



**GO HIGHER**

West Yorkshire

# Enhanced Careers Guidance: Impact Evaluation 2022/23

**Authors** Sophie Elizabeth Smith, Alice Annetts-Smith, Natalie Aldridge

A Go Higher West Yorkshire Evidence Report

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This report is the first in a series on enhanced careers guidance delivered by Go Higher West Yorkshire. Future reports in the series will be published on the GHWY website at [www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/impact](https://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/impact).

## **Abstract**

In the academic year 22/23, Go Higher West Yorkshire funded the delivery of high-quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance sessions to year 10 learners in selected schools in West Yorkshire. These sessions provided 1-1 advice from a CEIAG advisor, as well as an opportunity to reflect on other Uni Connect interventions that learners had taken part in. Being distinct from typical CEIAG provision, GHWY is able to facilitate high quality careers guidance that is connected to HE outreach and goes above and beyond what is required to be delivered by schools. Evaluation of the programme found that it was effective at improving learners' knowledge of their post-16 options, and also helped them to think more positively about the future.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Note**

This report was partly produced by an undergraduate placement student. The statistical analysis undertaken by the student has been checked for accuracy and validity and revised accordingly to make it suitable for publication. The student's written contributions are mostly unedited.

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# Executive Summary

In the academic year 22/23, Go Higher West Yorkshire funded the delivery of high quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance sessions to year 10 learners in selected schools in West Yorkshire. These sessions were distinct from and additional to schools' mandatory statutory duty to deliver careers guidance. These sessions provided 1-1 advice from a CEIAG advisor, as well as an opportunity to reflect on other Uni Connect interventions that learners had taken part in.

## Key Findings

Learners had a significantly improved knowledge of their post-16 options after taking part in an enhanced careers guidance session

Learners felt significantly more positive about their future after taking part in an enhanced careers guidance session

## Recommendations

Deliver in depth careers guidance above and beyond statutory requirements

Increase opportunities for learners to explore different career possibilities

Align enhanced CEIAG provision to a measurable framework

# Introduction to Go Higher West Yorkshire and Uni Connect

Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) is a partnership of 13 higher education (HE) providers across West Yorkshire which seeks to reduce inequalities in HE access and success. This is facilitated by a dedicated central team of staff who enable collaboration in relation to county-wide widening participation initiatives and members' access and participation plan (APP) activity. Each HE provider subscribes to Go Higher West Yorkshire as a member institution.

Our 13 HE members are:

- Bradford College
- University of Bradford
- University Centre Calderdale College
- University of Huddersfield
- Kirklees College
- Leeds Conservatoire
- University of Leeds
- Leeds Arts University
- Leeds Beckett University
- Leeds College of Building
- University Centre Leeds
- Leeds Trinity University
- University Centre Wakefield College (Heart of Yorkshire)

GHWY delivers the Uni Connect programme in West Yorkshire. Uni Connect is the national programme through which higher education providers work together, and with partners, to improve equality of opportunity in access to higher education. Funded by the Office for Students (OfS) since 2019, Uni Connect is the latest in a series of nationally funded 'collaborative outreach' programmes that have operated in England since the early 2000s (1).

As an organisation we work closely with schools, local authorities, employers and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to enable true collaboration.

To find out more about our collaborative initiatives, current projects and strands of work, including the Uni Connect Programme, please visit our website: [www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk](http://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk).

You can also follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and on X @GoHigherWY.

# Introduction to the Enhanced Careers Guidance Programme

In 2020, the careers company C&K careers were commissioned by Go Higher West Yorkshire to investigate the impact of different ways of delivering careers guidance during the Covid-19 pandemic. They found that, in light of the pandemic, potential challenges to delivery of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) included: 'labour market uncertainty; concerns around the priority of CEIAG; time / space within the curriculum; students' IT access; engagement; safeguarding; impact; evaluation; and tracking' (2). These findings align with the challenges evident in the literature and are discussed in the literature review (p10 and appendix 2); for example Career Education was already competing for time against national curriculum subjects before the pandemic (3). Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest inconsistencies in tracking and evaluation, making studies hard to compare and understand the impact of career education (4).

Being distinct from typical CEIAG provision, GHWY is able to facilitate high quality careers guidance that is connected to HE outreach and goes above and beyond what is required to be delivered by schools.

Following promising (unpublished) results from a previous round of enhanced CEIAG for eligible UC learners in 2021/22, GHWY funded the enhanced intervention for a limited number of additional schools and colleges in 2022/23. The delivery of enhanced CEIAG is in addition to schools' and colleges' statutory duty to provide careers guidance. Enhanced CEIAG was delivered to year 10 cohorts and, where possible, prioritised support for underrepresented groups. The enhanced sessions were one hour in duration for each recipient, and provided the following:

- One-to-one advice from a CEIAG advisor on future pathways
- An opportunity to reflect on careers/UC interventions received to date and to develop an ongoing action plan.

# Evaluation design

## Outcome themes and specific intended outcomes

The programme was designed with two main intended outcomes for learners:

1. **Increased ability to plan for the future** – after taking part in the programme, learners should have an increased ability to plan for the future, including increased confidence to make decisions about, and a more positive outlook for the future
2. **Increased knowledge of options** – after taking part in the programme, learners should have increased knowledge about their education and career options in the future, as well as an increased understanding of where to get more information.

## Evaluation approach

Progress towards intended outcomes was measured using pre and post surveys, with one taken immediately before taking part in the enhanced careers guidance session and one taken immediately afterwards.

A literature review also considers the context and rationale for providing enhanced careers guidance as part of the assessment of value added to regular provision.

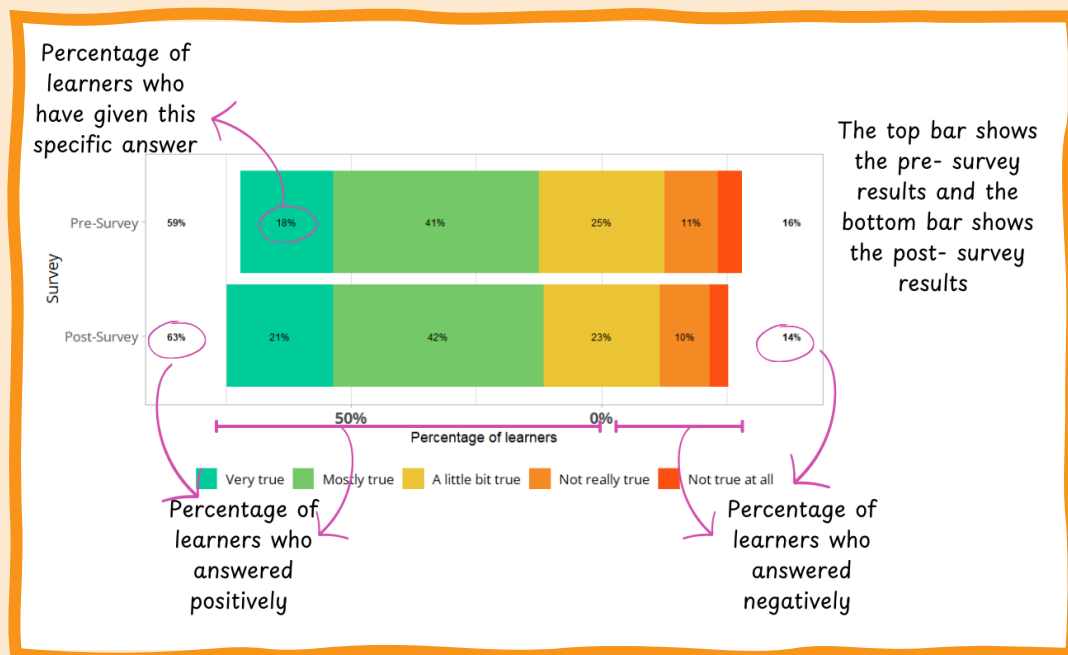
For more details on the evaluation methodology, please see Appendix 1.

# Findings

## Interpreting graphs & findings

In the graphs in this report, the x axis shows the percentage of learners who have answered positively (to the left of 0%) and the percentage of learners who have answered negatively (to the right of 0%). When the questions were phrased negatively (ie, to give a negative answer shows movement towards the answer) the results have been reverse coded so that all responses follow the same pattern.

In each graph, the top bar shows the pre survey results and the bottom bar shows the post survey results. A shift to the left, towards the green, therefore shows progress towards the outcome.



## P values

Statistical testing generates a p-value that tells us the probability that we would get these results if there was no difference between the two groups – in other words, if the programme had had no impact. So, when a p value of 0.05 is given, it means there is a 5% probability of this happening if there was no impact, and when a value of 0.01, this means a 1% probability. Given that it is so unlikely to happen if there was no difference between the two groups, we can therefore assume, that there is a difference – in other words, that taking part in the programme has had impact.

The threshold for statistical significance is usually  $p < 0.05$  – so when a result is called significant, it means that there is a less than 5% probability that it could've happened by chance.



# Knowledge of Options

Learners had a significantly improved knowledge of their post-16 options after taking part



Figure 1 Pre and post survey responses to questions on the topic of knowledge of options. All questions saw a significant shift towards more positive responses ( $p < 0.01$ )

Before and after taking part in the enhanced careers guidance session, learners were asked to take a short survey which included statements on their knowledge of their options – they were asked to rate each statement on a scale of 1- 10, with 1 meaning ‘strongly disagree’ and 10 meaning ‘strongly agree’. All questions were answered significantly more positively after the learners had taken part ( $p < 0.01$ ). A particularly clear improvement could be seen in response to the statement ‘I can tell you about the courses/qualifications I need for the careers I am interested in’, with only 14% of learners agreeing before taking part, and 70% agreeing after taking part. Another striking improvement is in response to the statement ‘I know about where to get information about what I can do when I leave school/college’ – almost all of the learners (94%) answered this question positively after taking part in the programme.

## Learners felt significantly more positive about their future after taking part



Figure 2 Pre and post survey responses to questions about planning for the future. All questions saw a significant shift towards more positive answers ( $p < 0.01$ )

Before and after taking part in the enhanced careers guidance session, learners were asked to take a survey which had questions about their plans for and attitudes towards the future. After taking part, learners answered the post programme survey significantly more positively than the pre programme survey, a significant difference which was seen across all questions ( $p < 0.01$ ). The number of learners answering the questions positively in many cases more than doubled, for example in response to the statement 'I am confident making decisions about my future' (from 38% to 78%), and 'I have a plan about what I am going to do after school college' (from 30% to 78%).

The least clear (though still significant improvement) was to the question 'I am confident that I have thought about all the job/career possibilities that would suit me', where only 58% answered the question positively after taking part - the smallest percentage of any question in the post survey.

## Literature review: headlines

As part of the Q-Step placement, a literature review was conducted for this evaluation project. Its purpose was to connect the statistical evaluative findings to the wider CEIAG context, providing insight and recommendations about the potential to align CEIAG provision more closely with higher education outreach. The full review is available in Appendix 2, but the key points are presented here.

- Without status as a national curriculum 'subject', CEIAG in schools struggles to compete for timetable space, despite its relevance to traditional subjects such as English and Maths, and newer subjects such as Citizenship and PSHE (3,5).
- CEIAG has grown and developed in the last decade and has become more structured with the introduction of the Gatsby Benchmarks (6–9).
- There is a scarcity of evidence about the impact of CEIAG on learner outcomes, potentially contributing to low prioritisation of CEIAG in schools (2,4,5).
- Evidence does suggest a promising link between receipt of individualised CEIAG, increased career ambitions and higher attainment, alongside breaking down career-based stereotypes (4,5,10).
- The adoption of the DOTS model into education policy provided additional structure and purpose to CEIAG, enabling learners to take a more active role in their career planning and providing potential for outcomes to be consistently measured (4,5,10).

# Recommendations

## Deliver in depth careers guidance above and beyond statutory requirements

The evaluation of these career guidance sessions, which were delivered in addition to schools' statutory requirements, show a clear benefit to the learners who took part. Outreach organisations should consider enhanced careers guidance as an impactful way to support learners to make decisions about their future.

## Increase opportunities for learners to explore different career possibilities

Only 58% of learners said that they were 'confident that [they] have thought about all the job/career possibilities that would suit [them]'. Connecting enhanced careers guidance to experiential outreach (such as subject/industry taster events) could provide learners with further opportunity to explore different career possibilities.

## Align enhanced CEIAG provision to a measurable framework

Evidence from the literature demonstrates the value of a framework approach for CEIAG provision in schools. Future enhanced provision should be aligned to a framework with clearly defined measurable outcomes, with links to CEIAG specific frameworks such as Gatsby Benchmarks and/or the DOTS model.

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# Appendix 1: Methods

## Pre and Post Programme Survey

Participants were asked to fill out a short survey before and after taking part in the careers guidance session. The survey asked them to rate statements about themselves on a scale of 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The survey questions related to learners' knowledge of options, and their plans for the future (see Table 1).

## Statistical Analysis

To analyse impact, a paired Wilcoxon test was done to compare pre and post survey results. A threshold significance value of 0.05 was used.

## Software and data availability

All statistical testing and data visualisation was done using R Statistical Software (v4.4.1; R Core Team 2024) (11) with R Studio. (v2024.4.2.764) (12). Graphs were made using ggplot2 (v3.5.1) (13) and ggstats (v0.8.0) (14). Raw data and code available on request.

*Table 1 Pre and Post survey questions* - participants were asked to rate each statement on a ten point scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Statistical testing was done using a wilcoxon test to compare the pre and post survey responses. A threshold of 0.05 was used for significance.

Section	Question	Statistical Testing		
		V value	P value	Conclusion
Knowledge of Options	Q1.1 I know where to get information about what I can do when I leave school/college.	3.5	2.027e-08	Significant
	Q1.2 I know what options are available to me when I leave school or college.	91.5	1.404e-06	Significant
	Q1.3 I can tell you about the courses/qualifications I need for the careers I am interested in.	77.5	2.447e-07	Significant
	Q1.4 I can tell you about the long-term benefits of going to college and/or university.	33.5	40245e-08	Significant
	Q1.5 With the information I have, I feel like I can make a good decision about my future after leaving school/college.	23.5	8.506e-08	Significant
Planning for the Future	Q2.1 I am confident making decisions about my future.	62	1.677e-06	Significant
	Q2.2 I have a plan about what I am going to do after school/college.	59.5	7.985e-08	Significant

	<b>Q2.3</b> I am feeling positive about my future after school/college.	28	3.799e-07	Significant
	<b>Q2.4</b> I am confident that I have thought about all the job/career possibilities that would suit me.	78.5	1.27e-05	Significant
	<b>Q2.5</b> I have talked with either my friends/family/teachers about my options after leaving school/college.	64.5	1.953e-06	Significant
	<b>Q2.6</b> I feel supported to make the right choices for me.	28	6.271e-07	Significant



# Appendix 2: Literature Review

Written by Alice Annetts-Smith (University of Leeds undergraduate placement student)

## The current status of Career Education in schools

In 2006 Andrews concluded that Career Education was in a weak position and not a teaching priority in schools (3). He argues this is due to its lack of status as a national curriculum subject, having to compete for time against newly introduced national curriculum subjects such as citizenship and PSHE, and Career Education being developed separately from the rest of curriculum policy. Furthermore, Andrews importantly recognises the disparity in teaching qualifications: “we have national CPD certificates for teaching citizenship and PSHE, but no equivalent professional development opportunity for CEG”<sup>3</sup> (pg.8). Andrews (3) and Ruff (2001) (5) both argue that career education is dependent on the “goodwill”, “dedication” and “enthusiasm” of career advisors<sup>9</sup> (pg.94) and local support such as career companies and local education authorities (LEAs) (3). In contrast to Andrews, Ruff argues that Careers Education in schools should be a key focus in conjunction with the evolving social, economic, and political landscape. Their book discusses the transition of the meaning of career. A career was once a linear, prescriptive and middle-class idea, with a focus on climbing the hierarchal corporate ladder. The idea of a career is now discussed in association with postmodern ideas of fragmentation and insecurity: a career is a “personal, subjective and socially constructed reality”<sup>9</sup> (pg 96-97). Career education is therefore, less about learning about jobs and choosing a career and more about lifelong learning and development, open-mindedness and flexibility (5).

Both studies are relatively old, but their ideas are still valuable in understanding the variability and inconsistency of careers education across different institutions geographically and historically. Since 2011, various policy and organisations have aimed to improve and expand Careers Education and Guidance in schools. Careers Education has faced criticism, it has been described as ‘underfunded’ and ‘a patchwork’. In 2011, the Education Act established secondary schools’ statutory duty to provide careers guidance from an external source, in addition to what they already provide internally (6). In 2021, The Careers Enterprise Company concluded ‘Careers education became more prominent in the curriculum last year [2020]’<sup>11</sup> (p.7) and has expanded beyond specific careers advisors. The study found that out of 3,893 schools and colleges 64% when teaching maths and 65% when teaching English made links to careers and work. The study concluded that there was increased focus on individuals and their context which aligns with Ruff’s ideas about careers becoming more individualised (5). In January 2023 the Government published Careers guidance and access for education and training providers in which it became expected that ‘all secondary schools and colleges to use the internationally recognised Gatsby Benchmarks to develop a careers programme that increases opportunities for students ...The benchmarks are non-statutory but support schools and colleges by providing a framework around which they can develop their careers programme in line with their legal requirements’ (15). In January 2023, 30% of England’s state secondary schools and academies were either working towards or had met the standard (9).

## Research on the impact of Careers Education

In 2016, Hughes et.al published Careers education: International literature review (4), and concluded that research between 1996-2016 on careers education is weak and limited and of what there is, the majority is from the US not UK. Furthermore, there are variations in findings due to the inconsistencies in provision

across different institutions and locations (4,5). This suggests there has been a lack of priority in career education research, perhaps reflecting the lack of priority it has been given in schools. The outcome of the literature review was that 60% of literature concluded that careers education had a positive impact, one study had a negative outcome, and 38% had either a mixed outcome or no clear pattern (4). These statistics can be paired with Go Higher West Yorkshire's research which sought to understand the impact of the pandemic on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance activities in schools and colleges in West Yorkshire which found that 58% of Careers Leaders said CEIAG would be 'high on the agenda', 10% said it would not be a priority and 32% were unsure (2). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is still a fairly large proportion of evidence that the impact of careers education is vague, inconclusive and not a priority - 32% of careers advisors were unsure of its prioritisation (2) and 38% of research has been inconclusive on its impact (4).

What Hughes et.al. do find is teenage career uncertainty is linked with lower adult earnings, lower educational attainment, and an increased chance of being not in education, employment or training at some point during their lives (4). Furthermore, Hutchinson et.al's study 'All things equal? Equality and Diversity in Careers Education, Advice and Guidance' found that inadequate Careers education is one of the largest factors in low post-16 participation in education. Improved career education will lead to increased ambitions, increased ambitions lead to higher attainment, and higher attainment will lead to wider career prospects (10). Hutchinson et.al. echo Ruff's conclusion that traditional, middle class and prescriptive definitions of career are becoming less prominent (5). Hutchinson et.al. suggest that Careers Education which is targeted and individualised has the potential to challenge "traditional notions of suitable academic and vocational options by gender, race or social background"<sup>14</sup> (pg.2). There is potential here for careers education to create greater equality of opportunity and equality of choice through helping students to make more informed decisions about progression to higher education, helping to reduce inequalities in higher education.

## Aims of Career Education

In 1977 Law and Watts Developed the DOTS model of Career Education. Their model set out four pillars of the aims of Career Education: self-awareness; opportunity awareness; decision learning; and transition learning (16). This model has consistently been used as the foundations for career education and guidance from its publication to the present day (5). The DOTS model has been described as adaptable and flexible for different contexts and uses (17). The framework has since been developed into a more linear, three stage model which focuses on students taking a more active role in their career planning- by the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) in 1996 and the Qualifications and Curriculum authority (QCA) in 1999 (5). Below is a table which sets out the three aims of Career Education alongside the four previous aims used in the DOTS model and a description of each aim, taken from various literature on both DOTS and QCA. The 'questions' column maps out the survey questions given to students who took part in the enhanced CEIAG programme against the three aims of Career education. This will help to provide an additional meaningful analysis, so the impact of the CEIAG programme can be measured against a reliable and widely used framework. Please note, mapping the questions against this model has been implemented *after* the survey; the questions were not designed with the DOTS, SCAA and QCA framework in mind.

*Table 2 Mapping of survey questions to DOTS framework. Note that mapping occurred after the evaluation of the programme was complete, and survey questions were not written with the DOTS framework in mind.*

Aim	Description	Questions
Self-Development (self-awareness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding themselves (5)</li> <li>Develop capabilities (5)</li> </ul>	Q1.5 With the information I have, I feel like I can make a good decision about my future after leaving school/ college.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand other influences on them</li> <li>• Personal aspirations (16)</li> <li>• Understanding what they can offer (17)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Q2.1</b> I am confident making decisions about my future.</p> <p><b>Q2.3</b> I am feeling positive about my future after school/ college.</p> <p><b>Q2.6</b> I feel supported to make the right choices for me.</p>
<p>Career Exploration</p> <p>(Opportunity awareness)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate careers and opportunities (5)</li> <li>• Taking a more active role</li> <li>• Understanding routes into work (17)</li> <li>• Understanding what work offers: enjoyment, satisfaction, rewards (17)</li> <li>• Understanding the demands of work, for example commitment and qualifications (17)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Q1.1</b> I know where to get information about what I can do when I leave school/ college.</p> <p><b>Q1.2</b> I know what options are available to me when I leave school/ college.</p> <p><b>Q2.4</b> I am confident that I have thought about all the job/ career possibilities that would suit me.</p> <p><b>Q2.5</b> I have talked with either my friends/ family/ teachers about my options after leaving school/ college.</p>
<p>Career Management</p> <p>(Transition learning and decision learning)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making and adjusting plans to deal with change and transition</li> <li>• Different ways of making decisions (16)</li> <li>• Accepting responsibility (16)</li> <li>• Self-management (17)</li> <li>• Problem solving (17)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Q1.3</b> I can tell you about the courses/ qualifications I need for the careers I am interested in.</p> <p><b>Q1.4</b> I can tell you about the long-term benefits of going to college and/or university.</p> <p><b>Q2.2</b> I have a plan about what I am going to do after school/ college.</p>



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Centre Leeds**

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