BDC IN THE COMMUNITY

SUMMER 2026 EDITION



Students Help Create Dagenham Landmark

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Barking & Dagenham College



A COLLEGE COMMUNITY TO BE PROUD OF!

As we look back on another successful year at Barking & Dagenham College, it is always a bittersweet moment as we prepare to say goodbye to students taking the next steps on their journeys.

We are proud to continue providing a welcoming, inclusive space where people from all backgrounds can learn, grow and achieve their ambitions.

Whether progressing to university, starting an apprenticeship or entering the world of work, our students continue to make us proud. Seeing them develop new skills, grow in confidence and realise their potential is one of the most rewarding aspects of college life.

Throughout this edition of *BDC in the Community*, you'll discover stories of fundraising, volunteering and collaboration that showcase the positive impact our college community continues to make.

CELEBRATING OUR PROJECT SEARCH GRADUATES





BDC student Nelson Ojo receives his award from Havering Mayor Maggie Themistocli.

Barking & Dagenham College celebrated the achievements of this year's Project SEARCH Supported Internship graduates at Queen's Hospital, marking the successful completion of a year of workplace learning and professional development.

Delivered in partnership with Project SEARCH and Queen's Hospital, the programme gives young adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) the skills, confidence and experience needed for paid employment. Through placements across a range of hospital departments, students developed valuable workplace skills while becoming trusted members of their teams.

Students, families, college staff, hospital colleagues, and the Mayors of Havering and Redbridge came together to celebrate the graduates' success and the partnership creating meaningful pathways into employment.

Congratulations to this year's graduates, and thank you to Queen's Hospital and Project SEARCH for their continued support.

LANDMARK COMMUNITY SCULPTURE UNVEILED AT DAGENHAM GREEN

Students from Barking & Dagenham College have helped create a lasting tribute to one of the borough's most important moments in history, playing a key role in the creation of The Dagenham Agates – a landmark public artwork unveiled at Dagenham Green.

Commissioned by Peabody and The Hill Group, and curated and produced by leading public art organisation UP Projects, The Dagenham Agates by Ruth Ewan honour the Ford Dagenham sewing machinists whose historic strike action in 1968 and 1984–85 paved the way for the Equal Pay Act 1970. Inspired by 'Fordite' – also known as 'Dagenham Agate' – the two striking sculptures feature colourful bands that represent each of the women who took part in the 1968 strike.







Working alongside local residents, our students helped craft the individual coloured layers that make up the artwork, contributing to a project that celebrates the courage and determination of the women whose actions changed workplace equality across the UK. In total, 187 local people took part in creating the sculptures – the same number of women who participated in the original strike.

*"It was exciting to work with students from BDC, many of whom were discovering the achievements of these incredible women for the first time. **Passing that knowledge on is vital - these stories must be remembered.**"*

RUTH EWAN, ARTIST

The sculptures stand close to the site of the original picket lines at Dagenham Green and form the first installation in a new heritage trail celebrating the area's manufacturing history and the fight for workers' rights. The development also honours the women of the strikes through streets named after key figures, including Rose Boland, Vera Sime, Gwen Davis and Eileen Pullen.

The project demonstrates the power of creativity, collaboration and community, giving our students the opportunity to contribute to a permanent public artwork while learning about a defining chapter in Barking and Dagenham's history.

At BDC, we are incredibly proud that our students have helped preserve the legacy of the Ford Dagenham sewing machinists. Their contribution ensures that the story of equality, resilience and collective action will continue to inspire future generations.



Students creating the layered "Fordite' design in the College art workshop.



BDC staff, students and Ruth Ewan at the unveiling of the sculpture at Dagenham Green.



WINNERS OF GREATER LONDON SKILLS COMPETITION 2026

Students from Barking & Dagenham College secured three gold medals and ten podium finishes to be crowned overall winners of the Greater London Skills Competition 2026, outperforming competitors from 15 colleges across the capital.

Supported by the Greater London Authority, in partnership with the Association of Colleges and endorsed by WorldSkills UK, the competition celebrates vocational excellence and helps prepare the workforce of tomorrow.

"We are beyond excited and incredibly proud of our students and staff. To achieve first place overall among 15 colleges is a fantastic accomplishment and a testament to the talent, dedication and teamwork across the college."

NATALIE DAVISON, PRINCIPAL & CEO

The college's success was confirmed at the awards ceremony at City Hall, where it claimed the overall title after winning medals across a wide range of disciplines.

Engineering student Alan Oleksiewicz won gold in the CAD Toolbox Challenge, demonstrating advanced CAD and precision engineering skills by designing and building a 3D sheet-metal toolbox. In the Digital Media Editing & Presentation Challenge, Kayleigh-Jo Cullings, Bradley Curle and Abidemi Talabi took first place after producing a three-minute film celebrating International Women's Day. Hairdressing student Yaykly Valencia also claimed gold for creating a bridal up-style, judged on creativity, technique and finish.

Barking & Dagenham College also hosted two competitions during the event: a science challenge featuring practical laboratory tasks and a foundation competition for learners with special educational needs, where participants created spring flower displays using paper and textiles.

In total, the college secured ten medal-winning positions across the competition programme, including three golds, reinforcing its reputation as one of London's leading further education colleges.



BDC student Yaykly Valencia receives her award for Hair - Creative Talent.



BDC Principal & CEO Natalie Davison receives the Overall College Champion Award from Mary Vine-Morris MBE, Area Director for London at the Association of Colleges.

RUSH GREEN SCHOOL SPORTS DAY

We were delighted to welcome Rush Green Primary School for its annual Sports Day, with our Sport & Protective Services students leading activities and helping to organise the event from start to finish.

Their professionalism, enthusiasm and willingness to support the young participants were a credit to the College, helping to create a fun and engaging day for everyone involved.







NETWORKING BREAKFAST

We were proud to host our most recent networking event, delivered in partnership with the Barking & Dagenham Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The session brought together professionals from business, industry and education to explore how we can work collaboratively to create opportunities in our local community.

If you are a local business and would like to attend our next networking event in September, please contact:

skillsandpartnershipsteam@bdc.ac.uk

Whether you're looking to expand your network, explore collaboration opportunities, or simply stay connected with the local business community, we'd love for you to join us.

MEDIA STUDENTS QUIZ DEPUTY LEADER CLLR DOMINIC TWOMEY





Cllr Dominic Twomey took part in an inspiring and highly interactive Q&A session with Media students.

The visit formed part of the College's commitment to giving students meaningful opportunities to engage with local leaders, explore issues shaping their community, and develop real-world professional skills.

Over the course of the session, students asked thoughtful and challenging questions on a range of topics, including crime, community safety, and future opportunities for young people across the Borough.

The event also doubled as an exceptional hands-on learning experience. Second-year students took full responsibility for the technical production, running a complete multi-camera recording of the session as part of their practical training in live broadcast and studio operations. Meanwhile, first-year students formed the live audience and led the Q&A, gaining valuable experience in interviewing, communication, and on-camera presentation.

Cllr Twomey's openness and willingness to engage in discussion made a strong impression on the students and encouraged them to explore the issues that matter most.

His insights into local policy, youth opportunities, and the importance of civic participation offered the students a unique perspective on how local government works, how decisions are made and how young people can play an active role in shaping their community.

The session also showcased the College's strong emphasis on practical, industry-focused learning, giving students the chance to apply their skills in a real production environment.

By combining political engagement with real production experience, the session highlighted the value of giving students opportunities that extend beyond the classroom and will help equip them with the confidence, skills, and understanding they need to succeed in both their studies and future careers.

HORIZONS TEA PARTY

Our Horizons learners from our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) department recently celebrated the completion of their work experience placement with a special tea party and garden showcase at Rainham Hall.

Over several weeks, they developed their skills through hands-on gardening activities, helping to maintain and enhance the outdoor spaces.

The event gave learners the opportunity to reflect on their achievements, tour the hall and gardens, and showcase their work. Experiences like these build confidence, develop employability skills and provide valuable real-world experience, and we are incredibly proud of everything they have achieved.



STUDENTS VISIT MET POLICE COUNTER TERRORISM UNIT

The visit gave students a first-hand look at the advanced technologies, methods and precision required in high-level search operations.

Throughout the day, they were introduced to specialist equipment used to detect and prevent potential threats, observed demonstrations of technical search tools, and learned how cutting-edge technology supports counter-terrorism efforts.

Students also spoke directly with professionals, gaining valuable insight into the skills, teamwork and decision-making required in this area of policing.

The visit strengthened links to classroom learning. Gwen Edwards, Sport & Protective Services Curriculum Manager at the College, explained:

"The students had a fantastic opportunity to see first-hand what the Search Department does and to ask direct questions. This experience links closely with their Equality & Diversity unit, particularly in understanding the impact of place to protect the public."

The day provided an inspiring insight into the vital role of counter-terrorism operations and the wide range of career pathways within the protective services sector.

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BDC FITNESS CENTRE



OPENING TIMES

Mon - Thurs: 7:30am - 8:45pm

Friday: 7:30am - 8pm

GYM MEMBERSHIP

Pay as you go: £5/session (£4 students)

Monthly: £15 (£12.50 NHS/ Emergency Services & 60+)

Annual: £150



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START SEPTEMBER

Barking & Dagenham College



We offer a wide range of courses for school leavers and adults. Full-time, part-time and short courses are available, as well as Apprenticeships. Term starts from 1 September 2026.

The earlier you enrol, the more chance you have of securing a place on your chosen course.

ENROLMENT DATES

16-18 ENROLMENT

Thursday 20 August:	2pm - 6pm
Friday 21 August:	12pm - 2pm

ADULTS 19+

Wednesday 19 August:	10am - 4pm

OPEN ENROLMENT (ALL AGES)

Saturday 22 August:	10am - 2pm
Monday 24 August:	10am - 6pm
Tuesday 25 August:	10am - 4pm
Wednesday 26 August:	10am - 6pm
Thursday 27 August:	10am - 4pm
Friday 28 August:	10am - 2pm

SCAN HERE TO BOOK YOUR ENROLMENT SLOT!