



Care to Go Higher CPD 2024-25 Evaluation Report





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Introduction

Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) is a partnership of 13 Higher Education (HE) partners working collaboratively to reduce inequity in the West Yorkshire region. Our Care to Go Higher (CtGH) programme is a CPD-certified programme for key influencers of care-experienced young people such as foster carers, personal advisers, children's home workers and local authority staff.

2024-25 marks the first academic year of CPD certification with the CPD Certification Service. In total, around 40 participants attended the CPD programme.

The programme was delivered three times this year: in autumn 2024, spring 2025 and summer 2025. The majority of participants were drawn from local authority teams, alongside a number of HE professionals.

There were a total of six two-hour sessions that covered different topics across the CPD certified programme. This included barriers to entering Higher Education, support for care-experienced individuals, making an application, and finance.

The CPD programme was delivered online via Microsoft Teams. The participants were provided with slides and resources after each session, alongside curated links for further exploration. Guest speakers were invited to enrich the content and aligned to speak on a topic that was in their area of expertise.

This year, we also delivered an in-person bespoke tailored CPD session in partnership with Wakefield Virtual School. This ran alongside newly introduced 30 minute taster sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to provide flexibility to accommodate staff CPD without the need to attend CPD of six 2-hour sessions. These sessions are available on request so can be delivered at a time that suits the organisation.

To evaluate the programme's impact, participants provided both quantitative and qualitative feedback through pre- and post-session questionnaires, anonymous comments, and an interview with a participant. The evidence collected shows clear improvements in knowledge and confidence around care experience and Higher Education.

Delivery format

Building on the strengths of previous years, the programme was delivered as six weekly online sessions, each lasting two hours. In a change from previous practice, each session was delivered once per week rather than being repeated twice in the same week. This decision ensured consistency within groups and discouraged non-attendance based on the assumption that a later session could be joined instead.

Interest in the programme once again extended beyond West Yorkshire, with participants joining from regions such as the South Coast, the Midlands and the North East. At the same time, uptake from our core area remained strong. While examples used in sessions were rooted in West Yorkshire's Higher Education landscape, the content was applicable and relevant to attendees nationwide.

Participants who attended all six sessions received an official CPD certificate. Those unable to attend the full programme were awarded a GHWY certificate of attendance. In some cases, Rob Scott (GHWY's Training Delivery Officer) offered supplementary catch-up sessions for any participants who had missed content. Of the approximately 40 participants that attended the CPD in 2024-25, 20 of those achieved CPD-certification so about half of the participants in 2024-25.

Based on feedback from last year, the Training Delivery Officer introduced 30 minute taster sessions. These responded to concerns that 12 hours is a huge time commitment. The first of these was presented at the University of York as part of its Destinations Festival for care-experienced young people. The taster session provides an insight into part of the CPD whilst including something practical to takeaway to help decide if the CPD will meet participant needs or is for their organisation.

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers remain a distinctive and valued feature of the programme. Each session concluded with a guest contribution, providing participants with additional expertise and real-world perspectives.

The inclusion of guest speakers reinforced the session content, highlighted alignment between our aims and those of external organisations, and allowed participants to develop useful professional contacts. Feedback confirmed that these contributions were highly valued and enhanced the overall learning experience.

As in previous years, participants had a chance to ask them questions and receive insightful answers. The guest speakers have their own area of expertise that they cover, whether

it is being a care-experienced student in Higher Education or employability options for care-experienced graduates.

List of guest speakers:

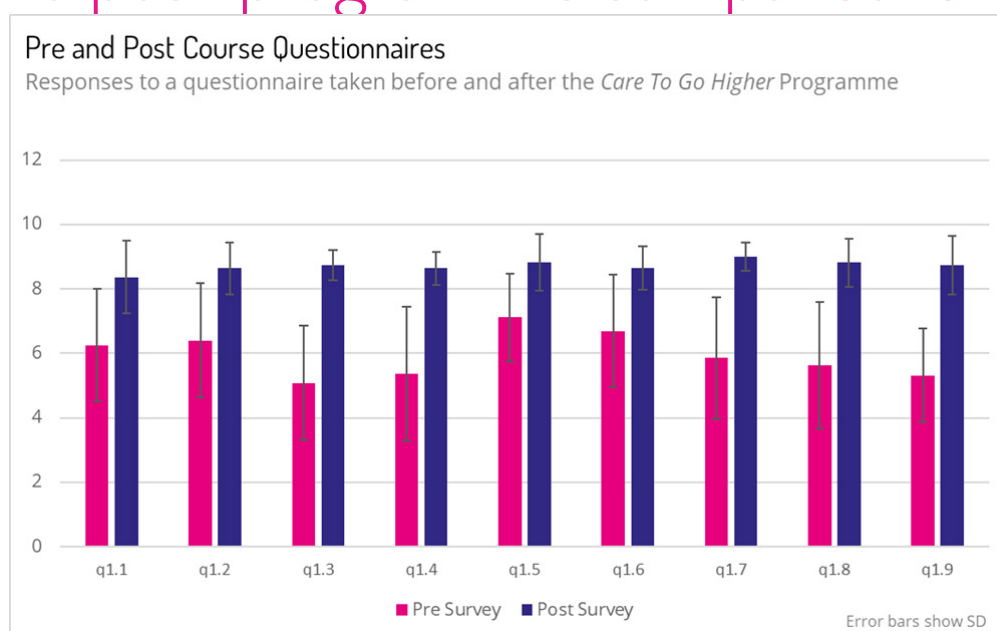
- **HE Outreach Professionals from Leeds Beckett University**
- **HE in Further Education from Luminate Education Group**
- **A care-experienced student from University of Huddersfield**
- **University representatives from University of Bradford**
- **Lifelong Learning Centre, University of Leeds**
- **Charitable organisation staff from Unite Foundation**
- **Employability scheme staff from John Lewis Partnership**

Analysis and evaluation

This section presents an overview of the impact of the Care to Go Higher CPD-certified programme, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data.

Pre- and post-programme questionnaires provide evidence of improvements in participants' knowledge and confidence, while anonymous feedback and a participant interview offer deeper insight into how the programme was experienced in practice. Together, these findings highlight the effectiveness of the programme in strengthening understanding, fostering confidence, and equipping participants to better support care-experienced young people around Higher Education.

Pre- and post-programme comparisons



Participants were asked to complete a non-mandatory questionnaire before the first session to assess their existing knowledge and understanding of key topics. The same questions were repeated after the programme, enabling us to measure how effectively it enhanced participants' knowledge and understanding and demonstrate the overall impact of the programme.

Q1.1 How would you rate your knowledge of Higher Education?	Q1.2 How would you rate your understanding of Higher Education?	Q1.3 How would you rate your knowledge of how the care experience and Higher Education interact?	Q1.4 How would you rate your knowledge of supporting informed choices for care-experienced young people?	Q1.5 How would you rate your knowledge of the value of Higher Education?	Q1.6 How would you rate your knowledge of the experience of Higher Education?	Q1.7 How would you rate your knowledge of supporting aspirations in care-experienced young people?	Q1.8 How would you rate your understanding of your support role for care-experienced young people in relation to Higher Education?	Q1.9 How would you rate your access to expertise in Higher Education?
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The data in the graph above demonstrates consistent improvements across all nine areas of knowledge and confidence measured. Average scores increased in every category, with changes ranging from +1.7 to +3.6 points on a 10-point scale. This demonstrates that participants not only built on existing expertise but also made notable gains in areas where knowledge was initially lower.

The largest increases were in Question 3 ("knowledge of how the care experience and Higher Education interact" +3.64), Question 9 ("access to expertise in Higher Education" +3.41), and Question 8 ("understanding of your support role" +3.19). These results highlight that the programme is most effective at addressing specific gaps in awareness and confidence, particularly around how the care experience impacts HE progression and how key influencers see their own role in supporting young people.

Other areas, such as understanding the value of Higher Education (Q5, +1.70), showed smaller but still marked gains, suggesting that participants already had relatively strong baseline knowledge but nonetheless benefited from deeper insights and reinforced understanding.

Importantly, the post-programme standard deviations were consistently lower than pre-programme values, showing that participants ended the programme with a more consistent and levelled-up knowledge base, regardless of their starting point. This suggests the programme effectively reduces disparities in knowledge across participants, creating a more confident and well-prepared professional community.

Overall, the dataset reinforces the conclusion that Care to Go Higher delivers sustained, broad-based impact: building specialist knowledge, challenging misconceptions, and equipping participants with the tools and confidence to support care-experienced young people on their journey towards Higher Education.

Pre- and post-programme comparisons

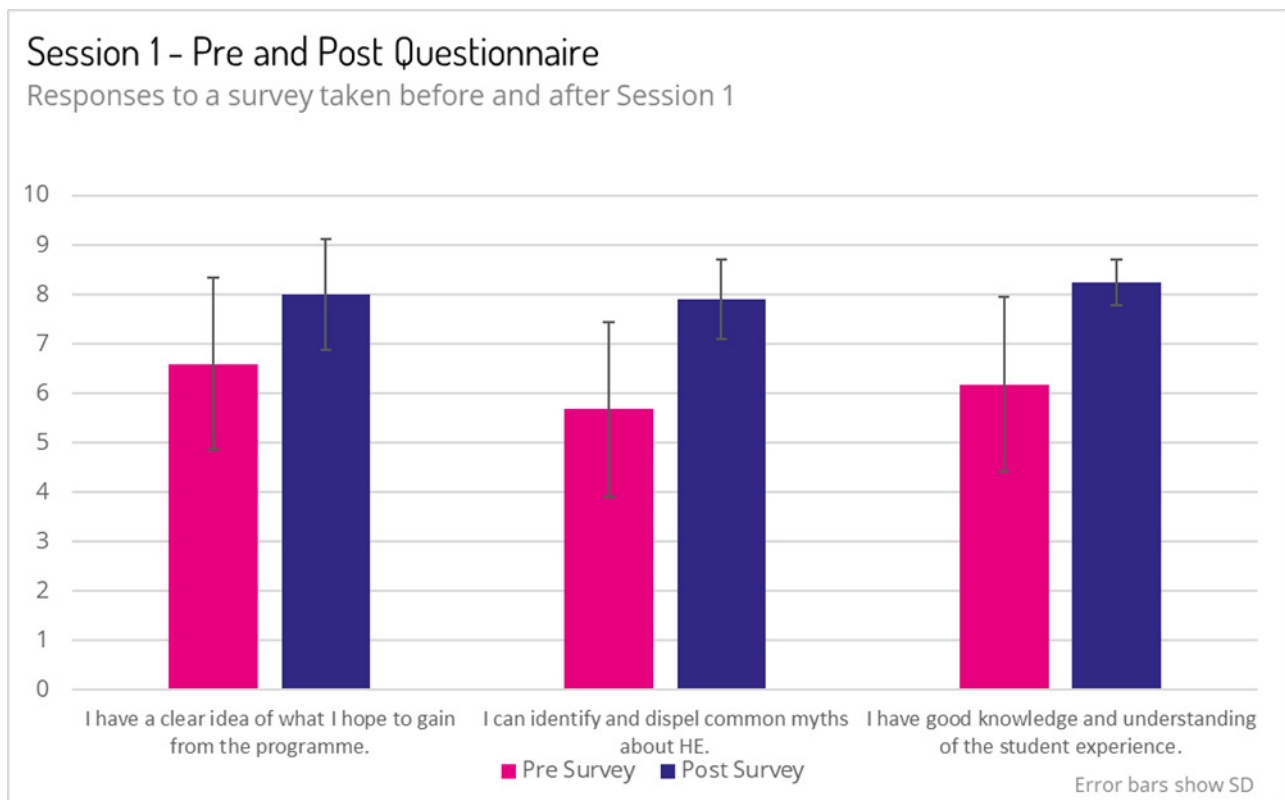
To measure the impact of each session, participants were asked to complete a short non-mandatory questionnaire before and after each session. These assessed changes in knowledge and confidence relating to the session content and provided insight into overall progress across the six-week programme.

Each questionnaire contained three questions. The same questions were asked both before and after each session, allowing for direct comparison. Participants rated their level of agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 10 being Strongly Agree.

Statements covered a wide range of Higher Education topics, including those specifically relating to the experiences of care-experienced young people. An example of a typical statement was: "I have a good understanding of what a Higher Education learning environment is like."

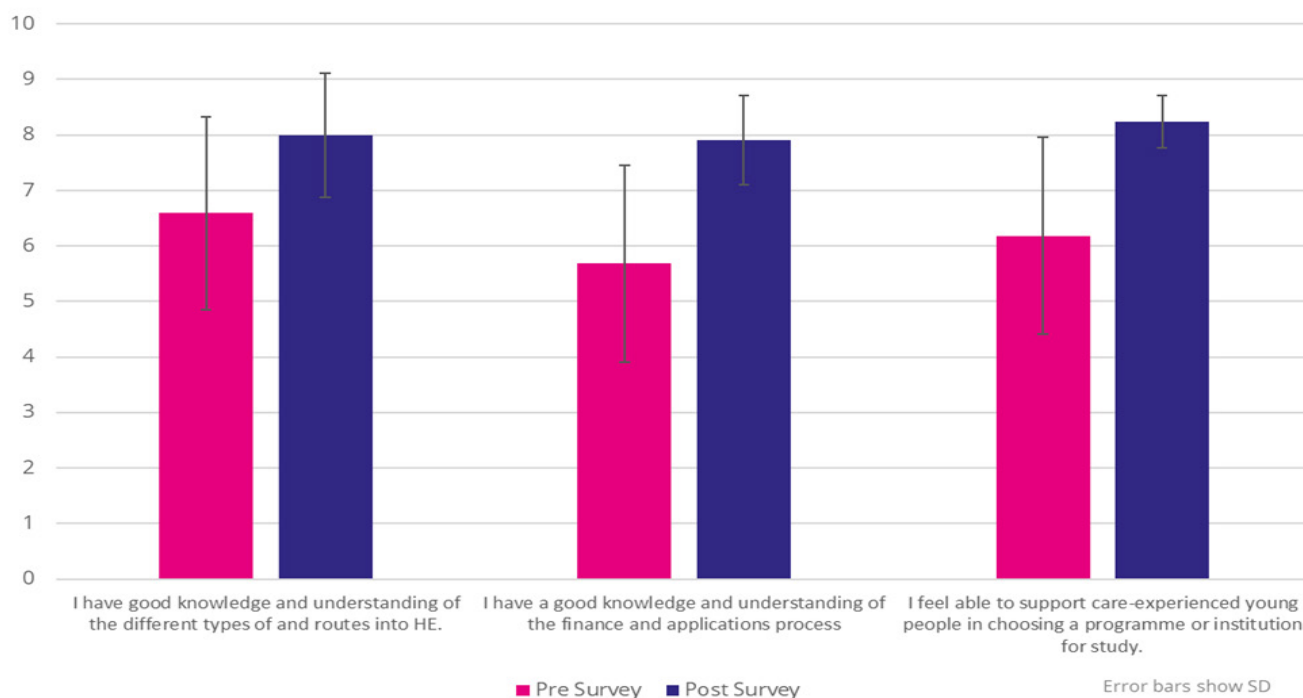
Given that many participants already worked in Higher Education, some surveys showed relatively high baseline scores. Nonetheless, the data demonstrates consistent improvements in knowledge and confidence across sessions.

The next section will display the pre- and post-session responses for each questionnaire, with conclusions being drawn at the end.



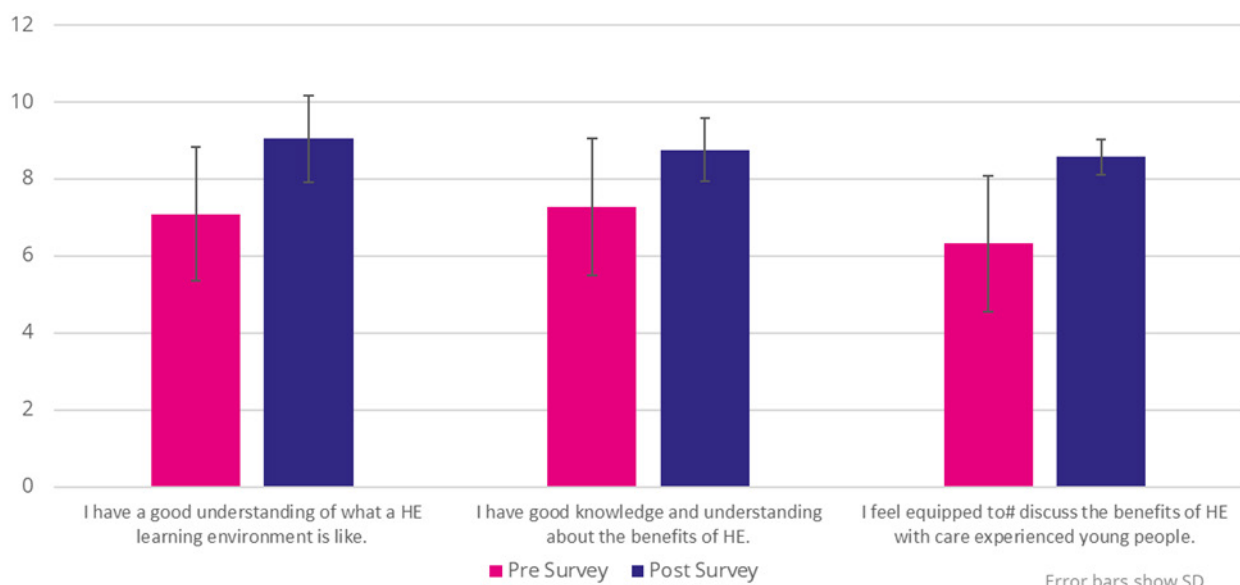
Session 2 - Pre and Post Questionnaire

Responses to a questionnaire taken before and after Session 2



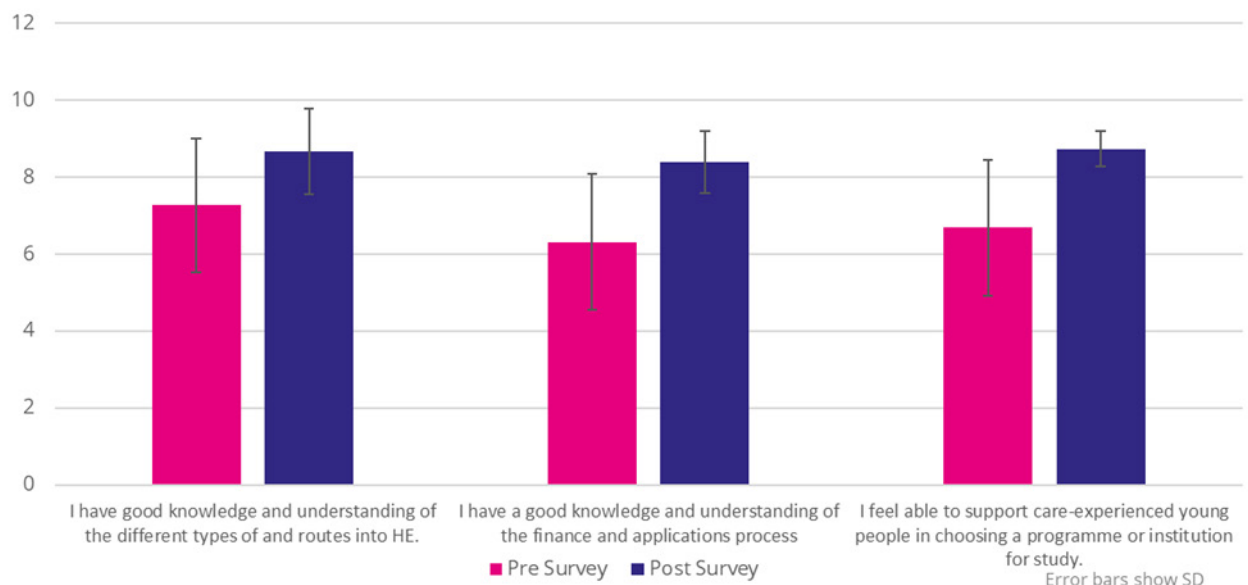
Session 3 - Pre and Post Questionnaire

Responses to a questionnaire taken before and after Session 3



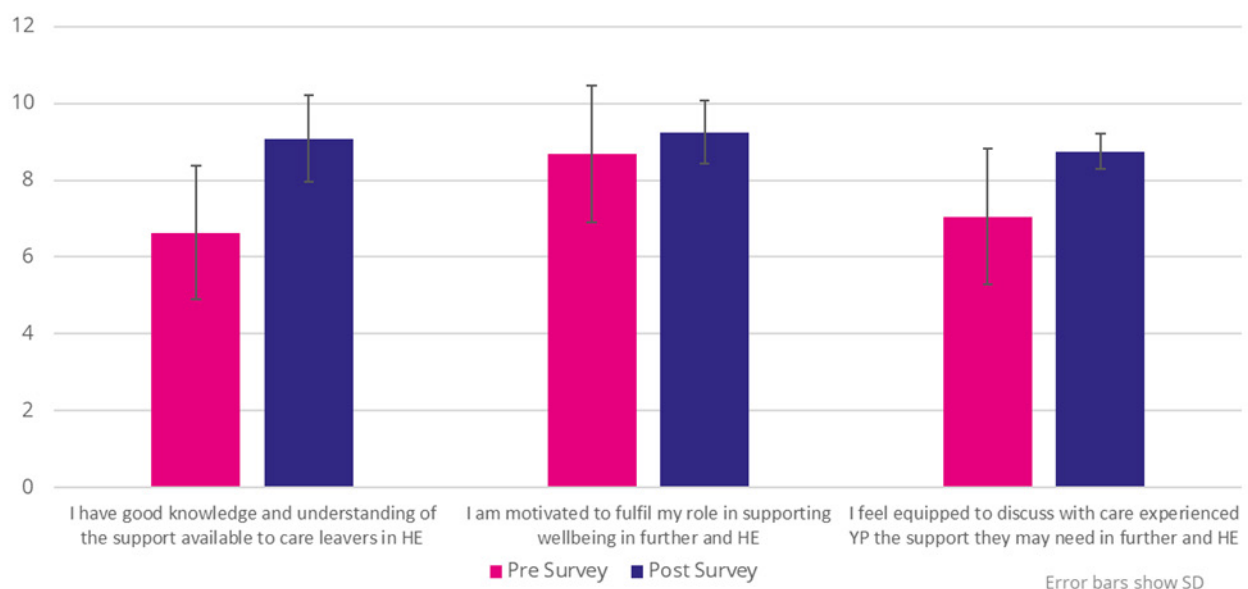
Session 4 - Pre and Post Questionnaire

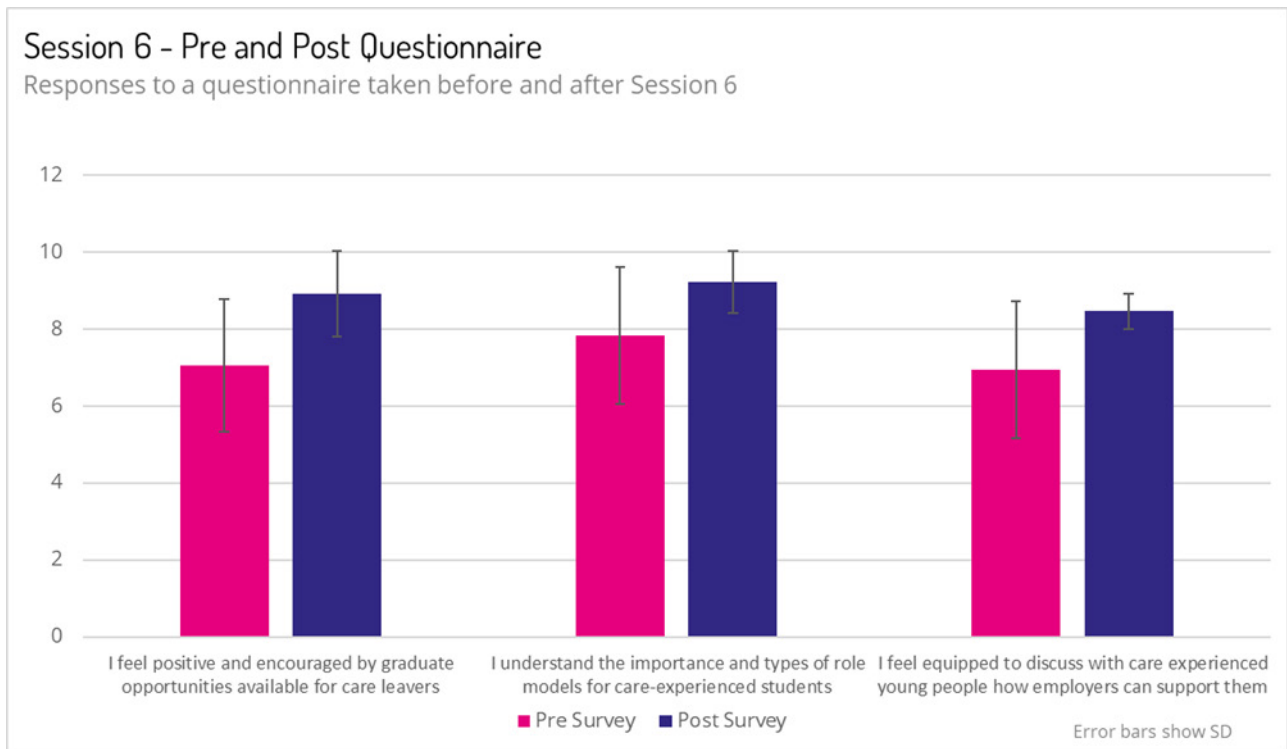
Responses to a questionnaire taken before and after Session 4



Session 5 - Pre and Post Questionnaire

Responses to a questionnaire taken before and after Session 5





Pre- and post-session comparisons: conclusions

Across all six sessions, the pre- and post-questionnaire data shows a consistent upward trend in participants' knowledge and confidence. While some sessions started with relatively high baseline scores, likely reflecting participants' existing professional expertise, every session demonstrated measurable improvement, reinforcing the value of the programme in building both awareness and practical skills.

The most notable gains were in areas directly tied to supporting care-experienced young people in practical and informed ways. For example, knowledge of the support available to care leavers in higher education rose from 6.63 to 9.08, representing the strongest improvement overall. This shows that the programme effectively closed a major knowledge gap in an area central to supporting care-experienced learners. Similarly, participants' confidence in identifying and dispelling common myths about higher education grew substantially, rising from 5.70 to 8.63, suggesting the programme equipped participants to challenge misconceptions and provide accurate, reassuring information to young people.

Marked gains were also seen in participants' understanding of the finance and applications process, which increased from 5.26 to 7.90. This indicates the programme gave participants the practical tools to guide young people through what can often be a confusing and intimidating stage of the journey into higher education.

Other results aligned closely with the programme's core aims. For instance, confidence in supporting young people to choose a programme or institution rose from 5.82 to 8.24, while knowledge of how to discuss the support needs of care-experienced young people improved from 7.05 to 8.75. These gains highlight how the CPD not only strengthens technical knowledge but also enhances participants' ability to provide personalised, empathetic support.

Taken together, these results illustrate more than one-off improvements: they show the cumulative impact of the programme in building a well-rounded knowledge base, dispelling misconceptions, and giving participants both the confidence and competence to apply this understanding in their daily practice. This strongly reinforces the overall effectiveness of the CPD in preparing key influencers to better support care-experienced young people on their pathways into higher education.

Programme qualitative feedback and comments

Participants were given the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback at the end of the programme to highlight key strengths and potential improvements. Participants consistently reported that the CPD programme was highly valuable and informative. Many noted that the sessions provided both new insights and the opportunity to revisit familiar topics from a fresh perspective.

One participant reflected:

"Some of the information I was aware of, but it was good to look at it from a different perspective sometimes."

The inclusion of guest speakers was highlighted as a key strength, adding depth to the sessions and providing practical signposting of support available for care-experienced students. Participants commented that this helped them feel better equipped to advise young people and colleagues:

"I have taken away many useful tips... It has made me reflect on the information I give and feel far more confident that I am giving the right advice."

The Training Delivery Officer's approach was highly praised and was described as engaging, attentive, and inclusive, ensuring all participants were heard and able to contribute. Interactive elements, group discussions, and shared experiences were repeatedly mentioned as particularly beneficial, helping participants to consolidate learning and apply it to their roles. For example, one participant noted the value of hearing contributions from other participants with different areas of expertise alongside the structured content:

"Really helpful sessions, enjoyed the group activities and chats and also listening to other knowledge."

While feedback was overwhelmingly positive, one participant did make suggestions for minor improvements. These included more practical, scenario-based activities, rearranging the session structure to allow earlier access to guest speakers, and simplifying the process for accessing online sessions. Despite these minor suggestions, the programme was seen as well-organised, engaging, and effective in enhancing participants' knowledge and confidence in supporting care-experienced young people towards Higher Education.

Summary of participant feedback

- The programme increased participants' knowledge and confidence in supporting care-experienced young people towards Higher Education.
- Guest speakers and interactive elements were highly valued for adding depth and practical insights.
- Facilitator delivery was consistently praised for being inclusive, engaging, and supportive.
- Group discussions and sharing of experiences were seen as particularly useful for reflection and learning.

Minor suggestions for improvement included more practical, scenario-based activities, reordering session structure, and simplifying online access.

Participant interview feedback

In addition to the anonymous feedback, the Training Delivery Officer had the opportunity to interview one of the participants about their experiences and reflections on the programme. This provided in-depth qualitative feedback to complement the existing quantitative and qualitative evaluation completed by most participants.

The participant reported that the programme helped them to effectively meet the specific needs for care-experienced young people, particularly by enabling them to provide more detailed information on financial support and the range of resources available. They highlighted that learning about how Higher Education Providers (HEPs) support students with Maths and English was especially valuable.

A key outcome noted was the participant's ability to take learnings back to their broader team. The participant explained that sharing these insights noticeably improved their colleagues' knowledge and confidence, allowing them to better advise care-experienced young people. This knowledge transfer was seen as a particularly valuable aspect of the programme:

"Encouraging team to be more confident and proactive in their discussions with young people."

Local guest speakers were praised for their relevance, helping the participant understand what HEPs are doing to support students and strengthening connections within their local area. The participant also emphasised that the programme facilitated further conversations with HEPs, enhancing their team's ability to provide tailored support.

Some areas for enhancement were suggested, including a greater focus on apprenticeships, possibly through a dedicated session. Practical aspects of the programme were well received: the two-hour weekly sessions were easy to schedule, and interactive tools such as Mentimeter and Padlet supported discussion and immediate feedback.

Overall, the interview reinforced that the CPD programme not only increased individual knowledge and confidence but also enabled effective knowledge sharing within teams, enhancing practice and support for care-experienced young people.

Future delivery

We will build on the success of the 2024-25 cohorts, continuing to deliver high-quality training for key influencers who influence the educational journeys of care-experienced young people.

The geographical spread of participants demonstrates the programme's growing national reach, although it remains essential that this does not detract from the commitment to local stakeholders. Through ongoing engagement with West Yorkshire partners, this will ensure balance is maintained.

Whilst programme dates in previous years were previously accommodated around half-term, with either six week delivery before or after half term, we did have one delivery in 2024-25 that had a one week pause due to half term. This had little impact on participants engagement and knowledge acquisition. This allows us greater flexibility in choosing dates for future delivery.

Tailored deliveries

In addition to the two main cohorts, a condensed version of the programme was delivered in June 2025 to colleagues from Wakefield Virtual School. This was in response to an existing relationship with Wakefield Virtual School and previous bespoke delivery in 2023-24. As such, the three-hour workshop distilled key elements of the six-week programme into a half-day format. The content was co-designed with Wakefield Virtual School to meet their specific needs and context.

Although attendance was slightly lower than anticipated due to competing demands at that time of year, engagement was strong and feedback was positive. Participants highlighted the usefulness of small-group activities and praised the delivery and accessibility of the session. Survey responses indicated consistent improvements in confidence when supporting

care-experienced young people with Higher Education.

Further tailored sessions are in development, including another planned collaboration with Wakefield Virtual School in November 2025.

Conclusions

The first full year of our CPD-certified Care to Go Higher delivery has been a success. It has been great to see innovation continue with the introduction of 30 minute taster sessions.

The programme continues to receive excellent qualitative feedback with improvements in participant knowledge, understanding and confidence demonstrated through quantitative pre- and post-questionnaires.

The future of the programme will hopefully see more tailored deliveries, increased take up of the taster sessions, and a greater number of people attend all six sessions to achieve CPD certification. A key part of this is information about Care to Go Higher being included on partner websites. This is located on the existing area of their websites about support at all stages (access, success and progression) for care-experienced students.

Further information

For further information about the programme, please visit the [Care to Go Higher webpage](#).



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