

Birmingham Careers Service – Traded Service for Schools and Colleges Feedback – June 2024

Birmingham Careers Service (BCS) delivers a traded careers information, advice & guidance (CIAG) service for schools and colleges. Buying this traded service helps schools and colleges to meet their statutory responsibilities to provide independent, impartial careers guidance for their students from year 7 upwards. This academic year the team has worked in some 36 schools, special schools, alternative provision providers, colleges and specialist colleges.

As part of the current review of BCS, traded partner schools and colleges have been sending feedback about the value of the traded service and its impact on their students.

Below are some examples of feedback received:

Fortis Academy – Melissa Hunt, Deputy Head Teacher

Working in one of the largest Academies in Birmingham where our students face huge deprivation and low aspirations, I have a constant battle to support our learners to raise themselves out of the poverty trap.

I would not be able to meet the needs of my learners if I was unable to access the services run by the Birmingham Careers Service. There is currently no one in school who is trained to the correct level or with the expertise to give bespoke careers guidance and therefore we would not be able to meet the needs of our students. The colleagues who join us from BCS are consummately professional and hugely knowledgeable, they are an invaluable resource for students and staff. Not having this resource would mean I was unable to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks and goes against our mandate to broaden our students' horizons and lift them out of socio-economic deprivation. It does not make sense to cut a service that raises the aspirations of our young people.

Selly Oak Trust School – Simon Pearson, Assistant Headteacher/Careers Lead

We have worked with Jainn-Ann Wearing for 3 years now and she has added so much to our careers offer. Jainn-Ann's skill set and experience of working with SEND students has been invaluable, she has made strong relationships with the students she meets. We have never had any issues with students walking out of meetings, if anything they find her so welcoming, they tell her their life stories! Jainn-Ann has been able to create and update extremely useful action plans that accompany student's EHCP reviews to SENAR, and of course home to parents to help them. We have students from all over the city, so our careers outreach to colleges and training providers goes far and wide. Jainn-Ann's knowledge is essential to offer further detail to what students can do next.

We hope that you retain your services, we need Jainn-Ann, the city needs your services to continue, and I will advocate your services to anyone who will listen to me!!

Cockshut Hill College – Michelle Turton, Careers Lead

Cockshut Hill College is an 11-16 comprehensive school in the Yardley area of Birmingham. It serves an ethnically diverse population from a wide geographical area. The school is in the top quintile in terms of economic and social deprivation indicators. The stability measure indicates a very mobile student population with high numbers of EAL, PP and SEND students and high numbers of in-year admissions. The schools high number of disadvantaged learners (well above national average) are in receipt of Free School Meals.

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Your traded service for CIAG is deeply valued by both our learners and parents. Personal Guidance is at the forefront of our Careers Programme at Cockshut Hill School to enrich the lives of our learners. Career advisors are the link from school to Post 16 who can give insight into the world of work. The Traded Service gives us scope to work with our learners to ensure our young learners are equipped with the knowledge for a school leaver and avoid the issues surrounding NEET. The Traded Service has enabled Cockshut Hill to reduce its annual NEET figures. Without the Traded Service many young people will struggle and end up NEET.

Reach School – Lauren Jacques, CEIAG Lead

I would like to thank our BCS Careers Adviser (Kashmir) for her ongoing support to our vulnerable, disengaged and SEMH students. We have worked together for over 6 years, and I have been impressed with how quickly Kashmir puts our students with additional needs at ease, her approachable nature and how well she listens. Kashmir is keen to know the student holistically, and investigate academic, social and SEND information before meeting with them. This marries well with her adaptability, if a student is absent, she re-arranges her schedule, keeping thorough records and returning careers action plans speedily to myself, to be shared with the students.

Kashmir is keen to coax out the skills, attributes and dreams of individuals, she is always positive and encouraging. Realistic, yet aspirational. Kashmir has excellent current knowledge of the labour market and of Post 16 offers in a wide variety of sectors, localities and levels. Students are keen to see her and often ask for follow up sessions.

I am very impressed with the support Kashmir offers to SEND students, especially EHCP students. She supported one elective mute student to secure a Level 3 placement and put him completely at ease. I have also been grateful of her support to a school refuser, and a pregnant young person and she went above and beyond to ensure they had her advice, and indeed, ongoing support as they entered Post16.

I'd also like to thank Kashmir for her support for our school leavers: not just those referred as RON, but for all students. Kashmir came to support a leaver student who had an upcoming EHCP review and gave him short and longer term foci to ensure his mental health and wellbeing did not dip, and he had pathways in place, with further support from SENAR. Kashmir's record keeping, tracking and communications are excellent.

Kashmir is an invaluable part of our team, not just careers team, but whole school. Her presence is valued and welcomed, and I have improved my own practice from Kashmir's wisdom and advice.

Hall Green – Michell Homer, Careers Lead

As you well know we have been working with BCS since 2013 as a traded service for personal guidance, now spanning 11 years.

In doing this, we have been able to evaluate with confidence every year and every half term on Compass + that all our pupils have been offered 1 to 1 support by the time they leave us in year 11 (this Benchmark 8 is always 100%).

We have had several different advisers, but we are really happy to have had the last 4 years of continuity of staff with Helen Richards. This allows better relations not only with the Careers

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Leader but with other staff and most importantly for our pupils, who start to see a face they've seen around school before and become more familiar with.

We have always been pleased we with the advisers we've partnered with. Helen is brilliant, she's reliable, friendly. knowledgeable, experienced and understands our school. She is never off; her attendance is incredible.

She is patient when pupils sometimes forget and is accommodating for when events arise in school as they always do and there needs to be changes to the schedule.

Helen is always professional, has great SEN expertise and for working with vulnerable young people and always reports back to me any concerns that somebody else in school has not been aware of. She raises their aspirations and gives them the time to think about their choices carefully.

She gives detailed Careers Plans that are shared with pupils, staff and families as we simply do not have the time and knowledge to personalise in the way she does.

Due to this vital partnership our NEET figures are continuously low between 0-2% in the last 5 years. This also shows that from the guidance our pupils receive the vast majority stay in their post-16 learning place until completion.

Schools must have this support from BCS and would have a very difficult time in trying to replicate all the wonderful work they do.

In our recent 'Careers Impact Strategy' of self-evaluation with the Careers and Enterprise Company, we selected Personal Guidance as one of our biggest strengths within the school.

We really hope to be able to continue our very well established and regarded partnership in the future.

For further information about the Birmingham Careers Service CIAG Traded Service please visit [CIAG Traded – Birmingham Careers Service](#)