

# The ContinU Plus Academy



**2025 -  
2026**

**Education Brief  
- Vision, Ethos &  
Values**

## **Vision, Ethos & Values**

### **Background & Context for Establishing the ContinU Plus Academy (CPA) Alternative Provision Free School**

We have established the ContinU Plus Academy (CPA) in the Wyre Forest and Hagley districts of North East Worcestershire, based on the successful track record of the ContinU Trust in delivering high quality mainstream and Alternative Education provision. We already have extremely well established and highly productive relationships with our 7 partner secondary schools and Kidderminster College who were all former members of the ContinU Trust are developing Links with the Universities of Wolverhampton and Birmingham. Our wider network encompasses the Local Authority, local support services, Work Based Learning Providers, voluntary and community sector providers, regional colleges, out of area schools and employers. Our objective is to extend and improve existing Alternative Education - working with and not competing against existing provision, having already forged partnerships with students in the Dudley area.

At the ContinU Trust we are dedicated to and passionate about working with some of the most disadvantaged and disenfranchised young people and young adults in society. We support them to take control of their own lives, develop the range of academic, vocational and life skills required in today's complex world and to make the most of the opportunities available to them.

The CPA allows us to extend the depth and breadth of the provision to better meet the needs of young people and increase their educational outcomes and life chances. It allows us to make long term investments in improving the wellbeing of our students and further develop our academic and vocational offer for excluded students while meeting the evidenced demand and aspirations of parents/carers for quality Alternative Provision in our area.

## **Mission**

The vision of the ContinU Plus Academy reflects our commitment to working with young people who are excluded, or at risk of exclusion, from our partner schools and proactively to target post-16 destinations. In so doing:

- We support young people with multiple barriers to education and work; with health, behavioural, educational and psychological problems and young people from dysfunctional families who often lead chaotic lifestyles.
- We work directly with these young people, their families and our consortium of schools and engage support from our existing and comprehensive network of partners in education, training, health and the judicial system to support our students in becoming active citizens, exercising choices in their lives and taking a full part in society.
- We and other Alternative Provisions engage in research and good practice for supporting school behaviour strategies, developing bespoke vocational pathways and explore dynamic relationships with employers to reengage young people.

## **Principles**

Our distinctive approach to Alternative Provision is firmly based on addressing the personal, social, core and vocational skills of our students. We employ a personalised approach with agreed Individual Learning Plans for each young person. These use structured, supported activities to develop, deliver and accredit the range of academic, personal, social and employability skills required by young people to take control of their lives and make the transition back into mainstream education, further education, training or employment. It also delivers value for money by providing a specialised Alternative Provision service utilising a range of appropriate specialised staff and high quality, but relatively low cost premises.

We have developed our distinctive curriculum based on and supported by a large body of research.

Our aims lie at one with National AP targets, are as follows, and are to ensure:

- the right children are placed in AP: We want to support mainstream and special schools to create the school culture and behaviour management systems that support

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children to remain in or re-integrate into their schools, where that is in the best interests of the child and compatible with the interests of other children at that school.

We need commissioners who place children in AP for behavioural, health or other reasons to plan for how the placement will meet the child's needs and support their transition into a mainstream or special school, another medical placement or onto meaningful employment, education or training at post 16.

This planning and decision-making should involve parents and children.

- our children have good experiences of, and receive high quality education in, AP: AP should not simply be viewed as a provider of last resort. AP settings should enable children to make rapid personal, social, and educational progress and go on to attain qualifications or re-integrate back into mainstream or special schools. AP providers should provide an ambitious education that meets children's needs and prepares them for success in the next phase of their education.

Our AP provision is a Free school, with high aspirations and a highly trained and committed staff group.

- children achieve meaningful outcomes after leaving AP: The success of AP settings can be measured by how well prepared children are for the next stage of their lives. Schools, local authorities, AP settings, referring NHS teams, post-16 providers and employers should work together to ensure the routes out of AP are well-developed, so that children who leave AP settings can fulfil their potential as they grow up.

- AP is recognised as an integral part of the education system: The role of AP as an integral part of the education system should be respected and its performance should be developed through partnerships across the education system. AP should be an attractive place for teachers to train, work and develop. There must be sufficient high quality and specialist provision to meet the needs of compulsory school-age children, for as long as they need it.

- We are committed to the delivery of better, long-term outcomes for children and value for money for the taxpayer.

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This is typified by the report of the Audit Commission in July 2010: 'Against the Odds - Reengaging Young People in Education, Training or Employment'. The report was unequivocal in its findings that:

*"Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) at 16-18 have poorer life chances than their peers and are more likely to be a long term cost to the public purse."*

The report highlighted the fact that *'the 2008 NEET cohort will cost an estimated £13 billion in public finance costs and £22 billion in opportunity costs over their lifetimes'*.

National figures for 2009 showed 9.2 per cent (183,200) of young people aged 16-18 were NEET and that 16-25 approaching one million young people are NEET. This shows no real sign of diminishing significantly despite numerous Government initiatives, the report also highlighted the fact that young men who were NEET are three times more likely to suffer from depression and five times more likely to have a criminal record than their peers.

Latest figures (**NEET annual brief- 2020, Gov.uk**) show more than half of those young people NEET are economically inactive.

The unemployment rate increased for 16-24 year olds in the years following the 2008/2009 recession, peaking in 2011. This proportion had fallen and remained broadly stable until 2020 when it increased, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase in the proportion unemployed has been driven by those unemployed for 6 months or more, though short term unemployment has also increased.

Since 2014, more young people are NEET due to economic inactivity than due to being unemployed. In 2020 the proportion with main reason for inactivity being looking after family or home decreased by almost half. The main reason for inactivity being long term or temporarily sick has increased since 2011.

Using Gov.uk data, we see that although the proportion of the overall 16-24 population with a health condition has remained relatively stable in recent years, there is an increasing proportion of those 16-24 NEET reporting a health condition.

In 2020 those NEET were almost twice as likely to have a health problem as the overall 16-24 population (45.1% and 23.2% respectively).

Looking specifically at mental health conditions, the proportion of the 16-24 NEET population with such a condition has almost tripled from 7.7% in 2012 to 20.8% in 2020. The conditions reported include depression, bad nerves, anxiety, mental illness, or suffering from phobia, panics or other nervous disorders.

In drawing up conclusions for future actions the report included the following:

- Better targeting and collaboration can reduce lifetime cost and increase wellbeing;
- Early prevention through low-cost interventions can bring large savings. £4,000 of short-term support to a teenage mother can be repaid twenty times over through net lifetime tax contributions. The same successful intervention can reduce public service costs by nearly £200,000 over a lifetime;
- Financial payback from some interventions is visible at the age of 25 through reduced public finance costs. Payback for most interventions is in the medium term, when young people have been in employment for longer and have made tax and National Insurance contributions;
- Connexions services, schools and colleges, Job Centre Plus and other youth support services do not collaborate effectively. The result can be duplication, wasted effort and wasted money. The extent of this potential waste will vary locally;
- Through their strategic commissioning role, councils and their local partners should use their new responsibilities for commissioning 16-19 education to review and redesign services to achieve further reductions in NEET levels and reduce waste and duplication; make their response to the circumstances of the most sustained NEET groups a core part of the local 14-19 strategy and funding plans, commissioning individually tailored packages of support where required.

Our maximum capacity is 90 places (Full time equivalent), with an addition 10 post 16 places.

We are one of the few AP Free schools that has opened a post 16 Sixth form offer to better support effective and sustainable transitions post 16. As a school we are fundamentally committed to the long term well-being and social functionality of our pupils.

According to ***Forgotten Children-: alternative provision and the scandal of increasing exclusion 2018***; 94% of Year 11 pupils from a mainstream or special school go on to a sustained education or employment or training destination, 202 compared to 57% from alternative provision.

Our positive transition data has sat around the 90-100% mark for the last 6 years.

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Our principles are a firm commitment to delivering a high quality, personalised and skills based curriculum aimed at reengagement, reintegration in mainstream schooling where appropriate, or post 16, in meaningful and aspirational training, apprenticeships or employment including places in our sixth form. We will ensure this through a rigorous monitoring and evaluation programme of staff and students with effective targeting and performance management. We are committed to the application of innovative methods without detriment to long term structural and strategic aims.

**A copy of the Education Brief is published in its entirety on the CPA's website ([www.continuplus.org.uk](http://www.continuplus.org.uk)).**

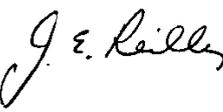
**Date Policy Created: June 2021**

**Member of Staff Responsible: Sara Devo (Headteacher)**

**Review Date: June 2026**

Signed: 

(Headteacher)

Signed: 

(Chair of Governors)