



Schools for Higher Education Programme

2019-2020 LIFT OFF Annual Report

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2019/2020

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Forward & Report Summary

This report covers the activity carried out by LIFT OFF in 2019/20. LIFT OFF is a partnership organisation which works with schools within the Fife and Tayside region as part of the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP); supporting widening access into Higher Education (HE).

LIFT OFF's 2018/2019 annual report detailed plans of a phased programme expansion which would see a shift from SHEP targeting schools, to targeting pupils within all schools. A 3-tier delivery model was approved for LIFT OFF which met Commission on Widening Access (CoWA)¹ recommendations, along with widening access recommendations² and Skills Development Scotland meta skills³

This report will be the first to detail programme delivery using the newly implemented 3-tier model.

During this reporting year LIFT OFF engaged with 1,433 pupils from 23 schools with most receiving multiple interventions throughout the year. LIFT OFF increased the number of schools it works with by 92% compared to AY2018/19. 54.09% of LIFT OFF core pupil school leavers transitioned into Higher Education. 54.8% of LIFT OFF core pupils resided in the most deprived 20% and 40% areas of Scotland (quintiles 1 & 2). 94% of S4 LIFT OFF core pupils chose to stay on at school for their S5 year; 5.2 measures higher than the national average S4- S5 staying on rate of 88.8%, and 11.2 measures higher than the LIFT OFF regional average S4 - S5 staying on rate of 82.8%. LIFT OFF core pupils also reported positive changes in their levels of confidence, aspiration to enter into HE after school, preparedness for HE and awareness of HE opportunities.

In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic impacted LIFT OFF's programme delivery resulting in virtual engagement only (emails, 'phone calls, videos, direct messages, online events etc.) for the remainder of the academic year. This shift in delivery resulted in a drop in pupil engagement which continued into AY2020/21 as COVID-19 restrictions remained in place.

¹ A Blueprint for Fairness: Final Report of the Commission on Widening Access, Scottish Government, March 2016

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-fairness-final-report-commission-widening-access/>

² Widening Access to Higher Education for Students from Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds, University of Strathclyde, September 2016

https://pure.strath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/55895221/Sosu_etal_2016_widening_access_to_higher_education_for_students_from_economically_disadvantaged_backgrounds.pdf

³ Skills 4.0: A skills models to drive Scotland's Future, February 2018

https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/44684/skills-40_a-skills-model.pdf

Aims & Objectives

The programme aims to increase progression rates to higher education by targeting young people in state secondary schools in Fife and Tayside who may experience barriers to learning.

LIFT OFF supports high quality learning and teaching through access to learning, success in learning and progression from learning.

LIFT OFF targets support to those who:

- have potential to achieve HE entry, but are at risk of not achieving this potential; or
- are achieving but don't recognise their potential for progression to higher education.

The aim of the project is to increase the numbers of young people facing barriers to learning, from socio-economic or personal circumstances, entering higher education at SCQF Level 7.

The project aims to achieve this by delivering a programme of activity that:

- brings together partners to deliver a collaborative programme that offers parity of esteem between higher education at college and university
- has tangible outcomes that could, over time, form the basis of progression agreements with partners
- supports attainment and transition in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence
- takes a learner centred approach to delivery that recognises the importance of developing and maintaining individual relationships with pupils and provides impartial guidance and support consistently throughout the programme

The accountability, governance and financial monitoring of the programme are the responsibility of Abertay University, as the lead institution for SHEP in Fife and Tayside and the host of the LIFT OFF programme.

LIFT OFF Schools & Partners

As per LIFT OFF's 3-tier delivery model, schools have been allocated a level of pupil support based the following measures: % of pupils claiming free school meals (FSM), % of pupils residing in SIMD20/40 areas, % of leavers progressing into Higher Education and % of leavers obtaining 2 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 or above.

Schools were allocated two scores to allow for clustering and allocation of support. These were statically checked using z-scores by an independent reviewer, Dr Edward Sosu at University of Strathclyde.

FSM/SIMD > 40 and HEPR/Attainment < 80

This resulted in a shift in the level of support for some of the programmes original 12 target schools. The approach ensures that more support is targeted to areas experiencing higher

levels of disadvantage in terms of accessing higher education; whilst not overlooking pupils who require LIFT OFF support in higher performing schools.

Schools who matched both conditions were allocated tier 1, schools who met one condition were allocated tier 2 and schools who met neither condition were allocated tier 3 support. A breakdown of the schools who received LIFT OFF support during AY2019/20 can be found in Figure 1. This details that LIFT OFF engaged with 23 schools during AY2019/20, an increase of 11 schools (92%) from the previous year. Such sharp rise in engagement is testament to LIFT OFF's reputation across the regions as so many schools were eager to engage during phase one of LIFT OFF's expansion. LIFT OFF's support in new schools was phased in by year group to manage the change. New tier 1 schools received S3 and S4 support only, with new tier 2 schools receiving targeted S5 support and general S6 support, and new tier 3 schools receiving their outlined HE applicant workshops.

Fig. 1 - LIFT OFF schools & support within a 3-tier model

TIER 1			
Level of support	No. of Engagements	Schools	Region
Full programme (S3 – S6) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S3 in-school events • S4 external events • LIFT OFF 2 Success Residential (LO2S) • LIFT OFF Learning Skills (LOLS)(SCQF credit rated) • Individual face to face meetings for S4 & S5 pupils • Senior HE researching workshop • Personal statement writing and editing workshop • What to do after receiving HE offers workshop • Face to face parent/carer engagement • Teacher CPD 	S3 - 1 S4 - 5 S5 - 8 S6 - 4	Arbroath Academy* Baldragon Academy* Braeview Academy* Craigie High School* Morgan Academy St. John's RC High School St. Pauls RC Academy* Beath High School* Glenrothes High School Glenwood High School* Kirkcaldy High School Levenmouth Academy* Lochgelly High School* St. Columba's RC HS Woodmill High School*	Angus Dundee Dundee Dundee Dundee Dundee Dundee Fife Fife Fife Fife Fife Fife Fife Fife
TIER 2			
S5 – S6 support to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIFT OFF Learning Skills (LOLS)(SCQF credit rated) • Senior HE researching workshop • Personal statement writing and editing workshops • What to do after receiving HE offers workshop • In school drop-in sessions • Individual distance support for both pupils and parent/carers • Teacher CPD 	S5 - 8 S6 - 4	Arbroath High School Brechin High School** Harris Academy Auchmuty High School Dunfermline High School Viewforth High School**	Angus Angus Dundee Fife Fife Fife
TIER 3			
Senior Support to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A choice from our suite of HE application, planning and budgeting workshops • Individual distance support to both pupils and parent/carers. • Teachers CPD 	S5/S6 - 4	Bell Baxter High School Waid Academy	Fife Fife

*2018/2019 LIFT OFF target schools

**2018/2019 LIFT OFF target schools who saw a change in support level during 2019/2020

LIFT OFF is supported by all the higher education providers within the Fife and Tayside region, as well as the local authorities. Our immediate partners are outlined in Figure 2.

Fig. 2- LIFT OFF Partners

Higher Education Providers	Local Authorities	Others
Abertay University	Angus Council	Skills Development Scotland
Dundee & Angus College	Dundee City Council	
Fife College	Fife Council	
SRUC		
The Open University		
University of Dundee		
University of St. Andrews		

LIFT OFF is also supported by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) outwith the Fife and Tayside region, most notably Edinburgh Napier University, Heriot Watt University, Queen Margaret University, The University of Edinburgh and University of Stirling.

Programme of Activity

LIFT OFF works with pupils from S3 – S6, and beyond if they need further support. The programme of activity is made up of school-based workshops, experiential events and one-to-one support. In addition to this LIFT OFF has been working hard to support the parents/carers of its core pupils, as well as teachers in school.

Figure 3 outlines the level of participation for LIFT OFF's main engagements across all schools and tiers. It should be noted that each year group experiences more interventions than listed throughout the year; promotional sessions and distance support have not been listed, and some engagements are made up of several interventions.

Fig. 3 - Participation figures per engagement

For who?	For schools in tier?	Type of engagement	When?	No. Participants /Reached
S3	T1	Aspiration raising, in school event	Jan 20	585*
S4	T1	Experiential HEI campus visits	Dec 19	193
S4	T1	Individual information, advice and guidance (IAG) meetings	March 20	121*
S5	T1	LIFT OFF 2 Success, experiential 5 day residential for new S5 pupils	July 20	0*
S5	T1, T2	LIFT OFF Learning Skills (LOLS), a SCQF level 6 credit rated extended engagement	Oct 19	108
S5	T1, T2	Tailored information, advice and guidance (IAG) meetings	Feb 20	231
S6	T1, T1, T3	"Applying to Higher Education" workshop, offered to all HE applicants	Aug 19	292
S6	T1, T2, T3	"Your Personal Statement" workshop offered to all HE applicants	Sept 19	308
S6	T1, T2, T3	"Moving into to Higher Education" workshop offered to all HE applicants	Feb 20	422
S6	T1, T2	Tailored personal statement feedback for core pupils	Nov 19	27
Parent/Carers	T1, T2	Various information, advice and guidance (IAG) engagements	Throughout the year	624*

*engagement impacted by COVID-19

Impact Made

The following section will explore the impact LIFT OFF is making in relation to its aims and objectives. Higher Education Progression Rate (HEPR) data will be reviewed for the LIFT OFF regions of Angus, Dundee and Fife. This data is supplied by Scottish Government on request. School Leaver Destination Return (SLDR) data for LIFT OFF's targeted cohort is analysed for the same purpose and is supplied by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) through a data sharing agreement.

School Higher Education Progression Rate (HEPR) Data

From 2009/2010 to 2018/19, LIFT OFF was tasked with supporting schools with lower-than-average progression rates into HE. A subsequent programme impact measure was therefore helping to increase overall school HE progression rate figures in target schools.

With SHEP's changed focus to supporting targeted pupils in all schools, rather than targeting low HE progression schools; this particular measure now helps LIFT OFF manage resource within its tier delivery model. By including school HEPR figures, along with school attainment data, and the school profiles of SIMD20/40 and FSM pupils, LIFT OFF can ensure that more support is being targeted where there is a higher proportion of pupils experiencing barriers to learning (LIFT OFF tier 1 schools).

Figure 4 highlights that the majority of tier 1 LIFT OFF schools' report HEPR figures below that of the regional average; with the exceptions being Glenrothes HS and Woodmill HS. Both these schools do however report higher than average FSM uptake and SIMD20/40 pupil profiles, hence their inclusion in this tier for this reporting year.

Fig. 4 - Table of HE progression rates for LIFT OFF engaged schools, including national and regional comparators

	LIFT OFF Tier	% Progression rate into HE					
		5yr Av (15/16-19/20)	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
SCOTLAND		41	40	40	41	40	44
All LIFT OFF Engaged Schools*		31.2	33	30	30	30	33
ALL ANGUS		37.8	37	40	38	37	37
ANGUS Engaged Schools*		32	33	32	30	34	31
Arbroath Ac	1	25.4	24	22	27	33	21
Arbroath HS^	2	37.2	37	37	35	33	44
Brechin HS	2	32.6	37	36	27	35	28
ALL DUNDEE CITY		35.6	31	32	28	35	37
DUNDEE Engaged Schools*		28.8	27	30	25	29	33
Baldrigon Ac	1	23.2	26	21	18	21	30
Braeview Ac	1	22.2	20	25	19	18	29
Craigie HS	1	22.2	22	28	20	26	15
Harris Ac^	2	42.8	42	43	37	42	50
Morgan Ac^	1	28.2	25	26	28	31	31
St. John's RC HS^	1	34.2	36	32	27	34	42
St Paul's RC Ac	1	29	19	33	27	30	36
ALL FIFE		36.4	37	35	36	37	37
FIFE Engaged Schools*		32.4	36	30	33	30	33
Auchmuty HS^	2	37	45	33	38	35	34
Beath HS	1	25.6	26	26	17	29	30
Bell Baxter HS^	3	39.2	42	38	42	28	46
Dunfermline HS^	2	35.8	39	42	29	28	41
Glenrothes HS^	1	40.8	41	28	51	45	39
Glenwood HS	1	30.8	40	28	29	23	34
Kirkcaldy HS^	1	27.6	34	7	41	27	29
Levenmouth Ac**	1			23	27	21	17
Lochgelly HS	1	20	20	16	21	16	27
St. Columba's RC HS^	1	32	38	27	30	30	35
Viewforth HS	2	25.8	22	44	27	25	11
Waid Ac^	3	47.6	51	49	49	42	47
Woodmill HS	1	37	31	31	34	46	43

*includes data from newly engaged LIFT OFF schools

^ new to the LIFT OFF programme in 19/20

** School opened in 16/17 following the closure of Buckhaven HS and Kirkland HS

School Leaver Destination Return (SLDR)

LIFT OFF secured school leaver destination data for 416 of its targeted cohort of core pupils. 54.09% of them transitioned into Higher Education (HE) through a college or university route, with 21.15% going into Further Education (FE), 5.05% into a Modern Apprenticeship, (MA) and 20.67% into Employment or “Other” destinations. “Other” includes statuses of economically inactive, unemployed, moved outwith Scotland and ill-health.

A breakdown of core pupil destinations from LIFT OFF engaged schools can be seen in Figure 5.

The data highlights that the engagement LIFT OFF has with its core pupils raises their aspirations, and supports their transition into HE; consistent with LIFT OFF’s overall aim.

This inference can be made when the percentage of pupils transitioning into HE from LIFT OFF’s targeted cohort is consistently higher than that of their schools’ average; coupled with the knowledge that this targeted cohort experience barriers to learning outlined in LIFT OFF’s pupil selection criteria (appendix 1) suggesting they may not have explored HE as a feasible option post-school without LIFT OFF intervention.

The decision was made to include any destination data from newly engaged LIFT OFF schools to build the foundation for future reports. Higher Education destination data therefore looks low for Harris Ac, Morgan Ac, St. John’s RC HS, Auchmuty HS and St. Columbas’ RC HS. This is because of the phased year-group intake at newly engaged schools; meaning new Tier 1 schools only had a targeted intake of S4 pupils (no HE leavers), and new Tier 2 schools had a targeted intake of S5 pupils. Consequently, there were less leavers from these schools with most pupils choosing to remain at school for their S5 or S6 years.

Due to a LIFT OFF recruitment error by Dunfermline HS, both S5 & S6 pupils joined the LIFT OFF programme in AY19/20, which accounts for the higher than expected (92%) HE destination figure. Both Glenrothes HS and Kirkcaldy HS had no LIFT OFF school leavers during AY19/20. New Tier 3 schools (Bell Baxter HS and Waid Ac) received general HE application support meaning no targeted cohort of LIFT OFF core pupils could be tracked. Arbroath HS joined late in the reporting year, again meaning no pupils could be tracked.

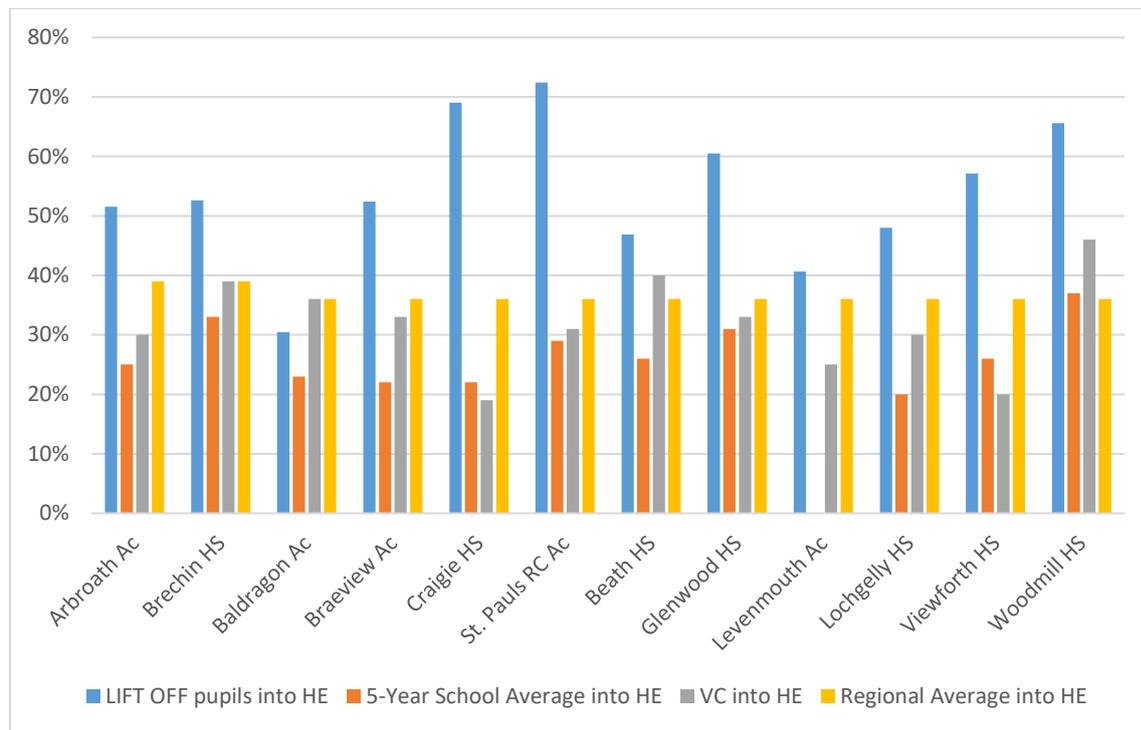
To illustrate the impact of LIFT OFF further, Figure 6 has removed newly engaged LIFT OFF schools and compares HE destination data for LIFT OFF legacy school targeted cohorts against that of their schools’ 5-year average HE destination figures, regional average into HE and virtual comparators (VC) data. This demonstrates that more LIFT OFF core pupils tend to transition into HE compared to their school average and virtual comparator.

Fig. 5 - Table of SLDR data for 2019/20 LIFT OFF leavers; including HE progression rate comparisons with whole school cohort, virtual comparator (VC) and regional averages

	LIFT OFF Tier	No. LIFT OFF Leavers	into FE	into MA	into Employment/ Other	into HE	5-Year School Average into HE	VC into HE	Regional Average into HE
Angus									
Arbroath Ac	1	33	18%	6%	24%	52%	25%	30%	39%
Brechin HS	2	38	21%	8%	18%	53%	33%	39%	39%
Dundee									
Baldragon Ac	1	23	39%	4%	26%	30%	23%	36%	36%
Braeview Ac	1	42	19%	10%	19%	52%	22%	33%	36%
Craigie HS	1	42	21%	2%	7%	69%	22%	19%	36%
Harris Ac*	2	6	33%	0%	50%	17%	43%	44%	36%
Morgan Ac*	1	4	75%	0%	25%	0%	28%	31%	36%
St. John's RC HS*	1	1	100%	0%	0%	0%	34%	37%	36%
St. Pauls RC Ac	1	29	17%	7%	14%	72%	29%	31%	36%
Fife									
Auchmuty HS*	2	3	33%	0%	33%	33%	37%	37%	36%
Beath HS	1	32	22%	3%	31%	47%	26%	40%	36%
Dunfermline HS*	2	12	0%	0%	8%	92%	36%	41%	36%
Glenwood HS	1	38	18%	8%	13%	61%	31%	33%	36%
Levenmouth Ac	1	32	22%	6%	31%	41%		25%	36%
Lochgelly HS	1	25	24%	4%	24%	48%	20%	30%	36%
St. Columbas' RC HS*	1	3	100%	0%	0%	0%	32%	37%	36%
Viewforth HS	2	21	14%	0%	29%	57%	26%	20%	36%
Woodmill HS	1	32	9%	3%	22%	66%	37%	46%	36%

*newly engaged LIFT OFF schools in AY19/20

Fig 6 - Clustered column chart of HE destination data for 2019/20 LIFT OFF legacy school leavers; including school average, virtual comparator (VC) and regional average comparisons.



LIFT OFF Core Pupil Profile

To understand the general profile of LIFT OFF's target cohort, Staying on Rates (SOR), postcode data and pupil views have been reviewed. This enables LIFT OFF to compare its targeted cohort against national government objectives surrounding widening access to HE.

Staying on Rates

In the 15 tier 1 schools in which LIFT OFF engaged with, S4 – S5 staying on rates were tracked. Out of the 212 LIFT OFF S4 core pupils, 94% of them chose to stay on at school into their 5th year. A breakdown of this can be seen in Figure 7.

This decision to stay on at school beyond their statutory leaving date demonstrates that LIFT OFF is effectively raising the aspirations of core pupils to consider HE as a viable option after school.

With Scottish Schools Online data sets being moved onto Insights, the Scottish Government online benchmarking tool, LIFT OFF has been unable to compare SOR with whole school cohorts due to not having access to Insights at this time. However, by using public 2020

pupil census supplementary statistics, it can be calculated the national average SOR from S4 (2019) to S5 (2020) in Scotland was 88.8% and the Angus, Dundee, Fife regional SOR was 82.8% This shows the SOR for LIFT OFF pupils is 5.2 points higher than the national average, and 11.2 points higher than the LIFT OFF regional average.

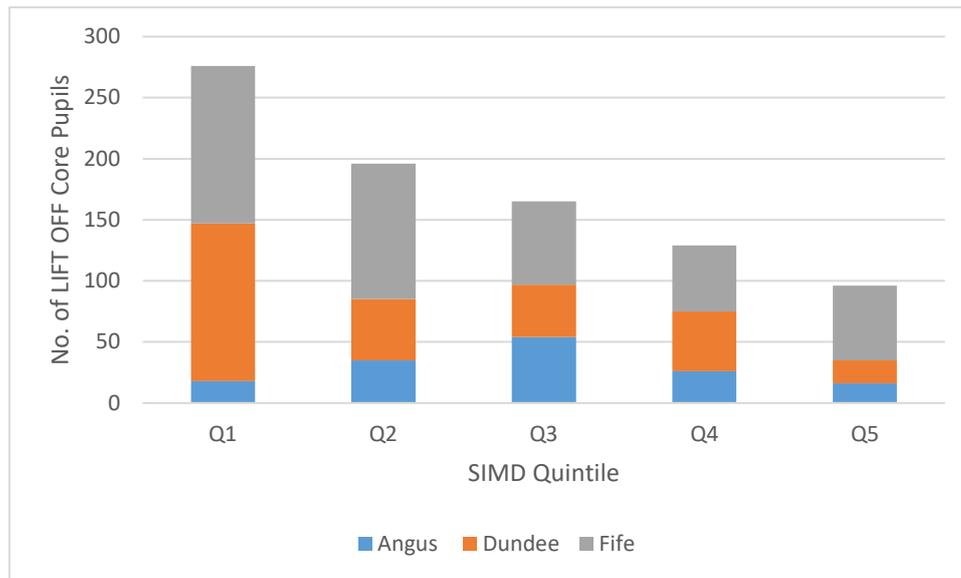
Fig 7 - Staying on Rates from S4 - S5 for 2019/2020 LIFT OFF core pupils

	No. of S4 Core pupils	No. S5 Core Pupils	% staying on rate
Angus			
Arbroath Ac	18	17	94
Brechin HS	11	11	100
Dundee			
Baldragon Ac	18	18	100
Braeview Ac	7	7	100
Craigie HS	5	5	100
Morgan Ac*	15	11	73
St. John's RC HS*	17	16	94
St. Pauls RC Ac	19	19	100
Fife			
Beath HS	21	20	95
Glenrothes HS	11	11	100
Glenwood HS	11	10	10
Levenmouth Ac	24	23	96
Lochgelly HS	15	15	100
St. Columbas' RC HS*	14	11	79
Woodmill HS	6	6	100
Total	212	200	94

Scottish Index on Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

During 2019/20, LIFT OFF held accurate postcode data for 862 core pupils. This showed that 472 pupils (54.8%) resided in most deprived 20% and 40% areas of Scotland (quintiles 1 & 2); with the remaining 390 (45.2%) reporting residency in areas represented through quintiles 3-5. This is illustrated in Figure 8. Engagement with this cohort, coupled with the LIFT OFF leaver destinations outlined in Figure 5, supports the First Ministers 2014 pledge - by 2030, 20% of all university entrants should come from the 20 per cent most deprived areas in Scotland; levelling the playing fields in terms of participation in university HE.

Fig. 8 - Number of LIFT OFF pupils from each SIMD quintile



SIMD lookup files are updated periodically to reflect the creation of new postcodes and changing levels of deprivation. For this report LIFT OFF has chosen to use SIMD2016; in-line with weighted data sets used by the SFC when conducting analysis on socio-economic status.

LIFT OFF has been embedding robust pupil selection guidelines to ensure support is targeted to those most in need. LIFT OFF's pupil selection criteria includes SIMD, along with other factors that can be considered barriers to learning. These measures align with SHEP's national framework as well as HEIs minimum access thresholds. They will be tracked and evaluated in future LIFT OFF reports to evaluate the programme expansion and pupil targeted delivery models.

Pupil Tracking Questions

LIFT OFF tracks how their core pupils feel about progression into HE post-school. During 2019/20 it was able to track responses at 4 separate points throughout the core pupils LIFT OFF learner journey. This included when they first joined the programme in S4, post engagement in S4, when they started S5, and post engagement in S5. Findings were clustered to identify changes in pupil confidence levels, HE aspirations, preparedness for HE and awareness of opportunities. Results are displayed in Figures 9 - 14.

The results show a marked increase in all of the measured areas, indicating that pupils self-reported levels of confidence, aspiration to enter into HE after school, preparedness and awareness of HE opportunities have all risen across the duration of their engagement with the programme. These results demonstrate that LIFT OFF is having a measurable, positive

impact on target pupils who have sustained engagement with the programme, in-line with its core aims and objectives.

Fig. 9 - Change in pupil aspiration

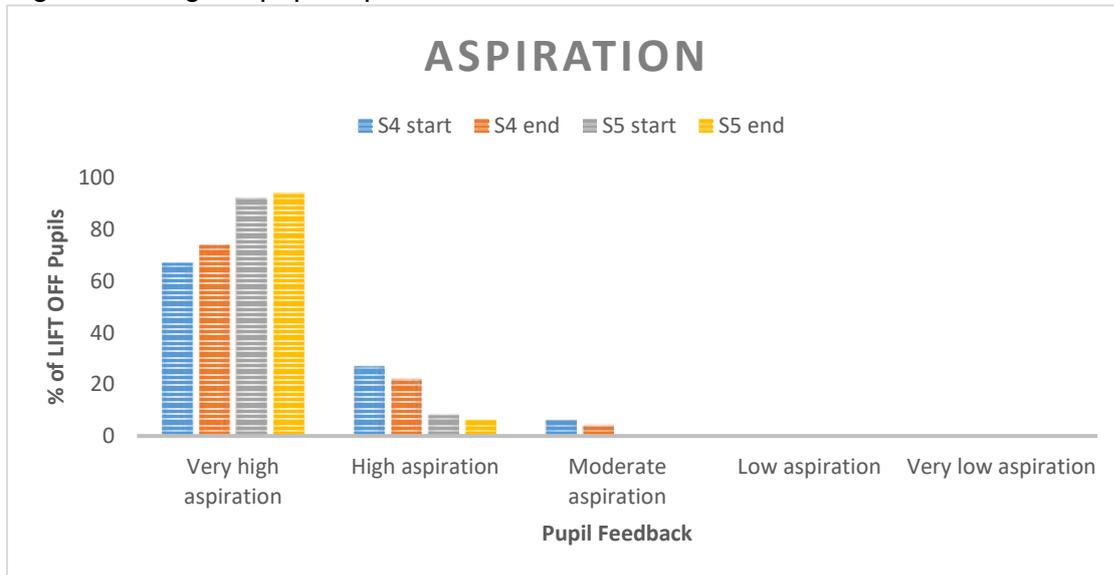


Fig. 10 - Change in pupil awareness of HE courses

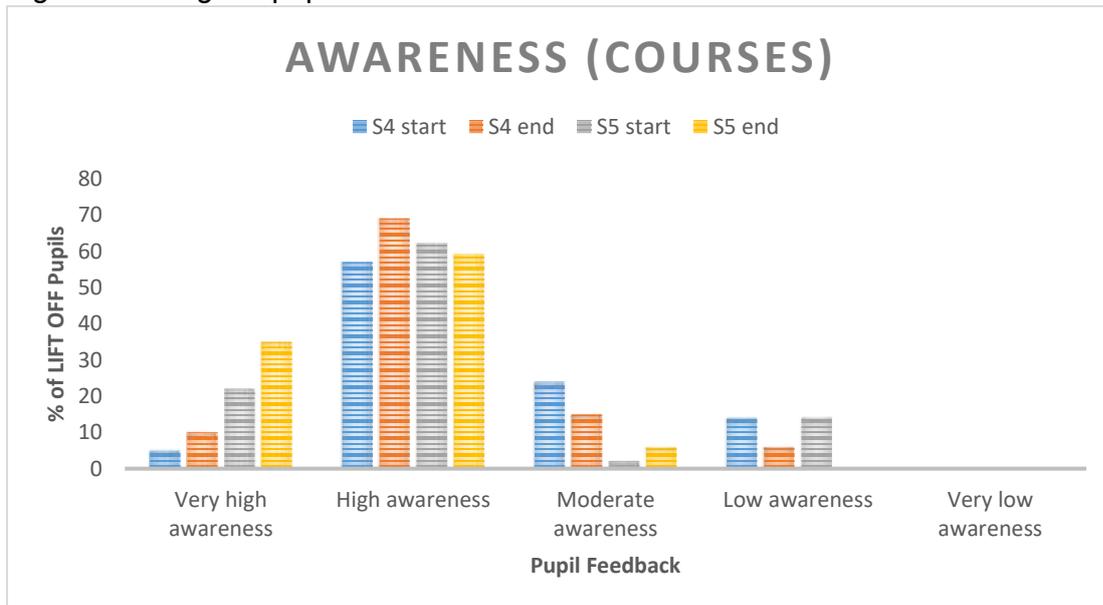


Fig. 11 - Change in pupils awareness of the support available in HE

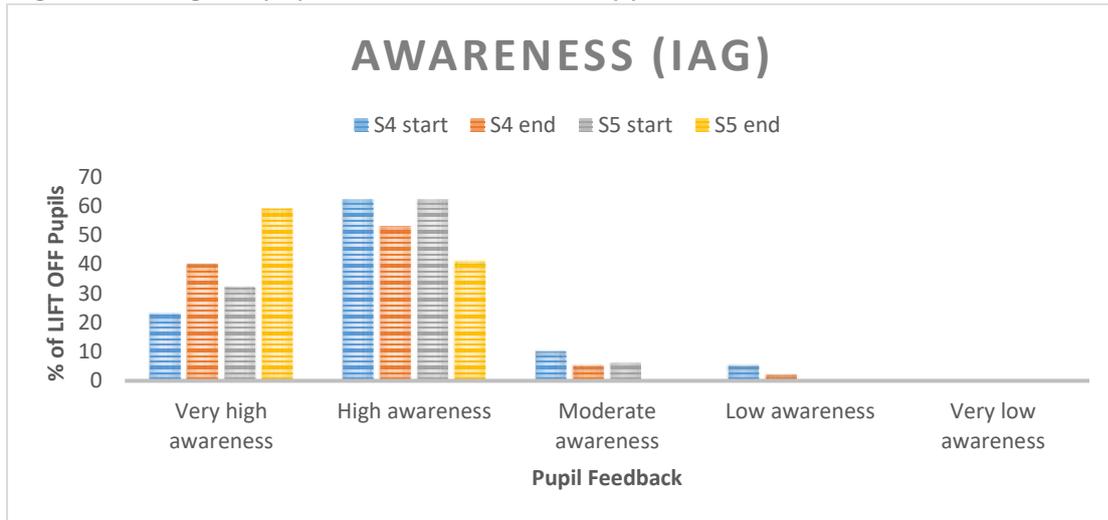


Fig. 12 - Change in pupil confidence levels relating to skills required in HE

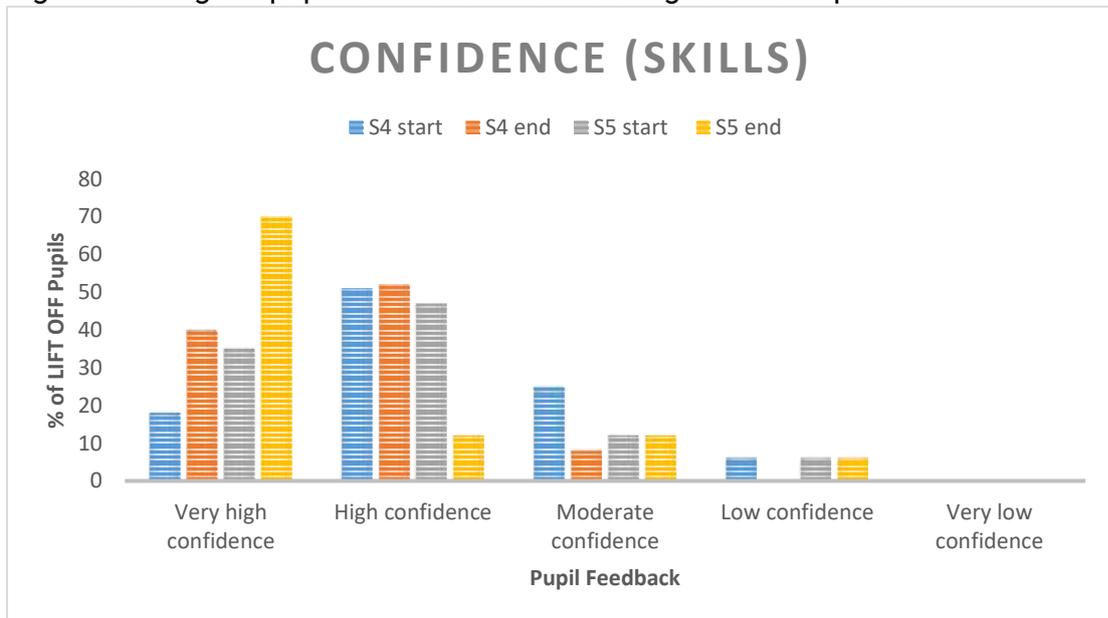


Fig. 13 - Change in pupil confidence relating to goal setting

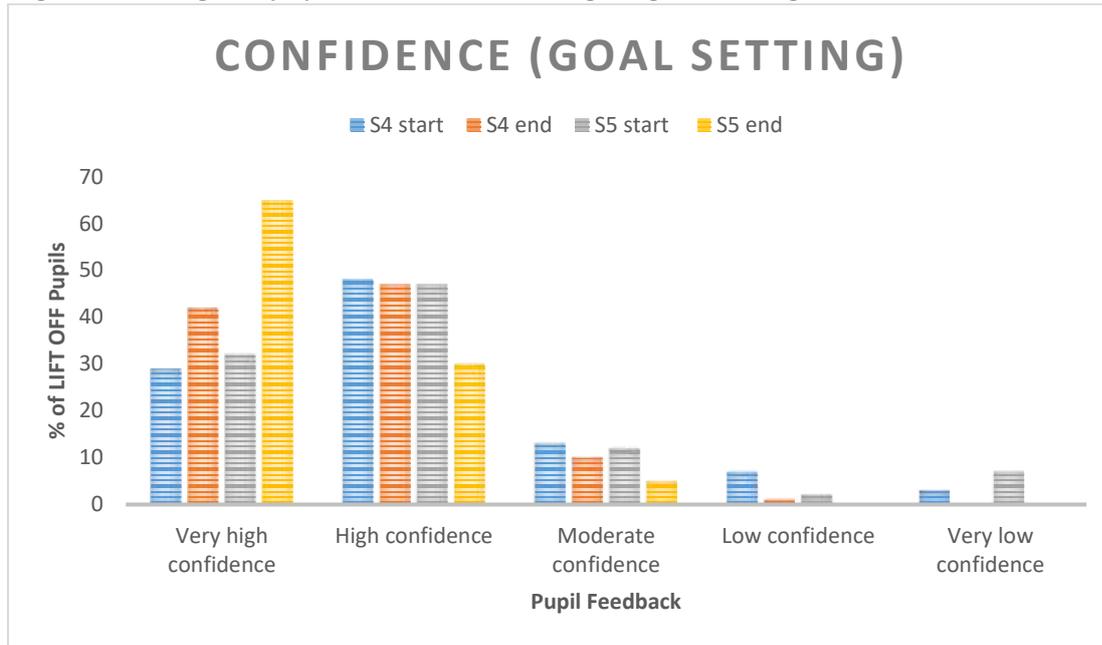
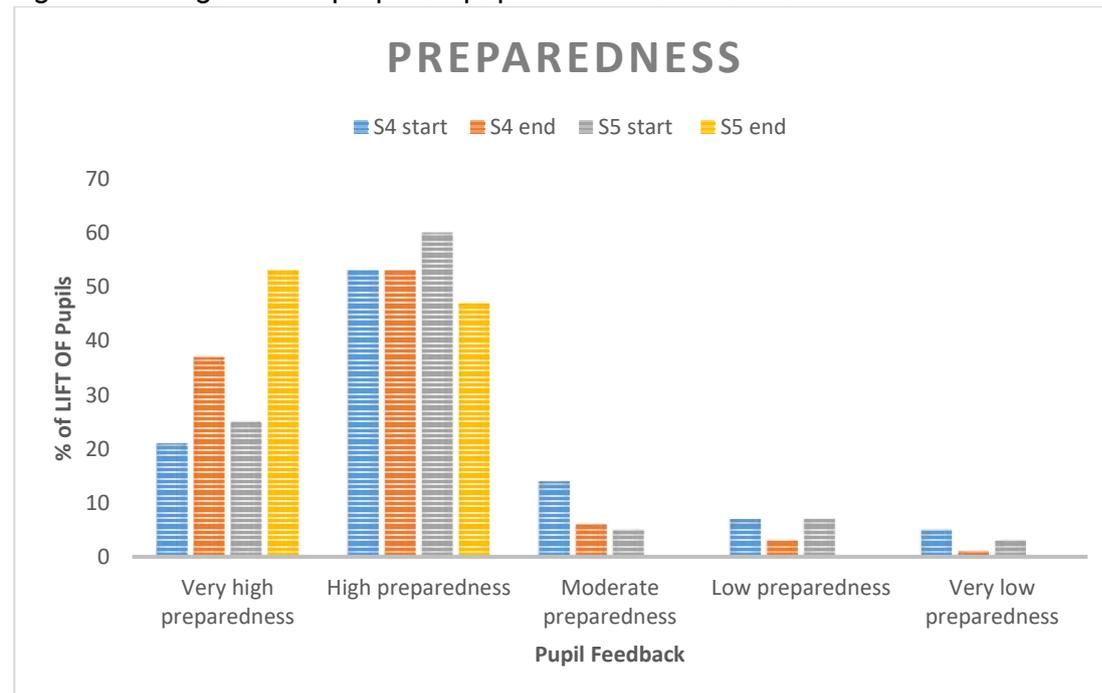


Fig. 14 - Change in how prepared pupil feel to transition to HE

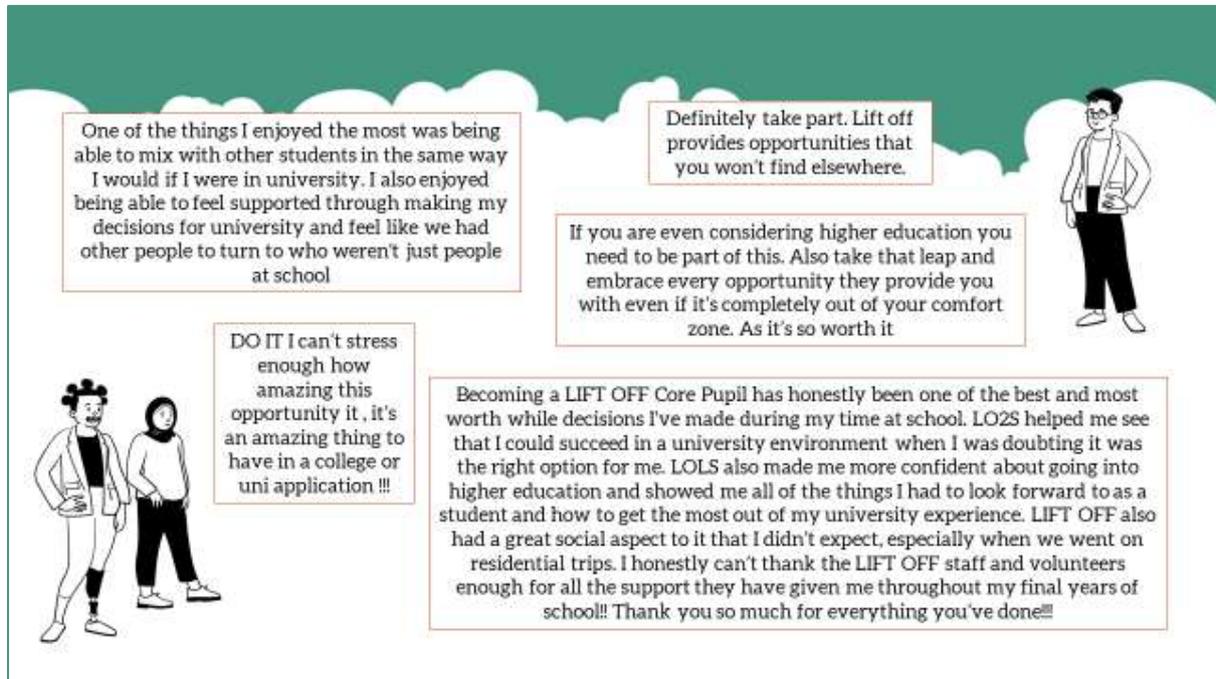


Qualitative Data

It is important to not only place emphasis on quantitative data when examining the LIFT OFF core pupil profile, but to explore the quality of the impact LIFT OFF has on its core pupils through opinion feedback. Figure 15 offers a snap-shot of some of the feedback from

legacy LIFT OFF pupils. They were asked what they remember about the programme and if they had any words of wisdom for future LIFT OFF applicants.

Fig. 15 - Qualitative pupil feedback surrounding the LIFT OFF programme



Student Volunteers

LIFT OFF provides its pupils with the opportunity to meet and work alongside current HE students. This pairing is two-fold, providing role models for the pupils as well as professional development opportunities for HE students. It is also worth mentioning that a number of our active volunteers are ex-LIFT OFF core pupils resulting in continued support and development for core pupils throughout their HE journey.

During this reporting year, LIFT OFF benefited from 180 volunteering hours from 16 students. These students developed their communication skills, time management, reflective practice and understanding of policy relating to young people; benefitting student employability post education. These skills were developed through formal training plus their individual contributions in supporting external pupil events hosted by partner HEIs and facilitating pupil groups during in-school interventions.

During the national COVID-19 lockdown, volunteers continued to support LIFT OFF core pupils through virtual platforms, creating videos and resources covering a range of topics.

Pupils benefited from our volunteering initiative by accessing role models who broke down barriers associated with HE learning, provided pupils with information, advice and guidance surrounding courses/HEIs whilst raising their educational aspirations.

Summary of Income and Expenditure

For AY2019/20, LIFT OFF received £325,000 from the SFC to deliver the LIFT OFF programme. This is awarded to our host institution, Abertay University in 3 instalments throughout the year. The majority of this funding is allocated to staff salaries which includes national insurance and pension contributions. The expertise within the LIFT OFF staff role ensures the programme is equipped to provide the best possible support to our pupils, parent/carers, schools, local authorities and HEI partners.

A breakdown of LIFT OFF's spending can be found in Figure 16. As the residential element of the programme, LIFT OFF 2 Success (LO2S) runs throughout the month of July, expenses for this portion often straddle two funding cycles if invoices are not received until August (funding cycles run from 1st August – 31st July). As such, some expenses for LO2S 2019 have been included in this breakdown despite LO2S 2020 being cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Fig. 16 - AY2019/2020 Expenditure

Staffing	£
Core staff salaries	256,022.28
Staff Travel	2852.66
Staff Development	2034.93
Programme Delivery	
S3	600.96
S4	3783.15
LO2S 2019	16090.78
LOLS	5786.82
S6	545.07
Operational Costs	
Consumables & Marketing	12887.18
Rent & Hosting	8700
COVID-19 Contingency Planning	15696.17
	325,000.00

COVID-19 Impact

COVID-19 impacted LIFT OFF delivery during AY2019/20 in March 2019 resulting in delivery moving online. Online delivery continued throughout the whole of AY2020/2021 meaning LIFT OFF was unable to deliver any experiential elements of the programme. Similar to the to SFC's caveat in their most recent Report on Widening Access (RoWA)⁴ COVID-19 will mean past and future data will not be directly comparable due to the impact of the pandemic.

During winter 2020 the Commissioner for Fair Access, Professor Sir Peter Scott, put out a call for evidence to assess how young people in Scotland were being affected by the pandemic in terms of their learning opportunities. LIFT OFF responded through SHEP in December 2020, outlining impact to date and predicted ongoing impact. LIFT OFF's section of SHEP's response can be found in Figure 17.

Fig. 17 - Impact (actual and predicted) of COVID-19 on LIFT OFF pupils during AY2020/21

LIFT OFF Year Group	Type of Engagement	COVID Impact on Engagement
S3	Aspiration raising, in school events	Normally large-scale events which run in school throughout January/February. These will now be facilitated in small groups with teachers supporting delivery, instead of LIFT OFF staff, in school PSE time. The positive impact of this will be LIFT OFF resources can be delivered to more pupils by embedding activities in PSE delivery. However, with LIFT OFF staff being unable to facilitate the sessions in person, it will negatively impact relationship building and raising awareness of LIFT OFF for future targeted cohorts.
S4	Promotional workshops, campus visits & 1:1 meetings	LIFT OFF managed to recruit 216 new S4 core pupils despite not being permitted to deliver promotional sessions in school. This is testament to the hard work of our contact teachers who coordinated electronic application distribution alongside promotional videos; as well as the perceived value of the LIFT OFF programme. These pupils have, however missed out on the experiential elements of the programme, with no campus events running during AY2020/21. Pupils

⁴ Report on Widening Access 2019-20, Scottish Funding Council, Issue date: 30 June 2021: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/reportsandpublications_sfcst052021/report-on-widening-access-2019-20.pdf

		have however engaged with sustained individual support facilitated through MS Teams, phone calls and live chat functions. The COVID impact for this particular cohort will be the lack of aspiration raising and confidence building opportunities, potentially impacting their future learning choices.
S5	5 day residential (LO2S), promotional workshops, credit rated LIFT OFF Learning Skills programme (LOLS), campus visits & 1:1 action planning meetings with follow-ups	LIFT OFF is currently working with 237 S5 pupils across 21 schools. With no residential events running in the summer of 2020, plus no opportunities to visit HEI's, it can be argued this cohort has been the most heavily impacted by COVID. The credit rated element of the LIFT OFF programme plans to move online for 2021. This will potentially mean the removal of maximum pupil numbers, but whether pupils will engage with this additional qualification opportunity during a recovery of learning phase, plus the pressure of preparing for exams after the removal of 2020 exam diet, remains to be seen. This cohort has positively engaged with their individual LIFT OFF support via the same methods outlined for the S4 cohort. However, this engagement has highlighted pupils' anxieties surrounding their future learning choices as a result of COVID, with many reporting a lack of opportunities to enhance their future applications, feeling underprepared and lacking confidence in themselves, as well as the education environment.
S6	In school workshops to include researching HEIs, applications & personal statements, accepting offers, time management and budgeting, plus personal statement checking service	S6 workshops had to move online in August 2020 due to COVID. Each had synchronous and asynchronous elements to maximise engagement and suit the needs of pupils as well as the schools. The COVID impact for this cohort has mainly surrounded the cancelation of the 2020 exam diet and the response of HEI's to deal with this. This particular cohort has concerns that the measures taken by HEI's to support 2020/21 applicants will become void for their 2021/22 applications. For example, they have not sat an S5 exam diet, but entry requirements currently still ask for Highers in 1 sitting. There has also been a lack of extra-curricular activities for them to participate in.
Parents/Carers	Information evenings, SAAS presentation	Virtual information events have taken place this year in place of in-school "LIFT OFF information

	<p>and LIFT OFF updates</p>	<p>evenings”. Emails and text messages remained the default platforms for general updates. Parents/carers are normally invited “celebrations of success” for LIFT OFF pupils, for example at programme graduation events. As these have not been possible due to COVID, these stakeholders have missed out on valuable opportunities to “buy-in” to LIFT OFF and raise the aspirations of their young people in a home setting. Qualitative feedback opportunities have also been missed.</p>
<p>Overall comments on Engagement & Connectively: The COVID world forced LIFT OFF to adapt quickly and embed distance engagement strategies into our widening access programme. Despite some positives, for example enhanced 1:1 tailored support opportunities, these are outweighed by the negative impacts; most predominately the lack of aspiration raising and confidence building opportunities - key success measures for SHEP. Online engagement spiked when pupils were able to return to school. This highlighted many may have experienced digital poverty at home, limited space to work and/or a lack of direction or focus. It is LIFT OFF’s belief that the impacts of COVID will be experienced for many years to come, and funders, policy influences and HEI’s should plan for this accordingly.</p>		

Appendices

Appendix 1 - LIFT OFF Pupil Selection Criteria

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PUPIL SELECTION CRITERIA

In order to target LIFT OFF support to individual pupils within each school, a robust pupil selection tool has been developed.

The selection criteria used is aligned with the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP); and markers used in national access programmes and contextualised Higher Education admissions.

CRITERIA

LIFT OFF Core Pupils will be targeted by their potential to achieve at least two Highers by the end of S6 – allowing that young person to apply to HE (HNC or above).

They must then meet at least one of the following markers to access LIFT OFF support .

SIMD	Care Experienced	FSM
ASN	ESOL	

Young Carers	Subject to negative peer and/or community influence	Adverse family circumstance
Rural isolation	Little/no family experience of HE	Asylum seekers/refugees

Schools should confirm which markers have been met.

Pupils who meet the academic criteria and two or more of the markers listed above, may be entitled to additional LIFT OFF support. This will be assessed on an individual case basis.