



# S6 Transitions Programme

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## Summary Report

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## **Background: The S6 Transitions Programme**

### ***Outline of S6 Transitions Programme***

Unlike the majority of LIFT OFF engagements which use a targeted approach to support Core Pupils identified by their schools according to the LIFT OFF selection Criteria (**see Appendix 1**), the S6 Transitions Programme is open to all S6 Pupils in LIFT OFF partner schools who have demonstrated a desire to study at Higher Education (HE) level at college or university.

The programme is comprised of 3 double-period sessions. Workshop 1, 'Applying to Higher Education' covers the UCAS/College application process; Workshop 2, 'Your Personal Statement' provides personal statement advice and editing activities; while Workshop 3, 'Your Transition: Moving into Higher Education', provides advice on H.E. offers, student finance, and budgeting and accommodation.

In addition to this suite of workshops, LIFT OFF Core pupils are offered an additional level of support in the personal statement drafting process and are invited to submit a maximum of 3 drafts of their personal statement to LIFT OFF for comment.

### ***Timeline***

In academic year 2019/2020 session 1 ran from the beginning of the summer term in August until 20<sup>th</sup> September; session 2 ran from 1<sup>st</sup> October until 29<sup>th</sup> November; and session 3 ran from the beginning of term in January and was scheduled for completion on March 20<sup>th</sup> (pre-COVID 19 restrictions).

### ***Workshops***

Framework documents were already in place for sessions 1 and 2 which include a rationale for each workshop, information on the intended learning outcomes of each session, as well as an inventory of the materials required to deliver each session. These outline documents, as well as copies of all the materials required for each session, have been provided in **Appendices 2.1 -2.3**, but for the purposes of clarity, a brief overview of the workshops and their accompanying materials is provided on Table 1 overleaf:

Workshop	Purpose	Materials Required
Workshop 1: 'Applying to Higher Education'.	The purpose of this workshop is to introduce pupils to the H.E. application process. The workshop also introduces pupils to the personal statement through a 'do's and don'ts' section.	Powerpoint and Personal Statement Tips handout.
Workshop 2: 'Your Personal Statement'.	Prior to delivery of this workshop, school contact teachers are emailed with a request to remind pupils to bring drafts of their personal statements to the session. The session reinforces information provided in workshop 1, and builds upon this by asking pupils to examine extracts of strong and weak personal statements. Pupils are then asked to use these reflective skills to examine their own personal statements in exercises such as the 'cliché buster' and the 'iCatch'.	Powerpoint and Troubleshooting Worksheet with cliché buster and iCatch tasks.
Workshop 3: 'Moving into Higher Education'.	The final Transitions workshop provides pupils with information on offers given by colleges and universities. In addition to this, the workshop also offers some information on the support that is available to enhance life and learning at college and university such as mental health, financial, and disability support services. Interactive elements in this workshop include the 'Guess the Price' budgeting activity and the 'Rate the Accommodation' activity. <b>N.B.</b> While LIFT OFF endeavours to provide each partner school with a two-period block for delivery of each S6 workshop, a number of schools, particularly for S6 Session 3, were only able to timetable 1 period to this session (in some cases due to the timetabling of prelims). In order to maximise student engagement and make the delivery of S6 Session 3 as smooth as possible, a condensed version of Session 3 was also created (see Appendix 2.3).	Powerpoint and "Your Transition Booklet" which is used to reinforce delivery of full-length session.

Table 1.

### *Personal Statement Editing*

Although the S6 Transitions programme is open to all S6 in partner schools, LIFT OFF Core pupils, as mentioned above, are given the opportunity to submit 3 drafts of their personal statement to LIFT OFF for editing. Generalised comments on personal statements are provided by the LIFT OFF team using the comment function in Microsoft Word. If subject specific advice is required that is not held in the team, LIFT OFF staff signpost pupils to online resources or partner organisations.

## **Section 2 Staffing and Training:**

### *Staffing*

In the academic year 2019/2020, LIFT OFF implemented a clustered and tiered approach to in-school delivery. Full details of this can be found in the LIFT OFF Expansion Paper (see **Appendix 3**). For clarity, the impact of the Expansion Paper on S6 delivery is as follows:

Where the calendar allows:

- School cluster leads deliver each S6 session in their schools;
- School cluster leads are responsible for the majority of correspondence between school contacts and pupils;
- Cluster leads play a central role in fostering and maintaining good working relationships with partner schools.

Initially staffing for session 1 was based upon delivery being led by one member of staff. From session 2 onwards, however, (and where staffing allowed) 2 members of staff were placed in each session to allow for more interactivity. Where sessions were double-staffed, the school cluster lead would conduct the session, while the second development worker would support and facilitate pupil engagement.

### *Training:*

All Development Workers were given the opportunity to shadow existing team members for the delivery of S6 Sessions 1, 2, and 3. Pre-delivery training was also provided before delivery of Session 2. A meeting, led by a long-term member of staff, was held before the delivery of session 3 during which staff were introduced to the workshop and its aims, and were also given the opportunity to ask any questions.

### *S6 Session 2 "Your Personal Statement" Training*

The purpose of the S6 Session 2 training workshop was to embed best practice not only in the delivery of the in-school sessions, but in the provision of feedback to pupils on drafts of their personal statements. In this training session (see **Appendices 4 & 4.1 for training slides and booklet**), staff were provided with information on the Personal Statement process and were given the opportunity to provide and compare feedback on personal statement examples. A flow-chart was also created to



## **Section 3 Communication Strategy:**

### ***Scheduling***

In AY 2019/20 scheduling meetings were held in-school in June with LIFT OFF management, school cluster leads, and contact teachers in attendance. Where possible sessions were scheduled using each school's academic calendar. In cases where contact teachers were unable to access academic calendars, sessions were booked, in the first instance, using the previous year's scheduling booklet as a template.

As a result of COVID19, remote "Planning Meetings" will be held via Microsoft Teams in June to plan for AY 20/21. School clusters leads, LIFT OFF management, and partner school staff will be in attendance during these video calls where differentiated provision will be planned for each school. See overleaf for Operational Communication Flowchart.



### *Personal Statement Communication*

As with school communications, template emails were created which were to be sent on the receipt of personal statement drafts. Responses to redrafted personal statements also had a loose structure which reinforced key details (e.g. the number of drafts that the pupil had sent), but which were largely devoted to providing a summary of Development Worker feedback on the content of the statement (see **Appendix 4.1** for representative examples of personal statement correspondence).

## **Section 4 Evaluation**

### *Staff Evaluation Spreadsheet*

This year was first to trial the staff evaluation spreadsheet which was to be populated by staff following the delivery of each S6 workshop (see **Appendix 6**). As well as being used to track pupil attendance, the spreadsheet also sought to embed reflective practice in the delivery of the programme.

### *Thematic Trends Identified in Staff Evaluation Spreadsheet*

#### *Scheduling:*

Scheduling difficulties are mentioned several times throughout the Staff Evaluation spreadsheet in various different contexts.

- Anecdotally pupils at Lochgelly advised delivery staff that they would have preferred session 2 to be delivered earlier (before October holidays which is the deadline for first drafts in many schools).
- There is an arguable correlation between scheduling and attendance as demonstrated in attendance for S6 Session 2 at Baldrigon, which was scheduled in November after the school's internal deadline for first drafts. Attendance figures for this session were low, with only 5 pupils attending. Attendance for S6 Session 3, however, was 28, suggesting that the school had a fairly sizeable and engaged cohort, but that the late scheduling of S6 Session 2 was off-putting to pupils.
- Some schools requested that LIFT OFF offer a drop-in session in place of a two-period workshop when the school's scheduled Session 2 delivery fell after the schools' internal deadline for personal statements.
- Scheduling of S6 Session 3 also posed some problems. Some schools were reluctant to take pupils out of class for 2 periods in January surrounding prelim examinations.

### *Communication*

- Ahead of next year's delivery cycle, and where possible, LIFT OFF Development Workers would like to build working relationships with school UCAS coordinators and SDS contacts in order to align provision and promote collaborative working.

### *Delivery and Materials*

Session 1

- Limited data is available as the Staff Evaluation Spreadsheet was developed ahead of session 2 delivery.

#### Session 2

- Session 2 worked well with pupils engaging particularly effectively with the opportunity to evaluate personal statement examples.
- Adapted, “drop-in” style, delivery was also well-received by delivery staff who felt that pupils valued the experience of having LIFT OFF provide comment on their personal statement.

#### Session 3

- Although all the content in this session is valuable, staff felt that the volume of information was, at times, overwhelming to pupils and difficult to deliver.
- All staff enjoyed the “Guess the Price” activity and would like to see more interactive elements such as this embedded in future iterations of the workshop.
- Staff expressed a desire for more college related material in the workshop.
- Staff would also like to see an overhaul of the “Your Transition” booklet so that the information provided in the workshop aligned more coherently with the delivery content.

### ***Tracking of Pupil Attendance and Collection of Evaluation Data***

There were some difficulties in tracking core pupils’ attendance due to both the new LIFT OFF team being unfamiliar with existing pupils, and the logistics of populating a blank register in large sessions. This will be addressed in the recommendations section below.

As yet, no formal method of gathering evaluation data from pupils has been embedded in the programme, though some qualitative feedback has been received in conversation between LIFT OFF staff and pupils. General trends in these conversations included:

#### Scheduling

- Both pupils and teachers voiced the opinion that sessions 1 and 2 should be scheduled earlier.

#### Session 2

- Pupils enjoyed editing activities and valued tailored advice from LIFT OFF staff on their own personal statements.

#### Session 3

- “Dave” slides received poor feedback from some pupils and some pupils also felt that some information in the session was pitched too low (difference between a loan and a bursary for instance). A number of pupils would also wanted to learn more about college.

## **Section 5 Recommendations**

Based on LIFT OFF staff feedback gathered above, and the feedback gathered during conversation with school pupils and school staff, the following recommendations have been reached for AY 20/21.

### Scheduling and Timings

- Begin engagement with S6 cohorts earlier – after the timetable change in May/June, but before the summer holidays. For academic year 20/21 a video will be made publicly available for S6 pupils with information on how to use the summer holidays effectively.
- The new S6 Session 1 video will act as a “lead in” to a condensed 1 period in-school session to be delivered (if possible) or through Microsoft Teams remotely in August 2020.
- S6 Session 2, as it currently stands, will be split into two 1-period sessions. The first session will be a workshop which will focus on developing self-editing skills, while the new session 3 will be a drop-in session during which pupils can receive tailored advice on drafts of their statement. Session 2 will take place before the internal deadline for first drafts of personal statements (which often fall in October) while the session 3 drop-in will take place in October and November.
- Session 4, “Your Transition”, will maintain the same framework and timings.

### S6 PROGRAMME 2020/2021



**Fig. 3** shows the new framework for the S6 Transitions Programme for AY20/21

### Staffing

- In order to maximise pupil engagement, session 3 drop-ins will be multi-staffed (where possible).

### **Materials Update**

The overarching framework of the S6 Transitions Programme will remain the same for AY20/21. Ahead of delivery, however, revision will be made to materials. These changes will be made in conversation with all Development Workers in order to give delivery staff ownership over the programme.

Based on the staff feedback (listed above), and that received from pupils during conversation, the following is an indicative (and not exhaustive) list of the changes which will be considered during the annual reflection period:

- Less information will be placed on slides.
- “Screengrab” slides of SAAS and UCAS website, as well as “Dave” scenario slides, will be condensed.
- A new resource bank will be designed to facilitate pupils’ transitions on leaving school. Work for this resource will be undertaken in summer 2020 and will inform the revision of materials for S6 session 4 delivery in January.

### **Evaluation and Tracking**

- Use of the staff evaluation spreadsheet will continue for AY20/21.
- Pre-delivery of in-school sessions, registers prepopulated with Core Pupil details will be printed with blank spaces left for non-core pupils to add their details.
- In order to provide best service to pupils, and to align with LIFT OFF’s longitudinal tracking strategies, standardised tracking questions focussed at the core pupil group will be put in place for Academic Year 20/21 to track pupil engagement.
- Kwik surveys will be sent to all pupils at the end of the Transitions programme to receive qualitative feedback from pupils. This data will be used to inform the development of the programme for AY21/22.

### **Communication**

#### **LIFT OFF Partner Communication**

In order to facilitate collaborative working a draft email will be composed which Development Workers can send to the SDS contacts at the beginning of each academic year.

#### **Pupil Communication**

In addition to communication methods already in place, LIFT OFF should continue to use Microsoft Teams as a repository of resources for pupils and as a means of communication.