University of
Kent

Succeed Evaluation Report

2022

Contents

Succeed 2022 – Executive Summary

A brief overview

The Succeed Programme, a sustained outreach intervention offered at the University of Kent through the Kent and Medway Collaborative Outreach Programme (KaMCOP), aims to provide a framework for young people to consider their post-18 choices and make informed decisions about whether going to university is the right choice for them. Funded through Uni Connect, the Succeed Programme aims to increase the number of students from groups underrepresented in Higher Education progressing to university study.

The Programme spans a 6-month period, involving a mixture of online workshops and Saturday visits to the University of Kent's Canterbury campus. The programme concludes with a 3-night residential on the Canterbury campus, providing students with practical experience of student life and university study.

65 students attended at least one visit day, and attendance dropped to 54 for the residential. They came from 23 local schools and colleges, with the highest participant rates being from EKC Group (East Kent College Group – 11 students at Visit Days and 7 on the residential), The Harvey Grammar School (7 at Visit Days and the residential) and The Howard School (5 at Visit Days and 3 on the residential).

Three students indicated they were care experienced on their application form and, typically for the University of Kent's outreach activities, the majority of students were white (69.2% at Visit Days and 72.2% on the residential). Over 40% of students were from either IMD Q1 postcodes, or eligible for FSM.

Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation for the Succeed Programme took the form of administering surveys, at baseline level and then at the end of visit days with satisfaction surveys, and an evaluation at the end of the residential. The evaluation method also included the use of focus groups, which took place on the final day of residential to gain insight into the students' experiences on the programme. We also conducted a focus group with previous participants of The Succeed Programme to understand how their experiences have influenced their education since completion of the programme.

Key Findings

- The Succeed Programme provided students with a range of information about university study, the process of applying and what university life is like.
- There was an increase in understanding of the range of post-18 options available to young people. Their awareness of apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships became greater.
- Students indicated an improvement in their social confidence and ability to interact with their peers.
- The key barriers to young people progressing to Higher Education remain finance, confidence and a lack of awareness of the support available to them (finance, medical, personal).
- The Succeed Programme plays a role in providing young people with a range of information which improves their understanding and helps to overcome these barriers.
- Students reported an increase in their self-confidence with regard to their academic abilities, their belief in their ability to get to university and to fit in there.
- Students indicated an improvement in their social confidence and their ability to interact with their peers.
- Student ambassadors can help support participant's decision-making by sharing their own personal experiences of university study.

Recommendations

- Students considered the online sessions inclusive as all could engage and access from home, but others felt that they were hard to engage fully with, being online. One possibility would be to make the online sessions optional, so that students could choose whether to attend, and also include these elements in the Saturday sessions.
- Students indicated a desire for more time to themselves during the residential. The programme was very full, and students did not have much time to unwind or informally interact with others - more breaks being introduced could allow for rest time but also improve student engagement.
- A list of further resources could be included in the delivery of information to students about their post-Level 3 options.
- Students who had already decided that they would like to progress and study at Higher Education felt that the programme did not address their needs, and spent a lot of time exploring alternatives. An alternative could be devised for this group of students, or the benefits of exploring options should be emphasised to ensure that all students benefit from the programme.
- The programme may dissuade students from progression to Higher Education by making other

options, such as apprenticeships, seem very appealing. A balance needs to be struck between giving students information and being realistic about the availability of opportunities in different areas, for example the lack of degree apprenticeships available in the South East.

- Due to staffing constraints, the maximum number of students accepted onto the programme is 60. In 2021/2022, a total of 103 applications were received - a comparator group could be created to track the educational journey of the students who have been rejected from the Succeed Programme.

Conclusions

The Succeed Programme aims to help Level 3 students make informed decisions about their future. The results of the evaluation of the 2022 Succeed Programme demonstrates that the programme provides students with the information and skills they need to undertake their own continuing research about their progression to HE. This is an encouraging and positive outcome.

Succeed 2022 - Overview

Introduction

The University of Succeed Programme is a sustained outreach intervention aimed at students in year 12 or the first year of a level 3 course at an FE College. It is targeted at those who live in areas with low progression to HE or come from groups who are less likely to access HE level study. Since its launch in 2018, the programme has been funded through the Uni Connect programme and is a significant element within the activities offered through the Kent and Medway Collaborative Outreach Programme (KaMCOP). The key aim of the programme is to provide a framework for young people to consider their post-18 choices, explore their skills and career options and make an informed decision about whether going to University is the right choice for them.

This report outlines the findings of an evaluation study which took place in academic year 2021-2022 and is intended to share identified good practice and to inform the proposed development and expansion of the programme from 2024-2025.

Key Findings

- The Succeed programme provided students with a wide range of information about university study, the process of applying and what being a student at university is like.

- Students reported an increase in their self-confidence with regard to their academic abilities, their belief in their ability to get to university and to fit in there.

- Students indicated an improvement in their social confidence and ability to interact with their peers.

- There was an increase in understanding of the range of post-18 options available to young people.

- The journey into Higher Education is not uniform and can take various different pathways. Decisions are influenced by a whole range of personal circumstances and individual situations.

- Key barriers to HE progression remain finance, confidence and a lack of awareness of the support (financial, medical, social and personal) which is available.

- The Succeed Programme plays a role in providing young people with a range of information which improves their understanding and helps to overcome these barriers. Advice and guidance about the range of support services available can help students access these services when they are undergraduates.

- Student ambassadors can help support participant's decision-making by sharing their own personal experiences of university study.

- The Succeed Programme is a highly positive experience for most participants.

Programme Background and Aims

The Succeed programme is funded through the national Uni Connect programme which aims to increase the number of students from groups underrepresented in higher education progressing to university study.   The Succeed Programme is therefore targeted at young people who might not consider Higher Education without the additional support and guidance that the programme provides. This targeted support is intended to encourage participants to aspire to higher education and, through the provision of clear advice and guidance, to help them understand the level of academic attainment which they will need to achieve to progress to University. In this way, the programme is also intended to support improved academic outcomes for the students.

The aims of the programme include:

- To introduce the students to the options available to them beyond Level 3, including going to university;

- To provide students with the space and opportunity to decide on whether or not they would like to enter Higher Education and whether it will support their career choices;

- To introduce students to a university environment and to help them to become familiar with learning conventions and practices in higher education.

The programme is intensive and requires significant commitment from students. The programme is also expensive in terms of University resource and so it is essential that the recruitment of participants is focused and targeted at those who will benefit most. Harrison and Hatt (2010: 66)[1] noted:

> "*Targeting is central to widening participation. It determines those who do or do not take part in widening participation programmes; those whose awareness of higher education is or is not increased and those whose aspirations to progress to higher education are or are not supported by activity programmes. If the targeting criteria are not fit for purpose, scarce resources will be misdirected towards young people from groups that are already well-represented in higher education.*"

By bringing together students from schools and colleges across Kent and Medway, the programme aims to

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[1] Harrison, N., and Hatt, S. (2010) 'Disadvantaged Learners': Who are we targeting? Understanding the targeting of widening participation activity in the United Kingdom using geo-demographic data from Southwest England. *Higher Education Quarterly* 64(1), pp. 65-88.

mimic the opportunities to develop social connections with peers which going to University can provide. This is intended to bolster the participants' sense of belonging in higher education, boost their confidence and smooth their transition through the UCAS application process into HE study if they decide to take that route.

Some participants are likely to have taken part in previous outreach activities offered through KaMCOP or by HEIs who are part of the Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF). Succeed is designed to complement pre-existing outreach activities whilst providing a deeper level of support to targeted learners who are more ambivalent about going to university.

Format and Delivery

The Succeed Programme is delivered over a 6-month period through a mixture of online workshops and Saturday visits to the University of Kent's Canterbury campus. The programme concludes with a three-night residential on the Kent campus, providing the students with practical experience of student life and university study. The length of the programme is intended to ensure that students have time to explore, reflect and learn – for many young people facing significant barriers to HE study, the decision to apply is not made easily. It also enables them to get to know their fellow students and to build a supportive community of learners. The residential element of the programme is a key part of the programme – university summer schools are seen as having a key role to play in widening participation programmes[2], and, it has been argued, positively impact the attitudes of students toward their educational aspirations and post-18 choices.[3]

In 2022, the delivery of the programme followed the pattern below:

Date	Activity	Format
15/02/2022	Introduction to the Succeed Programme	Online
26/02/2022	Getting Started	Visit Day
19/03/2022	Understanding Ourselves and our Options	Visit Day
19/04/2022	Part 1: Considering why others might go to university	Online
23/04/2022	Part 2: Considering why you might go to university	Visit Day
21/05/2022	Discovering more about university study	Visit Day
28/06/2022	What to expect from the residential	Online
19/07/2022	Residential	
20/07/2022		
21/07/2022		

[2] Hatt, S., Baxter, A., and Tate, J. (2009) 'It was definitely a turning point!' A review of Aimhigher summer schools in the south west of England. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 33(4), pp. 333-346.
[3] Baines, L., Gooch, D., and Ng-Knight, T. (2022) Do widening participation interventions change university attitudes in UK school children? A systematic review of the efficacy of UK programmes, and quality of evaluation evidence. *Educational Review*, DOI: 10.1080/00131911.2022.2077703.

| 22/07/2022 | | |

Figure 1. Timetable of the delivery of the Succeed Programme

The programme consisted of a mixture of both in-person and online sessions. The experience of delivering a fully online programme in the pandemic informed the development of this hybrid delivery. Online delivery is helpful when students are spread over a wide geographical area and travelling to campus takes considerable time and is expensive but the immediacy of face to face delivery, the opportunity to experience the campus atmosphere and the chance to connect with other participants and the student ambassadors in person, are valuable elements of the programme. For the first time, the University used 'Brightside Mentoring' as an online source of advice and guidance for participants during the programme. This ran alongside the sessions.

In 2022, 103 applications were received for the 60 places available on the programme. Potential students were made aware of the programme through fliers sent to their school, information on the University website and the Kent schools' bulletin, dissemination through the KMPF newsletter and website, and through promotional talks and videos, delivered in schools either in person or online.

Just under 60 students started on the Succeed Programme in 2022, and 54 followed the whole programme and completed the residential. This was an excellent completion rate as there are inevitably personal challenges that mean that some students have to withdraw.

Evaluation Design and Purpose

Evaluation represents a highly significant indicator of success and progression in research environments. In the Succeed Programme evaluation is designed not only to identify areas that are working well and areas needing further development, but also to measure the impact of the programme on the students themselves.

A variety of evaluation methods were used throughout the programme. These included the use of a baseline survey at the start of the programme, satisfaction surveys at the end of the visit days and an evaluation at the end of the residential. The students also completed a reflective journal during the visit days and focus group interviews were held at the end of residential. This range of methods ensured that both qualitative and quantitative data was collected making it possible to track how students felt as they moved through the programme and once they had completed all elements of it.

Surveys

The surveys were designed to question students about their plans for their future (i.e., if they would enter Higher Education, start working etc), and more generally their understanding and knowledge of Higher Education to measure changes in their attitudes over the course of the programme. The baseline survey was used to determine the students initial perceptions and to provide a point of comparison for subsequent evaluation. By surveying students regularly throughout the programme, it was possible to see how their views changes.

A second evaluation survey was administered to students on the final visit day before attending the residential, and consisted of questions asking them about the value of the activities they undertook, how confident they felt about certain aspects of university and what suggestions they had to improve the days. Some example questions are below:

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1. How much do you agree with the following statements?
   - I am motivated to do well in my studies
   - I have a clear understanding of who I am

2. Do you know how to go about getting the qualifications or training you need to get the job you want?

3. How likely are you to apply to Higher Education in the future?

4. What visit day have you found least valuable? Why?

Figure 2. Table of example questions from the end-of-days evaluation survey

On the final day of the residential, students were asked to complete another survey focusing on their experiences on the residential. These questions were designed to enable comparisons to be made with earlier surveys in order to see if there were any significant changes in attitude, self-belief and/or Higher Education. The survey also gave students the chance to comment on the programme and to share their own personal highlights. Some examples of the questions can be seen below:

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1. How much do you agree with the following statements about Higher Education?
   - It is for people like me
   - I would fit in well with others
   - I have the academic ability to succeed

2. How likely are you to apply to Higher Education in the future?

3. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements
   - Taking part in Succeed has helped me make informed decisions about my future

4. What will be your lasting memory of taking part in the Succeed programme?

5. What will be your lasting memory of taking part in this week's residential?

Figure 3. Table of example questions from the post-residential evaluation survey

In addition to the student surveys, parents and supporters were also asked to provide feedback, as were the student ambassadors who worked with the students on the programme. Gathering a range of perspectives was helpful in assessing the impact of the programme on the participants. In particular, parents and supporters could often articulate how the programme had affected participants more clearly than they could themselves.

Focus groups

In addition to surveys, the evaluation included the use of focus group interviews. These focus groups took place on the final day of the residential, with eight groups of students giving in-depth feedback on their experiences. Focus group interviews were chosen because they could provide a safe, non-threatening and inclusive space for conversations to develop between participants which, it was hoped, would provide a rich source of information. Adler et al (2019) have highlighted how focus groups for young people also decrease the likelihood of a power imbalance between the participant and the researcher by creating a safe peer environment[4].

HEAT

For the purpose of monitoring and evaluation, all students who applied to take part in the Succeed Programme were added to the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) database in order to track their progression. The HEAT database can be used to follow the journeys of students (whose information is stored on HEAT) throughout the rest of their education, and to see whether they progress to Higher Education. It was therefore possible to create a comparator group. The data from the HEAT database also provides tracking information about previous Succeed students and the educational journeys they have taken. This enabled us to form a small focus group interview of past attendees of the programme. This consisted of two previous students who had taken part in Succeed in 2018/19 and are currently in their final year of undergraduate study. The focus group discussed the extent to which the Succeed Programme might have impacted their transition to university.

Evaluation Findings

Participant Demographics

65 students attended at least one visit day, and attendance dropped to 54 for the residential. They came from 23 local schools and colleges, with the highest participant rates being from EKC Group (East Kent College Group – 11 students at Visit Days and 7 on the residential), The Harvey Grammar School (7 at Visit Days and the residential) and The Howard School (5 at Visit Days and 3 on the residential).

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[4] Adler, K., Salantera, S., and Zumstein-Shaha, M. (2019) Focus Group Interviews in Child, Youth, and Parent Research: An Integrative Literature Review. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1-15.

Three students indicated they were care experienced on their application form and, typically for the University of Kent's outreach activities, the majority of students were white (69.2% at Visit Days and 72.2% on the residential). Additional demographic data is shown in the charts below.
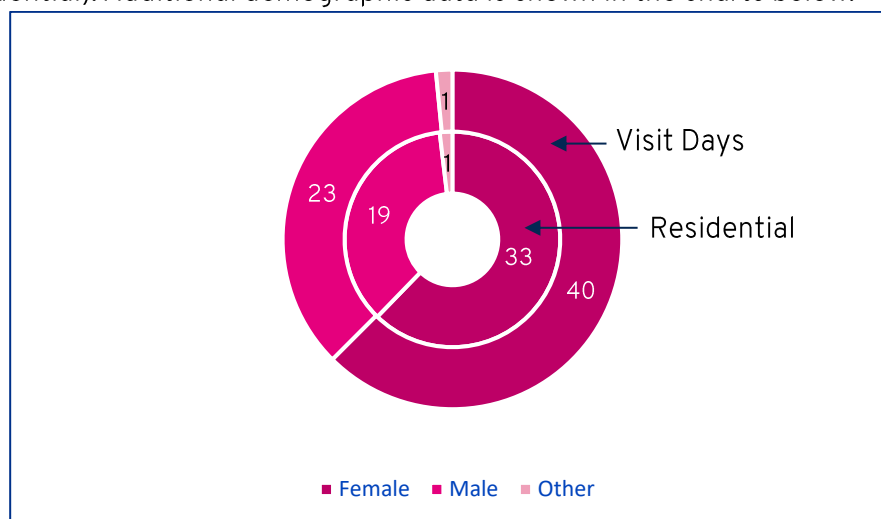

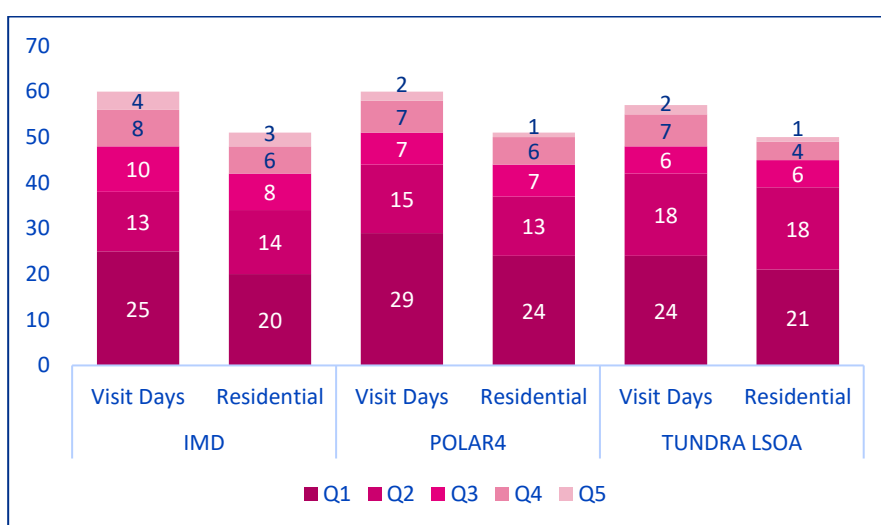*Figure 4. Visit Day and residential participants by sex*

Figure 5. Visit Day and residential participants by geographical indicators of disadvantage (IMD, POLAR4 and TUNDRA)
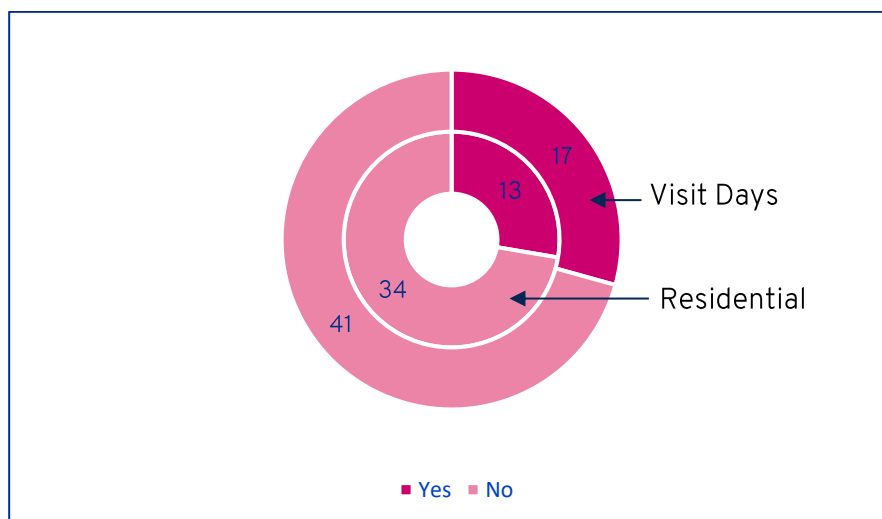
Figure 6. Visit Day and residential participants by eligibility for Free School Meals

The Succeed programme was part-funded by the national UniConnect initiative, and just under half of the attendees came from UniConnect target wards (43.1% at the Visit Days and 44.4% on the residential). The most represented wards were Newington in Thanet (5 students), Luton and Wayfield in Medway and Lydd in Folkestone (3 students each).

Baseline and Residential Surveys

54 students who completed the residential survey at the end of the programme had also completed the baseline survey. Analysis of quantitative trends was therefore focused on this group.

Analysis of the surveys demonstrated that the students' responses changed over the course of the programme.

- The number of students who selected 'Strongly Agree' in response to the question, 'I am motivated to do well in my studies' increased by 27% to 28 students by the end of the residential.

- There was a largely positive change in response to the question "I have a clear idea about what I want to do in the future", with the number of students disagreeing with this statement generally decreasing as the programme progressed.
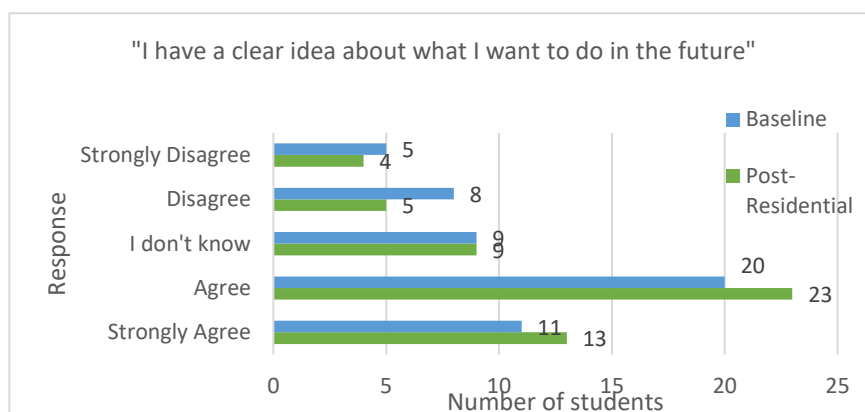
Figure 7. Graph to show the change in answers between baseline evaluation and post-residential

- There was a 95% increase in positive responses to the question, 'Do you know how to go about getting the qualifications or training you need to get the job you want?'

- There was a significant increase in the numbers of students expressing understanding of the financial implications of studying at university. Students were informed of the financial support available through a finance talk and by playing a finance-related game as part of the residential.
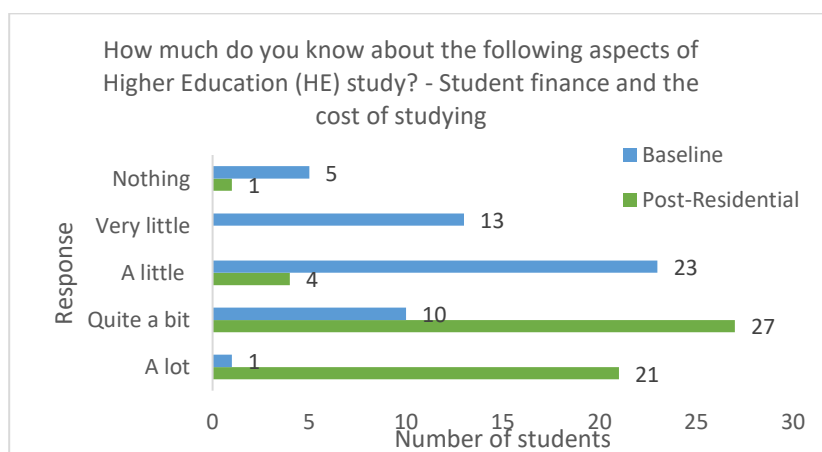
Figure 8. Graph to show change in student understanding of student finance

- One of the largest differences in response was noted in the question asking, 'How much do you know about the following aspects of Higher Education (HE) study? Other types of support available (e.g. advice and guidance, mental health)', with a significant majority of students developing a better understanding of the services available. The number of students who had a more limited knowledge of these types of support also decreased.

Figure 9. Graph to highlight increase in student knowledge of support available

- The post-residential and baseline surveys both asked about the likelihood that the student would apply to Higher Education in the future, in an attempt to determine whether the programme helps participants to make informed decisions about their future. There was a positive change noted in these responses with the number of students who selected 'Definitely will apply' increasing by 68% from 16 students to 27.
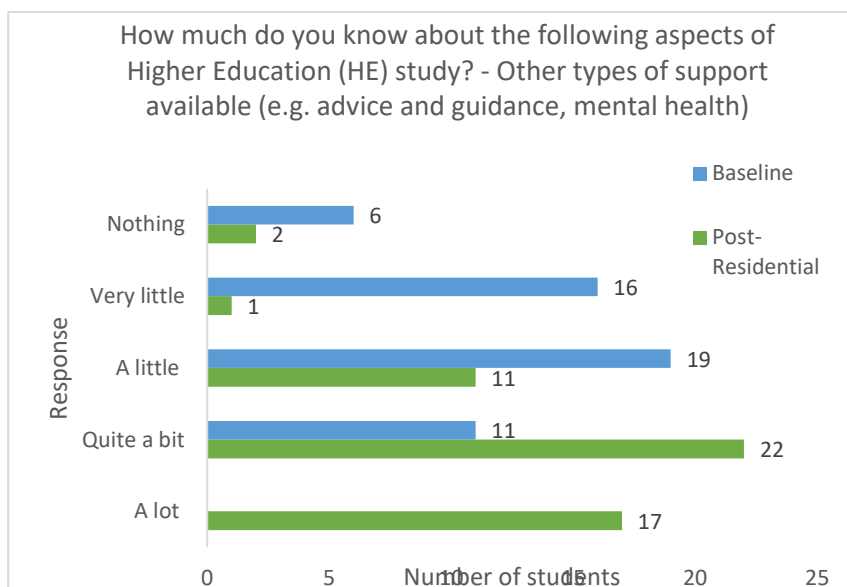
- The surveys also included questions about the students' sense of belonging and their perceptions of their academic abilities. One question, 'How much do you agree with the following statements about your future? It is for people like me' generated an interesting response. The number of students who strongly agreed increased slightly, but the total number of students who selected disagree following the residential increased. It has been argued that students' sense of belonging can be impacted by weak social and environmental connections in a new community[5] and that a lack of motivation and a perception of significant barriers to access can result.

Results from Participant Focus Groups

All students who took part in the Succeed Programme residential agreed to participate in a focus group, which took place on the concluding day of the residential. The focus groups were carried out by members of Kent staff who had had no involvement with the organisation or delivery of the Succeed Programme. This was to ensure that students felt able to give honest feedback and to avoid the risk of researcher bias in the questioning. The focus groups consisted of 6-8 students, who knew each other.

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[5] Pedler, M.L. Willis, R., and Nieuwoudt, J.E. (2022) A sense of belonging at university: student retention, motivation and enjoyment. *Journal of Further Education*, 46(3), 397-408.

Reasons for applying to the Succeed Programme

- **Decisions about the future:** Succeed was advertised to students who were unsure whether they wished to enter Higher Education or not. Almost all students indicated that they applied in order to help them come to a firm decision about HE progression.

- Students on the programme were offered the opportunity to receive **a contextual offer** (2 grades below the standard offer) if they applied to Kent and some indicated that this had been a factor in their decision to apply to the programme. One student stated that they wanted "to get the lower entrance grade." Only two students mentioned this as their prime reason for applying. This suggests that the contextual offer was not a compelling incentive for the majority of participants – or it may be that it was not advertised widely enough to impact on all applicants.

- A significant number of applicants indicated that they applied to the programme as **a means of developing skills** which would enhance their UCAS personal statement. One student noted that they hoped to be able to include their participation in the Succeed Programme on their personal statement and on their CV:

     "I just wanted to make myself stand out because no one else from my school was   doing it or anything, and then I can write it on my personal statement and things   like   that." [Succeed participant. 2022]

- **Wanting to 'stand out'** came up frequently during discussions. Students expressed a desire to make sure that they had the best chances possible to convey their abilities when applying for university. This suggests that students are choosing to participate in this programme to develop their knowledge and skills, with the aim of using these skills to make their application attractive to universities.

- Some students wanted to apply in order **to gain a better understanding of what university is** and how it operates. This included wanting to know more about student finance, understanding the study requirements for university compared to school study, and getting greater knowledge about the accommodation on offer.

     "I wanted to know about the university and financial stuff and how I'm going to get in if I have problems." [Succeed participant, 2022]

- A number of students spoke about being **First Generation HE** and the fact that they didn't know anyone who had been to University. Others expressed concerns about how to cope with University life including the need to budget and support themselves. One student said:

   "I have parents that have never been to university or anything, I wanted to know   what uni life is like." [Succeed participant, 2022]

- Students who already had a strong desire to go to University were often **unsure about what they needed to do to get there** – either the process to be followed or what they would study when they got there.

  "I feel like, before this, I had no clue what I wanted to do. And now, I've got more options to consider. […] And I feel like I'm much more ahead than where I was before I joined [the programme]." [Succeed participant, 2022]

Responses to the Programme

Multiple students commented on the way in which the programme had given them a clearer understanding of how to apply to University and the options available to them. Many felt that attending was of value even for students who were not considering University as it could give them a different perspective.

   "I would say that if you're struggling to decide what you want to do, even if you don't want to go to university or do something different, I still suggest coming here because you never know, it might completely change your mind or if you're debating what course you want to do or if you're apprehensive about the money situations and things, you should go because it really teaches you everything, any questions, you can always have answered. So it really is a good programme and then you also get your social aspects. So discovering what university life is actually like, making friends and memories." [Succeed participant, 2022]

Some students felt that it should have been made clearer to applicants that the programme was predominantly aimed at students who had not yet decided to go to University. One student said:

   "I don't think I realised how much this programme is meant for people who weren't sure what they were going to do. I was really set on university, and I still am, so a lot of the aspects of what we learn didn't apply to me, and it wasn't that useful to me." [Succeed participant, 2022]

It was clear that some students were already familiar with some areas covered by the programme and therefore might not have derived as much benefit from the course as others. Some students expressed that they were already decided on HE before they participated in the programme, but after gaining knowledge of other options available to them they had become more undecided about their previous thoughts. This is not necessarily a negative outcome of the programme as it shows participants are better informed and able to make decisions about their future.

Understanding other post-Level 3 options

Students on the Succeed programme generally had a limited understanding of their future options – other than the possibility of entering Higher Education. A significant number commented at the end of the programme that they now had a broader understanding of what other options were available. For example, one student in particular had expressed that they were initially certain about going to university, but after hearing about other options their decision is not so firm. They said:

"I'd probably say it's pushed me more towards an apprenticeship, or something like that" [Succeed participant, 2022]

The general consensus was that schools mostly concentrate on providing advice and guidance around university entry and do not focus on other possibilities. One student said:

"[Other options] briefly get mentioned but I think at school you get pushed into going to uni whereas this programme, […] there are other options, you don't have to just go into uni and it taught me what it was." [Succeed participant, 2022]

The information given about apprenticeship schemes on the Succeed Programme is limited to basic details, intended to make students aware of their existence as a potential alternative to university study. Students did indicate an awareness of other post-18 options and one student voiced that they had hoped for more information about apprenticeships. They said:

"*I wish there was more information given about apprenticeships because they only really went over it shortly. It is something that I am interested in, but I suppose I will just have to research it myself.*" [Succeed participant, 2022]

The advice given to students about other options within HE including foundation years and degree support was deemed to be helpful to some. One student in particular "*didn't know foundation years existed until this programme*". This indicates that the programme is making students aware of other elements within university study which may suit their needs.
Many participants commented on the increase in their knowledge around their post 18 options and the fact that they now understood that HE was not the only option they had – a perception that schools tend to reinforce.

"*It showed me I had a lot more options than I thought I had and it has let me explore them a bit more.*" [Succeed participant, 2022]

Other Influences

Research cited by Rubie-Davies et al (2010) describes parents as being a key influence on their children as they progress through the education system. Moreover they can adopt a form of 'parental aspiration'[6] as they witness their child's achievements which leads them to focus on the extension of these achievements even when the child themselves does not envisage this for themselves. One student from the Succeed Programme voiced how they felt that they were **required** to go to University in order to fulfil their family's expectations.

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[6] Rubie-Davies, C., Peterson, E., Irving, E., Widdowson, D., and Dixon, R. (2010) Expectations of achievement: Student, teacher and parent perceptions. *Research in Education*, 83(1), 36-53.

"My family, they say that you have to do something academic, like being a doctor, lawyer. I think that I want to enjoy my life, one time in the world, so I have to do my wishes. […] I don't want to make them unhappy, I will apply for university and do my best." [Succeed participant, 2022]

Another said:

"In my family, everyone went to university. I mean I want to go to university but I want to be free. I want to live life and just travel, do lots of stuff." [Succeed participant, 2022]

In the quotes above, both students mention the desire to be able to live life how they choose and suggests a pattern of decisions being significantly affected by parental and familial influence. Studies have shown how student stress levels can often be linked to parental pressure and academic pressure from school[7], which can also influence their decision to enter Higher Education. Many of the students who participated in the Succeed Programme voiced this as a concern.

Some students were very aware that the decision to go to University would have an effect, not just on themselves but also their families. Two students in particular spoke about their experiences with their families and their consciousness that their decision would impact upon on those around them. They said:

"For me, I had to think about my family too, because my decisions will affect their life too, if I decide to move hundreds of miles away." [Succeed participant, 2022]

"She definitely wants me to continue with education. […] She wants me to do well and she thinks because I'm good at maths, I'm gonna get a high paying job. So maybe she just wants that so I can look after her when she's older." [Succeed participant, 2022]

Research by Bartoszuk et al (2021) highlights how the majority of students are financially dependent on their parents when they go to university[8]. However for some Succeed participants this was not the case and some expressed a sense of responsibility towards their families when making decisions about their future because of the potential effect these decisions would have on their family situation. One student spoke about using the programme in order to assist their younger sibling with their queries about university in preparation for their own entry. They said:

"My little brother, he's two years younger than me, so he's got three years until he even needs to worry about uni, and he's already worrying about going. Like, "This is how much it costs, this is how much I need to save up. And doing something like this, I would be able to prepare him and say to him, "This is

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[7] Kulakow, S., Raufelder, D., and Hoferichter, F. (2021) School-related pressure and parental support as predictors of change in student stress levels from early to middle adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence*, 87, 38-51.
[8] Bartoszuk, K., Deal, J.E., and Yerhot, M. (2021) Parents' and College Students' Perceptions of Support and Family Environment, *Emerging Adulthood*, 9(1), 76-87.

what it's actually like, you don't need to stress." [Succeed participant, 2022]

Whilst family can play a large role in influencing young people to go to university, schools and colleges also play their part.

"Our school, […] they are encouraging it not forcing it. They're not pressuring us to do it but they are saying what is probably the most likely route you're going to go down." [Succeed programme, 2022].

What became clear from speaking with the students in the focus groups was the strong sense that many feel influenced to go to university as a result of both parental and educational pressures, and that the programme provided the opportunity for discussion around this issue, of particular value to those who were struggling with this.

Identified barriers to university

As young people start to think about their future post 18, they focus on the practical issues around access to university and may perceive potential 'barriers' to Higher Education. Throughout the focus group interviews, students identified several barriers to their progression.

The academic workload of university study was seen as something that would hinder progression to HE:

"Maybe the workload. Because sometimes I find myself falling behind in the sixth form. I feel like, in uni, it might be to a more severe degree. I feel like I struggle with motivation, so I feel like I'd have to find it more often." [Succeed participant, 2022].

The Succeed Programme aims to break barriers around academic expectations at university by providing an insight into student life and what student study is like. It also seeks to reassure students through the contact with student ambassadors who are current undergraduates and also provides extensive information on the support services available.

 "It's good to know that, if I was struggling, at least there are things I can go to. Whereas I originally thought you were just on your own, and that was it." [Succeed participant, 2022]

"It's always made out that you're living off pasta and crippling debt and struggling for money. But in reality, there's so much to help you." [Succeed participant, 2022]

Finance is also seen as a barrier by many students and the information on loans, bursaries and scholarships provided by the programme was seen as useful by the majority of students:

"The finance talk we had yesterday ease[d] the worries that I had that - because that was my main factor as to probably why I wouldn't go." [Succeed participant, 2022]

Students with disabilities expressed that their condition would be their main barrier to them entering Higher Education. This was evidenced by a few students who spoke about their personal difficulties:

"Probably my health, because I have [a long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy], so I have lots of hospital appointments and stuff." [Succeed participant, 2022]

Research by Jackie Goode (2007) highlights the difficulty of the transition to HE for students with physical and/or mental disabilities in terms of their identity having to adapt to a new environment that may or may not fulfil their needs.[9] A few students echoed this concern of having to manage and balance their studies with taking care of their physical and/or mental health. The Succeed programme provided information around the provision of wellbeing support at university, which many students were unaware of. One student said:

"*I have [a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D], I didn't know there was stuff you can get to help that's provided by the university and stuff.*" [Succeed participant, 2022]

For another student, when asked what barriers might hinder them from going to university, they said:

"*Probably mental health to be honest.*" [Succeed participant, 2022]

29% of students stated in the survey that they were much more aware of resources to help them should they be struggling with mental health, as a result of the Succeed Programme.
The other most common barrier students identified was their own struggles with self-doubt and their perception of their abilities. One student commented:

"*Having self-doubt and stuff about coming here. Am I going to be able to do it, like me? I feel like being here and doing this has shown me that I can come here. This is an option for me. This isn't completely closed off, but it's just having that self-doubt of, is this what's right for me?*" [Succeed participant, 2022]

Involvement of student ambassadors

The University of Kent employed 20 student ambassadors (all current Kent students) to assist in the delivery of the Succeed Programme. Their contributions included delivering promotional talks and supporting students on the visit days and the residential. A core group of ambassadors worked throughout the programme to ensure consistency and to permit them to build closer relationships with the students. Additional ambassadors were recruited to support the core team on the residential.

At the summer school, student ambassadors supervised the students in their residential accommodation, assisted them in activities, and acted as role models to the students. The ambassadors, many of whom

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[9] Goode, J. (2007) 'Managing' disability: early experiences of university students with disabilities. *Disability & Society*, 22(1), 35-48.

came from similar backgrounds and schools to the participants, were able to provide advice and reassurance to the students based on their own undergraduate experience. Many students felt that the ambassadors they encountered had a positive effect on them, with one student in particular expressing how they were able to understand more about the university experience as a result of the ambassadors.

> "*It's very easy to relate to them as well because they're still a student, they're learning as well. Even though they're in Higher Education, they still have the same experience, so they can even tell us about their experience here at uni as well.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

For the participants, it was beneficial to witness the real, lived experiences of the ambassadors who were only a few years older than them. They were able to talk to them openly about their courses, their accommodation and *their* journey to Higher Education. The students spoke highly about the ambassadors and the way in which they treated them:

> "*They made sure we were comfortable in a situation.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

> "*They saw us more as friends rather than people they have to look after.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

> "*I just felt like the ambassadors really, really helped with the whole programme.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

The feedback received from the students about the involvement of student ambassadors was positive and many saw them as role models. Student ambassadors as role models who can help raise aspirations through sharing their experiences is well documented.[10]

> "*Before Succeed [...] I sort of put university on a platform above me, and I thought I would be the wrong kind of person to go there, but just speaking to the ambassadors and just being around them, [...] I just viewed them as normal people after that.*" [Succeed Programme, 2022]

Whilst for the most part students were largely positive about the student ambassador involvement, some students suggested that the supervision of ambassadors limited their freedom to be independent. One student said:

> "*It links back to the surveillance. I don't like it. It feels, like, quite structured.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

Some students also felt that the presence of the ambassadors made them feel that people did not trust them to be independent on the Saturday visits and also the residential. Two students commented:

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[10] Gartland, C. (2015) Student ambassadors: 'role-models', learning practices and identities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(8) 1192-1211.

"*It felt like they didn't trust us to really go anywhere. We always had to have an ambassador with us.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

"*I mean we're on the brink of adulthood, I feel like we should have been trusted more.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

As students at University are completely independent, participants may have expected that their university residential experience would provide the same independence. They may also already experience that level of freedom in their current lives. However as most participants were under 18 and on a university managed programme, the ambassadors' close supervision was also driven by safeguarding and health and safety requirements.

Feedback on the format and content of the programme

Students were asked to comment on the format and content of the programme.

Many students felt that more subject-based information would have helped them to decide which course to study at university or to confirm their existing decisions. Students said:

"*Subject-based stuff could be very useful. Especially for people who don't exactly know what they want to do but know what they like.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

"*I think maybe broader in the beginning and then as it gets further on in the programme, you could maybe try and tailor it to people's subject choice and areas.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

There is limited time within the programme to introduce a variety of different subjects which could be wide ranging. By chance one of the Saturday visit days coincided with a University of Kent's Open Day, and taking part in this was built into the programme to allow students to explore subject areas of interest. They were able to visit facilities to speak to teaching staff and learnt more about assessment methods – this would be difficult to replicate on one of the Saturday session. In their reflective journal for this visit day, one student wrote:

"*Doing the law presentation allowed me to ask more questions that were really important and helped make me feel more in control about what I'm doing in the future.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

The programme encourages participants to attend a range of Open Days which provide specialised subject knowledge. This can enhance and extend the more general information provided within the Succeed programme.

Other students expressed wanting to witness mock lectures, presumably to help them become familiar with university study.

"*Maybe mock lectures about the subjects you want to do, just to feel what that would be like.*"

[Succeed Participant, 2022]

Besides wanting to learn more about individual subjects, the other most common response for feedback was that the students wanted more free time throughout their day on the residential.

> "*It would have been nice to have more free time, just to explore the campus or just to see what is around.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

> "*I think I needed a bit more free time during the days, just because I often got sick, so I just needed a bit of time to take medicine and stuff.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

The timetable for each day and for the residential was very full and it is clear that some students felt that they would really benefit from having more time to themselves in the day, just for some rest or to take specific medication.

Role of Brightside Mentoring Service

The Brightside Mentoring service was available to all students as an online source of advice and guidance throughout Succeed, and from the survey results the general consensus was that most students found it quite useful with 31 students selecting 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' when asked how useful they found the mentoring to be. However, some students in the focus groups expressed that they did not receive the full benefits of it. One student said:

> "*It was a bit structured, but the messages we were getting, like, you can tell they were copy and pasted. […] There's obviously a reason for it, but it doesn't feel like you're having a conversation with someone.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

Some students preferred in-person communication rather than online activities which they did not find to be as personal. Not all students engaged fully with the mentoring platform. Ambassadors reported low engagement and response rates from students and felt it was not the most useful tool to use when maintaining contact and engagement with participants.
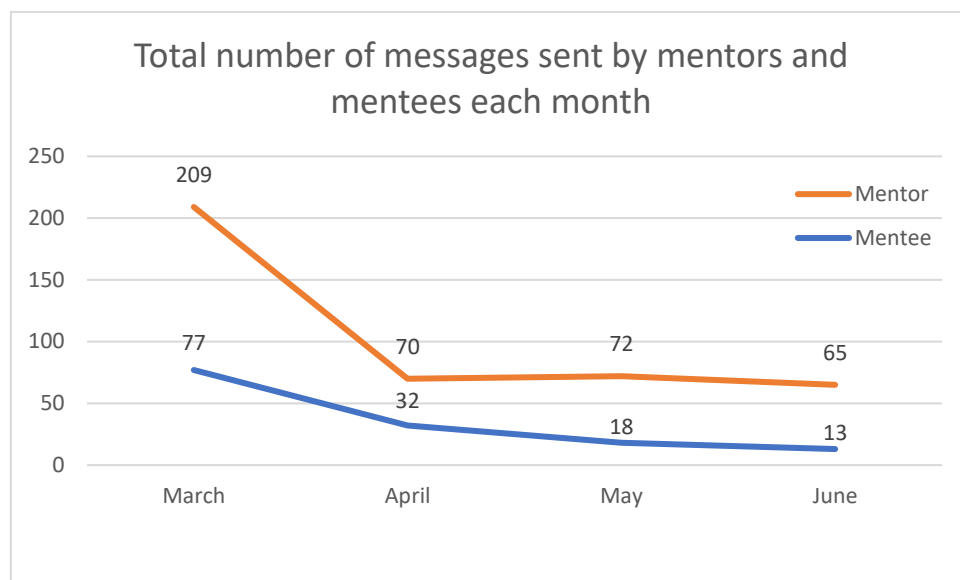
Figure 10. Engagement with Brightside Mentoring

Fig. 7 presents engagement with the Brightside Mentoring platform by how many messages were sent by the students (mentees) and ambassadors (mentors). These figures represent engagement over four periods of data collection throughout the six-month programme, and it is clear that the engagement with Brightside Mentoring significantly decreases as the months go on. Only half of students sent two or more messages over the course of the programme and almost a third sent no messages at all.

The issue of social interaction was raised by a number of participants. The mentoring programme was intended to help with this but participants did not indicate that this had helped. There was limited opportunity for social interaction on the Saturday visit days because of time constraints and this was noted by the students.

"*It was very hard to form connections, until we got to the residential.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

There was little crossover between mentor groups and the corridor groups on the residential. Students wanted greater interaction with their corridor groups on the residential.

"*I think more activities with corridors.*" [Succeed Programme, 2022]

However the overall response to the programme was positive with one student summing up their feedback by saying, "*I think the worst part of it […] is the fact that it's ending*".

The Impact of the Succeed Programme

In addition to feedback on the programme, Succeed participants were asked about what impact the programme had had on their choices and on their personal development.
Many commented on the fact that the programme had significantly improved their understanding of all aspects of University life and their perception of how they might fit in. One student said:

"*Just getting an intimate knowledge of university life, what a university actually looks like when you are here, and how everything functions. It is useful to point you in the right direction, at what to look for when looking at other potential universities in the future.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

The improvement in participants' confidence about making informed choices in the future was matched by an increase in students' confidence in their own abilities to succeed. It has been argued that students' self-efficacy and academic motivation can generally appear quite low as they progress through their education[11], but the students who participated in the Succeed Programme demonstrated clear development in their thinking about their academic and social abilities.

"*Before, you think of university and you think 'Oh, they are all geniuses.' [And now], It was like 'I could be one of them.'*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]
"*They make you feel really welcomed and included, so it's not hard to see yourself.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

Self-doubt about academic abilities is often compounded by students feeling that they would not 'fit in' in a university environment. The Succeed Programme clearly helped to reassure participants about this, whether as a result of the range and volume of information given, the experience of the residential or the example of the student ambassadors. One student said:

"*I will fit in more than what I thought I would before the Succeed Programme.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

Students also commented on the impact the programme had on their personal development as they progressed through the programme. Students commented:

"*In school, if I would be doing a presentation [...] my hands would shake, my legs would shake, my vision would go. [...] But here, I'm just more social, being able to talk to people and stuff. I've not really had that fear here.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

"*I feel like this experience has very much pushed me out of my comfort zone. I'm very much a shy person. I talk to people I know and that's about it. I've talked to people here that I probably wouldn't have talked to before. I wouldn't have approached anyone before, so it has given me that experience of what I'm going to do once I get here.*" [Succeed Participant, 2022]

There is evidence that students found the Succeed Programme to be a safe space for students to overcome their social anxiety and to increase their confidence before meeting new people at university. This was an aspect of the programme which many students commented upon:

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[11] Sander, P., and de la Fuenta, J. (2022) Modelling students' academic confidence, personality and academic emotions. *Current Psychology*, 41, 4329-4340.

"I wanted to get out of my comfort zone, and I thought the activities that we did really let that happen. Lots of people came out of their shell, […] and you could definitely see that throughout the week." [Succeed Participant, 2022]

[Is there anything you would do differently, as a result of taking part in Succeed?] "At the beginning, I wasn't very social and I have really bad anxiety. I think talking more and getting out of that shell faster." [Succeed Participant, 2022]

"I've been on other residentials and I didn't socialise whatsoever and then on the Succeed one, I was just, like, I feel comfortable, I feel alright to hang out with people and be myself." [Succeed Participant, 2022]

Students also commented on the inclusive and supportive environment created by the programme and the fact that they felt supported and well integrated into the group.

"You never really felt out of place. Everyone is always asking you if you're okay, if you need any more support. So, experiencing…being included is one of the things that has stood out." [Succeed Participant, 2022]

"Even if you don't feel like you fit in, there's probably always a place where you can and I think that's what's really good because university is made to seem really scary but I think everyone is in the same place." [Succeed Participant, 2022]

In the focus group interviews there was a clear sense that participants had developed a strong bond with their peers and that they planned to keep in contact and continue to support and reassure each other.

"Everyone was getting involved. It felt like how uni should feel. It felt like everyone was in there to do something and have fun. Everyone was giggling, everyone was playing music." [Succeed Participant, 2022]

"It really got everyone together, like, people we didn't even speak to, we were all communicating, talking, laughing." [Succeed Participant, 2022]

Most students found the programme a highly positive experience in which they felt involved and comfortable. Most felt that this reflected their perception of life within a university environment.

The results from the student focus groups demonstrated the development of students over the course of the Succeed Programme, with almost all students citing learning something about university, other post-Level 3 options or about *themselves* that they did not know prior to taking part in the programme.

Feedback from previous cohorts of Succeed Programme Students

All Succeed participants have been added to the HEAT database so that we can track them and determine whether they progressed to HE or nor. Since 2018/19 we have also added students who applied to the programme, but were either unsuccessful in getting a place or were offered a place and were unable to attend. This allows us to make comparisons between the different groups. Data from the HESA Track report is provided in Tables 1 and 2[12].

Number of students	Number of students who progressed to HE	Number of students 'continuing at HE provider' after first year
10	10	10

Table 1. HESA Track data for the 2017/18 Succeed cohort (students who took part in 3 or more activities, including the residential)

Group	Number of students	Number of students who progressed to HE
Succeed participants (attended campus visits and residential)	25	20
Successful at application, but did not attend full programme	45	15
Were not offered a place	90	50

Table 2. HESA Track data for the 2018/19 Succeed applicants. N.B. An additional 15 applicants have not been tracked.

Further progression, continuation and attainment data will become available in the coming years. It is important to remember that the students that have not yet progressed to university may still do so at a later date, so progression figures may change.

We were able to contact some past participants of the Succeed Programme in order to understand how

[12] As per HESA guidelines, counts of people are rounded to the nearest multiple of 5, and percentages are not published if they are fractions of a small group of people (under 22.5)

their involvement might have shaped their current university experience. Two students, one from the University of Kent and one from Canterbury Christ Church University, who both participated in Succeed 2018/19 and are now in the final year of their degrees, agreed to participate in a focus group interview.

When asked about what helped them to prepare for university, whether this was through research of their own or from information from school, one student commented:

> "*In the residential in Succeed, we had a finance board game. We had all the logistics and statistics of the finance part of uni. We did our own little budgeting and stuff like that.*" [Focus Group Participant, 2022]

The student considered that the finance information they were given during the programme had provided reassurance about the financial aspects of HE study and help with how to apply for loans. The board game mentioned, still forms part of the activities on the Succeed Programme.

Both students had also been made aware of the availability of scholarships and bursaries and had followed the advice given, with one of the students applying to the University of Kent stipend ambassador scheme. The students also talked about the knowledge they gained about other support services at University. One student said:

> "*We'd gone through wellbeing a lot, I think. Especially through Succeed. Then, I was actually diagnosed […] literally the week I started uni. […] That's when I found out about the additional services that I could access.*" [Focus Group Participant, 2022]

The students also commented that the programme had helped them to understand the importance of wellbeing, and although they were not fully aware of the processes to access this help, they were confident about using these services and had done so at their respective universities. When asked about how easy or difficult they have found accessing help services, one student said:

> "*I'm still going through the process but it's just hard finding the time to do meetings, basically. Just because my degree's very hands on right now. […] It's a bit tricky to fit it in but I think that's more me than them, just because I'm tight on time right now but yes.*" [Focus Group Participant, 2022]

The students were also asked about their experience of settling into university life, in terms of their academic studies but also in establishing friendships. It is important to bear in mind that this cohort of past participants completed their secondary schooling and entered university during the COVID-19 pandemic, and indicated that their experience was anything but 'normal.' One student said:

> "*First year, obviously, it was difficult because it was all [coronavirus]. I didn't speak to anyone. Then, I made my own course friends when I actually started going in because obviously we didn't have that during first year.*" [Focus Group Participant, 2022]

It is clear that this group of Succeed students had a more difficult time entering university due to the restrictions that the pandemic brought with it. This is not something that could have been foreseen within

the programme.

> "*I think my expectations went out the window as soon as COVID hit because I just knew it was all going to be online, which was frustrating.*" [Focus Group Participant, 2022]

Both students spoke about the transition to online learning at university and that it had an adverse effect on their motivation to study. Without a strict routine of face to face sessions and the lack of accountability provided by physical attendance at lectures and seminars on campus, both students felt a level of disengagement with their study.

Similar comments were made in the 2022 Succeed Participants focus groups, surrounding the feeling of disengagement during the Succeed sessions run online. One of the past participants worked on the online Succeed Programme in 2021/22 as a supporting ambassador and said:

> "*It was interesting. It didn't feel like we could really get involved that much but it was still interesting to see it online. I feel like they would have benefitted if it had been in-person but obviously you can't help COVID.*" [Focus Group Participant, 2022]

Both previous programme participants commented that the Succeed Programme had prepared them well for meeting new people at university and one cited "more confidence" as the biggest gain.

> "*I literally knew no one. I just had to be like, 'Look, get a grip. You need to make friends. You need to speak to these people.'*" [Focus Group Participant, 2022]
> "*I have definitely taken that into working on placement because you've got to make sure people know who you are. You've got to make sure that you're not seen as someone that hides in the corner when the emergency buzzer gets pulled. You've got to be there. So, yes. Definitely confidence and making people know that you're there.*" [Focus Group Participant, 2022]

The other student echoed gaining more confidence from Succeed, saying:

> "*I think before Succeed, I wasn't as confident, and now I'll be in a lecture hall, calling out stuff. […] They taught us so much about what uni life is and how you can get support.*" [Focus Group Participant, 2022]

These comments suggest that the increase in confidence noted by the 2022 participants (above) can continue after the end of the programme and is of benefit to students as they progress to university. The community built within the Succeed programme can also endure after the programme - students from the 2018/19 cohort still have a social media connection with each other, and routinely check-in with each other to see how they are getting on.

The former Succeed students noted that the programme had helped them to make informed decisions for their future and also allowed them to develop valuable skills. One of the past students now currently works

for the University of Kent ambassador scheme on a stipend ambassador scholarship, and worked on the 2022 Succeed Programme. They highlighted how their experience has come full circle – participating in the last in-person Succeed Programme before COVID and working on the first in-person programme following the pandemic. This student also spoke of wanting to support the Year 12 students on the programme by sharing their own experiences – something which the 2022 participants confirmed was helpful.

Parent/Supporter Feedback

As part of the evaluation of the Succeed Programme, parents and supporters were asked for their feedback on their young person's experience. They were also asked about their own level of confidence in their ability to discuss post-level 3 options with them. The number of responses was small (n = 7) which makes it difficult to draw general conclusions. However there were some interesting comments in the responses and these provide a limited insight into the views of parents.

All but one of the respondents spoke of how, since the Succeed Programme had started, they have spoken with their young person about plans for their future after finishing school. Many of these responses included speaking to them about university, but one also highlighted how their young person wanted to start an apprenticeship scheme.

Parents/supporters were asked, "*Do you think taking part in Succeed has had an impact on your young person*?" which produced a variety of positive responses. One parent said, "*they have taken to Kent well and may study there*", with another saying "*I think it may have alleviated some of her worries about going to university.*" It is promising to see parents and supporters engaging in conversation with their young person as it implies that this communication is demystifying Higher Education for both the young person and their parent/supporter. Five of the respondents selected 'Definitely Apply' when asked how likely their young person was to go into Higher Education in the future. This can be taken as an indication that they have discussed this with their young person.

The question asking, "*As a result of my young person taking part in Succeed, I feel better informed about Higher Education/University*" generated some interesting responses. All seven respondents selected either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' to this question, and in their explanation one person stated they received "*very informative emails explaining what is being done.*" It should be noted that only three of the respondents has specified that they were educated to degree level and therefore it is likely that many would not have had relevant experience and knowledge of HE to share with their young person. (NB 63% of Succeed participants indicated that they were First Generation HE).

Parents and supporters were asked about any additional information they would have like to have received. One response asked for more information about the health support available to their young person at university. Studies have shown that for many students, their health and wellbeing (particularly with mental health) can impact on their decision to enter Higher Education if they are not fully aware of

specific support that might be available to them.[13] This is echoed by the student feedback, as some students highlighted their medical history and expressed that it would be a barrier to them applying/enrolling to university.

Recommendations

- Online sessions were considered to be inclusive as all students could access them from home. However students felt that they were hard to engage fully with. The Saturday sessions were sometimes seen as rather long, particularly when sessions were not very interactive. One possibility would be to make the online sessions optional so that students could choose whether to attend and to include the most important elements of these sessions in the Saturday face-to-face events. Reducing the number of session is this way might have an impact on retention and engagement.

- Students indicated that they would like to know more about other Higher Education institutions, not just the University of Kent. They felt this would help them with their decision making. Visiting another campus as part of the residential could help them make comparisons (something which was included for the 2018/2019 cohort). This would take up a full day of the residential and the benefits would need to be balanced with the impact that this would have on other elements of the residential. If this were not possible, the residential could include a classroom based session giving students the opportunity to research the courses other universities can offer.

- Students indicated a desire for more time to themselves during the residential. The programme was very full and did not give students much time to relax in their corridor groups or to interact informally with ambassadors and fellow participants. Introducing more breaks would be in the interests of both the students and the delivery team to allow for greater rest time following or before activities. This could improve student engagement in residential activities amongst students. Students also wanted more time to relax in the evenings – this should be reviewed going forward.

- As many of the students were still unsure of the course they wanted to study, several suggested that the Succeed Programme could have more subject-focused sessions for students to get a more in-depth understanding of what certain courses offer. It is difficult to include information about all the courses available to students (although attendance at the Kent Open Day can support this), there should be an opportunity within the programme for students to research more about the courses that interest them.

- A list of further resources could be included in the delivery of information to the students about their post-Level 3 options.

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[13] Watkins, D.C., Hunt, J.B., and Eisenberg, D. (2011) Increased demand for mental health services on college campuses: Perspectives from administrators, *Qualitative Social Work*, 11(3) 319-337.

- The maximum number of students accepted onto the Succeed Programme is 60. This is due to staffing and resource constraints. In 21-22 a total of 103 applications were received and as knowledge of the programme has grown across Kent and Medway, application numbers have been rising. This provides the opportunity to create a comparator group of students who have been rejected from the programme, to track their educational journey. This would provide useful insights into the comparative effectiveness of the Succeed Programme (if the characteristics of the students could be aligned appropriately).

Conclusions

The Succeed Programme aims to help Level 3 students make informed decisions about their future. The results of the evaluation of the 2022 Succeed Programme demonstrates that the programme provides students with the information and skills they need to undertake their own continuing research and information gathering about their future choices, whether they intend to enter Higher Education or choose a different route.

At the end of the programme, participants considered that they were better prepared to make decisions and indicated a real development in personal skills and confidence. This is an encouraging and positive outcome.

It should be noted, that all cohorts vary and evaluation of subsequent iterations of the programme should be continued before final conclusions can be drawn about its lasting impact. As the data on progression is necessarily limited (due to the delay between the programme taking place and the publication of the relevant HESA track report), more time is also required to review the success of the programme in terms of participants progressing to higher education.

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