

# CLASS of 2023

## SUMMER SCHOOL

An evaluation of the 2017  
Go Higher West Yorkshire Summer School Programme



National Collaborative  
Outreach Programme

Research Toolkit  
Research - Training - Evaluation

Dr David Wilkinson  
November 2017

Bradford College  
...Further and Higher Education

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*I've learnt that I don't just want to be a back-street hair-dresser. I want to go further in life, I want to progress, I want to go to university.*

**Summer School participant**

## Executive summary

### The Class of 2023 Summer School

The Class of 2023 Summer School took place across a number of Go Higher West Yorkshire partner institutions from Tuesday 18th July to Thursday 20th July 2017. The residential programme was targeted provision offered to schools in West Yorkshire with low engagement and low progression rates into Higher Education (HE). The aims of the programme were to:

- Raise aspirations and confidence.
- Enhance awareness of choice for HE institutions and courses in the region.
- Familiarise students with the HE environment, and make them feel welcome in our institutions.

### Content of the programme

Participants appeared to enjoy the diverse nature of activities and sessions provided by the facilitating programme team. Megan's summary articulates and summarises comments from a number of participants: "The Class of 2023 residential ... was great, I didn't think I wanted to go to Uni but it got me thinking about what I want to do and where I want to go in life. I think it did the same for a lot of other people – it was really inspirational and a great experience."

### Subject taster sessions

Subject taster sessions were of particular value to participants as they presented discipline-specific information in a digestible and engaging way.

### Attitudes towards Higher Education and reflections on progression

Thoughts and considerations of progression to Higher Education presented fundamental attitude shifts for some participants, who were re-assessing what was possible as a result of the programme. As a result, most (71%) agreed/strongly agreed that their understanding of HE level study had become clearer as a result of the programme.

The UCAS fair on the first day was referred to by a number of participants as a positive part of the programme, as this allowed them to informally discuss progression options with a range of providers.

Nearly all participants (82%) indicated that the residential process and experience had made them feel more positive about the future.

### End of the Summer School - distance travelled

By the end of the Summer School, participants reported that their thoughts about progression had become much more focused and had crystallised around a greater confidence (comfort) about going to university.

### Teaching staff reflections

Teachers provided extremely positive feedback about the Summer School. They recognised the considerable resource and effort that had been given over by the programme team, partner institutions and support staff.

The structured nature of the programme was identified as a particular strength as it enabled an effective mix of events, activities, lectures and social experiences for all participants.

### Host/Ambassador reflections

A crucial element of the Summer School was the informal support and guidance provided by student Hosts/Ambassadors. Most supported the entire three-day programme and, as such, were able to participate in all aspects of the programme. "My highlight from the whole residential was being able to see how much the participants got out of it ... at first they were very unclear about Higher Education. By the end of the Summer School they were much clearer and some had a clear progression plan set out for themselves." Matthew Goring, Student Ambassador.

## Introduction

The Class of 2023 Summer School took place across a number of Go Higher West Yorkshire partner organisations from Tuesday 18th July to Thursday 20th July 2017. The residential programme was targeted provision offered to schools in West Yorkshire with low engagement and low progression rates into Higher Education (HE). 93 residential places were offered to target (NCOP and NNCO) schools, which were:

- Airedale Academy (Wakefield)
- Appleton Academy (Bradford)
- Bishop Young Academy (Leeds)
- Bradford Academy (Bradford)
- Carlton Bolling College (Bradford)
- Castleford Academy (Wakefield)
- Cathedral Academy (Wakefield)
- Dixons Trinity Academy (Bradford)
- Featherstone Academy (Wakefield)
- Immanuel College (Bradford)
- Leeds City College 14+ Apprenticeship Academy (Leeds)
- Leeds West Academy (Leeds)
- Westborough High School (Wakefield)

The Summer School was designed by the programme team to enable participants to 'experience' a Higher Education programme and included:

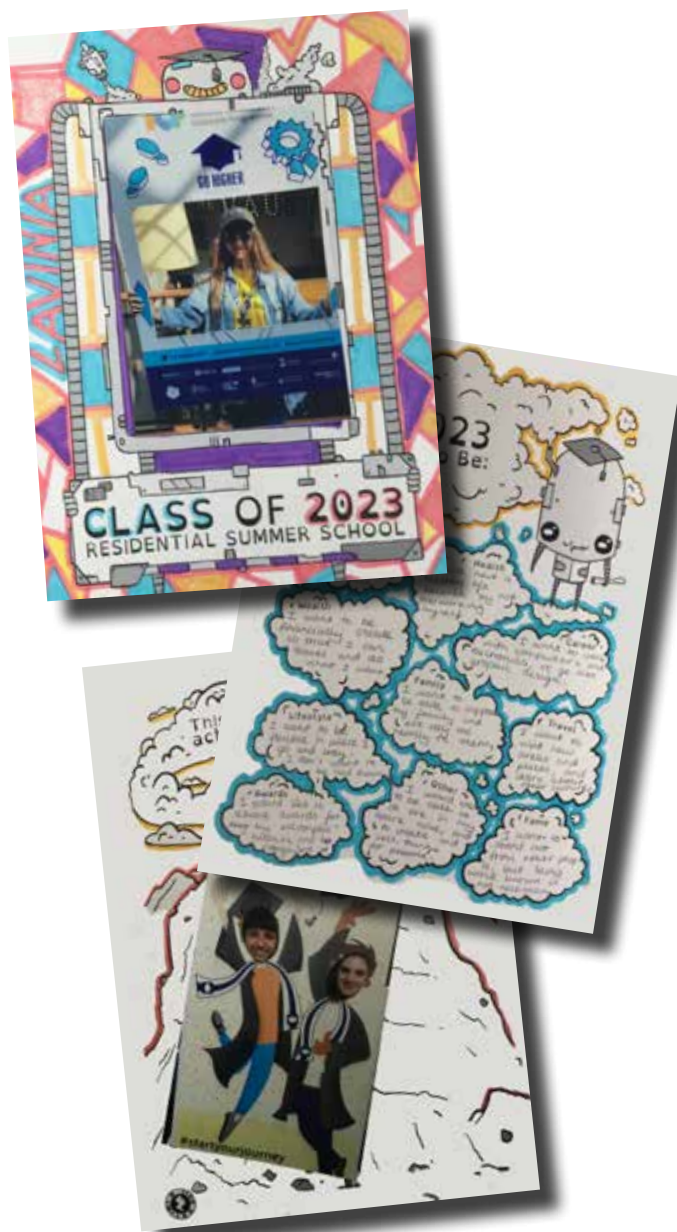
- A UCAS fair allowing participant access to HE College, University, and other providers.
- Academic taster sessions focusing on subject areas offered by Go Higher West Yorkshire partner institutions.
- Social experiences and events designed to support the development of confidence and interpersonal skills.
- A 'graduation ceremony' whereby participants were congratulated on their participation and contribution to the Summer School.

Throughout the whole programme, participants were encouraged to make contributions to their own learning journal or workbook in order to record their thoughts, feelings and reflections.

## Aims of the Summer School

The Class of 2023 Summer School sought to:

- Raise aspirations and confidence.
- Enhance awareness of choice for HE institutions and courses in the region.
- Familiarise students with the HE environment, and make them feel welcome in our institutions.







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I like the idea of independence behind going to university. I also like the idea that you can study what you are really interested in.  
**Summer School participant**

## Participant reflections on the Summer School

The three days were themed in order to reflect a Higher Education student's journey: making informed decisions about courses, sampling university and college-level subjects in taster sessions, and employability and graduation. The theme of the student journey was reinforced by a bespoke 'Class of 2023' reflective workbook designed by Kyle Prior, a student at Leeds Arts University.

A number of video interviews were also recorded with participants on the final day of the Summer School to capture summaries and reflections on the entire residential programme. Additionally, as part of the final day of the programme, participants were asked to record their views in relation to a number of statements about the residential. The Research Toolkit Learning Gain tool was also utilised to help determine areas of the programme that had most effect or impact for participants.

## Content of the programme

Participants appeared to enjoy the diverse nature of activities and sessions provided by the facilitating programme team. Prior to the Summer School, many had negative views on progression, and Higher Education in particular. Megan's summary articulates and summarises comments from a number of participants: *"The Class of 2023 residential ... was great, I didn't think I wanted to go to Uni but it got me thinking about what I want to do and where I want to go in life. I think it did the same for a lot of other people – it was really inspirational and a great experience."*

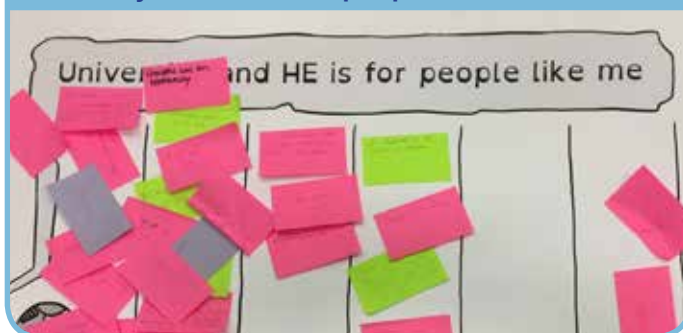
## Subject taster sessions

Subject taster sessions were of particular value to participants as they presented discipline-specific information in a digestible and engaging way. An additional benefit was the introduction to various Higher Education settings available to participants in the West Yorkshire sub-region: *"The subject taster sessions gave us a great insight into what it would be like to study at university or college. It was really interesting to find out how science subjects are taught and dealt with in a university setting."*

## Attitudes towards Higher Education and reflections on progression

Thoughts and considerations of progression to Higher Education presented fundamental attitude shifts for some participants who were re-assessing what was possible, as a result of the programme: *"I've learnt that I don't just want to be a back-street hair-dresser. I want to go further in life ... I want to go to university."*

### University and HE is for people like me



Most participants (77%) agreed/strongly agreed that Higher Education was for people like them (chart 1). Comments received linked to these responses indicate that participants wanted to develop their skills and knowledge, as well as enhancing their career options. Those who were unsure indicated that this may change once their career plans had become formalised.

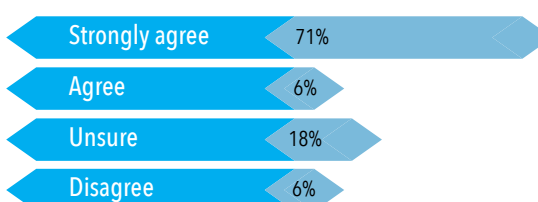


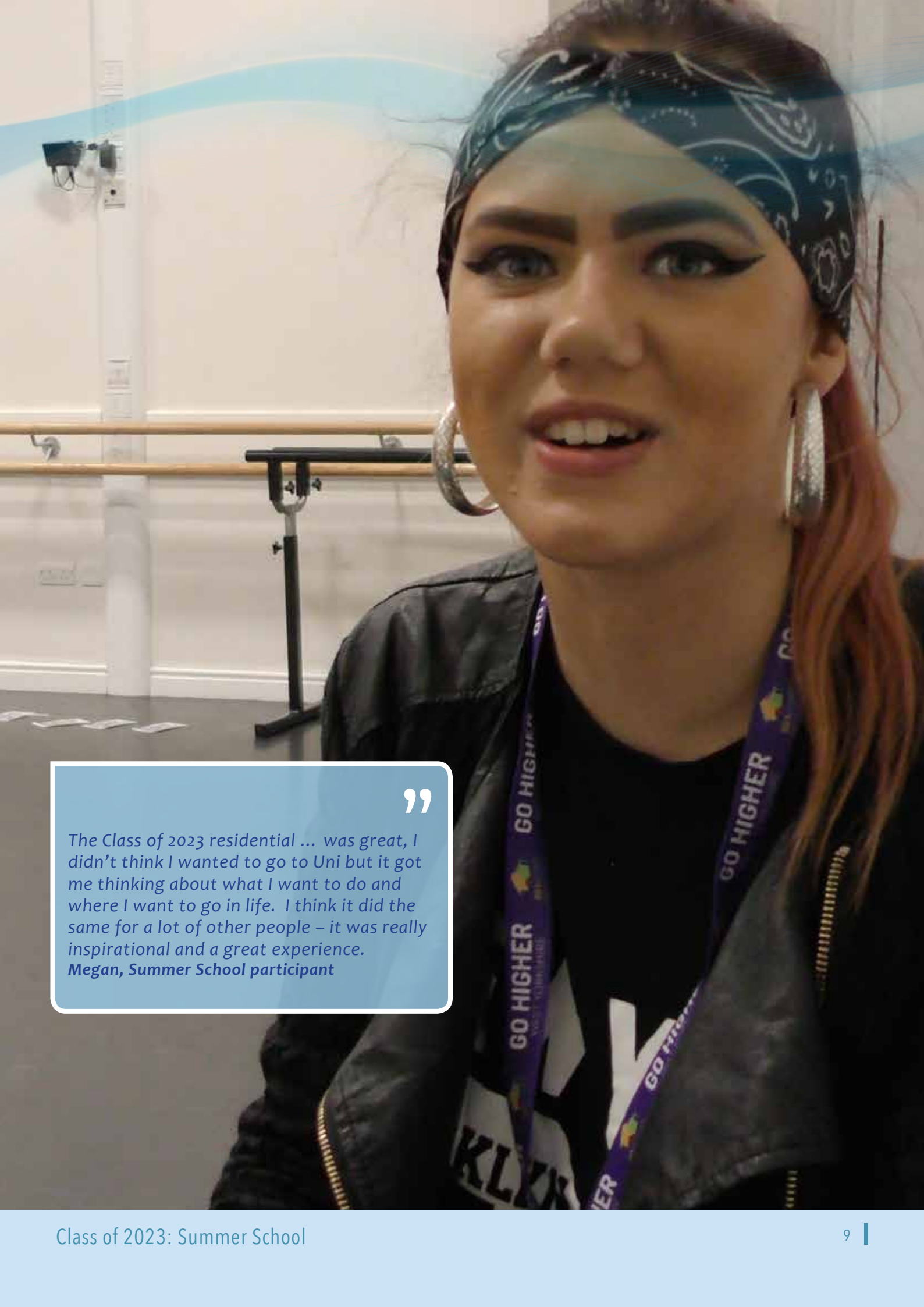
Chart 1: University and HE is for people like me

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*University will give the qualifications for a successful career.*

*I like the idea of independence behind going to university. I also like the idea that you can study what you are really interested in.*





”

The Class of 2023 residential ... was great, I didn't think I wanted to go to Uni but it got me thinking about what I want to do and where I want to go in life. I think it did the same for a lot of other people – it was really inspirational and a great experience.  
**Megan, Summer School participant**



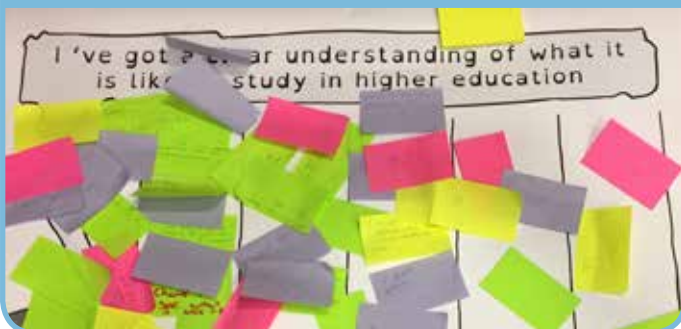
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The subject taster sessions gave us a great insight into what it would be like to study at university or college. It was really interesting to find out how science subjects are taught and dealt with in a university setting.

**Joshua, Summer School participant**



## I've got a clear understanding of what it is like to study in Higher Education



The intensive nature of the three-day residential programme enabled participants to explore many aspects of Higher Education and university life. Taster sessions and experience workshops brought to life the varied approaches to studying and working at advanced levels for many participants (chart 2). As a result, most (71%) agreed/strongly agreed that their understanding of HE level study had become clearer.

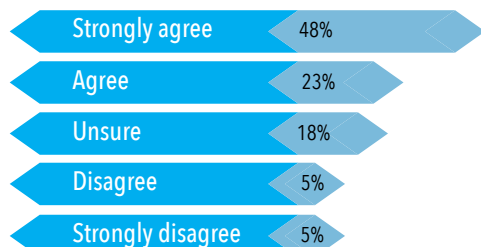


Chart 2: I've got a clear understanding of what it is like to study in Higher Education

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*I got the chance to see what it's like living like a student and taking classes.*

*I've got a much clearer idea now because I've fully participated in this summer school and learnt a lot.*

*I've learnt about student life and finance, as well as the educational side of Higher Education.*

## I've got a clearer idea of my options for future study



Most participants had a very positive view on options for future study following the three-day residential programme (chart 3). The UCAS fair on the first day was referred to by a number of participants as a positive part of the programme, as this allowed them to informally discuss progression options with a range of providers.

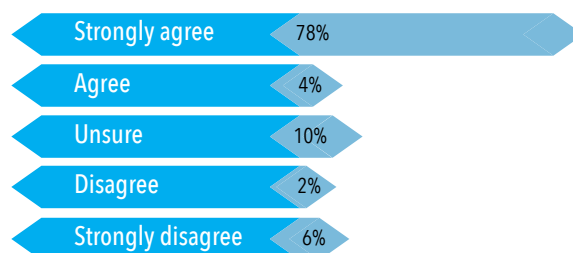


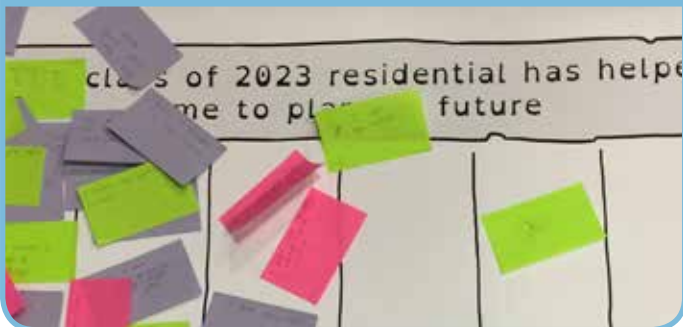
Chart 3: I've got a clearer idea of my options for future study

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*Yes, the UCAS fair allowed me to see the best university/courses available to me.*

*The UCAS fair really helped to shape my thoughts, and to think about the different courses on offer and what comes after them.*

### The class of 2023 residential has helped me to plan my future



Participants appeared to welcome the opportunity to engage in a diverse range of social, academic and skill-building sessions. The structured and informative elements of the programme enabled many to consider the progression options available to them (chart 4). Participants workbook entries also helped to shape and formalise plans for progression.

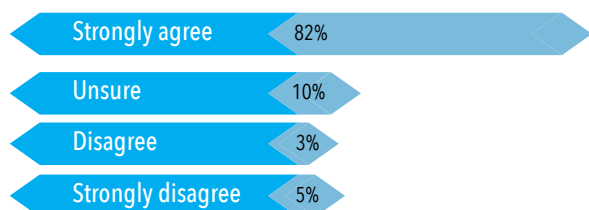


Chart 4: The class of 2023 residential has helped me to plan my future

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*Before I didn't want to go to university, now I do.*

*I am aware of all of the choices and paths I can take. Therefore this Summer School experience has helped me greatly.*

*I've been given lots of information about what I can do in Higher Education - it has made me much more confident.*

### My time on the residential has made me feel more positive about the future



Nearly all participants (82%) indicated that the residential process and experience had made them feel more positive about the future (chart 5). To provide context to this overwhelming positive note, many participants indicated that the mystery and complexity typically associated with HE had been overcome through engagement in enjoyable and interactive sessions. Comments received from those who disagreed/strongly disagreed with this statement were limited, but tended to indicate that there was a greater developmental need in confidence building and goal setting for these participants.

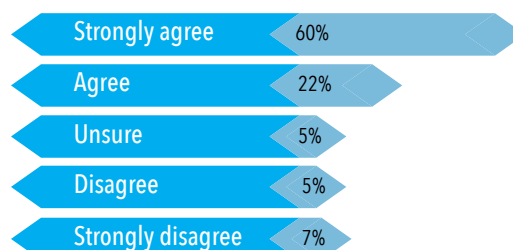


Chart 5: My time on the residential has made me feel more positive about the future

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*It has made me much more confident because it made clear the options that I can choose in the future and how things work in Higher Education.*



## UCAS fair providers

The UCAS fair was singled out by participants, school teaching and support staff, and Hosts/Ambassadors as one of the most useful elements of the entire programme. Representative 'stall holders' included apprenticeship providers, employers, Colleges and Universities. In addition, the programme team were able to secure commitment from other NCOP organisations at the fair (Higher York and Greater Manchester Higher), with the aim of sharing good practice in Summer School design and delivery.

### Providers at the UCAS fair:

- Babbington Group (Apprenticeship provider)
- Bradford College (FE/HE provider and GHWY partner)
- University of Bradford (HE provider and GHWY partner)
- Calderdale College (FE/HE provider and GHWY partner)
- Greater Manchester Higher (NCOP) (Progression support provider)
- Higher York (Progression support provider)
- University of Huddersfield (HE provider and GHWY partner)
- Leeds Beckett University (HE provider and GHWY partner)
- Leeds City College/ Apprenticeships/ Schools Liaison Team (FE/HE, Apprenticeship provider and GHWY partner)
- Leeds Arts University (formerly Leeds College of Art) (FE/HE provider and GHWY partner)
- Leeds College of Building (FE/HE, Apprenticeship provider and GHWY partner)
- Leeds College of Music (FE/HE provider)
- Leeds Trinity University (HE provider and GHWY partner)
- University of Leeds (HE provider and GHWY partner)
- Lloyds Bank (Apprenticeship provider, employer)
- Northumbria University (HE provider)
- Queen Mary's University London (HE provider)
- Sheffield College (HE provider)
- University of Cambridge (HE provider)
- University of Law - Leeds (HE provider)
- Wakefield College (FE/HE provider and GHWY partner)
- West Yorkshire Police (Apprenticeship provider, employer)



## Learning gain tool analysis

The Research Toolkit Learning Gain Tool®, is an interactive resource capable of assessing and measuring impact of educational interventions. It uses pre- and post-activity data to explore impact from the perspective of the activity participant, school or stakeholder representative. This tool has been used successfully to assess change in provision in Hospital Trusts, examined successful elements of university Summer School programmes, and is currently being used as part of a national evaluation of a work placement programme for Year 12/13 learners for the Royal College of General Practitioners.

## Learning and development gain

Our analysis is based on 87 paired responses received from the collaborative residential participants. Each participant completed an 11-statement, paper-based, learning gain instrument at the beginning and end of the Summer School.

## Beginning of the Summer School – some temperature readings

At the beginning of the Summer School, the highest average score was received for the statement about motivation at school and desire to study for a degree. It is clear that, at the beginning of the Summer School, participants were enthusiastic and were looking forward to enhancing their achievements at school or college. The statement that received the least positive score at the beginning of the programme related to an understanding of student life. This result provided a useful baseline for the Summer School programme team as activity and provision focused on student experiences in Higher Education.

## End of the Summer School - distance travelled

By the end of the Summer School, participants reported that their thoughts about progression had become much more focused and had crystallised around a greater confidence (comfort) about going to university. Participants additionally reported that their knowledge and understanding of the breadth and scope of Higher Education provision had dramatically increased by the end of the Summer School. Linked to this was an increased awareness of the subject choices decisions that should be taken in order to facilitate progression to Higher Education.

**COLLABORATIVE RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME 2017**

This survey has been developed to help you see how your skills/views/knowledge in a number of areas are growing or developing. Please answer each statement - with a rating of 1 to 10 (by ticking the relevant box). 1 means you strongly disagree with the statement 10 means you strongly agree with the statement. Please be as honest as possible with your answers - there is no right and wrong answer. The responses you provide are only used to support you, we will not share your answers with anyone else.

(a) Your name (please print):

(b) Your school (please print):

(c) Today's date:

Please select the appropriate number below (by ticking the box). (1 means the worst I could possibly be, 10 means it is the best I could possibly be).

(1) I understand what higher education is:

(2) I am motivated to achieve well at school/college:

(3) I understand the variety of courses available at university and college:

(4) I understand the different routes I can take when I leave school:

(5) I know the subject choices I need to make so that I can go to university/college:

(6) I have a good understanding of apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships as an option to study and work:

(7) I understand what student life is like:

(8) I feel I would be comfortable at university/college:

(9) There's less more to gain from being a student than a degree:

(10) I feel I would enjoy being a student:



## Learning Gain tool – how it works

The Learning Gain© Tool seeks responses to statements from each Summer School participant. Responses are given on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 equals strongly disagree or this very rarely happens/is the case; 10 equals strongly agree or this always happens/is the case). Responses to statements are then averaged across the entire group to determine pre-Summer School scores or ratings, as well as post-Summer School scores or ratings. Differences between pre- and post-Summer School averages are calculated and this produces the learning gain/development or distance travelled in that statement area. We asked participants, at the beginning of the programme, to rate or rank themselves in a number of areas in order to identify baseline positions in relation to attitude and expectation for the Class of 2023 Summer School. A single A4 sheet survey was provided to each participant containing ten statements related to the collaborative residential programme.



Learning Gain question	Pre-Prog.	Post-Prog.	Change	% Change
(1) I understand what Higher Education is.	7.20	9.13	2.56	27% ▲
(2) I am motivated to achieve well at school/college.	8.21	8.93	2.78	9% ▲
(3) I understand the variety of courses available at university and college.	6.16	8.76	2.56	42% ▲
(4) I understand the different routes I can take when I leave school.	6.84	8.76	1.78	28% ▲
(5) I know the subject choices I need to make so that I can go to university/college.	6.15	8.38	3.33	36% ▲
(6) I understand what student life is like.	5.82	7.83	1.44	35% ▲
(7) I feel I would be comfortable at university/college.	5.97	8.73	3.78	46% ▲
(8) There's lots more to gain from being a student than a degree.	6.72	8.68	3.78	29% ▲
(9) I feel I would enjoy being a student.	6.74	8.54	3.78	27% ▲
(10) I have a good understanding of the benefits of apprenticeships as a way to study and work.	7.62	8.90	3.78	17% ▲





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I'm now much more comfortable with the idea of university than I was before the residential.

**Summer School participant**



## Teaching staff reflections

A summary session was organised with teaching staff present at the Summer School. This was facilitated by programme staff and the external evaluator. Teachers from all schools participating in the Summer School attended the review session; informal discussion focused around: what worked well, what could be improved, reflections on impact.

## Resourcing and Ambassador support

Teachers provided extremely positive feedback about the Summer School. They recognised the considerable resource and effort that had been given over by the programme team, partner institutions and support staff. Teachers were very complimentary about Host/Ambassador support. Teachers recognised and appreciated that Hosts/Ambassadors had been through parts of the HE experience so could tell participants 'how it really was in Higher Education'.

## Content and structure

The structured nature of the programme was identified as a particular strength as it enabled an effective mix of events, activities, lectures and social experiences for all participants.

## Staffing levels

Staffing levels (both support and session leaders) were considered appropriate and ensured all participants were supported and encouraged to participate as fully as possible. Staying in halls was a very positive experience for participants, as it gave them the opportunity to experience life on a university campus.

## Experiencing multiple providers

The different sites and institutions participating in the Summer School provided breadth to the experiences for the participants and the teachers. Participants gained knowledge and understanding of some of the differences between institutions (in terms of their programme and course offer), as well as the more nuanced differences associated with studying at newer HE institutions as compared to older more established Universities.

## UCAS fair

The teachers were extremely complimentary about the UCAS fair as this allowed participants to explore progression options with multiple providers from within West Yorkshire but also from further afield. For some participants, this experience provided them with information on courses and progression areas that they would not have previously considered as an option. The diversity of contributors to this session (HE providers, Apprenticeship providers and employers) was commended by all teaching staff as an incredibly important element of the Summer School.

## Possible changes and adaptations for next year

There was some comment from the teachers that the overall structure of the programme could have been more directly presented to participants. Whilst teachers recognised that the content of the Summer School matched the Higher Education experience, some felt that participants might not have made the link between searching for a programme of study (the UCAS fair) to undertaking taster sessions (experiencing a HE programme), and finally completing the programme (graduating on the final day). This was recognised as a difficult task by teachers who commented that the experience of HE was known to them (as teachers) as they had all been through it – however, it was a brand new experience for participants so they were less aware of what to expect, and when, in the HE journey or process.

## Host/Ambassador reflections

A crucial element of the Summer School was the support and guidance provided by student Hosts/Ambassadors. Most supported the entire three days and, as such, were able to participate in all aspects of the programme. We asked for their comments and reflections at the end of the programme and all indicated that they had enjoyed the experience of engaging with young people and encouraging them to feel positive about progressing to Higher Education.

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*I was glad to support the Summer School, it enabled me to give something back as well as developing my own interpersonal skills.*  
**Matt Goodband, Student Ambassador**

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*The young people I worked with learnt a lot about Higher Education and how accessible it really is. It was great to help them to break down those psychological barriers!*  
**Jonny Day, Student Ambassador**

”

*My highlight from the whole residential was being able to see how much the participants got out of it ... at first they were very unclear about Higher Education. By the end of the Summer School they were much clearer and some had a clear progression plan set out for themselves.*  
**Matthew Goring, Student Ambassador**





## Concluding remarks

### An immersive experience

The Go Higher West Yorkshire Summer School provides an immersive experience for participants who wish to explore options for their progression when they reach traditional school-leaving age.

### Support for career and employment intentions

The data collected and collated for this report shows that participants gained valuable insights from the three-day experience. For some, it helped to crystallise their career and employment intentions, for others it opened up new development and progression opportunities.

### Valuable taster sessions

Through engagement in taster sessions and experience workshops, most participants had a clearer understanding of Higher Education provision available to them within their own sub-region.

### Learning gain indicators

Many participants, as our learning gain data show, now feel more comfortable about Higher Education and the social mobility it can bring.

### UCAS fair

Opportunities to meet Higher Education providers (via the UCAS fair) facilitated a deeper awareness of the offer available within and outside the sub-region.

### Structural developments

The Summer School is intensive and the nuanced nature of the programme may require more explicit referencing in supporting programme information. Some participants seemed to be unsure that the entire programme was a mirror of the HE journey: following a model of searching HE providers, finding out about application requirements and processes, engaging in taster sessions and 'graduating' with programme certificates. Teachers suggested that the programme structure and form could be introduced in school-based activity prior to joining the Summer School. More direct links (in activities) to the content of the workbook would help to reinforce the overall aims of the Summer School.

### Future provision

The Summer School proved successful from the perspective of participants, schools, and partner providers. It is already being refined as an established model for future residentials supported by Go Higher West Yorkshire.



**National Collaborative  
Outreach Programme**

If you would like more information about our work at Go Higher West Yorkshire or the National Collaborative Outreach Programme, please visit the website or email us:



[www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk](http://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk)



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