GO HIGHER
WEST YORKSHIRE

Higher Education Careers Coaching:
Impact Evaluation 2023/24

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A Go Higher West Yorkshire Evidence Report

OfS Uni Connect Programme

C+K

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This report is number 2 in a series on enhanced careers guidance. Previous reports in the series can be found on the GHWY website and are as follows:

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Abstract

In the academic year 2023/24, Go Higher West Yorkshire, in collaboration with C+K Careers, delivered a programme of Higher Education Careers Coaching to learners in years 10-13. The programme was designed in consultation with participating learners, and took the form of two 1-1 sessions with a careers coach. In the first session, learners reflected on their skills and strengths, set a goal and identified steps they could take towards that goal. In the second session, they reviewed their progress towards their goal. Evaluation of the programme found that learners who participated in the programme were able to experience an internal locus of control as a result of setting a goal and achieving it. On the other hand, some learners increased their understanding of suitability of options for themselves through the experience of setting an unrealistic goal and reevaluating it in the second session. The programme allowed learners to think deeply about their skills and strengths, and learners' understanding of their own skills and strengths was significantly increased after taking part in the programme. These findings have implications for the way in which both skills-focused coaching and goal setting activities are included in outreach programmes, both as standalone exercises, and as mechanisms within broader programmes.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to:

- C&K Careers for their role in the design and delivery of HE Careers Coaching
- The learners who took part in the programme design consultation
- The schools, colleges, and the former GHWY Progression Officers who supported and participated in the HE Careers Coaching
- Office for Students for the provision of Uni Connect funding to enable this programme to take place in 2023-24.

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Provide guided opportunity for learners experiencing inequality to reflect on their skills and strengths as part of their planning for the future 24

Include follow up reflection opportunities as part of goal setting exercises 24

Embed goal setting and reflection exercises into existing access programmes 25

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Executive Summary

GO HIGHER West Yorkshire

Higher Education Careers Coaching: Impact Evaluation 2023/24

Background

Whats the project all about?

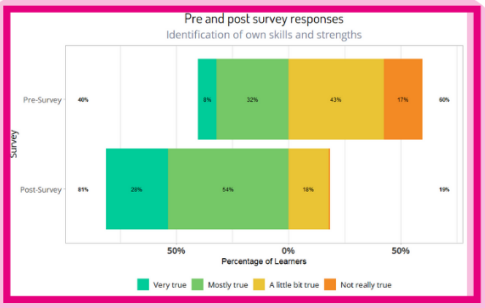
Two 1-1 sessions with a career coach - in the first, learners consider their skills, set a goal and identify steps to achieve that goal. In the second session they reflect and evaluate their progress.

Why will this work?

Available literature widely supports the idea that careers coaching will increase learners' self-efficacy.[1-4]

Goal setting activities are linked to increased self-efficacy[5], and are commonly used to develop self-regulated learning skills.[6]

Findings



There was a particularly clear positive impact on identification of skills and strengths.

> **"I think maybe [the learners] gained an insight into what they actually wanted, their preferences, that they probably wouldn't have got otherwise."**
>
> - Careers Coach

1. Learners made significant progress towards the intended outcomes as a result of taking part in HE careers coaching
2. Learners experience internal locus of control as a result of setting and achieving goals
3. Many learners think deeply about their skills and how to build on them after engaging with coaching resources and support
4. Some learners increased their understanding of what is right for them through the experience of setting an unrealistic goal and reevaluating it
5. Learners are proactively taking steps to increase their ability to progress to HE by setting and achieving goals related to their schoolwork and/or future

Recommendations

1. Provide guided opportunity for learners experiencing inequality to reflect on their skills and strengths as part of their planning for the future
2. Include follow-up reflection opportunities as part of goal-setting exercises
3. Embed goal-setting and reflection exercises into exisiting access programmes
4. Include HE careers coaching within the remit for future access programmes, such as regional access partnerships

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$p<0.05$ was used as the threshold for statistical testing throughout.

Office for Students

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. The core work of GHWY is funded by our member institutions.

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 (2).

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.

You can also follow us on LinkedIn and on X @GoHigherWY.

Introduction to C + K Careers

C + K are a careers service with over 30 years' experience in delivering a wide range of careers advice and guidance services to young people in West Yorkshire. C +K work with a wide range of organisations, including schools, colleges, local authorities and employers, and have a team of over 60 specialist career advisers who are Level 6 ISG qualified or working towards it.

Introduction to Higher Education Careers Coaching

Background

Learners from groups underrepresented (URG) in higher education take part in a range of activities through the Go Higher West Yorkshire Uni Connect programme. These activities aim to help learners to increase their ability to progress to higher education by making informed decisions about their future careers and education, and helping raise their attainment. Although there is evidence that this approach increases progression of these young people to higher education (HE) (3), it is unclear to what extent this is due to learners consciously reflecting on these experiences and considering how they could impact their future.

Learners from URGs are more likely to have lower 'career self-efficacy' than those not in URGs (4–6): career self-efficacy predicts vocational outcome expectations (6) – that is, what they expect for themselves and their future career. Negative outcome expectations then predict job seeking behaviours – that is, if learners have low expectations for themselves, they are less likely to seek out opportunities. It is therefore vital to ensure that learners feel positive about and in control of their future, and to address real and perceived barriers to progression, in order that they can have realistic positive expectations about their vocational outcomes.

Building on previous enhanced careers guidance provision (1), and in partnership with C+K Careers, the HE Careers Coaching programme aims to help learners reflect on past experiences, identify personal strengths, and think about future decisions through reflective conversation with a qualified careers coach. Available literature widely supports the idea that enhanced careers guidance / careers coaching has a positive impact on career self-efficacy. (6–8).At the time of delivery (2023-24) the programme benefited from GHWY's unique staffing model. This included a Progression Officer being wholly based at each priority school/college who was able to identify individual learners for participation and facilitate the delivery of the programme. At the time of writing, GHWY is no longer able to fund HE Careers Coaching in the format described in the report, or the Progression Officer role, due to substantial funding cuts to the national Uni Connect programme, implemented from the academic year 2024/25.

Programme structure

The programme was designed collaboratively with a wide range of relevant stakeholders including careers professionals, Uni Connect staff, and a small group of learners at two of the participating schools.

During the 2023-24 academic year, each learner took part in two 45-60 minute sessions with a Level 6 qualified Careers Advisor, around 1-2 months apart. In the first session, '*What's your strength?* ®' cards (9) were used to identify key skills and strengths that the learner felt they had, as well as to prompt self-reflection and discussion. Learners were then asked to set a goal that they would like to achieve by the next session, and identify key steps required to reach that goal.

In the second session, learners were able to reflect on their progress, determine whether they had achieved their goal, and discuss their successes and difficulties within the goal setting process. In addition, learners had the opportunity to reflect on any careers or outreach activities, including Uni Connect activities, they had experienced since the first session and discuss how this informed their future plans, goals, and next steps based on their learnings.

Learner participation

Learners were targeted for participation from specific groups that are underrepresented in higher education (URGs) – these were male learners who were eligible for free school meals, learners from a Black, Asian, or minoritised ethnic background, disabled learners, and care experienced learners. Learners with a Uni-Connect eligible postcode – that is, in POLAR quintile 1 or 2 – were also prioritised.

109 learners from Years 10-13 or further education (FE) level 3 took part in the programme, from 8 participating schools. The drop-out rate was high, particularly in FE colleges, with one FE College reporting less than 50% of learners returning for their second session. A total of 68 learners submitted both pre and post surveys, with an additional 23 completing only the pre survey, an attrition rate of approximately 25%.

Evidence for this approach

Relational careers coaching

One of the aims of the programme is to increase learners' career self-efficacy. There is wide support in available literature to support the idea that careers coaching will increase learners' self-efficacy. Although this evidence largely comes from HE students (6), graduates (10), or other adults (7), there is also some evidence of its effectiveness in school age participants (8).

Strengths-based approach

One key part of the activity involves a discussion of self-perceived skills and strengths, informed by the use of prompt cards which link school subjects to particular skills a learner may demonstrate in that subject. Evidence suggests that a strengths-based approach may be particularly beneficial for learners from 'widening participation' backgrounds (11), and this approach was endorsed by learners involved in the design of the programme (see appendix 1 for details).

Goal setting

Another part of the programme involved setting a goal, identifying steps required to reach the goal, and later evaluating their own success in obtaining the goal. Evidence suggests that both the act of setting and achieving a goal as well as the process of self-evaluation can lead to an increased sense of self-efficacy (12). In addition to this, goal setting skills are closely linked to the idea of self-regulated learning (13). Goal setting interventions are commonly used to develop self-regulated learning skills, and are also linked to wider positive wellbeing (13). Goal setting activities are also linked to increased attainment (14).

Changes and reflections since the pilot evaluation report

A previous iteration of enhanced careers guidance was delivered in 2022-23, and the associated evaluation

report was published in July 2025. The evaluation of this programme found that taking part significantly improved learners' knowledge of their post-16 options and led to them feeling more positive about the future.

The programme delivered this year has been significantly developed from the initial programme, becoming more structured, incorporating a goal setting element, and including a follow-up appointment with the coach to reflect on whether the goal had been achieved. The sessions were designed together with a small group of learners who later participated in the programme to ensure that the programme met their needs.

Table 1 Changes made to the 23-24 HE Careers Coaching programme in response to recommendations in the 22-23 report (1).

Recommendation	Changes made
Deliver in-depth careers guidance above and beyond statutory requirements	The structure of the programme was further developed and formalised to ensure that it was completely distinct from the careers guidance that learners will take part in as part of the schools/colleges' statutory requirements.
Increase opportunities for learners to explore different career possibilities	The Uni Connect Programme delivers a range of interventions which allow learners to explore different career pathways, in particular the Go Higher Industry Insight Programme (15). Learners who had taken part in these activities were able to reflect on these opportunities during the HECC sessions.
Align enhanced CEIAG provision to a measurable framework	The GHWY informed decision-making outcomes framework was used to design and measure the intended outcomes of the programme.

Intended programme outcomes

Outcome themes and specific intended outcomes

The programme was designed with three main intended outcomes for learners. The outcomes were taken from the GHWY informed decision-making outcomes framework which aims to facilitate informed decision making about the future.

1. **Developing self-efficacy / internal locus of control** – after taking part in the programme, learners should feel more confident about their ability to succeed and achieve their goals, as well as have an increased sense of control over their life and future.

2. **Identification of own skills and strengths** – after taking part in the programme, learners should have a better understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.

3. **Knowing suitability of options for self** – after taking part in the programme learners should have a better understanding of their options for the future, and which options are right for them specifically, given their skills, strengths, personal values, etc.

Progression to HE data will be used as a measure of longer-term impact on participating learners. This data will be available between 2026 and 2029, depending on their year group at time of participation, with the data for the majority of learners available in either July 2027 or July 2029[1].

Evaluation approach

Progress towards intended outcomes was primarily measured using a pre and post intervention survey, with one survey taken before taking part in their first session and a second survey taken immediately after their second session.

In addition to this, qualitative data was collected in a number of ways. As part of each session, learners filled in a 'next steps plan' with details of their chosen goal and the steps required to reach it. Although designed to aid delivery of the session, these worksheets were collated and analysed.

Further to this, the Careers Coaches involved in delivery of the sessions wrote reflective logs about their experience, or took part in a reflective interview. These facilitator observations were also analysed as part of the evaluation.

[1] Progression data is available through longitudinal tracking through the HEAT database. HEAT is able to link GHWY data with HESA data and provide progression information in the academic year after the year the learner enters HE – for example, for learners entering HE in September 2026, this data will be available in July of 2028.

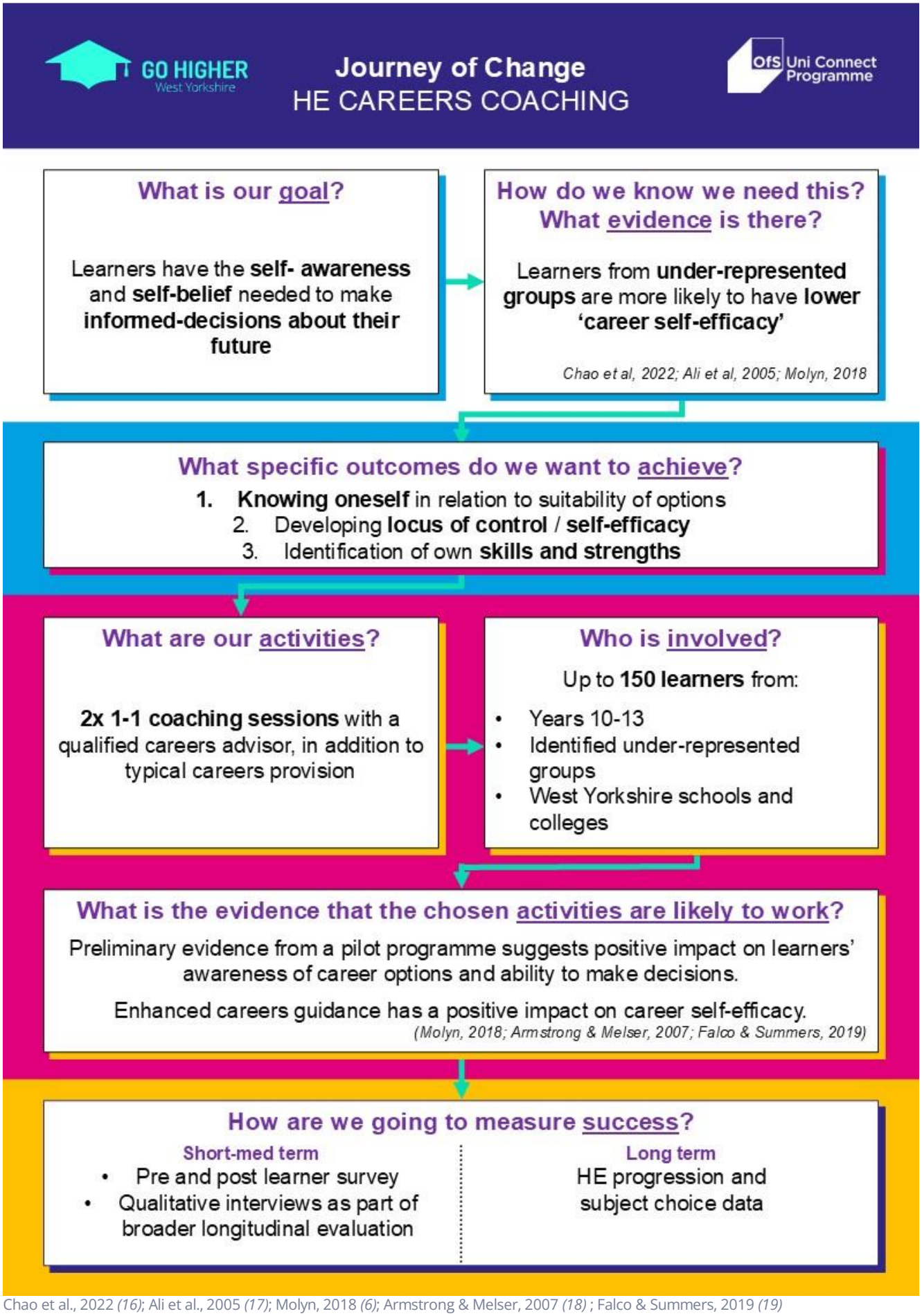
Finally, one participating learner was interviewed about their experience of Careers Coaching alongside other Uni Connect activities. This led to the learner case study included within the report.

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

Limitations of this approach

Several factors limit the completeness of the conclusions that can be drawn from this evaluation.

- Survey responses are compared between a baseline score before the intervention and responses from the same participant group after the intervention. No control groups have been used to compare survey responses between participants and non-participants. This is due to logistical challenges of surveying non-participants in schools/colleges, and limited staff capacity.
- Numbers for robust statistical testing are lower than ideal in some cases, such as when comparing distance travelled between different demographic groups such as ethnic group. Full details of n numbers used can be found in Appendix 2.
- Self-reported surveys, such as those used in this evaluation, have the potential to produce biased results, for example inattention bias, where learners tick responses without fully reading the question, or social desirability bias, where learners answer the questions based on how they would like to be perceived both by their peers and by the adults asking them to do the surveys. Whilst steps were taken to reduce potential bias, for example by encouraging learners to reflect thoughtfully on their answers, it is impossible to eliminate this entirely from this method. Additionally, many questions were designed specifically to measure impact for the stated intended outcomes, questions from external validated survey scales have been used where available to increase the efficacy of the surveys.
- Surveys are only able to measure self-perceived knowledge and skills, and learners' perception of themselves may not be entirely accurate.
- Limited qualitative data collection (specifically for evaluation purposes) took place, especially with learners. The qualitative data available from learners' 'next steps plans', while very useful for analysis, gives limited insight into learners' thoughts and feelings about the HE Careers Coaching process and outcomes. Qualitative findings contained within this report are therefore based mostly on processual insights.



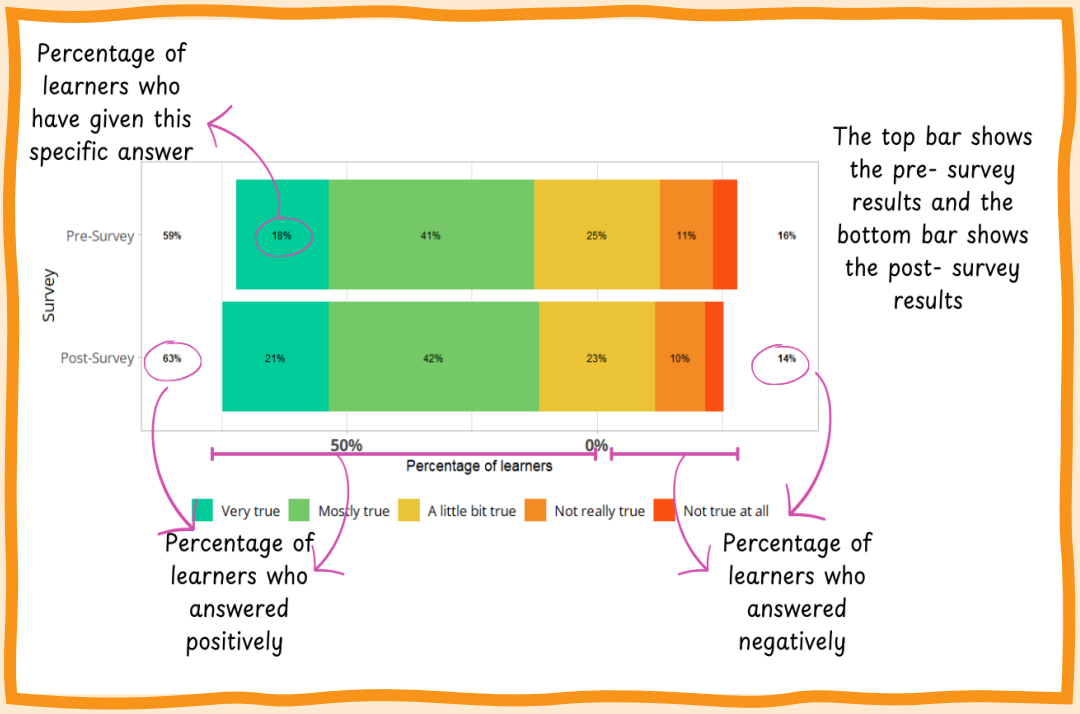
Chao et al., 2022 *(16)*; Ali et al., 2005 *(17)*; Molyn, 2018 *(6)*; Armstrong & Melser, 2007 *(18)* ; Falco & Summers, 2019 *(19)*

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.

Locus of control

Learners significantly increased their internal locus of control as a result of taking part in HE Careers Coaching

Learners are experiencing internal locus of control as a result of setting and then achieving goals

Before and after taking part in the programme, learners were asked to fill in a survey that asked them to rate how true certain statements were. Some of these questions were on the topic of locus of control, that is, how in control of their own life a learner feels. If they feel that their life is controlled by their own decisions, this is known as an internal locus of control, whereas if they feel that their life is controlled by external forces, this is known as an external locus of control. Based on these surveys, learners had a significantly more internal locus of control after taking part in the programme (Figure 1 and Appendix 2), with 59% of learners saying that statements about locus of control were 'very true' or 'mostly true' before taking part, and 83% answering the same after taking part. Note that statistical testing was done question by question, please see appendix 1 and 2 for details.

Qualitative data shows that learners are experiencing internal locus of control as a result of setting and then achieving goals. This behavioural process provides learners with lived experience of taking control over an aspect of their life. In many cases, this achievement was explicitly celebrated by the Careers Coach, driving self-awareness and providing a potential catalyst for learners to enact further agency going forwards. However, from the limited qualitative data available, it is not possible to determine learners' thoughts about the process of setting and achieving a goal or their perceptions of their self-observed locus of control as a result of that process.

What does this tell us?

Locus of control and self-efficacy are distinct but closely related concepts: a learner's locus of control is a measure of how in control of their life they feel; with an internal locus of control reflecting a belief that they themselves are responsible for what happens in their life (for example, their own hard work studying resulting in improved exam results), and an external locus of control reflecting a belief that their life is controlled by external factors (for example, a belief that their exam results are the result of what their teacher has taught them). Self-efficacy, on the other hand, is a learner's confidence in their own ability to succeed in what they set out to do.

An individuals locus of control is flexible and changes depending on their life experiences – those who have experienced control over aspects of their life, and who have experienced positive outcomes from choices they have made, are more likely to have a more internal locus of control (20). Learners in some URGs, such as learners from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds or care experienced learners, are more likely to have external loci of control (20,21). This may be due to having experienced structural barriers which prevent them from exercising full control over their choices and experiences.

The Higher Education Careers Coaching Programme involves learners setting a goal in the first session, working towards this goal in between sessions, and reviewing their progress towards that goal. As they exercise this control over their ability to achieve the goal, they experience an internal locus of control. A more internal locus of control and higher self-efficacy are associated with higher attainment (22,23),

vocational outcomes and expectations (17), as well as less procrastination (23,24) and learners with a more internal locus of control are more likely to adjust well to life in HE (25). A study of students at high tariff institutions found that disadvantaged students at these institutions inevitably showed high self-efficacy and an internal locus of control, as in order to be there they had overcome barriers that could not have been overcome without these traits (26). Locus of control and self-efficacy also impact which potential 'future selves' learners believe they can become (27).

Several studies found differences for locus of control and self-efficacy between genders and ethnicities (6,22,25), however our findings did not demonstrate this.

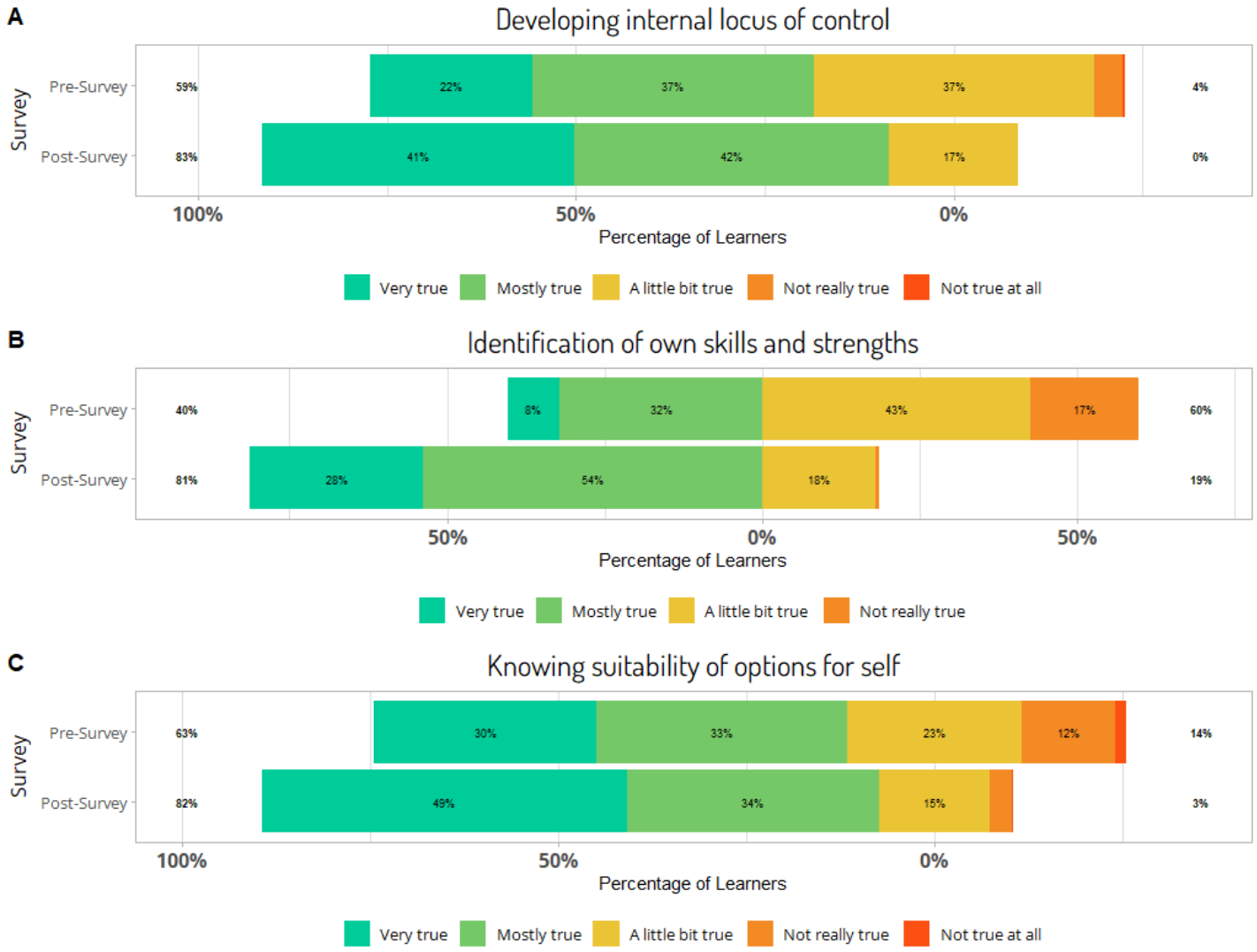


Figure 1 Responses to survey question before and after taking part in HE Careers Coaching. A) combined responses to questions on the topic of 'developing internal locus of control'. B) combined responses to questions on the topic of 'identification of own skills and strengths'. C)Combined responses to questions on the topic of 'knowing suitability of options for self'. Statistical testing was done question by question, see appendix 2 for p values.

Identification of skills and strengths

Learners significantly increased their understanding of their own skills and strengths as a result of taking part in HE Careers Coaching

Many learners are thinking deeply about their skills and how to build on them after engaging with coaching resources and support

Responses to survey questions on the topic of identification of skills and strengths were significantly different after taking part in the programme compared to before taking part in the programme (Fig 1B and Appendix 2), with 40% of learners saying statements about skills and strengths were 'very true' or 'mostly true' before taking part in the programme, and 81% after taking part. Note that statistical testing was done question by question, please see appendix 1 and 2 for details.

When comparing the distance travelled between the pre and post survey in responses to these questions, learners in Key Stage 5 (Year 12, Year 13 or FE, ages 16-18) 'travelled' significantly further ($p = 0.03235$), i.e. the programme had more of an impact on these learners compared to younger learners in Key Stage 4 (Year 10 or Year 11, ages 14-16) (Fig 3). This is supported by facilitator observations made by the Careers Coaches.

Learners were also impacted differently depending on whether they were free school meal eligible or not, which was used as a proxy for socioeconomic status. Learners who were not eligible for free school meals were impacted significantly more by taking part in the programme compared to those who were eligible ($p=0.03859$) (Fig. 2). However, when analysed separately, both learners on free school meals and those not on free school meals had a significantly improved idea of their skills and strengths after taking part in the programme ($p<0.01$).

Qualitative data shows that many goals set by learners specifically relate to either skills that they wish to develop further, or to applying their observed existing strengths in new contexts. Learners identified many different skills that they wanted to develop or apply, incl. research, presentation, time management, communication, problem solving and leadership skills.

> *Learner goal:* "To find a high mark question on two past sociology exam papers and apply critical thinking skills to get higher marks"
>
> *Example of a goal set by a learner*

As a result of this holistic process of reflecting on skills and strengths alongside setting goals, learners are able to make considered connections between their observed skills and opportunities to fulfil their potential. Facilitator observations support the value of a strengths-focused approach, particularly in the use of the '*What's your strength?* ®' cards for learners to reflect on and develop the skills needed for career planning. Coaches note that discussions around skills were thought-provoking for learners and encouraged them to "think beyond their immediate challenges in school/college" (Careers Coach).

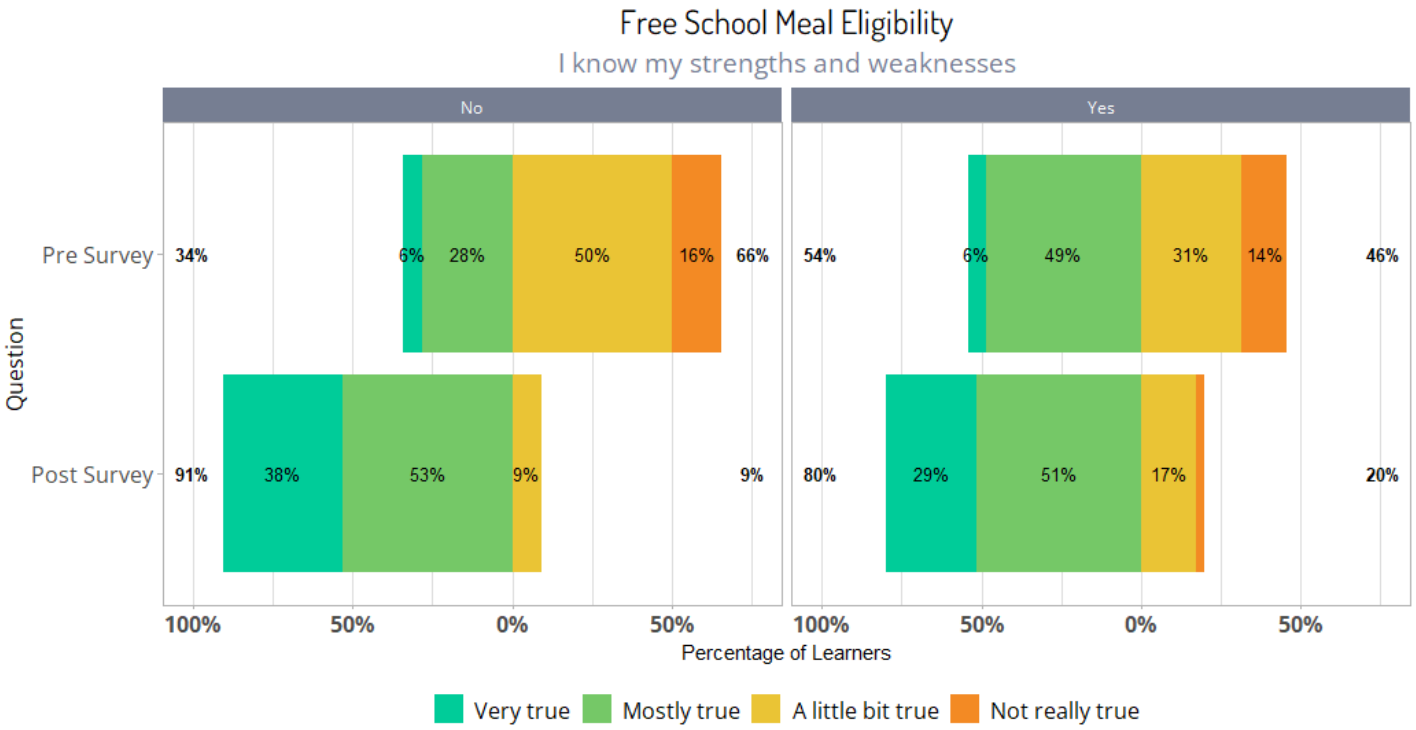


Figure 2 Comparison of pre and post survey responses to the statement 'I know my strengths and weaknesses' for learners who are not eligible for free school meals (left) and those who are (right). There is a significant difference in the distance travelled from the pre to the post survey between these two groups, but there is a significant difference between pre and post survey results for both groups individually.

What does this tell us?

Through taking part in the HE Careers Coaching programme, learners are able to identify their skills and strengths. This is important because learners' awareness of their own skills and strengths is linked to their wellbeing and motivation to achieve goals (28). These results support external findings from a strengths-based programme in HE which show that learners taking part have an increased sense of belonging in an HE environment and better retention in HE (29).

A learner's ability to identify their own skills and strengths – and therefore their own weaknesses and things they need to work harder at – is also linked to the metacognitive skill of monitoring, which is the ability to look at their own learning and identify the gaps in their understanding. Increased metacognitive skills are associated with increased attainment, and are a focus of another of GHWYs outreach programmes, the Think and Go Higher Programme (30,31).

Learners who were eligible for free school meals – used as a proxy for low socioeconomic status – seem to have found the programme less impactful in terms of identifying their skills and strengths (Fig 2). It is common for learners who come from non-traditional backgrounds to have particular skills and strengths related to their background that may not traditionally be recognised as such (32,33), and it therefore may be harder for these learners to identify these strengths in discussion. FSM eligible learners in several cases also had significantly lower baseline scores than their non-FSM-eligible peers (Supplementary Figure 2) – they were starting the programme with less confidence in their existing skills. Tailoring discussions to the specific URG audience may be beneficial in this case.

Learners in Key Stage 5 – that is, Sixth Form or FE College – seem to benefit more from the intervention compared to younger learners (Fig. 3).

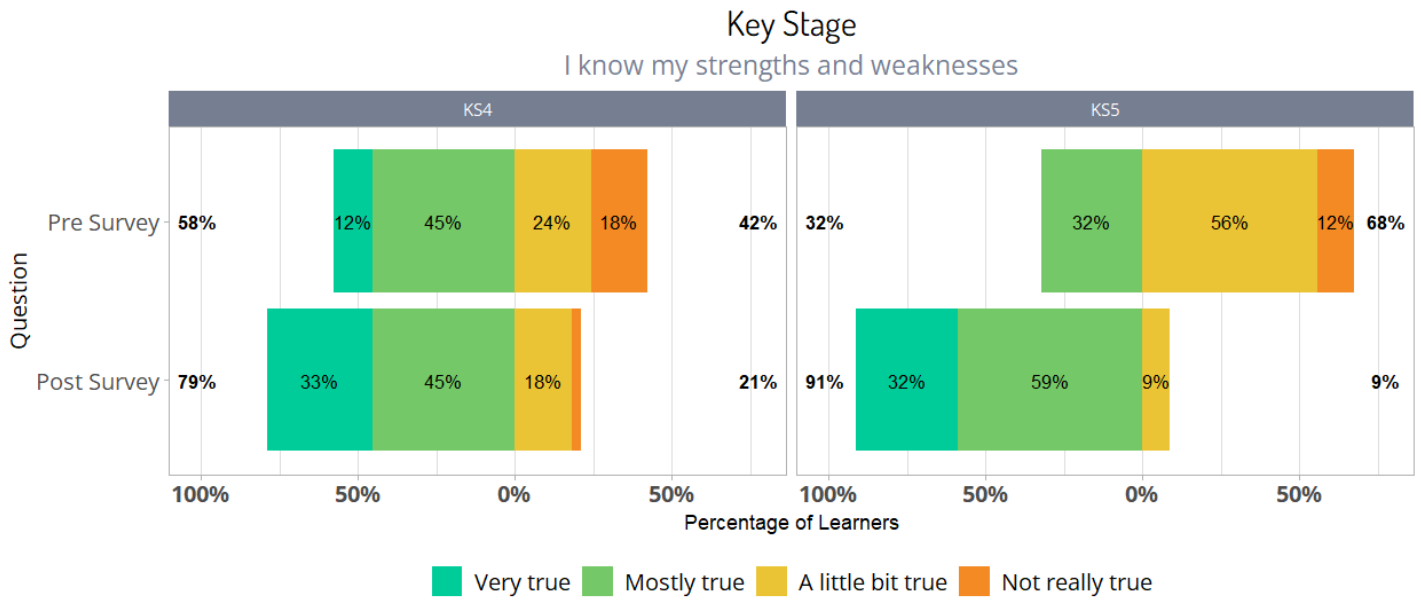


Figure 3 Comparison of pre and post survey responses to the statement 'I know my strengths and weaknesses' for learners in Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16, left) and those in key stage 5 (ages 16-18, right) There is a significant difference in the distance travelled from pre to post survey between these two groups (p = 0.03235), but there is a significant difference between pre and post survey results for both groups individually.

Knowing suitability of options for self

Learners significantly increased their understanding of what is right for them as a result of taking part in HE Careers Coaching

Some learners increased their understanding of what is right for them through the experience of setting an unrealistic goal and reevaluating it in the second session

Qualitative enquiry shows that, while many learners did achieve the goal they set, some learners did not achieve their goal. In this case, the second session with a coach was instrumental in helping learners to establish the feasibility of the goal they had set themselves, or their motivation to complete it, and recalibrate their thinking. This process supports their self-awareness and ability to set goals that are suitable for them and their circumstances, based on their skills, strengths, interests and values.

> "I think maybe [the learners] gained an insight into what they actually wanted, their preferences, that they probably wouldn't have got otherwise. People sometimes don't have a particularly realistic understanding of their own selves"
>
> *Careers Coach*

Further to this, survey results show that learners had a significantly better understanding of the suitability of options for themselves after taking part in the programme (Figure C), with 63% of learners saying statements

about suitability of options were 'very true' or 'mostly true' before taking part in the programme, and 82% after taking part. Note that statistical testing was done question by question, please see appendix 1 and 2 for details.

What does this tell us?

Through setting goals with the support of an adult, learners are able to articulate, reflect on and refine their vision of their 'possible selves' (34), bringing it to life. This process of 'elaboration' of their working self-concept can transform loosely defined possible selves into clear roadmaps and strategies for their future (35). Part of this process involves discarding imagined future selves which emerge as having lower desirability for the learner than anticipated once motivation to work towards achieving them was needed.

It is widely evidenced that 'hot knowledge', (i.e. learning accumulated through informal social interaction) has more impact on the decision-making of learners from underrepresented backgrounds than formal information sources (36,37). HE Careers Coaching provides a mechanism for learners to access bespoke, relational support from a coach to know themselves and options that are suitable for them better, through the sustained process of assessing skills and strengths, setting and achieving goals and reflecting on unmet goals.

Many learners did not attend the second session. While there is likely to be a variety of reasons for this, some learners may have felt embarrassed or anxious about not achieving the goal set in the first session, therefore choosing not to attend the second session. If the coach explicitly explains the constructive approach to the second session during the first session, it may help to reduce the attrition rate in any future delivery of this model.

Goal setting

Learners are proactively taking steps to increase their ability to progress to HE by setting and achieving goals related to their schoolwork and/or future

The qualitative data reveals that, at the end of the first session, almost all learners (for whom data is available) chose to set a goal that related to their future prospects, despite being told they could set a goal about anything they like. This includes many goals that relate to exercises and discussions about skills that took place earlier in the session.

Learners' goals (set for themselves) were in relation to the following topics, in order of prevalence:

Table 2 Types of goals learners recorded in their next steps plans.

Goal type (six most common)	**Number of learners setting this type of goal**
Improving focus and/or organisation in school	17
Increasing attainment	17
Career-related research	16
Developing life skills	16

Applying existing skills	8
Improving ability in sport	5

Most goals set by learners have a direct correlation with other forms of outreach and attainment raising activity, demonstrating the complementarity of the coaching and goal-setting approach to other Uni Connect workstreams and objectives.

What does this tell us?

Goal setting skills are integral to self-regulated learning skills, and have been used in many interventions which aim to support self-regulated learning as a mechanism to develop these skills (38,39). Self-regulation as a concept is closely linked to metacognition, and self-regulated learners are 'confident, diligent and resourceful' (40). They are able to identify when they have not understood something, and take proactive steps to remedy this – in other words, they display metacognitive monitoring and regulation skills.

Students with high levels of self-regulated learning skills are more effective learners and achieve better academic performance than their peers (40,41). Self-regulated learning skills have also been linked to non-academic outcomes including improved wellbeing and health (42). It is clear that there is overlap between the outcomes of HE Careers Coaching and other Go Higher West Yorkshire programmes, such as the Think and Go Higher metacognition based programme (30,31). It is likely that a goal setting intervention, delivered alongside other programmes, may help learners to reflect more effectively on experiences with these programmes. Further to this, as learners have chosen to set thoughtful goals related to skills and attainment, our evidence suggests that an intersection between these programmes would be welcomed by learners.

In goal setting interventions such as this, studies have found that it is not enough to instruct learners that they should set goals, but rather they must work with them to support them with the skills to set and achieve the goals (43). As such, the relational aspect of the HECC coaching programme, where coaches work one to one with learners to choose their goals and identify concrete steps towards achieving those goals, are key. The value of relational interventions such as coaching and mentoring in progression to HE are recognised (44), and learners from URGs often highlight a supportive relationship with a key adult in their life as vital to their progression to HE (45).

Operational insights

As part of the analysis of the qualitative data, some process-related challenges have been observed which, if addressed, could support a smoother application of HE Careers Coaching in the future, further improving outcomes for learners and our ability to measure these outcomes.

- There was some tension between the focus of the coaching sessions and the typical approach a Careers Advisor would take to 1-1 careers engagement. In some cases, coaches weren't completely clear about whether the sessions were primarily designed to provide coaching or more traditional forms of guidance.
- The act of goal setting in the first session seemed to be particularly engaging for learners, but it is more difficult to determine the value of the second session from session logs as most present limited reflection and/or do not reflect the voice of the learner (they were instead completed by the coach on the learners' behalf). However, insights from coaches and some learner logs have enabled us to

determine the stated value of the second session.

Meet Zane

Who are they?

Zane is a Year 12 learner at a Sixth Form in Bradford. He enjoys keeping fit and walking in nature. He wants to pursue a career in finance and looks up to his cousins, who have become successful in similar industries. He has enjoyed helping with the family finances at home. Although he was already determined to be successful ahead of taking part in Higher Education (HE) Careers Coaching, he needed some reassurance.

"I just thought, you know, I like doing this. I found it fun where other people find it boring"

(in relation to helping with family finances)

The learner's experience of Higher Education Careers Coaching

Zane took part in GHWY's HE Careers Coaching, attending two 1-1 sessions with a careers coach. Prior to that, he had attended a GHWY talk by an apprenticeship provider. During his first session with a careers coach, Zane discussed his options and completed an activity using 'Know Your Strengths' cards. As a result, his understanding of what he wants to do in the future deepened, and he felt reassured that he has the skills to do it. Talking to the coach also helped him reflect on the apprenticeship talk and feel more sure of himself and his potential choices.

"It showed me all the skills I would have learned in those subjects and I think this made me more sure of myself"

(in relation to the 'Know Your Strengths' activity)

Concluding Thoughts

HE Careers Coaching gave Zane the confidence and reassurance he needed to move forward with his career plans and make an informed decision based on his values and his skills. Zane's experience also demonstrates the importance of repeat encounters, when a memory of a previous experience can re-emerge during a reflective conversation later down the line. Although Zane would have preferred more time to unpick this, Uni Connect enabled Zane to make connections between his skills, experiences and pathway options through tailored coaching and conversation.

Recommendations

Provide guided opportunity for learners experiencing inequality to reflect on their skills and strengths as part of their planning for the future

Who is this recommendation for? GHWY, education sector, careers sector

Why? Being able to identify their own skills and strengths is beneficial for learners. Evidence shows this can be most impactful when learners are supported to reflect as part of a coaching or mentoring process. This is especially vital for learners experiencing inequality, such as those eligible for free school meals. It may also be particularly beneficial to provide these opportunities to older learners such as those in Sixth Form or FE colleges.

How?
a) Include strengths-focused discussion and activities in careers guidance and planning opportunities. This could be in a 1-1 or group scenario.
b) Use specialist resources such as '*What's your strength?* ®' cards (9) as conversation prompts with learners.

Include follow up reflection opportunities as part of goal setting exercises

Who is this recommendation for? GHWY, education sector, careers sector

Why? Goal setting activities are a common way to help learners develop self-regulated learning skills, but in addition to this, including a follow up session where learners can reflect on achieving or not achieving the goals they have set is also key. Highlighting self-driven achievements (such as setting and achieving a goal) maximises opportunity for learners' internal locus of control to increase. If this is explicit to learners they may be able to build on this achievement, supporting them to fulfil their potential when making bigger decisions about their future. In the context of a supportive relationship, reflection opportunities also hold learners to account when setting goals and provides constructive opportunity for validation or reconsideration of goals set.

How?
a) When supporting learners to set goals about their education and/or future, build in clear opportunities for learners to revisit their goal and reflect on progress.
b) Ensure learners are clear from the beginning of the guided process that not achieving a goal is not a failure, but a chance to reflect and recalibrate.
c) During guided reflection with learners, explicitly highlight the outcomes they are achieving for themselves, such as increased self-awareness, or the accomplishment associated with setting a goal and achieving it.

Embed goal setting and reflection exercises into existing access programmes

Who is this recommendation for? GHWY, HE sector

Why? Taking part in goal setting exercises as part of the HE Careers Coaching programme has been beneficial for learners, and goals set are highly complementary to other features of HE access engagement. However, some learners benefitted from the programme more than others. Embedding this type of activity into existing interventions aimed at specific groups allows the activities to be better tailored for specific groups, for example learners on free school meals, to ensure that they are extracting as much benefit as possible from the activities.

How?

a) At the start of access-related interventions, set aside time for learners to set a related goal that can be achieved during the intervention, alongside an opportunity to reflect on progress towards the goal at the end. This is particularly well suited to sustained interventions and could be applied to outreach or attainment-raising focused interventions.

b) Alternatively, learners could set a goal towards the end of an intervention, if a follow up reflection opportunity can be offered at a later point after the intervention has ended. This suits any length of intervention and could be applied to outreach or attainment-raising focused interventions.

Include HE careers coaching within the remit for future access programmes, such as regional access partnerships

Who is this recommendation for? Policymakers

Why? Based on our evidence, providing impartial opportunities for priority learners to access tailored, relational coaching would be an impactful feature of HE access programmes. This could be complementary to other aspects of collaborative access and outreach by providing opportunities for learners to set small-scale goals, reflect on the suitability of options for themselves and create roadmaps for their future.

How?

a) Recommend that regional access partnerships include a careers coaching strand to learner engagement within their operations planning for 2026-27 onwards, based on evidence such as that which is contained within this report.

b) Include provision for 1-1 coaching with priority learners in funding forecasts for 2026-27 onwards.

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Appendix 1: Methods

Learner consultation on programme design

During the process of designing the programme, groups of learners from two participating schools were invited to take part in discussion sessions to help shape the programme.

Participating learners felt that physical resources were helpful as a starting point for discussion, especially for less confident learners who may struggle with questions 'out of the blue'. They reacted positively to the 'what is your strength' cards, suggesting that although they knew what their favourite subjects were, they weren't necessarily able to identify the skills they were using in these subjects, and that analysing which skills they already had would be helpful to them.

They also suggested that the possibility to focus on skills outside of school subjects would be helpful, and proposed a format that would allow them to identify a skill they would like to develop and discuss how they could work towards this.

Data Collection

Demographic data and longitudinal tracking

Demographic and monitoring data were collected via schools and uploaded to the Higher Education Access

Tracker (HEAT) database for storage and longitudinal tracking.

Pre and post programme survey

Before and after taking part in the programme learners were asked to take a short survey which asked them to rate how true different statements were for them. The statements can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 Questions in the pre and post programme survey. Learners were asked to complete a pre and post survey before and after the programme. Learners were asked to rate on a 5 point scale from 'very true' to 'not true at all' how true the below statements were for them.

No.	Question	Outcome measured
q1.1	I have control over my future career or studies	Locus of control
q1.2	I know my strengths and weaknesses	Identification of skills and strengths
q1.3	I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	Knowing suitability of options for self
q1.4	I will be successful in my chosen career	Locus of control
q1.5	I will achieve my career and academic goals	Locus of control
q1.6	My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	Locus of control

q1.7	My talents and skills will be used in my career	Knowing suitability of options for self
q1.8	I am able to chose a career that suits my strengths and skills	Knowing suitability of options for self
q1.9	I am able to chose a career that will fit my interests	Knowing suitability of options for self
q1.10	I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	Identification of skills and strengths
q1.11	I know what my ideal career would be	Knowing suitability of options for self
q1.12	When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	Knowing suitability of options for self

Next Steps Plans

As part of the sessions, learners were asked to fill in a worksheet called a 'next steps plan', which involved setting a goal and identifying steps to achieve it. In the second session, these next steps plans were reviewed and a further goal set. An example of this document can be seen in appendix 3.

Reflective logs and interviews with Coaches

At the end of the programme, two of the coaches wrote reflective logs about their experience of delivering the programme, focusing primarily on operational aspects. The third careers coach took part in an interview focusing primarily on impact.

Case Study

One learner who had taken part in the careers coaching programme was interviewed for the case study.

Analysis

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.

To compare the impact between different groups, a distance travelled metric was calculated by subtracting the score on the post survey from the score on the pre survey. This number was then compared between different groups using an unpaired Wilcoxon test, or in cases where there were more than two group to be compared, a Kruskal Wallis test, followed by a pairwise Wilcoxon test if significant. The impact of the programme on the following groups was compared in this manner:

- Learners in Key Stage 4 with learners in Key Stage 5
- Learners in different ethnic groups
- Learners who were eligible for free school meals with those that were not
- Learners at different types of schools – for example, secondary schools with and without sixth forms, sixth form colleges, and FE colleges

- Learners with UC eligible postcodes with learners with non-eligible postcodes
- Male learners with female learners

Where a significant result was found between different groups was found, an additional Wilcoxon test was done using data from each group independently.

See Appendix 2 for full results of statistical testing.

Analysis of qualitative data

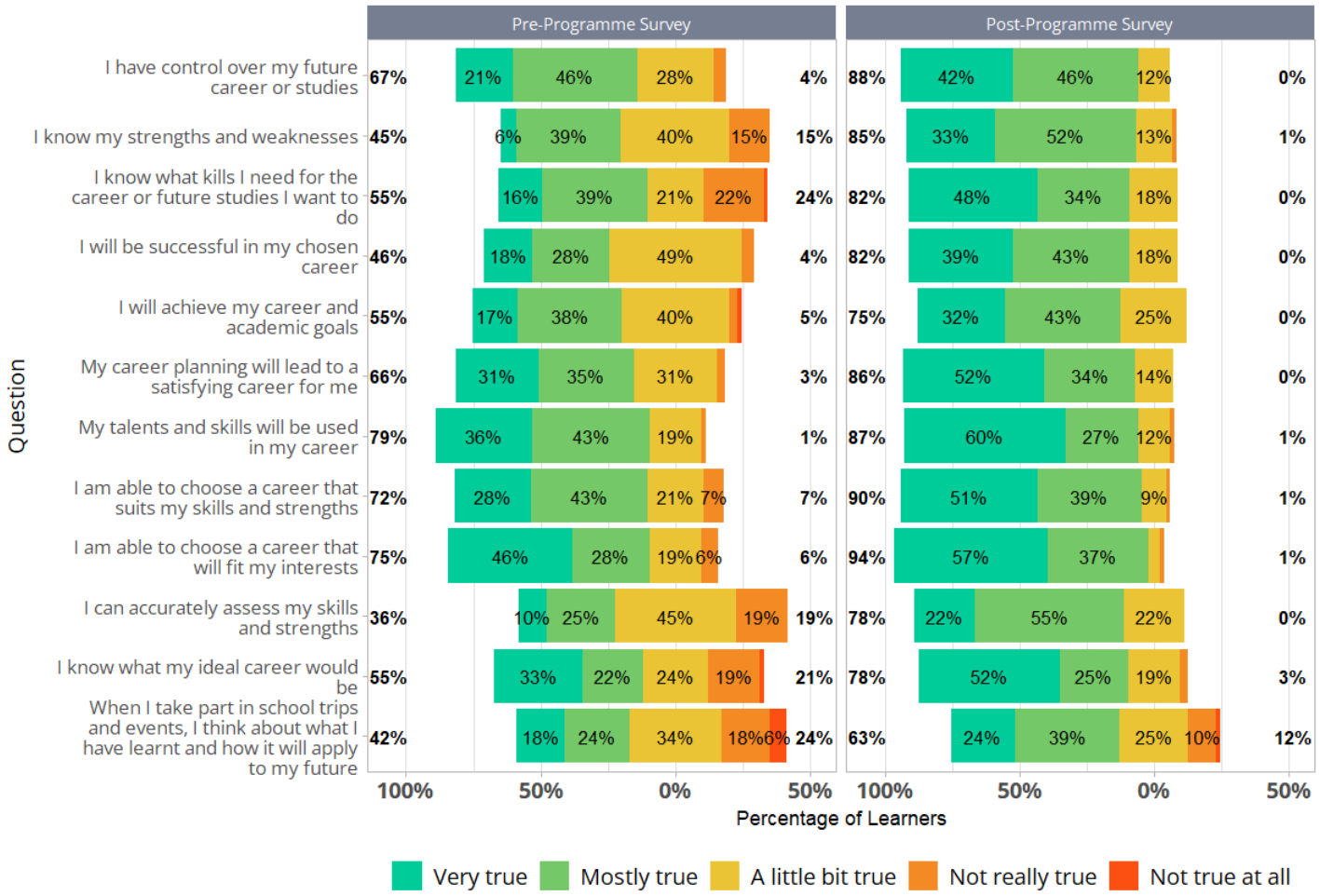
Learners' session logs were analysed in NVivo using thematic codes in specific relation to goals they set, alongside content and operational analysis where relevant.

Coach reflections were analysed thematically using a bespoke qualitative analysis workbook developed internally at GHWY.

Software and data availability

All statistical testing and data visualisation was done using R Statistical Software (v4.4.1; R Core Team 2024) (46) with R Studio. (v2024.4.2.764) (47). Graphs were made using ggplot2 (v3.5.1) (48) and ggstats (v0.8.0) (49). Raw data and code available on request.

Appendix 2: Full Results



Supplementary Figure 1 Pre and post programme survey results by question

1. Comparing pre and post survey results

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.

The total number of paired responses analysed was 67.

Table 4 Results of statistical tests comparing pre and post survey results

Section	Question	Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test		
		V value	P value	Conclusion
Locus of contr	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	625.5	6.632×10^{-5}	Significant

	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	1000	$7.345x10^{-6}$	Significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	541	0.002701	Significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	765	0.0007296	Significant
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	1013	$6.262x10^{-8}$	Significant
	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	937.5	$8.451x10^{-7}$	Significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	1100.5	$4.221x10^{-6}$	Significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	396	0.01025	Significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	582.5	0.0002556	Significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	538	0.002811	Significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	635	$9.177x10^{-6}$	Significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	654	0.009331	Significant

2. Comparing distance travelled between different groups

To compare the impact between different groups, a distance travelled metric was calculated by subtracting the score on the post survey from the score on the pre survey. This number was then compared between different groups using an unpaired Wilcoxon test, or in cases where there were more than two group to be compared, a Kruskal Wallis test, followed by a pairwise Wilcoxon test if significant.

Learners in Key Stage 4 with learners in Key Stage 5

The total number of responses in the Key Stage 4 group was 33 and the total number in the Key Stage 5 group was 34.

Table 5 Results of statistical tests comparing distance travelled between learners in Key Stage 4 and learners in Key Stage 5

Section	Question	Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test		
		W value	P value	Conclusion

Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	594	0.6613	Not Significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	498	0.4042	Not Significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	515	0.8619	Not Significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	623	0.1907	Not Significant
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	400	0.03235	Significant
	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	499	0.4166	Not Significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	502	0.4443	Not Significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	485	0.3006	Not Significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	459.5	0.1762	Not Significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	660	0.1891	Not Significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	601	0.5964	Not Significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	554	0.9325	Not Significant

Learners in different ethnic groups

The groups used and the number of responses in each group were as follows:

- Arab – 2
- Asian – 10
- Black – 9

- Gypsy or Traveller – 1
- Mixed – 9
- Not Known – 22
- Other – 1
- White – 13

Table 6 Results of statistical tests comparing distance travelled between learners of different ethnic groups

Section	Question	Kruskal Wallis Rank Sum Test			
		Chi-squared	df	P value	Conclusion
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	6.5026	7	0.4824	Not significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	5.4666	7	0.6032	Not significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	3.6003	7	0.8245	Not significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	6.539	7	0.4784	Not significant
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	5.878	7	0.5541	Not significant
	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	7.7763	7	0.3527	Not significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	7.737	7	0.3564	Not significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	3.112	7	0.8744	Not significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	5.7466	7	0.5696	Not significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	12.546	7	0.08397	Not significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	12.338	7	0.08997	Not significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	11.07	7	0.1356	Not significant

Learners who were eligible for free school meals with those that were not

The total number of responses from learners who were free school meal eligible was 35 and the total number from learners who were not was 32.

Table 7 Results of statistical tests comparing distance travelled between learners who were eligible for free school meals and those that were not eligible.

Section	Question	Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test		
		W value	P value	Conclusion
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	539	0.7821	Not significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	587	0.7184	Not significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	508	0.7966	Not significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	454.5	0.3183	Not significant
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	715.5	0.03859	Significant
	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	590	0.6965	Not significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	650	0.2415	Not significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	615	0.4546	Not significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	564.5	0.972	Not significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	418.5	0.05991	Not significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	520	0.5961	Not significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	474	0.2648	Not significant

Learners at different types of schools – for example, secondary schools with and without sixth forms, sixth form colleges, and FE colleges

The groups used and the number of responses in each group were as follows:

- Further Education College - 4
- Secondary - 33
- Secondary with Sixth Form - 17
- Sixth Form College - 13

Table 8 Results of statistical tests comparing distance travelled between learners at secondary schools with sixth forms, secondary schools without sixth forms, sixth form colleges, and FE colleges.

Section	Question	Kruskal Wallis Rank Sum Test			
		Chi-squared	df	P value	Conclusion
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	3.205	3	0.3611	Not significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	1.9945	3	0.5735	Not significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	0.59768	3	0.897	Not significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	3.804	3	0.2834	Not significant
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	8.0185	3	0.04563	Significant – pairwise test required
	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	1.8378	3	0.6067	Not significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	2.3683	3	0.4996	Not significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	3.3566	3	0.3398	Not significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	4.4213	3	0.2194	Not significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	2.1728	3	0.5373	Not significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	0.74511	3	0.8625	Not significant

	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	2.4477	3	0.4848	Not significant

Pairwise testing

Table 9 Pairwise statistical tests comparing distance travelled between learners at different types of education institutions in regards to their responses to the statement 'I know my strengths and weaknesses'

Question	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses		
	Further Education College	**Secondary**	**Secondary with Sixth Form**
Secondary	0.11		
Secondary with Sixth Form	0.14	0.23	
Sixth Form College	0.14	0.23	0.96
Conclusion	No significant differences		

Learners with UC eligible postcodes with learners with non-eligible postcodes

The total number of responses from learners with UC eligible postcodes was 36 and the total number of responses from learners who did not have UC eligible postcodes was 31.

Table 10 Results of statistical tests comparing distance travelled between learners with Uni-Connect eligible postcodes and those who do not.

Section	**Question**	**Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test**		
		W value	**P value**	**Conclusion**
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	663	0.1578	Not significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	536	0.7736	Not significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	441.5	0.2466	Not significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	555	0.6821	Not significant
Identification of skills and	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	632.5	0.3225	Not significant
	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths	630	0.3436	Not

	and skills			significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	582.5	0.753	Not significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	584	0.7259	Not significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	552.5	0.9465	Not significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	552	0.9414	Not significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	564.5	0.9357	Not significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	652.5	0.2194	Not significant

Comparison by sex

The groups used and the number of responses in each group were as follows:

- Female - 24
- Male - 37
- Unknown - 6

Table 11 Results of statistical tests comparing distance travelled between female learners, male learners, and learners with their sex recorded as 'unknown'

Section	Question	Kruskal Wallis Rank Sum Test			
		Chi-squared	df	P value	Conclusion
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	2.8027	2	0.2463	Not significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	3.9798	2	0.1367	Not significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	0.77132	2	0.68	Not significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	0.13223	2	0.936	Not significant
Identification of	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	0.14143	2	0.9317	Not significant

	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	3.0906	2	0.2133	Not significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	2.6971	2	0.2596	Not significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	7.583	2	0.02256	Significant – pairwise test required
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	2.9347	2	0.2305	Not significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	0.46033	2	0.7944	Not significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	1.1603	2	0.5598	Not significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	0.18735	2	0.9106	Not significant

Pairwise testing

Table 12 Pairwise testing comparing distance travelled by learners of different sexes in response to the statement 'my talents and skills will be used in my career'

Question	**Q1.7** My talents and skills will be used in my career	
	Female	**Male**
Male	0.059	
Unknown	0.558	0.059
Conclusion	No significant differences	

3. Comparing pre and post survey results for specific groups

Where a significant difference in distance travelled was observed between two groups (see section 2, above), a further paired Wilcoxon test was done, as in section 1, using only data from these specific groups. This allowed us to determine if these groups independently were significantly impacted by participating in the programme.

Table 13 Pre and post survey results comparison for specific groups. This testing was done for groups that were found to have a statistically

different distance travelled above.

Section	Question	Group	Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test		
			W value	P value	Conclusion
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	Learners eligible for free school meals	193	0.0005004	Significant
		Learners not eligible for free school meals	333	3.539×10^{-5}	Significant
	Q1.2 I know my strengths and weaknesses	Learners in KS4	195	0.003357	Significant
		Learners in KS5	325	6.246×10^{-6}	Significant

4. Comparing baseline results between different groups

To compare the impact between different groups, a distance travelled metric was calculated by subtracting the score on the post survey from the score on the pre survey. This number was then compared between different groups using an unpaired Wilcoxon test, or in cases where there were more than two group to be compared, a Kruskal Wallis test, followed by a pairwise Wilcoxon test if significant.

Learners in Key Stage 4 with learners in Key Stage 5

Table 14 Results of statistical tests comparing baseline scores between learners in Key Stage 4 and learners in Key Stage 5

Section	Question	Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test		
		W value	P value	Conclusion
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	657.5	0.1966	Not Significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	609.5	0.5143	Not Significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	602.5	0.2991	Not Significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	614.5	0.2336	Not Significant
Identification of	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	438.5	0.1015	Not significant

	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	492	0.3613	Not Significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	629.5	0.3732	Not Significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	535.5	0.7362	Not Significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	517	0.5624	Not Significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	676.5	0.1222	Not Significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	695.5	0.08183	Not Significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	586	0.7506	Not Significant

Learners in different ethnic groups

Table 15 Results of statistical tests comparing baseline scores between learners of different ethnic groups

Section	Question	Kruskal Wallis Rank Sum Test			
		Chi-squared	df	P value	Conclusion
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	10.248	7	0.175	Not Significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	6.3264	7	0.5022	Not Significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	3.7291	7	0.8104	Not Significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	8.4261	7	0.2965	Not Significant

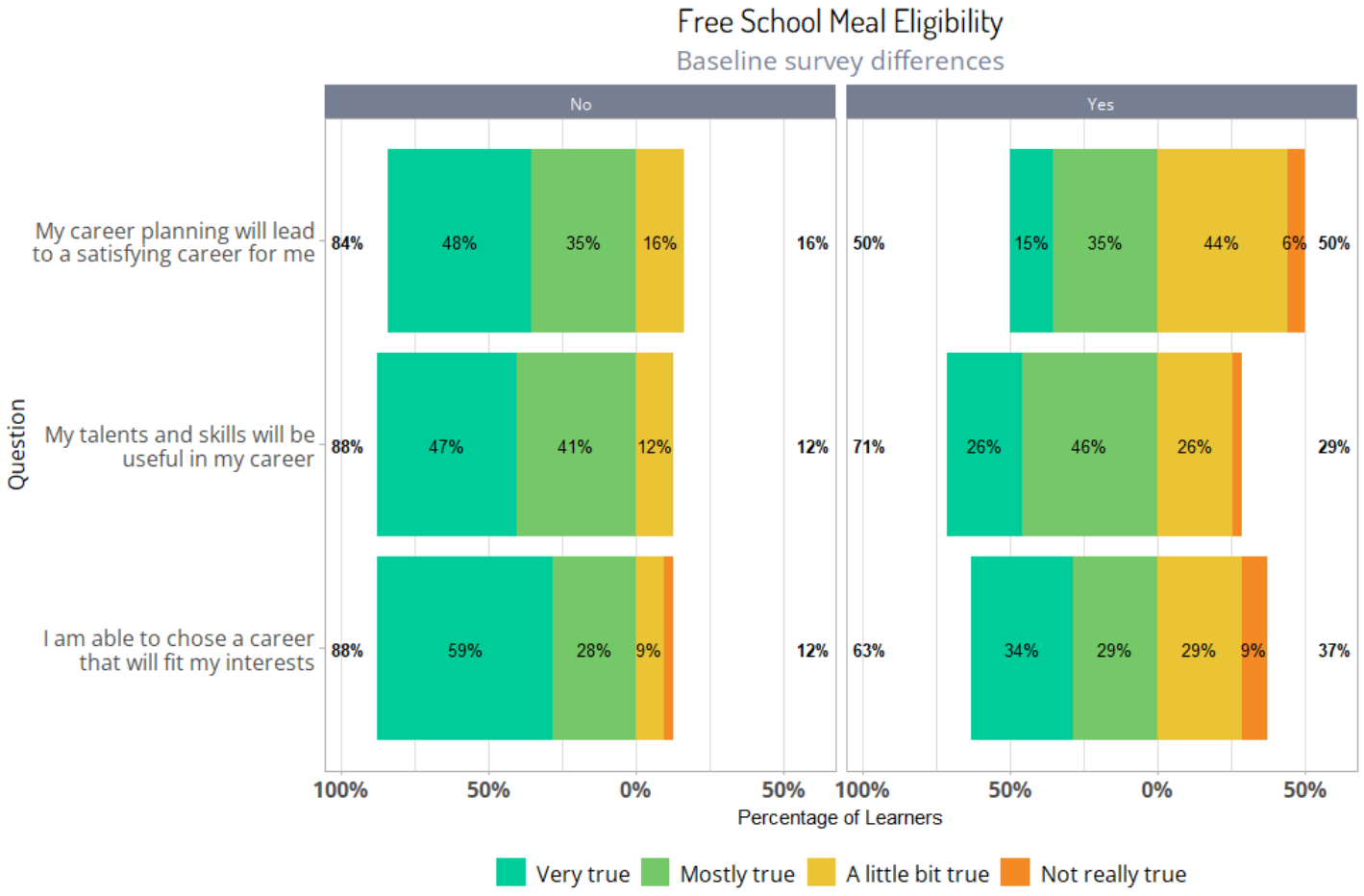
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	2.0671	7	0.956	Not Significant
	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	4.5047	7	0.7202	Not Significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	9.5657	7	0.2146	Not Significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	6.9729	7	0.4317	Not Significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	9.1189	7	0.2442	Not Significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	14.016	7	0.0509	Not Significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	9.4829	7	0.2198	Not Significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	6.153	7	0.522	Not Significant

Learners who were eligible for free school meals with those that were not

Table 16 Results of statistical tests comparing baseline scores between learners who were eligible for free school meals and those that were not eligible.

Section	Question	Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test		
		W value	P value	Conclusion
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	474	0.2496	Not Significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	527.5	0.6635	Not Significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	424.5	0.152	Not Significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	281	0.0006657	Significant
Identification of	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	651	0.224	Not Significant

	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	592	0.6744	Not Significant
Knowing suitab	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	527.5	0.6749	Not Significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	406.5	0.03902	Significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	518	0.5801	Not Significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	381.5	0.01665	Significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	419	0.06782	Not Significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	510	0.5204	Not Significant



Supplementary Figure 2 Differences in baseline survey results between learners who are free school meal eligible and those that are not.

Learners at different types of schools – for example, secondary schools with and without sixth forms, sixth form colleges, and FE colleges

Table 17 Results of statistical tests comparing baseline score between learners at secondary schools with sixth forms, secondary schools without sixth forms, sixth form colleges, and FE colleges.

Section	Question	Kruskal Wallis Rank Sum Test			
		Chi-squared	df	P value	Conclusion
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	5.7898	3	0.1223	Not Significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	1.3196	3	0.7245	Not Significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	4.9861	3	0.1728	Not Significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	2.6256	3	0.453	Not Significant
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	3.5796	3	0.3106	Not Significant
	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	1.8088	3	0.613	Not Significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	0.97274	3	0.8078	Not Significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	0.6104	3	0.894	Not Significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	0.45955	3	0.9277	Not Significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	2.6703	3	0.4453	Not Significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	3.4653	3	0.3253	Not Significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	1.8069	3	0.6134	Not Significant

Learners with UC eligible postcodes with learners with non-eligible postcodes

Table 18 Results of statistical tests comparing baseline score between learners with Uni-Connect eligible postcodes and those who do not.

Section	Question	Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test		
		W value	P value	Conclusion
Locus of control	**Q1.1** I have control over my future career or studies	641	0.2658	Not Significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	496	0.4021	Not Significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	423.5	0.1552	Not Significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	538.5	0.8567	Not Significant
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	642.5	0.2582	Not Significant
	Q1.10 I can accurately assess my strengths and skills	600.5	0.5747	Not Significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	618.5	0.4308	Not Significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	528	0.6901	Not Significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	564	0.9415	Not Significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	511	0.5309	Not Significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	506.5	0.5066	Not Significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	689.5	0.08836	Not Significant

Comparison by sex

Table 19 Results of statistical tests comparing baseline score between female learners, male learners, and learners with their sex recorded as 'unknown'

Section	Question	Kruskal Wallis Rank Sum Test			
		Chi-squared	df	P value	Conclusion
Lo cu s	**Q1.1** I have control over my	1.2781	2	0.5278	Not

	future career or studies				Significant
	Q1.4 I will be successful in my chosen career	0.86375	2	0.6493	Not Significant
	Q1.5 I will achieve my career and academic goals	0.15475	2	0.9255	Not Significant
	Q1.6 My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me	1.374	2	0.5031	Not Significant
Identification of skills and strengths	**Q1.2** I know my strengths and weaknesses	1.38	2	0.5016	Not Significant
	Q1.10 I can accurately asses my strengths and skills	4.5579	2	0.1024	Not Significant
Knowing suitability of options for self	**Q1.3** I know what skills I need for the career or future studies I want to do	0.33339	2	0.8465	Not Significant
	Q1.7 My talents and skills will be used in my career	3.8482	2	0.146	Not Significant
	Q1.8 I am able to choose a career that suits my strengths and skills	1.5041	2	0.4714	Not Significant
	Q1.9 I am able to choose a career that will fit my interests	0.77944	2	0.6772	Not Significant
	Q1.11 I know what my ideal career would be	0.050182	2	0.9752	Not Significant
	Q1.12 When I take part in school trips and events, I think about what I have learnt and how it will apply to my future	1.4049	2	0.4954	Not Significant

Appendix 3: Next Steps Plan

Higher Education Careers Coaching

Next Steps Plan

Please use the space below to outline your goals and actions, to help you achieve them. On the end of this sheet you will find a list of useful resources that might help you with your goals. These can be part of your actions if you like, but this is your choice.

Careers Coaching Session One: Your Next Steps, write your answers in the boxes below

- Agree a goal with your coach

- Identify up to three actions you will take before session two to help you reach your goal

1.

2.

3.

Careers Coaching Session Two: Your Next Steps

- Review your progress with your coach
- Did you complete all the actions?
- Discuss results and agree on next steps, write them here

My next steps are…

GO HIGHER
WEST YORKSHIRE

Bradford College

UNIVERSITY of BRADFORD

UNIVERSITY CENTRE Calderdale College

University of HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring global professionals

KIRKLEES COLLEGE

LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

LEEDS ARTS UNIVERSITY 1846

LBU LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

Leeds College of Building

University Centre Leeds

Leeds Trinity University

University Centre at the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group