



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

# IntoUniversity

Thank you for helping  
to inspire children  
in inner-city Leeds



2020/21

# ▶ Thank you for supporting education during the global pandemic

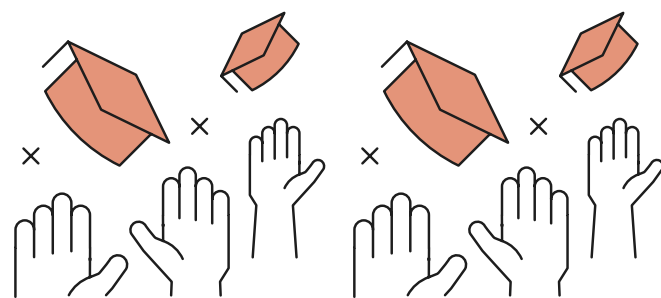
The partnership between the University of Leeds and national educational charity IntoUniversity, made possible thanks to your support, is changing lives in two of the most deprived areas of inner-city Leeds.

Young people in these areas face a considerable educational disadvantage as statistically they do far less well at school and they are less likely to go to university. But with your help, IntoUniversity is changing this. At learning centres in Harehills and Beeston, IntoUniversity staff work directly with young people, providing sustained and continuous support from primary school to A-Level. Our aim is to inspire those from disadvantaged backgrounds to believe they can aspire to a place at university.

2020/21 has been an exceptional year for IntoUniversity as they have responded to the ongoing challenges of Covid-19 and sought to mitigate its disproportionate impact on students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. IntoUniversity has worked tirelessly to support students in navigating this difficult time. Through the agility, dedication and innovation of IntoUniversity staff, the centres have continued to provide a blend of high-quality virtual and in-person sessions which is crucial for these students.

The many years of collaboration between IntoUniversity and the University of Leeds, which is all possible thanks to your support, has played a key role in enabling effective and transformative learning opportunities for these students during this unprecedented year. Together, thanks to your support, we are raising young people's chances of progressing to university and achieving their full potential.

**On behalf of the children and young people in Leeds who benefit from this partnership, thank you.**



**2,894**

students worked with in total during 2020/21

**9,327**

students worked with in the seven years of IntoUniversity in Leeds

## Students' progression rates to Higher Education

**48%**

Leeds East IntoUniversity Centre

**23%**

Local average

**60%**

Leeds South IntoUniversity Centre

**12%**

Local average



**14**

IntoUniversity students started at the University of Leeds in autumn 2021



**90**

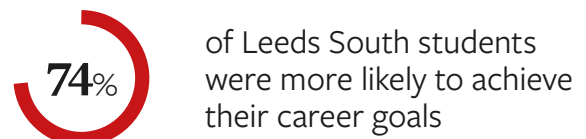
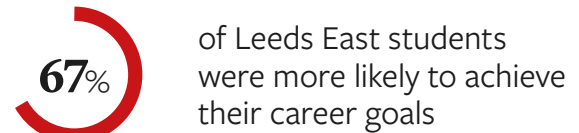
students have started overall at the University of Leeds since the partnership began in 2014

# ► IntoUniversity student responses to the end-of-year survey

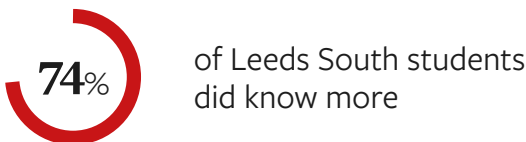
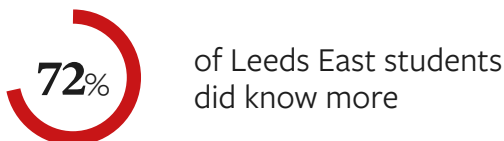
As a result of attending IntoUniversity are you more likely to go to university?



As a result of attending IntoUniversity are you more likely to achieve your career goals?



As a result of attending IntoUniversity do you know more about university?



As a result of attending IntoUniversity has your confidence improved?



As a result of attending the Academic Support sessions at IntoUniversity have your school marks or exam grades improved?



“ The best thing about IntoUniversity is the very welcoming atmosphere; everyone is helpful and caring. It doesn't matter who you are, IntoUniversity makes people feel like they are at home. I feel like it builds my confidence as well as my children's. I see my kids happy and I feel happy; it makes a big impact on my day-to-day life. Not only have my children received help, but I have also felt supported by IntoUniversity throughout the pandemic – in every aspect we get more help than expected. ”

**Parent of a child who attends IntoUniversity in Leeds**

# ► Academic Support



## IntoUniversity staff provide sessions of structured academic study after school.

The sessions raise attainment, encourage young people to become active, independent learners and help them to develop effective study skills.

In August 2020 **IntoUniversity** staff returned to the centres after four months of closure. Risk assessments were completed to ensure that the centres could reopen safely at the start of the new academic year and capacity was limited to just 15 students per session. **IntoUniversity** staff had the difficult task of triaging and prioritising children to ensure support was given to those most in need – taking into account safeguarding, vulnerability, access to devices and exam year groups.

In October 2020, Academic Support was live streamed as a pilot to assist those not able to access the in-person provision. It was also crucial for the team to develop a virtual system to support all students through any further lockdowns. In January 2021, this was put into action as centres closed once more due to restrictions being tightened.

In April 2021 in-person Academic Support resumed with numbers still limited to 15 students per session. Virtual sessions continued to provide additional support to students unable to access the in-person sessions.

Throughout the 2020/21 academic year a lot of the programme's core aims have been delivered online and sessions have been adjusted to meet these objectives. For example, the Future Readiness sessions introduced students to topical issues focused on diversity and inclusion. After learning about key concepts, students were tasked with creating a podcast celebrating the life of an LGBTQ+ figure, which developed their independent research skills online.

# 359

students engaged with Academic Support

# 70%

of **IntoUniversity** Leeds East students reported improved school grades as a result of Academic Support

# 80%

of **IntoUniversity** Leeds South students reported that they were working better at school as a result of Academic Support



“ My school work and grades have improved since coming to **IntoUniversity** – I used to hand in homework late, but now I am achieving almost full marks. I hope for a bright future and I am motivated to achieve this by working on my Maths and English skills at **IntoUniversity**. ”

**A Year 6 student**  
**IntoUniversity Leeds East**

# ▶ Primary FOCUS



**Primary FOCUS is a structured programme which supports and enhances the National Curriculum. It enables an entire primary school class to think about their future education and the world of work.**

The centres in Leeds responded to the needs of local schools and provided sessions in different formats including live virtual sessions for students at home or in the classroom, recorded content with follow-up resources, or a blended approach.

#### Programme highlights this year included:

- Immersive, virtual tours of the University of Leeds which brought Higher Education to life.
- Undergraduates at Leeds dialled in to answer questions and share insights about student life.
- Graduation ceremonies were adapted to bring a sense of occasion to a virtual format and students presented their future ambitions to their peers, complete with home-made mortar boards.

“ We were absolutely blown away by the virtual FOCUS Week. The resources were so well-adapted to suit the virtual setting. Considering we were in lockdown, with the majority of the students working from home, it’s so fantastic that we were able to work with **IntoUniversity** at all. It was great to still have the variety of activities and topics every day to maintain their engagement. The students still talk about it and ask about **IntoUniversity**; they’ll remember it forever. ”

**Year 6 teacher at a partner primary school**

## Primary FOCUS Impact



# 1,718

students engaged with the Primary FOCUS programme



# 78%

 of **IntoUniversity** Leeds East students reported that they knew more about university as a result of Primary FOCUS

# ▶ Lower Secondary FOCUS

The Lower Secondary FOCUS programme for Years 7-11 provides a series of workshops and trips to support students' learning and increase their knowledge of Higher Education, career opportunities and educational pathways.

The Leeds centres provided sessions in a variety of formats including live virtual sessions for students at home or in the classroom, recorded content with follow-up resources, or a blended approach. In addition, students were able to access an after-school 'Spotlight Series' designed in response to identified Learning Recovery outcomes.

#### Programme highlights this year included:

- Year 7 and 8 students attended a new 'Is University for Me?' webinar, during which staff shared their experiences of Higher Education. This supported students to look at their long-term ambitions at a time when the future was uncertain.
- Virtual mock interviews allowed older students to learn about, and gain feedback on, how to conduct themselves professionally during a live video call interview.
- Goal-setting templates and next-step journals were included in resource packs, available in both physical and electronic format, for students to refer to during and after virtual workshops.
- A newly-created 'Finding Motivation' workshop provided students with the tools to prioritise their wellbeing when learning during unprecedented times. Students created personalised coping calendars to ensure they incorporated a daily wellbeing activity into their routines.

## Lower Secondary FOCUS Impact



# 868

students engaged with the Lower Secondary FOCUS programme



# 70%

 of IntoUniversity Leeds South students reported that they knew more about university as a result of Lower Secondary FOCUS

“Over the course of this last year, the move to online learning has presented many challenges and obstacles to learning. I cannot thank **IntoUniversity** enough for their continued effort in accommodating our changes. Our students have been lucky enough to still take part in a full programme of **IntoUniversity** workshops. These online, interactive workshops have encouraged students to think about their futures, taking into account labour market changes arising from Covid-19, and have pushed our students to put their futures at the forefront.

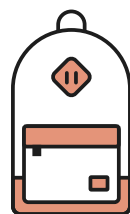
At a time when the message to 'keep going' is so needed, **IntoUniversity** has truly delivered. Each Secondary FOCUS workshop has seen an increased 'buzz' around careers, with the level of engagement from pupils being so brilliant. We are very grateful to **IntoUniversity** for their time and continued support of our pupils.”

**A Year 8 teacher at a partner secondary school**

# ▶ Upper Secondary **FOCUS**



## Upper Secondary FOCUS Impact



# 207

students took part in Upper Secondary FOCUS

**Aimed at students in Years 12 and 13, the programme focuses on independent learning skills, support with CV writing, interview skills, UCAS and personal statement support, and the transition to university or another chosen pathway.**

The centres in Leeds provided content through live virtual sessions for students at home or in the classroom, recorded content with follow-up resources, or a blended approach. Enrichment opportunities pivoted online and all sessions were structured to ensure that the programme's main aims were achieved.

### Programme highlights included:

- Year 12 students accessed supplementary webinars which explored how to connect to prospective universities. A 'Finding the Right University' webinar helped students choose which university was right for them, during a time when campus visits were limited.

- During a 'What is University Like Right Now?' webinar, students explored how universities have employed a blended approach to teaching and learning. Students heard from current undergraduates about their experience of university life during Covid-19, giving them an understanding of what to expect.
- **Into**University utilised its extensive network of corporate partners to provide high-quality, virtual enrichment opportunities to students. For example, a financial services firm ran a virtual 'Hackathon', which developed students' coding skills and exposed them to a professional setting at a time when work experience opportunities were limited.
- Enrichment events were moved online removing geographical barriers and allowing **Into**University students from across the network to meet professionals from a variety of sectors. For example, two London-based fashion designers shared their entrepreneurial journey as part of the 'Sowing the Seeds in Fashion' online session.

“ The enrichment opportunities that I took part in were amazing and I would not have had these without **Into**University, for example the opportunity to do a paid internship as part of the Big City Bright Future programme. I know that the connections I made at the firm will help me in the future. Big City Bright Future really could be the first rung on the career ladder. The online experience was great and involved a lot of group projects. We had our own buddy and we had coffee chats with everyone at the company from Personal Assistants to Vice Presidents. ”

**A Year 13 student sharing their experience of participating in online enrichment events with IntoUniversity**



# ► Mentoring and the Buddy Programme



The Mentoring programme, available to Years 6-13, matches IntoUniversity students with undergraduate volunteers who can act as positive role models, providing them with the opportunity to develop their social skills, explore future options and improve academic attainment.

The Buddy programme, available to Year 8 students, pairs young people with university student volunteers over two days. Students participate in subject-based workshops, before spending a day at a university. The programme aims to enhance students' understanding of university life and different approaches to learning.

## Mentoring pair, Samia and Weronika, share their experience of mentoring.

**Samia (Mentee):** "My favourite part about mentoring is the video calls I have with my mentor Weronika. In each video call we complete 5-10 minutes of reading to improve my confidence as I am nervous about reading out loud. We also complete mini-debate activities where we plan both sides of a topic, allocate roles and practise debating together. The feedback I have received from Weronika has really taught me how to understand both sides of an argument. Through the Mentoring programme I have discovered that I am very interested in art and photography and for the 'Inclusivity in the Arts' event we presented our Khadija Saye inspired photography project which we enjoyed working together on so much."

## The impact of mentoring

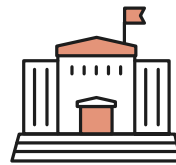


# 191

students engaged with the Buddy programme



# 97%

 of IntoUniversity Leeds East mentees reported increased knowledge of their future options as a result of the Mentoring programme

# 94%

 of IntoUniversity Leeds South students reported that they knew more about university as a result of the Buddy programme

**Weronika (Mentor):** "I wanted to volunteer with IntoUniversity to show children the world of unlimited possibilities and give them support and courage in pursuing their dreams. Mentoring meetings with Samia allow me to look at the world from a completely different perspective. I am able to challenge myself by preparing materials for the meetings, sharing ideas and giving advice. I have definitely gained interpersonal skills and become more open-minded. The 'Inclusivity in the Arts' event sparked Samia's interest in photography. Throughout the event we explored our own identity, our traditions and what makes us happy.

I have enjoyed observing a constant improvement in Samia's communication skills, particularly her confidence in speeches and reading.

**The responsibility I undertake as a mentor has made me feel that I am a part of the local community."**



# ► Further Programmes

A series of programmes for secondary school students brings an additional dimension to the work of IntoUniversity. Some face-to-face activities were able to continue, some were delivered in a blended way, but many were run as virtual programmes this year.

## 218

students took part in the **Extending Horizons** and **Holiday FOCUS** programmes, introducing students to different careers, future pathways and degree subjects. For example, the 'Computer Science' Holiday FOCUS programme introduced Primary Academic Support students to coding and programming languages. Students applied their learning of the binary coding system to create name bracelets, and demonstrated their understanding of algorithms by programming instructions to navigate their way through an online maze.

## 50

students took part in the **Careers in FOCUS** programme which aimed to introduce students to different career possibilities. These sessions, all held online, offered highly-specialised, after-school sessions to students, allowing them to choose workshops that were most relevant to their future goals. Students met professionals from a variety of industries from healthcare to law, at a time when access to school careers advisors was limited.

## 60

students took part in a **Business in FOCUS** programme – some sessions were held in-person and some were online. Each one-day event was designed to promote skills in leadership and teamwork, and was facilitated by a team of corporate volunteers. In one of these sessions, students from across the country met City-based financial professionals during the 'Investment Banking' virtual Business in FOCUS. In the simulation, students worked together to trade stocks, whilst reacting to market pressures.



“ I did the 'Careers in Medicine and Healthcare' webinar as I would like to study Forensic Science at university. There was a volunteer who spoke about their pathway into the field and it has really helped me think about my own journey and future career. I also enjoyed the Business in FOCUS workshop that was held online. I was the Marketing Manager and liked that there was lots of teamwork and everyone was contributing. The volunteers also gave us amazing advice on our project. ”

**A Year 11 student  
IntoUniversity Leeds South**



# ► Impact of Covid-19

## The students that IntoUniversity works with have been among those most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A government report warned that, 'learning loss among poorer primary school pupils as a result of the pandemic has undone as much as two thirds of the progress made over the last 10 years in closing the disadvantage gap.' By autumn 2020, students from disadvantaged backgrounds were 7 months behind their more well-off peers (Department for Education, 2021).

In a survey of 2,438 young people aged 13-25 carried out by a national youth mental health charity in 2021, 67% believed that the pandemic will have a long-term negative effect on their mental health (Young Minds, 2021).



## Learning recovery

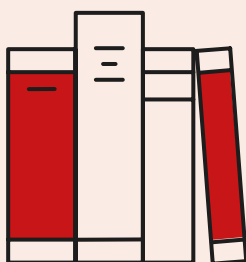
IntoUniversity is implementing a three-year strategy to coordinate their response to the pandemic. The Learning Recovery strategy focuses on supporting young people in three key areas allowing them to re-engage and flourish in a post-Covid world. These key areas are:

- Impact on attainment gap
- Impact on student social skills
- Impact on young people's wellbeing

Centre teams in Leeds found that the negative impacts of the pandemic on young people were varied and highly individual. Staff teams assessed and then responded to the wellbeing, social skills and academic needs of each young person attending Academic Support. For example, wellbeing packs were provided to students transitioning to secondary school, all Holiday FOCUS provision incorporated wellbeing activities, and new workshops, including a 'Finding Motivation' workshop were created.

All student facing staff received trauma-informed facilitation training before returning to work with young people face-to-face. This focused on the psychological impact that lockdowns, school closures and the incumbent uncertainties of the pandemic have had on young people's wellbeing and their ability to learn. Staff explored strategies including self-calming techniques such as mindfulness, grounding and positive memories. During the year, staff continued to focus on the IntoUniversity principles of positive behaviour management and effective communication techniques.

# ► Impact of Covid-19 continued...

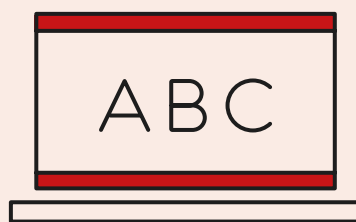


## IntoUniversity Reading Society

Ofsted reported that young people's reading stamina decreased during school closures. In response, **IntoUniversity** devised and piloted a new initiative: The **IntoUniversity Reading Society**. This newly-designed programme, developed by Laura McGregor, Centre Leader at Leeds East, aims to support young people to develop a love of reading, and enable them to engage enthusiastically in discussions about books, build on the ideas of others and challenge views respectfully.

The Reading Society Team devised online training and inductions for volunteers and created high-quality session plans and activity ideas to aid meetings. Volunteers created engaging profiles about their favourite books to share their love of reading. They were then matched either with primary students for one-to-one reading support, or with small groups of secondary students in book clubs. As well as receiving reading support, students have been given the books to keep, building a legacy of reading in their homes.

10 students from the Leeds centres took part in the Reading Society pilot last year. Going forward, both Leeds centres will continue to run the programme this year as the programmes moves into its second phase of development.



## IntoUniversity Laptop Project

The digital divide between disadvantaged and better-off households has been widely reported in the press. In January 2021, centre teams assessed the technology needs of all Academic Support students and it became clear that there was a wide variation in access to suitable technology, creating an additional learning barrier that would widen the gaps experienced by those who already face the most challenges.

Nationally, **IntoUniversity** responded by creating a month-long, specific fundraising campaign to raise £150,000. This enabled them to provide technology where it was needed most. As a result, **IntoUniversity** gifted 500 Chromebooks to families across the country, and 57 of these went to families in Leeds. This ensured that young people could feel reassured that they would be able to carry on learning during the uncertainty of lockdowns and isolations.

# ▶ Case study: **Samantha**

## Year 9, **IntoUniversity** Leeds East

**Samantha started attending Primary Academic Support at IntoUniversity Leeds East in 2016 when she was in Year 5, after hearing about the centre through family friends.**

When Samantha first started coming to **IntoUniversity** she was quite shy, but by making friends with other students, her confidence has grown significantly. By participating in a variety of additional programmes, including Primary FOCUS

and mentoring sessions with her University of Leeds student mentor, Samantha has been exposed to a range of different experiences. Samantha has matured into a student who has clear aspirations and is determined to make them a reality. She is an ambitious and self-motivated student, who always strives to be the best version of herself, both academically and personally. During the lockdowns, Samantha has continued to engage with **IntoUniversity** virtually, benefiting from online Academic Support sessions and e-mentoring meetings.

### ▶ **What do you hope to achieve by coming to IntoUniversity?**

“I have learnt more about the different levels of degrees, such as undergraduate, Masters and PhD. Going to university is a goal of mine because it would be great to be part of different societies and to learn things to help me secure a job. I come back to **IntoUniversity** each year to expand my learning and to find out what opportunities are out there. Virtual Academic Support allowed me to engage with others. I didn't want to be bored at home whilst school was closed.”

### ▶ **How has IntoUniversity helped you?**

“**IntoUniversity** has broadened my understanding of university. Through participating in Future Readiness projects I have learnt more about the LGBTQ+ community and the Black Lives Matter movement. I have developed my creativity and resilience as I have always kept going with projects. The Mentoring programme has supported me, especially with my English and Maths. It has helped improve my grades – I have achieved grade 9s in a range of subjects. Staff make sure I have the resources I need both in the centre and throughout the lockdown. I enjoy being part of the **IntoUniversity** Leeds East community. It is nice coming to Academic Support and knowing you belong somewhere.”

### ▶ **Which IntoUniversity programme did you find most beneficial and why?**

“I think the Holiday FOCUS programme which focused on women in STEM. I found it beneficial because it was great to learn about empowering women and about STEM and how other careers link together. Science interests me because it is one of the GCSEs and A-Levels I will need to become a doctor – to be a General Practitioner is my career aspiration.”

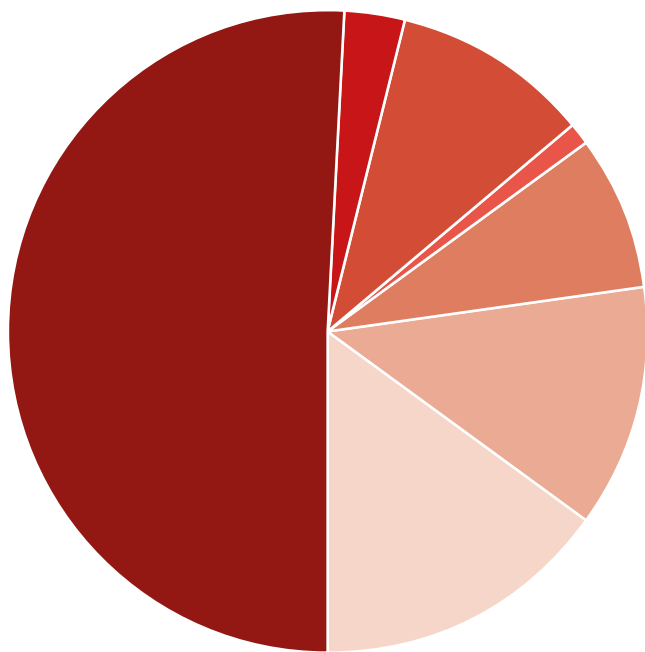
### ▶ **How has IntoUniversity supported you to think about your future?**

“**IntoUniversity** has supported me by running Careers in FOCUS weeks so students can hear about different careers. I took part in a ‘Careers in Medicine/Healthcare’ webinar, and I also attended a ‘Careers in Art’ webinar, where we heard from a producer talking about different degrees. I also expanded my knowledge of university through university trips.”

### ▶ **How did you find returning to school in September after lockdown?**

“Coming back to school was alright because I was excited and I wasn't that anxious. **IntoUniversity** supported me by being welcoming and checking if I was alright. Staff would see if my workload was alright and if it was too much, they would help me with it. I received a call from **IntoUniversity** once a week which was good. It was nice they were checking on my wellbeing and checking I was being proactive.”

# ► Destinations of IntoUniversity Leeds 2021 School Leavers



- 51%** University
- 3%** Gap year – deferred entry
- 10%** Gap year – applying for university
- 1%** Foundation course
- 8%** Apprenticeship
- 12%** Employment
- 15%** Other outcome

## ► Thank You

Thank you so much for your incredible support during another difficult year. **IntoUniversity** students are keen, enthusiastic and determined but their lives have been affected by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Thanks to your support, **IntoUniversity** has been able to ensure that they stay on track during this difficult time. Your generosity is empowering these much in-demand centres to flourish and to continue to provide a place where aspiration, learning and fun go hand in hand.

**By supporting the University of Leeds' partnership with IntoUniversity you are helping young people to see learning as their key to a brighter future.**



