

BHASVIC

BRIGHTON HOVE AND SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

FLOURISH

How BHASVIC is breaking down
barriers to opportunity





About **BHASVIC**

Brighton, Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College (BHASVIC) is one of the country's top-performing non-selective state education providers, delivering A level and vocational qualifications to nearly 4,000 students. Our high-grade A level outcomes are 20% above the national average. Our students receive around 50 offers annually to study at Oxford and Cambridge – putting us in the top 3 providers nationally – with over half of these offers going to students from a “Widening Participation” background, referring to groups historically underrepresented in accessing university, including those from low-income backgrounds.

As part of our mission to **‘transform lives through learning’**, we are committed to helping deliver one of this government's key missions to **break down barriers to opportunity**. One way we do this is by offering certain students our own in-house mentoring programme we call **‘Flourish’**. We are seeking to raise additional funds to deliver this mentoring to the students who need it.



What is Flourish?

Flourish is a bespoke, in-house mentoring programme for identified BHASVIC students. It aims to reduce the impact of socio-economic disadvantage and 'close the gap' in educational outcomes for students who engage with the programme, so that their outcomes are similar to, if not better than, those of their peers.

What is the aim of Flourish?

Flourish aims to support students with low prior attainment who are also from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds or who have experienced other related barriers. Young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are frequently outperformed by their peers, where each phase of education sees a widening gap in outcomes. BHASVIC aims to reduce this trend and increase the academic achievement, future options and life chances for these students.

In particular, the project seeks to support these students':

- **Retention** (staying at college)
- **Achievement** (completing and gaining their qualifications)
- **Progress** (helping them attain better than predicted grades).

All other positive outcomes for students are also supported like securing strong destinations and engaging in wider enrichment programmes.



How are these aims achieved?

Flourish mentoring noticeably improves retention and value-added outcomes for mentees via an Academic mentoring programme which helps them to improve their study skills, which in turn helps them to 'learn how to learn' and to 'know what to do when they don't know what to do'. One of the beliefs of the programme is that one of the most effective ways to widen participation in higher education is to support successful academic enjoyment, confidence, and achievement.

A team of mentors meet individually with mentees across the academic year, providing hands-on support, advice, tools and resources. Regular mentoring sessions primarily have an academic and study skills focus, but also cover the student's aims and ambitions for the future, information, advice and guidance with next steps, and more holistic support according to the individual student's needs and preferences.

Flourish mentoring complements rather than replaces established college provision for the student (teacher, personal tutor, counsellor and other relevant support services).

Each mentor sees their mentee for a Flourish mentoring session twice per half term (i.e. approximately every three weeks). A one-to-one is normally 30 minutes long and will be supplemented by informal 'chat' communications, checking-in with mentees, offering support and providing motivational encouragement and messaging, so that the mentee feels like their mentor is available and has them in mind.



Content of Flourish Mentoring

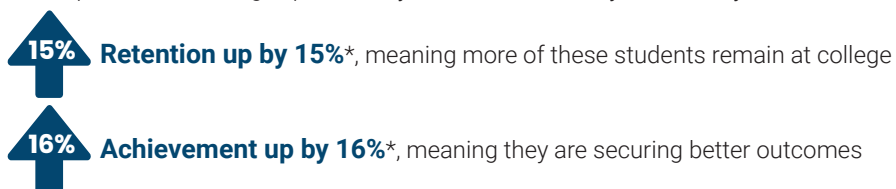
Our specialist mentors will allow the mentee to set the pace, the demands, and the actions of the programme for themselves. Therefore, the focus of the sessions is determined by the mentee. The mentor assesses which aspects of the programme have the greatest positive impact for the mentee, ranging from:

- **Study skills**
- **Vision and longer-term goals**
- **Support with next steps and Widening Participation**
- **Self-advocacy, confidence and belonging**

The Impact of Flourish Mentoring:

Over the four years it has operated, this programme has proven results. The outcomes for mentees, compared to those in scope who did not engage, is positive on all measures (pass rates, high grades, retention, value-added, attendance, progression).

The impact of mentoring is particularly notable in the first year of study:



**Based on those who engaged with Flourish vs those who declined mentoring.*

Most notable is the impact on the college's "Closing the Gap" strategy. Students from low-income backgrounds have gained higher results above their target grades than all other students at BHASVIC:

- **Flourish A Level 2025 = +58 L3VA*** (all students +53)
- **Flourish Applied General 2025 = +70 L3VA*** (all students +57)

This means that these students are now outperforming their peers in terms of progress made at BHASVIC.

**The government's Level 3 Value Added (L3VA) measure is a measure that compares the actual performance of students in school sixth forms and colleges at age 18 to the expected outcomes based on their prior attainment at age 16, helping assess the effectiveness of post-16 education providers. 0 is the average (i.e. no added value) and a positive score indicates students achieve higher than expected where +50 represents performing at half a grade better than expected.*

What do students say about Flourish?

“ Having someone to talk to, who is always on my side. Having someone in my corner has helped me to progress whilst feeling supported heard and seen. My mentor has been a wonderful pillar of safety kindness and encouragement all throughout BHASVIC and I appreciate her so much.”

“ The most helpful thing is being able to talk about anything. You can talk to your mentor about feelings, anxiety, home life, and other things. It helps me feel less stressed during college!”





The Need

We need help to fund this programme so it can reach all the students who want to engage with it. Funding is now essential if Flourish is to reach every student who needs it. We are proud of the dedication of our Mentors, but without your financial support we cannot meet the demand.

- Flourish was initially funded by the National Collaborative Outreach Programme, from 2019 to 2021. This funding ended.
- In 2022 to 2024, BHASVIC received £42k of income from the government relating to the "Covid catch-up fund". We used this money for mentoring students who were most 'left behind' and expanded our Flourish mentoring programme as the most effective method to meet the objectives of the catch-up fund.
- From 2024-25 BHASVIC has self-funded Flourish after the withdrawal of central government funding. The annual budget for Flourish is £15k which allows us to support 30 learners.
- We would love to see this provision grow but do not receive any additional funds to help these students.
- Each Flourish mentee costs £500 for one year of the programme and we are seeking external support for this from donations and charitable giving.
- £25k per year would allow us to mentor 50 students annually with the 4-year cost for this being £100k.
- Any external funding would need to be over a sustained period (e.g. 4 years, to see through two cohorts of student mentees).
- Donations would go directly to this project, with donors receiving an annual impact report
- The college can accept Gift Aid donations to make this money go further.

Opportunities for Partners

- Helping to build a local education legacy
- Hosting student work placements
- Employer engagement opportunities

Your support will directly expand Flourish's capacity, ensuring no student is left without the help they need. 100% of donations will go directly to the programme. If you are interested in helping these students "Flourish" please contact Alison Mansell (Governor) in the first instance on 07971 045151 or via a.mansell@bhasvic.ac.uk

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