



Careers Newsletter

2026

July



careers@wh5d.com



www.waltonhigh.org.uk

NEWS FROM THE CAREERS TEAM

Careers guidance is crucial in helping students emerge from school ready to either continue their studies or ready for the world of work. We provide information, advice and opportunities to allow students to be well informed when making subject and career decisions.

Careers Team –

As the academic year comes to a close, it’s a fantastic opportunity to celebrate another year of growth, achievement and innovation in Careers.

This year marked an exciting new chapter as the Careers Team joined the 5 Dimensions Trust. Mrs Montague took on the role of Head of Careers for the Trust, working collaboratively across all four secondary schools in Milton Keynes to strengthen and expand careers provision for our young people.

We were also delighted to welcome two new apprentices to the team. They have made an outstanding start and will begin their Level 6 qualifications in October, bringing fresh energy and enthusiasm to our work.

A key focus this year has been developing modern work experience opportunities for Key Stage 3 students. Through participation in pilot projects and close collaboration with the Careers Hub, we have begun shaping an innovative offer that will continue to grow and evolve over the coming years.

Every student from Year 7 to Year 10 took part in engaging speed networking sessions with our partners at Worktree, meeting professionals from a wide range of industries and gaining valuable insight into the diverse career pathways available to them.

We have also expanded our annual Careers Fairs, welcoming more employers, training providers and industry representatives than ever before. These events gave students even greater access to inspiration, advice and opportunities, helping them make informed decisions about their futures.

It has been a year of exciting progress, strong partnerships and ambitious developments, and we look forward to building on this success in the years ahead.

Our Careers Team work towards achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks –

What are the Gatsby benchmarks? – [Good Career Guidance](#) | [Education](#) | [Gatsby](#)

Where is Walton High against the Gatsby benchmarks?

Gatsby Benchmark	% achieved in latest evaluation
GB1 - A stable careers programme	100%
GB2 - Learning from careers and labour market information	92%
GB3 - Addressing the needs of each young person	84%
GB4 - Linking curriculum learning to careers	64%
GB5 - Encounters with employers and employees	100%
GB6 - Experiences of workplaces	79%
GB7 - Encounters with further education and higher education	100%
GB8 - Personal guidance	69%

Worktree – Speed Networking

Students in Years 7, 8, 9, and 10 at Brooklands Academy took part in the highly successful Career Workout sessions, designed to give students valuable exposure to the world of work and future career opportunities.

The event welcomed over 80 employers and industry professionals from a wide range of companies, sectors and career backgrounds. Students had the opportunity to engage directly with employers through a series of interactive discussions, enabling them to explore different career pathways and gain insight into a variety of professions.

Representatives from industries including healthcare, engineering, business, finance, education, technology, construction, law, creative arts, emergency services, and many more shared their experiences, career journeys, and advice with students. This allowed students to develop a broader understanding of the opportunities available to them and the skills and qualifications required for different roles.

The sessions encouraged students to ask questions, build confidence in speaking with professionals, and begin thinking about their own future aspirations. Events such as these play an important role in helping students connect their learning in school with real-world careers and employment opportunities.



Hospitality Connect -

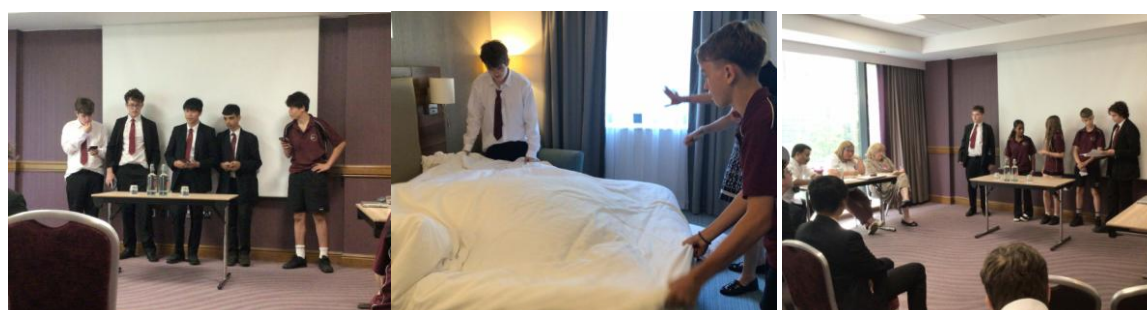
Walnut Tree - Year 9

Leonardo Hotel has worked closely with our Walnut Tree Campus throughout this academic year, providing a range of meaningful opportunities that have enriched students' learning and broadened their understanding of future careers. Through their involvement in our annual Careers Fair and support for speed networking sessions delivered in partnership with Worktree, students have had valuable opportunities to engage with industry professionals, develop their communication skills, build confidence, and gain a deeper insight into careers within the hospitality sector.

Building on this partnership, Leonardo Hotel recently supported a small group of Year 9 Catering students through an exciting real-world project focused on planning and delivering an event. Led by Mrs Montague, the project encouraged students to develop and refine their event ideas while gaining practical experience of the planning process. Throughout the programme, students strengthened key employability skills including teamwork, organisation, problem-solving, creativity, and customer awareness. The support and commitment of Leonardo Hotel have also played an important role in helping us develop our KS3 modern work experience offer.

The project concluded with a visit to the hotel in July, where students gained first-hand experience of the hospitality industry and the variety of career pathways available. During the visit, they heard from a range of professionals, including the Head of HR, Head Chef, General Manager and Deputy Manager, as well as team members from departments across the hotel. A particular highlight was the opportunity for students to present their event proposals to a panel of judges, impressing them with their creativity, confidence and professionalism.

Alongside a behind the scenes tour of the hotel, students took part in a series of engaging workplace challenges, including timed bed making and table setting competitions, giving them a fun and authentic taste of hospitality operations. Students were highly engaged throughout the day, embracing every opportunity to learn, participate and challenge themselves. Feedback from both students and staff has been overwhelmingly positive, and we look forward to continuing our successful partnership with Leonardo Hotel next year as we welcome the next cohort of students.



Hospitality Connect – Year 12

Brooklands Academy

Our Year 12 Business students presented their "Zero Budget Growth" projects to a judging panel which included senior professionals from the Cranfield Management Development Centre. The students delivered their ideas with confidence and professionalism, showcasing impressive creativity, strategic thinking, and presentation skills. Congratulations to all involved, and especially to our winning team! As a new partner, Cranfield Management Development Centre has provided fantastic support to Brooklands Academy throughout this academic year. From welcoming our students to our annual careers fair to contributing to our Year 9 Business Panel, their involvement has helped inspire and inform our young people about future career opportunities.

We would like to thank everyone at Cranfield Management Development Centre for their support and commitment to developing the next generation of talent. We look forward to building on this successful partnership in the next academic year.



Year 11 College Connect

Working in partnership with MK College, our Careers Team supported Year 11 students at all Trust schools through a three-week initiative designed to help pre-NEET learners re-engage with education and build confidence in their next steps after GCSEs.

Throughout the programme, students explored post-16 pathways, discovered a range of course and career options, received guidance with applications, and connected with key college staff, leaving them feeling more prepared, informed, and optimistic about their future.

All students have either submitted applications or have an offer in place. We will review the programme but offer this on an annual basis to ensure all 5 Dimensions students have a successful placement following their time in our schools.



Year 10 Work Experience:

In June, Year 10 students at both campuses took part in a valuable work experience programme organised by Pro-active. The programme gave students the opportunity to spend time in a real workplace, helping them develop important skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management. Students gained first-hand experience of different job roles and learned more about the expectations of employers. The work experience also helped them build confidence, improve their understanding of the world of work, and consider future career pathways. Overall, the Proactive work experience programme was a rewarding and educational experience that provided students with practical insights and valuable preparation for their future education and careers.



Year 12 Kellogg's Challenge with the University of Hull

Our Year 12 Business students took part in the Kellogg's Business Challenge, and it was fantastic to see each team come together to develop creative ideas, combining marketing, finance, and pitching skills throughout the morning.

Thank you to Hull University to running the session and for delivering an interesting and engaging Business session. You can find out more out the University of Hull here - [Unsane Old Story | University of Hull](#)



💡 Creative Industries Careers Spotlight 💡

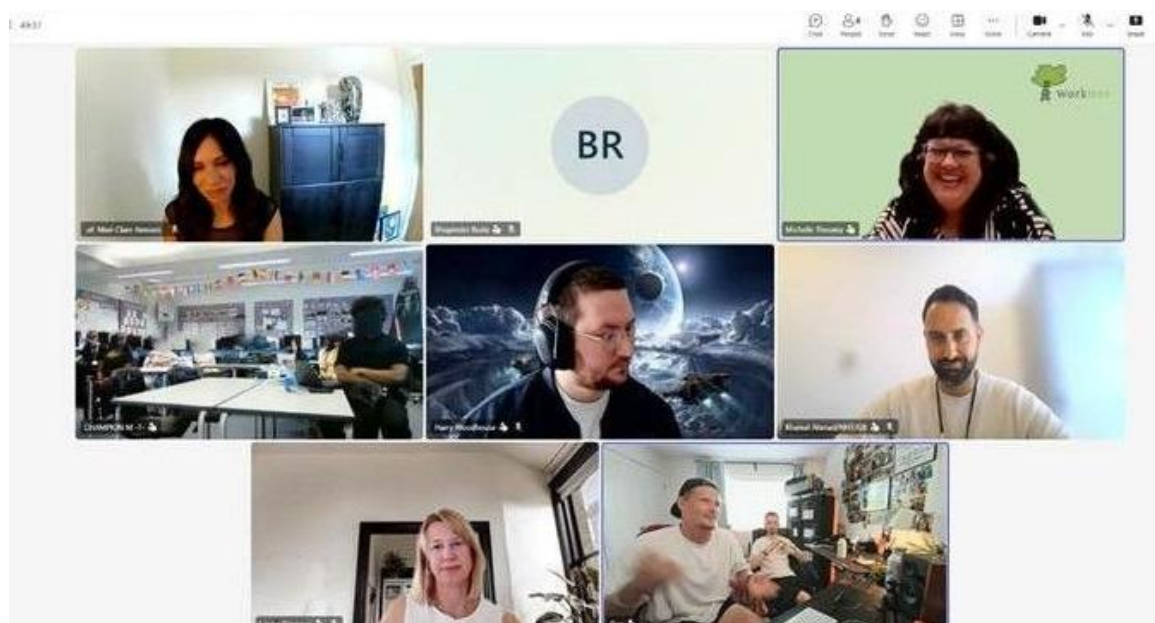
Last week, [Worktree](#) facilitated a 'Spotlight on the Creative Industries' Virtual Career WorkOut session with Year 12 students from Walton High (Brooklands Campus).

The creative industries are a vibrant and growing sector, offering a wide range of rewarding and impactful career opportunities. Students gained insights from professionals working across marketing, digital, product development, video production and games production, representing organisations ranging from innovative start-ups to well-known brands across retail, higher education and gaming.

A special thank you to [Mari-Clare Amoani](#) who sponsored the session and helped bring together a fantastic panel of professionals from across the creative industries.

[Mari-Clare Amoani](#) said, "I'm proud to support this session and bring together colleagues with such diverse roles and experiences. It was fantastic to see the thoughtful questions from students and have the opportunity to share insights and career journeys as they explore their future career options."

A huge thank you to everyone who took part and contributed to such an engaging discussion. Sessions like these help young people better understand the breadth of opportunities available and the different pathways into creative careers.



Year 7 – Modern Work Experience – Walnut Tree

A Huge Thank You to Dufeu IT!

We are incredibly grateful to Dufeu IT for supporting our recent modern work experience trial. Their team spent a fantastic morning with us hosting a **Key Growth Sector Day**.

Two Dufeu IT professionals—including a current apprentice—shared their personal career journeys. They gave our students a genuine, behind-the-scenes look at daily life in the cybersecurity and tech sectors, sparking brilliant conversations about apprenticeships and diverse career pathways.

Students also dove into a hands-on code-breaking challenge designed to build problem-solving skills and confidence. Despite the summer heat, the energy and engagement in the room never dropped!

Finally, a massive thank you to **The Inspirational Learning Group** and **South Midlands Careers Hub** for bringing this inspiring event together.



Year 12 – Personal Statement Session at both campuses

The University of Hull attended both campuses to deliver an informative and engaging session on Personal Statement writing. This session followed on from UCAS trips ensuring our students get the support they need to progress successfully.



Year 12 NextSteps Day – Brooklands Academy

Empowering Our Students for the Future

Our students recently dived into a jam-packed day of future-focused sessions designed to demystify life after Post-16. From university applications to alternative career pathways, the day offered crucial insights to help everyone plan their next steps.

University Insights & UCAS Preparation

- **Why University?** The University of East Anglia kicked off the morning virtually, exploring the long-term benefits of higher education.
- **Mastering UCAS:** Our Post-16 team ran a practical guide on navigating the UCAS platform.
- **Choosing Courses:** The University of Leicester shared expert tips on selecting the right university and degree program.

Alternative Pathways & Career Branding

- **Diverse Options:** Our Careers Team led an invaluable session covering apprenticeships, HNC/HND qualifications, distance learning, gap years, and varied degree types.
- **Professional Networking:** Industry expert Dale Willis wrapped up the day with an engaging workshop on how to build a powerful professional profile on LinkedIn.

Reflecting and Looking Ahead

Following this wealth of information, students completed a *NextSteps* worksheet. This self-reflection will directly support their upcoming tutor pathway sessions over the next few weeks.

This successful day builds upon our previous activities, including our recent UCAS Fair visit and Personal Statement workshops. Looking ahead to the new academic year, we will launch targeted apprenticeship workshops to fully support students choosing that route.



Inspiring Future Legal Professionals through NHBC Legal Work Experience



NHBC recently delivered a successful Legal Work Experience programme for eight Year 12 students from Walnut Tree and Brooklands, a valued partner of the past two years. The programme forms part of Walton High's Law curriculum, helping students bridge the gap between classroom learning and the practical realities of working within the legal profession.

Over the course of the placement, students experienced a comprehensive programme across both our Milton Keynes and London offices, gaining first-hand insight into the work of NHBC's busy in-house Legal team and the importance of collaboration across the wider business. Through a combination of interactive sessions, career workshops, networking opportunities and a tour of the Royal Courts of Justice, students were able to see how legal principles studied in the classroom are applied in a real business environment.

The programme was enhanced by contributions from colleagues across Risk, Company Secretariat, Major Projects, Corporate and Government Affairs, Claims and Legal, providing students with a broader understanding of the diverse career opportunities available within the legal and corporate sectors.

The students were exceptionally engaged, enthusiastic and motivated throughout the week, demonstrating a genuine interest in the legal profession. Their positive feedback highlighted the value of the experience in supporting their studies and future career aspirations. We are proud to play a role in inspiring the next generation of legal professionals and are already looking at ways to build on the programme for next year's cohort.

Year 12 Walnut Tree – Employability Den



Our Year 12 students recently enjoyed an inspiring and engaging employability day at NHBC, giving them a valuable insight into the world of work and the wide range of career opportunities available within the organisation.

Throughout the day, students took part in a series of interactive sessions designed to develop key employability skills. They explored different career pathways, built confidence through networking activities, and heard directly from professionals about their career journeys and experiences working at NHBC.

A particular highlight was the opportunity for students to experience key stages of the recruitment process. From completing a job application to participating in a mock interview, they embraced every challenge with enthusiasm, professionalism and ambition.

The day provided students with practical skills and real-world experience that will support their future career aspirations. We are incredibly proud of the positive attitude and engagement shown by everyone involved and would like to thank NHBC for providing such a valuable and memorable opportunity. It was a fantastic step in helping our students prepare for their future careers.





Unifrog

All students in Years 7 to 13 have free access to Unifrog.

What is Unifrog?

Unifrog is a universal destinations platform, a one stop shop for whole school careers guidance.

Our mission is to level the playing field when it comes to students searching for the best opportunities and applying successfully by working closely with our community of students from over 3,000 partner schools and colleges.

Our impartial, user-friendly platform allows students to explore pathways throughout school/college, evidence key activities and competencies, and draft and collate feedback on Personal Statements and CVs to submit the strongest possible applications.

For further information about Unifrog click [here](#) to watch a short video about the platform.

What is Unifrog and how to get the most out of it - [What is Unifrog? A guide for parents and caregivers : Know-how library](#)

Virtual Work Experience:



[Springpod](#) and [Futures for All](#) both offer virtual work experience programmes offers students and young people the opportunity to explore different careers and industries from anywhere, at their own pace. Through a range of online activities, employer-led content, and real-world projects, participants gain valuable insights into the workplace while developing essential employability skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management. The programme helps individuals build confidence, broaden their understanding of career opportunities, and make informed decisions about their future education and employment pathways. By providing accessible and engaging learning experiences, Springpod and Futures for All support young people in preparing for success in the modern world of work.

Labour Market Information:

In 2027 there will be some changes to the options available to students following Year 11. These include the introduction of **V levels** – find out more about V levels [here](#).

What are the new post-16 options?



What?

The Government have recently announced changes to the options available to students at the post-16 stage.

Why?

To make sure it is really clear what the options are for you and that you can gain the skills, knowledge and behaviours employers and the wider economy need.

When?

The first new courses are planned to start in September 2027, with different courses being rolled out until 2030/31.

New and existing post-16 options



What's new?

A-levels and T Levels are joined by V Levels at level 3

Two new level 2 pathways (roughly the same level as GCSE) are available to support students into further study or work

New level 1 GCSE qualifications provide a foundation year ahead of level 2 GCSE resit(s)

V Levels - key facts

- Level 3 vocational qualifications.
- Two-year course.
- For 16-19 year olds who would like to explore sectors without specialising.
- Taught in schools and colleges.
- Similar in size to one A-level.
- Multiple V Levels can be taken in combination with other qualifications such as A-levels or level 2 English or maths.
- First subjects available from September 2027 in Education & Early Years, Finance & Accounting and Digital.
- Content based on the skills you need for real jobs - the same framework used for T Levels and apprenticeships.
- Nationally recognised qualification.
- Most of assessment will be non-exam and will be through practical tasks.
- Attract UCAS points.

Further Study Pathway - key facts

- Level 2, classroom-based option.
- One-year programme.
- For 16-19 year olds who want to and are capable of progressing to further study at level 3 (T Levels/A-levels or V Levels).
- Taught in schools and colleges.
- Includes a Foundation Certificate, a vocational qualification.
- Content includes English and/or maths, enrichment activities and exposure to level 3 teaching.

Occupational Pathway - key facts

- Level 2, classroom-based option.
- Two-year programme.
- For 16-19 year olds who want to enter a particular level 2 occupation and need to develop their technical knowledge and skills.
- Taught in colleges and other training providers.
- Includes an Occupational Certificate, a technical qualification.
- Content includes English and/or maths, enrichment activities, core content and occupation-specific learning

Find out more about T Levels: tlevels.gov.uk

Post-16 pathways from 2027

