



THE
MERCERS'
COMPANY

CfEY Year 3 Evaluation

An evaluation of the
Mercers' Transitions Special
Initiative



The Centre
for Education
& Youth



Alix brings both journalism and teaching experience to the team. She has carried out research on topics including special educational needs and disabilities, barriers to accessing UK higher education, post-16 transitions, and supporting student mental health. Alix has conducted several evaluations and delivered evaluation training to a range of organisations. She has provided communications support to clients and coordinates CfEY's Youth and Education Podcast. Alix started out as an English teacher and went on to work as an education journalist for sister papers FE Week and Schools Week. She wrote a chapter on mental health for CfEY's book, *Young People on the Margins*.



Vanessa Joshua is an Associate at The Centre for Education and Youth. Before joining the team, Vanessa worked as a teaching assistant in primary and secondary schools and as a research intern at The Centre for Social Justice. Vanessa has written on education research for various publications, including FE Week, The Times, and The Teaching Times, and has spoken with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Exclusions. She also created and manages the CfEY work experience programme.



Ellie is Director of Research and Operations at CfEY. A former teacher, she believes strongly that all children and young people deserve an excellent education. Ellie has conducted research into a range of youth issues and how collaboration between schools and the wider youth sector can address critical issues and support better outcomes for young people. Ellie previously worked as a reception teacher, and with Teach First to develop the Early Years Programme. She authored a chapter on the experiences of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller young people for CfEY's book, *Young People on the Margins*.

Contents

Contents	3
1 Executive summary	4
2 Introduction	8
Theory of Action	14
3 Understanding of programme aims	14
4 Successes	16
5 Challenges	19
6 Areas for improvement	21
7 How the partners feel they can refine delivery	24
8 Recommendations	28
9 Theory of Action: conclusion	29
Appendix: Programme data	30
10 Delivery	30
11 Overall satisfaction	32
12 Self- and organisational-efficacy	34
13 Aspirations	36
14 Pathway awareness	37
15 Destinations	39
16 Programme data: conclusion	40

1 Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

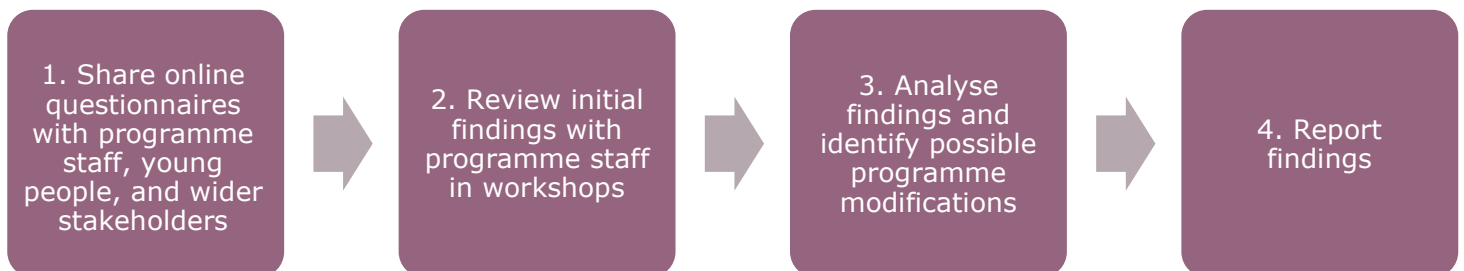
The Mercers' Company's Transitions Special Initiative began in July 2019 to support young people to make successful post-secondary transitions into positive destinations. The Initiative has funded fifteen partner organisations ('partners'), delivering careers-focused work to young people across London. The work of eight of these partners, across Cohorts 1 and 2, is explored in this report, with the remaining seven (Cohort 3) beginning their first year of the Initiative at present.

Each individual partner is evaluating the impact of its Mercers'-funded work. The Centre for Education and Youth (CfEY) is evaluating the impact of the Transitions Special Initiative as a whole and drawing together the key lessons learnt from delivering these individual projects.

1.2 Theory of Action

This year, CfEY replaced the Intensive Studies from previous years of the evaluation with a methodology rooted in the 'Theory of Action' (ToA) approach, described in Professor Chris Brown's article, [Using theories of action approach to measure impact in an intelligent way: A case study from Ontario Canada](#).

CfEY adapted this approach for our qualitative evaluation work this year, following the structure outlined below.



This process revealed that young people working with each of the partners have a good understanding of the individual programmes' aims, and school staff are aware that the programmes seek to improve young people's soft skills and employability skills. However, employers generally lacked awareness of programme aims beyond boosting young people's employability skills.

Programme staff highlighted the following successes this year:

- Young people's feedback was broadly positive
- Young people cited improvements in soft skills
- Young people cited improvements in employability skills and understanding
- Young people gave constructive criticism
- Some schools and colleges were positively engaged with programmes
- Participants appreciated the range of activities on offer

They described the following challenges:

- Schools can act as gatekeepers to young people, sometimes restricting the extent to which partners can carry out their work

- Maintaining a focus on employability skills can be difficult, where young people are more attracted to other aspects of the programmes (such as sport or socialising)
- Employers require more support with taking part in evaluation

Programme staff also identified the following possible areas for improvement:

- Young people want information about a broader range of career opportunities in different industries
- Young people and schools want sessions to be more frequent or longer
- Young people want more practical, face-to-face experiences
- Young people want to be asked about their interests and areas for development
- Volunteering processes require refinement

The partners each identified ways that they felt they could refine their delivery in the future:

Cohort 1

Career Ready

- Increasing training for mentors
- Maximising alumni networks
- Harnessing youth voice

Construction Youth Trust

- Working around school demands
- Improving buy-in from school staff
- Improving the quality of volunteers

Drive Forward Foundation

- Increasing staff specialisms
- Introducing consultants
- Tailoring the programme to individuals' needs
- Improving evaluation

EY Foundation

- Lengthening the onboarding process for employers
- Adjusting delivery timelines
- Maintaining engagement with young people post-programme

Cohort 2

Brentford FCCST

- Incentivising feedback processes
- Sharing good practice across programmes and departments
- Boosting marketing and communications

Dallaglio RugbyWorks

- Communicating clearly with school staff
- Clarifying aims and expectations
- Introducing new role models

IntoUniversity

- Allowing young people to feed ideas into planning of programme content
- Exploring opportunities for more trips
- Making school staff aware of IntoUniversity's full offer

Young Westminster Foundation

- Introducing science-focused activities
- Increasing employer engagement

1.3 Recommendations

CfEY has also suggested a range of recommendations for refinements across the partners' programmes. Going forward, the partners should aim to:

1. Avoid timetabling programme activities during schools' busy periods
2. Explore options for engaging a broader range of employers
3. Provide clear onboarding processes for employers
4. Provide robust training opportunities for volunteers
5. Engage young people in the planning process

These recommendations are explored in greater depth in section 8 on page 28.

1.4 Programme data

As in previous years, CfEY gathered programme data from the partners regarding their Mercers'-funded delivery and impact in 2021-22.

CfEY used the evaluation framework developed in the first year of the Transitions Special Initiative in order to report the partners' impact in relation to the following five areas:

1. Delivery (which activities the partners deliver, when and with whom).
2. Self- and organisational-efficacy (young people's life and workplace skills).
3. Aspirations (young people's aims for the future and where they see themselves).
4. Pathway awareness (young people's knowledge and understanding of different academic and vocational pathways into work).
5. Destinations (young people's post-programme places in education, training, or work).

Programme data was gathered in early July, and as such represents a snapshot in time, rather than a full picture of delivery and impact for the year. The partners shared with CfEY the data that they had available at the time and have submitted more detailed individual evaluation reports to The Mercers' Company directly.

1.4.1 Delivery

Across the second year of the Transitions Special Initiative, the eight partners worked with 66,809 young people; 166 schools, virtual schools, or colleges; and 572 employers on their Mercers'-funded delivery¹. Several programmes are targeting and engaging high proportions of students who are from Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, eligible for free school meals (FSM) or care experienced.

1.4.2 Overall satisfaction

Among the organisations for which we have data, young people, school staff and employers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the partners' programmes. Across all stakeholders and programmes, satisfaction rates were above 75%.²

1.4.3 Self- and organisational-efficacy (how the partners develop young people's life and workplace skills)

Available data indicates that the Transitions Special Initiative positively influences many young people's development of soft skills, such as confidence, and workplace skills, such as timekeeping.

1.4.4 Aspirations

Partners' available data indicates that their programmes positively influence the aspirations of many young people they work with, for example by helping them to feel more positive about their future.

1.4.5 Pathway awareness

Partners' available data suggests their programmes have a positive impact on young people's awareness of different pathways into further or higher education, training, and work. However, there is variation across the different programmes, with some having a greater impact than others at the point at which data was collected (though it must be noted that this was at a mid-point in the year). Partners' data also suggests that the programmes have a substantial impact on improving young people's professional networks.

1.4.6 Destinations

The partners who collect data on their young people's post-programme destinations report that many of their participants go on to further education, training, or employment, though it is not possible to wholly ascribe this progression to the impact of the programmes alone.

¹ Figures are for 24 of the partners' 27 programmes, where data was provided. Brentford FCCST did not provide this data for three of their programmes.

² Some of the partners do not collect data on overall levels of satisfaction. CfEY has reported on the data that was made available.

2 Introduction

2.1 The Transitions Special Initiative structure

The Mercers' Company's Transitions Special Initiative began in July 2019 to support young people to make successful post-secondary transitions. The Initiative has provided funding to fifteen partner organisations ('partners'), delivering careers-focused work to young people across London. The work of eight of these partners, four in Cohort 1 and four in Cohort 2, is explored in this report. The remaining seven partners are just beginning their first year of the Initiative at present.

The Initiative's current timeline of support from CfEY is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Timeline of CfEY's support of the Transitions Special Initiative

Cohort	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
1						
2						
3						

2.2 The partner organisations

The four Cohort 1 partners are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Cohort 1 partner organisations

Organisation	Organisation type and focus
Career Ready	A social mobility charity providing whole-school, careers-focused interventions for 11- to 18-year-olds, alongside one-to-one activities (i.e. mentoring and paid internships) and small-group activities for young people who face barriers transitioning from education into the world of work.
Construction Youth Trust (CYT)	A charity providing activities such as one-to-one coaching and work placements to help 15-16-year-olds particularly at risk of becoming 'NEET' (not in education, employment, or training) after leaving school, with a focus on skills relevant to the construction industry.
Drive Forward Foundation (DFF)	A non-profit organisation providing one-to-one and group support to care-experienced young people aged 15 to 18, to help them make positive decisions about their future and assist them in the process of leaving the care system.
EY Foundation	A charity providing activities including careers workshops and paid work experience for young people in Lewisham, including those at risk of becoming NEET, with a particular focus on engaging local employers.

The four Cohort 2 partners are shown in Table 3, including one new partner, Young Westminster Foundation, who joined Cohort 2 this year (2021-22).

Table 3: Cohort 2 partner organisations

Organisation	Organisation type and focus
Brentford FC Community Sports Trust (FCCST)	A sports trust offering a portfolio of programmes in education, employability, sports participation, health, and community engagement. The trust works with a wide range of young people, including young carers and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
Dallaglio RugbyWorks	A charity offering a three-year employability skills programme that aims to help teenagers aged 14 to 17 who are outside of mainstream education or at risk of exclusion, to transition successfully from secondary education into a career that matches their skills and interests. It uses the values of rugby, and sport in general, to ensure that disadvantaged young people who are disengaged from learning get the best opportunities to build a positive and productive future.
IntoUniversity	An education charity with 20 years' experience of delivering impact-driven programmes through a network of 39 learning centres that inspire young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve their full potential. Students participate in a holistic programme of support, designed to raise aspirations, broaden horizons, improve attainment, develop soft skills, and provide experience of the world of work.
Young Westminster Foundation	A cross-sector charity working in partnership with businesses, public sector organisations, individuals, and major funders to strengthen services for young people growing up in Westminster. Young Westminster Foundation supports a membership of local youth clubs and organisations through grants, training, and networking opportunities.

2.3 Evaluation framework, aims and structure

Each individual partner is conducting its own evaluation of the impact of its Mercers'-funded work. The Centre for Education and Youth (CfEY) is evaluating the impact of the Transitions Special Initiative as a whole.

2.3.1 Evaluation framework

The eight partners involved in the Initiative deliver very different programmes. In collaboration with The Mercers' Company and the four Cohort 1 partners, CfEY designed an evaluation framework against which to report the partners' impact and draw broad comparisons across the programmes. However, it remains important to acknowledge that each organisation employs different modes of delivery and impact, works with different cohorts of young people and volunteers, and uses different evaluation systems.

Our framework explores the Initiative's impact in relation to the following five areas:

1. Delivery (which activities the partners deliver, when and with whom).
2. Self- and organisational-efficacy (young people's life and workplace skills).
3. Aspirations (young people's aims for the future and where they see themselves).
4. Pathway awareness (young people's knowledge and understanding of different academic and vocational pathways into work).
5. Destinations (young people's post-programme places in education, training, or work).

2.3.2 Evaluation aims

CfEY has been guided by the following aims in its work with The Mercers' Company and the partner organisations. We are seeking to:

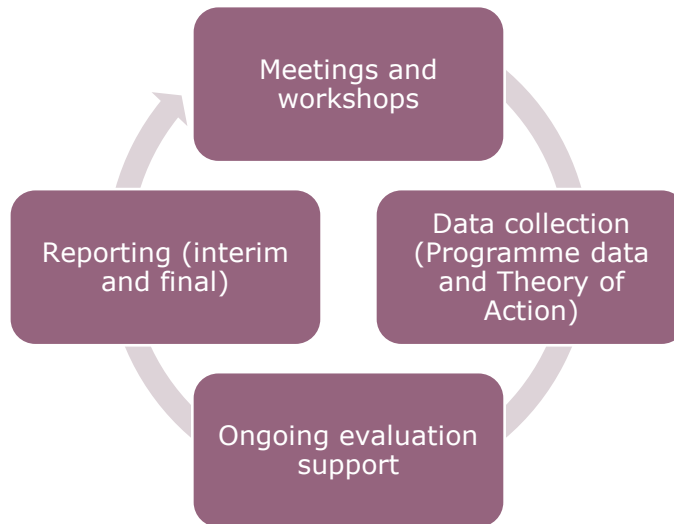
- describe and capture the partners' (very different) work
- explore the work that partners are doing individually, while ensuring we can talk about the Initiative from a 'bird's-eye view'.

This evaluation does not seek to provide detailed information about each individual partner's impact. Partners will report separately to The Mercers' Company on their achievements. Rather, the evaluation aims to capture the impact of work underway across the Initiative, providing The Mercers' Company and the partners with a picture of impact in the round, and implications for delivery, evaluation, and programme recommendations in future years.

2.3.3 Evaluation structure

This year our evaluation has followed the structure presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Evaluation structure



Meetings and workshops

CfEY began this year's evaluation cycle with a workshop in which we brought all of the partners together to remind them of each other's programmes, including introducing the new partner, Young Westminster Foundation, and their work. We then reviewed the journey so far, including the partners' experiences of last year's evaluation. CfEY introduced the partners to the new Theory of Action approach (detailed below), and briefed them on next steps, as well as fielding their questions about this year's work.

After this workshop, we met individually with the new partner, Young Westminster Foundation, and their delivery partners, asking them about their priorities for the year ahead, and how CfEY could best support them.

Data collection

Throughout the 2021/22 academic year, CfEY collected data using two methods:

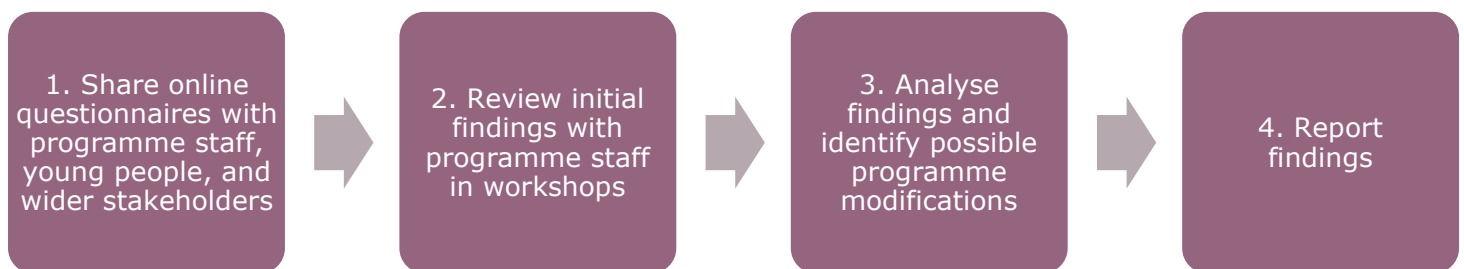
Individual data submissions

As in previous years, the partners submitted their own, internal evaluation data regarding their Mercers'-funded delivery and impact in 2021-22 to CfEY. This data was gathered in early July, and as such represents a snapshot in time, rather than a full picture of delivery and impact for the year. Some of the partners were unable to submit complete datasets as delivery was ongoing and end of programme evaluations had not been completed. CfEY has synthesised the information that was provided to present overarching findings about the impact of the Transitions Special Initiative, with recognition that this data is not complete for some organisations. In the coming years, CfEY will review timelines for data submission, with the aim of capturing more data from the partners.

Theory of Action

Instead of conducting thematic Intensive Studies this year, CfEY adopted a methodology rooted in the 'Theory of Action' (ToA) approach, described in Professor Chris Brown's article, '[Using theories of action approach to measure impact in an intelligent way: A case study from Ontario Canada](#)'. In this article, Professor Brown describes the development and application of the Dialogic Model of Impact (DMI), which was designed with the purpose of evaluating the success of a specific approach to teaching and learning. The article highlights that when seeking to refine programmes, decisions on what changes should occur are often made at a distance and may not reflect the challenges practitioners face on the ground. Instead, it is important to acknowledge the context in which an intervention is taking place, the problem it was seeking to address, and how it was intended to result in change. After this, exploring outcomes and learnings from the delivery of programme activities can drive thinking around how to make improvements and set longer-term aspirations and goals for growth. The benefit of this approach is that it can help to improve the effectiveness of implementation in the long term.

CfEY used this thinking to create an approach for our qualitative evaluation work this year, following the structure outlined below.



- In Phase 1 we created and shared online questionnaires with the partners. We requested that these be answered by: programme staff in different roles; around five to ten young people; and around three wider stakeholders, such as school staff and employers. Respondents answered open questions about their participation in, and experiences of, the programmes.
- In Phase 2 we convened feedback workshops with programme staff where we reviewed findings from Phase 1 and reflected on what these mean for future delivery.
- In Phase 3 we analysed these findings and identified possible programme modifications resulting from the questionnaires and workshop discussions.
- In Phase 4 we produced our final report to The Mercers' Company this year, summarising our findings and detailing how the partners might make programme adjustments in the future.

All participants gave informed consent to engage with the research.

Ongoing evaluation support

CfEY also provided the partners with individual support in relation to their own evaluations, offering ad-hoc guidance as required.

Reporting (interim and final)

Each year CfEY provides a report summarising the findings from the year's Mercers' Transitions Special Initiative activities. This Year 3 report outlines findings from both Cohort 1 and 2 activities.

2.3.4 Reflections on Theory of Action

The Theory of Action approach has been well received by the partners this year.

Online questionnaires

Partners generally found the online questionnaires easier to distribute than arranging focus groups or interviews, as they had done in previous years.

One partner was concerned about sharing the questionnaires with young people, as their students already regularly complete surveys for their internal processes, and they weren't sure whether the questionnaires would yield the same kinds of insights as an in-person focus group. However, others received high numbers of detailed responses from young people.

Responses from employers and school staff were mixed, with some partners gathering feedback from one of these groups but not the other. This may improve in subsequent years when stakeholders are more familiar with the expectations. Improving employer engagement with this feedback process would be especially valuable and could be achieved through briefings from the partners at the start of the next year of the evaluation.

Feedback workshops

The feedback workshops proved a valuable space for discussion. In previous years, feedback gathered by CfEY has been analysed and synthesised before being shared with the partners. This year's process has allowed the partners to review and reflect on the comments submitted by young people and stakeholders in full (in an anonymised form). This provided a helpful basis for understanding how feedback was aligned with the partners' expectations, including identifying unexpected comments and pinpointing areas for improvement that were not already a focus of their work. Some of the partners reported that they felt the conversations in the feedback workshops yielded helpful, concrete outcomes. They appreciated having more clarity on learnings and recommendations as the result of employing this methodology.

Reporting

In the reporting process, CfEY identified that it was important to include key themes from the surveys, alongside an exploration of the points that the partners specifically drew out in the feedback workshops. In light of these experiences, CfEY would like to proceed with the ToA approach in the coming years of the evaluation.

Theory of Action

In this section, CfEY explores themes arising from the online questionnaires completed by programme staff, young people, and wider stakeholders, and the subsequent feedback workshops in which we discussed the findings with the partner organisations. This section sets out our findings under the following themes:

- Understanding of programme aims
- Successes
- Challenges
- Areas for improvement
- How the partners feel they can refine delivery
- CfEY's recommendations

3 Understanding of programme aims

Section summary: The online questionnaires asked the partners, their young people, and their stakeholders about the aims of the programmes. This section explores the alignment on these aims across the different groups. Findings suggest that:

- Young people had a good understanding of the programme aims
- School staff were aware that the programmes seek to improve young people's soft skills and employability skills
- Employers lacked awareness of programme aims outside of employability skills

3.1 Feedback from young people showed a good understanding of programme aims

Feedback received from young people broadly reflected staff descriptions of the aims of the programmes. All of the partners, except Dallaglio RugbyWorks, commented on this in their feedback workshops, saying they felt that young people's feedback showed that they understood programme aims, and were able to comment on whether and how these were being achieved.

"It is good to see that overall respondents' ideas of what the aims of IntoUniversity's programmes are, are consistent, demonstrating that ... the aims are communicated clearly with different groups."

Programme staff, IntoUniversity

Across the programmes, many young people recognised that they were being provided with opportunities to help prepare them for their future after school, including awareness of different career paths and employability skills. They also noted that they were gaining soft skills such as improved confidence.

The level of detail young people gave when describing the aims of the programmes varied between individual young people and across the programmes, ranging from a few words to more detailed explanations:

"To allow students to be aware of different career prospects. To allow us to develop soft skills like communication in interview scenarios. We learnt techniques to come across well in professional environments. This took place alongside confidence building tasks."

Young Person, Career Ready

Young people working with Drive Forward Foundation and Brentford FCCST also mentioned social benefits, such as friendship. Dallaglio RugbyWorks young people mostly cited fitness, with only one commenting on employability. IntoUniversity and Dallaglio RugbyWorks students mentioned that the programmes also aimed to help them improve at school.

While staff across the programmes noted that their work was aimed at boosting social mobility by supporting disadvantaged young people who would not otherwise have access to the opportunities they provide, young people across the programmes did not comment on being targeted because of their backgrounds. For example, Drive Forward Foundation staff noted that their aim of educating young people about leaving care, was not mentioned by their young people.

3.2 School staff were aware that the programmes seek to improve young people's soft skills and employability skills.

School staff working with EY Foundation, Construction Youth Trust, Brentford FCCST and IntoUniversity gave feedback on their involvement with the programmes. When asked what the aims of the programmes' activities were, school staff generally focused on soft skills and employability skills.

One member of school staff working with EY Foundation noted that the work helped their school "to have meaningful activities to achieve the [Gatsby Benchmarks](#)". School feedback for Construction Youth Trust and IntoUniversity showed awareness that the programmes were targeted at disadvantaged young people. Those working with IntoUniversity recognised the focus on boosting university participation but did not mention support with career paths.

3.3 Employers lacked awareness of programme aims beyond employability skills

Employers working with Construction Youth Trust, Drive Forward Foundation, Brentford FCCST and Young Westminster Foundation gave feedback on their involvement with the programmes. Their responses were similar, with a strong focus on educating young people about the opportunities available to them in different industries and helping them to understand the world of work.

"[The activities' aims are to] Demystify the world of work for young people, help them understand different career options and sectors and to develop employability skills."

Employer, Young Westminster Foundation

They did not comment on wider soft skills or the social benefits of the programmes.

4 Successes

Section summary: The online questionnaires asked about the impact that the programmes were having on young people. The partners' individual review workshops then explored which aspects of the feedback they felt most positive about this year. This section summarises themes arising from the feedback surveys and discussions, as well as some examples of each of the partners' successes.

Programme staff highlighted the following successes in their review workshops:

- Young people's feedback was broadly positive
- Young people cited improvements in soft skills
- Young people cited improvements in employability skills and understanding
- Young people gave constructive criticism
- Some schools and colleges were positively engaged with programmes
- Participants appreciated the range of activities on offer

4.1 Young people's feedback was broadly positive across the programmes

All of the partners were pleased with the feedback they received from young people. In the feedback workshops, some programme staff noted that young people had described tangible positive outcomes from engaging with the programme, such as:

- reduced numbers of detentions and moving up sets in specific subjects at school (IntoUniversity)
- expanded networks and helpful insights into industry (Career Ready)
- increased knowledge of careers (EY Foundation).

Drive Forward Foundation staff were pleased that young people had remained engaged with the programme over a long period, leading them to feel that "a community has been built" for their young people.

4.2 Young people across all programmes cited improvements in soft skills

When asked about the impact that the programmes had had on them, young people on all of the programmes referenced improvements in soft skills. In the feedback workshops, staff from Young Westminster Foundation, Career Ready, EY Foundation, Construction Youth Trust, and Drive Forward Foundation directly commented that they were pleased that their young people had cited improvements in soft skills including greater confidence, self-esteem, motivation, self-reflection, and resilience.

"It allowed me to become [a] confident person and helped me to face challenges no matter how difficult it is. It also expands my knowledge allowing me to share my opinion with others. It is also a free space where I can open up without anyone [being] judged."

Young Person, Drive Forward Foundation

Staff at Brentford FCCST were pleased that their young people had reported being challenged without feeling overwhelmed. Staff at Dallaglio RugbyWorks appreciated that

students had both recognised a need for mental health support and also reported that sessions had helped to improve their mental health. This was particularly true for female participants, who said they had benefited from more female staff being present during the delivery of the programme this year.

"[It has] really helped my mental health, I really look forward to Fridays and seeing Dan & Grace."

Young Person, Dallaglio RugbyWorks

School staff working with EY Foundation and IntoUniversity and both school staff and employers working with Construction Youth Trust also commented that these programmes helped to improve young people's soft skills.

4.3 Young people on most programmes cited some improvements in employability skills and understanding

Young people on most of the programmes also mentioned some improvements in employability skills in their online questionnaires, including:

- increased awareness of different career pathways (Construction Youth Trust, Drive Forward Foundation, IntoUniversity)
- improved understanding of how to apply for jobs, training, or further study (Career Ready, Construction Youth Trust)
- networking (Career Ready and Young Westminster Foundation)
- feeling more comfortable in the workplace (EY Foundation, Brentford FCCST)

School staff working with EY Foundation and Construction Youth Trust and employers working with Construction Youth Trust, IntoUniversity and Young Westminster said they felt these programmes helped to prepare the young people for entering the workplace. School staff working with IntoUniversity said the programme had helped young people to understand how to apply to university.

The partners also commented that they were pleased with young people's progress in employability skills and understanding in their feedback workshops.

4.4 Young people on two programmes gave constructive criticism that partners found helpful

IntoUniversity and Drive Forward Foundation staff commented that they were pleased to see their young people were able to give constructive criticism about their programmes. They acknowledged that hearing directly about young people's experiences was important in ensuring they are able to meet a range of needs, and said that the feedback would influence future changes to programme delivery.

4.5 Some schools and colleges were positively engaged with the programmes

The four partner organisations that were able to gather feedback from school staff (EY Foundation, Construction Youth Trust, IntoUniversity and Brentford FCCST) also directly commented on having positive relationships with schools in their feedback workshops.

Construction Youth Trust staff said it was "really satisfying" to hear that both students and teachers valued their sessions enough to want more of them. IntoUniversity noted that school staff had requested more from their team. The programme staff said they

felt they could try to make teachers and school leaders more aware of other ways students could get involved with their work.

Brentford FCCST noted that they had developed good relationships with schools, which had been a priority for their work. EY Foundation staff appreciated that school feedback had been “extremely positive” with “minimal feedback on areas to improve”.

4.6 Participants appreciated the range of activities on offer this year

The online questionnaires showed that across all of the partners’ programmes, young people had taken part in a range of activities. In the feedback workshops, some of the partners celebrated their young people and stakeholders’ appreciation of the variety of opportunities that they were able to provide this year. Career Ready said that they felt pleased with the balance between skills-based tasks and more 'hands-on' experiences, which meant there was “something for everyone”. Young Westminster Foundation staff said that activities such as their STEM-based workshops had helped to boost young people’s hope for the future.

For some of the partners, external support had helped to enrich their programme offer. Construction Youth Trust staff reported that the support of industry volunteers had helped to “bring a session to life”, while site visits had enabled them to “indicate the sheer scale of a project and the number of job roles involved”.

5 Challenges

Section summary: The online questionnaires highlighted some challenges with programme delivery. The individual review workshops then explored aspects of the feedback that the partners felt more negative about. This section summarises themes arising from these discussions.

Programme staff highlighted the following challenges:

- Schools can act as gatekeepers to young people, sometimes restricting the extent to which partners can carry out their work
- Maintaining a focus on employability skills can be difficult, where young people are more attracted to other aspects of the programmes (such as sport or socialising)
- Employers require more support with evaluation

5.1 Schools can act as gatekeepers to young people

In their review workshops, Construction Youth Trust, Dallaglio RugbyWorks and Young Westminster Foundation each drew attention to problems with reaching young people, in some cases because of school timetables and policies.

For Construction Youth Trust, staying in contact with their young people during examination periods at school was most challenging, especially towards the end of year 11 and due to the pressures on schools to catch up on the curriculum following home learning during the lockdown periods. They found that this made it difficult for them to gather feedback on aspects of their programme, such as trips taking place around this time of year. It also made it hard for them to draw the programme to a meaningful close for the young people, with some sessions being rearranged or replaced with remote support. Schools' senior leadership teams were sometimes responsible for this lack of access if they 'vetoed' sessions in favour of other schoolwork or exam preparation.

Dallaglio RugbyWorks had also experienced challenges with the way that school staff managed pupils' involvement with their programme. Programme staff said that in some cases schools were using their sessions as a reward, in a timetable slot for extracurricular activities. Students were then unable to access this if they had received a punishment, such as an internal exclusion.

"A young person mentioned attending sessions when 'allowed' - this is the polar opposite of what we want to hear, it shows the issues we have with schools and their understanding of what we're trying to achieve."

Programme staff, Dallaglio RugbyWorks

Programme staff found this frustrating, as they felt it was vital for them to be able to reach and support the young people experiencing the greatest challenges. When problems like this occurred, Dallaglio RugbyWorks staff were sometimes not given the full information about why a student could not attend.

Young Westminster Foundation acknowledged that the catchment area for their programme restricted their ability to reach all the young people they would like to

support. They explained that some young people whom they currently work with are unable to access their full programme offer because they live outside of the Westminster area.

Brentford FCCST staff commented more generally that they would like to reach more young people and encourage them to join the programme in the future. One of Brentford's employer partners supported this as a goal.

5.2 Two partners feel they need to prioritise employability skills more

Drive Forward Foundation and Dallaglio RugbyWorks staff felt they needed to work on keeping their young people focused on the employability training side of their programmes.

Drive Forward Foundation staff noted that young people made many positive comments about the community the programme had created and the opportunities to build soft skills, such as self-esteem, but made fewer mentions of knowledge about leaving care and moving into employment. Staff questioned whether this meant that young people were absorbing less of this information and said they would like to explore this further in the future.

Similarly, Dallaglio RugbyWorks staff recognised that their young people had commented more on their enjoyment of sport and fitness than on what they had learned about employability, raising similar questions about whether young people were fully retaining this information.

5.3 Two partners feel employers require more support with taking part in evaluation

EY Foundation and Drive Forward Foundation commented on some challenges with evaluation. Although EY Foundation staff had approached several employers directly to ask for feedback, none had provided any information. They explained that employers tend to be time poor and, for smaller businesses in particular, day-to-day priorities can overtake a request for feedback. They found that requests for feedback tended to be more successful when made on a one-to-one basis.

Drive Forward Foundation staff noted that employers wanted more evaluation of their impact but did not know how to do this themselves. Thus, staff highlighted a need to provide more support for evaluating employer impact.

6 Areas for improvement

Section summary: The online questionnaires asked about potential areas for improvement in their programmes. The individual review workshops then explored these ideas. This section summarises themes arising from these discussions.

Programme staff identified the following possible areas for improvement:

- Young people want information about a broader range of career opportunities in different industries
- Young people and schools want sessions to be more frequent or longer
- Young people want more practical, face-to-face experiences
- Young people want to be asked about their interests and areas for development
- Volunteering processes require refinement

6.1 Young people want information about a broader range of career opportunities in different industries

In their review workshops, Career Ready and IntoUniversity highlighted a need to introduce young people to a broader range of career opportunities. Feedback from young people on the Career Ready programme called for engagement with a wider range of industries, including media, medicine, and engineering. IntoUniversity had received less positive feedback on their Careers in FOCUS programme than their other programmes, with young people requesting sessions that were more tailored to their interests. Staff suggested that in order to help young people keep their options open, they needed to balance informing young people about the careers that most appealed to them with clearly communicating the benefits of learning about a range of opportunities.

While Construction Youth Trust was not seeking to present a range of industries to their young people, staff acknowledged that some students were not primarily interested in construction. Therefore, they felt it was important to highlight the range of different roles and employability skills the sector offers, in order to keep all young people engaged. Alongside this, they also acknowledged that feedback from one school had reported that while many visiting professionals had been good speakers “a very small minority” had been less engaging.

One young person on the EY Foundation programme asked for more engagement with professionals in their feedback survey. One young person working with Young Westminster Foundation also requested more science-focused activities.

6.2 Young people and schools want sessions to be more frequent or longer

In tension with the issue of access to young people (see section 5.1), there was a demand for more frequent or longer sessions. Young people on the Young Westminster Foundation, Dallaglio RugbyWorks, and Construction Youth Trust programmes wanted more sessions across the year, with young people on the latter two programmes directly asking for more contact time with programme staff. IntoUniversity staff also noted that both students and teachers had requested more sessions throughout the year. One

school specifically wanted IntoUniversity to work more with Key Stage 3 students, but the organisation was unable to offer this support.

Young people on the Brentford FCCST programme wanted longer sessions, while those on the Drive Forward Foundation programme wanted both more frequent and longer sessions. Staff from both programmes noted that this is difficult to arrange, as young people's attendance can be unreliable.

Career Ready staff noted the need to be flexible around the frequency of sessions to meet all students' needs, as some wanted more contact time than others. Their approach to mentoring offered a solution to this, as they set a baseline of one hour a month and offer the chance for students to arrange more frequent meetings if they desire.

Young Westminster Foundation wanted to make sessions available to as many young people as possible but faced some challenges in balancing this with what employers' felt they could comfortably offer to young people. They noted, for example, employer feedback that raised concerns that "not all young people got a chance to speak or be seen" in large group sessions.

"It's always hard to figure out how many people should attend one workshop. Employers sometimes don't have the space so we have 20 young people attend and sometimes we would like more. Alternatively, as one employer said, when there are 20+ some young people get 'lost' in the group."

Programme staff, Young Westminster Foundation

6.3 Young people want more practical, face-to-face experiences

Young people on the EY Foundation, Career Ready, Construction Youth Trust, Drive Forward Foundation, IntoUniversity and Dallaglio RugbyWorks programmes said they wanted more practical, face-to-face experiences. Career Ready and EY Foundation staff noted that some young people had missed out on in-person opportunities due to Covid-19 restrictions and therefore understandably wanted to make up for this with more in-person workplace experiences. Over the past year the partners have had to reintroduce face-to-face delivery gradually, in accordance with government guidelines.

For Career Ready and Construction Youth Trust, young people specifically wanted more workplace experiences. School staff working with Construction Youth Trust also called for more site visits despite the timetabling challenges mentioned in section 5.1.

Young people on the EY Foundation and Drive Forward Foundation programmes wanted more practical hands-on activities as opposed to presentations or lectures, while young people on the IntoUniversity programmes wanted more trips or workplace visits and more practical activities.

"In Year 6 I went on a trip to Bath with IntoUniversity. We got to go outside of London and stay away from our parents. We learnt how to do things like sleep in a dorm on your own ... That trip showed me loads of new things and I think we should have more trips like that now."

Young person, IntoUniversity

As with Construction Youth Trust, school staff working with IntoUniversity also requested more “trips and residential visits”.

One young person on the Dallaglio RugbyWorks programme said they wanted sport-based work experience. In their review workshop, programme staff said schools had also requested more in-person career taster days. They had offered some digital opportunities with mixed success and found that young people preferred in-person experiences, which they hope to provide more of from September 2022.

6.4 Young people on three programmes want to be asked about their interests and areas for development

Young people working with IntoUniversity, Drive Forward Foundation and EY Foundation said they would like to be consulted about what they want to gain from the programmes and for content to be more tailored to individual needs and interests. Young people on the IntoUniversity programme wanted to have input on which career pathways they learnt about, while young people working with Drive Forward and EY Foundation wanted the programme to be tailored to the skills they wanted to develop (such as building confidence).

“[The activities could be improved] by being more tailored for each individual/asking people what they would want gain by the end of the programme e.g. like if someone wants to build their confidence.”

Young person, Drive Forward Foundation

IntoUniversity and Drive Forward Foundation programme staff reflected that it was difficult to tailor their programmes to suit the needs of every individual.

6.5 Four partners want to refine their volunteering processes

Career Ready staff felt that they could be providing more training and resources for the volunteer mentors working with their young people and more robust quality assurance of this process.

“We do need to provide more and better training to mentors though - there is limited quality assurance currently and of course we also want it to be a valuable learning experience for volunteers as well as students.”

Programme staff, Career Ready

Brentford FCCST staff noted that their volunteers needed more clarity around their involvement.

In contrast, EY Foundation staff discussed requests from school staff for more diversity amongst their volunteer base, especially during employability skills days. They said this was an issue they were already working on improving. They explained that staff are mindful of diversity when recruiting volunteers and the EY Foundation Volunteer Manager has an objective to engage different ethnic groups in order to improve the volunteering pool. In terms of staff performance management, the organisation also requires staff to promote Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

7 How the partners feel they can refine delivery

Section summary: At the end of their review workshops, the partner organisations each identified refinements that they could make to improve the delivery of their programmes, based on the feedback they had received and their experiences this year. Each partner highlighted different programme refinements which are set out, by organisation, in this section.

Cohort 1

Career Ready

Increasing training for mentors

In response to feedback around mentoring, staff said they would aim to provide more training for their mentors, including looking at introducing monthly mentor debriefs to allow for questions and troubleshooting.

Maximising alumni networks

Career Ready staff were keen to make more use of their alumni networks to improve student experiences. This included clarifying the purpose of the networks with young people, increasing the number of people involved, and encouraging alumni to go on to become mentors.

Harnessing youth voice

Staff felt that they could use youth voice more, for example by gathering further insights from young people on which employers they wanted to engage with. They also wanted to reach and hear from more seldom-heard young people through this process.

Construction Youth Trust

Working around school demands

Staff said they were finding ways to work “creatively” with schools in order to fit in their sessions most effectively. They highlighted plans to start their work earlier in year 10 in anticipation of a tail-off of engagement at the end of year 11. They were also looking at offering activities during half terms or other school holidays to give teachers more time in the lead up to exams.

Improving buy-in from school staff

Construction Youth Trust staff were keen to encourage school staff to join site visits as part of their continuing professional development, to improve their understanding of the value of the interventions and the connections to the curriculum.

Improving the quality of volunteers

Staff saw an opportunity to build out the briefings they offer volunteers into full training sessions, in which they set more explicit expectations about the programme. They wanted to establish a body of “tried and tested” volunteers whom they could work with over time, including providing support to those less confident working in a classroom setting. Staff felt they could address the issue of some professionals being less engaging than others by offering constructive feedback to their volunteers on how to build engagement with a youth audience. They also said they were also looking at ways to recruit trade volunteers, even though it might be expensive and difficult for these professionals to find time to come off-site to meet young people. They appreciated that

to ensure quality they would need to be stricter about turning down volunteers who did not meet the required standards.

Drive Forward Foundation

Increasing staff specialisms

Drive Forward Foundation staff currently work across different fields but recognised that it might be helpful for team members to cultivate more specialisms when delivering their programme. They felt that having split caseloads was generally more efficient for their organisation but that there was space for staff to potentially take the lead on specific areas, such as taking responsibility for coordinating support for employers.

Introducing consultants

Staff were considering bringing an employment consultant into their workshops, to help young people focus more on preparing for the future. They were also exploring connections with other professionals from different agencies and older young people, with the aim of providing ongoing support to their young people as they transition out of care and into the workplace.

Tailoring the programme to individuals' needs

Staff recognised that their young people tend to define their goals more clearly as they move through the programme. They therefore felt that they could structure their work to become more focused on the needs of individuals over time by starting with general activities that suit everyone and moving towards a more tailored approach.

Improving evaluation

Staff also wanted to refine how they collect feedback and monitor progress by testing out some tools and exploring whether these could be integrated into their existing structures.

EY Foundation

Lengthening the onboarding process for employers

EY Foundation staff identified a need to refine the way they engage with employers. They felt they could support the employers they worked with to better understand the experiences of disadvantaged young people and the barriers that they face. They felt this would help to set realistic expectations of what to expect from working with young people on the programmes, for example by preparing them to understand that sometimes young people do not take up the opportunities offered, such as work placements. Staff felt they could achieve this by allowing more lead-in time for the onboarding process with employers and looking at what they could learn from relationships with employers that had worked well so far. Improving the onboarding process could also boost employer engagement in the long term, including enhancing their understanding of the value of taking part in feedback.

Adjusting delivery timelines

EY Foundation staff said that in order to lower the risk of young people dropping out, it was beneficial to deliver their programme in blocks rather than a staggered approach. They felt this would work best when combined with efforts to avoid busy times for schools, such as exams. They had begun working on this approach.

Maintaining engagement with young people post-programme

Staff were also interested in exploring how they could continue to engage with young people after the end of their programme. They wanted to think further about how to shape this and which resources would be valuable.

Cohort 2

Brentford FCCST

Incentivising feedback processes

Brentford FCCST staff said that while strong relationships between delivery staff and young people helped them to gather feedback about their programme, they would like to collect more of this information. They recognised that they would most likely gather more feedback if they offered an incentive, such as match tickets or vouchers. They planned to consult with their youth voice panel to pin down the most desirable incentives for young people, as well as speak to individuals about what would work best for them.

Sharing good practice across programmes and departments

Brentford FCCST staff felt that finding new or more defined ways to share good practice across programmes and departments could help their team better understand each other's work. They wanted to make sure delivery staff connected with each other, as well as passing on information to managers. They believed that strengthening this process would also help them to provide better support to young people with complex needs and empower staff members to make better internal referrals between departments, so that young people can access the support most suited to them.

Boosting marketing and communications

Staff felt that a concerted effort to improve the marketing and communications around their work could help them to bring more young people onto their programmes.

Dallaglio RugbyWorks

Communicating clearly with school staff

The Dallaglio RugbyWorks team were working on ways to communicate more clearly with schools, to improve their access to young people. They wanted to show teachers and leaders that they are well equipped to support vulnerable young people who might show challenging behaviour, to reduce the likelihood that school staff remove these young people from their sessions. They had already introduced new internal safeguarding procedures, including new software, and were looking at how to better communicate the strengths of their team in this area and build more trust with schools.

Clarifying aims and expectations

Staff also wanted to communicate more clearly to young people what they wanted them to achieve on the programme, particularly in terms of employability skills, to help participants maintain their focus on these aspects of the work. They are exploring how to approach this going forward.

Introducing new role models

Finally, they wanted to expose their young people to more positive role models, building on their work with high-profile sportspeople such as Dame Kelly Holmes.

IntoUniversity

Allowing young people to feed ideas into planning of programme content

While IntoUniversity programme staff felt tailoring their Careers in FOCUS programme to exactly fit the needs of every young person would be difficult, they proposed exploring the possibility of giving students more agency over the content provided. This could include, for example, offering them a range of themes to choose from at the start of the year and using this feedback to influence choices around speakers and content. IntoUniversity also suggested that they could aim to ensure programme staff who speak with young people informally about their interests feed this information back to colleagues responsible for arranging future activities.

Exploring opportunities for more trips

Staff said they could look into opportunities for more trips for young people on an ad-hoc basis. They felt this was more feasible post-Covid due to fewer restrictions on travel and access, as well as having fewer staff absences. They said that where there was a choice in the programme between offering an in-house workshop or a trip, they would prioritise trips in response to feedback they had received from young people and schools.

Making school staff aware of IntoUniversity's full offer

IntoUniversity staff explained that while increasing contact time or producing new strands of work, in response to schools' requests, would be difficult; they felt they could make school staff more aware of opportunities for their students to get involved in other aspects of IntoUniversity's work, such as their existing out-of-school activities.

Young Westminster Foundation

Introducing science-focused activities

Young Westminster Foundation staff planned to look into identifying and building connections with businesses that could offer some science-focused activities for their young people.

Increasing employer engagement

Staff also wanted to encourage their employer partners to become more engaged across the different parts of their work, for example by inviting representatives who deliver workshops to also become mentors. They were considering whether an event or webinar where young people could meet employers would support engagement on both sides.

8 Recommendations

In this section, CfEY provides recommendations for refinements across the partners' programmes.

Going forward, the partners should aim to:

1. Avoid timetabling programme activities during schools' busy periods

The partners should review the timetables for their programmes in partnership with the schools that their young people attend, in order to ensure they are delivering sessions at the most appropriate times and in a structure that works around the school year. This could also provide an opportunity to reiterate their full offer to schools, to make sure young people are making the most of the opportunities available and receiving the support that best suits their needs.

2. Explore options for engaging a broader range of employers

Following the opening up of businesses again post-Covid-19, the partners should explore new opportunities for engaging with employers who can offer their young people insights into a wider range of careers than their programmes currently offer. As part of this process, they should also look for opportunities with employers who are able to deliver high-quality face-to-face activities for their young people.

3. Provide clear onboarding processes for employers

The partners would benefit from reviewing the onboarding processes they provide for employers, to ensure the requirements around employer engagement are clear from the outset and employers understand what to expect from their involvement. This should include briefing employers fully on the challenges that their young people experience so that their expectations are realistic, and they are well prepared for working effectively with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. It should also clarify requirements around participating in evaluation activities in advance, including explaining why the process is important for refining programme delivery. The partners may wish to discuss the training they provide to employers and share examples of successful experiences.

4. Provide robust training opportunities for volunteers

The partners should also explore possible refinements to volunteer training. While engaging volunteers can be challenging, partners should still maintain high standards for volunteer involvement to ensure their young people and stakeholders have positive experiences. They may wish to engage alumni from the programmes in this process, as they will already understand what the programmes deliver. This is an area where the partners may benefit from sharing examples of best practice with others across the Transitions Special Initiative.

5. Engage young people in the planning process

As mentioned in previous years of the evaluation, where possible the partners should aim to engage young people in their planning at the start of each new year. While it is understandable that they cannot tailor their programmes to suit the needs of every individual, allowing young people the chance to co-create activities or give a view on what they would find most valuable would help to boost buy-in to the programmes. Some of the partners have had success with the use of youth voice panels, which they consult about the content and delivery of their programmes. This may be an approach that others could benefit from, though the partners should aim where possible to ensure the students on these panels represent a range of views and are not just the most engaged young people they work with.

9 Theory of Action: conclusion

Stakeholders across the partners, particularly young people and school staff, showed a good understanding of the different programmes' aims. They appreciated the range of activities that were available through the partners' work and recognised the positive impact these had on developing soft skills and employability skills.

The Theory of Action approach was well received and demonstrated the partners' ability to highlight and respond to challenges with constructive steps for improvement. The process has given rise to a range of improvements for each individual programme as well as a set of recommendations which could improve the delivery of the Transition Special Initiative across all programmes.

Appendix: Programme data

In this section, CfEY explores trends in the partners' quantitative programme data, across the following areas:

- Delivery
- Overall satisfaction
- Self- and organisational- efficacy
- Aspirations
- Pathway awareness
- Destinations

As in previous years, CfEY gathered programme data from the partners regarding their Mercers'-funded delivery and impact in 2021-22. This data was collected in early July, and as such represents a snapshot in time, rather than a full picture of delivery and impact for the year. The partners shared with CfEY the data that they had available at the time and have submitted more detailed individual evaluation reports to The Mercers' Company directly. It is also important to acknowledge that although some broad comparisons are drawn between the partners' work in this report, each organisation works differently, with different cohorts of young people and using different evaluation systems, and therefore these comparisons are not like for like and should be considered with the appropriate caveats.

10 Delivery

Section summary: Across the second year of the Transitions Special Initiative, the eight partners worked with 66,809 young people, 166 schools, virtual schools, or colleges, and 572 businesses. Several programmes are targeting and engaging high proportions of students who are from Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, eligible for free school meals (FSM) or care experienced.

During the 2021/22 academic year, the eight partners worked with: 66,809 young people; 166 schools, virtual schools, or colleges; and 572 employers³. Engagement with young people was particularly high this year, mainly due to Career Ready reaching 62,534 young people through the new self-serve activities that are offered to schools via their Career Starter programme.

Partners work with young people aged between 11 and 25 (while five of the partners work with only with school-aged young people, Brentford FCCST, IntoUniversity and Young Westminster Foundation run programmes that are also available to young people in their twenties). The data we have suggests that the majority of organisations had an equal amount of male and female pupils. However, there was a greater proportion of male pupils on the Construction Youth Trust and Dallaglio RugbyWorks programmes (see Table 4).

³ Figures are for 24 of the partners' 27 programmes, where data was provided. Brentford FCCST did not provide this data for three of their programmes.

Table 4: Percentage of young people identifying as male, female, and non-binary, Cohorts 1 and 2

Organisation name (no. of programmes for which data was submitted)	Percentage of students identifying as male	Percentage of students identifying as female	Percentage of students identifying as non-binary/other
Career Ready (1/3)	41%	57%	2%
Construction Youth Trust (1/1)	68%	32%	0%
Drive Forward Foundation (1/1)	48%	48%	4%
EY Foundation (3/4)	45%	54%	<1%
Brentford FCCST (7/10)	55%	45%	0%
Dallaglio RugbyWorks (1/1)	72%	28%	0%
IntoUniversity (5/6)	48%	52%	<1% ⁴
Young Westminster Foundation (1/1)	Data not provided	Data not provided	Data not provided

From the programme data we have available, several programmes are targeting and engaging high proportions of students who are from Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, eligible for free school meals (FSM) or care experienced. For example, the Career Ready programme was working with the highest proportion of students from BAME backgrounds, at 89%. Drive Forward was working with the highest proportion of care-experienced pupils, as this is their key demographic, at 100%. EY Foundation had the highest proportion of young people eligible for FSM, at 100% across their Smart Futures and Our Future programmes. All students taking part in Construction Youth Trust’s programme have been identified by their school as being at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training).

⁴ 227 young people on IntoUniversity programmes did not provide data about their gender, they have been removed from these calculations.

11 Overall satisfaction

Section summary: Among the organisations for which we have data, young people, schools, and employers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the partners’ programmes. Across all stakeholders and programmes, satisfaction rates were above 75%.⁵

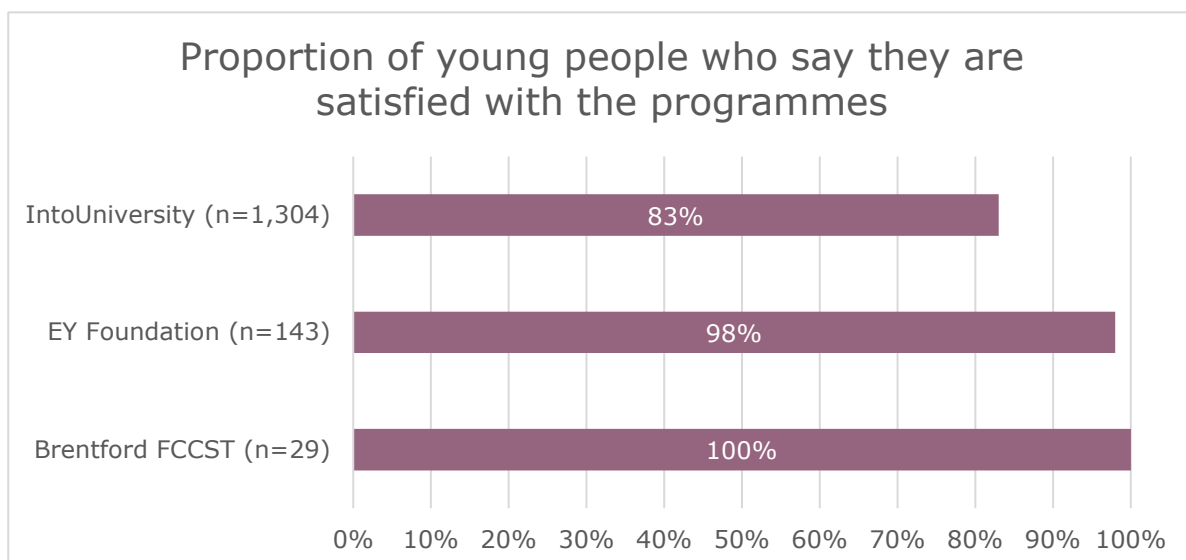
Data on programme satisfaction from a range of stakeholders was submitted by four of the partner organisations. The table below sets out which organisations provided satisfaction data from each of their programmes.

Table 5: Number of programmes providing satisfaction data⁶

Organisation name	Number of each partner’s programmes that submitted satisfaction data from the following stakeholders:		
	Young people	Schools	Employers
EY Foundation	2/4	2/4	0/4
Brentford FCCST	4/10	3/10	1/10
IntoUniversity	5/6	2/6	0/6
Young Westminster Foundation	0/1	1/1	1/1

Brentford FCCST, EY Foundation and IntoUniversity had high levels of satisfaction amongst their young people, with Brentford FCCST reporting 100% satisfaction rates across the four programmes for which we have data (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Young people’s satisfaction with the programmes



⁵ Some of the partners do not collect data on overall levels of satisfaction. CfEY has reported on the data that was made available.

⁶ Career Ready, Construction Youth Trust, Dallaglio RugbyWorks and Drive Forward Foundation did not provide satisfaction data.

Three Brentford FCCST programmes and the Young Westminster Foundation programme received 100% satisfaction rate from schools and colleges. IntoUniversity gained an 86% school and college satisfaction rate across two programmes, while all those working with two of EY Foundation's programmes gave a satisfaction rating of above seven out of ten.

One Brentford FCCST programme and the Young Westminster Foundation programme also received 100% satisfaction rates from employers.

Would stakeholders work with the partners again?

Some partners also collected data on which stakeholders would work with them again in future. The data shows that the following proportion of stakeholders would work with partners again:

- 100% of schools working with the EY Foundation
- 100% of employers and schools working with Young Westminster Foundation
- 100% of employers on two Brentford FCCST programmes and 100% of schools on two of their programmes

12 Self- and organisational-efficacy

Section summary: The Transitions Special Initiative appears to have a strong impact on many young people’s soft skills and helps them to develop new workplace skills.⁷

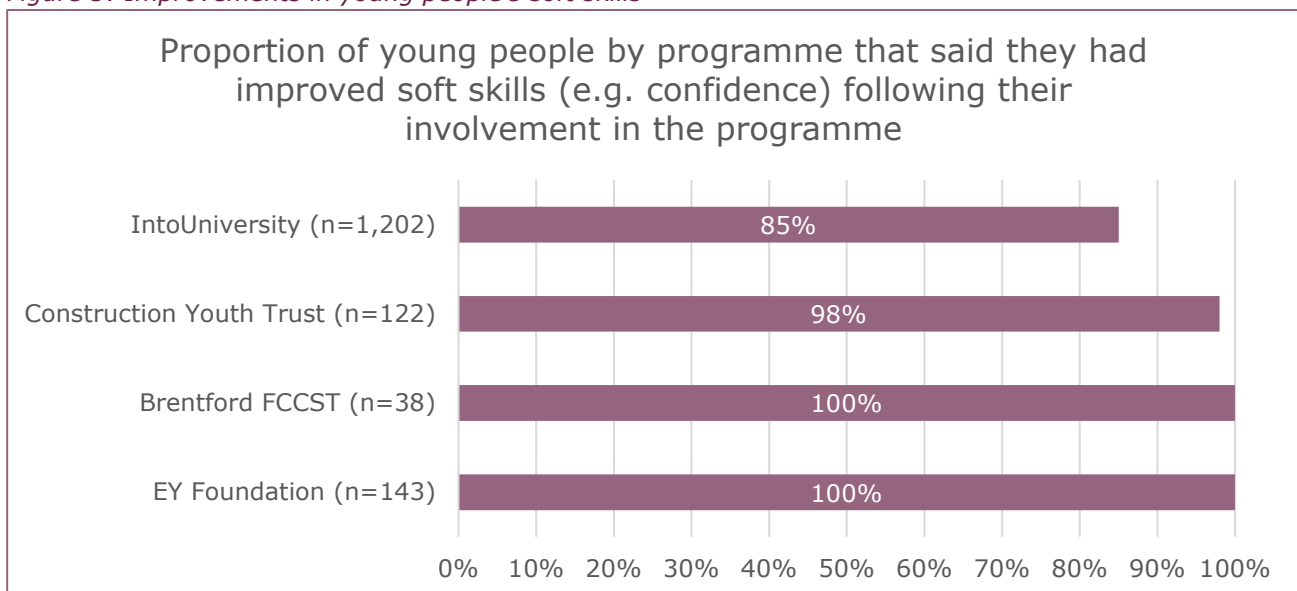
Data on the programmes’ impact on young people’s soft skills was submitted by four organisations, while data on workplace skills was submitted by two organisations. The table below sets out which organisations provided data from a proportion of their programmes.

Table 6: Number of programmes providing data on soft skills and workplace skills⁸

Organisation name	Number of programmes that submitted data on young people’s soft skills	Number of programmes that submitted data on young people’s workplace skills
Construction Youth Trust	1/1	0/1
EY Foundation	2/4	2/4
Brentford FCCST	5/10	5/10
IntoUniversity	4/6	0/6

The majority of young people for whom data was collected reported that they had improved soft skills, such as confidence, following their involvement in the programme. All or almost all the young people surveyed on Brentford, EY Foundation and Construction Youth Trust’s programmes reported improved soft skills suggesting that these programmes had a particularly strong impact. (See Figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Improvements in young people’s soft skills

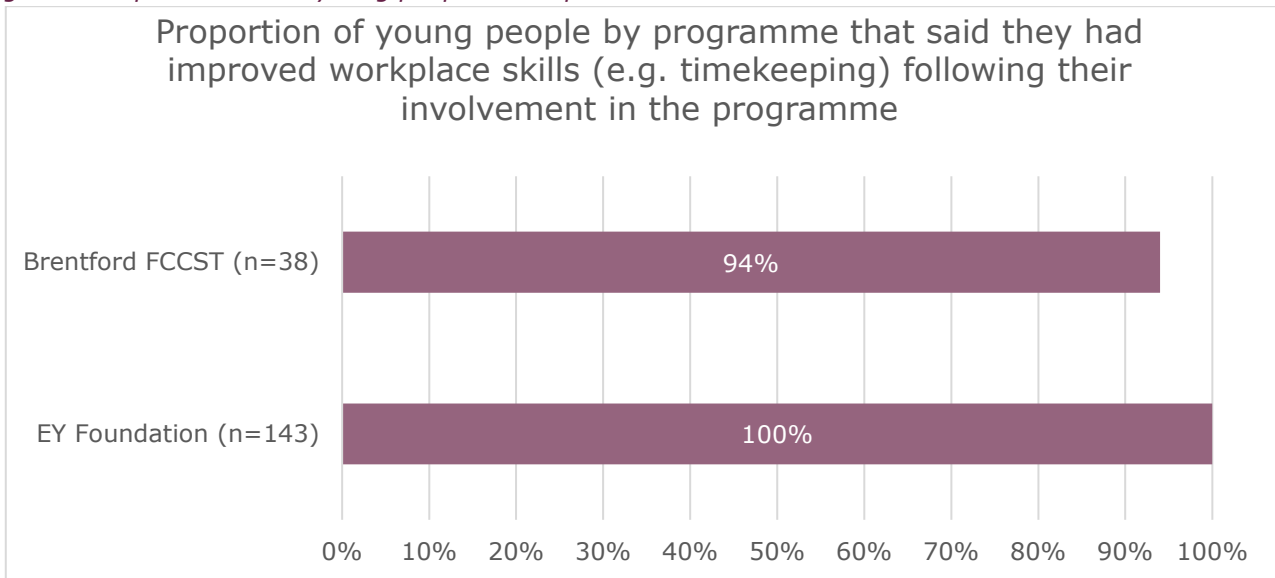


⁷ Some of the partners do not collect data on soft skill or workplace skill development. CfEY has reported on the data that was made available.

⁸ Career Ready, Dallaglio RugbyWorks, Drive Forward Foundation and Young Westminster Foundation did not provide data on soft skill or workplace skill development.

Figure 4 summarises young people’s responses regarding improvements in workplace skills on two organisations’ programmes. On two EY Foundation programmes and four Brentford FCCST programmes all young people involved reported that they had improved their workplace skills (e.g. timekeeping) as a result of the programme. On the remaining Brentford FCCST programme, 75% of young people reported an improvement in workplace skills.

Figure 4: Improvements in young people’s workplace skills



While this is only a partial sample of programmes and participants, the available data suggests that the programmes have a positive impact on soft skills and workplace skills for the majority of young people.

13 Aspirations

Section summary: Available data from partners suggests that their programmes positively influence the aspirations of many of their young people, by making them feel more positive about their future.

By ‘aspirations’ we mean young people’s aims for the future and where they see themselves.

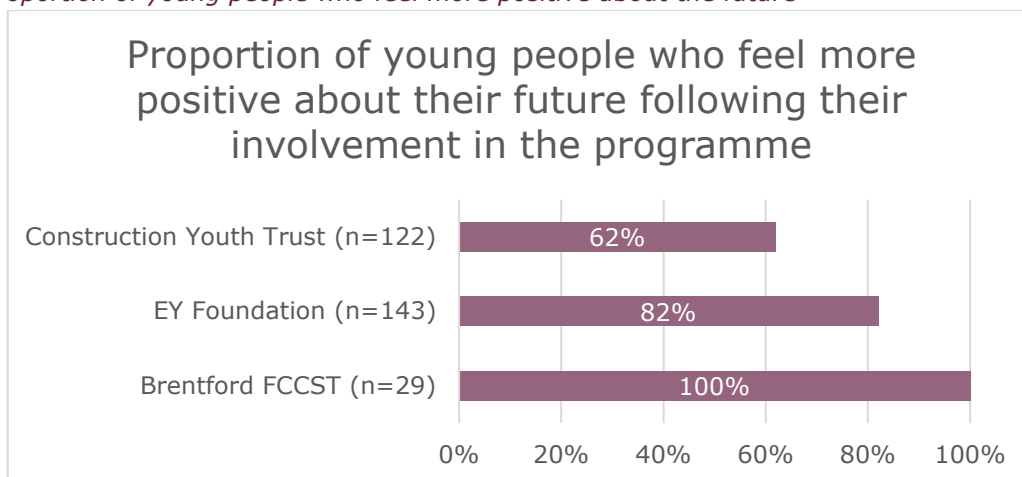
Three out of eight organisations submitted data on how many young people felt more positive about their future after taking part in the programme. The table below sets out which organisations provided data from each of their programmes.

Table 7: Number of programmes providing data on the percentage of young people who feel more positive following their involvement in the programme⁹

Organisation name	Number of programmes that submitted data on the percentage of young people who feel more positive following their involvement in the programme
Construction Youth Trust	1/1
EY Foundation	2/4
Brentford FCCST	4/10

The majority of young people surveyed by Brentford FCCST, EY Foundation and Construction Youth Trust reported feeling more positive about their future as a result of the programme (see Figure 5). Young people on EY Foundation’s and Brentford’s programmes were more likely to report impact on their aspirations compared to those working with the Construction Youth Trust: 82% and 100%, compared to 62%, respectively. However, 100% of schools and colleges working with Construction Youth Trust said the programme had inspired young people about careers in the construction and built environment sector.

Figure 5: Proportion of young people who feel more positive about the future



⁹ Career Ready, Dallaglio RugbyWorks, Drive Forward Foundation, IntoUniversity and Young Westminster Foundation did not provide data on aspirations.

14 Pathway awareness

Section summary: Partners’ data suggests their programmes positively influence young people’s awareness of different pathways into further or higher education and work, however, there is variation across the different partners, with some having a greater impact than others at the time data was gathered. Partners’ data also suggests that the programmes have a positive impact on young people’s professional networks.

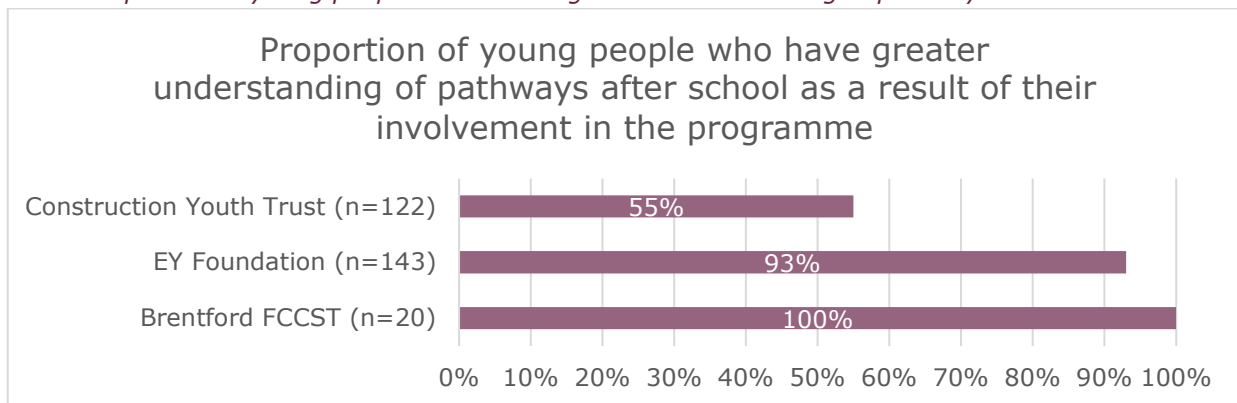
‘Pathway awareness’ refers to young people’s knowledge and understanding of different academic and vocational pathways into education, training, or work. The table below sets out which organisations provided data from each of their programmes.

Table 8: Number of programmes providing data on the percentage of young people who have a greater understanding of pathways after school and who have grown their networks¹⁰

Organisation name	Number of programmes that submitted data on the percentage of young people who have a greater understanding of pathways after school	Number of programmes that submitted data on the percentage of young people who have grown their network
Construction Youth Trust	1/1	1/1
EY Foundation	2/4	2/4
Brentford FCCST	3/10	2/10

The majority of young people surveyed by Brentford FCCST and EY Foundation felt they had a greater awareness of post-school pathways as a result of the programmes, with 100% and 93% of young people (respectively) on these programmes reporting a greater understanding following their involvement with the programme. Although most young people surveyed by Construction Youth Trust also reported a positive impact on their awareness of pathways, they were comparatively less likely to do so at the time data was collected (55%) (see Figure 6).

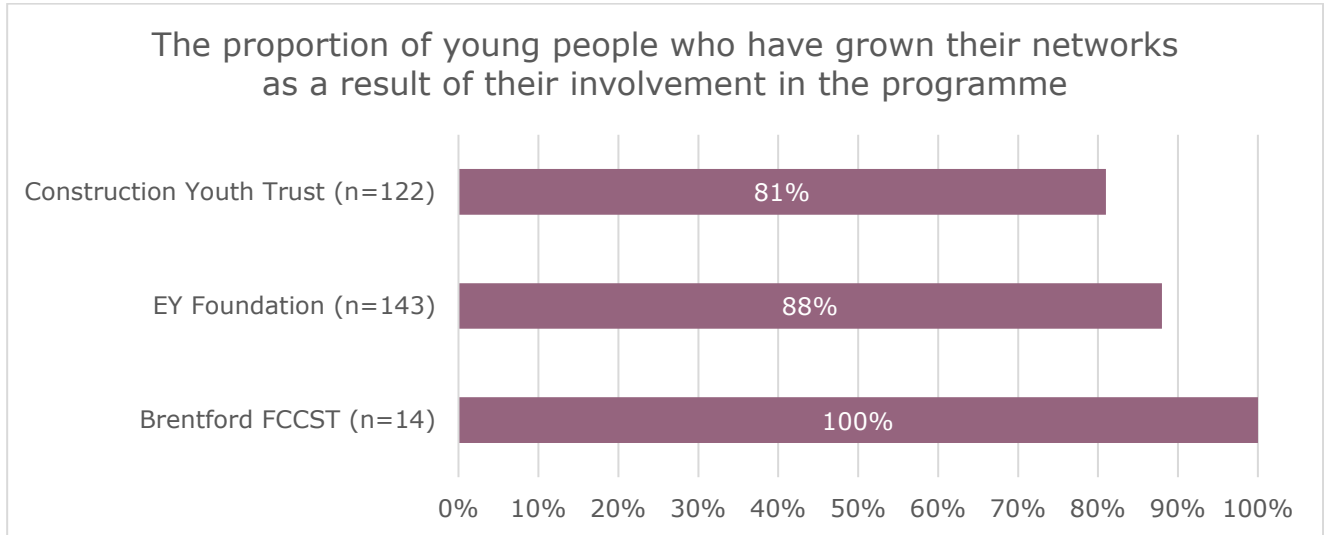
Figure 6: Proportion of young people who have a greater understanding of pathways after school



¹⁰ Career Ready, Dallaglio RugbyWorks, Drive Forward Foundation, IntoUniversity and Young Westminster Foundation did not provide data on pathway awareness.

In addition, data showed that the majority young people working with the same three organisations felt they had grown their professional networks as a result of their participation (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Proportion of young people who have grown their networks



15 Destinations

Section summary: The partners who collect data on their young people's post-programme destinations report that many of their participants go on to further education, training, or employment.

'Destinations' refers to young people's subsequent trajectories in education or work. The table below sets out which organisations provided data from each of their programmes: only Brentford FCCST provided data on impact in this area and therefore we are only able to draw very limited conclusions on the impact of programmes on this outcome.

Table 9: Number of programmes providing data on the percentage of young people who felt more positive about their future after taking part¹¹

Organisation name	Number of programmes that provided data on the percentage of young people who felt more positive about their future after taking part
Brentford FCCST	1/10

Data from one Brentford FCCST programme showed that 80% of young people had made a meaningful transition (defined as moving into FE, HE, employment, self-employment, or training). Though it is not possible to conclude that this is as direct a result of the programme (because a range of other factors in young people's lives will also influence their destinations) it may indicate that the programme supported positive transitions to further education and/or work.

The remaining partners did not have this data at the point CfEY collected information from them, as young people had not completed the programmes at this time. This was in part due to data being collected before the end of the academic year and prior to the confirmation of exam results.

¹¹ Career Ready, Construction Youth Trust, Dallaglio RugbyWorks, Drive Forward Foundation, EY Foundation and Young Westminster Foundation did not provide data on pathway awareness.

16 Programme data: conclusion

This year, available data suggests that the partners achieved high levels of satisfaction across their programmes and had a positive impact on young people's soft skills, workplace skills, aspirations, and pathway awareness. While the data gathered this year presents a useful snapshot of the partners' delivery and impact at a point in time, CfEY intends to review the timelines for data submission in future years, with the aim of collecting more information. At present, CfEY's reporting deadlines for The Mercers' Company require data to be gathered before the end of the end of the year, in order to complete our reporting by the beginning of the next year. At this point, the partners' delivery is ongoing, and some end-of-programme evaluations have not been completed. The Mercers' Company has agreed to review these dates with CfEY, in order to allow the partners more time to submit their data to CfEY for analysis and reporting.