

Isaac Newton Trust WPIF Grant Report – Queens' College Outreach

Queens' College was awarded £4,190 to cover the costs associated with enabling students from our Link Area of Bradford to attend outreach events held in college, namely:

- **Transport, accommodation and catering costs for 10 students attending a Year 12 Medieval Studies Day**
- **Transport and catering costs for two Key Stage 4 (KS4) Access Days (84 students and 12 staff, from 6 schools).**

What our project seeks to change

Bradford's demographic profile includes high proportions of students currently underrepresented at Cambridge, based on socioeconomic markers and ethnicity. Given the areas and the schools targeted, this project supports Access and Participation Plan priorities by aiming to increase successful applications to Cambridge from:

1. British-Pakistani and British-Bangladeshi students
2. Students from IMD Quintiles 1 & 2 and students eligible for Free School Meals.

How we expect to realize change through the project by enabling participation in campus-based events that address existing Office for Students Risk Factors: 1. Knowledge and skills; 2. Information and Guidance; 3. Perception of Higher Education.

- Many young people in the city rarely travel beyond Bradford, and find it hard to picture themselves as belonging in a different environment. Their higher education choices are currently disproportionately centred on institutions in the local area.
- Bradford is the 5th most income-deprived local authority in England and transport/accommodation costs are a barrier to individual participation in outreach activities; transport/accommodation costs are also a major factor in limiting schools' ability to engage in educational visits, especially for events considered as relevant to only a small proportion of a given student cohort.
- Offering free transport/accommodation makes participation possible for both individual students and targeted school groups. Direct experience of interacting with University staff and students and visiting Cambridge will support students in developing a prospective sense of belonging in selective higher education.

Medieval Studies Day

What Worked:

- 11 Bradford students attended the Medieval Day Residential.
- 63% of Bradford residential participants were from one or more priority groups identified in the APP (IMD quintiles 1 or 2, FSM or Pupil Premium, under-represented ethnicity), compared with 44% of the overall participants.
- The majority of participants were planning on applying for relevant Arts subjects (History, English, French, Archaeology, Linguistics, History of Art, Classics, ASNAC).

Given uncertainty around potential train strikes and engineering work, a decision was made to hire a mini-coach to transport students from Bradford rather than booking trains. This increased costs per head but from a logistical and safeguarding point of view it worked well.

Comparison of Pre and Post-event responses to survey questions adapted from the TASO ASQ shows a positive impact on:

- Higher Education Expectations (Intention to attend university and to apply to Cambridge)
- Knowledge of Higher Education (Knowledge and understanding of what studying at Cambridge would be like; Confidence in their ability to get a place at Cambridge)
- Sense of Belonging (Confidence around fitting in socially at Cambridge)

Providing residential accommodation not only enabled students to engage with the full medieval day programme but also gave them a real taste of student life, with time to meet student ambassadors, have a walk around the city centre and relax in the JCR as well as staying in typical first year rooms. I have since had contact with some of the students involved at other school events in Bradford, and they are now in a position to be confident in talking to me about their plans for Cambridge applications, and in talking with their peers about their experience of Cambridge, and de-mystifying the University for other students in their sixth forms.

What Did Not Work:

The date of the event was chosen to ensure academic staff availability and allow for overnight accommodation, which is rarely possible at Queens'. However, the late September date meant limited choice of student ambassadors available for college tours and we were not able to secure ambassadors representing the relevant subject areas, or the demographics of the Bradford participants.

The date also complicated the process of recruitment/targeting due to impact of GCSE exam period on communications, student movement between KS4/5, and difficulty of ensuring the participants would be taking relevant A levels. Although all applicants had been asked about their motivation for engaging with medieval studies at the point of application, by the time of the actual event some of the Bradford students were planning on non-Arts subjects (Law, Geography, Engineering, Maths, Sciences) and were no longer studying subjects directly relevant to the content of the day.

How others can learn from our experience:

Should the event be repeated next year, we intend to increase pool of applicants by changes to the time frame for publicity/applications in order to ensure more precise targeting of (a) students with relevant academic interests and A level choices and (b) students from WP priority groups (IMD/FSM/Under-represented ethnicity).

KS4 Outreach Days

What Worked:

- 89 students and 13 staff attended over the course of the 2 days.
- 96% of those students for whom individual postcode data is available are from IMD quintiles 1 or 2.
- 55% of students required halal lunch, indicating that a high proportion of those involved were from Bradford Pakistani or Bangladeshi Muslim communities.

In addition to tours of Queens' with Student Ambassadors, lunch in the buttery and a lively Student Life Question and Answer session, with the panel on each day including 2 students from Bradford schools, the outreach team at the Cavendish Laboratory provided hands-on learning

Working with a Multi-Academy Trust for one of the two days meant that staffing issues were more easily resolved (the schools were able to share a first aider, and when a coach breakdown resulted in a quick change of plan staff were easily able to work together to provide a solution whilst staying within school safeguarding policies, with two members of staff driving to Cambridge while)

Pre-trip visits by the SLO to several of the participating schools meant that students from those schools had an understanding of how Cambridge works before visiting the Queens', and came prepared with relevant questions for student ambassadors.

Staff feedback was very positive, highlighting that the days were informative, enjoyable, inspiring and well-organised:

The kids had a wonderful day, and it was such an incredible opportunity (with some of them never having visited a university before!). When speaking to students on the way back, many of them said they could see themselves studying at Cambridge in the future. The impact of such trips is colossal, and I know our students greatly appreciated and benefitted from the trip yesterday

Comparison of Pre and Post-event responses to survey questions from the TASO ASQ shows a positive impact on:

- Higher Education Expectations (Intention to attend university)
- Knowledge of Higher Education (Knowledge and understanding of what studying at university would be like and how it differs from school; Confidence in their ability to get a place at university)
- Sense of Belonging (sense that university is for 'people like me', confidence around fitting in socially and academically at university)

What Did Not Work:

Getting data from schools, whether individual participant data to enter into the HEAT database, or survey responses to evaluate impact, is difficult. Of the 7 schools involved, 5 returned individual pupil data and pre-trip surveys and 4 returned post-trip surveys. This impacts on the reliability of evaluation and our ability to track engagement with students.

How others can learn from our experience:

The schools which returned the most complete data and surveys were those where I had been able to deliver a pre-trip talk. In future we would consider making this an essential part of the offer, to ensure full engagement from the school and optimum preparation to enable students to make the most of the day. Whilst other colleges may not be able to replicate this in person, online pre-trip briefing for school groups might have a similar effect.

The event had been billed as Key Stage 4 day, and different schools had taken different approach, some bringing Y10 students, some Y11 and some a mixture of both year groups. This made it harder for the content of the academic session to be pitched at the right level. In future we would give schools more specific guidance around which Year Group to target.

Financial statement

Planned	Planned cost	Actual	Actual cost
Train transport to and from Medieval Day (10 students at £90 per student)	£900	Coach transport for Medieval day (£1400 for 11 students and SLO = £116.6 per head, cost given for 10 students)	£1166
Taxi transport to/from Bradford station, Medieval Day (10 students)	£40		
Accommodation for Medieval Day (10 rooms at £20 each)	£200	Accommodation for Medieval Day (10 rooms at £15 each)	£150
Catering for Medieval Day (10x dinner at £4, 10x breakfast at £3.50, 10x lunch at £4, 10x tea/coffee at £3.50)	£150	Catering for Medieval Day (Average £19.56 per head, dinner, breakfast, lunch, packed tea, 10 students)	£195.60
Coach hire for travel to and from KS4 Access Days (one coach per day)	£2500	Coach hire for travel to and from KS4 Access Days (one coach per day)	£2500
Catering for KS4 Access Days (£4 per head)	£400	Catering for KS4 Access Days (£4 per head)	£507.40
Total Costs/Contribution	£4190	Total Costs/Contribution	£4519