

7 May 2020

# WIRRAL MET UPDATE



## Principal's Update

Welcome to the latest edition of our 'Lockdown update' and thanks to everyone who contributed by sharing your stories that are truly heart-warming. It is fantastic to see how innovative teams are being in embracing technology to provide new and exciting ways to support learning and provide business continuity. I am also in awe of the fantastic work being done by the safeguarding team, pastoral support mentors and ALS team that is touching so many lives and making such a difference to people at this difficult time. Thanks also to our business support teams who are working tremendously hard as our college business continues remotely, whether it is recruitment, payroll, systems support, MIS returns – thank you all so much!

As we wait to hear what our PM says about the gradual lifting of lockdown we know that it is likely that social distancing will remain part of our lives for months, if not years. This means that we must adapt our approaches and the extent to which new ways of working have been adopted by teams, I have no doubt that we will embrace these challenges in the weeks to come. You can be assured that I have been working with the senior team to start planning models to adapt to our new 'normal' and I look forward to develop these with you all, as well as working with our Trades Unions.

It remains very sad to watch the impact of Covid19 at the daily briefings and my thoughts are with all of those who have lost family and friends at this time. I am also mindful of the huge impact on industries such as Visitor Economy, Travel and others which are struggling to survive with tens of thousands of job losses that is tragic to see. Although our models of learning will need to adapt to the requirements of social distancing, there will never be a more important time for Further Education, as we will need to support the recovery of our economy and train and retrain people for new careers.

Thank you for your continued support and I hope that you enjoy the long weekend as we remember VE Day from 75 years ago, including those who lost their lives and those, like Captain Tom, who survived to tell their stories and continue to support our NHS through his fundraising at the grand age of 100! This edition also shows some of our own heroes who are making a difference helping others.

Warm wishes, stay safe and hope to see you soon.

Sue Higginson  
Principal and CEO



## Updates from curriculum teams across the College

### ESOL

We are so proud of our ESOL students, who continue to engage well and speak to their teachers at least once a week via WhatsApp. The one thing these students have in common is that they are constantly asking when they can come back to college! For our students without extended family in the UK, college life is their community and friendship groups.

Thanks for the lovely note from one of our students who wrote in with their thanks, saying: "The College is more than college, it was like a home for me; I learned more than language. I learned how to be with other people and how you can find work. The College is fantastic and helpful...I really enjoy study at this College with great students and teachers. The College is wonderful and makes you feel comfortable when you study there."

### Childcare & Early Years

Level 3 Early Years students took part in an extremely competitive online Kahoot! quiz which was about planning a safe environment for children. Student Jayme-Leigh won gold, Caitlin silver and Sophie bronze prizes – well done! Early Years student of the month is Zoe, who has shown true dedication to her course.

### Health & Social Care

Congratulations to student Lily, who has completed her level 1 qualification and is our student of the month. So proud of our student Ella (pictured) who has progressed to level 3 Health and Social Care. With a real passion for working in care, Ella has also been working in paid employment during the lockdown following a successful work placement, visiting people's homes across the Wirral often in a team of two, to provide palliative care and also to care for Covid19 patients.



*Ella is providing care to Covid-19 patients*

## Hospitality & Catering

Lots going on in lockdown and we bet parents are delighted to be at home with our budding chefs, as they practise their skills. Well done to our students of the month, for all their hard work during lockdown, who are: Abbie; Jacob; Olivia and Rebecca.

## Public Services

We are very proud of our student Nathan, a Level 3 Public Services Diploma student, who recently secured a job helping out with national shielding. This is a campaign set up by the Department for Work and Pensions so that vulnerable people who are self-isolating for 12 weeks can be contacted to talk through any concerns they may have.

Nathan has been speaking to vulnerable people and asking them if they need any help with food or medicine deliveries and he also asks them if they have people to talk to so they are not lonely during their period of isolation. If they need food or other help, Nathan contacts the local council on behalf of the vulnerable person and helps to sort out what they need. Nathan is doing this job as well as working at home on his final assignments – a true inspiration to others.

Students of the month for Public Services are Level 2 Uniformed Services student Marc and Level 3 Public Services student Mike, who have completed outstanding work.



*Student of the month for Public Services, Mike*

## Sport

Congratulations to Cameron, one of our BTEC Football Development students who ran 42Km and raised £1,100 for Arrowe Park Hospital – well done, Cameron!

Students of the month for Sport are personal trainer students Callum and Aaron, who have maintained good contact with their tutors, have produced good work and have been keen to learn as much as they can. Also, level 3 sports coaching student Andy, who has shown great tenacity in completing his exercise health and lifestyle units.

## Hair & Beauty

Tutors Jaki, Liz and Lynda have been doing some incredible work, developing their use of Microsoft Teams to support teaching and learning. Jaki has had five parent meetings which were all received with positive feedback and lots of humour. The meetings were very upbeat and the parents were very appreciative of being able to speak to Jaki and have agreed to be models for practical assessments to support the students. Liz and Lynda were able to answer lots of questions from students and found that the interaction eased some stress for many of them. Hairdressing student of the month is Jessica, in recognition of all of her hard work during lockdown.

## Progression to FE

Progression to FE student of the week is Ewan, who has worked exceptionally hard on his maths work, scoring 100% on a number of papers – well done, Ewan!

## Travel & Tourism

Congratulations to Travel & Tourism students of the month, for continuing to work at distinction level during lockdown, we are very proud of you Cait; Caitlin; Lloyd, Charlotte and Maddie who achieved distinction in her first task while working at home despite the difficulties of having to share a laptop with two others studying in her household – a fantastic achievement.

## Prep 4 Life

Tutor Henry explained how he started to teach online tutorials with Prep4Life students: “Whilst it was daunting at first, I have found that very quickly I have become confident in my new virtual classroom and many of my standard tutorial functions can be performed just as effectively using Microsoft Teams.

Henry says, “Whilst I can understand the prospect of teaching live on a new platform in front of a group of students (and their parents) is daunting; in my short experience I have found both students and parents to be very understanding and patient as I have been getting to grips with it. I have also found that they are very grateful that we are actively trying new and dynamic ways to engage them during this unusual time.”



*A Captain Tom drawing by a Prep 4 Life student, sent to our Facebook page*

## **Apprenticeships**

Big shout out from Trainer/Assessor Ann who is very proud of her Wirral Borough Council apprentices, some of whom have been redeployed helping to get PPE to care homes or are working on the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme getting food parcels and essential supplies to those in need on the Wirral.

## **Science**

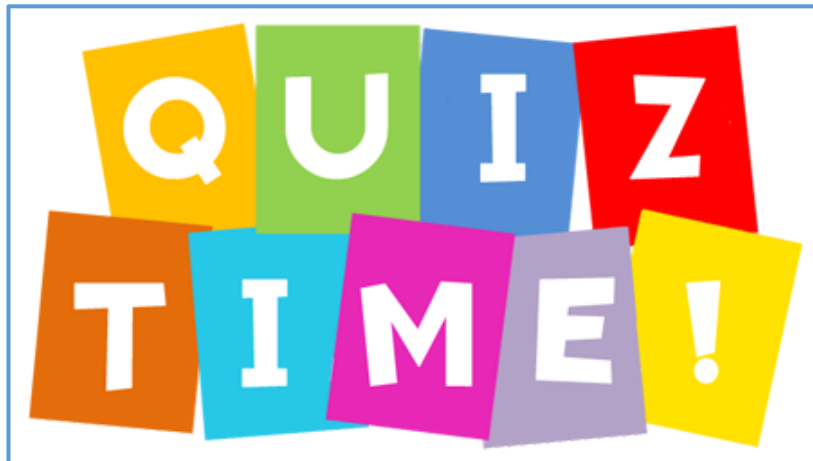
Science students are excelling during these difficult times, with Pre-Access student Kayleigh completing all her assignments and contacted her tutors for additional work as she felt it helped her to focus. Second year level 3 Apprentice Tracey, completed and submitted an entire BTEC unit in the period since we moved to this new way of working.

The Science team was thrilled to learn that second year level 3 student Sharna was invited to a remote interview with the University of Liverpool, the outcome of which was an offer for Radiography. Well done Sharna!

## **Electrical Installation**

Electrical Installation tutor Tony has been impressed with how his students have been enhancing their electrical installation skills with additional life skills – from cooking and baking to painting the garden fences for their mums. Some have also been learning German and finding time to support their community by doing the shopping for elderly neighbours. How's that for enrichment during the lockdown!

Third year electrical diploma student Thomas has been working at hospitals including the Countess of Chester Hospital and the two new hospitals set up to battle the virus in Bangor and Deeside, another truly inspirational story of how our students are supporting their communities during these difficult times.



Congratulations to first year Electrical Diploma student Josh and his family who took part in and won the Wirral Fun Quiz set by Tony to support family learning with his students.

## **Brickwork**

Brickwork student of the month Kai has successfully completed his Level 1 certificate and chosen to progress his career in the Royal Navy. His tutor says he has been an excellent student and he highly recommends Kai for his attendance, punctuality and maturity. We wish Kai the best of luck!

## Computing

The Computing team continues to have daily online meetings and are still working hard to ensure all students are engaged in learning making sure that they are coping well with studying from home. The team received some great feedback from student Moises who said: "You're all doing a great job, as good as you are when we are in College. Thanks for all the support and stay safe."

## Foundation Degree - Computer Science

Student of the month is Charlie, who passed his English level 2 Functional –congratulations!

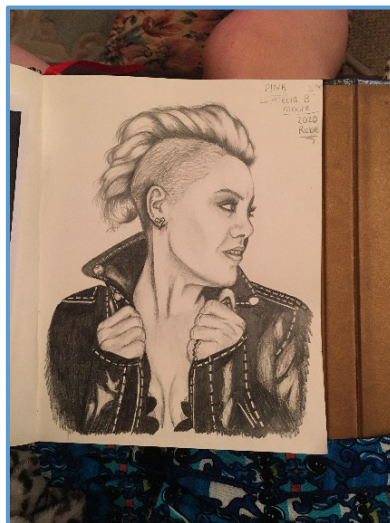
## Animal Management

The Animal Management team has also started using Microsoft Teams to run online lessons and this has been going well. Our animals are also doing well at their foster homes and our bearded dragons have been enjoying some raspberries.



*One of our bearded dragons is enjoying his foster home*

Feedback from students about their experience with Microsoft Teams has been really positive and they commented that they think this method of learning will continue to be beneficial to their studies. During regular contact with students, we have received feedback on how they are getting on, and our students have also gained additional skills during lockdown. One student Joe has been woodworking and made a table and Rebecca shared some of her art with us.



*A fantastic piece of artwork by Rebecca*

## **Pastoral Support Mentors**

Our team is providing fantastic support for students that is making such a difference to individuals and their families. One of our Pastoral Support Mentors stepped in to help a hospitality and catering student who didn't have access to WIFI at home and working with the bursary team, we purchased a Dongle for the student to enable him to access the internet and complete his college work in the safety of his own home.

One student told us how she is benefiting from significantly increased hours with her part-time job, but has still continued to work hard on completing and staying up to date with her College work. Another student, who was having a tough time prior to lockdown, has caught up with their College work and is now up to date with their studies, all thanks to the great encouragement and support provided by their Mentor.

## **Safeguarding**

Summer personal education planning is in full flow with the local authorities for students who have Child Looked After status. Deputy Safeguarding Manager, Jess will be in touch with tutors to discuss individual students who are part of this process. Contact with social workers and specialist agencies is ongoing, ensuring that we play our part in helping keep our most vulnerable students safe from significant harm.

Safeguarding processes are still very much in place and if anyone has any concerns about a student, please follow the procedure by documenting your concerns, before contacting Lorraine Jones. If Lorraine is not available, please contact Jess Raybould or another designated manager (Ste Bailey or any Assistant Principal, Campus Manager, Vice Principal).

# **Business Support teams**

## **Student Services**

Student Advisers have been busy dealing with online advice and guidance. We have launched a Live Chat facility, as part of our online support. Online applications continue to flow and we are keeping in touch with students who have applied for a place next year. The Admissions team is therefore very busy processing online applications, and our Student Finance team is working hard to process payments for free meals and bursary.

We understand that social distancing will become our new 'norm' and preparing for that our Admissions team is working with Marketing and MIS to develop our enrolment process to enable the process to be entirely online. This will be rolled out during the coming weeks and everyone involved will be trained in how this will work.

## **Marketing**

The Marketing team is working on a proposal to hold a Virtual Open Evening on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, to replace the planned 19+ Open Evening. Further details will follow in the next bulletin.

## HR

Even though we've all been in lockdown, recruitment of new members of Team Wirral Met has been continuing and we welcome the following staff to our team:



Lynsey Hockings, Work Experience Coordinator

Harry Mates, Lecturer – Sport

Isabel Kidd, Lecturer – 3D/Textiles

Stephen Bell – Trainer Assessor/Lecturer – Plumbing & Gas

Sharon McAlenan, Trainer Assessor/Lecturer – Business & Management Apprenticeships

Mark Jopson, College Manager, Engineering

Michelle Spencer, Learning Support Assistant, Carer

Laura Byrne, Lecturer – Prep 4 Life

Paula Crowder, Supported Internship Job Coach

Tara Thorpe, Cleaner

### **National Skills Day Reminder**

Calling all of our tutors! The National Careers Week team has set up National Skills Days on Wednesday 20th May 2020 which aims to be great fun, whilst building confidence and an important connection for everyone at this time.

It's a great chance for everyone to show off their skills from wherever they are. Please can you let your students know so that we can all get involved.