anything within our offer that parents/ carers would like more support on, we are happy to help. Please see below for information on how to contact us and access the Walsall Virtual School Post 16 Offer.

How to Access the Post 16 Walsall Virtual School Offer

If you would like to access any support from the Post 16 Walsall Virtual School Offer, please don't hesitate to contact us:

Tel: **01922 652816**

Email: walsallvirtuelschool@walsall.gov.uk

