

Sandra Bull

Level 3 professional chefs leave us today with all assessments in the bag! 👍 Here's a couple of photos of the cohort – Good luck to all of these talented individuals.



Caroline Brown

Please see below a letter from a prisoner who has held the post of education peer mentor for two and half years at Leyhill:

Dear Caroline/Pauline/ Louise/ Sian/ Laura/Angie/et al

You may (or may not) be aware that I was informed yesterday that the parole board has issued a decision to release me on licence. (Lara will pick up on the fact that I've used too many 'that's in that sentence I think ☺ - I always said my English wasn't great). Anyway, I digress.

Given the current lockdown measures, and that there is no date yet for education to return, it may well be that I will have left Leyhill by the time you all return, and whilst I am completely useless at thanking everyone in writing, it is much better (I hope) than simply disappearing.

Having been employed in Learning & Skills/Skills Centre for over two and a half years, and despite my numerous soap box moments (which Caroline/Louise/Pauline will know well), I have to say it has been a real pleasure working with people who are not only true professionals, working in very difficult circumstances, but who are all totally committed to helping the students learn, and to their betterment.

On a personal level, I want to thank everyone of you for all the help and support you have given me. I have always tried to do the best for the students, focusing on the 'job' – sometimes to the detriment of building good interpersonal relationships (a failing from the past that I still struggle with – getting that 'balance'), but everyone has been patient and understanding.

Seriously, your help and support with everything I have done in education – whether mentoring or O.U. based – has enabled me to get to this point. Because I find prison life and especially knowing all the hurt/damage I've caused, so difficult to live with, it is all your help, your professionalism, your desire to help others learn, and above all, the people you are – characters in your own right, but always caring- that has helped me get through it and given me the will to continue. I will miss you all.

I wish everyone of you success, happiness and fulfilment in everything you do.

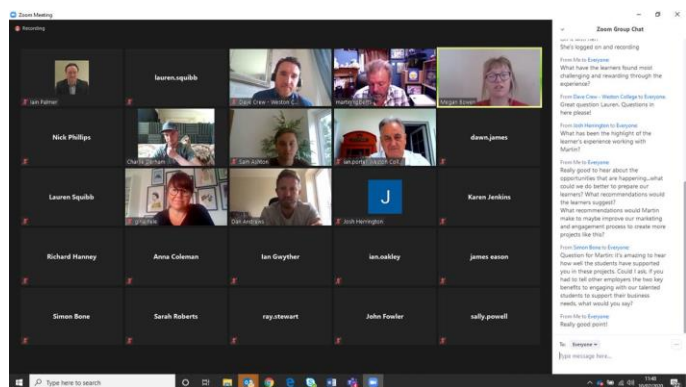
Above all, thank you for everything, Vince

Dave Crew

We delivered our second online Toolbox Talk event, hosted by Business Growth, for all college staff and we discussed the topic of live projects and industry placements for our learners alongside their course.

We were joined by Martin Roberts, known for his role hosting Homes Under the Hammer on the BBC for nearly 20 years, and Martin described how three of our learners, Sam from Business, Megan and Charlie from CAD, have been supporting him with developing online content for his YouTube channel. Megan, Charlie and Sam were a credit to themselves, Gina Hele and Dan Andrews from CAD, and Weston College as they described their experience of working with Martin, who highlighted how positive he had found working with Weston College and our team.

This Toolbox Talk event highlighted how powerful providing real work experience for our learners is – it really can shape their future, harness their talent, and by working with an employer with a business to run, benefit from constructive feedback and praise. My thanks to Ian Porter for making the connection with Martin, Anna Coleman from our Work Placement team, Gina and Dan for supporting this project and making the process so easy and enjoyable for Martin, and to our incredible learners Megan, Charlie and Sam who are a credit to Weston College.



Sam Mayhew

Delighted to welcome back are British Sign Language learners to college last week preparing for their assessments.



Jane Vivian

Sam Mayhew, Michelle Boland and I attended a meeting with the DfE on 15 July. We met a number of new staff and update them on the college's response to Covid-19 and plans for supporting learners coming back into college, in particular our SEND learners.

The college's Inclusive Practice team was featured earlier this year by the DfE for its best practice around keeping learners with SEND engaged during lockdown, through the innovative use of digital technologies. The DfE would now like to feature the team again for its best practice in managing the transition back into the college and for the continued engagement of learners with SEND.

The DfE has invited us to run a webinar in early September on the above. This will be run as part of the Centre for Excellence in SEND (People) Leadership Hub activity.

#MyVirtual College - Reducing Anxiety in Remote Learning

Our learners have significant barriers to learning and engagement, and staff have worked tirelessly to ensure they are able to access the online curriculum. Staff have been responding to learners outside their working patterns to ensure all vulnerable learners feel supported and prioritised.

We have found that some of our re-engagement learners respond better and have higher levels of engagement with a virtual platform.

Here's what the team have been up to:



Mitch with virtual HIT workouts and training selfie



Nicola with her photo a day challenge



Home cooking with Karim



James' virtual Duke of Edinburgh sessions



Gardening with Pete



Chris boosting staff morale with his Big fat staff quiz of the week

Room with a View!

Good morning Extension Studies Home Learning

Today's challenge: take a picture of a view outside of your window

What can you see? Is there anything interesting outside?



Bonus for arty people: draw or use a photo editing software (Pics.com is free to use) and edit your view from your window



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Simon Bone

As with many areas of the college the work placement team have been adapting their approach to engaging with students and employers through various digital and virtual means in these challenging times for all. Our main aim being to support our students in finding industry placement opportunities for next year, that enhance their development and skills, and in turn provide a valuable asset and resource for businesses, in an evolving working world.

Last week the work placement team delivered a very successful Wednesday Working Lunch session. The session was engaging and interactive and hosted a range of employers, highlighting our students as a great resource to support businesses through COVID recovery. Our student panel, Hannah (L3 Early Years) and Charlie (L3 Media) were a credit to themselves and our college, and our employer panel guests from Yeo Valley and TourLife were fantastic when sharing their own journey and the successes that they have experienced, through industry placements in partnership with us.

Thank you to the team for all their hard work through the last few months and moving into what will be a somewhat challenging year for work placements, a challenge no doubt that they will very much take in their stride.

If anyone would like to find out more please do not hesitate in contacting the team:

workplacementteam@weston.ac.uk

Weston College led Institute of Technology, at forefront of Higher Technical Qualification reforms

The Weston College led Institute of Technology, is at the forefront of Higher Technical Qualification reforms, as the Government sets out a plan akin to German employer focused technical skills system.

This week sees the launch of the Government's response to the Augar review, looking at the impact of the technical and vocational education at below degree level.

The proposals outlined include the:

- Introduction of a national scheme to approve higher technical qualifications that provide the skills that employers are looking for
- Improvement of the provision and quality of higher technical courses, by working with Institutes of Technology (IoT) and employers
- Encouragement of more people to take higher technical courses, by setting up a new government-backed brand and a public communications campaign and improving information and guidance.

So, what does this mean for Weston College and the wider West of England region?

At Weston we are the lead partner for the West of England IoT, which is supported by the Department of Education as "a flagship provider in higher technical STEM skills." This puts the College as a national lead, who is able to support local employers upskill, and liaise with Government on the next steps.



We already work closely with the West of England LEP and the West of England Combined Authority, to develop the right mix of provision needed both locally and regionally. This ensures that we have a skill offer that is relevant to, and valued by, the region, the local economy and employers we work with.

To this end, in addition to T levels in Childcare, we will launch our Digital T Level course in September with places still available ([click here to find out more](#)), leading to jobs like network engineers, cyber-security technologists and software developers which are all vital in a future digital economy. The focus on

this area addresses skills gaps and at Weston, we already have a strong Higher Apprenticeship offer supporting apprentices as Cyber Security Specialists, in Data Analyst roles, Network Engineering and Software Development, with many employers recruiting apprentices to join our next intake in September.

The College's Principal and Chief Executive, Dr Paul Phillips CBE added 'as part of the investment in the Institute of Technology, (IoT) we have made significant investment in digital delivery, creating an expanded digital lab environment and state of the art facilities, designed in partnership with employers, enabling lectures to be captured in our classrooms using industry standard equipment, which can then be shared more widely across the Institute, as the offer develops. This supports the Department's desire that approved courses have a blend of classroom and online learning. This is an approach where Weston, (as a Microsoft Showcase College), has very much led the UK during the pandemic, switching its entire provision to remote learning within seven days prior to lockdown - creating #MyVirtualCollege with over 4,000 lessons/support sessions delivered in the first week.

Here at Weston, we believe in 'Creating Brighter Futures' which is why we offer all ages the opportunity to choose high-quality higher technical education, either locally in Weston Super Mare and/or across the Bristol and wider West of England region, with our partners in the Institute of Technology, which includes University of the West of England, Bath College, Gloucestershire College, Yeovil College as well as a network of key local employers, including GKN Aerospace, Airbus, GE Aviation, Renishaw, Bamboo Technology, University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust and St Monica Trust.

Leading Tech employers endorse Weston College's new Digital T Level programme

DIGITAL PRODUCTION, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

T-LEVELS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH


cardstream


eloquent
TECHNOLOGIES GROUP


ZIRCON
AGILE • RELIABLE

In September 2020, Weston College will be one of only fifteen education providers delivering T Levels and will launch with the new Digital T Level.

The new qualification is highly anticipated, with one of the benefits being learners will spend a minimum of 45 days with a relevant employer carrying out their Industry Placement to really hone what they learn in the classroom.

Employers are recognising the potential that this new qualification can bring to their company; by building a pool of new talent, gaining support from an additional pair of hands, who can bring fresh ideas and provide them with the opportunity to mould a learner into a future employee.

Leading digital companies, Wiltshire based Zircon Software, and Somerset based Eloquent Technologies and Cardstream, have pledged their support to Weston College and the new qualification, by committing to take on Digital T Level learners for their Industry Placements for 2020.

David Owen, Managing Director at Zircon Software, said: "Industry placements are an excellent way for a business to identify future tech talent by offering a structured work placement programme.

"Key to the success of our business is building a talented workforce and we are delighted to work in partnership with Weston College to offer industry placements to students studying digital technology courses."

These thoughts were echoed by David Ford, Managing Director of Eloquent Technologies, who said: "We had great success last year through offering industry placements to Weston College learners and we are excited to be extending the partnership into next year.

"Our placement student's work was of such a high standard, that when he told us he was intending on taking a gap year, we hired him on a fixed term contract as he had become a critical member of our team."

Adam Sharpe, CEO of Cardstream, added: "Industry Placements offer the opportunity to meet keen and eager potential employees, that can be developed into future leaders of your business.

"We are delighted to support Weston College, through their Digital T Level programme, from experience we know that the College develops learners of a high standard, that can support our business and who we can help further develop their talents."

T Levels are delivered over a two-year period and provide an alternative to A Levels for 16 to 19-year-olds who would rather study work-related courses than traditional academic subjects. They provide a mix of industry-specific technical knowledge and practical skills and an industry placement of at least 45 days.

Dr Paul Phillips CBE, Principal and Chief Executive of Weston College Group, said: "We are excited to launch the Digital T Level in September, and to have endorsements from Eloquent Technologies, Cardstream and Zircon Software shows how important these qualifications are going to be for the business community.

"We have had success stories throughout the industry placement programme, and we are looking forward to this extending this into T Levels, and developing career pathways for our learners, in partnership with leading tech sector employers."