

Empowering Ambition: How Thomas Rotherham College's Flexible Learning Centre transforms outcomes for learners



Thomas Rotherham College (TRC) is a forward-thinking further education provider committed to meeting the diverse needs of learners aged 16–25, particularly those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) who cannot access mainstream provision.

Through its Flexible Learning Centre, TRC offers a blend of academic, vocational and technical education, alongside tailored careers support and enrichment opportunities. The college works in partnership with local employers and education providers to address regional skills gaps, promote social justice, and enable progression to higher education, apprenticeships or employment. TRC's inclusive approach ensures minimal entry criteria and personalised pathways for every student.

Since 2020, Academy21 has been a trusted partner of Thomas Rotherham College's Flexible Learning Centre, working collaboratively to deliver a rigorous and inclusive academic and pastoral curriculum for students facing barriers to education. This provision, funded by the Local Authority, is designed for learners who are unable to access mainstream classroom-based education.

By integrating academic excellence with robust pastoral support, the Flexible Learning Centre enables young people to access aspirational pathways, gain vital qualifications, and take confident steps towards their chosen careers. Below, Emma Shakespeare, Vice Principal of TRC shares their experience of working with Academy21:

“*Our Flexible Learning Centre supports students with high needs and Education, Health and are Plans (EHCPs) who are unable to access traditional classroom-based learning. Through [Academy21's sister school King's InterHigh], we have been able to deliver a high-quality academic and pastoral curriculum tailored to these learners' individual circumstances.*

The platform enables students to study A Levels remotely, often over an extended period, ensuring they can progress at a pace that suits their needs. This flexibility has been transformative, allowing young people to achieve ambitious qualifications without the barriers of a conventional setting.

The pastoral support embedded within the programme ensures that students remain engaged, supported, and connected throughout their learning journeys.

This provision, funded directly by the Local Authority, has become an essential part of our inclusive offer. It empowers students who might otherwise be excluded from advanced study to access meaningful pathways and achieve their aspirations.

We recommend Academy 21 for any institution seeking a flexible, academic solution for learners with complex need

– Emma Shakespeare, Vice Principal