

2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT

INSPIRING
CHOICES



**inspiring
choices**

York & North Yorkshire



OfS Uni Connect
Programme

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----------|-------|---|
| <u>3</u> | ..... | Introduction |
| <u>4</u> | ..... | What is Inspiring choices? |
| <u>5</u> | ..... | Partners |
| <u>6</u> | ..... | Programme Monitoring (HEAT) |
| <u>7</u> | ..... | Progression Framework – NERUPI, CDI, Gatsby |
| <u>9</u> | ..... | 2021/22 Overview |
| <u>10</u> | ..... | Research |
| <u>10</u> | ..... | • FE Segmentation Study |
| <u>12</u> | ..... | • Research into the ‘Attainment Raising’ context based on needs and experiences in schools in West Yorkshire, York, and North Yorkshire |
| <u>14</u> | ..... | Programme Evaluation |
| <u>14</u> | ..... | Package Offer |
| <u>21</u> | ..... | Adult Learners |
| <u>26</u> | ..... | Aspire Week |
| <u>30</u> | ..... | Film Project |
| <u>31</u> | ..... | Flood a School |
| <u>32</u> | ..... | Grow Programme |
| <u>35</u> | ..... | Third-Party Delivery |
| <u>35</u> | ..... | Bespoke and Third-Party Funding |
| <u>40</u> | ..... | The Brilliant Club |
| <u>41</u> | ..... | MyTutor |
| <u>44</u> | ..... | Project Dare |
| <u>45</u> | ..... | “People like me” – STEM for Girls Workshop |
| <u>47</u> | ..... | STEM Conference |

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2021-22 which outlines the key projects and activities that were delivered over the last academic year.

The first thing to note is our new branding which was launched in August 2022. After stakeholder consultation FutureHY has now become the Inspiring Choices Programme.

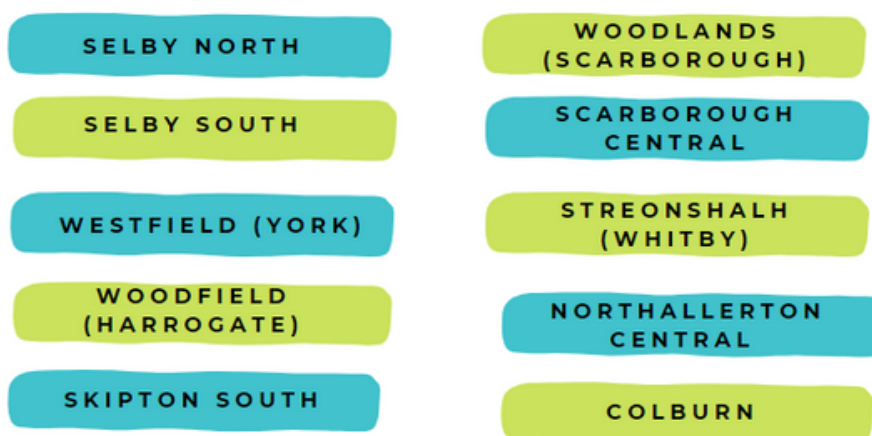
I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge all the hard work and support that we have received from our partners across York and North Yorkshire in delivery of the programme.



WHAT IS INSPIRING CHOICES?

Inspiring Choices is part of the Office for Students Uni Connect Programme. Running since 2017, our aim is to support young people and adults who live in York and North Yorkshire to make well-informed decisions about their future education.

Our work is particularly focused on geographic areas in York and North Yorkshire where participation in higher education is low overall and lower than expected given local GCSE results. Our outreach activity is primarily focused in 10 target wards:



In addition to working with target schools, we are also continuing to support discrete learners' groups such as Care Experienced young people, young people from the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller community, military service children, and adult learners.





OUR PARTNERS

NCS Trust

York Cares

NYBEP

LEP/Careers Enterprise Hub

Askham Bryan College

Craven College

Scarborough TEC

Harrogate College

York College

Selby College

City of York Council

North Yorkshire County Council

University of York

York St John University

CU Scarborough

PROGRAMME MONITORING (HEAT)

As a condition of Uni Connect funding, the Office for Students (OfS) require partnerships to track all learners engaged with their activity. This includes learners who live in both target and non-target wards. We are required to use an OfS-approved tracking service; Inspiring Choices use the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT). The HEAT service was developed by the sector to evaluate the efficacy of widening participation outreach teams.

We have both Data Sharing and Service Level Agreements in place with our schools and colleges which detail how we will collect this data to enable the required tracking. Participants are issued with our Privacy Notice so they understand how their personal data is being used. The tracking data enables us to understand how participation in Inspiring Choices activity impacts progression to higher education and is an essential part of evidencing the impact of Uni Connect.





NERUPI¹

All Inspiring Choices activity is carefully mapped against our progression framework, which sets out key outcomes for outreach activity at each educational stage. Inspiring Choices are part of the NERUPI network. The Network for Evaluation and Researching University Participation Interventions enables members to plan, develop and evaluate our programmes and activities. Using a praxis approach (objectives based on theory and practice) it provides a sound basis for improving practice in teams across the student lifecycle from outreach to student success to graduate progression.

Our framework is based on five key strands, which focus on enabling the learner to:

CHOOSE: Develop young people's capacity to navigate Higher Education sector and make informed choices

KNOW: Develop young people's knowledge and awareness of the benefits of higher education

BECOME: Develop young people's confidence and resilience to negotiate the challenges of university life

PRACTISE: Develop young people's study skills and capacity for academic attainment

UNDERSTAND: Develop young people's understanding by contextualising subject knowledge

We use a variety of methods to evaluate the Inspiring Choices programme and draw on evidence from learners, teachers, parents, outreach practitioners, plus other stakeholders. Our programme of activity is reviewed regularly as a result of this evidence, alongside the latest local and national research findings, to ensure what we offer meets the needs of all learners we engage with.



KNOW



CHOOSE



BECOME



PRACTISE



UNDERSTAND

¹NERUPI (2022) <https://www.nerupi.co.uk/>

Alongside our progression framework we have also mapped the CDI Framework and the Gatsby Benchmarks against our activities. Both are nationally recognised frameworks for good careers guidance.

CDI Framework²

- 1. Grow throughout life**
- 2. Explore possibilities**
- 3. Manage career**
- 4. Create opportunities**
- 5. Balance life and work**
- 6. See the big picture**

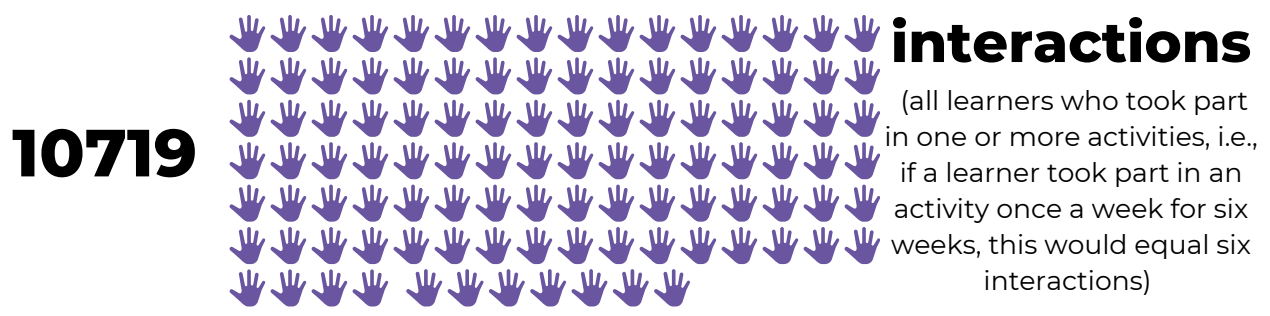
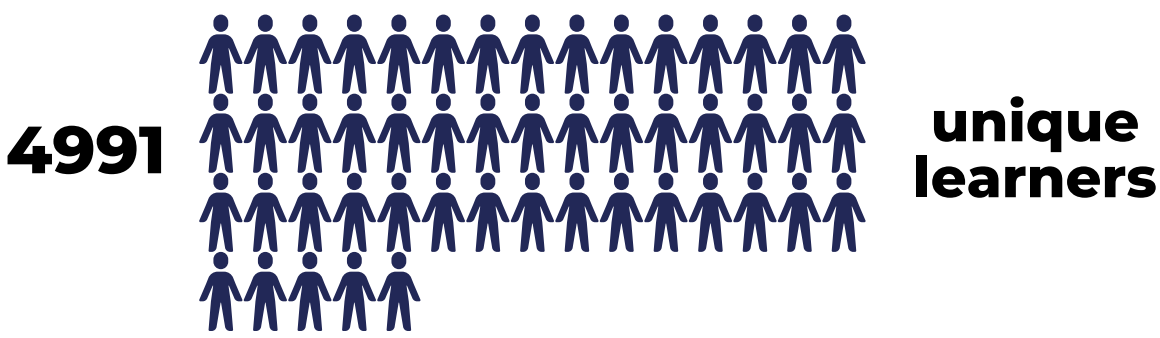
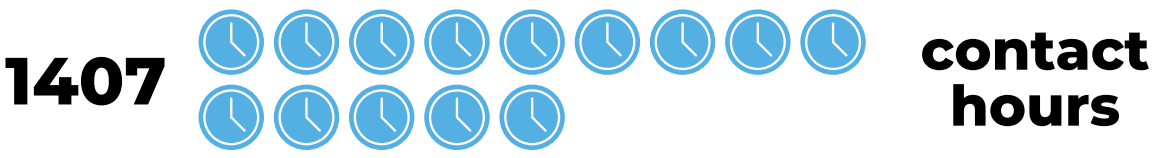
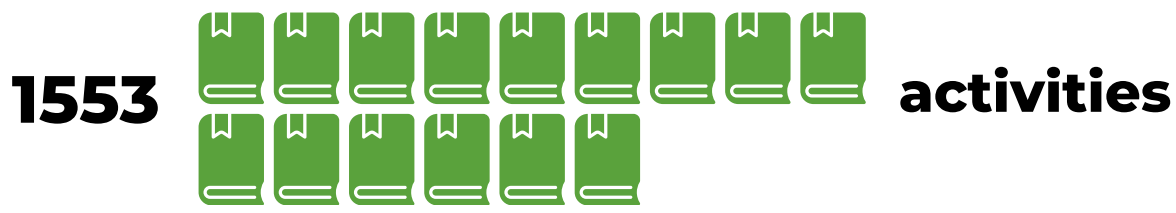
Gatsby Benchmarks

- 1. A stable careers programme**³
- 2. Learning from carer and labour market information**
- 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil**
- 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers**
- 5. Encounters with employers and employees**
- 6. Experience of workplaces**
- 7. Encounters with further and higher education**
- 8. Personal Guidance**

² CDI (2020) Launching the new career development framework <https://www.thecdi.net/New-Career-Development-Framework>

³ Holman (2018) Good Career Guidance final-0099-gcg-college-booklet-a5-4pp-rgb-aw1.pdf (gatsby.org.uk)

2021/22 OVERVIEW

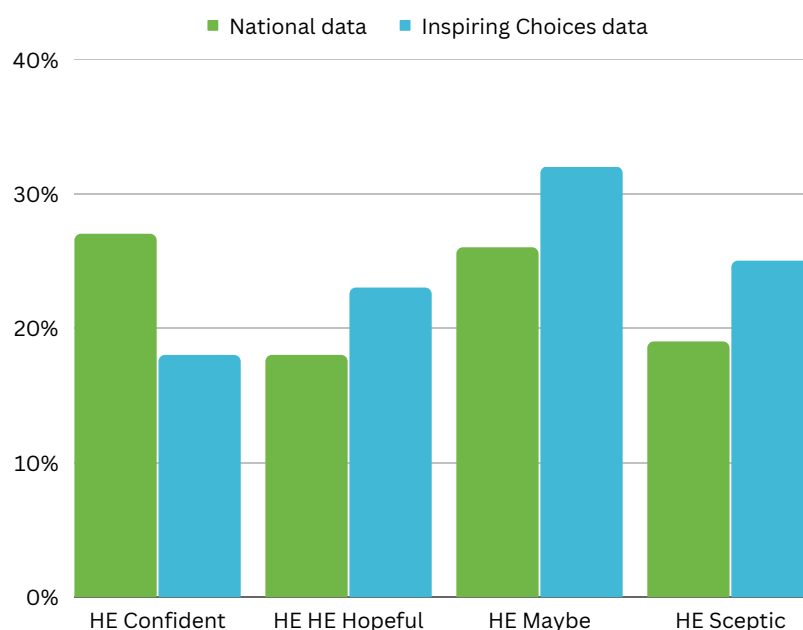


FE Segmentation Study

Inspiring Choices and other Uni Connect partnerships commissioned Cosmos to undertake an FE segmentation study. Segmentation is a quantitative method that identifies distinct segments within a population based on shared characteristics around relevant variables.⁴ Cosmos' research suggested that FE students are generally highly motivated to succeed and confident about their abilities. However, not all are convinced that HE is the right path for them.

In the national data, Cosmos analysed over 30,000 surveys and identified four segments of FE students. The first segment was HE Confident, this accounted for 27% of FE students. These students are highly confident and knowledgeable about HE and are on track to study at HE. The next segment was HE Hopeful and accounted for 18% of FE students. These students are quite confident about wanting to study at HE but are lacking knowledge. The next segment was HE Maybe and accounted for 26% of FE students. These students have poor knowledge about HE and need reassurance whether HE is for them. Finally, HE Sceptics accounted for 19% of FE students. These students were lacking in motivation and HE knowledge (compared to the other segments) and were fairly convinced that HE is not for them.

The distribution of these segments within Inspiring Choices' is slightly different to the national picture. The HE Confident proportion is significantly lower than the national figure at 18%.⁵ The other proportions are larger than the national figures but not significantly different. HE Hopeful accounts for 23%. The greatest proportion of students fall into the HE Maybe segment with 32%. And finally, HE Sceptics account for 25% of Inspiring Choices' FE students.



4 Cosmos (2022) National FE Student Segmentation 2021/2022: Cosmos Engagement Report. Cosmos Ltd.

5 Cosmos (2022) Inspiring Choices FE Segmentation Study 2021/2022. Cosmos Ltd.

The research undertaken by Cosmos can help Inspiring Choices to target our interventions to the areas that the students need most. For example, compared to FE students nationwide Inspiring Choices' FE students' knowledge about specific aspects of HE is low. The areas that are particularly lacking are: how to apply for HE, financial support available, where to live while studying and the types of courses available. These areas are covered in our package offers, so it is important that we encourage colleges and sixth forms to consider participating in the interventions.

There also seems to be a gap in the knowledge around apprenticeships and a strong appetite for learning about the full range of options available post FE studies with guidance on which would be the most suitable for individual students. It is important that this advice is balanced and unbiased.

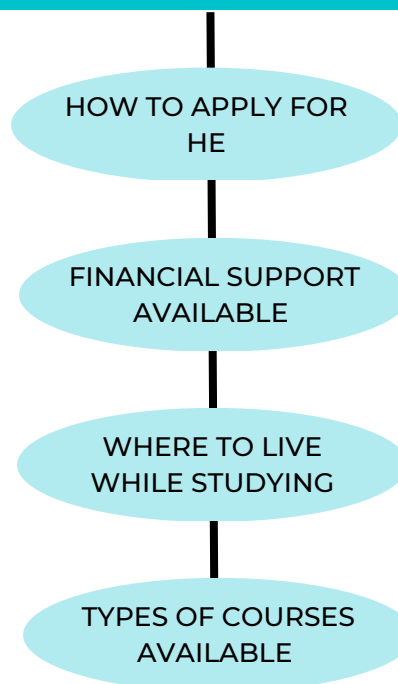
Students would also like to see more from their institutions in terms of help with gaining work experience/ securing internships in subjects that the students are interested in.

Finally, similar to the national picture, students find one-to-one activities and external support more helpful than group activities and activities provided by their sixth form/college. However, all support types are appreciated and considered helpful and there is an overall enthusiasm for a variety of activity types. Students welcome more support in general delivered more proactively rather than them having to seek out the support they need. Inspiring Choices will consider all the findings from Cosmos' research and implement their work in future interventions.

Cosmos findings

- Gap of knowledge around apprenticeships and options available post FE studies
- Students want help gaining work experience/ securing internships
- While all support types can be helpful, students found one-to-one activities and external support most helpful

Areas where Inspiring Choices' FE students knowledge is lacking compared to nationally:

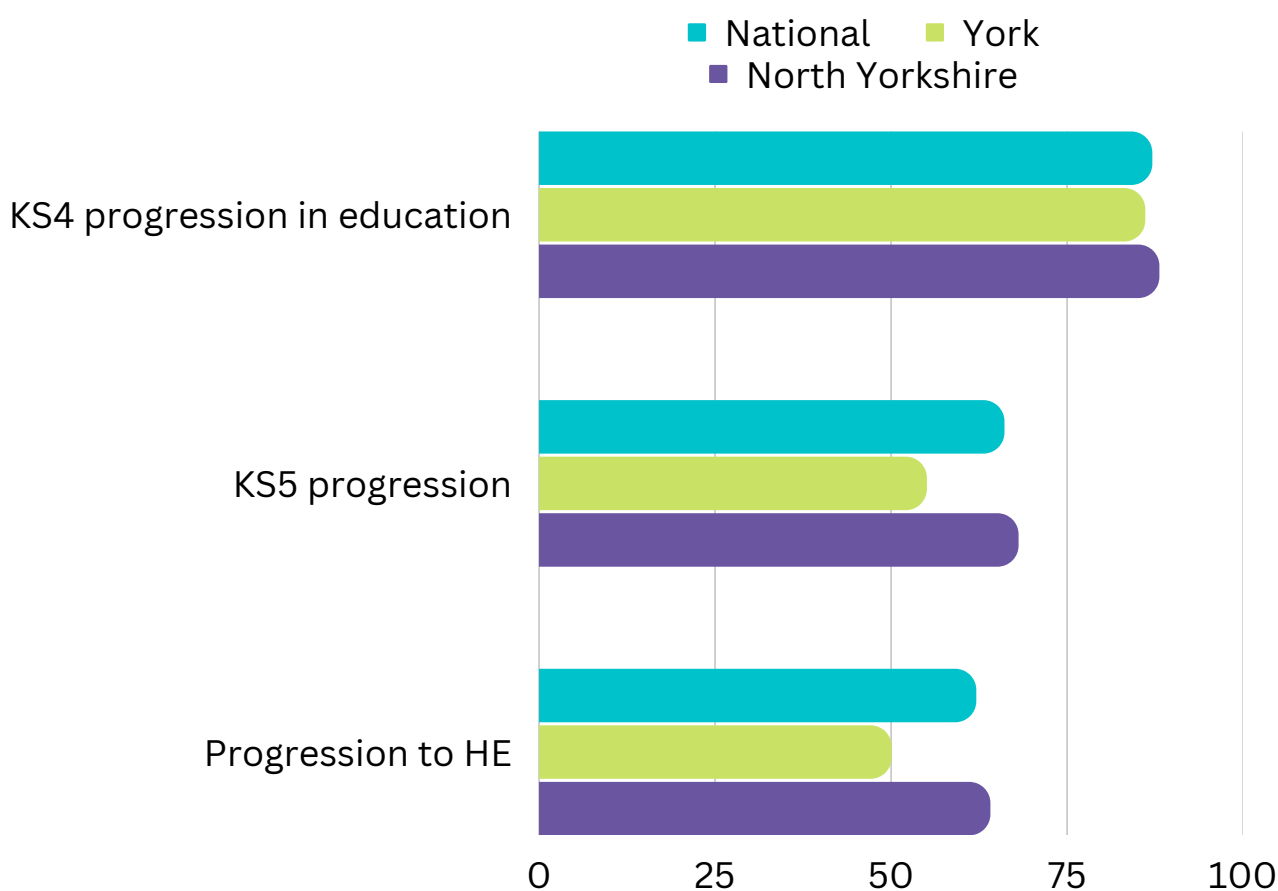


‘Attainment Raising’

Research into the ‘Attainment Raising’ context based on needs and experiences in schools in West Yorkshire, York, and North Yorkshire

Applied Inspiration were commissioned by Inspiring Choices and Go Higher West Yorkshire to deliver research into the context of raising attainment based on the needs and experiences of schools in West Yorkshire, York and North Yorkshire.

Using data from National Statistics, Applied Inspiration analysed progression and attainment data for key stages 4 and 5. In the most recent figures (2020/21), the national average for learners staying in education or employment for at least two terms after key stage 4 was 94%. In North Yorkshire and York, it was slightly higher at 95%. To stay specifically in education, the national figure was 87% with York and North Yorkshire being close by (86% and 88% respectively). For key stage 5, the rate of progression for York (55%) was lower than the national average (66%) whereas North Yorkshire was slightly higher (68%). York was also below the national average (62%) for progression specifically into Higher Education with only 50%. However North Yorkshire was slightly higher than average with 64%.⁶

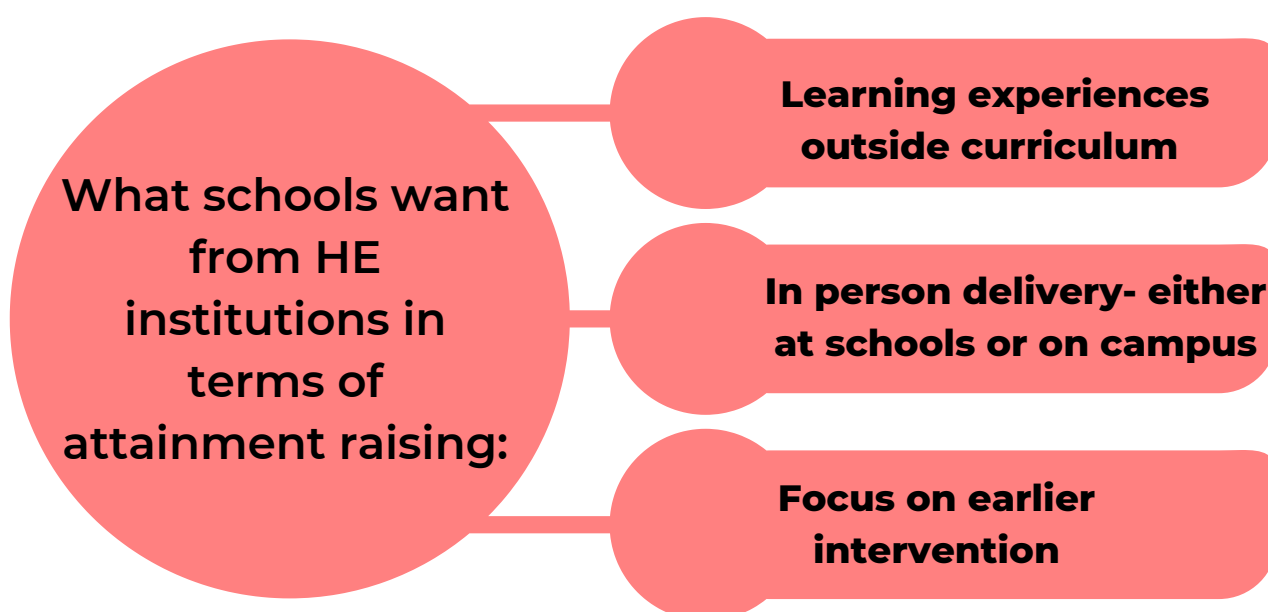


⁶ Applied Inspiration Research and Evaluation Unit (2022) Research into the ‘Attainment Raising’ context based on needs and experiences in schools in West Yorkshire, York and North Yorkshire

In terms of attainment, the most recent figures available were from the academic year 2018/19. Two measures were selected for comparison purposes, Attainment 8 and Progress 8. The Attainment 8 score for both York (51.4) and North Yorkshire (48.7) were above the national average of 46.7. However, the disparity between the top and bottom schools is huge with York having a 20-point difference and North Yorkshire having a 39-point difference. Most of our target schools fall below the national average. Multi-Academy Trusts are also not included in this data. In terms of Progress 8, our target schools are again mostly in the bottom half of the table with negative scores or making little progress.

MOST OF OUR TARGET SCHOOLS FALL BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN TERMS OF ATTAINMENT 8 AND PROGRESS 8.

Applied Inspiration conducted a survey of education providers and interviews with school and educational leaders. Schools are not asking HE providers to influence attainment directly by delivering the curriculum but would prefer them to provide learning experiences outside of the curriculum that may motivate learners with their studies. Schools would like the activities to be in person and either at the school or on campus. HE providers may need to engage earlier than accustomed to as key stage 3 and 4 were identified as particular hotspots. However, this also raises a concern that HE providers, specifically academic tutors, may lack the right communication skills to engage with such young people. Finally, it was further pointed out that there was a clear role for a broker such as Uni Connect to be able to bridge gaps in understanding, vision, and ways of working.



PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Package Offer

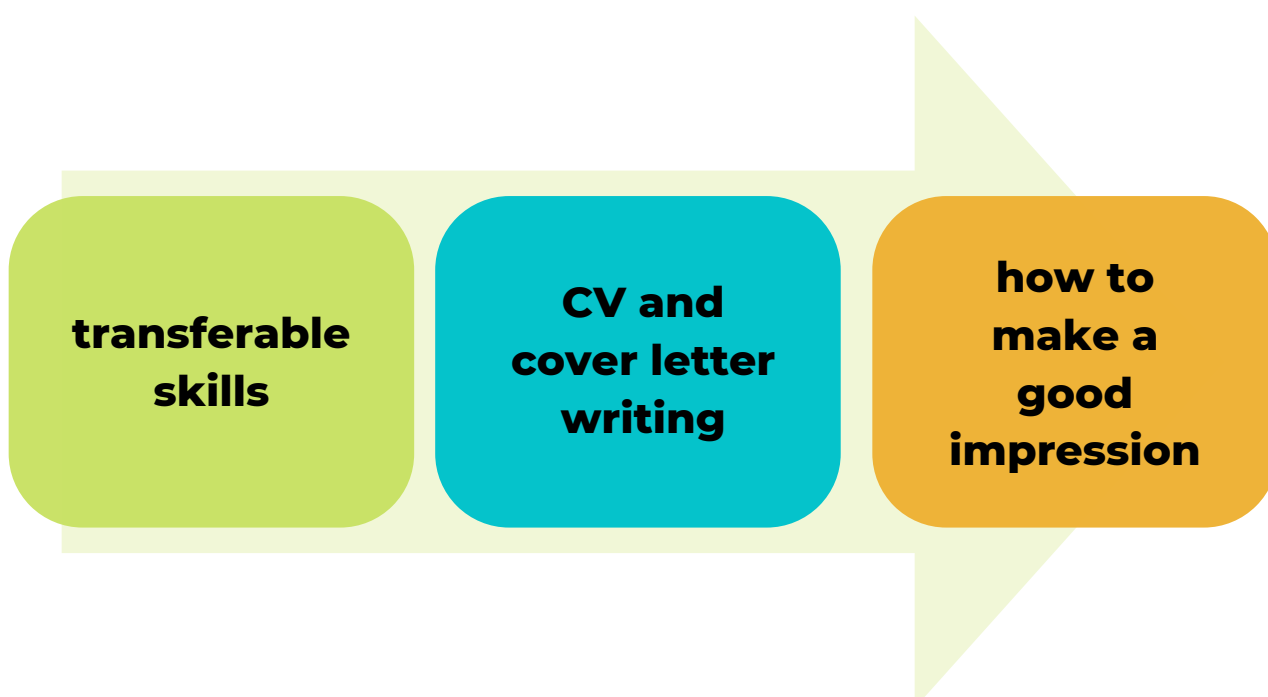
In 2021/22 we introduced our packages offer which were designed so that a learner would receive three or more interventions over the academic year. As part of this provision, we offered eight packages, with some packages available to all schools and colleges and some packages more targeted to their particular stage of educational needs.

Our packages included:



Employability

In a competitive job market, it is important to know what transferable skills are needed to be 'employable.' In our employability package learners take part in a series of workshops designed to boost their employability to set them off to a good start in the world of work. The package includes three workshops on i) transferable skills, ii) CV and cover letter writing and iii) how to make a good impression. The package also includes two optional activities, CV drop ins/follow up meetings and mock interviews delivered by the Inspiring Choices team. This package covers the NERUPI outcomes of Become and Practise. Our Employability package was evaluated on 101 learners from two schools with a post event survey. Our packages included:



BECOME



PRACTISE

Table 1. Percentage scores for Employability

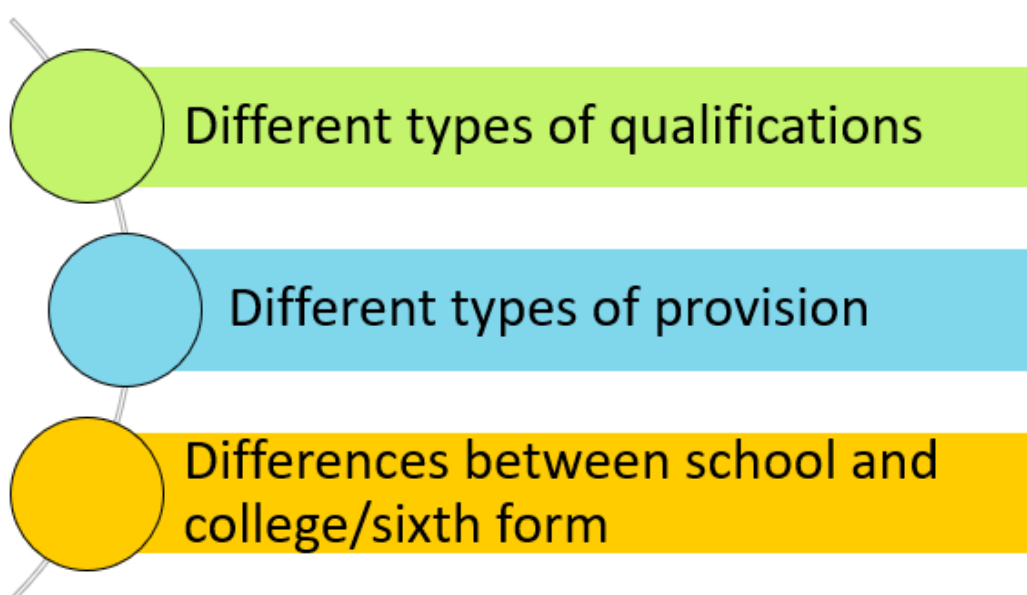
| Question | Extremely unlikely | Quite unlikely | Neither likely or unlikely | Quite likely | Extremely likely |
|---|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| How likely are you to apply to Higher Education? | 5.1 | 7.1 | 18.4 | 38.8 | 30.6 |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| I am good at communicating and getting my ideas across | 2.0 | 9.1 | 16.2 | 62.6 | 10.1 |
| I have a good understanding of what critical thinking skills are and why they are important | 0.0 | 5.1 | 20.2 | 62.6 | 12.1 |
| I work well with others on group projects | 1.0 | 9.1 | 14.1 | 58.6 | 17.2 |
| I feel confident in presenting myself well in applications and interviews | 2.1 | 12.4 | 40.2 | 33.0 | 12.4 |
| I have the ability to organise and take responsibility | 0.0 | 2.0 | 22.4 | 53.1 | 22.4 |
| I could make a successful application to university/ higher education | 2.0 | 4.0 | 30.3 | 54.5 | 9.1 |
| I have the academic ability to succeed at university/ higher education | 3.0 | 8.1 | 36.4 | 37.4 | 15.2 |

The percentages in Table 1. suggest that most learners felt positive at the end of their employability sessions. In particular, learners were confident they could work well with others with 75.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement and also their organisation skills and taking responsibility with 75.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

The learners thought the most useful part of the workshops was the section around interviews, they found the focus on how to present themselves and how to make a good impression particularly helpful. When asked how we could improve the sessions the learners suggested including more activities to make it more interactive and to make the sessions longer so they had time to complete the activities.

Your Post-16 Options

Your Post-16 Options package explores a student's options beyond their GCSEs. The package is for learners in Year-10 or 11 and covers the different types of qualifications, the different types of provision, and the differences between school and college/sixth form. This package includes two workshops and a visit to a FE campus. The package covers the NERUPI outcomes of Know, Choose, Become, Practise and Understand. Our Your Post-16 Options package was evaluated by 63 learners from one school with a post-event survey.



KNOW



CHOOSE



BECOME



PRACTISE



UNDERSTAND

Table 2. Percentage score for Your Post-16 Options

| Question | Extremely unlikely | Quite unlikely | Neither likely or unlikely | Quite likely | Extremely likely |
|---|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| How likely are you to apply to Higher Education? | 1.6 | 3.1 | 36.5 | 44.4 | 14.3 |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| I know about different places where you can go to study a further education course | 0.0 | 6.3 | 17.5 | 65.1 | 11.1 |
| I am aware of the entry requirements for different types of further education courses | 0.0 | 7.9 | 25.4 | 60.3 | 6.3 |
| I feel confident I could succeed at college/sixth form | 1.6 | 4.8 | 28.6 | 55.6 | 9.5 |
| I feel confident I would fit in at sixth form | 0.0 | 4.9 | 32.8 | 52.5 | 9.8 |
| I feel prepared to choose the right college/sixth form and the course which is in line with my own interests and future goals | 1.6 | 9.5 | 38.1 | 36.5 | 14.3 |
| I feel confident in presenting myself well in college/sixth form applications and interviews | 1.6 | 12.7 | 31.7 | 42.9 | 11.1 |

The percentages in Table 2. show that learners are mostly in agreement with the statements and are fairly knowledgeable and confident about their next steps into Further Education. For example, 76.2% agree or strongly agree that they know about different places where they can go to study a further education course.

The learners thought the most useful part of the workshops was finding out about the different types of qualifications (e.g., BTEC, A-Levels, T-levels) that they could choose from. To improve the sessions the learners would like them to be more interactive.

Explore HE (pre-16)

In this package we start with the basics. Why go to university? What are the routes into Higher Education? Learners explore an introduction to HE through a range of interactive activities. This package is for learners in Year-9, -10 or -11. The package includes a talk on What is HE? a campus visit with a HE provider and a workshop titled Interactive Intro to HE. The package covers the NERUPI outcomes of Know, Choose, Become and Understand. Our Explore HE package was evaluated by 15 learners from one school with a post-event survey.



KNOW



CHOOSE



BECOME



UNDERSTAND

| Question | Extremely unlikely | Quite unlikely | Neither likely or unlikely | Quite likely | Extremely likely |
|---|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| How likely are you to apply to Higher Education? | 1.6 | 3.1 | 36.5 | 44.4 | 14.3 |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| I know about the different types of social and leisure opportunities which would be available to me at university | 0.0 | 0.0 | 20.0 | 73.3 | 6.7 |
| Doing a higher education course could benefit me in the future | 0.0 | 13.3 | 6.7 | 13.3 | 66.7 |
| Going to university can open a broader range of careers/jobs for me | 0.0 | 13.3 | 6.7 | 13.3 | 66.7 |
| I know about the different types of organisations that provide higher education | 0.0 | 0.0 | 26.7 | 46.7 | 26.7 |
| I am aware that similar universities/higher education courses may have different entry requirements | 0.0 | 0.0 | 20.0 | 33.3 | 46.7 |
| I would fit in well with others at university | 0.0 | 6.7 | 20.0 | 53.3 | 20.0 |
| I am confident that I could get the support from others if I needed it when I go to university/higher education | 0.0 | 0.0 | 21.4 | 21.4 | 57.1 |

The percentages in Table 3. suggests that the learners have a positive relationship with Higher Education and that 80% think that doing a higher education course could benefit them in the future. However, this evaluation was only completed by a small sample of learners (n=15) therefore the results need to be taken with caution.

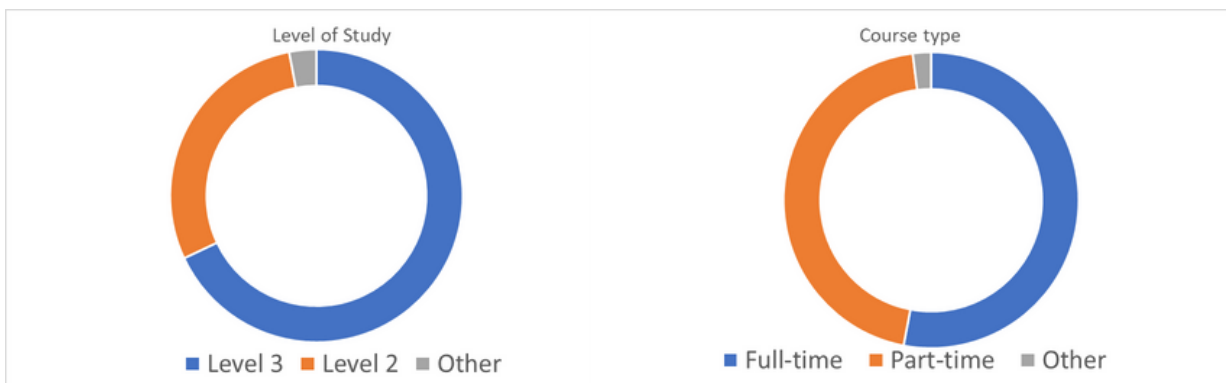
The learners thought the most useful part was learning about animal care (part of their campus visit to Askham Bryan College) To improve the workshops, the learners would like to know more about the courses available at Askham Bryan College.

Inspiring Choices will continue to evaluate our package offers and develop our evaluation methods to include a pre-event survey as well as a post-event survey.

Adult Learners

In 2021/22 the OfS asked Uni Connect partnerships to work with adult learners aged 19 or above situated in an FEC as part of our targeted outreach work. To find out how we could offer more support to adult learners we conducted a survey in five colleges and held two focus groups at an FE College. The aim of our survey was to understand the different types of learners in Further Education, their motivation for their current studies and intentions for any future education.

The most common level of current study was Level 3 (68%) followed by Level 2 (29%). For 53% they were enrolled on a full-time course and 45% were enrolled on a part-time course. Prior to enrolling on their current course, the adult learners had a range of qualifications from holding no formal qualifications to Level 7+ (Postgraduate), with the most common being Level 3 followed by Level 2. Prior to enrolling on their current course, 29% had been out of education for 10+ years, the next most common group (27.5%) had been out of education for less than a year.



The main reasons for enrolling on their current course was to; gain qualifications to enable a career change, to progress to university/higher education or to upskill in their current job role. The intention to undertake a university level course in the future was strong with 70% saying 'definitely yes' or 'probably yes,' and 12% selecting 'definitely not' or 'probably not.' To support the learners to make informed choices about their education and career options, some of the activities they would like are; a one-to-one careers interview with a qualified advisor, subject specific pathways talk (e.g., routes into teaching, nursing etc.) and a visit to a university or higher education provider campus.

Two focus groups were conducted with the part-time Level 2 adult learners. The learners decided to enrol on this course because they wanted to change their careers, or they already worked in the area and wanted to learn more, and they were interested in and enjoyed the subject.

“I’m already running a business and I simply wish to enhance my knowledge of SUBJECT and is has actually been quite useful in that I have already applied some knowledge.”

Sources of Information

To find out about their current course the learners mostly used the internet, some knew the course they wanted to do so were searching for providers and others went directly to the college website. Others remembered hearing about the college on the radio and another knew others who had done the course previously, and had spoken to them about their experiences.

When searching for future opportunities the learners' biggest source of information was each other.

"Best source of information is just talking to the course mates and asking them about job opportunities, what they're doing, what their experiences are, trying to see if we could help each other out in the future with employment or any opportunities"

The learners felt that the college could be better at signposting the other short courses that the college runs that would complement their course or support their studies.

"I'm supplemented with two City and Guilds courses and I know that some of them run here and TUTOR mentioned them occasionally and its maybe about promoting some of that"

Another learner suggested a schedule and some information about the courses available at the college.

"That would be quite good to have on a rolling annual schedule or what have you. These are course prices you could then plan because as LEARNER said, the courses are really expensive. Yeah. So, you could then think, oh actually next October I might be able to save up and do that course."

The learners also felt that the college could do more in terms of giving careers advice for example, better signposting, dedicated time to talk to people that could support them and adding things to the poster boards and the website so they don't have to go searching for the information.

"I think there's something missing there... like a couple of hours, once, this whole term to have a bit of careers chat"

"And obviously, you know, we've all been out in the workplace. We all know how to do a CV but sometimes if you've been in a career for a long amount of time, there's not a lot of support from the college. Say you're a career changer, here's, here's some tips and advice that way as well. So, most of that I have to say, has come from other people on the course."

Style of Learning

The learners in these focus groups liked that the course was part-time, they felt it was manageable and meant they could dedicate one day a week to being in college. They also preferred coming in to college rather than distance learning, although they would be open to hybrid options.

“The specification is changing so I'm gonna be learning that online rather than classroom based which is a shame we haven't had the opportunity.”

“For me it's the motivation as well cause I've got, I've got a family as well. So, actually having to come into college means that I'm more motivated to come into college and do it and, and because it's hands on as well. If it was online, I just would find anything else to do.”

“I struggle with parts of doing the online myself with that, with your family and sometimes you get to the end of night, its half past nine I can not be bothered to sit down and study. So, coming into college part-time has been very useful”

Throughout both focus groups it was clear that the learners enjoyed and valued the social interactions.

“The most important part of the course has actually been the experience of the course so that means the interaction, not only with staff but other students.”

“Suddenly I'm meeting new people and I can share other experiences and which is really lovely.”

“Yeah, really good atmosphere, good vibe, brilliant tutors, really excellent tutors so that, I was expecting that to be good but that surpassed my expectations that, the knowledge, and the kindness and the humour.”

The learners also appreciated that their course was all adult learners. The learners spoke of the variety of people on the course but that everyone was passionate about the subject and talked about the subject rather than nights out.

“I asked that question in my interview cause I've had this fear that I gonna turn up and be the only grey hair in the class. And I am the only grey hair, but the span is there and that makes more interesting as well. People come from different backgrounds and different perspectives and different motivations.”

Barriers to their Learning

In terms of barriers, for either their current learning or for future learning, cost was a major concern. The cost of their current course and further Higher Education courses but also the associated cost such as child care arrangements. One learner said they paid more than the advertised price on the website because they live in a different local authority which doesn't subsidise adult education.

"It's a lot and it did stop me from doing [another] course in the evening which compliments it because that would have been £2,400 and I'm a gardener. It's so, you know, it's very expensive."

Whereas another learner was unaware that their course would be funded and joined the course prepared to pay "because I work part-time, I got mine funded...that wasn't advertised, that I knew of anyway." Another learner thought the course was reasonably priced in comparison to the other courses that are available in academia and that they "have had my monies worth, in a very broad sense of the college experience which involves interaction with other students."

A barrier to moving on to higher education was the time commitment. They also found the thought of going to university to be quite daunting and that it may be hard to interact with their peers.

"I want to get on and do other stuff, I don't want to be stuck in a classroom for three years."

"That's what I'm dreading going to uni now, doing my masters, because I know there are not a lot of adult learners from, well from previous years at least. And I'm not really sure how to fit in with the, the ones who've to come on straight from having doing bachelors. Yeah, with the youth."

The learners had an issue with the particular course's lack of resources (e.g., a textbook, reading list). In an attempt to overcome this barrier, the learners have found past papers, books, forums, information and shared it with the group. This issue also relates to a wider issue within education involving the amount of disability support and significant barriers to educational attainment due to personal and family circumstances. One learner conferred that they had been able to make informal arrangements with their tutor around restrictions or disabilities. However, the learners also discussed how the course was delivered could be difficult particularly for those with disabilities.

"It's auditory, it's very difficult everything coming from verbal, y'know, it's overloading for some people ... it's quite fast paced and I enjoy that, but I've missed things, and I've missed information."

To reduce this barrier the learners suggested that as well as receiving the auditory information "a couple of slides on a PowerPoint would have been amazing."

Intentions for Progression

A lot of the learners were interested in progressing to the Level 3 course. Although for some “not necessarily immediately, still absorbing stuff that I’ve learned this year.” Some others wanted to work before progressing to the next level. Some others were interested in other similar courses (e.g., short courses) “I’ve just got such an interest in everything since being here that I think, oh maybe I’ll do that.”

In terms of Higher Education, one learner felt ready to go to university and study in a related subject.

“I don’t think I would’ve taken that leap had I not done this. Getting back into education again after a few years, you know, is kind of, I can do it, you know, I’m not too old.”

Another learner already had a degree, but decided to do their current course because of interest in the subject and is now going to go back to university to a masters in their new subject. Many of the learners already held a degree qualification before starting their current course and were not interested in pursuing another one or thought it would be relevant for their new career.

“I think it's interesting that you're asking about higher education as well because a lot of people here are transferring. It's not about higher education's it's about practical experience, about getting experience in the area we want to get it in.”

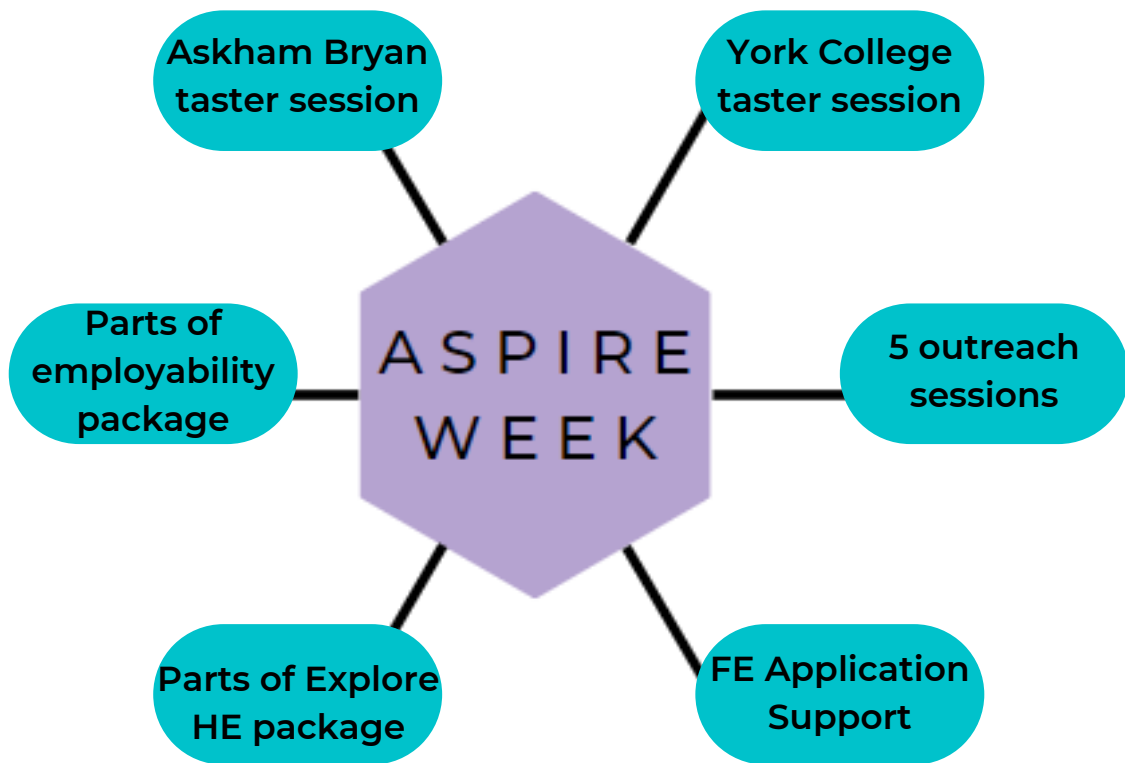
“I’d considered the degree very briefly because it’s really expensive. But, but I think I’ve spoke to someone who’s got one, and said she just doesn’t use it.”

Recommendations

From listening to the learners in the focus groups it was clear the college was doing some things well such as the tutors being very knowledgeable and approachable. Providing courses that are an adult only class made the learners feel more comfortable about returning to education and less concerned about fitting in with their classmates. They also found having the classes all in one day a week was good for their time management and they could fit their other commitments around studying. However, the college and the learners experience could be improved. For example, in providing disability support, ensuring that learners know what support is available and how they are able to access that support. The college could also improve with better signposting, as the college does have a careers service but the learners in the focus groups were not directed to it. It was suggested that the full-time learners may have more access to this provision so it is important that the college reaches out to support all of their learners.

Aspire Week

During York High's 'Aspire Week', learners in Year-11 had the opportunity to attend two taster sessions hosted by York College and Askham Bryan College, and five outreach sessions delivered in a carousel fashion by Inspiring Choices. Due to covid restrictions some activities were unable to commence. To support York High's Aspire Week, Inspiring Choices' delivered part of our Employability package and Explore HE package. From the Employability package learners had three hour-long workshops: CV and Cover Letter Writing, How to Make a Good First Impression, and Transferable skills. From the Explore HE package the Intro to HE workshop was delivered. Learners also received FE Application Support to help with applications for colleges and/or apprenticeships. These activities cover Skills and Attainment and General HE Information. These activities capture several NERUPI learning outcomes from Know, Choose, Become and Practise.



KNOW



CHOOSE



BECOME



PRACTISE

Before participating in Aspire week, 27 learners answered a pre-event questionnaire. At the end of Aspire Week, 109 learners answered a post-event questionnaire. The first question, “How likely are you to apply to Higher Education (such as university or a Degree Apprenticeship)?” was answered on a scale of 1 to 6 (1= I definitely won't apply, 2= Very unlikely, 3=Fairly unlikely, 4= Fairly likely, 5= Very likely, 6= I will definitely apply, Don't know/I'm unsure was unscored). The remaining questions were answered on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 10 being “strongly agree.”

Table 4. shows the percentage scores for question 1, the most frequent answer was “Very likely” to apply to higher education. Of 101 respondents, 58.4% were likely to apply to higher education. Table 5. shows the means and standard deviations for the post-event questions. Table 6. shows the scores for those that answered both the online pre-event questionnaire and the post-event questionnaire. The means for all questions increased from the pre-event to the post-event questionnaire, meaning the responses were closer to “strongly agree”. The results of a paired sample t-test showed for questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, there was a significant difference between time 1 (pre-event) and time 2 (post-event). However, due to the low response rate or the pre-event questionnaire, the results need to be taken with caution.

Table 4. Percentage scores

| Question | Response | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. How likely are you to apply to Higher Education (such as university or a Degree Apprenticeship)? | I will definitely apply (6) | Very likely (5) | Fairly likely (4) | Fairly unlikely (3) | Very unlikely (2) | I definitely won't apply (1) | Don't know/I'm unsure (unscored) |
| Percentage | 18.8% | 23.8% | 15.8% | 10.9% | 10.9% | 12.9% | 6.9% |

Table 5. Scores for all respondent's post-event questionnaire.

| Question | Respondents | Mean | SD |
|---|-------------|------|------|
| 1. How likely are you to apply to Higher Education (such as university or a Degree Apprenticeship)? | 101 | 3.89 | 1.71 |
| 2. Doing a higher education course could benefit me in the future | 109 | 6.96 | 2.38 |
| 3. I think a higher education qualification would give me more career options | 108 | 7.56 | 2.02 |
| 4. University is for people like me | 109 | 4.99 | 2.80 |
| 5. I feel confident speaking to people about my future and my options | 109 | 6.62 | 2.57 |
| 6. I am able to identify which skills I am good at | 109 | 6.83 | 2.19 |
| 7. I am able to identify which skills I could improve on | 108 | 7.38 | 2.07 |
| As a result of Aspire week... | | | |
| 8. I feel more prepared for what I will be doing after I leave high school (such as college or an apprenticeship) | 107 | 7.30 | 2.26 |
| 9. I now know more about my higher education (post-18) options | 106 | 6.90 | 2.30 |
| 10. I feel more confident about applying for courses and/or jobs | 106 | 7.16 | 2.05 |

Table 6. Scores for those that answered both the pre and post questions.

| Question | Respondents | Time 1 Mean | Time 1 SD | Time 2 Mean | Time 2 SD | t | Effect Size |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------|-------------|
| 1. How likely are you to apply to Higher Education (such as university or a Degree Apprenticeship)? | 21 | 4.57 | 1.21 | 4.71 | 1.27 | .59 | .129 |
| 2. Doing a higher education course could benefit me in the future | 27 | 6.89 | 2.44 | 7.44 | 2.49 | 1.78 | .342 |
| 3. I think a higher education qualification would give me more career options | 27 | 7.19 | 2.00 | 8.26 | 1.58 | 3.36* | .646 |
| 4. University is for people like me | 27 | 5.14 | 2.80 | 6.44 | 2.47 | 2.85* | .548 |
| 5. I feel confident speaking to people about my future and my options | 27 | 5.26 | 2.80 | 7.00 | 2.37 | 5.12* | .985 |
| 6. I am able to identify which skills I am good at | 27 | 5.41 | 2.39 | 6.96 | 1.79 | 3.63* | .699 |
| 7. I am able to identify which skills I could improve on | 27 | 6.15 | 2.03 | 7.81 | 1.52 | 4.60* | .886 |

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference between time 1 and time 2 scores ($p < .01$, two tailed).

Effect size denotes the magnitude of change in units of standard deviation (Cohen's d_z ; Lakens, 2013)

At the end of Aspire Week, learners were asked three free text questions. The responses to these questions will help us at Inspiring Choices to understand what the learners thought was useful and where improvements can be made.

Overall, the feedback on Aspire Week was mainly positive. Learners indicated that they felt more confident about their future options and felt more prepared for their next steps (e.g., applying to college or apprenticeship). Although there was a low response rate to the pre-event questionnaire, the findings suggest that Aspire Week has increased learners' ability to identify their skills, increased their confidence in speaking to people about their future and that university is for 'people like me'.

What was the most enjoyable activity during Aspire week?

CV writing
Taster days
Knowing which course is good
All of it
Mock interviews
Learning about HE
Applying to college
Learning about transferable skills
How to make a good impression

Transferable skills e.g., confidence
How to act in an interview
How to make a good first impression
How to write and structure a CV
Talking about the future

Tell us the most useful thing you have learned during Aspire Week

How could we make Aspire Week better for next year's students?

Don't change
Bring in external people
Handouts
More activities/longer
Go on trips
More interactive
Don't do it next year
More options

Film Project

Inspiring Choices commissioned Inspired Youth to create a film with young Travellers. The film titled Human – The Voice of Young Travellers was shaped, written, featured, and narrated by young Travellers. The aim was to change the narrative through lived experience and to explore the challenges, the stigma and the discrimination faced by young Travellers. In February, it was premiered at the Everyman Cinema in York.

[HUMAN - THE VOICE OF YOUNG TRAVELLERS - YOUTUBE](#)

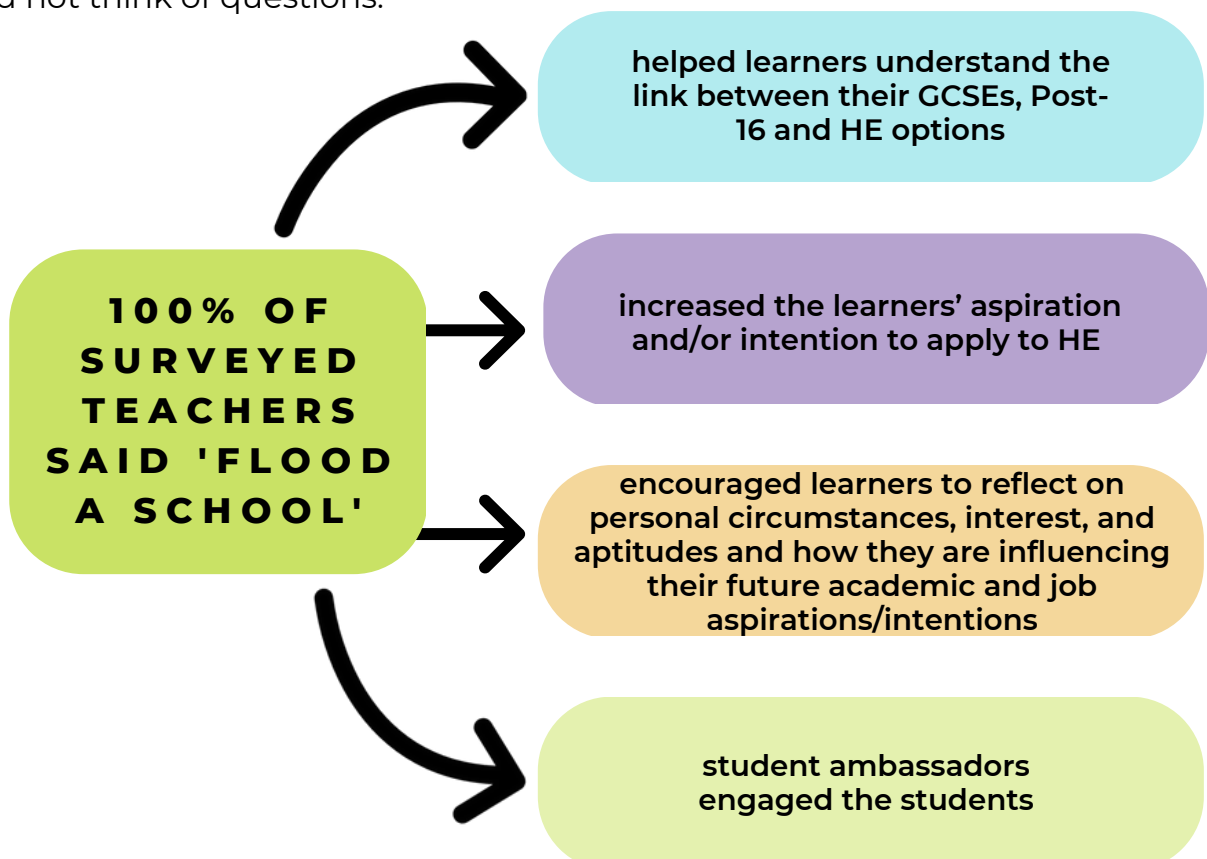


Flood a School

Inspiring Choices ran a Flood a School event in four of our target schools. Flood a School involves student ambassadors going into classes and speaking about their experience of higher education. Where possible the student ambassadors are matched into their subject areas (e.g., a student ambassador studying History would go into a history lesson). The student ambassadors discussed a range of topics with the learners including, i) student life, ii) student finance, iii) HE course information, iv) the academic and/or social benefits of HE, and v) teaching and learning styles in HE (such as lectures, seminars, workshops etc.)

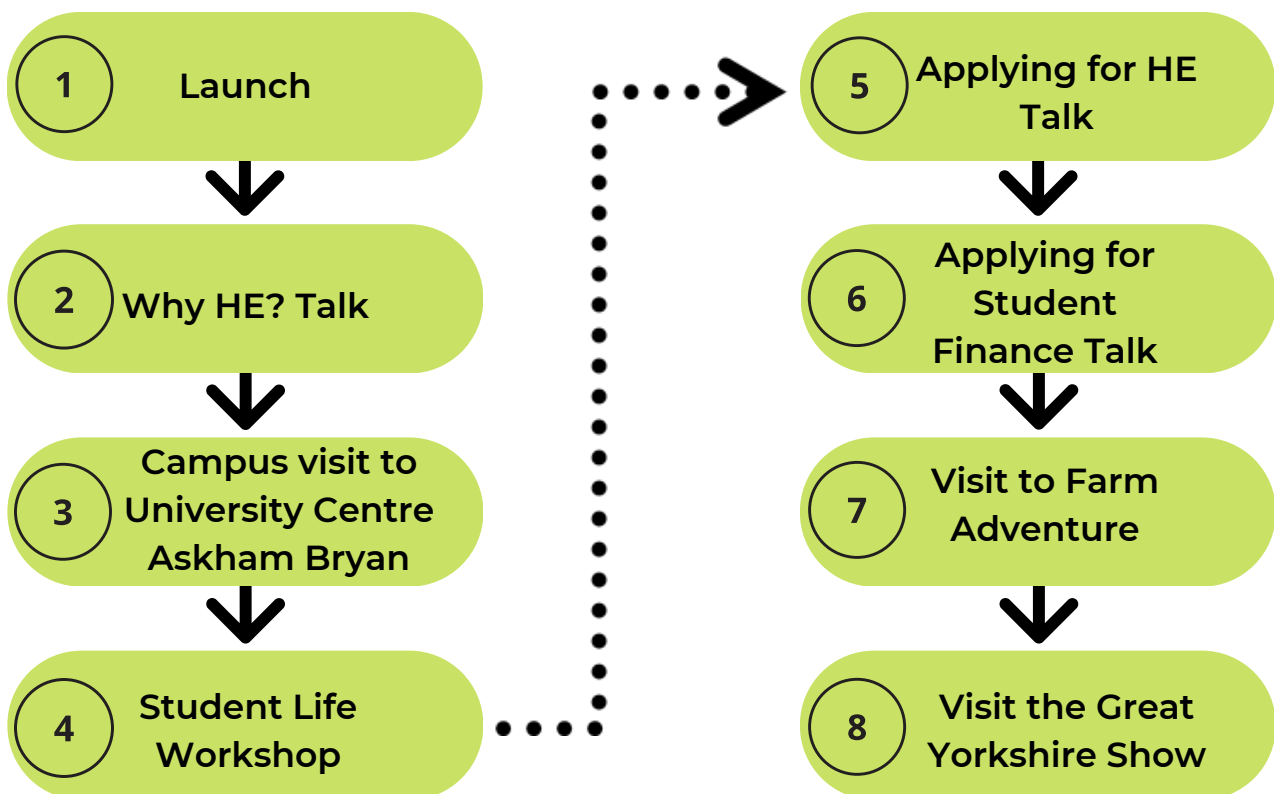
Sixteen teachers from across the four schools completed a survey and gave positive feedback about the event. All teachers agreed that i) the student ambassadors engaged the students, ii) helped learners understand the link between their GCSEs, Post-16 and HE options, iii) increased the learners' aspiration and/or intention to apply to HE, and iv) encouraged learners to reflect on personal circumstances, interest, and aptitudes and how they are influencing their future academic and job aspirations/intentions. Most teachers (87.5%) agreed that the learners developed their knowledge of the wide range of HE courses available.

To improve the event the teachers suggested leaving some handouts with information for learners to take, more time to engage with learners in smaller groups and to prepare some frequently asked questions as some learners could not think of questions.

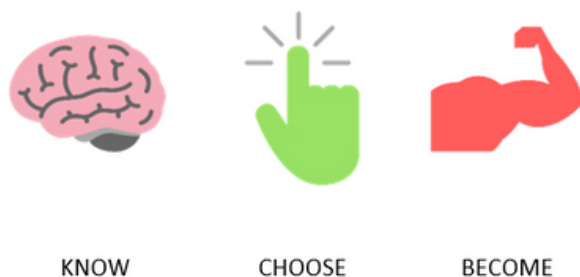


Grow Programme

The Grow Programme was an 8-week programme that aimed to support learners who are currently studying in the Further Education provision at Askham Bryan College, have a postcode in an area with low progression to higher education (POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2), and who are interested in progressing to higher education. The programme included a series of face-to-face workshops, industry showcasing and enrichment trips. The workshops were chosen from a combination of the Inspiring Choices packages to create a bespoke programme.



The intended outcomes of the programme were the NERUPI outcomes of Know, Choose and Become.



The Grow Programme was attended by eight learners who were studying at Level 2 or their first year at Level 3. Seven of these learners completed a questionnaire at the start and at the end of the programme.

Table 7. Response format for the questions in the pre and post event survey

| Question | Response | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| How likely are you to apply to Higher Education (such as university or a Degree Apprenticeship)? | Extremely unlikely (1) | Somewhat unlikely (2) | Neither likely or unlikely (3) | Somewhat likely (4) | Extremely likely (5) |
| All other questions | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |

Table 8. Scores for those that answered both the pre and post questions (n=7).

| Question | Time 1 Mean | Time 1 SD | Time 2 Mean | Time 2 SD | t | Effect Size |
|--|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------|-------------|
| How likely are you to apply to Higher Education (such as university or a Degree Apprenticeship)? | 2.86 | 1.25 | 3.71 | 1.28 | 2.52* | .69 |
| I know about the types of social and leisure opportunities available to me at university/higher education. | 3.29 | .88 | 4.43 | .49 | 4.38* | 1.30 |
| I know about the support services available to higher education / university students. | 3.29 | 1.03 | 4.29 | .45 | 3.24* | .97 |
| I feel confident that I have enough information to make an informed choice about university/higher education. | 3.29 | .70 | 4.43 | .49 | 3.36* | 1.63 |
| I am aware of the types of courses/ subjects offered at different universities/ higher education institutions. | 3.43 | 1.05 | 4.29 | .70 | 1.87 | .82 |
| I feel comfortable with how to apply to university/higher education. | 3.00 | 1.20 | 3.71 | 1.16 | 1.51 | .60 |
| I feel confident I could make a strong university/higher education application. | 2.57 | 1.18 | 3.71 | 1.16 | 2.49* | .97 |
| I am aware of what financial support is available for university/higher education students. | 3.43 | 1.40 | 4.29 | .70 | 2.52* | .61 |
| I am aware of career opportunities in the land-based sector. | 3.57 | .73 | 3.86 | .64 | 1.00 | .39 |
| I am confident I know what I want to do as a career. | 3.57 | .73 | 4.29 | .88 | 2.50* | .98 |
| I am confident I know what I need to do to achieve my career aspirations. | 3.86 | .99 | 4.00 | 1.07 | 0.35* | .16 |

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference between time 1 and time 2 scores ($p < .01$, two tailed).

Effect size denotes the magnitude of change in units of standard deviation (Cohen's d_z ; Lakens, 2013)

Table 8 shows that there was a significant increase in agreement with the statements from before to after the programme in eight of the eleven questions. The largest increases were found in “I feel confident that I have enough information to make an informed choice about university/higher education” and “I know about the social and leisure opportunities available to me at university/higher education.” The results suggest that the programme is meeting the intended outcomes. However, due to a small number of participants the results should be taken with caution.

The learners were also asked to complete three free text questions at the end of the Grow Programme. From these questions we have learnt that (i) the learners would like further support with their UCAS application and finances (ii) it was useful to have opportunities to meet career contacts, learn more about higher education and understand the options for higher education. To improve the programme the learners would like more opportunity to experience industry (e.g., work experience).

Survey questions with the largest increase:

“ I feel confident that I have enough information to make an informed choice about university/higher education ”

“ I know about the social and leisure opportunities available to me at university/higher education. ”

THIRD-PARTY DELIVERY

Bespoke and Third-Party Funding

Alongside our package offer we also offer schools the opportunity to bid for extra funding.

Bradford Museum Visit

One of our colleges took 21 Level 1 and Level 2 learners on a visit to Bradford Media Museum where they had a tour and participated in a series of workshops.

CREATIVE CODERS

Students will learn about the first computer programme, the breaking of the German Enigma machine and the maths behind the first successful rocket launches.

WONDERLAB

Students can investigate how light and sound work through an amazing range of fun interactive exhibits. By experimenting, playing and exploring, they will learn about how light and sound are the building blocks of technology we use every day.

THE FIBONACCI SEQUENCE

In this demo and workshop, students will hear about the Fibonacci sequence, how its numbers can help create the 'golden spiral' shape, and where you can spot this shape in nature – from the tiniest of seashells to the largest (spiral) galaxies in space.

IMAX 3D: ANTARCTICA

Students will experience a spectacular 3D exploration of the mysterious and wild continent of Antarctica and the related environmental issues.

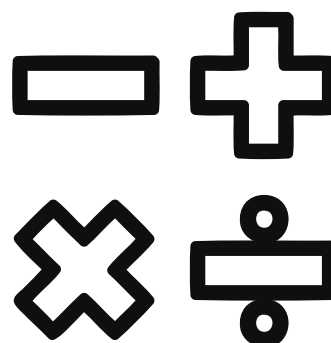
Career Interviews

One school placed a bid for career interviews for 30 learners to support with their decision making for post-16. These one-to-one career interviews were with learners that were in Year 10 and potentially at risk of Not being in education, employment or training (NEET) post-16. The careers interviews help learners to know more about FE and HE courses, and to choose a pathway that is right for them. It helps learners understand what grades and skills would be needed and to help them understand their range of choices. Another school submitted a larger bid that worked with approximately 100 learners across Year 9 to Year 11.



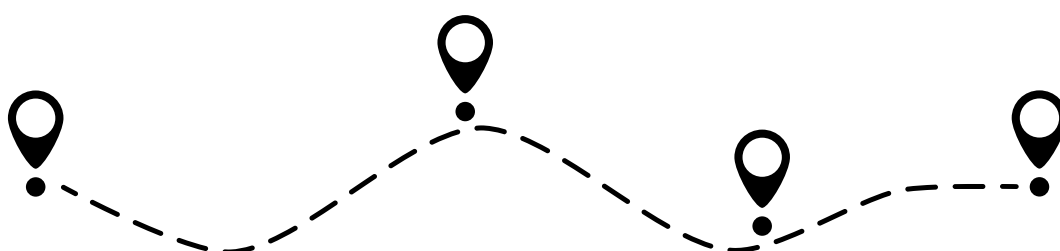
HegartyMaths

HegartyMaths is an online platform that allows teachers to set maths work; view all learners' answers, scores and comments, and give learners feedback to improve. The site covers the curriculum for key stage 3 and GCSE with over 600 video lessons and over 40,000 bespoke questions. One school completed a bid for HegartyMaths and it benefitted around 200 Year 9 and Year 10 learners.⁷



Geography Trip

One of our schools completed a funding bid to take 11, Year 10 learners on a geography field trip. During this trip they completed a study on rivers and carried out geographical enquiries. The learners also had to write a report using the data they had collected. Learners said that it was useful as some topics may come up on their GCSE exam. The trip gave learners the opportunity to learn how to use the equipment efficiently and increased their confidence in their ability to do well in geography.



⁷ <https://hegartymaths.com/>

Grow Programme

See [page 32](#).

MyTutor

See [page 41](#).

NYBEP People Like Me

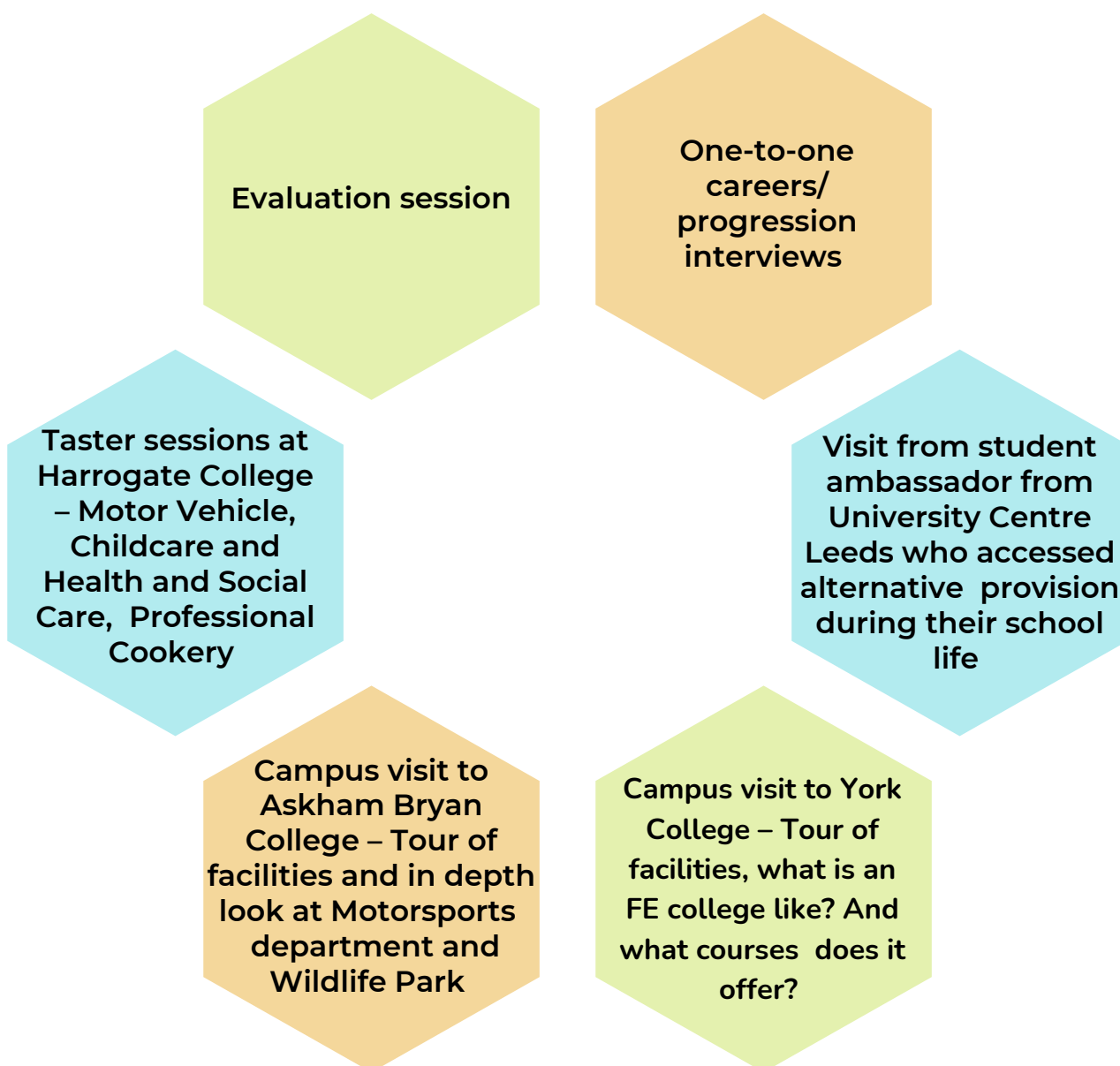
See [page 45](#).

The Brilliant Club

See [page 40](#).

Strive for Education

Strive for Education is an alternative provision for Year-9 to -11 in Harrogate. Strive for Education offers a varied curriculum that meets the needs of learners when attending a mainstream school full-time is not possible.⁸ Strive for Education aims to re-engage learners' interest in education. In a collaboration between Inspiring Choices and Strive for Education, a small group Year-11 learners attended several activities:



UCAS Exhibition

One of our colleges took 127 Level 3 learners to the West and North Yorkshire UCAS Exhibition at Leeds Beckett University. The exhibition presents hundreds of universities, colleges, apprenticeship providers and employers. Learners can find out about different options and pathways, listen to live expert talks and get advice and information on different career choices.⁹ This was a great opportunity for learners to find out more information about their future.

Unifrog

Five of our schools/colleges received funding for Unifrog. Unifrog is an online platform that helps learners make the best choices and submit their applications. Unifrog encourages learners to choose courses offering a range of entry requirements and think more widely about what subjects might be appropriate for them. The platform includes apprenticeships and Further Education colleges in the UK as well as universities in USA and Canada and degrees taught in English across Europe, Asia and Australasia.¹⁰

⁹ UCAS (2022) <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/open-days-and-events/ucas-discovery-exhibitions>

¹⁰ Unifrog (2022) <https://www.unifrog.org/>

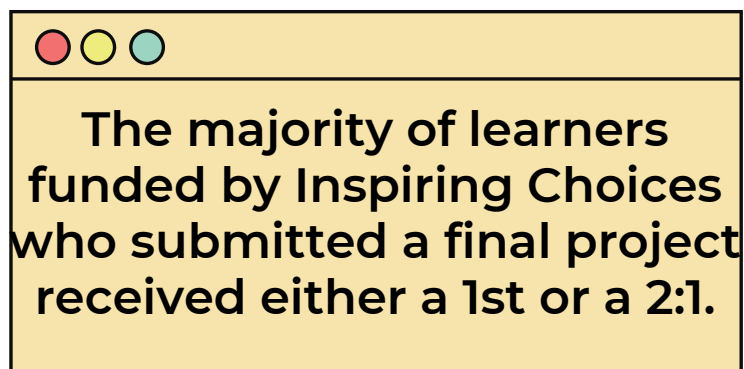
The Brilliant Club

The Brilliant Club's Scholars Programme gives learners from non-selective state schools the opportunity to work with a PhD researcher to experience university style learning. It helps pupils develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to secure a place at a highly-selective university. The Brilliant club works with learners from aged 7 to 18, supporting learners to make an informed choice at 18. The Brilliant Club works with over 800 schools, 40 partner universities and 15,000 learners across the UK. In 2021/22, The Brilliant Club mobilised more than 800 researchers across their programmes to work with 22,073 learners in 1067 schools.

The placements are structured around seven tutorials and opportunity to attend a launch and graduation event at universities. At the universities they will experience a day on campus, speak to current undergraduates and learn about university life. The learners work towards completing a challenging final assignment which is marked and moderated using university grades. An average learner makes 8.9 marks progress between their baseline and final assignment mark, 27% of learners who submitted a final assignment achieved a 1st and 42% of learners achieved a 2:1.

Inspiring Choices offered all of our target schools and colleges a placement with The Brilliant Club. Seven of our target schools and colleges accepted the placements, four received the Key Stage 4 placement for Year 10's and three received the Key Stage 5 placement for Year 12's. One Key Stage 5 placement was involved in a pilot scheme where each learner was able to select their own courses. They then took part with learners from across the country online with their tutor. Two other schools took the opportunity to have the placements delivered online while the rest of the placements occurred in-person.

In the autumn term, Inspiring Choices funded three placements with 38 learners enrolled at the start of the programme, 29 of these learners submitted a final assignment and 21 (74%) achieved a 1st or 2:1. Also in the autumn term was the pilot adaption of the KS5 Scholars programme which was adapted to more closely simulate undergraduate study. From this placement 6 learners submitted final assignments and 3 (50%) achieved a 1st or a 2:1. In the spring term, Inspiring Choices funded three placements with 39 learners enrolled at the start of the programme, 30 of these learners submitted a final assignment and 19 (63%) achieved a 1st or 2:1.



The majority of learners funded by Inspiring Choices who submitted a final project received either a 1st or a 2:1.

MyTutor

MyTutor works with over 1,300 schools to boost attainment and confidence in learners. Learners receive 12-weeks of one-to-one tuition from a near-peer tutor. The tutors are undergraduate students from top UK universities and are matched with the learners based upon their subject as well as their personality, academic ability, and goals.

Ten of our target schools had a placement with MyTutor for 12 Year 11 learners. They received one-to-one tuition in either Maths, English or Science. A small sample (15) of these learners completed a post-tuition survey.

Table 9. Percentage scores

| Question As a result of the MyTutor sessions.... | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| I am better at solving problems in my schoolwork | 7.14 | 7.14 | 42.86 | 35.71 | 7.14 |
| I can think creatively and apply this to my schoolwork | 0.0 | 14.29 | 35.71 | 35.71 | 14.29 |
| I can use a range of revision skills and techniques | 0.0 | 21.43 | 28.57 | 35.71 | 14.29 |
| I feel more confident about my end of year assessment/exams in my MyTutor subject | 0.00 | 14.29 | 50.00 | 28.57 | 7.14 |
| I feel more confident I could attend university (or higher education) in the future | 7.69 | 15.38 | 46.15 | 23.08 | 7.69 |
| I feel more confident about my end of year assessment/exams in other subjects | 14.29 | 21.43 | 42.86 | 14.29 | 7.14 |

The percentage scores in Table 9. show a mixed response for MyTutor with learners choosing to neither agree nor disagree with the statements. The low agreement percentages for the statement “I feel more confident about my end of year assessment/exams in other subjects” suggests that there is little transfer of skills from the tutored subject to other subjects.

When learners were asked what they found most useful about MyTutor, the comments were mostly positive suggesting that MyTutor was helpful in some ways. However, it was clear that some learners did not find MyTutor useful.

Going through exam questions

That it allowed me to refine my skills

I learnt how to answer exam questions better

my confidence levels

Having something in-front of you when you're doing the work

I didn't find anything useful.

You can draw on the screen at the same time as your tutor

He understood how to help me

Not much to be honest. I can do Pythagoras but that's it

Having it as a one to one

Nothing

I realised I was able to learn stuff that I didn't in lockdown which gave me a clearer understanding of a certain topic.

the tutor was helpful and explained the subject in a way in which I could actually understand

Learners were also asked how would you improve your MyTutor sessions? This question again provided a mixed response. Some learners were happy with their MyTutor sessions and didn't want to make changes. Some suggested making them even more tailored to cover specific topics they are struggling with and showing different ways of revising. Some learners had issues with their tutors in that they changed throughout the programme and some thought that their tutors were not knowledgeable enough about the particular topics.



I would like to be taught by someone who knows what they are talking about. I had a lovely individual but she didn't know anything about the topic that I was doing and spoke to me like I was stupid which I felt quite belittling. She was teaching me from the text book which is great and all but it's not useful when she is teaching herself while trying to teach me. I stopped going to my tutoring lessons I found them so not useful and so did a lot of my other friends who did this program. I think to make it better just get individuals who know what they are talking to and that are a bit less patronising (this is not coming from just my experience)"

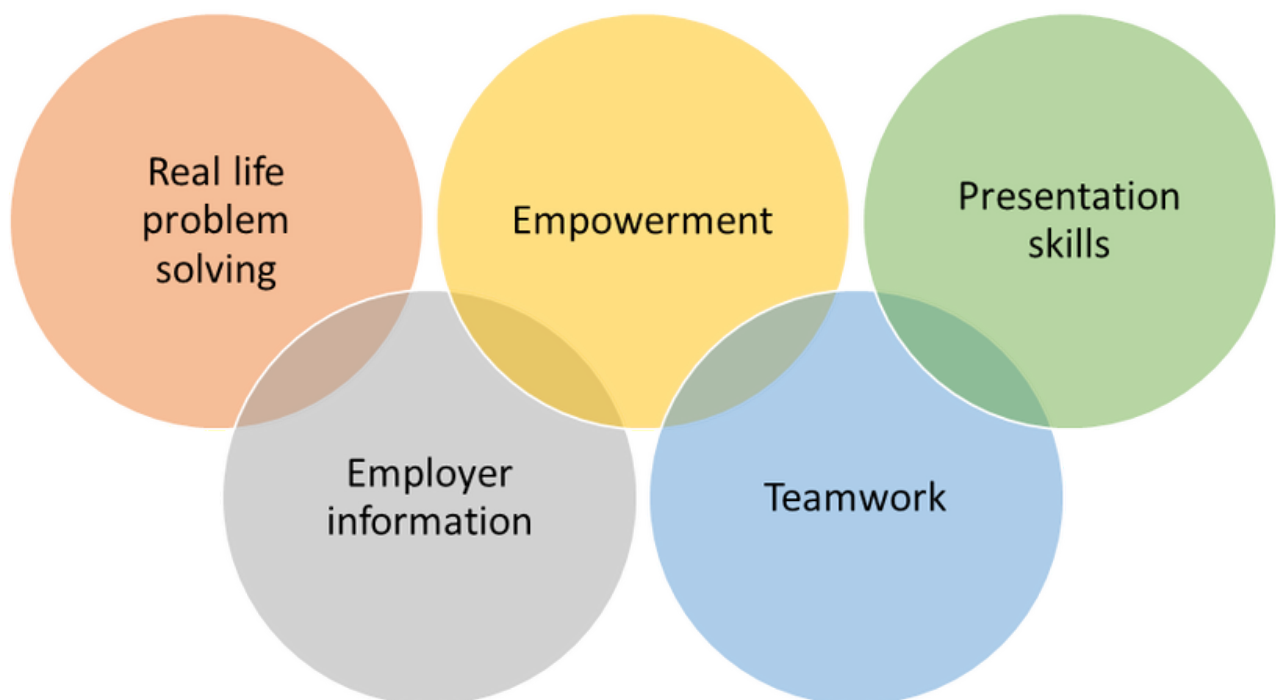
We received feedback from a teacher that said their learners also gave mixed messages. They found that some of their learners found it really good whereas others were non-committal. The teacher raised a question with MyTutor about the subject the tutors teach compared to the subject they are studying at university. MyTutor assured them that MyTutor has a rigorous application and training system to ensure that the tutors are fully capable of tutoring the subject they are given.

“One or two spoke of good tutors but others were not so complimentary. Diligent students got the most out of it but even they dwindled off!”

Project Dare

Inspiring Choices partnered with York Cares to deliver two Project Dare placements. York Cares is an independent employee-volunteering charity which brings together businesses, employees and communities. Project Dare is part of York Cares Aspirations Programme which is designed to bring the world of work to life by challenging young people with real-world problem-solving activities and empowering them to succeed. Employers host a visit or online workshops for secondary school pupils and challenge them to apply their academic learning to solve a real-world industry specific task.

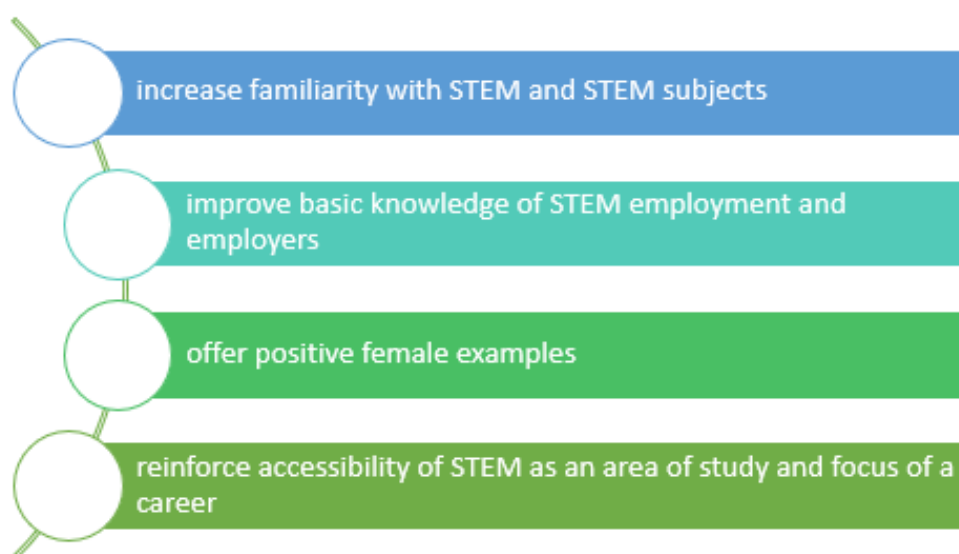
The first placement was attended by 15 students from one target school. It was led by ARUP with a focus on engineering, team work, and rail planning. There were two sessions which were delivered online. The second placement was attended by 20 students from another target school. It was led by Hiscox and was themed around designing a pet insurance policy, covering marketing, research, art and design, and maths. Two sessions were delivered online and the third session was a visit to the Hiscox building in York City Centre.



“People like me” – STEM for Girls Workshop

In partnership with North Yorkshire Business and Education Partnership Ltd (NYBEP) and local employers from STEM, seven two-hour workshops were delivered across six target schools. The workshops were delivered to females in Year-9 and Year-10 (one session was delivered to Year-12). The workshop was designed to increase familiarity with STEM and STEM subjects, improve basic knowledge of STEM employment and employers, offer positive female examples, and reinforce accessibility of STEM as an area of study and focus of a career. This was facilitated by local employers providing information regarding their company, related careers and skills, and their own personal career journey. The workshop aimed at increasing knowledge, confidence, and aspirations associated with a career in STEM among young females.

At the beginning and end of the session, learners were asked to complete an outcome star with a scale of 1-10, 155 learners completed the outcome star. The learners were asked if they would recommend the activity to a friend and 81.3% said yes and 3.9% said no (14.8% didn't answer).



81.3% of learners would recommend the activity to a friend

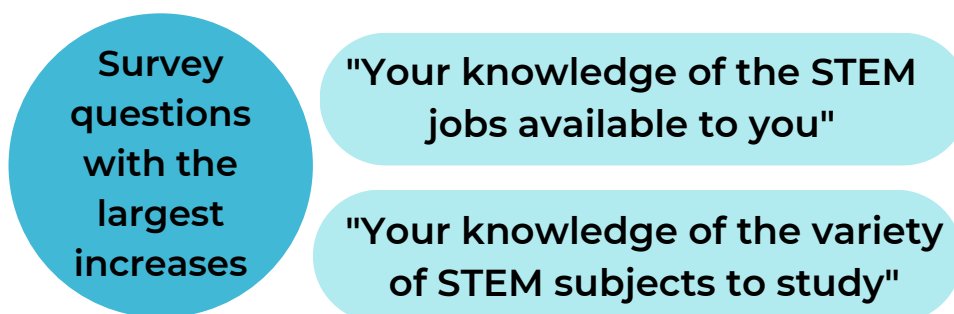
Table 10. Scores for respondents that completed the outcome star pre-and post-event.

| Statement | Time 1 Mean | Time 1 SD | Time 2 Mean | Time 2 SD | % Change | t | Effect size |
|--|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|--------|-------------|
| A career in STEM is for people like me | 4.08 | 2.59 | 6.34 | 2.57 | 55.14 | 12.59* | 0.87 |
| Your knowledge of the STEM jobs available to you | 3.71 | 2.04 | 7.30 | 1.80 | 96.73 | 21.92* | 1.76 |
| How your skills and abilities can be applied to subjects and careers | 4.71 | 2.27 | 7.04 | 1.80 | 49.39 | 14.02* | 1.03 |
| Your understanding of the benefits of studying a STEM subject | 4.53 | 2.29 | 7.19 | 2.10 | 58.53 | 15.33* | 1.16 |
| Your confidence in speaking to people about their career and your future | 4.55 | 2.73 | 6.66 | 2.40 | 46.47 | 13.94* | 0.77 |
| Your knowledge of the variety of STEM subjects available to study | 4.17 | 2.12 | 7.18 | 1.84 | 72.20 | 16.84* | 1.42 |
| Your ability to apply existing knowledge to problem solving | 5.75 | 2.14 | 7.10 | 1.91 | 23.54 | 9.87* | 0.63 |
| Your aspiration to work in a STEM career in the future | 3.97 | 2.40 | 6.32 | 2.48 | 59.03 | 14.26* | 0.98 |
| The importance of thinking about your future | 7.18 | 2.33 | 8.13 | 1.94 | 13.25 | 6.85* | 0.41 |

Note. * denotes a statistically significant difference between time 1 and time 2 scores ($p < .01$, two tailed).

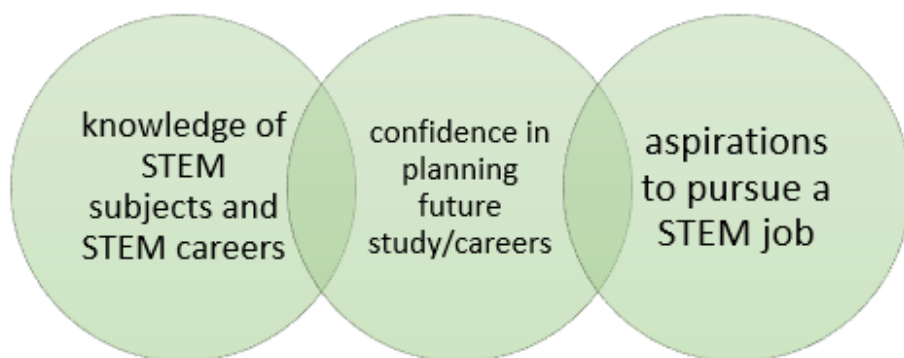
Effect size denotes the magnitude of change in units of standard deviation (Cohen's d_z ; Lakens, 2013)

There was a significant difference for every statement between the start and end of the session. This suggests that the session met all its intended learning outcomes. The largest increases were from statements “Your knowledge of the STEM jobs available to you” and “Your knowledge of the variety of STEM subjects available to study.” The results suggest a positive impact in the female learners in knowledge, confidence, and aspirations associated with a career in STEM.



STEM Conference

The STEM Conference was a face-to-face event delivered in partnership with the National Railway Museum. Seventy-four Year-9 learners from three target schools attended the conference. The activities at the STEM conference focused on the transferable skills which STEM professionals use, and explored the Engineering Habits of Mind whilst solving problems and overcoming real world challenges sustainably and as part of a team. The conference included a presentation 'Into Further Education' which covered options post-Year-11 and post-Year-13, different places to study and potential entry requirements, and how to find out more information about careers. The conference aimed to increase (i) knowledge of STEM subjects and STEM careers, (ii) confidence in planning future study/careers, and (iii) aspirations to pursue a STEM job.



The activities capture NERUPI outcomes from Know, Choose, Practise and Understand.



KNOW



CHOOSE



PRACTISE



UNDERSTAND

Table 11. Pre-event questions percentage scores

| Question | Percentage | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 1. I have a good understanding of the STEM job and career options open to people who go to university | 5.41 | 9.46 | 44.59 | 32.43 | 8.11 |
| 2. Doing a higher education/ university level course could benefit me in the future | 0 | 2.70 | 18.92 | 48.65 | 29.73 |
| 3. I know the options available for studying a subject or career specialism I'm interested in | 6.76 | 10.81 | 28.38 | 37.84 | 16.22 |
| 4. I feel that I could enter a STEM role or career | 4.05 | 21.62 | 33.78 | 32.43 | 8.11 |
| 5. I recognise that skills I already have could be used in a STEM role or career | 4.05 | 14.86 | 21.62 | 50.00 | 9.46 |
| 6. I can work well with others on group projects | 2.70 | 5.41 | 24.32 | 41.89 | 25.68 |
| 7. I can apply my existing subject knowledge to solve problems | 1.35 | 2.70 | 14.86 | 68.92 | 12.16 |
| 8. I am good at problem solving and coming up with creative ways to do things | 0 | 8.11 | 32.43 | 33.78 | 25.68 |
| 9. I understand how what I am learning at school will help me in future | 1.35 | 4.05 | 10.81 | 56.76 | 27.03 |

Table 12. Post-event questions percentage scores

| Question | Percentage | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
| 1. I have a good understanding of the STEM job and career options open to people who go to university | 0 | 0 | 2.70 | 59.46 | 37.84 |
| 2. Doing a higher education/ university level course could benefit me in the future | 1.35 | 1.35 | 12.16 | 41.89 | 43.24 |
| 3. I know the options available for studying a subject or career specialism I'm interested in | 0 | 2.70 | 20.27 | 45.95 | 31.08 |
| 4. I feel that I could enter a STEM role or career | 2.70 | 8.11 | 28.38 | 45.95 | 14.86 |
| 5. I recognise that skills I already have could be used in a STEM role or career | 0 | 9.46 | 27.02 | 47.30 | 16.21 |
| 6. I can work well with others on group projects | 0 | 1.35 | 25.68 | 43.24 | 29.73 |
| 7. I can apply my existing subject knowledge to solve problems | 0 | 4.05 | 18.92 | 50 | 27.02 |
| 8. I am good at problem solving and coming up with creative ways to do things | 0 | 2.74 | 21.92 | 45.21 | 30.14 |
| 9. I understand how what I am learning at school will help me in future | 1.37 | 0 | 13.70 | 50.68 | 34.25 |
| 10. I know more about different STEM roles and careers | 1.37 | 0 | 4.11 | 54.79 | 39.73 |
| 11. It has helped me make decisions about the options available to me after I leave school | 0 | 4.05 | 25.68 | 45.95 | 22.97 |
| 12. I've discovered something new about STEM | 0 | 1.39 | 19.44 | 40.28 | 37.5 |
| 13. I feel inspired to consider a STEM role or career | 0 | 6.76 | 36.49 | 37.84 | 17.56 |

Table 13. Scores for respondents who completed both pre-event and post-event questions

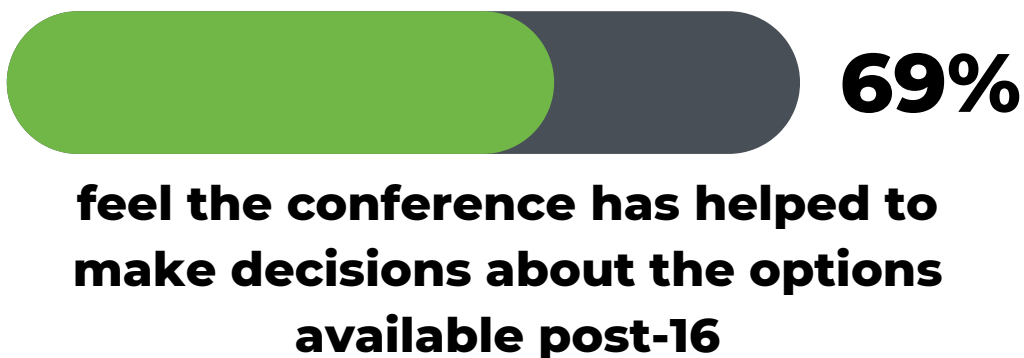
| Question | Respondents | Time 1 Mean | Time 1 SD | Time 2 Mean | Time 2 SD | % Change | t | Effect size |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------|-------------|
| 1. I have a good understanding of the STEM job and career options open to people who go to university | 74 | 3.28 | 0.94 | 4.35 | 0.53 | 32.51 | 9.76* | 1.13 |
| 2. Doing a higher education/ university level course could benefit me in the future | 74 | 4.05 | 0.77 | 4.24 | 0.82 | 4.667 | 2.11 | 0.25 |
| 3. I know the options available for studying a subject or career specialism I'm interested in | 74 | 3.46 | 1.10 | 4.05 | 0.79 | 17.19 | 5.02* | 0.58 |
| 4. I feel that I could enter a STEM role or career | 74 | 3.19 | 1.00 | 3.62 | 0.93 | 13.56 | 3.64* | 0.42 |
| 5. I recognise that skills I already have could be used in a STEM role or career | 74 | 3.46 | 1.00 | 3.70 | 0.86 | 7.03 | 2.14 | 0.25 |
| 6. I can work well with others on group projects | 74 | 3.82 | 0.97 | 4.01 | 0.79 | 4.95 | 2.07 | 0.24 |
| 7. I can apply my existing subject knowledge to solve problems | 74 | 3.88 | 0.70 | 4.00 | 0.76 | 3.14 | 1.20 | 0.14 |
| 8. I am good at problem solving and coming up with creative ways to do things | 73 | 3.78 | 0.93 | 4.03 | 0.80 | 6.52 | 2.36 | 0.28 |
| 9. I understand how what I am learning at school will help me in future | 73 | 4.04 | 0.82 | 4.16 | 0.76 | 3.05 | 1.12 | 0.13 |

Note. *denotes a statistically significant difference between time 1 and time 2 scores ($p < .01$, two tailed). Effect size change denotes the magnitude of change in units of standard deviation (Cohen's d_z ; Lakens, 2013)

The percentage scores for pre and post event questions are shown in Table 11. and Table 12. Descriptive statistics for those who completed time 1 and time 2 questions are reported in Table 13, along with change scores, results of a pair-samples t-test and effect size.

There was an increase in agreement from pre-event to post-event for all questions. Three of the questions (1, 3, and 4) showed a significant increase. The three post-only questions suggest a positive impact with 69%, 78% and 55% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that the conference has helped to make decisions about the options available post-16, discovered something new about STEM, and feel inspired to consider a career in STEM.

Our evaluation indicates a positive impact of the STEM Conference on the knowledge, understanding and aspirations of participants in regards to STEM subjects.



Inspiring Choices

Uni Connect York and North Yorkshire

inspiringchoices@yorks.ac.uk

Gateway House, York St John University, York, YO31 7EX

 www.inspiring-choices.co.uk

 @inspiring.choices.uc

 @inspchoices_uc

 @InspiringChoicesUC

 @inspiringchoices_uc

Author:

Laura Fenwick

Research and Impact Evaluation Officer

February 2023