



## **STEP INTO HE FAIR 2008**

**TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2008  
WORCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB**

### **What did we try to do and why?**

We built on the success of our inaugural Fair last year to showcase all of the local HE opportunities for students taking vocational qualifications.

We invited all the further education colleges, private training providers and some employers as well as universities within the West Midlands.

### **Who helped?**

We set up a working group comprising the LLN Manager, and Project Officer, Aimhigher strand leads for 13-19 for both counties, the Herefordshire, Worcestershire & Shropshire Training Providers Association, and the Schools Liaison Officer from University of Worcester.

### **Who was the Fair targeted at?**

This year we took the decision not to open the Fair to the public due to the lack of support shown last year. Instead we targeted this year's Fair at Schools (Years 11, 12 & 13) and FE Colleges in Herefordshire & Worcestershire.

The 13 – 19 Aimhigher strand leads for Herefordshire & Worcestershire promoted the Fair to Schools and Colleges and made arrangements for their attendance. A flyer was sent to each school detailing the anticipated exhibitors, the structure of the event and it's location and date.

### **The Fair**

The Fair was held at Worcester Rugby Football Club which is a large venue just off Junction 6 of the M5 motorway. Its location made the event more easily accessible to the Schools and Colleges located in North Worcestershire who were unable to attend the event the previous year when held in Hereford.

We had 25 exhibitors attend the event, as follows:

- Aimhigher (including an Impartial Advice & Guidance Service)
- Army
- Aston University
- Birmingham City University
- Evesham and Malvern Hills College

- Gloucestershire College
- Harper Adams University College
- Hartpury College
- Hereford College of Arts
- Herefordshire College of Technology
- Herefordshire & Worcestershire Group Training Association
- Herefordshire, Worcestershire & Shropshire Training Providers Association
- Kidderminster College
- Ludlow College
- North East Worcestershire College
- Open University
- Paramedics
- Pershore College
- University of Birmingham
- University College Birmingham
- University of Gloucestershire
- University of Wolverhampton
- University of Worcester
- West Mercia Constabulary
- Worcester College of Technology

The programme was organised so that each school/college would navigate the event as follows:

- Exhibition Hall (30 Minutes)
- Finance Talk (20 Minutes)
- Student Panel (20 Minutes)
- Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talk (20 Minutes)

When entering the Exhibition Hall students were given a folder which contained information on which institutions/organisations provide courses in a number of vocational subject areas (based on the 14 – 19 Diploma subject areas). Therefore if a student was interested in, for example Public Services, they could instantly see which providers offered a HE course in that subject.

### **Who Attended the Fair?**

There were a total of 550 visitors from the Schools and Colleges listed below:

<b>1 School from Herefordshire:</b>	Minster College
<b>4 Schools from Worcestershire:</b>	Droitwich Spa High School King Charles I School Persore High School Prince Henry's High School
<b>3 Colleges from Worcestershire:</b>	Kidderminster College North East Worcestershire College Worcester Sixth Form College

## What Lessons did we Learn?

Evaluation Methods: We asked students to complete an evaluation form and received 313 completed surveys (the results of which are summarised, see attached). We also sought feedback via questionnaire from exhibitors (the results of which are summarised, see attached) and asked for informal feedback throughout the day. Some of the main points raised are shown below:

### What Worked Well?

- 91% of students said that the event provided them with a good understanding of higher education provision available locally.
- 79% of students said that the event had helped inform their decision on whether to continue on to Higher Education.
- 86% of students said they found the choice of talks useful. Both formal and informal feedback from students and teachers/lecturers showed that the Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century talk was really interesting/helpful.
- All of the exhibitors felt that the opening hours were appropriate. This had been altered in response to feedback from last year's event.
- All of the exhibitors felt that the venue was appropriate for the event.
- All of the exhibitors reported that the event was very well organised.
- Most Exhibitors were busy throughout the day with student enquiries.
- Two colleges sent their entire BTEC cohorts.

### What did not Work as Well?

- 56% of students said they did not have a good understanding of the purpose of the event before they arrived. This indicated that some preparatory work should be undertaken with the Schools/College prior to the event. Exhibitors also reported that 'students did not know what the day involved for them' and 'it would have been useful for schools/colleges to have received the details of the talks and the subject sheets beforehand'.
- The location of the venue was cited as the reason for many Herefordshire Schools/College not attending.





- IT work
- More A-Level info
- More prospectuses
- Put into groups along similar line of what they want to progress onto e.g. sports/childcare
- Sport
- The referencing in more detail
- What do you do in the Police Force
- Where could you get a well paid job with horses

**11a. Do you think that you will continue on to higher education in the future?**

**73% Yes**

**4% No**

**23% Still Unsure**

**11b. If yes or no, has this event helped inform your decision?**

**79% Yes**

**21% No**

**Additional Comments**

**Positive:**

- Good, Good freebies, Very Good x 5
- The last presentation was great 'Jon' very helpful
- Very helpful x 3
- Very Fantastic
- Thanks
- I enjoyed this and it has been a lot of help to me
- It helped a lot on my understanding of the finances of the University
- Thank you for the understanding of higher education
- Was good
- Well done, was fun

**Negative:**

- Event too short, not enough time to ask about courses/speak to colleges x 4
- Event too long x 3
- I know what I'm doing and don't need any more advice!
- I think you should break up the talks as there was a lot in a row
- It was boring
- It would have been helpful if there were more Universities, not just local ones
- Lack of water



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**SUMMARY OF EXHIBITORS EVALUATIONS**

A total of 23 Surveys were completed, the results of which are shown below.

**How useful was the information that you received prior to the event?**

0 x Not at all useful      2 x Quite Useful      13 x Useful      8 x Very Useful

**What other information do you feel would have been useful prior to the event?**

- Details of schools/colleges attending (x 3)
- Year/Age groups attending (x 3)
- No of visitors attending to gauge amount of literature required (x 3)
- Programme of Event (x 2)
- Better directions for WRFC
- Types of qualifications/subjects students are currently taking

**Did you feel that the venue was appropriate for the event?**

23 x Yes      0 x No

**Did you feel that the opening hours of the event were appropriate?**

23 x Yes      0 x No

**Did you have enough time to set up your stand prior to the visitors arriving?**

22 x Yes      1 x No

**How helpful did you find the organisers and student helpers?**

0 x Not at all Helpful      0 x Quite Helpful      8 x Helpful      15 x Very Helpful

**Did you feel the number of visitors was ...**

5 x Too Few      18 x About Right      0 x Too Many

**Did you feel that the organisation of the Groups in the Exhibition Hall was ...**

1 x Not Very Well Organised      6 x Organised      14 x Very Well Organised

### **Please provide any suggestions for how the event could be improved in the future**

- Layout/space better than Hereford. More coffee or option to get hot drink when required - the start time meant a very early start from home - needed sustenance!
- It would have been useful for schools/colleges to have received the details of the talks beforehand. Also the subject sheet would have been useful. Several teaching staff/support staff requested this.
- Students did not have sufficient time in the exhibition hall - they were being turned out before they had finished.
- More consistent year groups - e.g. FE or HE target audience
- More schools as well as colleges
- Very well organised. Lots of students from different areas. Thanks for lunch
- Year 11 students were very interested but above that, they had already made their minds up
- Somebody in Reception to tell you where you need to be (i.e. upstairs!). I was struggling with prospectuses and stands etc so missed the signs. When you're running late, as you couldn't find the venue, it adds to your overall stress!
- Exhibitor signage from main road/M5 roundabout
- University of Worcester to bring more prospectus', however helpers/LLN organiser were very helpful in getting more
- The students didn't have enough time to look at all the stands before going into talks

### **Please provide any other comments regarding the event below**

#### **Positive:**

- Very well managed and organised event
- The flow of students was just right. Really great event, thank you!
- A good mix of HE providers - so quite a bit referring to others so the 'relevant for me' sheet was a good idea
- This is a really great event and very busy for us. Really great students who seemed well prepared with some excellent questions. Thank you for lunch too, a welcomed break. Thank you for inviting us, we'd certainly like to come again next year
- Very well organised - could have accommodated more schools from both Herefordshire & Worcestershire
- Bringing the visitors in stages made it a lot more management to give advice
- Felt it was excellent venue - managed very well. There was a 'buzz' which I am sure the students picked up. Well done!

#### **Negative:**

- The students did not know what the day involved for them - i.e. talks they were attending.
- The event at Hereford suited Ludlow College better as feeder schools coming through the day were mainly Year 11's looking at pathways. This event seems more suited to HE institutions because of the higher number of colleges attending. Alternate years and alternative venues? Schools could bring Year 10 or 11 dependent of the location.
- A better location to attract more students from Herefordshire.
- Not enough Year 11 students, most Year 12 students had already decided on their routes. Maybe split event into 2 with Year 11 (am) with WBL routes and college routes, and Year 12 (pm) with HE routes
- Group Paramedics should be included with the University in future now that education has moved and it is the main route
- This event seems far too early in the school term. Most students were still getting used to being at college and not focussed on choosing a University. I feel most of them will come to the Worcester HE Fair so this seemed a bit excess to needs