



**Next Steps  
South West**

# **Navigating Journeys to Higher Education**

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**School & College Programme  
2021/22**

# ABOUT US



**Next Steps South West (NSSW) is a collaboration of 14 partner universities and colleges throughout Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset, funded by the Office for Students (OfS).**

As the region's Uni Connect programme, we help young people navigate their own personal journey to higher education (HE). Throughout the region, we hold events and activities designed to inspire students aged 13-19 years old to fulfil their potential. Together we raise aspirations and awareness, while improving access to HE, helping target students make informed decisions about their future.

To ensure that students receive the right information at the right time, we've created a programme of interventions aimed at developing soft skills and knowledge of educational pathways. Our work is entirely impartial, so students can decide what suits their individual needs.



**What is Uni Connect?**  
The Uni Connect Programme brings together 29 partnerships of universities, further education colleges, and other local partners. The project started in January 2017, and its aim is to double the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in HE by 2020.

# BARRIERS

**Many factors may prevent a young person from fulfilling their future potential. Our events and resources are designed to address the following themes:**

## SOFT SKILLS

**BUILDING SELF-BELIEF AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS, INCLUDING RESILIENCE, MOTIVATION, TEAM WORK, RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION.**

## KNOWLEDGE

**PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF THE BENEFITS AND CAREER PROSPECTS, STUDY OPTIONS, APPLICATIONS, QUALIFICATION LEVELS AND STUDENT LIFE.**

## SOCIOECONOMICS

**PROVIDING CULTURAL CAPITAL AND ROLE MODELS, WHILST IMPROVING ATTITUDES AND ASPIRATIONS.**

## FINANCE AND COST

**DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE OF FEES AND FINANCE, SUPPORT AVAILABLE AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT.**

## INFLUENCERS

**INFORMING PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS AND CARERS.**

## GEOGRAPHY

**OVERCOMING PERCEIVED OR PHYSICAL CHALLENGES, BROADENING HORIZONS.**

# NSSW OFFER

Progressive and engaging, our core activities are designed in stages that address the NSSW-identified barriers to HE progression.

## Introduction Stage - Year 9

- Challenge pre-conceived ideas about HE.
- Provide opportunities to explore the career benefits of HE.
- Introduce HE as a managed, personal investment.
- Inform on local HE provision and provide the opportunity to visit a campus.

## Development Stage – Year 10 & 11

- Develop aspirations through interactions with HE role models.
- Use research skills to identify personal interests and possibilities.
- Increase awareness of HE pathways and how HE differs from school.
- Encourage discussion around concerns relating to student fees and finance.

## Consolidation Stage – Year 12/13, Post-16 & Adult Learners

- Raise aspirations within subject areas and HE progression routes.
- Develop confidence and ability to make informed HE choices.
- Spend time on HE campuses with student ambassadors and lecturers.
- Understand that finance and geographical location are not barriers to HE progression.

**Eligibility** Target students are identified as living in a postcode where HE participation is low, or are studying at Level 3 in FE and are 19+. We utilise criteria outlined by the OfS, known as POLAR3 Q1 and Gaps Q1 & Q2.

For more information on how we identify target students, please visit [officeforstudents.org.uk](https://officeforstudents.org.uk)







# CORE ACTIVITIES

Many of our in-person activities can be also be delivered live online or viewed as pre-recorded sessions.

See icons in the tables below for information on alternative formats. We have suggested where the session may align with Gatsby Benchmarks in the GB column.

## YEAR 9 - Introduction Stage

 Recorded online session available  Live online session available

Session	Format	Summary	Alt formats	Notes	GB
Introduction to HE	Talk: 20 mins	Learn to separate the facts from the fiction in relation to HE.	 		7
Careerpilot: Jobs and Job Sectors	Workshop: 60 - 75 mins	Research job sectors & jobs including salaries and labour market information.	 	*PCs required.	2 & 3
Intro to HE & Careerpilot for Parents	Workshop: 20 - 60 mins	A talk introducing HE followed by a shared learning experience for parents and their children using the Careerpilot website (could be run alongside an options or parents' evening).	 	*PCs required.	
Campus Visit	Off-site visit: whole day	A visit to a local university or college for a tour of the campus and HE facilities.			7
"My Pefect Degree"	Workshop: 60 mins	Students develop their presentation skills by designing a degree programme and presenting their ideas to the group.			4, 7 & 8

**Evaluation** As part of the nationwide programme, we have collected over 9000 HE surveys from target students in the South West to understand more about students' perceptions of, and attitudes towards HE.

## YEAR 10 - Development Stage



Recorded online session available



Live online session available

Session	Format	Summary	Alt formats	Notes	GB
<b>Student Life &amp; Budgeting</b>	Workshop: 60 - 75 mins	An introduction to student life. Includes an interactive budgeting activity.			3
<b>Level 3 Options</b>	Talk: 20 mins or Workshop: 60 - 75 mins	Develop knowledge and understanding about level 3 pathways and relevant options.		*PCs required for workshop.	4
<b>Campus Visit</b>	Off-site visit: whole day	A visit to a local university or college for a tour of the campus and HE facilities.			4 & 7
<b>Higher and Degree Apprenticeships</b>	Workshop: 45 - 60 mins	Discover information about higher and degree apprenticeships as an alternative route into HE.		*PCs required.	2 & 4
<b>The Pay Index</b>	Workshop: 60 mins	How much money could you earn after doing a degree or apprenticeship? Using LMI, investigate how pay and living costs vary across the UK.		*PCs or mobile phones required.	
<b>Careerpilot: My Skills Profile</b>	Workshop: 60 - 75 mins	Identify experiences and transferable skills and how they align with those required by a range of different jobs.		*PCs required.	2 & 3

## YEAR 11 - Development Stage



Recorded online session available



Live online session available

Session	Format	Summary	Alt formats	Notes	GB
<b>Student Life &amp; Budgeting</b>	Workshop: 60 - 75 mins	An introduction to student life. Includes an interactive budgeting activity.			3
<b>Level 3 Options</b>	Talk: 20 mins or Workshop: 60 - 75 mins	Develop knowledge and understanding about level 3 pathways and relevant options.		*PCs required for workshop.	4
<b>Higher and Degree Apprenticeships</b>	Workshop: 45 - 60 mins	Discover information about higher and degree apprenticeships as an alternative route into HE.		*PCs required.	2 & 4
<b>Study Skills</b>	Workshop:	Develop revision skills in preparation for GCSEs			3
<b>The Pay Index</b>	Workshop: 60 mins	How much money could you earn after doing a degree or apprenticeship? Using LMI, investigate how pay and living costs vary across the UK.		*PCs or mobile phones required.	2, 3, 7 & 8

### INFLUENCE

Through progressive engagement with NSSW, parents/carers are empowered to support their children with their life choices. Teachers are supported through NSSW to encourage students to consider

### INFORM

Our Parent & Carer Stands provide influencers with positive, factually correct information so they are better placed to encourage HE progression.

### CONNECT

We believe it's vital to connect students with real role models. Our dedicated team of student ambassadors are DBS-checked and trained to work within schools and further education colleges.

# SUPPORTING HE PROGRESSION

**In addition to our activities, schools and colleges can support HE progression in the following ways:**

- Include an HE policy statement in your school/college's Careers Policy and publish on your website.
- Encourage progression to HE through your School Development Plan.
- Nominate an HE Advisor, most probably your Careers Leader, who reports to SLT.
- Monitor progression rates to HE at Governing Body level.
- Continue to engage with the NSSW institutional outreach programmes to achieve GB7.

NSSW funding is confirmed until July 2022, but we hope to continue to July 2025. Many thanks for your continued commitment.

## YEAR 12/13/POST-16 - Consolidation Stage



Recorded online session available



Live online session available

Session	Format	Summary	Alt formats	Notes	GB
<b>Student Finance &amp; Budgeting</b>	Workshop: 60 - 75 mins	Explores student finance, how student loan repayments work and how students can afford to live at university.			3
<b>Student Life</b>	Talk: 20 mins or Workshop: 60 mins	Provides an insight into what life is like for HE students, while increasing understanding of the wider benefits of HE study.			7
<b>Choosing an HE Course</b>	Workshop: 60 mins	Highlights a range of criteria relevant to choosing the right HE course.		*PCs required	3 & 4
<b>Careerplot: My Skills Profile Review</b>	Workshop: 60 mins	Builds on identifying transferable skills to help develop personal statements for a range of applications. Ideally followed up the personal statement workshop.		*PCs required	3
<b>Higher and Degree Apprenticeships</b>	Workshop: 45 -60 mins	Discover information about higher and degree apprenticeships as an alternative route into HE.		*PCs required	2 & 4
<b>The Pay Index</b>	Workshop: 60 mins	How much money could you earn after doing a degree or apprenticeship? Using LMI, investigate how pay and living costs vary across the UK.			2, 3, 7 & 8
<b>UCAS Exhibition Preparation</b>	Talk: 30 mins or Workshop: 60 mins	Prepares students for how to make the most of UCAS exhibitions. Workshop includes pre-event research.			2 & 4
<b>HE Mock Interviews</b>	Workshop: 60 mins	Preparation and practice for HE-course interviews.			3
<b>Personal Statements</b>	Workshop: 60 mins	Learn about the role the personal statement plays in the UCAS application. Provides examples of personal statements and supports students with planning and drafting their own.			3
<b>Virtual HE Events</b>	Workshop: 45 -60 mins	Learn how to get to get the most out of virtual HE events.			2 & 4
<b>UCAS Application</b>	Workshop: 60 mins	Help students understand and navigate the UCAS application process.			3 & 4

# ADULT LEARNERS

Adult learners are eligible to access the Year12/13/ Post-16 sessions, in addition to those listed below.

## ADULT LEARNERS



Recorded online session available



Live online session available

Session	Format	Summary	Alt formats	Notes
<b>Introduction to Lifepilot</b>	Workshop: 45 - 60 mins	Explore jobs & careers. Search for degree courses and apprenticeship vacancies. Improve your study skills.		
<b>Aspiration-raising Workshop</b>	Workshop: 45 - 60 mins	Students identify their goals, aspirations and next steps to fulfil their potential.		Delivered by MADE
<b>Returning to Study Workshop</b>	Workshop: 45 - 60 mins	Students refresh their study techniques, increase confidence to facilitate personal success		Delivered by MADE

# NSSW TRAVEL CARD

Supporting your journey to a university or college.

Our HE Travel Card is available to students who wish to attend an on-campus event such as an interview, an open day or an offer holder/applicant day. This offer is available to eligible Next Steps South West students only.

For more information on our travel card offer, please visit

[nextstepsw.ac.uk/resources/higher-education-travel-card-application/](https://nextstepsw.ac.uk/resources/higher-education-travel-card-application/)

# OUR PARTNERS

**Next Steps South West proudly represents the following colleges and universities:**



**I am impressed by the amount of engagement we have managed to get delivered to a large number of students and the positive relationships which are developing with staff as a result.**

**T Chedzoy**  
In-school Coordinator  
Bridgwater & Taunton College

**For more information or to arrange a booking please contact:**

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