

Overview

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, the S6 Transitions Programme offers both generic support 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, as well as tailored advice and guidance to core pupils in S6. This extra level of support for Core Pupils is provided through the S6 Transitions Support Service which offers Core pupils the opportunity to attend Teams Live events, to have Teams DM conversations or phone calls with a member of the LIFT OFF Staff, and to submit up to three drafts of their personal statement to LIFT OFF for comment.

Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of the skills required to search for H.E. courses, navigate college application portals, and to apply to university through UCAS.
- Use the resources provided to develop a strong personal statement.
- Develop the key skills required to succeed in H.E. such as learning in H.E. styles via recorded content and LIVE sessions, as well as budgeting and searching for accommodation.

Previous Recommendations

- Based on AY 19/20 staff feedback and verbal feedback from pupils several changes were made to S6 workshop resources, though workshop frameworks for workshops 1 and 4 remained largely the same.
- Workshop 2 was split into two sessions; the first focusing on drafting and editing early incarnations of the personal statement draft, with the new workshop 3 covering fine tuning the final draft.
- New S6 pupils were sent an invite to a LIFT OFF Live Event in June 2021 which promoted early planning of university applications and which flagged the S6 Transitions Booklet (available on the website) as a tool to begin planning for life after school during the summer between S5 and S6.

COVID-19 Adaptations to Delivery

In AY 2020/2021 the S6 programme migrated to remote delivery. All generic S6 Sessions (1,2,3 and 4) were condensed into videos ranging in length between 5 and 20 minutes. These videos were recorded by LIFT OFF staff and were sent via YouTube link, along with accompanying learning materials, directly to Core pupils and to school guidance staff who could facilitate delivery of materials to all non-core S6 pupils. Videos 1, 2 and 3 all fell before the October holidays to coincide with school personal statement deadlines and S6 session 4 videos were released in February 2021.

To provide more tailored advice and guidance to S6 Core Pupils, LIFT OFF staff devised the S6 Transitions Support Service. This included LIVE Teams Events to which all S6 Core Pupils and guidance staff were directly invited. These LIVE events acted as interactive follow-up sessions to S6 generic video content for sessions 1, 2 and 3, and were billed as being akin to H.E.-level tutorials (with the generic videos standing in place of lecture content). LIVE sessions were further bolstered in the S6 Transitions Support Service by opportunities for individual advice and guidance through Teams DM chat or phone calls, as well as the personal statement drafting service. The personal statement drafting service, previously exclusive to Core Pupils from Tier 1 schools, was also extended to Tier 2 schools.

Programme Evaluation

Although no evaluation strategy was developed ahead of online delivery, LIFT OFF Programme-wide feedback was gathered from former S6 Core pupils via a Microsoft Form, from LO staff during team discussions, and from school teaching staff during planning meetings or via email.

LO Staff Feedback

- The S6 Transitions Support Service was viewed positively as a concept by LO staff who supported addition of Tier 2 pupils to Personal Statement Drafting Service.
- LIVE Sessions and team delivery allowed LIFT OFF to maintain a presence during remote working periods.

Contact Teacher Feedback

- S6 Generic Video content received praise from school contact teachers, some of whom screened videos (on multiple occasions) during PSE lessons. Concise nature of videos was a particular source of praise.

Pupil Evaluation and Transitions Support Service Participation Trends

- S6 Core Pupils were invited to feedback on the LIFT OFF Programme in its entirety. In the open questions part of the survey where pupils were invited to record positive experiences, S6 content featured prominently. Pupils found the personal statement editing service particularly useful.

- LIVE session attendance, on the whole, was fairly buoyant with around 20 pupils attending each session.
- The number of personal statement drafts received was up 50% on AY 19/20 from 26 to 39.

Future Recommendations

- Maintain 4 session outline with each session being 1 period in length.
- Maintain S6 “preview” before summer holidays to encourage pupils to use their summer holidays effectively.
- Trial session 3 personal statement “drop-in” for any S6 pupils with specific problems with their personal statements. In-school reminder emails will make it clear that pupils should be selected by school staff before drop-in session to alleviate pressures on LO staff. Where possible, sessions should be multi-staffed.
- Maintain extension of personal statement editing provision to Tier 2 Core Pupils.
- Maintain online and remote elements of the S6 Transitions Support Service i.e. LIVE sessions for core pupils, Teams content, DMs, and phone calls.
- Engage student volunteers in the S6 Transitions Service.
- Maintain pupil attendance tracking spreadsheet first adopted in 2019 which details number of pupils in attendance at each session as well as a space for staff reflection on the successes and areas for improvement in the session delivery.
- Develop pupil evaluation strategy for the S6 Programme.