Weston College and University Centre and WIN
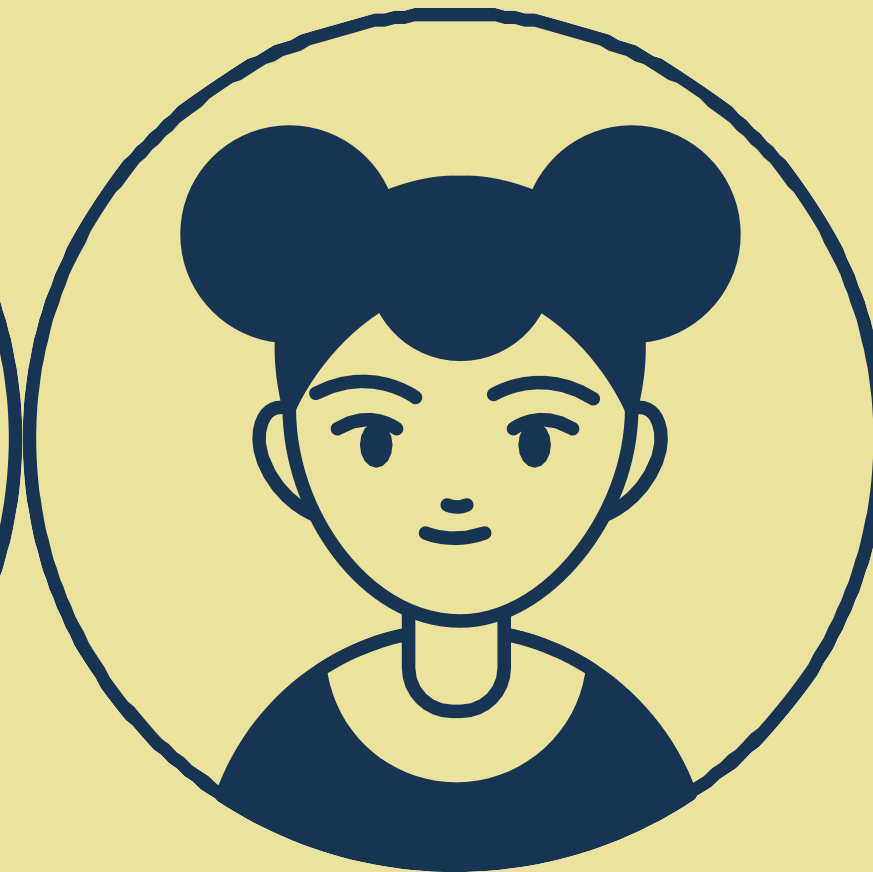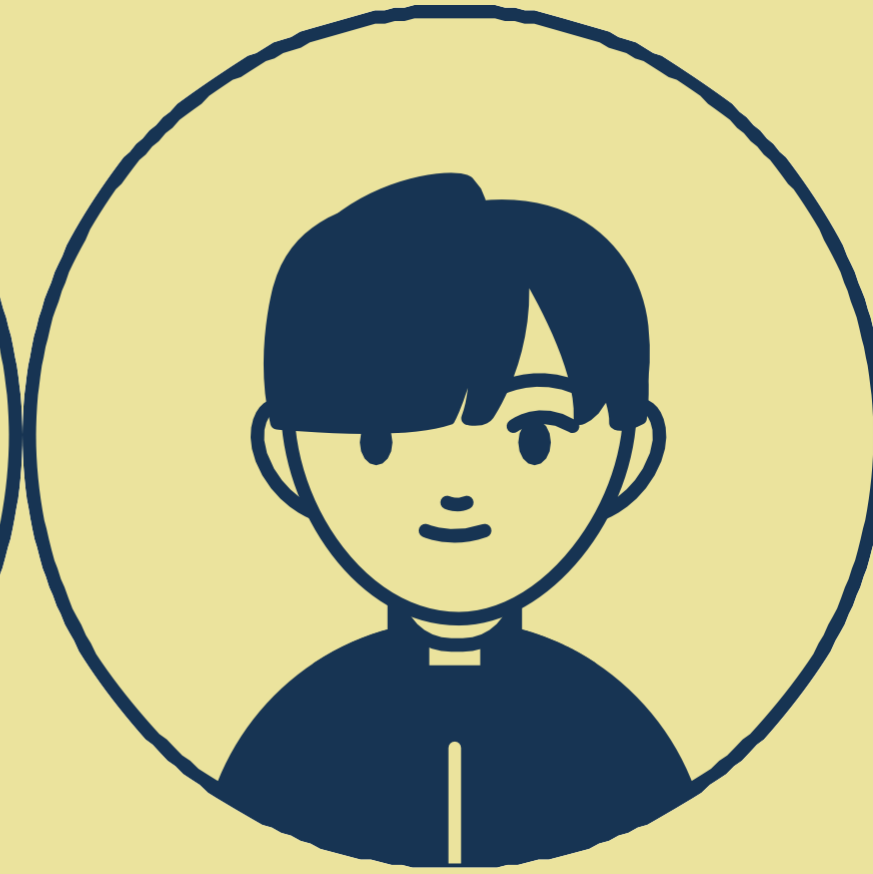
A-Level Mentoring Pilot Scheme

Ben Anderson & Natalie Blight

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What we will cover

- Challenges of delivery during COVID

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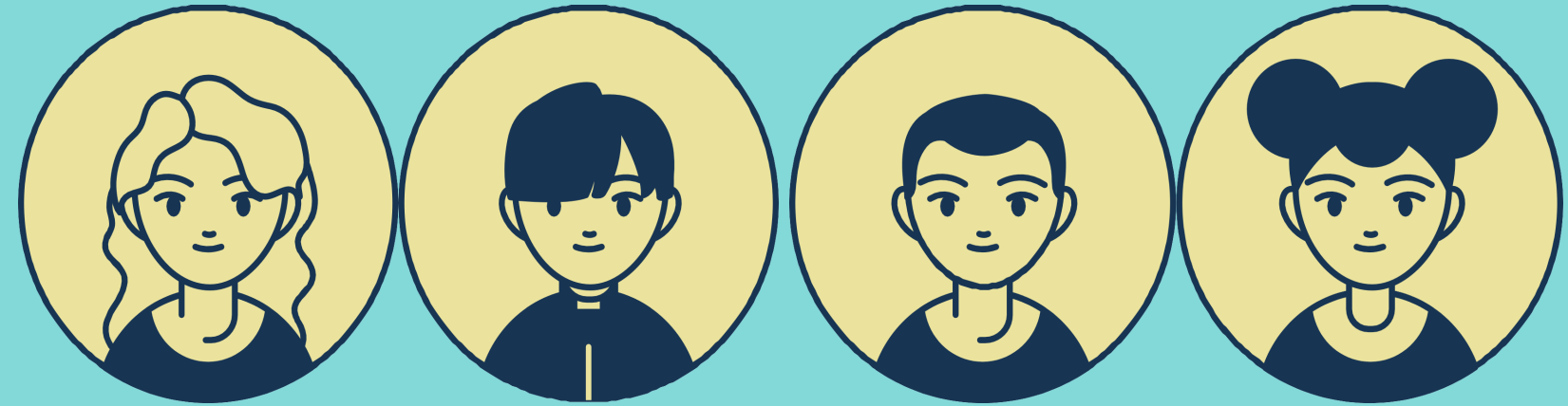
- The Project Idea

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- Key Outcomes

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- Why we think it worked

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- Recommendations

Context

Weston College

Weston is a large college that offers a diverse range of course's including A-Levels, T-Levels and BTEC's. It has 5 campus's across the Weston area.

52% of Weston College learners are from PQ1 or 2.

The WIN

Have been working in the college for 4 years. Running:

- 1:1's
- Tutorials
- Large scale Events and Trips
- Workshops
- Projects

Covid 19
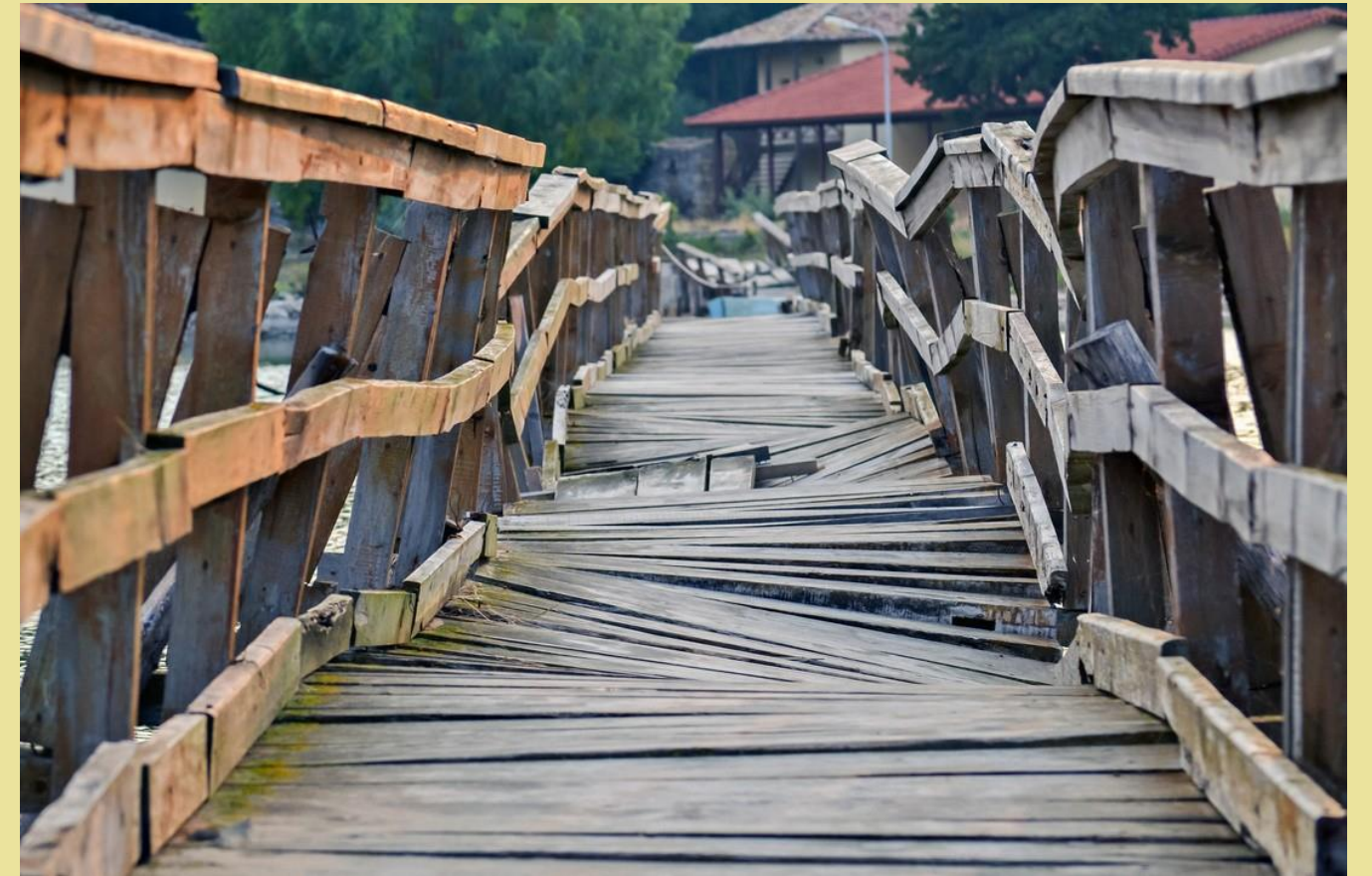
Weston switched to a digital/remote delivery model.

Teaching staff and learning technologists were keen to experiment to find the best ways to educate the students during this time.

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The Aim

Ensure that the young people we target are receiving high quality and appropriate HE advice and guidance.

Objectives:

- To create a WP intervention that our targeted care experienced young people will engage with.

- To provide role models for the young people.

- To provide young people with the information required to choose and then thrive within HE.

- To help build the study skills required to gain access to and thrive within HE.

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Theory of Change

What is the issue or problem our activity is designed to solve?	How does our activity solve the issue or problem?	What are the 'active ingredients' that make this happen?	What do we need to measure to prove this is happening?	How do we measure this?
Concerns about getting the required grades.	If learners receive more help and feedback on their work the quality of their work will improve, and they will get better grades.	Opportunity to learn subject knowledge from mentees. Greater engagement with learning.	Improvement in quality of academic work – assessments/course work. Greater engagement with learning.	Predicted/actual grades. Tutor feedback. Attendance/ learning analytics.
Lack of knowledge about life at university.	If learners can talk to current undergraduates, they will learn more about life at university and feel more confident about this as an option for them.	Discussions between mentor and mentee. Giving the learners insight of HE experiences via the mentors. Relationship between mentor and mentee.	Increased knowledge of university life.	Ask mentee before and after. Participant survey. Focus group.
Not prepared for study at HE Level.	If learners get feedback on their work from undergraduates, they will be more prepared for study at HE level.	Feedback from mentors. Mentees understand the importance of these skills for success at HE level.	More prepared for HE study. Improved study skills – problem solving/ group work/ research and referencing.	Tutor feedback. Student feedback.
Drop in UCAS applications from A level students at Weston College.	If learners are aware of the benefits of university degree and university experience, then they are more likely to apply.	Removal of barriers to progression. Feeling that HE is the right option for them.	Applications.	Application statistics.
Some learners are unsure about what to do next.	If learners have the opportunity to discuss their options with someone of similar age and background, then they will be able to make a decision about the future career path.	More informed about HE. Help with decision making.	Change in intentions. Reduction in 'Don't knows'.	Participant survey. Student feedback. Destination data.

What constraints or limitations that we need to consider?

Commitment of mentors and mentees, relationship between mentors and mentees.

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Evaluation

Pre-evaluation

Surveys for key audiences:

- Mentors
- Mentee's
- Elected known staff

Mid-point
(same audiences)

- Surveys
- Focus groups

End point
(same audiences)

- Surveys
- Focus groups
- HEAT Data analysed
- Learner destinations analysed

NERUPI Framework

KNOW – develop students' knowledge and awareness of the benefits of HE

Enable learners to explore academic, social, economic, and personal benefits of progressing to HE

CHOOSE – develop students' capacity to make informed choices.

Enable learners to explore differences between HE institutions and study opportunities.

BECOME – develop students' confidence and resilience to negotiate the challenges of university life.

Enable learners to increase confidence in their capacity to progress to HE

PRACTISE – Develop students' study skills.

Enable learners to develop study skills and enhance their academic skills.

UNDERSTAND – develop students understanding and subject knowledge and supporting attainment raising.

Enable learners to broaden their understanding of subject knowledge.

Virtual Mentoring

12 Week programme for year 12 and 13 pupils.

Universities provided Student Ambassadors to act as virtual mentors for young people.

Session were hosted on a monitored internal school/college system (TEAMS)

A total of 527.75 contact hours were delivered over 312 sessions, involving 87 mentees and 14 mentors.

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Partnerships

Bournemouth University

FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Mentoring sessions aimed to provide

 HE Information

 Role Models

 Academic Study Skills
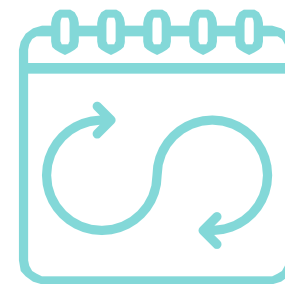
 Flexible, versatile and person-centred approach.

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Mentee

Sign up/selected by school

Applicants will complete a short survey (with support) to create a profile to be matched with an appropriate mentor.

Matching criteria includes subject interest and personal experiences.

12 weeks of mentoring

Mentor and Mentee will meet weekly for 30 mins to 1 hr.

Core themes to be covered but they can choose how this is delivered.

Review and referral (ongoing)

Mentor and Mentee will have an allocated known member of staff from their own institution.

They are to meet every 3 weeks and feed into evaluation of the project.

Mentors
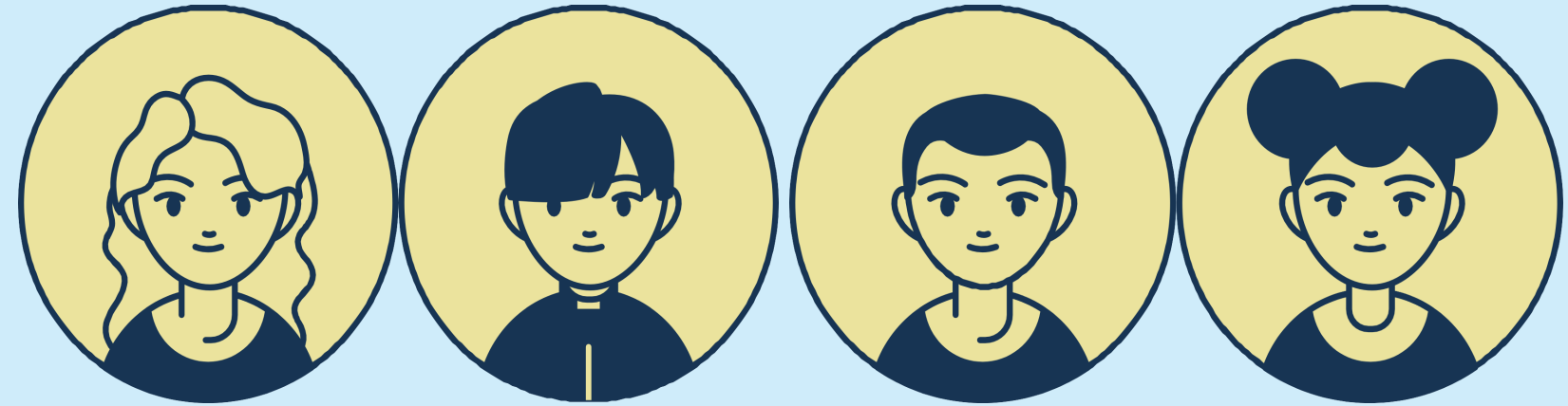
Interview and training

Interviews - Profiles to be built from these and appropriate mentors selected.

Training - topics will include; safeguarding and mentoring. A Teams page for training was set up so on-going dialogue could continue after the sessions.

On-going Support

Monthly meeting with project lead and quarterly team meeting for mentor team.

Opportunity for reflective practice and to discuss success's and challenges of mentoring.

Review and referral (ongoing)

Mentor and Mentee will have allocated a known member of staff from their own institution.

They are to meet every 3 weeks and feed into evaluation of the project.

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Key Outcomes

Learners felt more confident about progression to HE because of mentoring.

Learners felt that mentoring had improved the quality of their work. This was validated by their improved grades.

Compared with traditional methods on-line mentoring provided more accessible mentoring, enabling learners to meet with ambassadors from a variety of HE Institutions.

Participants learnt more about the social aspects of university life.

Delivery of the mentoring scheme offered a learner-led and versatile approach to addressing GATSBY Benchmarks 3, 4, and 7.

Benefits of the mentoring scheme extended beyond the learners.

Key Outcomes

64% of learners that received subject-specific mentoring saw an increase in their end grade.

Survey responses found that knowledge, awareness and confidence in progressing to HE had all increased after mentoring.

Improved quality of work, study skills, and overall confidence in progression were the most significant takeaways for learners.

21 of the 51 second-year mentees have confirmed places to study at HE level.

Why we feel it worked

1. We provided a versatile environment where people knowledge, skills and experience could be passed on.

2. We provided a diverse range of mentors allow us to match the majority of learners by subject interests.

3. We provided mentors that were close in age and had recently gone through similar experiences i.e., exams, course work, applying to University and for Student finance etc.

4. We gave the mentor and mentee autonomy to create a relationship that worked for them.

5. We were able to remove some of the barriers of physical mentoring scheme i.e geography, appropriate spaces for sessions etc.

6. We were able to track learners engagement via TEAMS.

Recommendations

1. Investigate how the programme could be extended to other schools and colleges within the WIN partnership.

2. Offer two waves of intervention to best suit the timetable of Year 12 (L3Y1) and Year 13 (L3Y2) students.
   a. October to December – Open to year 13 in preparation for HE applications.
   b. February to May – Open to year 12 and year 13 in preparation for progression decisions.

3. Ensure that mentors and tutors have a clearer definition of the mentoring programme. i.e., Mentoring Expectations (pre-agreed working hours per week) and Mentoring Good Practice document would also be beneficial.

4. College tutors and HEI mentor should meet on a regular basis, ideally meeting fortnightly (minimum of 20 mins virtual 1:1).

5. All Teams pages to be set up by learning technologist to ensure consistency and allow better use of Microsoft Insights to reduce the admin burden.

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Recommendations

6. Mentees should work towards having their cameras and microphones on for better engagement.

7. Recruiting from a wider range of universities would mean that this provision could be offered to learners from a variety of subject areas.

8. Where appropriate include a university campus visit for students. This will allow them to meet their mentors at their university and gain first-hand experience of campus life.

9. Building in review checkpoints to programme delivery will improve overall communication and monitor the process.

10. For better academic outcomes, match mentees academic subject with the mentor's degree subject.

Future Developments

- This project would aim to grow year on year, increasing in variety, reach and impact.

- As the project develops we would encourage previous mentee's to become mentors (where appropriate).

- The project would aim to build working partnerships with HE staff responsible for transitions and retention within the partner universities.

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Thank you!

Any Questions ?

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