

GHWY Care to Go Higher CPD Programme for Key Influencers of Children in Care: 2021 Virtual Programme Report



Introduction

The second edition of Go Higher West Yorkshire's CPD programme for key influencers of children in care took place from February to July 2021 with 27 participants graduating from the course.

This cohort looked very different from the pilot with all sessions taking place online. Sessions were run via video call, with participants able to access resources via a bespoke account area on the GHWY website. Each session also featured a live talk from a staff member or student ambassadors from one of GHWY's partner HE providers to ensure connectivity with higher education.

Overwhelmingly positive feedback was received from participants, reflected in both the numerical survey data and written responses that were submitted as part of taking part in the course. These responses, along with the results of the pilot programme, reinforces that this project should remain a cornerstone of GHWY's work to support care experienced young people.

"I have found this course very useful. I think that there are a lot of grey areas in HE that young people pick up on as they go through school. It is a great resource to help them make the right decisions for them and also help us adults support them in the best way possible!"

Survey data analysis

Baseline survey pre and post course comparisons

To measure the progress of those taking part in the programme we utilised a baseline survey focusing on the knowledge we hoped the key influencers would develop throughout the course. Participants were asked to rank themselves out of ten on statements relating to a range of topics before and after completing the course.

The results show that participants' knowledge, understanding and experience of higher education improved significantly after taking part in the course. This puts them in a better position to support their young people with choices relating to education and advocate more effectively for them if needed.

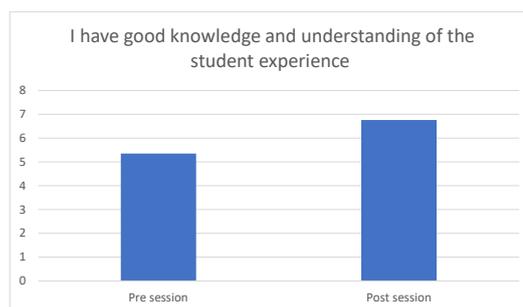
Details of the results can be read in the appendix.

Pre and post session comparisons

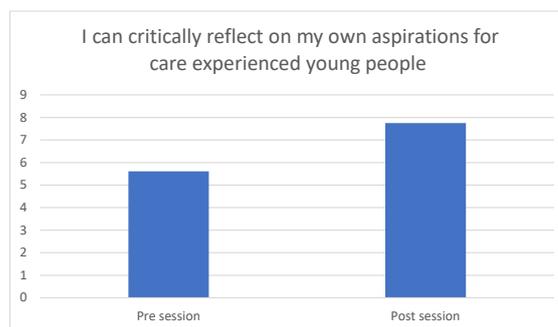
Before and after each session participants were invited to rank a set of three statements through their GHWY online account area. These statements related to the objectives and content of each session to assess the learning of the participants.

Examples from each session (all scores ranked out of 10):

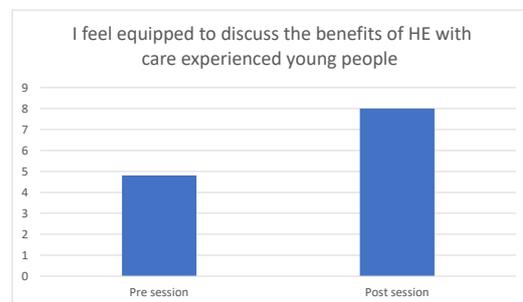
Session 1 (26.36% increase)



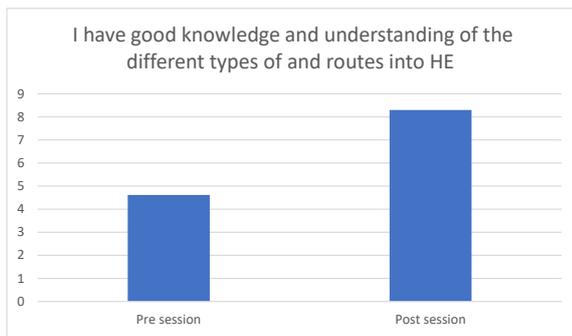
Session 2 (38.15% increase)



Session 3 (66.32% increase)



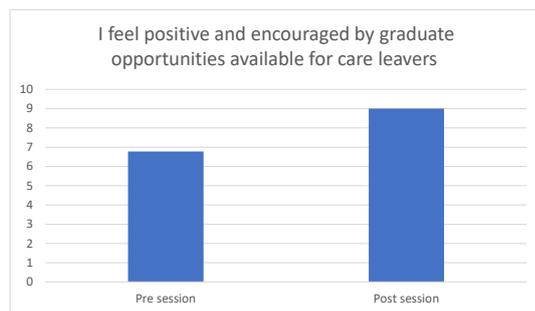
Session 4 (79.65% increase)



Session 5 (137.67% increase)



Session 6 (32.74% increase)



For every statement the average score before the session had increased by the post session survey, showing that the key messages got through to those taking part in the course, even with sessions taking place virtually.

"I was unsure what I may learn on this course at first but I have been pleasantly surprised. There has been a lot of planning effort and careful consideration as to what the content of the course is. The guest speakers were excellent."

Feedback

Participants were also asked to provide written feedback during the final session on whether the course had met their expectations at the start of the programme. This was done anonymously via padlet with a range of responses given below (and

throughout the report in blue frames):

"Useful to have up to date information including bespoke support for care leavers."

"I was able to find out more than I had anticipated and loved the links to the care leaver university contacts. Big thank you."

"I have learnt so much that I didn't know about what support / finances are available to care leavers."

"The breakout sessions were very useful with just the right mix of presentation vs group discussions."

"The sessions have been great as I have kids in years 10, 11 and 12 currently so all information is helpful in guiding them in their further education."

"This course has been very valuable. It gave great insight into how we can support young people in our care."

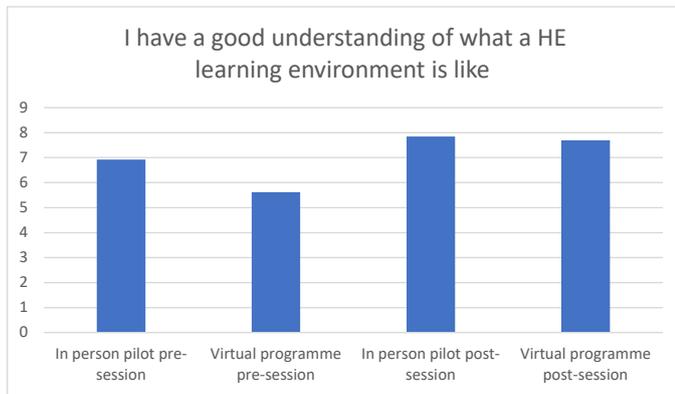
"I've found this course very informative and will hopefully be able to bring this into my work with young people."

"I have found the resources very useful and have downloaded and printed them out to put in my file profile."

Virtual vs in person

A comparison can be made between the results of the virtual programme with the previous pilot programme that was delivered in-person and had sessions taking place on HE campuses around the region.

The same aims and objectives were used for both programmes, which meant the same statements were used pre and post each session, allowing for a direct comparison to be drawn:



(Figures based on 13 participants for in-person pilot pre-session; 12 for post-session; 16 for virtual pre-session and 13 post-session)

The statement from session 3 is particularly important to consider as you could expect there to be a drop off given that the pilot programme allowed participants to physically experience a HE learning environment and to tour a campus. However, there is no such difference visible, suggesting that the virtual programme was equally effective at improving the understanding of participants.

Across all the session surveys there were very similar post-session results for both courses, with the average scores of all post-session statements around the same value. Additionally, the participants from the virtual course generally started from a lower ranking, meaning a higher percentage of improvement.

"I feel confident that I can help my young people access support, both wellbeing and financial. This was a key worry before the course."



Feedback on the virtual course

Participants were also asked in the final session for their thoughts on the virtual nature of the course, whether they felt connected to GHWY and to each other, and if starting the course again what their preference for virtual or in-person would be.

The vast majority of responders to these questions indicated that part of the virtual nature of the course should be retained, with quite a few of these commenting on how it made attending sessions logistically easier.

"The virtual nature of the programme was much better than expected. Being online does make it easier for many to join and take part, particularly if they have commitments during the day. A mixture of both in person and virtual would be the best way forward." Foster Carer, Leeds

"I like that it was delivered virtually. It was much more accessible when mixing this with my work schedule. The content is excellent and relevant. Very glad I took part." Children's Residential Home Worker, Calderdale

However, for a couple of people it did not work as well:

"I didn't like the virtual thing - my preference would be in person, but think it would have to be shorter. Didn't feel like it made for making good links." Children's Residential Home Worker, Calderdale

It also should be remembered that the course being completely virtual was made clear to participants before they signed up for the programme. This may have put some people off applying to participate at the pre-enrolment stage.

Overall, from feedback it seems that the most popular format for future versions of the course would be a blended approach. By doing the first session in-person it could help participants form a connection with others, and then it could be a case of doing half the course online, with the other half of sessions taking place on HE campuses to allow immersion in that environment.

Overwhelmingly the course has received positive feedback from participants, some of whom have

even asked how they can help to promote the next programme to their peers. Combining this feedback with the survey results showcases the positive impact that taking part in the course had on key influencers of children in care.

This reinforces that the Care to Go Higher CPD programme should continue to be a key part of GHWY's work, and there remains further potential to reach a larger audience across West Yorkshire.

"I've found the programme so inspiring. I'll be encouraging my young people to go to university now and I'm going to look into studying myself part time. The care experienced students were amazing!"

Potential for expansion to other groups

There is potential to expand the approach of this work to other underrepresented groups that GHWY works with.

The model of training key influencers around higher education is a sustainable form of outreach that allows a wider reach of influence rather than working directly with young people themselves. There is also very limited provision of this type of activity delivered by HE providers themselves, and GHWY would be well-placed to develop these programmes for West Yorkshire.

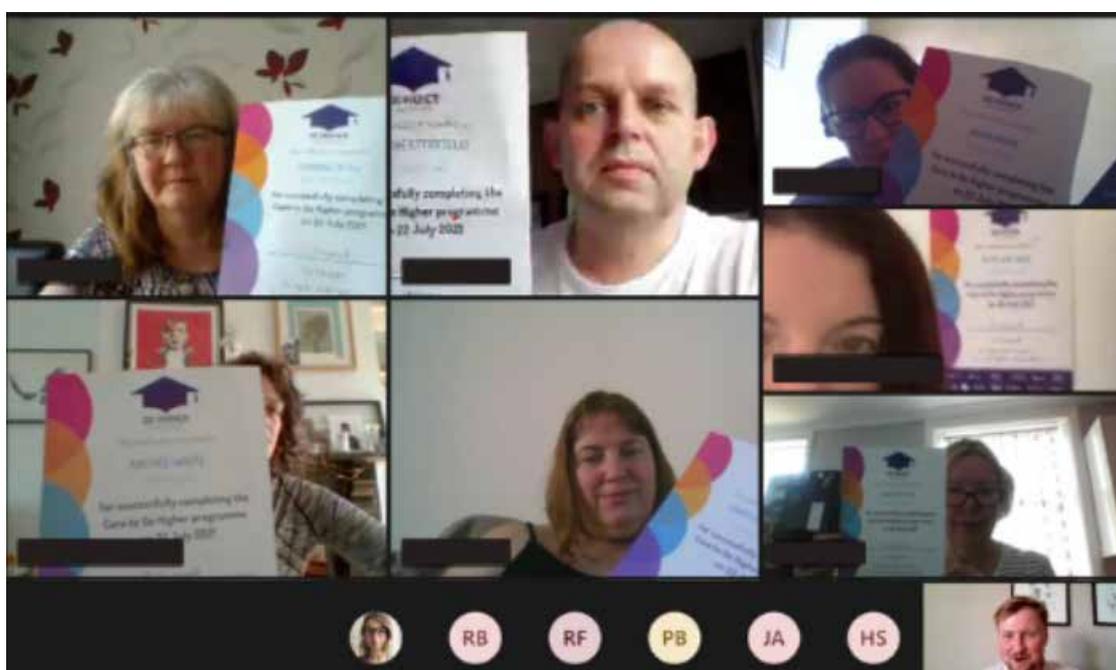
One potential group that could benefit from this approach is refugee and asylum seeking young people. The Refugee Support Network report "I just want

to study", highlights how young refugees struggle to access the correct advice around their education, leading to them making ill-informed choices and be less likely to access higher education.¹

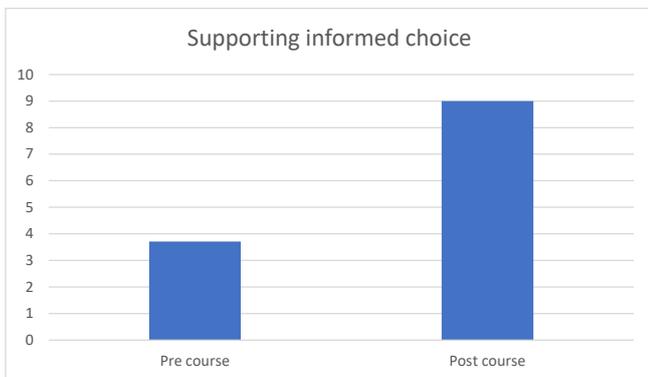
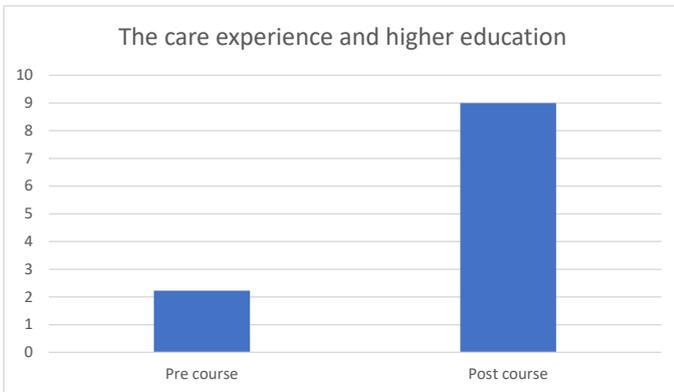
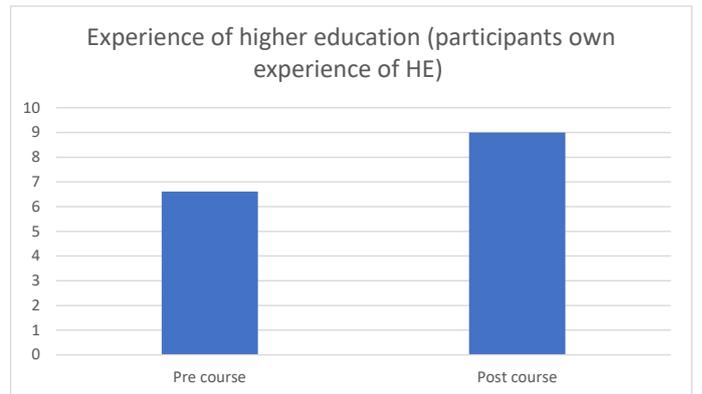
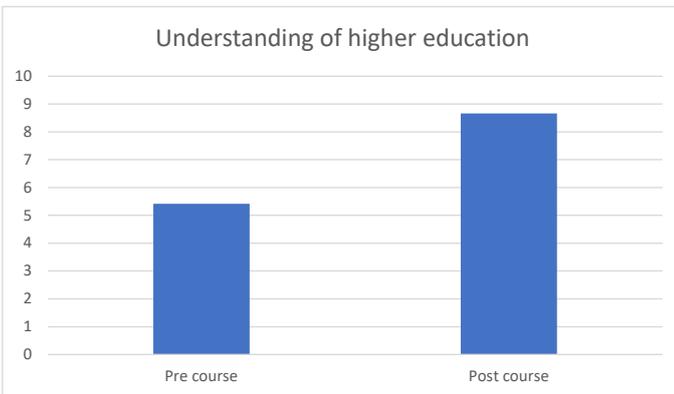
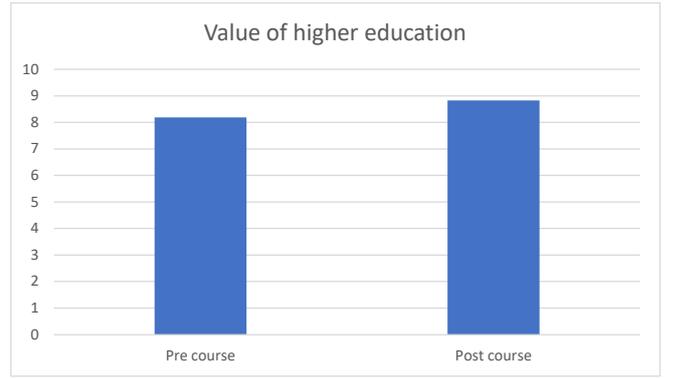
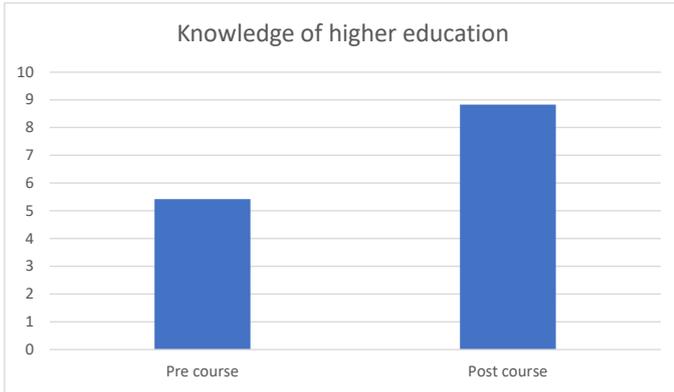
Additionally these young people are having to progress through an educational system that may be very different from the one they have come from, leading to a lack of understanding. Work by the Youth Work Unit on behalf of GHWY has identified that those working with refugee and asylum seeking young people do not always see educational progression as a priority when they are struggling to help them meet basic needs such as food and shelter.

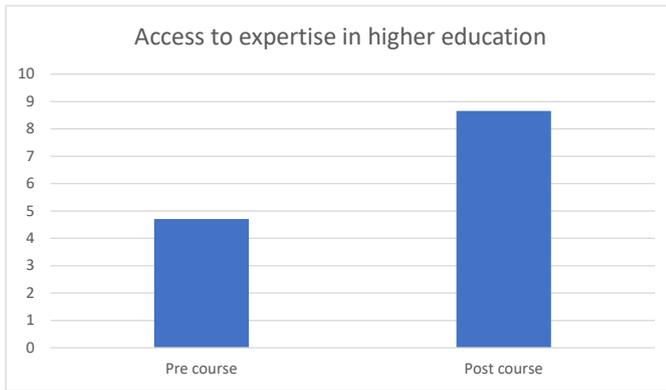
Consequently, a programme that looks to give key influencers of refugee and asylum seeking young people the tools to effectively support the children they work with and teaches them more about the value of higher education could be extremely valuable. This could be targeted at those in community organisations or carers. This would require further research into the support available for these young people at HE providers, as well as the different legal statuses and how they relate to education.

1 Refugee Support Network, "I just want to study": Access to Higher Education for Young Refugees and Asylum Seekers" <http://www.refugeesupportnetwork.org/resources/13-i-just-want-to-study-access-to-higher-education-for-young-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>



Appendix





Further reading

You may also be interested in reading the following reports about GHWY's Care to Go Higher CPD programme:

[OfS case study highlights GHWY's Care to Go Higher CPD programme](https://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/news/of-s-case-study-highlights-ghwys-care-to-go-higher-cpd-programme/), <https://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/news/of-s-case-study-highlights-ghwys-care-to-go-higher-cpd-programme/>

[GHWY publishes evidence report on Care to Go Higher CPD programme](https://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/news/ghwy-publishes-evidence-report-on-care-to-go-higher-cpd-programme/), <https://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/news/ghwy-publishes-evidence-report-on-care-to-go-higher-cpd-programme/>

General information about the programme can be read here:

[Care to Go Higher - A programme for care professionals](https://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/care-to-go-higher/), <https://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/care-to-go-higher/>



Bradford College

 UNIVERSITY OF
BRADFORD

 UNIVERSITY
CENTRE
City of Leeds

University of
Huddersfield
Inspiring global professionals

 KIRKLEES
COLLEGE

 LEEDS
CONSERVATOIRE

 UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

 LEEDS
ARTS
UNIVERSITY
Leeds

 LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

 Leeds
College of
Building

 University
Centre Leeds

 Leeds Trinity
University

 UCW
UNIVERSITY CENTRE
WAKEFIELD COLLEGE

For general enquiries about the work of GHWY contact
hello@gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk