The Beacon Plus

Careers Education Strategy 2023 - 2027

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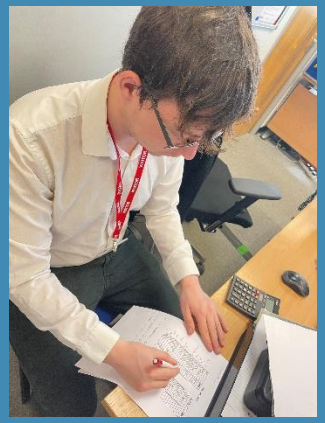


Strategy Mission

The ultimate goal of this strategy is to provide meaningful experiences of work and pathways into employment for all learners. We will achieve this by enhancing existing and generating new successful working relationships with businesses across a number of sectors; raising our profile both locally and across the county as experts in supporting LDD adults into sustained and successful paid employment. We will ensure all learners have access to a high quality and comprehensive careers education including impartial advice and guidance.

Context

Established in 2019, Folkestone Beacon Plus is a specialist provider offering support to adults with a learning disability into the world of employment and further developing skills to live an enriched life as an adult with as much independence as possible. We currently work with businesses across the retail, sports and leisure plus food and service sectors at a local level to provide short and long-term experiences of work for our learners. We have excellent relationships with each employer and work closely with them to match learners to appropriate placements in which they can succeed and thrive. We have excellent destination data with the vast majority of learners who move on from Beacon Plus progressing to paid employment or substantial voluntary posts. In order to be ready to move on to employment it is essential that learners joining Beacon Plus are independent travellers or in the final stages of achieving this, this requirement is clearly stated in our Admission Criteria.

We have an Employability Higher Level Teaching Assistant responsible for sustaining these excellent working relationships with employers, establishing new links wherever possible and supporting learners to thrive and succeed in the work place. They also play a key part in the delivery of employment skills to all learners, ensuring each individual receives personalised support linked to their individual aims and goals.

We have our own functioning business model to provide opportunities and experiences of work with learners initially running their own online and face-to-face businesses during the pandemic and has now progressed to running our own café and bakery, managed and operated by Beacon Plus learners with support and guidance from a bespoke Higher Level Teaching Assistant. In addition, we have created a stakeholder group of local employers to explore their recruitment and retention needs to make sure our delivery in relation to employment with learners is

accurate and discuss how we can generate future opportunities for collaboration with businesses. We work closely with the local Job Centre and Department for Work and Pensions in addition to local Police Community Safety Officers to ensure we are equipping our learners with the essential work and life skills required to succeed.

Our previous strategy 2019-2023 focussed on establishing Beacon Plus as a model of excellence in the local community providing well-matched learners to work placements ensuring we had an excellent reputation in our local community of adding value to local businesses through work placements. Employer feedback, learner satisfaction results and the number of employers willing to offer placements increasing during this time confirms that we were successful in achieving these objectives.

The Gatsby Benchmarks

Benchmark 1 **A stable careers programme** Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by learners, parents, staff and employers.	**Benchmark 2** **Learning from career and labour market information** Every learner, and their parents, should have access to good-quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.	**Benchmark 3** **Addressing the needs of each learner** Learners have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each learner. A college's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.	**Benchmark 4** **Linking curriculum learning to careers** All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.
Benchmark 5 **Encounters with employers and employees** Every learner should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.	**Benchmark 6** **Experiences of workplaces** Every learner should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.	**Benchmark 7** **Encounters with further and higher education** All learners should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in colleges, universities and in the workplace.	**Benchmark 8** **Personal guidance** Every learner should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level.

Beacon Plus Strategic Goals

1. • Improved rates of successful, sustained employment for the LDD community in East Kent.

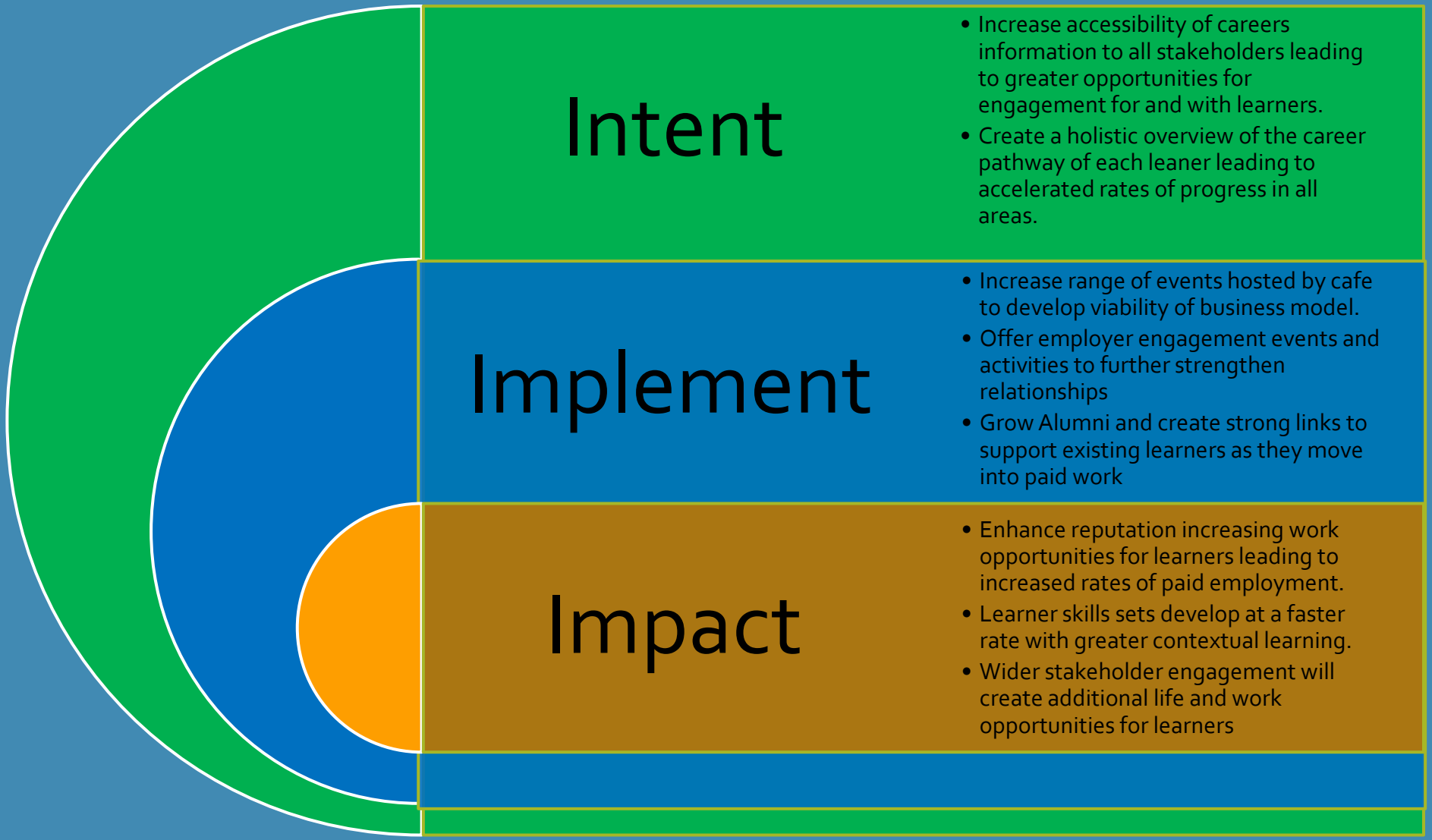
2. • The Beacon Plus College is a trading entity providing learners with real life experience of managing and developing a business that is valued by the community.

3. • Learners benefit from an innovative, cohesive curriculum and can articulate how this prepares them for adulthood.

4. • 4. Learners have strategies and skills to manage their mental health, now and in the future.

The Careers Strategy and Policy are at the centre of the college's strategic plans

Careers Strategy Objectives 2023-2027



Delivery Plan

Phase	Objective	Target Groups	Gatsby Benchmark Mapping	Activities	Timescales			Delivered by
					Short term (0-1year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (>2years)	
Intent	Increase accessibility of careers information to all stakeholders leading to greater opportunities for engagement for and with learners.	Parents	1, 2 , 3	Utilise college communication platforms to direct parents and carers to online careers events, resources and useful information.	●			College Admin Team
		All stakeholders	2, 4	Case studies produced and shared on communication platforms celebrating work placement successes.		●		Placement Coordinator
		Learners and parents	3	Develop resources to aid understanding of paid employment and potential impact on benefits such as Universal Credit.		●		Head of Centre
		Learners and parents	2, 3	Offer training and incentivise use of Kent LMI website including Start Profile	●			Placement Coordinator
	Create a more holistic overview of the career pathway of each leaner leading to accelerated rates of progress in all areas.	All stakeholders	1, 3, 4	Identify appropriate management information system to collate targets and progress for learners in a holistic overview.	●			Head of Centre
		All stakeholders	1, 3, 4	Introduce and embed through access and training a new MIS system to support target setting and progress.	●			Head of Centre Placement Coordinator
		All stakeholders	1, 3, 4	Establish new MIS tool as an essential tool to be frequently accessed and updated by all parties.	●			Placement Coordinator

Phase	Objective	Target Groups	Gatsby Benchmark Mapping	Activities	Timescales			Delivered by
					Short term (0-1year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (>2years)	
Implement	Increase range of events hosted by cafe to develop viability of business model.	Local community	5, 6	Utilise college communication platforms to promote the café as a local venue to host high quality events at affordable prices.		●		Café Lead Admin Team
		Learners	3,4,5,6	Additional event training for learners to increase their skill sets, such as waited table service.		●		Placement Coordinator Café Lead
		Local community	4,6	Create a package of event options to share and promote locally.		●		Café Lead
	Offer employer engagement events and activities to further strengthen relationships	Employers	2, 5, 6	Create a survey to assess when and how existing employers might be willing to attend engagement events.	●			Placement Coordinator
		All stakeholders	2, 5, 6	Use feedback to create networking events to bring together existing and potential employers to promote the benefits of collaborating with Beacon Plus.	●	●	●	Placement Coordinator Café Lead
		Employers and local community	3, 5	Offer training to employers to support use of SEN practices within their organisations to support all aspects of business.		●	●	Head of Centre
	Grow Alumni and create strong links to support existing learners as they move into paid work	Alumni, learners, staff	2, 3	Alumni engagement events hosted by the café to create informal opportunities for learners to engage in a meaningful way to support their future careers.	●	●		Head of Centre Placement Coordinator
		Alumni, learners, staff	2,3	Utilise college communication platforms to create opportunities for existing learners and Alumni to effectively engage and interact in relation to work related topics.		●	●	Admin Team

Phase	Objective	Target Groups	Gatsby Benchmark Mapping	Activities	Timescales			Delivered by
					Short term (0-1year)	Medium term (1-2 years)	Long term (>2years)	
Impact	Enhance reputation increasing work opportunities for learners leading to increased rates of paid employment	All stakeholders	5, 6	Develop marketing skills and strategies to promote our core and wider businesses leading to greater community awareness and engagement.		●	●	Admin Team Head of Centre
		Learners, employers	2, 3, 5	Reverse jobs fair to promote our learners with local employers		●	●	Placement Coordinator
	Learner skill sets develop at a faster rate with greater contextual learning	All stakeholders	1,3, 4	Develop skills analysis of learners during their induction and throughout the year to enable us to provide more accurate development information.	●			Placement Coordinator Admin
		Learners, employers, staff, parents	3, 4, 5	Skill development results and progress to be shared with stakeholders as authorised and appropriate for each learner.	●			Placement Coordinator
		Learners, parents, staff	3,4	Capture additional skills gained during contextual learning opportunities such as learning within the community.	●			Head of Centre
	Wider stakeholder engagement will create additional life and work opportunities for learners	Learners, parents	1,3,4	Establish links with local community groups and organisations who can offer support to learners as they move on from Beacon Plus.	●	●	●	All staff
		Learners, parents	1,3,4,5	Invite external speakers to engage with learners and families around wider contextual issues.	●	●	●	All staff

Appendix 1

BEACON PLUS CAREERS PROGRAMME 2024-2027

Beacon Plus has a careers programme that is woven throughout all aspects of its provision and includes education, advice, guidance and personalised support to all learners. Charlotte Henderson is the lead for work placement coordination including communication with employers.

What	How	When
Induction week	New and returning learners are welcomed to Beacon Plus and explore the range of enrichment activities available to them, explore the expectations of Beacon Plus and how we are involved in our local communities.	September
Work Placement/Work	All learners will access a personalised work placement or paid work on set days and times to enhance their employment skills and opportunities.	Bespoke weekly sessions
Work Skills lessons	All learners will access lessons based around their own work placement and focus on the skills they are developing, review feedback from their employers and identify next steps towards their targets. Across the year the following will also be covered: - C.V. writing, interview skills, career planning, communicating with employers and colleagues, job searching and application using Indeed and other online recruitment platforms.	Weekly sessions
Employability skills	Learners will have the opportunity to work towards a relevant qualification in employment skills, units covered include health and safety at work, customer service, development of skills through real life enterprise opportunities.	Weekly sessions
Functional English and Maths skills	All learners who have not achieved level 2 in English or Maths will attend lessons to develop their skills at the appropriate level, these lessons will have real life context and learning opportunities and can link in with work placement targets.	Weekly ability set sessions
Business skills	Learners will have opportunities to participate in enterprise activities – completing a cycle of research, production, marketing and sales to gain skills running a small business. Learners also run the Beacon Plus Café and Bakery, responsible for food production, all elements of stock control, customer service, money handling, marketing and profit and loss activities.	Weekly and termly sessions
Impartial Advice	All learners will have a dedicated hour for a 1:1 session with a qualified Careers Advisor from CXK, this is to talk about career aspirations and explore ideas that they may not have considered in relation to career options.	Annual
Local MP Careers Fair	Learners will have the opportunity to attend the annual careers fair hosted by the local MP at the Leas Cliff Hall, learners will be able to meet local employers and other education providers.	February
Reverse Jobs Fair with The Job Centre	Learners meet with potential employers at a bespoke reverse jobs fair in the security of our own café.	April
Careers in the curriculum	Termly curriculum map highlights where skills for work are addressed and embedded giving opportunities for overlearning and securing skills plus understanding how they transfer across multiple aspects of life.	Ongoing

What	How	When
National Careers Week	A full timetable of events will be available to learners including guest speakers to talk about career pathways in their organisations, training routes in FE, overcoming adversity, the importance of resilience and many other important aspects relating to careers.	March
Mock Interviews	All learners will be able to select from a variety of job descriptions to identify a job to complete a mock interview for that is relevant and realistic to their personal circumstances and aspirations. They will receive personalised feedback following the interview and have an opportunity to reflect on the process. The interview is conducted by someone from outside the organisation.	March
Coaching/mentoring	All learners will be assigned a member of staff and will be able to select from coaching or mentoring to receive support on developing a personal skill they identify as important to themselves and developmental.	3 times per year
Preparing for Adulthood	Learners participate in weekly sessions throughout the year on various PFA themes, they can include support to access the Job Centre, government benefits and taxes, paying bills and managing finances and budgeting.	Throughout the year as relevant.
External trips and visits	Throughout the year tutors will arrange for learners to visit local organisations relevant to their education programme.	Throughout the year as relevant.
Bespoke training	Learners will have the opportunity to complete online training to support their work placements and career aspirations such as Level 2 Food Hygiene, Manual Handling, Safeguarding, driver theory	Throughout the year as relevant.
Other FE opportunities	Learners will receive ongoing support to explore other further education and training opportunities including visits from other specialist providers to Beacon Plus should learners express an interest in other courses being advertised internally or externally to the college. Learners will be encouraged to explore appropriate apprenticeship opportunities.	Throughout the year as relevant.

Appendix 2 – Progress against Gatsby Benchmarks

Results

26 February 2024

Folkestone Beacon Plus

Your results show your progress in achieving the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

Compass evaluation results help you to identify strengths and discover areas for improvement within your careers provision.

Benchmark 1

Your provision has met 100% of the 18 assessment areas in benchmark 1: 100%

Your previous score Nov 2023 100%

Benchmark 2

Your provision has met 100% of the 2 assessment areas in benchmark 2: 100%

Your previous score Nov 2023 100%

Benchmark 3

Your provision has met 100% of the 8 assessment areas in benchmark 3: 100%

Your previous score Nov 2023 100%

Benchmark 4

Your provision has met 100% of the 3 assessment areas in benchmark 4: 100%

Your previous score Nov 2023 100%

Benchmark 5

Your provision has met 100% of the 3 assessment areas in benchmark 5: 100%

Your previous score Nov 2023 100%

Benchmark 6

Your provision has met 100% of the single assessment area in benchmark 6: 100%

Your previous score Nov 2023 100%

Benchmark 7

Your provision has met 100% of the 3 assessment areas in benchmark 7: 100%

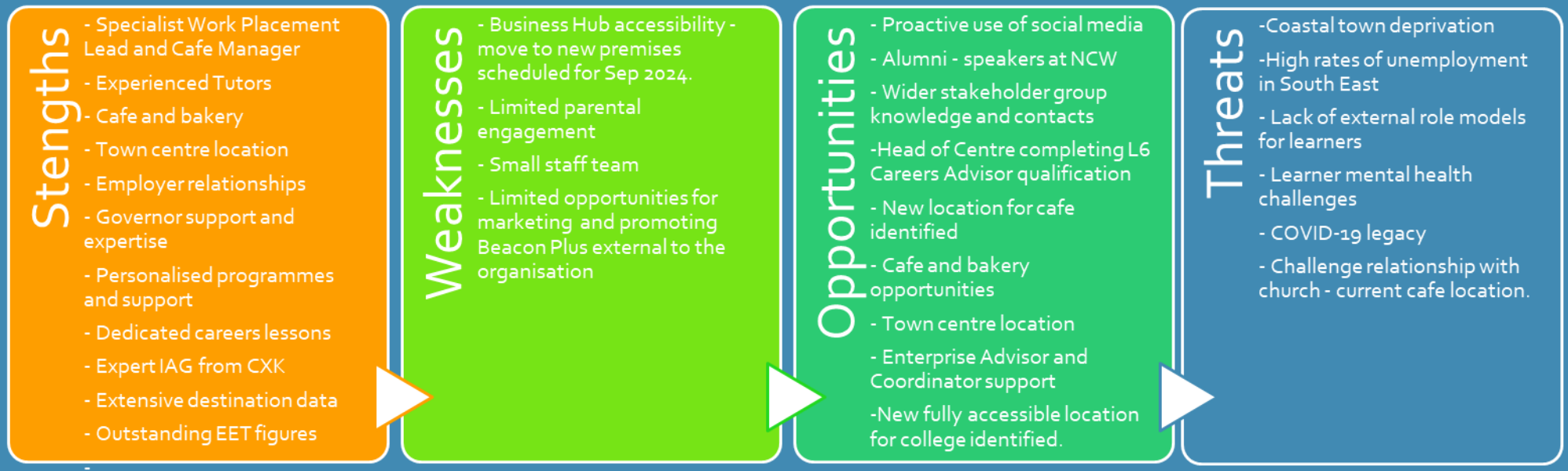
Your previous score Nov 2023 83%

Benchmark 8

Your provision has met 100% of the 2 assessment areas in benchmark 8: 100%

Your previous score Nov 2023

Appendix 3 - 2024 Careers SWOT Analysis



Appendix 4 – 2024 Development Plan Review

Intent Objectives	Activities	Action
Increase accessibility of careers information to all stakeholders leading to greater opportunities for engagement for and with learners.	Case studies produced and shared on communication platforms celebrating work placement successes.	Use of TikTok to share learners at work. Very positive outcomes with high levels of views when compared to our other levels of social media engagement.
	Develop resources to aid understanding of paid employment and potential impact on benefits such as Universal Credit.	Bespoke training from the Job Centre for staff on the benefits system and how paid employment affects benefits.
Create a more holistic overview of the career pathway of each leaner leading to accelerated rates of progress in all areas.	Identify appropriate management information system to collate targets and progress for learners in a holistic overview.	All Learners now have their own central targets folder to access at all times. Management Information System PICS purchased February 2024.
	Introduce and embed through access and training a new MIS system to support target setting and progress.	Management Information System PICS set up April 2024, to be launched in September 2024. Staff training April – July to effectively use the system.
	Establish new MIS tool as an essential tool to be frequently accessed and updated by all parties.	

Implement Objectives	Activities	Action
Increase range of events hosted by cafe to develop viability of business model.	Additional event training for learners to increase their skill sets, such as waited table service.	Barista training booked for appropriate learners to enhance skills and increase employability.
Grow Alumni and create strong links to support existing learners as they move into paid work	Alumni engagement events hosted by the café to create informal opportunities for learners to engage in a meaningful way to support their future careers.	Event scheduled to support the transition of leavers in July.
	Utilise college communication platforms to create opportunities for existing learners and Alumni to effectively engage and interact in relation to work related topics.	College email utilised to set up mentoring for existing learner with alumni. Positive role model and mentor created for learner.

Impact Objectives	Activities	Action
Enhance reputation increasing work opportunities for learners leading to increased rates of paid employment	Develop marketing skills and strategies to promote our core and wider businesses leading to greater community awareness and engagement.	Use of TikTok to share learners at work. Very positive outcomes with high levels of views when compared to our other levels of social media engagement.
	Reverse jobs fair to promote our learners with local employers	Learners attended bespoke Reverse Jobs Fair in our café in partnership with the local Job Centre. Positive engagement for learners with potential employers giving a new experience to learners and developing relationships.
Grow Alumni and create strong links to support existing learners as they move into paid work	Alumni engagement events hosted by the café to create informal opportunities for learners to engage in a meaningful way to support their future careers.	Event scheduled to support the transition of leavers in July.
	Utilise college communication platforms to create opportunities for existing learners and Alumni to effectively engage and interact in relation to work related topics.	College email utilised to set up mentoring for existing learner with alumni. Positive role model and mentor created for learner.
Learner skill sets develop at a faster rate with greater contextual learning	Capture additional skills gained during contextual learning opportunities such as learning within the community.	Curriculum mapping is developing skill transfer. Staff observe greater ability for learners to transfer skills across the curriculum with this new approach.
Wider stakeholder engagement will create additional life and work opportunities for learners	Establish links with local community groups and organisations who can offer support to learners as they move on from Beacon Plus.	Strong links fostered with local Jobs Centre, staff now attending visit to Job Coach with identified leavers to support their transition. Locavore community garden keen to extend work opportunities to leavers to support well-being and mental health.