

## **Understanding the impact of the pandemic on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance activities in schools and colleges in West Yorkshire including exploring different approaches to delivery**

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C&K Careers have been commissioned by Go Higher West Yorkshire to explore alternative ways of delivering CEIAG in target schools and colleges across West Yorkshire in view of the impact of Covid-19.

**July 2020**

## The research had the following components:

**Understanding the impact Covid-19 has on CEIAG activities during the 2019/20 summer term and the potential impact it will have during the 2020/21 academic year**

**Exploring different approaches to delivering Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance**

**Scoping of what is possible and might work in the current school/college environment**

**Exploring how external providers (employers, FE Colleges, Universities, training providers) engage with schools/young people once schools reopen**

**Producing guidance/recommendations that will inform schools and colleges and help overcome some of the issues presented.**



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# 1. Executive Summary

This report provides recommendations to support the delivery of Covid-19 compliant CEIAG activities in schools and colleges in the academic year 2020 / 21. The research undertaken has a particular focus on how higher education providers engage with young people within this new context. It explores current and planned approaches to delivery of CEIAG activities in schools and colleges and examines challenges and potential solutions. The findings can be used as a basis for further collaboration and development of resources for the new academic year and beyond.

Careers Leaders, Higher Education Providers, the Local Enterprise Partnership and Career Guidance Companies contributing to the study cited a number of potential challenges including: labour market uncertainty; concerns around the priority of CEIAG; time / space within the curriculum; students' IT access; engagement; safeguarding; impact; evaluation; and tracking.

Despite the challenges discussed throughout, the 'new normal' has led to innovative thinking and trialling new ways of working, generating some positive outcomes in terms of student engagement. One key message was that the activities most valuable and impactful during this period are those that are short/bitesize, accessible and incorporating two-way interaction. A joined-up approach will also enhance this offer. Schools, colleges and education providers should work together to build on existing quality resources to meet the needs of young people.

Analysis of survey responses has given rise to the following recommendations:

## Recommendations for Higher Education Providers

- Create accessible, bitesize resources in a variety of formats (videos, virtual presentations, interactive and paper-based), including those that are mobile friendly
- Consult with young people, schools and colleges to design activities appropriate to their needs
- Ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place
- Work closely with the LEP to expand on and contribute to their toolkit of resources
- Evaluate resources to ensure impact and continue improvement. Support this by capturing and monitoring data about engagement and participation

## Recommendations for Schools/Colleges

- Work closely with providers to ensure online activities and resources meet student needs and there is sufficient preparation and evaluation time/support
- Evaluate activities by gathering student voice as landscape continues to develop (schools and colleges to share information with HE providers and vice versa).
- Choose quality assured resources, for example, accessing a 'toolkit' of online resources, including those from Go Higher West Yorkshire, The Careers and Enterprise Company and UCAS
- Plan/allocate time during 2020/21 for a range of small trips and visits, if appropriate
- Update your careers web page to include new and updated resources
- Ensure systems and procedures are appropriate for digital resources - use surveys to accompany activities in order to gather feedback on who has accessed them
- Use a system for recording CEIAG activities that meets the needs of your institution and allows for reporting and evaluation
- Adapt risk-assessments and safeguarding procedures relating to delivery of online activities and share with activity providers.

## 2. Introduction and Context

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on educational systems in the UK, leading to the near-total closures of schools, universities and colleges. It is anticipated that schools and colleges will be able to reopen in September 2020 with measures in place to maintain social distancing. As a result of this, early indications from local schools in West Yorkshire suggested that next academic year it would be difficult to release students from lessons for careers interviews and career related activities both within and outside schools and this provided the impetus for our research. Difficulties in accessing CEIAG will inevitably have an impact on career choice and decisions and the information that young people have in order to make such decisions. Our research aims to investigate the extent of the challenges faced by schools, colleges and providers in relation to CEIAG delivery and to formulate solutions.

Research by National Education Opportunities Network<sup>1</sup> (NEON) indicates that over 80% of Higher Education providers do not expect to be able to work in schools before January 2021 due to the impact of Covid-19. Rules on social distancing will affect how delivery can take place as well as schools' and colleges' priorities for the new academic year. Speakers at the NEON summit in July highlighted a number of challenges for Higher Education Providers in delivering the widening access agenda under these new circumstances including access, safeguarding and quality assurance. These areas, among others, will be addressed within our research.

Dr Dierdre Hughes<sup>2</sup> has highlighted various barriers to accessing Careers Guidance in the current climate and an urgent need for every young person in years 11 and 13 to be offered a careers interview with a trained and qualified careers professional. Her report suggested a personalised plan for every young person should be a priority in view of school/college lockdown, the impact of exam cancellations, the lack of work experience and the uncertainties regarding university processes for awarding places. It also suggested *'Promoting a centralised set of resources for pupils and parents.'*

The Sutton Trust (citing recent research<sup>3</sup>) say the likely impact of digital approaches will be increasing the gap between disadvantaged young people and their peers. How do we ensure access to all when the students most uncomfortable in attending physical tours are also more likely not to have access to the digital platforms to participate in virtual alternatives?

Furthermore, in an already crowded curriculum, Careers Leaders may well find careers activities a difficult sell. Providing students with access to a high-quality careers curriculum is more important now that it has ever been, in light of the huge impact on

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<sup>1</sup> NEON Summit – 'Where to now for outreach? Innovation and Impact of Covid-19 on widening access to HE work in 2020-2021.' Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Covid-19: Where do I go for Careers Support? (2020) Dr Dierdre Hughes

<sup>3</sup> Education Endowment Foundation (2018) The Attainment Gap

college and university processes as well as the labour market, and students will need additional support to make sense of the new landscape they face on leaving school or college.

### 3. Methodology

During June and July 2020, C&K Careers consulted with a range of key CEIAG staff from local schools and colleges in West Yorkshire to identify the impact of Covid-19 on CEIAG delivery.

A qualitative research approach was adopted to provide an opportunity for the voices of Careers Companies, HE Providers, Careers Leaders and the Local Enterprise Partnership to be captured.

The consultation was carried out with:

- Careers Leaders from 6 schools within the Go Higher West Yorkshire Uni Connect Partnership and 8 additional schools from across West Yorkshire.
- 4 Careers advisers responding on behalf of Careers Leaders in schools in West Yorkshire
- The Careers Manager from the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Managers responsible for outreach activity at 5 Higher Education Providers within the Go Higher West Yorkshire Uni Connect Partnership.
- Guidance/Contract Managers from local careers service providers, Aspire Igen, C&K Careers, Careers Inc and Prospects. (The term 'Guidance Manager' has been used generically to refer to these respondents within the report.)

### 4. Findings

#### 4.1 Careers Advice and Guidance: Perspective of Careers Service Providers

##### Careers, Advice and Guidance activities are still being delivered but the picture is mixed across West Yorkshire

All respondents in this survey (Careers Leaders, Careers Advisers and Guidance Managers) reported that the delivery of career guidance in schools and colleges has continued during the 'lockdown' period. Guidance Managers from four career guidance organisations in West Yorkshire were asked how they felt Covid-19 had affected delivery and how this might look going forward.

A number of potential challenges were raised by Guidance Managers in relation to the current uncertainty in the sector and with the labour market. *'We won't really know until*

*September the position that colleges and universities will be in so that is a big challenge.’  
‘We need clear information for year 13s if they don’t get the results they expect.’*

### Careers providers are using new platforms to connect with young people

All Guidance Managers reported that a range of platforms were being used by their staff to carry out personal guidance. The most popular approach was telephone guidance, but additional platforms have been trialled including Zoom, Teams and Google Meet, as well as social media, newsletters, email and text. There have been inevitable concerns from schools about security and safeguarding when using some online platforms (notably Zoom and Whatsapp) as well as issues with student engagement. However, colleges have embraced these platforms more readily, with one college reporting very good engagement via Zoom.

### Polarised views on the priority of CEIAG

Feedback from Guidance Managers indicated that the picture from Senior Leaders in schools and colleges has been mixed in terms of priorities, with two distinct standpoints: for some, careers guidance will be low on the agenda due to time constraints, for others the careers guidance service is more important than ever. Guidance Managers felt these different stances would be difficult to manage from a delivery perspective.

Responses from Careers Leaders were also mixed in relation to the priority of CEIAG in the new term, with 58% saying it would be high on the agenda, 10% feeling it wouldn’t be, and the remaining 32% unsure.

*‘We know there will be additional pressures on schools come September but one hour with a careers adviser can have a huge impact on a young person.’* **Guidance Manager**

*‘There has been some talk of reducing the content of exams or students taking fewer GCSEs; this would help release some pressure and may protect PSHE and tutor time.’*  
**Guidance Manager**

Things are still unclear in terms of subject delivery and how exams will look for schools and colleges but this may be one of many solutions to alleviate pressure.

### Student engagement is more difficult

The picture has also been mixed across schools and colleges in West Yorkshire as a result of various factors. Careers advisers have been able to engage well with pupils in some schools, but others have proved more difficult. Inevitably, family circumstances and home schooling will be different for every child and the added demands of being at home can present barriers to engagement for some. Young people may now have caring responsibilities, be struggling with worsened mental health or have issues with IT access. Furthermore, some students will find it more difficult to engage over the telephone. ESOL and SEND students may struggle over the telephone and may be reliant on visual cues.

*'We need to develop these alternative platforms in order to be inclusive.'* **Guidance Manager**

Students in years 7, 10 and 12 returned to schools and colleges for a short time before the summer break, making engagement easier to some extent. However, Guidance Managers expect that the focus for those going into years 11 and 13, in particular, will be on attainment. Careers guidance for this group entering a key transition period is also of huge importance so the onus is on careers companies and professionals to work with individual schools and colleges to ensure students receive the support they need. The key here is prioritising and targeting support and supplementing guidance with a range of resources that can be accessed by teachers and by pupils independently. *'During this period, year 12s would normally have had lots of interaction, exploring HE options and starting personal statements, so anything that could go out to these students covering these areas would really help.'* **Guidance Manager**

Information at Key Stage 3 was also highlighted as an important consideration for colleges, apprenticeship providers and universities during this time. *'Raising awareness at Key Stage 3 is important to support with options and external influences can be huge for these younger year groups.'* **Guidance Manager**

### Increased use of digital interactions

Despite the challenges of the lockdown situation, there have been some positive outcomes as a result of new ways of working.

*'Some really hard to reach students, who were school non-attenders, are now engaging really well via email.'* **Guidance Manager**

Some young people have responded very positively to the use of digital channels for guidance and there has also been a significant upturn in parental engagement. This has been echoed across a number of different schools and colleges and has highlighted the importance of using a variety of different communication methods to meet individual needs. For some, a more distanced approach such as social media or email can sometimes provide a forum for more open and honest interaction.

*'We are finding new ways of reaching out to students and it will help us really change the way we think about things and business plan for the future.'* **Guidance Manager**

### What CEIAG might look like during the autumn term

There is uncertainty around how guidance will work in the new term. Guidance Managers have reported that some schools have indicated that they would like careers advisers to be on site for socially distanced interactions, or interactions via Zoom on site, others are unsure. This was not, however, reported by any of the Go Higher West Yorkshire partner schools. This period has opened the door to combining new and traditional approaches and tailoring to suit the individual and institution. On request of schools, various bitesize resources are being developed to be delivered virtually, including videos and



presentations. One Guidance Manager suggested producing a centralised set of resources for students and parents and this is a theme that has been presented by various respondents throughout the research process.

Although there is little clarity on what things will look like in schools and colleges in the new term in relation to curriculum time, subject choices and exam resits, as well as uncertainty around students' wider choices and the labour market, careers companies are adapting well to this new environment and supporting young people in a variety of ways. There are inevitable constraints to new online approaches, but they could be viewed as contributing to the digital literacy of students and improving their skills ready for employer, university or college interviews.

### Impact of digital resources in improving access

Technology has the potential to allow rural schools and students the possibility to access education providers, workplaces or sectors that would otherwise be prohibitively difficult. Furthermore, as more companies allow their employees the freedom to work from home, allowing students access to the digital platforms that facilitate this, can only make them more employable.

## 4.2 Local Enterprise Partnership

The Careers Manager from the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership provided feedback in response to a tailored survey. Contributors included the Lead Enterprise Co-ordinator, three Enterprise Co-ordinators and two Project Managers.

### Investment in digital resources

The LEP are currently working on resources that can be shared with schools and colleges and this ties in well with the aims of our research. One of the main messages from our Careers Leaders survey was that a range of quality assured digital resources would prove very valuable and that they were often overwhelmed by information overload. *'We have created digital resources on career decision making and produced lessons in partnership with employers that link to Maths, English and Science. We are also working closely with providers and employers to share opportunities with schools and colleges and have done this via regional newsletters.'* **LEP Careers Manager**

Furthermore, a teacher survey conducted by the LEP echoed the findings of this report with a need for *'short, sharp interventions such as icebreakers and videos.'*

The Careers Manager felt, that *'creating a range of information to meet the needs of different young people and their influencers; including stories, case studies, signposting and practical activities,'* would be most effective in ensuring engagement.

Discussion of delivery platforms formed part of the survey. The LEP have previously consulted with young people on this and the use of apps has been cited as something

that they 'wouldn't use.' It would be worth exploring this further to ensure needs are being met, as apps were mentioned by some of the school, college and HE Provider respondents as a potential solution for improving access.\*

### **Employers have concerns that safeguarding protocols/policies will be a barrier to digital encounters with students**

The LEP are also working with schools and colleges to enable better access for employers. One of the main concerns for employers was around safeguarding policies in light of new delivery methods. *'We need clarity around the role of employers in schools and consistent guidance around safeguarding.'* Further discussion with schools and colleges is needed in order to develop and agree a way forward on this. A further recommendation for Go Higher West Yorkshire would be to work closely with the LEP to expand on and contribute to their toolkit of resources, as well as consulting with young people on their specific needs and what delivery methods and resources would work for them during the current climate.

## **4.3 HE providers**

HE Providers were invited to offer examples of current outreach practices and plans for the new academic year.

Of those HE providers surveyed, 100% were already offering online outreach activities. The type of activities were mostly one-off online activities such as open days and presentations/webinars supported by online or downloadable materials.

### **A range of activities and platforms are being used and evaluated**

A range of platforms were reported including MS Teams, Google Meet, Slido and Unibuddy.

All providers reported using Unibuddy but had used the platform in different ways. This was popular with students and had good potential for engagement and tracking of activities because of its integrated capabilities. Respondents also reported new software due to be trialled including Sway and Stream.

100% reported using 'Live' sessions with a question and answer format as well as static presentations. Small group pre-recorded sessions have been created by academics to use in lessons and this approach fits well with what Careers Leaders have suggested would work for them. Providers had trialled online applicant days using live chat with academic staff and student ambassadors and had received good feedback from students and staff with good uptake. One provider's summer school has been delivered remotely; with 2 days' activities spread over a week. Providers are also developing podcasts and you tube videos and would like to grow these resources.

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\* The Unibuddy app was cited as one example.

### 4.3.1 Analysis of Approaches

It came through strongly during the research that the evidence base is still in its infancy in terms of new approaches and that providers were still in the early stages of gathering feedback and evaluating to see what students, staff and parents felt was working. It is also important to evaluate the effectiveness of existing outreach methods within this new set of circumstances.

#### Initial feedback from HE Providers is good

Initial feedback from both Higher Education Providers and schools/colleges has indicated that virtual open days have been well-received, and that the Q&A format had the potential to be engaging and meaningful for individuals. It is difficult, however, to replicate the experience a face to face campus visit would have, and the resulting impact on a student in terms of developing independence and seeing the environment where they would be studying.

There was particularly good feedback about Unibuddy and how this is being used to deliver webinars as well as providing a platform for prospective university students to engage one to one with current students. *'Unibuddy is great for providing data on interactions so is good for evaluation. It allows you to send emails to a student and get their feedback so has the potential to show how an intervention has impacted their decision making.'* HE Provider.

#### Live events and bespoke small group activities are high impact but timetabling is difficult

Throughout the research, a number of Careers Leaders discussed the pros and cons of live versus static (pre-recorded) approaches. One of the barriers to accessing live workshops and events is timetabling and demands on curriculum time. The live approach has the potential to deliver greater impact and opportunity for two-way interaction, but group activities do not necessarily generate two way interaction for all participants and young people are sometimes reluctant to voice questions in a group. In the absence of direct interaction and difficulty in delivering real time activities to suit the needs of schools and colleges, providers are trying out different methods to enable students to ask questions and provide feedback on activities at a later date.

This lockdown period has seen increased use (reported by HE Providers) of peer to peer interactions and use of ambassadors, so a more bespoke one to one or small group theme is common. This approach will have the potential for more meaningful and impactful encounters but is inevitably more time consuming and has a smaller reach. Its real value could be in complementing and building on those activities with wider reach activities such as large-scale events and webinars (via breakout activities or separate interventions within the CEIAG programme).

Online resources were being used by all providers: *'transition resources are beneficial to students, and as an online resource have a wider reach than a taught module.'* *'In an online forum some students are more likely to engage as it doesn't involve them having to pose a question in a large lecture theatre or at a crowded HE stand.'* **HE Provider.**

The benefits of online approaches echo those cited by the Guidance Companies in providing the potential to engage with those that are more reticent in face to face situations. One difficulty is that take-up will be mixed and dependant on the abilities and motivation of individual students and/or their support to access these resources. Schools reported that engagement with resources while pupils were working from home was relatively low and difficult to monitor.

## 5. Challenges in relation to CEIAG delivery

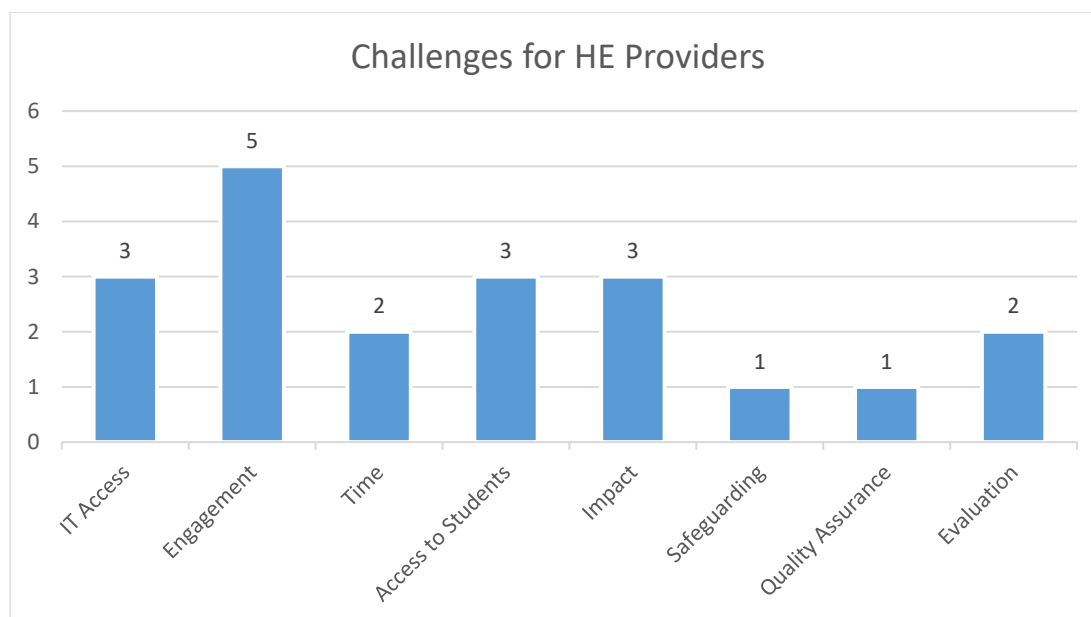
18 schools/colleges, 4 Guidance Managers and 5 HE Providers were asked what they felt the challenges would be in relation to CEIAG delivery in the new academic year.

### Careers Leader responses



The bar chart displays emerging issues in light of new approaches to outreach activity, with IT access, engagement, time, and access to students the most commonly cited concerns by schools and colleges.

## HE Provider responses



Engagement, IT access, access to students and impact were the biggest concerns for HE Providers. The themes echoed those from schools and colleges, and evaluation was also discussed in addition.

## Guidance Manager responses

All four Guidance Managers were in agreement about potential challenges for delivery (as detailed in section 3.1):

- Labour market uncertainty
- The impact of exam disruption on transition to college and university
- Safeguarding in light of new approaches to delivery
- Student engagement
- School and college priorities for the new term

**5.2.1 Access to IT** at home and in school: This was cited as an issue for all School/college respondents: *'a lot of students don't have IT access at home.'*

Many young people may not have a laptop or may be sharing devices; internet access may not be available or may be poor, data may not be available to access content on mobile devices. This highlights young people's unequal access to digital resources.

In terms of IT access in schools and colleges, responses varied, ranging from one institution having dedicated IT lessons in which pupils could work on careers activities and others having more limited access. Approximately 30% of respondents said IT access was poor in school, citing this as a particular issue, 30% reported access as mixed or variable, and 30% said it was good, the remaining 10% weren't sure how things would look in September. One school suggested teachers presenting pre-recorded CEIAG

content on a whiteboard rather than pupils having individual access in order to bypass the access issue.

Solutions to digital disadvantage have been addressed more widely by the government and charities but we have yet to see the impact of this. For example, loan of laptops from the Sutton Trust and the DfE scheme Expanding Digital Access.

In order to make things as accessible as possible, it is useful for activity providers to make it clear what students will need in order to access certain activities and provide alternatives where possible (e.g. hard copy backup materials). Producing resources that could be accessed live or on-demand would also help with access, as well as using platforms that are accessible on mobile devices.

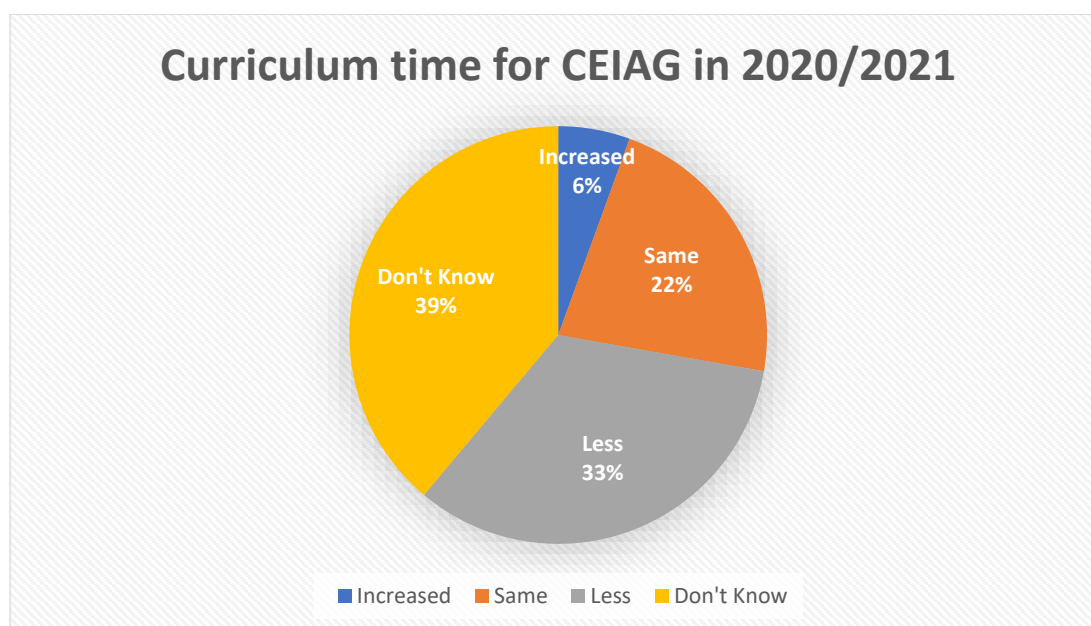
### **5.2.2 Engagement**

All Careers Leaders reported lower engagement with schoolwork generally due to the nature of home schooling, and, in turn, careers activities. This has been exacerbated by the fact that some students will be carers at home, or have limited support from parents/carers, and the amount of time or motivation for schoolwork varies dramatically from person to person.

There are concerns from HE Providers around how they can engage with all students effectively when contact is reduced/restricted. Effective marketing and streamlined and quality assured resources will help Careers Leaders to support with the promotion of a range of options for students, as well as close working with teaching and support staff in schools and colleges to facilitate activities. It was also suggested that instructional guides could accompany resources to allow parents to support with their use.

### 5.2.3 Time

Figure 5.2.3 The impact on curriculum time for CEIAG in 2020/2021



Careers Leaders were asked about the impact on curriculum time for CEIAG in 2020/2021. Responses were mixed in terms of the expected impact. Some of the Careers Leaders polled expected no changes to allocated time for CEIAG, despite the need for catching up with core subjects, one even allocating more time for careers within the enterprise curriculum. Some careers leaders have used the time during lockdown to further embed careers in the curriculum and this can be a good way of ensuring some careers input takes place if it is going to be reduced elsewhere.

Most said there would be changes to the curriculum but didn't know what this would look like yet. It was generally felt that approaches to delivery of CEIAG would change during the period 2020-2021. This included reduced time and consequently more of a focus on KS4 and 5 given the need to prioritise.

*'We have concerns around staff panicking about catch up work leaving no time out of lessons for careers activities.'*

*'It feels like overload for year 10s in particular.'*

*'There is still flexibility for pupils to participate in activities, with the exception of year 11s.'*

*'Year 11 only get PME (personal development lessons) once every two weeks, the rest of the school get weekly lessons. There isn't a lot of time to fit careers lessons in.'*

*'What time we have may be solely during form time and after school, which means that students who are more disengaged will be less likely to be accessing provision.'*

*'Through curriculum and Learning 4 Life, most of the careers programme will remain the same. We are looking at ways of how best to implement any changes we need to make.'*

### **Careers Leaders**

Emerging themes included an emphasis on pupils undertaking more independent work and cancellation of drop-down days due to the uncertainty around inviting visitors into schools and colleges at this time.

Senior Leaders in schools and colleges will need to try and find time to plug the inevitable academic learning gap created by the digital divide. As we have seen in our research, this additional learning in many instances could eat into time used to provide much needed careers education, information, advice and guidance.

### **Need for small/bitesize, focused and quality CEIAG interventions**

Due to these time restrictions, a smaller number of focused, short, quality interventions will be important in order to ensure students are equipped with the information they need. This, supplemented by a flexible set of resources that could also be accessed outside of school/college time as needed.

## **5.2.4 Access to Students**

This was mentioned as a concern by all guidance providers and HE Providers. With schools uncertain about when face to face interactions will be permitted, and with pupils facing other curriculum commitments, activities in the new academic year may look very different. It is inevitable that core subjects will be a priority and school/college feedback supported this assertion. Working closely with schools, colleges and young people to identify their needs will be key, as well as tailoring interventions to suit timetabling, with flexible and static options, and printed/printable resources where possible to ensure access is available for all.

## **5.2.5 Ensuring impact:**

*'Face to face visits are really impactful and it's hard to see how you could replicate that level of engagement.'* *'Social media is not as engaging or two way.'* **Careers Leader**

### **Digital solutions will compliment rather than replace face to face interactions**

It is important during this period of transition to note that online activities may never be able to replicate or replace face to face options and nor should they. The onus should be on providing a range of activities that are as accessible as possible and are complemented by some level of interaction and support activity to make them meaningful for an individual.



## Support staff involvement is key to evaluating impact/ensuring pupil voice

Support staff are key in enabling access to young people and helping providers to gather feedback and evaluate what is working so as to ensure pupil voice is heard and things can adapt accordingly. Wrap around support for activities will enhance their impact by enabling effective preparation and evaluation and helping students to link to their overall career journey.

### 5.2.6 Safeguarding

#### Safeguarding policies may need reviewing to facilitate digital delivery

There have been a number of concerns from schools around safeguarding and many schools have advised providers not to use certain platforms such as Zoom. Colleges, however, have not reported the same issues with safeguarding and have been using a wider range of platforms. Solutions from HE providers and schools include schools inviting providers into their systems, two people delivering talks rather than one, each school having a safeguarding policy covering online interactions and following school's Safeguarding protocols. As a consequence of changes in delivery, safeguarding policies and systems should be reviewed to embrace new ways of working.

### 5.2.7 Tracking: Monitoring and Recording interventions and Evaluation

With many students off site during the lockdown period and accessing content remotely, monitoring and recording work relating to CEIAG is an issue for schools, particularly if students are not formally submitting work.

*'It is difficult to know how well an activity is received, if work is done, and how the students have used resources.'* **Careers Leader.**

*'It is really difficult to guarantee and track that students access resources and opportunities without being able to physically ensure they are in a room and paying attention.'* **Careers Leader.**

Some schools are using Google Classroom and online programmes such as Start to record activities, and these are reported as working well. Different packages can be adapted to suit the needs of different institutions so there is no 'one size fits all' recording solution. Surveys are also being used to look at engagement with activities and gather feedback and some programmes have built-in evaluation tools. There is, however, no easy answer to this as it is difficult to get full engagement under these circumstances. The recording of CEIAG interventions should become easier once students are back on site.

## 5.2.8 Quality Assurance

### Lack of confidence in the quality of online CEIAG

*'I am unsure of the quality of all the online material distributed and can't tell whether the students are actually using the resources.'*

*'The variable quality and volume of resources is an issue.'*

#### Careers Leaders

One solution to this could be in more effective signposting to resources with support from providers, the LEP and careers companies specifically focusing on this. There are a number of websites that pull together resources including Go Higher West Yorkshire and the Careers and Enterprise Company.

These are quality assured and current, and one outcome of our research could be to ensure that providers work together to expand the range of quality assured resources available and that schools and colleges across West Yorkshire are aware of them.

## 5.2.9 Priorities for Schools and Colleges and ways forward

### Y11 and Y13 are a priority for CEIAG

Careers Leaders were asked what their priorities would be for CEIAG in the new academic year:

*'There is likely to be blended learning, at least at the beginning of the year. The priority will be on year 11 and their progression, whilst ensuring that other year groups are given access to CEIAG as appropriate.'*

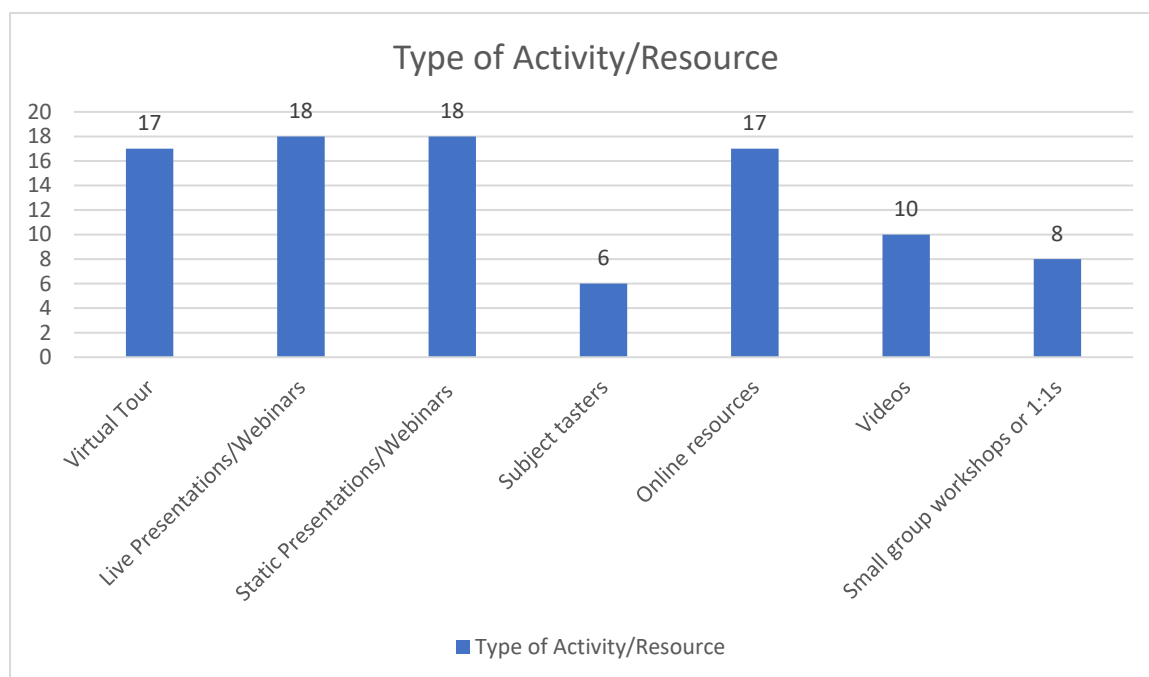
*'Making sure disadvantaged students receive quality CEIAG and that leavers in years 11 and 13 have relevant information in a very new environment for jobs and further study.'*

*'Starting (careers activities) earlier in school will allow students to make more informed decisions ensuring they are aiming for the right grades and subjects from the start and giving them the motivation to do this.'*

All respondents alluded to prioritising for those students in their transition years (11 and 13) as well as tailored, targeted support for vulnerable students but there was also an acknowledgement of the importance of building awareness from Key Stage 3.

## 6. Careers Leaders: What kind of careers activities would be useful

**Figure 6.1** What kind of careers activities would be useful for students at your school/college in the current climate?



Careers Leaders were asked what types of digital activities and resources would work for them in the new academic year in light of potential restrictions to face to face activity.

94% of respondents mentioned that they would value virtual tours of colleges and universities and all felt that a mixture of pre-recorded and 'live' activities would meet the needs of their institution.

*'It would be good to have pre-recorded presentations from alumni who are currently on apprenticeships or at university.'*

*'Using pre-recorded presentations by employers, colleges and universities with the option to ask questions (perhaps a Q&A section on the providers website in response to the webinars/presentations) this gets round timetabling issues and IT issues, as well as being easily recorded and quality assured.'*

*'(Our pupils would benefit from) subject tasters that can be built into the curriculum, short sessions that can be accessed during form time (5 minutes ideally) and online activity that students can work through on their own.'*

*'We would like providers to offer small group interventions. I'm not sure what curriculum time will be like yet, but we are considering small trips out after Christmas, if possible.'*

*'We want to ensure that students complete the basic necessary steps such as writing personal statements, applying for colleges/sixth form or attending interviews.'*

*'Many layers of light touch activities and making sure careers and HE progression is built into the curriculum.'*

*'Bitesize videos about different universities, courses and careers.'*

More than 90% mentioned the usefulness of an online menu of activities or resources that is quality assured: *'Online virtual learning platform,' 'online resources that could be adapted and put into lessons' 'menu of options to choose from and tailor,' 'streamline communications into monthly newsletters as Careers Leaders are bombarded with information.'* The theme here is a portable, flexible set of resources and links including those that can be used independently by students, delivered in lessons, or delivered by external providers.

Virtual subject tasters were mentioned by 30% of respondents. *'Virtual links between departments in colleges and universities and those in schools would work well, for example the history department could use pre-recorded materials from a college or university linked to careers with that subject.'*

Other activities that featured in Careers Leader responses include video assemblies, competitive tasks set by universities and colleges online, virtual tours of a range of businesses, virtual work experience, mock interviews via video call, smaller bespoke group activities and workshops (online or face to face, guidance permitting).

Building skills was also highlighted; in particular resilience, motivation and aspirational outlooks which will have been significantly affected by the pandemic.

## 7. Recommendations

### 7.1 Recommendations for Providers

#### Create Accessible Resources

- Resources should be produced in a variety of formats (videos, virtual presentations, interactive and paper-based) to give schools and colleges the flexibility to easily incorporate them into planned lessons and activities and to meet student needs.
- Resources should be short in duration (bitesize), so they are easily integrated into existing lessons and activities.
- Providers should consider how students will access and use resources including those with SEND, EAL etc and maximise the compatibility of resources to work on different devices including mobile devices.

## Evaluate resources to ensure impact and continue improvement

- Use surveys to evaluate and monitor activities. This evaluation can help develop and improve future resources.
- Capture and monitor data about engagement and participation, new digital platforms that embed feedback and evaluation from young people, e.g. Unibuddy, monitor effectiveness and reach.

## Work collaboratively with schools, colleges, young people and the Local Enterprise Partnership

- Where possible consult with young people, schools and colleges to plan and design activities that are appropriate to their needs.
- Ensure that approaches are safe and appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place. Discuss safeguarding protocols further with schools and colleges and agree on suitable platforms and arrangements to minimise risk.
- Work closely with the LEP to expand on and contribute to their toolkit of resources.

## 7.2 Recommendations for Schools/Colleges

### Tell providers what resources you need, provide feedback and help evaluate

- Start a dialogue with providers early: schools and colleges should speak to providers about what would work for them and continue this dialogue as the situation develops. Take a collaborative approach with Go Higher West Yorkshire and Careers Guidance Providers to help teachers, careers advisers and support staff to facilitate engagement and targeting for widening participation.
- Work closely with providers to ensure online activities and resources meet student needs and there is sufficient preparation and evaluation time/support.
- Evaluate activities by gathering student voice as activities and landscape continue to develop (schools and colleges to share information with HE providers and vice versa).

### Choose quality assured resources

- Use reliable sources when selecting content and activities to promote to students, for example, accessing a 'toolkit' of online resources, including those from Go Higher West Yorkshire, The Careers and Enterprise Company and UCAS.

### Promote and encourage students to access resources

- Plan/allocate time during 2020/21 for a range of small trips and visits, if appropriate.
- Update your careers web page to include new and updated resources.

## Ensure systems and procedures are appropriate for digital resources

- If your current platforms don't embed feedback and evaluation, use surveys to accompany activities in order to evaluate and gather feedback on who has accessed them.
- Use a system for recording CEIAG activities that meets the needs of your institution and allows for reporting and evaluation.
- Adapt risk-assessments and safeguarding procedures relating to delivery of online activities and share with activity providers.

## 8. Conclusion

Lockdown has significantly affected attendance in schools and colleges, disrupting learning in 2019-20. The knock-on effect for 2020-21 means CEIAG is likely to be a lower priority than core subjects. All participants within the study highlighted the importance of being flexible and adaptable and being prepared for all eventualities in the current climate. The challenge for everyone has been the difficulty in predicting the impact/duration of the lockdown and therefore a delay in planning.

It is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from a small-scale study, but some themes did emerge and recommendations can be used to direct further discussion.

One key message was that the activities most valuable and impactful during this period are those that are short/bitesize, accessible and incorporating two-way interaction where possible.

Participants also agreed there should be a menu of activities and resources to meet different needs. A wealth of good quality, up to date, free and paid resources are already available, including from Go Higher West Yorkshire, and these could be made more visible and marketed more widely. A joined-up approach will also enhance this offer. Schools, colleges and providers should work with the LEP to build on these quality resources to meet the needs of young people. This online content can be used as a springboard to more intensive and sustained engagement.

One element missing from the research is pupil voice. It will be necessary to take a collaborative approach and listen to messages from young people, parents and schools/colleges about what is working as the situation evolves. As emerged from the research, all schools and colleges, and the young people attending there, have different needs and there is a great deal of uncertainty about how things will work in the new term.

Despite the challenges discussed throughout, the 'new normal' has led to innovative thinking and trialling new ways of working, generating some positive outcomes in terms of student engagement.

'Elements of this can continue; these new approaches provide access to a wider audience, have the benefits of no travel, and can be great for schools that are isolated.'  
**HE provider**

'This has given us the time to look at and develop the things we've always wanted to do, making our offer more inclusive, flexible and adaptable.'  
**HE Provider**

HE providers are in agreement that we should link online approaches to the wider learner journey. Online will be one of a number of touchpoints that can complement and enhance face to face experiences. The idea is not to replicate or replace the in-person approach but to complement and work alongside these face to face interventions in the longer term.

The focus now is on the transition from emergency outreach to something sustainable, long term and flexible.

