

Effective Transitions Fund

The Careers & Enterprise Company administered £2 million funding from JPMorganChase to deliver targeted support and build the evidence base on effective careers education for disadvantaged young people at points of transition.

 **DELIVERING 2+ YEARS OF TARGETED SUPPORT ACROSS**

 **10 PROJECTS**
Delivered by Careers Hubs¹ in England

 **Provided support for over 1000 YOUNG PEOPLE YEAR 10 AND 11**

The objectives of the Fund were:

- To deliver targeted transition support to enable disadvantaged young people in Key Stage 4 to achieve sustained engagement in high-quality post-16 destinations
- To build the evidence base of effective interventions for the target group by understanding the impact of long-term targeted support on achieving high quality sustainable destinations

Target groups:

Each project elected to combine the mandatory criterion of Free School Meals (FSM) with at least one other characteristic, reflecting local priorities and identified needs.

Young people faced intersectional barriers: young people in receipt of FSM face an attainment gap, are less likely to sustain an education destination, and are likely to earn less over their lifetime.^{2 3 4}

In receipt of Free School Meals (FSM)
At risk of under achieving / mildly disengaged
Special educational needs or disability or Education and Health Care Plan
Low attendance
Low self esteem
Gender
Excluded or at risk of exclusion
Ethnicity

Activities

The Fund-level theory of change set out how young people would be supported predominantly through the provision of intensive and tailored one-to-one support and careers education, information, advice, and guidance. Young people had diverse support needs and the programme designed by each Careers Hub was bespoke to these, while containing a core of common activities. Each project created a programme that would support pupils to develop awareness and knowledge of different education and employment routes; increase their motivation, confidence, and aspirations; and support them to take actions for their next steps. Typically, the projects offered a combination of:

01



One-to-one coaching to inform goal setting and action planning;

02



Group sessions to cover more generic topics and offer peer support;

03



Parental engagement to support engagement with project activities;

04



Further and higher education visits to raise aspirations and knowledge of post-16 routes, and to maintain engagement in school and on the project;

05



Work placements and work experience to give insights into potential future careers and help with decision-making;

06



Employer encounters offered insights into the world of work and role models;

07



Transition support to address individual-level barriers and prepare for successful post-16 destinations;

08



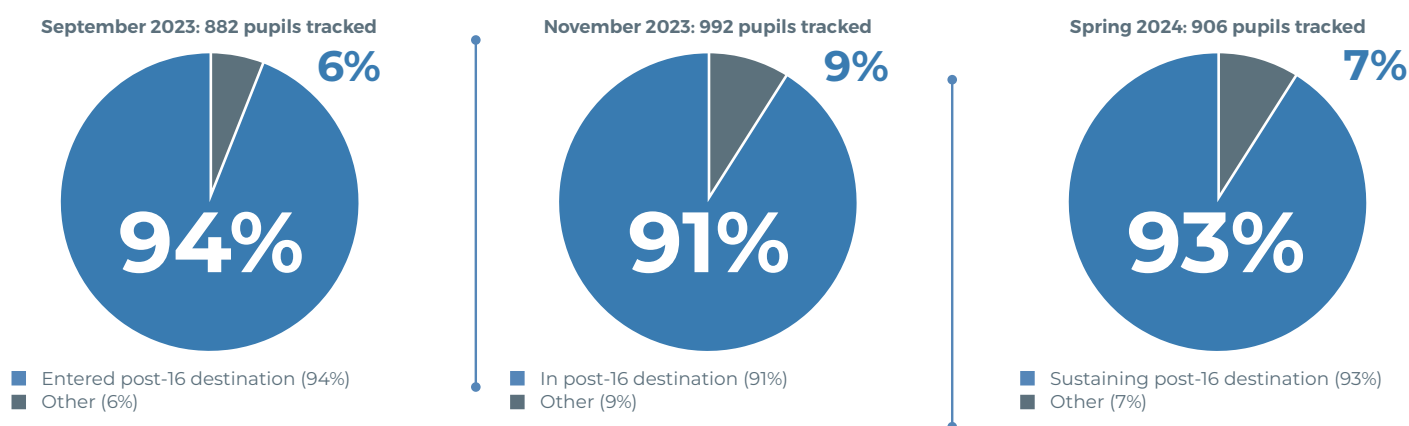
'Keep in touch' strategies to overcome barriers caused by high absence levels.

Detailed insights

Evidence drawn from existing literature and comparable national data indicate that the outcomes substantially exceed what might be expected for the groups receiving support: For example, the 93% in this programme who are in a sustained destination following the initial transition into 16-18 study compares very favourably with 87.8 % of disadvantaged young people and is in line with the 93.9% of all young people⁵. Looking forward to the potential future effect of this transition rate, the most recent national data shows that 82.6% of young people who complete 16-18 study continue to be in a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination in the year following that study².

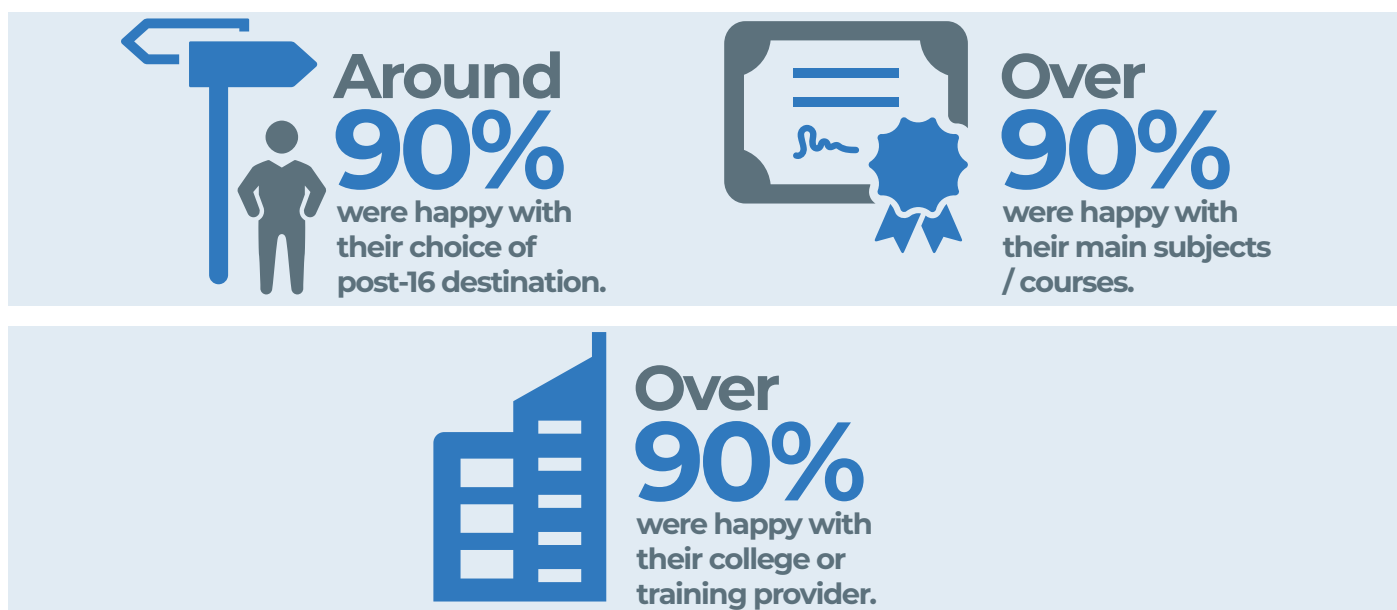
Over 900 of the 1,000+ cohort were still engaged at the end of the programme.

Overall, the evaluation shows the Fund has been **effective in supporting** young people into **sustained** and **good quality** post-16 destinations.



This evaluation collected pupil survey data over three waves (baseline, before they started on the projects, midline, and endline after they had moved into their post-16 destination). As well as surveys, interview data, management information and destination data were collected to track progress over time, based on a theory of change framework which closely defined what each project was designed to achieve in terms of improved pupil outcomes.

The data provided indicators as to why young people sustained their destinations:



Importantly, there was no statistical difference between different groups of young people in their level of happiness with their destination.

The evaluation analysed data from the surveys with young people, destinations data and interview data. This showed the importance of targeted and sustained interventions with trusted adults in leading to sustained destinations that young people were happy with. Overall, there were very few statistically significant differences in survey responses on this by different pupil characteristics. This suggests that the tailored nature of the programme did well in addressing the individual needs of different learners.

Pupils' self-reported satisfaction with their destination was significantly linked to their sustained destinations, as was the level of careers coach support that they received. Pupils' positive perception of careers coach support was a predictor of midpoint EET status, where for with each increase in survey score on the following questions, the likelihood of being EET in November/December 2023 increased.

Additionally, the young person survey analysis shows that there was a statistically significant improvement in the scores for these measures over time.



Feeling listened to and supported when considering their future



Feeling that they had a trusted adult that they could talk to about their future plans (e.g. coach).



The young person survey analysis showed that there was a statistically significant improvement in the scores for these measures over time.

Overcoming barriers

Pupils had multiple barriers and faced intersectional disadvantage which could have affected their chances of progressing to and sustaining high quality post-16 destinations.

Poor mental health was not always medically diagnosed, and pupils were not always externally supported by community mental health teams. Pupils experienced high anxiety and low confidence and self-esteem, as well as poor mental health, which had an impact on their ability to attend and participate in school and project activities. Persistently absent pupils had reduced contact time with teachers, support staff and careers services, meaning that they were less likely to achieve good grades and transition to 'good' destinations.

Interpersonal conflicts and challenging group dynamics were also encountered in delivery. There were difficulties in ensuring that 'generic' careers information sessions were sufficiently interesting and engaging for a diverse group of young people with different interests and ambitions.

Pupils in the projects often faced **multiple disadvantages**. This included emotional and behavioural barriers, additional support needs requiring adaptations to approaches and materials, systemic racism, undiagnosed SEND, difficult home contexts (with a lack of parental engagement or support) or faced issues with public transport (lack of access, affordability, or lack of confidence).

Projects worked to address these through:



1. A holistic approach:

careers coaches and project workers focused on getting to know young people, building relationships over time, to understand their barriers to progression. This meant responding to their needs and advocating on their behalf with employers and education providers.



2. Personalisation:

bespoke work placements and employer encounters were sourced for young people and were customised to meet their needs.



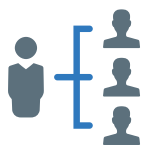
3. Representation:

some projects engaged employers as positive role models to inspire their pupils. They selected employers who had similar disadvantages to those faced by young people so reinforced images of success and increased feelings of self-worth.

Additionally, there were 'system' level barriers to delivery, which also had to be overcome. This included access to school staff who could provide long term support for the project; employers who could support different types of activities (from workshops and visits to extended work experience); contracting and data sharing agreements; and recruiting experienced and qualified careers workers.

Key lessons

Overall, the evaluation evidence shows that the activities in the theory of change helped to generate short-term outcomes such as confidence and motivation, which in turn supported outcomes such as improved decision-making which led to the impacts reported here. There are key lessons that CEC, Careers Hubs, schools and delivery partners can take from the Effective Transition Fund about how future projects like this can be effective for young people.



Building support networks in schools

- ‘Buy-in’ from a range of school staff supported delivery - from senior leadership, pastoral staff, SENCOs and Careers Leaders to ensure support for activities and programme administration.



Responding to young peoples' needs

- Adapting delivery for pupils with SEND, including reducing the length of coaching sessions and work-related activities to ensure pupils are not overwhelmed.
- Additional activities to support mental health and anxiety ensure that pupils are supported in a holistic way.



Persistence and integrity

- Relationships between careers coaches and pupils are central to the successes of the projects and develop over time – requiring consistency in who delivers the support to pupils.
- Coaches demonstrated values, skills and experience that offer a client-centred approach.



Supporting the transition

- Going the extra mile to ensure pupils are enabled to successfully transition into post-16 destinations by providing additional support on exam results day or overcoming barriers in the early phase of the post-16 destination.

1 Nine of the ten were part of Careers Hubs at the start

2 Official Statistics. (2024) Academic year 2021/22: 16-18 destination measures. GOV.UK. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/16-18-destination-measures> February 2024

3 Department for Education (DfE). (2024). Key stage 4 performance, 2022-2023, [custom table 1](#) and [custom table 2](#) created April 2024.

4 Hodge, L., Little, A., & Weldon, M. (2021). GCSE attainment and lifetime earnings: Research report. Department for Education. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60c36f0cd3bf7f4bd11a2326/GCSE_Attainment_and_Lifetime_Earnings_PDF3A.pdf

5 Official Statistics. (2024). Academic year 2021/22: Key stage 4 destination measures. GOV.UK. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-destination-measures> February 2024.

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