



**GO HIGHER**  
WEST YORKSHIRE

# Annual report 2023-24





Speak Up, Your Voice Matters programme

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## Foreword by Professor Jane Owen-Lynch, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) at the University of Huddersfield, and Chair of GHWY

Go Higher West Yorkshire is a long-standing, formal consortium which brings together a range of Higher Education (HE) providers in our local area. Our partnership exists to help ensure that an individual's background does not determine their ability to benefit from higher education, in all its forms.

The academic year 2023-24 saw a significant amount of change in the focus of the activities that we work on and deliver together. The first change was precipitated by yet further major cuts nationally to the Uni Connect programme, alongside a further narrowing in focus of the Targeted Outreach strand of Uni Connect funding which had previously allowed us to place Go Higher Progression Officers in target schools and colleges. Our partnership's evidence base has shown how impactful the Progression Officer role was in supporting young people to consider their future options, and as this team moves on from their work with GHWY, I would like to personally thank them for their dedication and the difference that they have made in the lives of young people in West Yorkshire. These thanks are extended to all staff who moved on from the Uni Connect programme during 2023/24, as well as those who remain with us: whatever your role, together we have built an effective programme which is in a strong position to continue its successes.

Our second change is responding to a range of factors to increase our refocus our collective efforts on our collaborative 'access



and success' strands of work. This coincides with the successful closure of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority-funded 'Grad Skills' programme which helped new and recent graduates – from a range of groups which experience inequality of opportunity – to move into and move on in their graduate careers. At the end of this academic year, we agreed as a partnership to ramp up access and participation activity, including bringing in-house our Care to Go Higher strand of work – equipping carers and professionals to support care-experienced young people to make decisions about their future options – and also collaborating to evidence the impact of the activity we each deliver to support a range of students into and through our institutions.

As the HE sector continues to move further into uncharted territory with very challenging financial circumstances, pulling together and pooling resources will continue to support our activities. Activities such as GHWY's inaugural collaborative Teachers' and Advisers' Conference in May 2024 are beneficial not just to school and college attendees, who get to experience and learn about a much broader range of HE options than is usually covered at such an event, but also to our member HE providers who will share costs by taking it in turns to host. Continuing to work, share and learn together will remain vital to our future successes.

# What is GHWY?

Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) is a consortium of Higher Education (HE) providers in our local area, working to reduce inequalities in HE access and success.

Our **mission** is to achieve common goals relating to those from underrepresented groups in HE, by connecting our unique range of HE provider members with each other and with external stakeholders.

We do this by:

- Collaborating to support informed HE choices for those who experience inequality of opportunity
- Collaborating to respond to the needs of our target audiences and our 13 member institutions

We cover West Yorkshire.

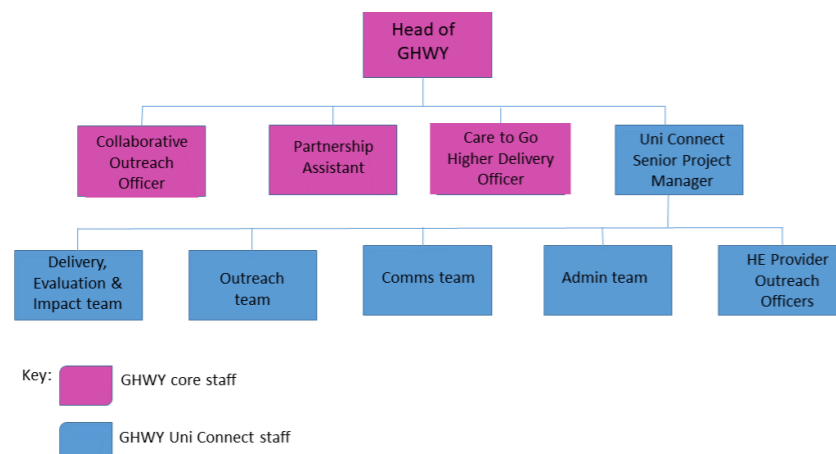
This is through:

- Bringing together strategic networks of staff to share information, ideas and learning, and to collaborate on activity. Alongside the Board, our main group is the Access and Participation Strategy Group, plus associated sub-groups.
- Delivering and supporting collaborative bids for externally-funded projects such as Uni Connect (OfS-funded) and GradSkills (WYCA-funded). You can find out more about past funded projects on the next page.

Our priorities are:

- Those who experience inequality of opportunity
- Supporting informed choices
- Collaborating to develop practice
- Embedding evaluative/evidence-based practice

## Team structure



# Previous externally-funded projects

Read examples of our successful collaborative funding bids and activity. Get in touch for support with future collaborative funding bids relevant to our partnership mission.

## National Networks for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO)

GHWY's previous guise – HEART (Higher Education Access Rewarding Transforming) – secured Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) 'NNCO' funding to support the development of local networks in our area and enable greater access to HE. The work laid the ground for our collaborative outreach, and kickstarted our skills strand of work, supporting greater connectivity with West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

[Read more.](#)

## Let's Talk Real Skills (LTRS)

West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges (WYCC) contracted us as a delivery partner for LTRS. The programme invested in new, employer- focused skills training. We used it to inform our employer-focused materials, aiming to support greater access to HE across a wider range of people. The programme also strengthened partnership working across our members and key stakeholders.

[Read more.](#)

**Get in touch at [hello@gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk](mailto:hello@gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk) for support with future collaborative funding bids relevant to our partnership mission**

## National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)

The precursor to Uni Connect, NCOP focused on collaborative HE outreach activity in particular areas of West Yorkshire. It enabled us to more directly engage with local schools and colleges, and to significantly scale up our ambition to support local young people to make informed decisions about their own futures by broadening horizons to a wide range of options.

[Read more.](#)

## Degree Apprenticeships Development Fund Phase 2 (DADF2)

In a bid led by Leeds Trinity University, we were awarded funding through HEFCE's highly competitive DADF2 programme. The project aimed to stimulate the development and delivery of Degree Apprenticeships (DAs) in West Yorkshire. Outputs included new DA curricula, new systems and processes for the recruitment of apprentices, and over 150 apprenticeship starts during the short time-span of the project.

[Read more.](#)

# Collaborating to support informed choices

**Our strategy is to support prospective students to make informed choices by delivering the kind of activity that a single HE provider cannot do alone, and to showcase the huge range of HE options equally. Our work also encompasses activity to help increase attainment for young people in schools, so that HE remains a viable option for them. Here are some examples of key activities delivered.**

## Collaborative opportunities

Our 'Go Higher In...' events focus on particular key sector areas locally. We work with employers to showcase a broad range of careers available. We also consider the varied HE routes into them that are offered across West Yorkshire Higher Education (HE) providers.

This year we delivered six Go Higher In... events to over 300 learners from 25 schools and colleges, with four of these being co-funded by West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). Sharon Le Goff (Enterprise Coordinator, WYCA) said: "The level, the quality and content during... these days was incredible." A learner said: "It was really good to get practical experience of how it all fits together in a real working space"

A full evaluation report will be published later this year.

## Go Higher in Health and Social Care

**Attendees:** 55 Year 9 students from three schools across the region

**Host:** University of Huddersfield

**Industry contacts:** Staff from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service, Active Social Care, and LabCorp, among others

**Impact:** Post event there was a 33% increase in the number of students who understood what it is like to work in this industry.

**What the employers said:** Maria Semertzidou, HR Manager at Active Social Care, said: "It is essential that from a young age the [students] know about the careers available in Health & Social Care and why they are important."

[Find out more.](#)

## Go Higher in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM)

**Attendees:** Over 50 Year 10 students from underrepresented groups (URGs)

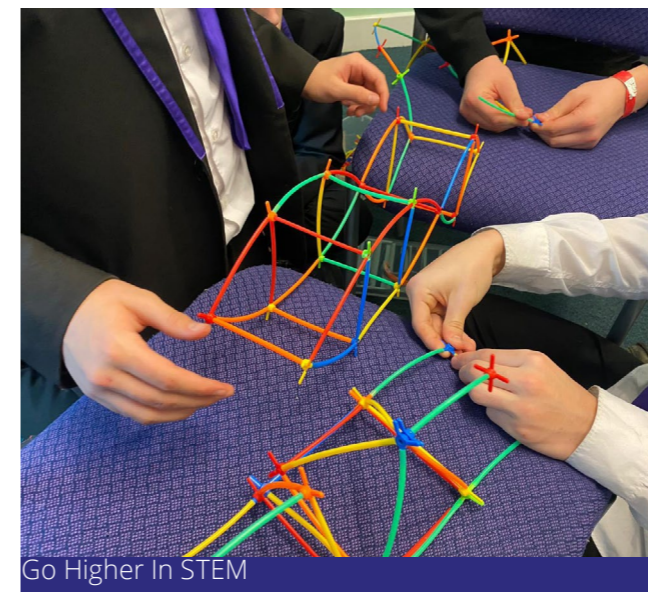
**Host:** Leeds Beckett University

**Industry contacts:** Staff from Network Rail and quantity surveyors, among others

**Impact:** Post-event students noted a 33% increase in their knowledge of working in the industry.

**What the students said:** "It has showed me that they are practical subjects and not only writing."

[Find out more.](#)



## Go Higher in Green Skills

**Attendees:** 50 Year 7 and 8 students from four schools across the region.

**Host:** Bradley Wood Activity Centre in Brighouse

**Industry contacts:** A range of professionals including Lush and Equans

**Impact:** The percentage of learners who said their understanding of what it is like to work in the Green Skills sector also increased from 15% before the event to 61% after.

Student quote: "I never knew how many jobs used green skills."

[Find out more.](#)

## Go Higher in Policing

**Attendees:** Year 12 and 13 Uni Connect students from schools across the West Yorkshire region

**Host:** Leeds Trinity University

**Industry contacts:** West Yorkshire Police and Andi Brierley, a senior lecturer in Criminology

## Go Higher in Leadership and Management

**Attendees:** 65 Year 12 learners from four schools and colleges from across West Yorkshire

**Host:** University of Huddersfield

**Industry contacts:** Apprentice finalist Adam Corbally, among others

## Go Higher in Digital Media and Artificial Intelligence

**Attendees:** Over 35 Year 12 students from three colleges across the region

**Host:** Prime Studios in Leeds

**Industry contacts:** Staff from Leeds Young Film and MetFilm School Leeds, among others

**Impact:** Post event, the number of students who understood the skills they need to pursue a career in this sector increased by 48%.

### [Find out more.](#)

Debbie Maturi, Director of Leeds Young Film: “These events go beyond just film, offering life skills and transferable skills. They also introduce young people to jobs they didn’t know actually existed.”

## Outreach to broaden horizons

### Cockburn John Charles students become Crime Scene Investigators

A group of Year 7 and 8 students from Cockburn John Charles attended a practical crime scene investigation day that was organised by our Uni Connect project.

Led by Think Forensics, the event gave learners a glimpse into the world of forensic science. Activities included a hands-on fingerprinting session, a demonstration of footprint casting, and handwriting analysis. The session demonstrated the importance of methodical processing and teamwork in a sector that was entirely new to many of the attendees.

The activity made forensic science accessible and engaging to attendees, and raised their awareness of various career paths they had not previously considered.

### [Read more.](#)



## Outreach to support informed decisions

### HE Careers Coaching with C&K

We partnered with C&K Careers to develop and deliver HE Careers Coaching to eight of our schools and colleges in 2023-24. The project benefited 112 learners in underrepresented (URG) groups in years 10-13 across the region. It aimed to develop learners’ self-efficacy and locus of control in relation to goal setting through two one-to-one sessions with a qualified careers advisor. The careers advisors provided individual student feedback and also signposted to useful follow-up activities. After taking part in the activity, one student said their next steps were, “to research into job roles (and sectors) that might link to the skills I have identified.” A full evaluation report will follow.

### [Read more.](#)

## Improving academic achievement

### 2023-24 Attainment Raising project

Our six-week Attainment Raising programme was delivered to eight partner schools in 2023-24. This resulted in over 379 learners engaging, including around 80 returning learners from previous academic years.

The programme – which is aimed at years 8, 9 and 10 - helps learners be more effective and efficient in their learning by considering processes used in planning, monitoring, critical thinking, communicating knowledge and applying logic.

Preliminary analysis of pre- and post-survey results from this delivery period showed particular improvements in learners’ communication skills, as well as their knowledge of cognition. Read more: Evaluation of Think and Go Higher: A Metacognition-based Attainment Raising Programme

### [Find out more.](#)

Teacher quote: “I’m impressed with what the students produced, and their presentations were fantastic.”

## Supporting key influencers

### Care to Go Higher

The Care to Go Higher CPD for key influencers of care-experienced young people was delivered twice for the first time in 2023-24. It was also offered collaboratively with the National Youth Agency for youth worker staff as a pilot project. Building on previous success with Wakefield Virtual School, this year's delivery was offered in person. It had fantastic engagement and participation, leading to requests for more tailored deliveries in 2024-25. With this template we will consider the possibility of expanding the tailored delivery for designated teachers to other Virtual Schools in our area.

[Find out more.](#)



## Strategic Outreach

Our Uni Connect focuses on strategic outreach activity with young people from URGs to help them aspire to HE.

### Empowering Boys' Voices conference

Our Empowering Boys' Voices Conference brought together 65 senior leaders and practitioners to address local needs to share best practice when engaging with disengaged boys.

The day included talks from Mark Roberts, author of 'Boys Don't Try?'; Andy Hamilton, Research Associate at the 'Taking Boys Seriously' project; and Dr Alex Blower, who founded Boys Impact. It also provided overviews of our Speak Up, Your Voice Matters programme, and Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HeppSY) Uni Connect on their 'HE Can' programme.

[Read more.](#)

### 'Speak Up' Boys programme

Male learners on Free School Meals were encouraged to focus on their skills as part of a three-part programme our Uni Connect project delivered. The 'Speak Up, Your Voice Matters' programme had a specific emphasis on teamwork, communication, and self-awareness. It offered the students varied experiences and activities, including devising a rap, having a campus tour at the University of Leeds, and attending a motivational talk

by former Leeds Rhino rugby league player Jamie Jones-Buchanan. The programme was offered to learners at Cockburn John Charles, Farnley Academy, Appleton Academy, and Beckfoot Oakbank.

[Read more.](#)

### Aspire to Go Higher

We delivered a quiet campus visit hosted at Leeds Arts University for a group of 13 special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) learners based in New College Pontefract. This event was designed to create a safe environment for learners by scheduling it during the 'quieter' hours of day-to-day campus life. Learners engaged in teambuilding activities to provide meaningful encounters while engaging in HE related content tailored towards the needs of each learner. This included engaging with our Disabled Learner Transition Pack to gain deeper insight into the process of applying to HE.

[Access our transition pack.](#)

### Go Higher presents

Young learners from Black African and Mirpuri Pakistani backgrounds were inspired and empowered by a two-part podcasting event that our Uni Connect project ran. The 'Go Higher Presents' programme introduced learners to HE through a podcasting activity, where they worked towards interviewing student ambassadors from Leeds Beckett University who shared their heritages. The programme was run with 14 year 10 learners from Hanson Academy. The practical element of the programme was delivered at Tileyard

North's state-of-the-art studio in Wakefield.

[Read more.](#)

### Anti racism CPD

Syra Shakir (Leeds Trinity University) delivered online anti-racism training as part of our suite of CPD sessions. She reflected on a student and staff co-creation project that used storytelling as a decolonized pedagogy to educate high school GCSE age students on the 1947 Partition of India. Decolonizing education is an ongoing process that recognizes the importance of diverse voices, experiences, and knowledge systems in shaping a more equitable and just society.

[Watch the webinar.](#)

### The One in Five Podcast

Our Uni Connect project collaborated with Kent Medway Progression Federation and UniTasterDays to co-produce the One in Five podcast series. This was created by disabled students, for disabled students who are thinking about going to university. It covers a range of topics based on their lived experience, including getting a disability diagnosis and support available from HE providers for disabled students. It is hosted on a range of platforms, including UCAS and other Uni Connect partner websites. To date it has had over 465 downloads from across the country. Our promotion included a presentation at this year's NEON conference.

[Read more.](#)

# Collaborating to respond to need

**Our strategy is to support our 13 HE provider member institutions by creating opportunities to share and transfer good practice and learning, and to respond together to relevant common situations or challenges. Here are some examples of key activities delivered.**

## Supporting under- and un-employed graduates

Funded through West Yorkshire Combined Authority and based at Leeds Trinity University, GradSkills offered additional training and support to new and recent under- and un-employed graduates. It supported 255 individuals with access to coaching and skills training. While delivery has officially finished, participants have until March 2025 to complete and progress in their career. Participants rated the provision very highly, consistently awarding around 4.8-5 out of 5. One completer stated afterwards: "I do feel [my goals] are more achievable. I feel more confident going into employment as well; with this course I have more knowledge of where to go for jobs, and how to be more active in the industry."

[Find out more.](#)



## Underrepresented Group (URG) overview

GHWY convenes networks of HE staff to look at the experiences in our institutions of students from URGs and identify where we can work on tangible collaborative outputs together. These aim to improve access and success in HE by removing some of the barriers that URGs can encounter.

## Common definition of care-experienced adopted across GHWY members

One of the challenges that care-experienced students face when navigating HE and support is the different definitions used for care experience by HE providers, UCAS and Student Finance. In order to overcome this, GHWY moved towards a common definition for care-experienced students across the partnership from 2023-24. The move will give care-experienced individuals and their key influencers certainty at the HE application stage that they will be eligible for support from a GHWY member institution.

[Find out more.](#)



## Collaborating to address the lack of male student ambassadors in HE

Is there a lack of male student ambassadors in HE? This is the question that our Males on Free School Meals Network set to answer, as it means there are fewer male role-models to encourage HE applications from males on free school meals. We ran job descriptions through a gender decoder and found fewer males apply for student ambassador roles that are female coded. This was presented at the Driving Impact Working Class Boys conference. Following this, HE providers reviewed their job descriptions for student ambassadors. Data from Leeds Beckett University saw almost 6% increase in male applications after updating to a less gendered job description.

[Find out more.](#)

## Presenting at Stand Alone Pass the Baton conference

We made a commitment to continue working to support estranged students during a presentation at Stand Alone's Pass the Baton online conference. The event considered the legacy of the national estrangement charity after it announced it was to close in April 2024. We outlined our work with the charity, in addition to our existing work to support individuals who study without family support, as part of our presentation, which was titled 'Working with Stand Alone to push our local agenda for estranged students'.

[Read more.](#)

## Collaborating to identify barriers to HE for Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic students

We strive to take an evidence-informed approach to our work. However, our Black Asian and Minoritised Ethnic Students Network found that evidence base, in the form of a Systematic Review, was more than a decade out of date. Therefore, a working group is undertaking a Systematic Review to identify what factors act as barriers and facilitators for this group when accessing HE. While we are currently writing up findings, one finding is the importance of intersectionality, as it not just about ethnicity but also class and gender.

[Find out more.](#)

## Online watch party for Black History Month

We collaborated with Leeds Trinity University's Race Institute and Educate Group to host a free online watch party for Black History Month. The CPD was hosted by Shames Maskeen, Co-Chair of our Black Asian and Minoritised Ethnic Students Network. Over 120 people attended to gain insight into the lived experience of this group and to discuss the challenges they face in HE. The session included a film screening, a presentation on data by Nathan Ghann (Programmes Director, The Educate Group), and a panel discussion. One participant said: "The data helped add some context to the issues raised in the film."

[Find out more.](#)

## Collaborative teachers' and advisers' conference

We are always keen to showcase the diversity of HE in the region with a focus on URGs. One way we successfully did this was piloting a collaborative teachers' and advisers' conference. The event was organised with member input and speakers from across GHWY including our diverse student panel. The day brought together staff from various sectors to help them support young people to make informed choices about HE. The event received excellent feedback.

[Find out more.](#)

Attendee quote: "Thank you for organising such a great event, it was really informative and well organised and it was good to meet representatives and ambassadors from our local universities and FE Colleges."

## Collaborative resources

### Inclusive recruitment guide

We collaborated with Yorkshire Universities (YU) on the second edition of its Inclusive Recruitment Guide for Employers. The guide includes a new section, written by GHWY, specifically highlighting practical recommendations for delivering an inclusive approach to the recruitment of graduates from underrepresented groups. This was a joint effort, with case studies provided by colleagues across our various HE provider networks. We also supported the delivery of two workshops to promote the guide to employers.

[Find out more.](#)

### Stand Alone Pledge updated

We updated our collaborative Stand Alone Pledge, which is aimed at students studying without family support, for 2023-24. The resource, which was first produced in 2021, raises awareness of the support available for estranged students across our 13 HE member institutions. The document revised the support categories that our members offer to include new check-boxes for experiences on campus, application support, contextual admissions, and support with the transition to HE.

[Find out more.](#)

## Care Leaver Covenant updated

Our collaborative Care Leaver Covenant, which demonstrates the ongoing commitment to care-experienced people shown by our 13 HE members, was updated for 2023-24. The e-resource, which was originally launched in 2017, brings together the support, information, and top tips offered by our members in a single, easy to navigate document. The document revises the support categories that our members offer to care-experienced students, with new check-boxes for the common definition and the NNECL Quality Mark (an accreditation process for universities and colleges to demonstrate their support for the inclusion and success of care-experienced individuals).

[Find out more.](#)





## CPD for staff

### Culturally aware access CPD

In partnership with Leeds Trinity University's Race Institute, we delivered CPD and reflective activities to support greater confidence with cultural competence for access and outreach teams.

The programme, which was funded through Advance HE's Collaborative Development Fund, focused on the intersectional needs of racially minoritised students in their HE decision making. It also looked at whether this increased confidence was beneficial to access and outreach activities.

Evaluation findings will be disseminated across the sector later this year.

[Read more.](#)

### GHWY commissioned evaluation training

We commissioned YMCA George Williams College to deliver evaluation training to our staff and stakeholders, including West Yorkshire Combined Authority. The content, which was delivered over three sessions, aimed to develop attendees' intermediate-level understanding of evaluation. Attendees learnt about evaluative intervention design, evaluation methods and tools and reporting strategies. YMCA George Williams College specialises in evidence, quality, learning and improvement with a focus on the youth sector. It will deliver further staff training in 2024-25.

[Read more.](#)



### CPD programme delivered to teachers and advisers

In partnership with stakeholders and industry representatives, we delivered another comprehensive CPD programme for teachers and advisers in 2023-24.

Our series of webinars were designed to provide valuable insights and practical strategies to enhance educational support for teachers and advisers.

Running throughout the academic year, they equipped educators with the latest knowledge and skills within an array of HE topics. These included understanding the clearing process, exploring career opportunities in professional services for young people, and alternative routes into healthcare.

[Access our webinars.](#)

## Evaluation and impact

**Our work is underpinned by a strong evidence and research base to ensure it is having an impact.**

### Evidence based reports

In 2023-24 we have published several reports highlighting the impact of Uni Connect's different areas of work, mostly relating to the previous academic year. These include:

- Evaluation of Think and Go Higher: A Metacognition-based Attainment Raising Programme
- Higher education outreach with underrepresented groups: Go Higher West Yorkshire's approach and impact
- GHWY Uni Connect 2017 to 2021 August 2023 An Analysis of Progression to HE in West Yorkshire
- Evaluation of Collaborative Taster Days 2022-23 [link coming]
- Evaluation of Enhanced Careers Guidance 2022-23 [link coming]

Insights from these reports have helped to refine our engagement in 2023-24 and have informed the continuation of related interventions, such as the HE Careers Coaching programme. Key takeaways include:

- The link between sustained engagement and HE progression, and the importance of sustained engagement for under-represented groups
- Clear indication of impact of our experiential programme of collaborative

taster days (re-branded as Go Higher In... days)

- Promising signs of impact of our pilot think and Go Higher attainment raising programme.

Evaluation activity in 2023-24 focused on flagship Uni Connect interventions, including continuation of 'Think and Go Higher' and our newly branded programmes of 'Go Higher in...' Days and HE Careers Coaching. Evaluation reports for each of these programmes will be published in the coming months. With an increased focus on sustained engagement in 2023-24, particularly through our structured programmes for under-represented groups, we will also be publishing a strategic impact report for 2023-24 that considers the impact of sustained engagement on outcomes for learners.

### Outcomes framework

During 2023-24 we have been working on a new Outcomes Framework to ensure that all Uni Connect interventions are designed to produce relevant outcomes for learners. All future activity will be mapped against this framework, which also informs the measurement of impact across all our programmes in relation to learners' ability to make informed decisions and their ability to progress to HE.

# Communications

**Our strategy is to support prospective students to make informed choices by delivering the kind of activity that a single HE provider could not**

## Partnership working

We partnered with Next Steps Southwest (NSSW) and Humber Outreach Programme (HOP) to set up a national communications group for all Uni Connect Partnerships. The group will share best practice, run collaborative campaigns, and create core resources to be localised between partnerships.

In 2023-24, four national communications group meetings were delivered with 23 Uni Connect partnerships present. We have also had recent attendance and support from the Office for Students.

This working group will continue to take place in 2024-25 as communication and signposting will play a key role in championing the positive impact of Uni Connect programmes across the nation.

## Website engagement

Our website and resource analytics show significant engagement and growth. Resources such as [‘The One in Five Podcast’](#) gathered an impressive 476 listens within a short space of time, reflecting our audience’s interest.

Resource downloads reached 974, with the [Disability Transition Pack](#) ranking the most popular. Our website saw over 3,500 unique visits, predominantly driven by organic traffic, indicating strong search engine performance. The [CPD page](#) stood out with over 1,300 unique views, making it our most visited section.

Since September 2023, we have successfully hosted 13 webinars, further enhancing our outreach and commitment to teacher CPD. Additionally, 972 users have registered on the GHWY website, showcasing our growing community. Importantly, the website’s accessibility compliance is rated ‘Great’ at 92% (as of 8 July 2024), underscoring our commitment to inclusivity.

## Final thoughts by Helen Sykes, Head of GHWY

As mentioned by Jane in her introduction, 2023-24 saw changes to our teams and our work-streams. These were sadly forced by the continuing challenging financial times being experienced across the sector and beyond, particularly the funding cuts to the Uni Connect programme. Like Jane, I would like to pay tribute to all staff who moved on from their roles with GHWY during 2023-24: the positive impacts you made during your time with us will continue to be felt. Those who remain are thanked for their positivity and flexible approaches as we move into the new academic year.

As we navigate more challenging financial times, our skills activity will initially prioritise and focus our efforts on promoting the use of our existing valuable resources. These include the adult learner and employer webpages – helping people navigate the many varied higher education options available to them – and the Yorkshire Universities’ Inclusive Recruitment Guide which we partnered with them to update. Our Higher Level Skills Manager role and Go Higher Skills Group are currently on hold, but we thank all involved in this work for their collective hard work and successes.

Looking forward to 2024-25, we have some exciting plans in the pipeline. Following a successful pilot with our Uni Connect staff, we are rolling out evaluation training for staff employed at our member institutions. This is primarily to assist with meeting the Office for Students’ evaluation requirements for Access and Participation Plans, but may be beneficial for future applications to the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes



Framework.

We will also launch our next free e-learning module. This will help student-facing staff in roles outside of disability services teams to better understand the experiences of disabled students, so that they can be supported to succeed in HE. This follows our highly regarded free e-learning module that helps staff to understand care experience and estrangement.

Building on our successful Boys Impact Conference in July 2024, we will be investigating ways to collaborate on taking forward work to help young men remain engaged in education. And watch this space for a big announcement about Care to Go Higher, our free CPD aimed at key influencers of care experienced individuals. This programme helps professionals and carers to support those in their care to make informed decisions about their own next steps in education, based on full information about all the options available as well as the additional support on offer across different HE providers for those from a care background.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate during 2024-25 to reduce inequalities in access to and success in HE.

# Coming up in 2024-25

## E-learning to help HE staff support and understand disabled learners

An e-learning course to help HE staff to better understand and support disabled students is being developed. The resource will address a lack of confidence and knowledge among HE staff, who often do not feel empowered to support disabled students. Developed through our Disabled Students Network, it will outline some of the barriers to access and success in HE, definitions of disability, and practical tips that staff can follow, among other topics.

## Care Experienced Transition Pack

Based on the success of our Disabled Learner Transition Pack, we are creating a new version for care-experienced learners in collaboration with Inspiring Choices (Uni Connect partnership based in York). The resource will help to raise awareness of the barriers faced by learners from care-experienced backgrounds when progressing into HE, providing an interactive roadmap to

assist learners on their journey.

## Podcast for care-experienced learners

Our Uni Connect is collaborating with COSMOS Engagement to produce a podcast for care-experienced learners. This group of young people tend to be challenging to recruit for in-person activities. The activity is based on the recent success of our One in Five Podcast for disabled learners. This made it clear that podcasting offers a safe space for learners to engage with role models and HE related content from the comfort of their own homes.

## Boys Impact Hub launch

Boys Impact Hubs are a series of regional networks being established to pilot evidence-based approaches with schools, youth and third-sector organisations nationwide with the aim of closing the gap in GCSE outcomes for boys who are eligible for Free School Meals. As part of our Males on Free School Meals Network, James Rew (Leeds Conservatoire) will establish our own Boys Impact Hub for West Yorkshire. If you wish to express your interest in this, please complete

this form.

## Evaluation training offered across GHWY member institutions

Following a successful pilot with our Uni Connect staff, we will roll out evaluation training for staff employed at our member institutions. This will help them to meet the Office for Students' evaluation requirements for their Access and Participation Plans. It will also support staff with evidencing impact of their activity more generally, which may be beneficial for future applications to the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework.

## Care to Go Higher CPD being assessed for CPD certification

Our Care to Go Higher programme, which gives the key influencers of care-experienced individuals the tools they need to support informed decision making in relation to HE, is being assessed for 'certified' status by CPD UK. By completing a CPD certified course, employees gain a recognised qualification in their portfolios, which can support them to progress within their careers.

**Find out more about our work:**  
[www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk](http://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk)



Speak Up, Your Voice Matters programme



# GO HIGHER

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