

Introduction

The S4 Event Alternative acted as a temporary provision to replace the experiential elements of what would have been our Campus Event. This event was aimed at all of our Tier 1 schools, excluding Kirkcaldy High School, who did not enrol an S4 cohort for AY2021-2022 due to COVID restrictions.

This workshop incorporated 2 interactive activities to develop pupils understanding of HE and used the session as an opportunity to promote LO2S. These activities were designed to develop knowledge of HE by raising awareness of different HEIs and articulation routes. This event has been treated as a temporary revision and we do not aim to repeat it for future academic years assuming that government restrictions continue to ease surrounding COVID-19.

Context

In previous cycles The Campus Event would run from December to February. However, when it became unclear when HEIs would be able to accept in person visits in line with government regulations we decided to replace the event with the Event Alternative. In order for us to stay on track with events planning and in time for our summer residential, LIFT OFF to Success (LO2S), the S4 Event Alternative fell in the last two weeks of March 2022.

We were also faced with the challenge of not being able to replace the experiential element of the Campus Event therefore we did not try to re-create it, but offer the opportunity to experience an in person visit through the promotion of LO2S. Having delivered the LO2S promotion by utilising multiple mediums of communication (video, leaflet, mail) we ensured that pupils and parents/carers received key information and suitable resources to access to apply.

Method

This event was planned for the duration of one school period which allowed for 2 interactive activities and a short promotional video. We planned for content to be delivered through a PowerPoint presentation. Each staff member was equipped with a USB containing the presentation and LO2S promotional video. We required IT provision and access to log in to a school computer which was specified to contact teachers ahead of time. Staff also came prepared with LO2S parent/carer informational leaflets for pupils to take away.

Each contact teacher was emailed three weeks ahead of planned delivery to confirm a suitable date and time, as well as a room with suitable IT equipment. Pupils were also made aware of the event two weeks ahead of time by email via Moosend. Using Moosend allowed for user friendly approach, adopting a less formal format than a regular email. Using this platform also allowed cluster leads to schedule emails ahead of time and track engagement from pupils once received. Pupils were also sent a text reminder the day before the event confirming the time and room booking. Post event, pupils were sent a reminder of LO2S via Moosend including a link to the application and website which where they could revisit the LO2S promotional video content shown during the in-school session.

S4 LIFT OFF Engagements



Hey[Recipient Name] Fallback!

It seems like AGES ago that we came into school to complete your Core Pupil Profiles!

We are super excited to share some opportunities coming up with LIFT OFF! You can take part in either an in-school S4 workshop or digital engagement dependent upon school preference.

Tracking Questions

Complete Tracking Questions

Before we see you though, please complete this simple 5-minute form that explores your feelings about learning after school:

Coming Up: S4 Engagement

Figure 1, Moosend email screengrab


LIFT OFF To Success LO2S summer residential for core pupils progressing into S5.

Dear Parent / Carer, Your young person is eligible to take part in LIFT OFF to Success & has received information today in school. LIFT OFF to Success (LO2S) is our residential summer school for our core pupils who are progressing into S5. Pupils will spend a week living like a student, staying in a hall of residence and exploring different Higher Education Institutions throughout Scotland. Best of all, it's FREE! This year the summer school will take place from 18-22 July. Due to the nature of the residential event parent or carer consent is required for a pupil to apply to take part.

LO2S Information

- 18-22 July 2022
- Fully funded accommodation, meals & transport
- Pupils transitioning from S4 to S5
- Pupils from 15 schools across Fife & Tayside
- Application Deadline 18th April 2022

"If you get the opportunity to take part in LO2S jump at it!"



How to Apply

Places on LO2S are limited so we ask pupils to complete an online application with parent / carer permission. Pupils will be given access to apply via email. Please use this QR code to access additional information. Apply by **18th April 22**



Successful Applicants

Once we have received all the applications, we allocate places with the help of school guidance staff. Letters will be sent home to inform you & your young person if they have been successful or added to our reserve list.

Get in touch

If you have any questions about LO2S

www.lift-off.org.uk

lift.off@abertay.ac.uk

"I met so many new friends and everything about the experience was great."



Figure 2, LO2S parent and carer leaflet

LIFT OFF 2022

Hey [Recipient Name] Fallback!
It was so good to see you in school today at our S4 Workshop, we hope you enjoyed it! After a long 2 year break we are so excited to say...

LO2S IS BACK!

Simply complete the application form alongside a parent or carer to be in with a chance of being selected to participate in LO2S!

APPLY HERE

LO2S summer residential IS BACK!

18-22 July 2022

Application Deadline 18th April 2022

Visit Higher Education Institutions across Scotland

Figure 3, Moosend email screengrab

In light of the tight turnaround and staff turnover, the first activity was adapted from previous workshops and quizzed pupils on their knowledge of Scottish HEIs, courses and HE social activity e.g societies. The second activity was less interactive and allowed space for real life examples to be displayed, particularly relatable stories from volunteers currently in HE. Volunteers were made aware of the event via a monthly newsletter and online Volunteer hub available on our website. Each volunteer was then scheduled to a session based on their availability and staff's agreement to a suitable pick up/drop off point.

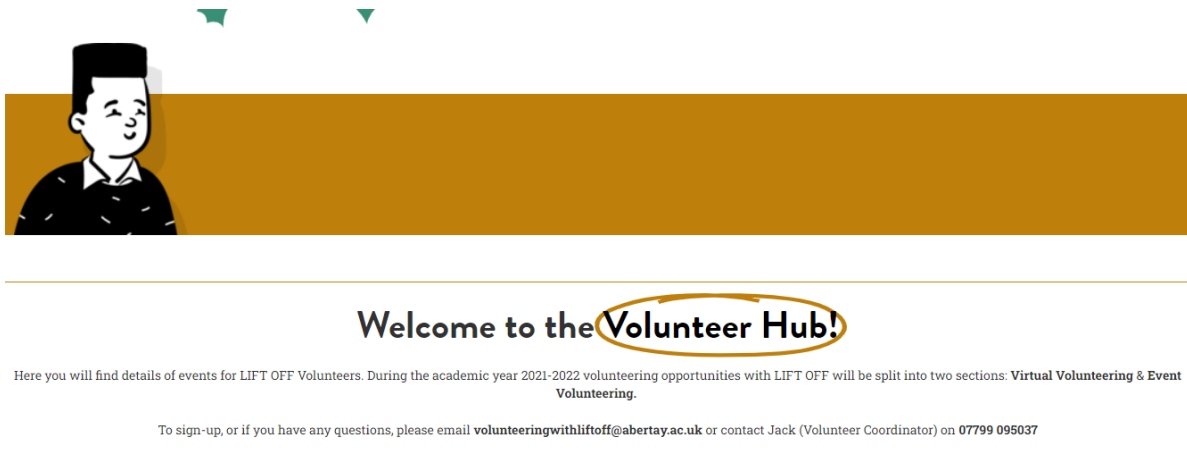


Figure 4, Screenshot from LIFT OFF website

Output

As we do not plan on repeating this event due to Covid restrictions easing, we did not send formal tracking questions to S4 pupils and teachers for qualitative data. However, reviewing core pupil cohorts, attendance and LO2S application numbers we have considered the quantitative data to reflect that this was a successful session in achieving the main objective: promoting the summer residential.

Pupil analysis

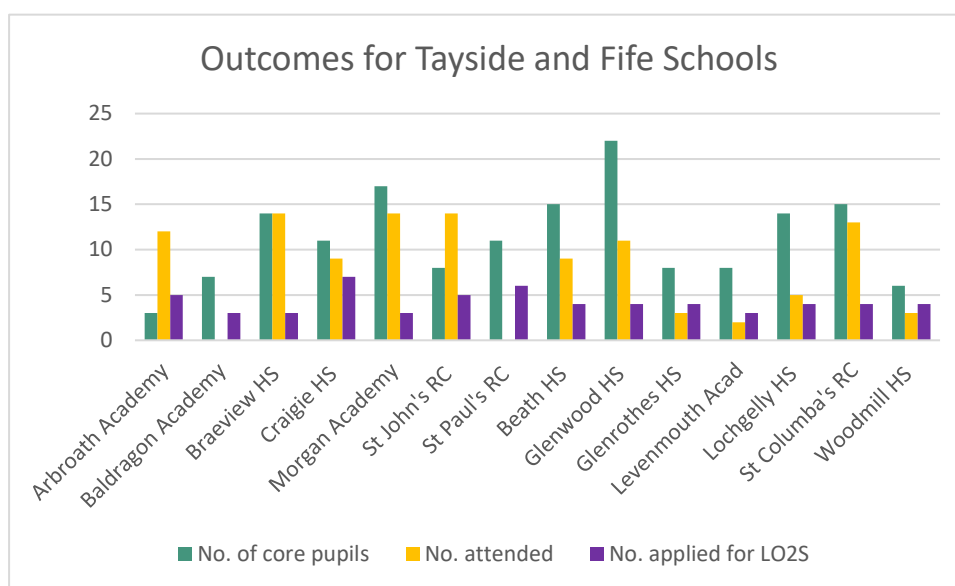


Table 1

Table 1 shows data from all of our Tier 1 schools in Tayside and Fife with the exception of Kirkcaldy High School. In general, less pupils attended the workshop than the total cohort number with the exception of Braeview High School. In two cases, more pupils attended than the total cohort number. Due to ongoing disruption during Covid, not all of our T1 schools had the capacity to fill their cohort numbers therefore this session was also used to promote LO and allowed cluster leads to backfill spaces. This can be seen in the case of Arbroath Academy which had 3 core pupils registered, but 12 attending. In total 5 core pupils applied (see table 2).

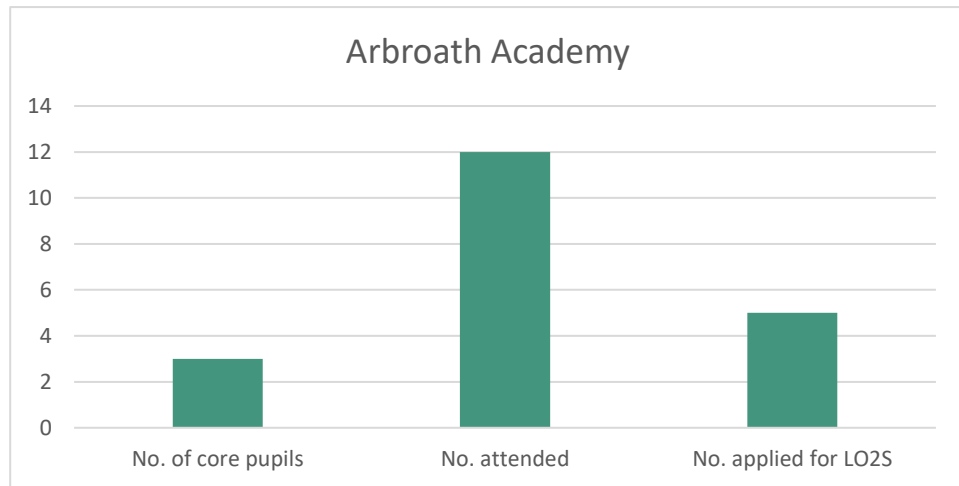


Table 2

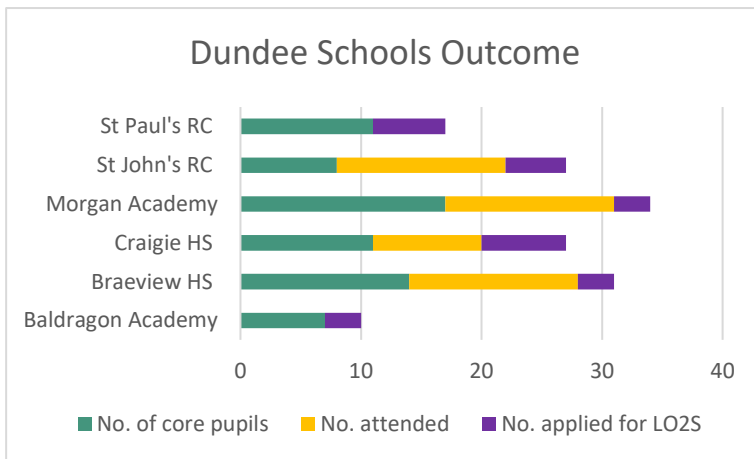


Table 3

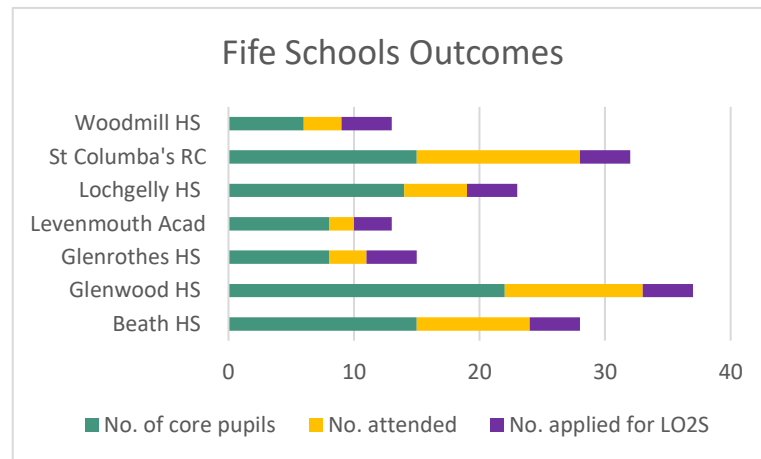


Table 4

Comparing the numbers between Fife and Dundee schools, Dundee schools had a higher relative attendance number in relation to its total cohort number, with the exception of St Columba's RC (Fife). The most common factors which contributed to a lack of attendance across all schools were to Covid, secondary prelims being held, or lack of awareness of the event.

Whilst absence due to Covid related factors cannot be managed, the lack of information pupils informed cluster leads that they did not receive was something that we took on board. Conversations with the pupils who did attend confirmed that they did not receive an email and were aware of the event via sms.

In total, X amount of pupils applied to LO2S with 59 spaces available. Expand

Staff analysis

A feedback form was created to gather qualitative data from staff which was collected post event. This evaluation was split into four sections: positive outcomes; outcomes needing improvement; comments and recommendations. This employed an open approach to collecting information and allowed each staff member to reflect on what elements of the session stood out to them.

Positive outcomes	Outcomes needing improvement	Comments	Recommendations
<p>Positive engagement where groups were larger.</p> <p>Prizes worked as a good incentive</p> <p>Quiz worked well as a way to frame discussions about HE in general.</p> <p>Volunteer input was valuable</p> <p>Leaflet was good to give to teacher for pupils who couldn't attend</p>	<p>Teachers just left us to it, might have been beneficial for them to attend to get LO2S info.</p> <p>Activities not interactive - LO staff talking at them for whole period.</p> <p>Journey to HE was hard to make interactive without additional staff/volunteers</p>	<p>Overrunning prelims were a feature of this year, hopefully not repeated.</p> <p>Generally felt it was well received and LO2S applications reflect that positively.</p> <p>I think this was a great alternative to the Campus events when they couldn't go ahead.</p> <p>The quiz could work well as part of a future LO2S promo.</p>	<p>Integrate quiz with future events, perhaps change the name of the activity so doesn't put pupils off.</p> <p>Volunteers to be used moving forward with a more structured plan for pick up/drop off</p> <p>Hopeful for a campus-based engagement in AY22-23. Think that taking the quiz element forward in some format would be sensible based on feedback here.</p>

Figure 5

Figure 5 displays a mix of responses from all staff. There is a general agreement that the event worked well as promotion for LO2S. It is also agreed that the quiz was an interactive way to “frame discussions about HE” from the majority of staff, with the exception of one who felt “staff [were] talking at them [pupils] for the whole period”.

Discussion

Communication method

The organisation, preparation and delivery of the session was managed successfully with some exceptions. The main concern for this event was attendance numbers. Although school contact teachers facilitated the event within the suggested period, the timing of the event resulted in low attendance. For example, Glenrothes High School has a total of 8 S4 pupils, of which 3 attended. The contact teacher of this school confirmed absent pupils was due to secondary prelims being sat. Despite this, 4 pupils applied from LO2S. Pupil attendance sheets which were recorded at the time confirms that 3 out of 4 of these pupils did attend the session, whilst one did not. Although we can't confirm this extra pupil received the leaflet, they may have received information via Moosend or social media. In this instance we have considered our multi-faced approach to communication to be successful.

However, one of the main reasons reported from cluster leads as to why pupils did not attend was that they had not received confirmation of the event. Discussion between staff revealed that most pupils found out about the session through sms but did not check their glow email accounts. However, reviewing data on Moosend suggests that most pupils did receive the email by indication of the "opened" rate on the platforms analysis. Although this data reflects that pupils did indeed interact with the email, the pupils that did attend confirmed that their peers who did not attend did not receive communication.

Despite this, discussion between development workers and teachers concluded that with the tight turnaround between the planning and delivery alongside prelims, the event was as successful as it could have been. This has been measured particularly by the surplus of applications in relation to available spaces.

Event activities

The first activity used a quiz to frame conversation surrounding different HEIs and HE courses available. Although the majority of staff considered this to be an interactive activity, we took into consideration that for smaller class numbers it may not have been. To overcome this, we incentivised the quiz with prizes which the majority of staff felt increased participation and therefore boosted conversation surrounding HE. Prize giving was merited on staff's discretion depending on attendance numbers, engagement and the question being asked. Due to this we felt this was a constructive activity with a positive impact.

The second activity, "destination journeys" aimed to raise awareness of articulation routes. This activity relied on a visual aid from the presentation which displayed icons relating to the start of a core pupils journey with LO, to the decision making process and then finally the end destination, being in HE. The aim of this activity was to show pupils that a journey to HE is not linear which we did by gathering examples from volunteers. When we spoke to volunteers we specifically asked about the obstacles they faced and how they overcame this on their journey to HE. Moving forward we decided to use one example from a volunteer which best demonstrated the flexibility surrounding HE. This was displayed through text excerpts and expanded on by the presenter. The second example was left blank for either a staff member or volunteer to fill in. It was agreed that volunteer examples were more valuable and when not present, the activity was not interactive. Based on this discussion it was agreed that volunteer participation added tangibility to articulation routes, allowing the pupils to converse with a someone who has recently undertaken a journey to HE. In this case, we have discussed using videos to replicate volunteer input should we chose to utilise an activity like this at future events.

The final part of the session was the LO2S promotion. This was presented through a promotional video which highlighted key information, which was also made available through a paper copy aimed at parent and carers.

Staff feedback

Overall, this qualitative data shows that this event worked well as a substitution of the Campus Event. However, we look forward to the chance of bringing back the experiential element of in person HEI visits for the next academic cycle.

Conclusion

This event was created in replace of our Campus Event which could not be run for the last two academic years due to COVID-19 restrictions. Considering this, the S4 Even Alternative can be considered a success in contrast to the last 2 years.

Although we could not return to fully running the Campus Event, we believe the Event Alternative created a positive result for LO2S applications, where pupils will have the opportunity to be involved in this experiential element at a later stage. Staff feedback has suggested that for the tight turnaround we had between the delivery of the S4 Event Alternative and LO2S deadline the event was a success based on ease and clarity of delivery methods, and success in LO2S applicants.

Recommendations

As mentioned, this event is not intended to be repeated for the next delivery cycle as we hope to be able to return to our Campus Event as COVID-19 restrictions ease. However, based on the success of different elements of this event we may consider developing on activities and methods of communication, planning and delivery for future events

- We found that incentivising the quiz worked particularly well and plan to implement this in future activities to encourage and increase engagement with pupils. As using a quiz worked well for informally framing a conversation, we recommend using this approach for future events where a discussion is required but would like to refrain from a lecture style approach.
- The added value of volunteer presence was particularly noted. Therefore, we plan to implement volunteers in sessions where possible to add a relatable student voice and enhance the effectiveness of an activity.
- We are looking to work out a better framework to manage our volunteer schedule moving forward. This includes considering Covid regulations, car share, pick-up/drop-off points and lateness for pick up times.
- By taking a multifaceted approach to our communication plan, we were able to reach both pupils, parents and carers whether present at the event or not. Therefore, we will continue to use Moosend to track engagement with pupils, parents and carers whilst still having an alternative method of communication such as leaflets to overcome pupil absence and immediate access to key information.

- We would like to reinforce contact teacher's role for LO sessions by encouraging the pupils use of their glow emails. As we have indirect interaction with core pupils, email is our main method of communication.
- Although we could not predict that prelims were due to be run for a second time, and over schedule in individual schools, the timing of the event was not optimal. The re-scheduling and repetition of prelims was due to Covid disruptions therefore we expect that during this time period in the next academic year the situation will have changed. We will have to consider these factors should we chose to run an alternative event in the next cycle AY2022-2023.