

Executive Summary: Evaluation of the Careerpilot/Wessex Inspiration Network's Careerpilot Careers Guidance Intervention Model

August 2019

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Careerpilot is a careers website which aims to help 13-19 year olds make an informed decision about their future courses and careers. The site includes one-stop information about choices available to young people, including the many routes to higher-level study, up-to-date job sector information alongside Career Tools to enable students to personalise their choices. Careerpilot also includes an Adviser, Parent and Reporting Zone.

Since 2017 the Careerpilot Team has been commissioned to provide one-to-one careers guidance annually to 500+ targeted WIN NCOP students.

The Careerpilot Team developed a three-stage career guidance model to use with WIN students:

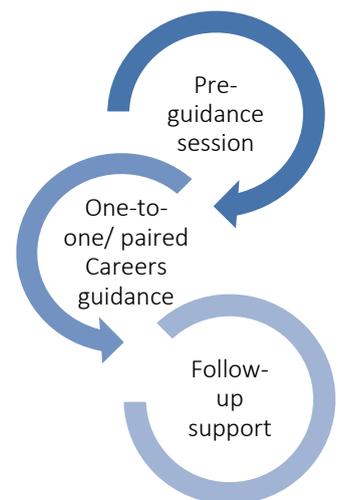
Step 1: Each student meets with the WIN HE Adviser (employed by the WIN and based across a cluster of WIN schools) and is introduced to the project, the Careerpilot Guidance model, registers on the Careerpilot website and completes some introductory activities

Step 2: A Careerpilot Qualified Careers Adviser provides:

- Y10 students with a paired one-hour session
- Y11-13 students with a personal one-hour one-to-one session

After the paired/one-to-one guidance session, the student and WIN HE Adviser receive a report outlining the discussion and agreed action points.

Step 3: The Careerpilot guidance report and action points are followed up with the student by a WIN HE Adviser.



Study focus

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of the Careerpilot Careers Guidance Intervention Model and ensure that lessons are contextualised and disseminated. It focused on student surveys and student voice to explore the impact of the Careerpilot guidance model on young people's awareness of their career choices, their future decision-making and progression to higher-level study.

Method

- Survey 1 completed at the end of the personal guidance session by 155 participants from eleven secondary schools: 74 Year 10 students (48.4%), 50 Year 11 students (32.7%), 15 Year 12 students (9.8%) and 14 Year 12 students (9.2%).
- Six Focus Groups took place in March 2019 involving 52 Pre and Post-16 students in three schools.
- Follow-up Survey completed by 24 participants: six Year 10 students (25.0%), thirteen Year 11 students (54.1%), three Year 12 students (12.5%) and two Year 12 students (8.3%).

Impact

The overall impact on young people falls into four main themes:

1. Increasing understanding of the importance of exploring ideas and forward planning

The Careerpilot Careers Guidance Intervention increased young people's awareness of the importance of exploring education and career opportunities and planning to achieve their future goals.

- 97.3% valued exploring a range of potential choices
- 96.7% felt better informed about their future options
- 88.2% of Pre-16 and 100% of Post-16 students felt the guidance sessions had helped them formulate a clear action plan for their future

There was evidence that participation had encouraged young people to explore career ideas and opportunities and to focus on their future ambitions. Early evidence highlights that the follow-up had helped young people to explore achievable goals and identify the practical steps needed to move towards these goals.

"The impact of taking part has been increased levels of confidence in my pursuits and aspirations after sixth form, and a more focused idea of what career paths I'd take based on the subjects I enjoy."

Focus Group Student

"I have been given ideas on what to do, I now just need to make clear decisions."

Year 12 student

2. Broadening awareness of educational pathways and knowledge of higher education

The Careerpilot Careers Guidance Intervention helped young people explore higher-level study and to develop a more detailed understanding of their routes into HE. Students felt the support had enabled them to make better decisions about what and where to study:

- 98.6% learnt new information about different qualifications
- 93.6% learnt new information about different learning providers
- 91.4% learnt new information about the range of different higher education opportunities
- 67.3% were more likely to consider higher-level study than they were before the session

The Careerpilot Careers Guidance Intervention gave the Pre-16 students a much clearer understanding of their Post-16 study opportunities helping to broaden their aspirations. The Post-16 students increased their capacity to navigate opportunities and make an informed choice about higher education study and future careers.

"Helped me know what is available Post-16/18. I now know different types of courses related to what I want to do at different universities."

Year 11 student

"It was a really useful experience that highlighted a lot of new possible routes, that previously I hadn't considered."

Year 12 student

3. Increasing understanding of future career ideas and graduate employment

The Careerpilot Careers Guidance Intervention gave young people the opportunity to explore career opportunities leading to a greater appreciation of their interests, skills and potential pathways. The support helped young people understand the link between salaries and education and the range of career pathways.

- 76.2% have a better awareness of HE and jobs with a degree
- 95.1% learnt new information about jobs and job sectors

Personalised and impartial support from knowledgeable Careers Advisers and HEAs were extremely beneficial for exploring a broad range of careers,

"Helped me to get ideas about my future options and helped me to find out what steps I need to take to get there."

Focus Group student

understanding job information, and potential career pathways. This led to a deeper level of analysis and a greater focus on real career options.

4. Developing confidence in self and future ideas

The Careerpilot Careers Guidance Intervention impacted on young people's confidence in their ability to navigate choices and make an informed decision about their future education and career.

- 88.4% felt more confident in deciding on their future options
- 85.0% felt more confident to make an informed choice about HE
- 90.5% felt motivated to do well in their studies, felt their future career is achievable and were more aware of where to find education and career information

There was also a recognition that the support had given them a head start on thinking about the decisions and choices they would need to make in the future.

"I didn't really know what I was doing and each session I started to get more of a focus of what I wanted to do."

Focus Group student

"I feel like I'm slowly adjusting to some of the decisions I have to make. It takes quite a while to do all this, so starting off now is quite helpful even though university might be a few years away."

Focus Group student

What worked well?

The evaluation highlights the effectiveness of the model as an incremental, progressive programme which supports targeted young people to make an informed decision about their future education and careers. The distinct steps each play a crucial role:

Preparation for guidance

The pre-guidance session is essential for introducing and preparing young people to participate in the Careerpilot Careers Guidance Intervention. The pre-guidance works best when used as a means of preparing young people to participate in the personal guidance session and to explore the Careerpilot website and its relevant tools. The pre-guidance is most effective when it is scheduled close to the personal guidance session and students have advanced understanding of the WIN project and the guidance process.

The role of the Guidance Adviser

The young people highly valued learning about the range of potential choices and talking through their options with someone knowledgeable about learning and careers. The young people felt very comfortable discussing their aspirations and career ideas with their Guidance Adviser, they felt listened to, had their questions answered and found the Advisers to knowledgeable, friendly and approachable. The personalisation of support from the Guidance Adviser was highly valued and the young people recognised this as distinct from other activities in which they had participated. The young people appreciated the neutrality of the discussion with the Guidance Adviser and recognised they were being encouraged to explore all options as a reflection of their educational potential. This encouragement, coupled with a better understanding of the benefits of higher education, led some young people to consider higher-level study, despite previously dismissing this option. Furthermore, young people were able to gain a better understanding of the intricacies of choosing higher education courses and institutions. The students highly valued the support they had received from the Careerpilot Qualified Careers Adviser during the guidance sessions.

- 95.3% valued being able to talk with someone knowledgeable about careers and possible options
- 96.0% felt the Guidance Adviser understood their needs
- 95.3% felt the session was tailored to their needs and aspirations
- 99.3% found the guidance session with the Guidance Adviser useful

The relationships fostered with the Careers Guidance and WIN HE Advisers are central to the success of the Careerpilot model.

The role of the HEA

The WIN HE Advisers (HEAs) were praised for understanding the needs of the young person, being responsive, and for providing general guidance as well as practice support. The HEAs played a key role in the follow-up activity and were able to enhance young people's action plans through their personal support, for example, helping young people arrange work experience placements, workplace visits or higher education visits. The young people who had received a follow-up described a supportive relationship with the HE Adviser and found the additional support exceptionally beneficially. The follow-up works best when the HEA is able to coordinate with the general support available through the school's careers guidance programme. The follow-up support from the HEAs can play a significant role in helping young people develop the resources and confidence to progress into education and work.

The Careerpilot website

The Careerpilot website was utilised as a tool to enhance the support and guidance provided by the Guidance Adviser and HEAs and was effective when used in direct response to the young people's needs. The areas of the Careerpilot website that the young people found more useful were having access to a Careerpilot account, the job sector information, job profiles and being able to log in to see their report. The Pre-16 students found the Job Sector quiz and information most useful while Post-16 students found the Skills Map most useful. The Job Sector information and tools were viewed as highly informative for showcasing a range of careers and associated progression pathways and beneficial for comparing roles, salaries and potential growth sectors. The Post-16 students found the Skills Map beneficial in helping them realise their broad range of skills, construct a UCAS personal statement and connect their skills to potential careers. The Careerpilot personal account features helped young people connect their personalised guidance to their future action planning and as a means to continue their careers research.

Integration with school structures

There are several different models by which HEAs work with schools – from being an employed member of the school staff to being employed directly by the WIN. HEAs external to partner schools have needed to invest significantly in building solid working relationships compared to being directly employed, where there was an existing level of awareness of the role and a higher level of integration with the school's broader careers guidance work. A higher level of integration of the Careerpilot Careers Guidance with the school's broader careers and progression work helps to connect participating students into internal school support and encourage sustainability of the model.

"I would highly recommend it as it helps significantly to have a focused session to gain a better understanding of what you want to do next and the steps you will take to achieve them without the feeling of being overwhelmed with all the information."

Year 12 student

What would make the process even better?

The Careerpilot Guidance Model has a significant impact on young people's awareness and understanding of higher education and how to progress. The research also provided feedback about how the model could have a more significant impact and could be further enhanced.

Preparation for guidance

1. Consider further developing the project flow-chart to include all expected stages of the guidance process and the roles and responsibilities of HEAs and Guidance advisers. This should include, ensuring students understand the WIN project and the purpose and process of the guidance and providing students with a pre-guidance pro-forma so they know what to expect and can prepare. Pre-programme information may also provide a positive means to involve parents.

2. Schedule the pre-guidance and personal guidance session close together to have a more significant impact.
3. Review how the iCould quiz is utilised within the pre-guidance session and ensure the HE Adviser takes time to explore how the results could be interpreted and used by the young person.

The role of the Guidance Adviser

4. Explore alternative means for delivering the paired Pre-16 student sessions, for example, conducted as friendship pairs or co-delivered by Careers Adviser and HEAs.
5. Develop a method of providing information which young people could take away from the guidance session in advance of the full report being available, for example, a discussion summary to show parents may be useful.

The role of the HEA

6. Consider how to develop a consistent approach to providing follow-up from the HEA to ensure all young people can access support which is timely and that the young people are aware of how they can request extra help from the HEA after the follow-up session.
7. Explore ways for the HEA to signpost young people to broader support, for example, financial assistance to attend open days, specialist talks, work/higher education-related seminars, and CV/Apprenticeship support.
8. Explore ways that the HEA can help young people stay motivated in their learning, manage themselves, develop self-esteem and self-confidence and in achieving the academic grades to enable progression to higher-level study.

Follow-up

9. Explore how best to communicate the action points more succinctly to encourage young people to follow-up and return to the Careerpilot website, for example, virtual reminders or alerts regarding action plans, open days and website updates.
10. Consider the addition of small group follow-up activities to include drop-in sessions, individual appointments and guided sessions on a range of career-related topics.

The Careerpilot website

11. Consider how Careerpilot could show employability for graduates from different degrees to help young people gain a greater insight into future careers and working life.
12. Explore improved navigation on the Careerpilot site and clear starting points for different users.

Integration with school structures

13. Develop higher level of integration of the WIN Careerpilot Guidance Model with a school's broader careers and progression work to support the programme's sustainability.
14. Integrate the young people's follow-up actions into a school's broader programmes of support and development.
15. Ensure greater coordination with, or signposting to, school-based activities to help young people access other support and information which may be better provided by schools or other agencies.