

A top-down view of a wooden desk. In the top left is a small potted plant with green grass-like leaves. To its right is a white computer keyboard. In the center are two black paper clips. In the bottom right is a white coffee cup on a saucer. In the bottom center is a black notebook with a white lined page and a black pen.

# Life as a Careers Leader

Yvonne Ashby, Head of Careers

Wootton Academy Trust

University of Huddersfield - PgDip  
Guidance (including QCG) completed  
in 2006

NVQ Level 4 Advice and Guidance  
completed in 2007

Various ILM Team  
Leadership Qualifications  
completed

CDI Level 6 Certificate in  
Careers Leadership  
completed in 2019







1<sup>st</sup> role - Adult guidance contract in Sheffield - including redundancy counselling, MIND and probation service work

2<sup>nd</sup> role - ESF Careers for the Future contract - high performing pupils in low performing state schools

3<sup>rd</sup> role - Wakefield College - Careers Adviser

4<sup>th</sup> role - City University, London - Project Careers Adviser across East London

5<sup>th</sup> role - University of Leicester - Widening Participation Coordinator

6<sup>th</sup> role - Wootton Academy Trust - Head of Careers





**WOOTTON**  
UPPER SCHOOL

Year 9-11

300 per year group

Predominantly GCSEs

Some limited alternative provision

Approx 96% Further Education (50-60% of these to Kimberley College)

Approx 3% apprenticeships

Approx 1% NEET



Began with a STEM specialism

350 per year group

Predominantly A Levels

Some BTECS (business, sport,  
media, graphics and Health &  
Social Care)

Approx 70% University & Gap  
Year

Approx 30% employment  
(including apprenticeships)

Ranked consistently high in the  
Sunday Times top performing  
Sixth Form Colleges in the UK -  
21<sup>st</sup> in 2022)





# The role

Wootton Academy Trust

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance  
(CEIAG) & Employer Engagement Coordinator



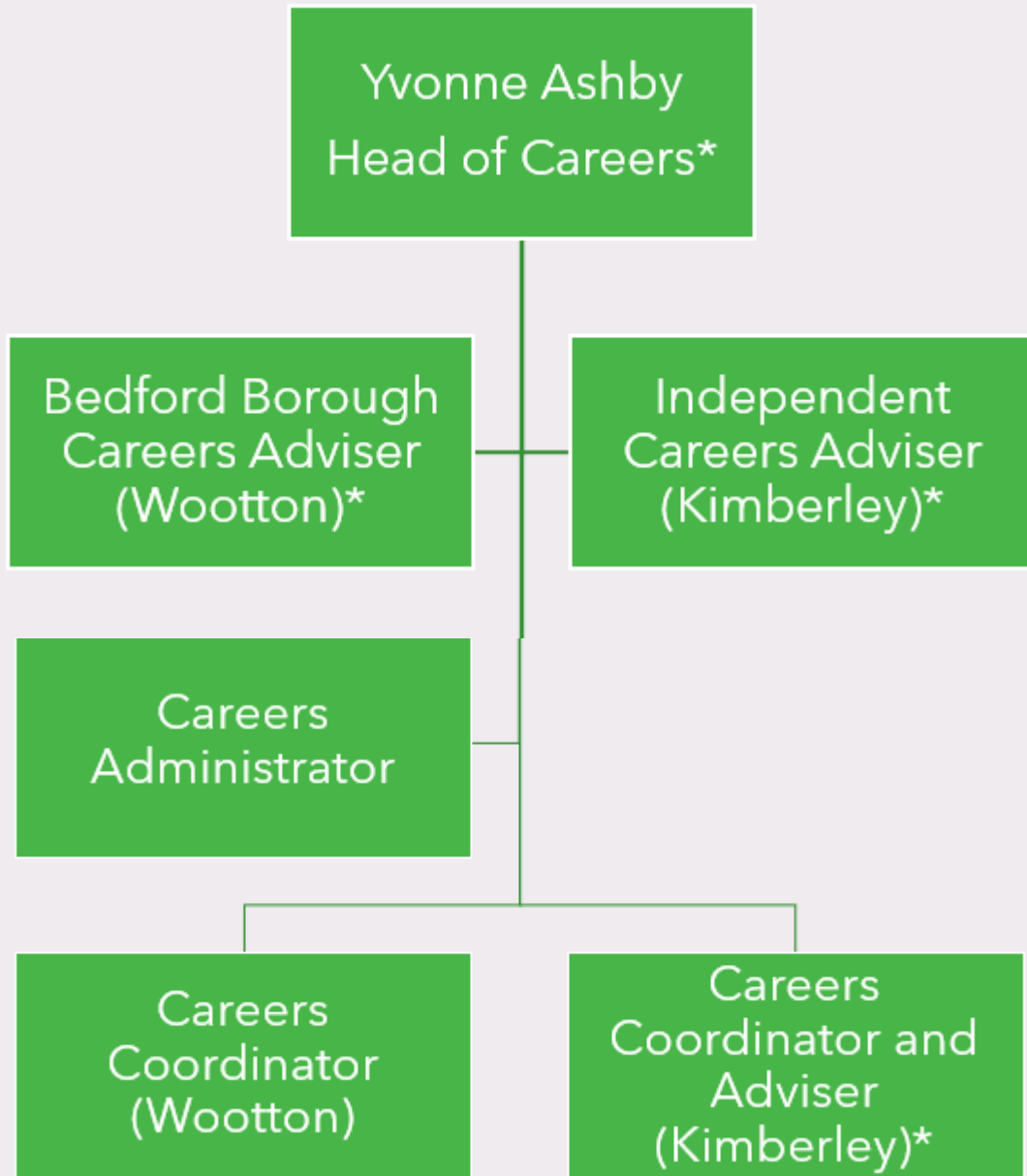
The characteristics of  
outstanding CEIAG provision  
and how I would develop and  
embed them across the  
Wootton Academy Trust

- Initially employed as CEIAG Coordinator (with the intention that a member of SLT would be named Careers Leader)
- Interview presentation set out a 2-year plan to meet all Gatsby Benchmarks and achieve the Quality in Careers Award
- Achieved this in January 2020
- Became an official middle leader and Head of Careers in March 2020

## The Characteristics of My Vision for Outstanding Provision

- ▶ Provision that aims to meet and go beyond the highest national and international benchmarks.
- ▶ That recognises the needs of all students no matter what their individual circumstances.
- ▶ That teachers, governors and parents are fully engaged in the development of careers provision and have full confidence in what we are doing.
- ▶ That commits to continual review and enhancement to ensure that the Wootton Academy Trust is always at the forefront of what is accepted to be best practice in this area.

# The team



- Initially just me and two bought in Careers Advisers
- Team grew due to me accumulating new responsibilities
- New hat - Connolly Foundation Coordinator
- New hat - UCAS and Early Entry Coordinator
- New hat - Raising Aspirations across Bedfordshire 6<sup>th</sup> Forms - Project Leader



# The Careers Leader Handbook

How to create an outstanding  
careers programme for your  
school or college

DAVID ANDREWS AND TRISTRAM HOOLEY

## Life as a Careers Leader

### The basics

- Overall responsibility for strategic leadership of Careers across the trust
- Leading on the design of the careers education programme
- Liaising with the trust board, 2 x governing bodies, 2 x senior leadership teams, and other staff
- Leading my careers team, delegation of tasks, developing them through CPD opportunities, motivating the team, taking on the big/complex issues from the team
- Key role in contributing to trust improvement plan and other strategic planning for the future of the school and college
- Working with external partners
- Sharing best practice
- Monitoring and Evaluation

+ lots of operational responsibilities

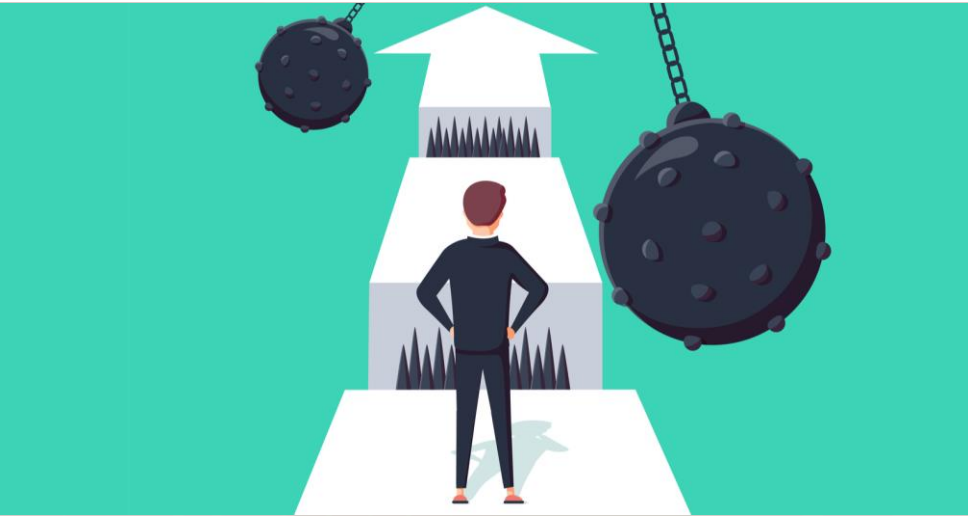




# What I enjoy

- We are the disrupters of education - consistently thinking of new things to do and new ways to do it, not sticking with the status quo
- The lightbulb moments (both the students and our own)
- When a student gets where they really wanted to get to, and thank you for your support, and you know you have been a key part of their journey
- The range of people I get to work with internally and externally (including alumni)
- The fellow 'careers geeks' I get to meet and share ideas, challenges and best practice with
- I sometimes sit back and think 'Wow, I really built all this' - not alone of course, but this was my plan and look at it go!
- How this role brings together all of my previous experience
- Autonomy and the trust that is placed in me
- My wonderful team!

# The challenges



- Isolation and weight of responsibility (before I built a team around me)
- Staff turnover and having to constantly re-educate staff about the importance of careers
- Having Line Managers who are not as well versed in careers
- Questioning whether you are doing enough (it NEVER feels like you are)
- Balance of running activities against the important monitoring and evaluation of activities
- Finding the time for the strategic side of the role when still so heavily involved in operational responsibilities
- TIME, TIME, TIME
- Multiple hats



# Importance of CPD

Latest news – CDI, The Week in Careers blog by Chris Webb (LinkedIn)

Local CPD/News – Careers Hub, SEMLEP, Careers Leader networking group x 2

Conferences and other bespoke training

Online networking – LinkedIn, Facebook Careers Leader Group / UCAS Advisers group





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2nd edition

## Hints and Tips

- Join careers leader networks immediately - support is crucial
- Make firm friends with key people internally asap - the data team taught me a lot!
- Take time to come up with the overall strategic view and plan BEFORE jumping into running activity
- Understand the wider issues in your setting - how can you support SLT to tackle these
- Prioritise - get the big stuff right first, then add new things
- What does success look like in your setting? Aim for that, compare yourself against your goals not what others are doing
- Celebrate EVERY win, big and small #winoftheweek
- Keep SLT and wider stakeholders informed (newsletters, half termly summary, twitter, LinkedIn) - always raise the profile of careers
- Keep fully up to date with the local post-16 offer (if you have Year 11) and local/national post-18 offer (if you have Year 13)
- Actually read and act on your evaluation data - don't just tick boxes