



Activity name	KS5 Campus Visit
Date	Tranche 6 (Sept 2021 - Aug 2022)
Total number of students	~2436 students
Total number of target students	~486 students
Institutions involved <i>* Institutions that completed surveys</i>	Bodmin College*, Brannel School*, Braunton Academy*, Bridgwater and Taunton College*, Chilton Trinity School*, Coombe Dean School*, Cornwall College, Discovery College, Eggbuckland Community College*, Fowey River Academy*, Great Torrington School, Haygrove School*, Hele’s School, Humphry Davy School, Lipson Co-operative Academy*, Marine Academy Plymouth*, Millbay Academy, Pilton Community College, Plympton Academy, Queen Elizabeth’s School*, Redruth School, Richard Huish College, Robert Blake School, Scott Medical and Healthcare College, Sidmouth College, Sir John Hunt Community Sports College*, South Dartmoor Community College, St James School, St Peter’s Church of England Aided School, Stoke Damerel Community College, The Castle School*, The Ilfracombe Church of England Academy, The Spires College, Tiverton High School, Tor Bridge High, Torquay Academy*, UTC Plymouth, West Somerset College, Whitsone School*.

Introduction

This impact evaluation report summarises the survey results collected for the ‘Campus Visit’ outreach activity organised and delivered by Next Steps South West (NSSW). The NSSW partnership offers activities, advice, and information to underrepresented learners as part of the Uni Connect programme from the Office for Students (OfS). Campus Visits took place between September 2021 and August 2022, which corresponds to the NSSW Tranche 6 (T6) period. The activity supported primarily pre-



16 students, but also some post-16 students studying at schools and colleges in Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset.

A Campus Visit offers learners, interested in any subject, the chance to find out more about student life and higher education campuses. NSSW organise a visit to a local university or college for a tour of the site and its facilities. The tours are led by NSSW Outreach Officers (IOs) and Student Ambassadors (SAs) and are occasionally supported by the Student Recruitment Teams at the hosting institution. Visits are typically day-long and offer up insights into both the place of study and other aspects of HE such as post-16 pathways, choosing a degree course, student finance, and graduate prospects. The day's agenda is dependent on the hosting institution and the availability of academic staff and undergraduates, but there is often the opportunity to take part in several academic taster sessions as well. The outreach activity increases students' aspirations towards HE, raises awareness of university options and allows prospective undergraduates to meet current HE-level students. Thus, it seeks to reduce the impacts that insufficient knowledge and geography can have on HE progression, as detailed in the NSSW Theory of Change Model.

In total, 44 campus visits were made in Tranche 6, which resulted in 39 schools and colleges and ~2436 students taking part.

Aims

The aims of the Campus Visits are to develop a good level of knowledge and understanding of student life on site, and learn more about different HE course options, and the different pathways available to reach them. Increased awareness of HE study options in their local area may encourage some students to consider progressing into HE whilst living at home. Equally, a better understanding of what university is like if you do leave home, may encourage others to make this choice.

As such, the Campus Visit activity aims to increase understanding of the benefits of HE and increase awareness of different HE choices. Alongside, it aims to reduce geographical disadvantage and improve students' motivation and ability to access HEIs both locally and nationally. It addresses the key NSSW barriers of '*Knowledge of HE*' and '*Geography*' and the obstacles that a lack of understanding and geographical context can be for HE progression.

In this report, success of the workshop is measured and evaluated against the targets for the expected short-term outcomes as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Barriers, outcomes, and indicators for the Campus Visit activity in T6.

Barrier to HE	Short-term outcomes	Indicators
<i>Knowledge of HE</i>	Increased understanding of HE options	Increased understanding of HE and student life in-situ for <u>≥ 60% of students</u> - <i>Students can identify relevant course options</i> - <i>Students can identify aspects of student life that appeal to them</i>
<i>Knowledge of HE</i>	Increased understanding of student life in-situ	
<i>Geography</i>	Increased experience of local HE context and provision	Increased experience and understanding of local HE context and provision for <u>≥ 60% students</u> - <i>Students engage in experience of local HE provisions</i> - <i>Students can identify local and national provision</i>
<i>Geography</i>	Increased understanding of how to overcome perceived or physical challenges accessing HE	

Evaluation Design and Data Collection

Evaluation of the Campus Visit activity for Tranche 6 consisted of a post-session survey, which was handed out to participants in paper format or as an online link. Students anonymously answered five structured quantitative and qualitative questions which related to the anticipated outcomes. The questions included both Likert-type choices and free-text response options.

The following results section presents the data gathered from 996 returned surveys. Separated by campus, there were 504 survey submissions from students who attended the University of Exeter, 259 from University of Plymouth visits, and 233 from University Centre Somerset visits. Other HEIs were visited by Campus Visit participants but survey data was not collected on these occasions.

Results

Students who attended a Campus Visit were asked to indicate how much they felt they knew about aspects of HE because of their participation. Figure 1 shows the success of the activity in supporting student knowledge and understanding across four different areas. Most attendees felt that they knew 'A lot' or 'A little' about a.) the different courses and subjects available nationally; b.) the course options available locally; c.) what life on a university campus was like; and d.) the different aspects of student life on campus. Notably, 42.5% (n= 539) felt that they now knew 'A lot' about life on an HE campus and 37.6% (n= 374) felt they knew 'A lot' about student life during HE study, which are clearly areas that were explained effectively during the activity.

Due to the high percentage of students (+89.8%) who indicated that because of their participation they had learnt something new, the activity evidently made a positive



impact on improving students' experience and understanding of HE, especially in relation to campus life. Equally, with less than 10.2% of all participants signalling that they knew 'Nothing' about these aspects of HE, there is further indication of the positive outcome on the students' overall learning.

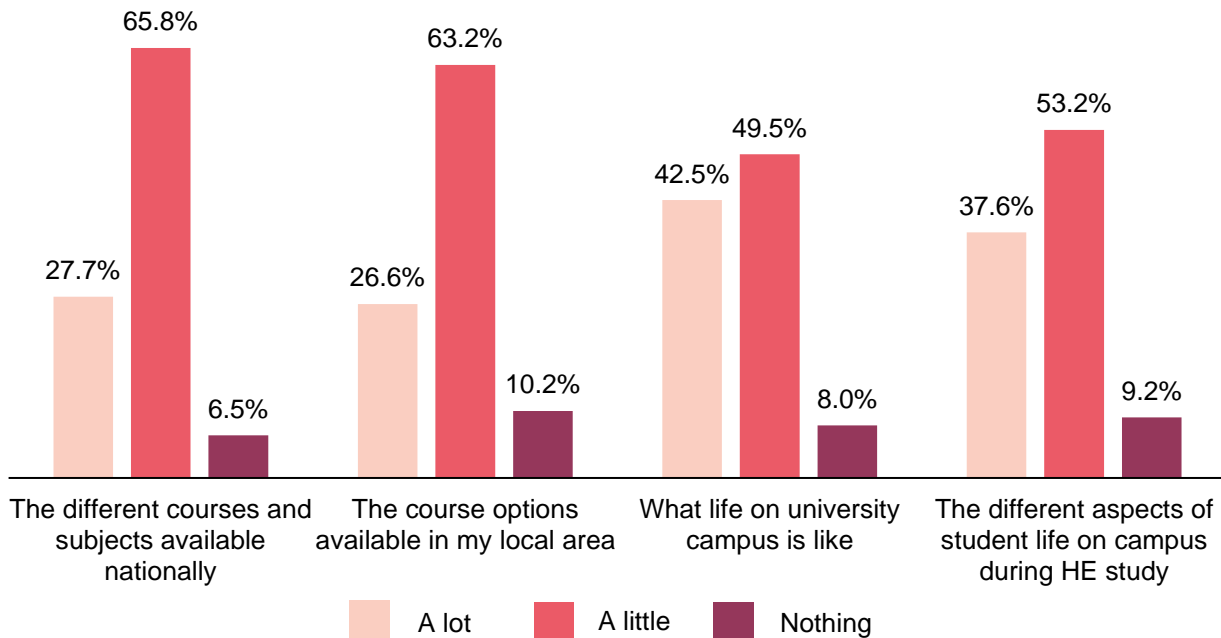


Figure 1. Students' opinions about their knowledge of HE after taking part in a campus visit.

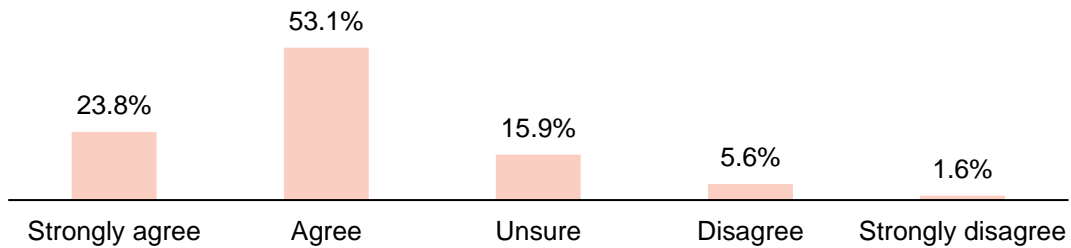
However, as most of the survey responses for question 1 showed that students knew 'A little', this may indicate that some students may have gravitated towards selecting a middle ground answer.

To obtain further information on how much the session had impacted on students' knowledge and understanding of higher education, the survey next required participants to respond to four statements relating to the session. Data in figure 2 shows the students' level of agreement to the statements. From the data it can be stated that overall, students had a positive perception of their understanding of HE and considered themselves able to apply this knowledge to their future plans, as over 42.1% agreed and over 19.2% strongly agreed to the statements.

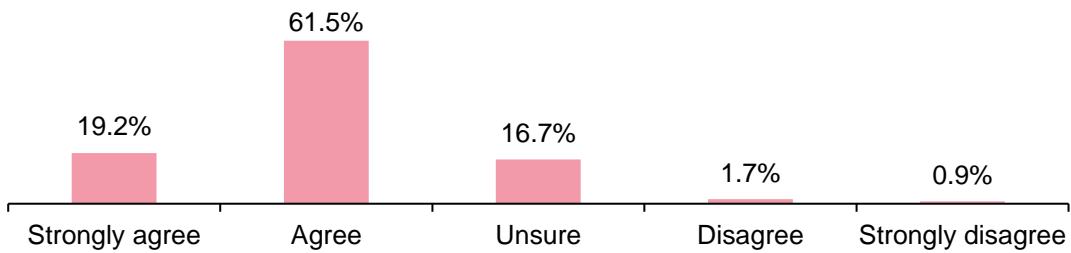
Specifically, 76.9% (n= 766) either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' that they heard real life student experiences that helped them to understand more about HE. 80.7% (n= 804) either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' that they were more knowledgeable about HE and university. Likewise, 73.2% (n= 729) 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' that they could now make a more informed decision about whether HE was right for them. The low percentages of those who 'Disagree' (5.6%, 1.7%, 1.9% respectively) and 'Strongly disagree' (1.6%, 0.9%, 1.1% respectively) to the first three statements suggest that overall students felt that they had benefited from having attended a campus trip.



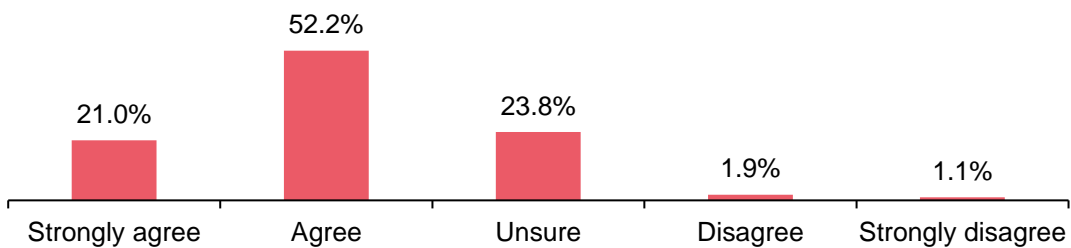
a) I have heard real life student experiences that have helped me understand more about HE



b) I am more knowledgeable about HE and university study



c) I can make a more informed decision about whether HE study is for me



d) I am more likely to consider going to University/Higher Education

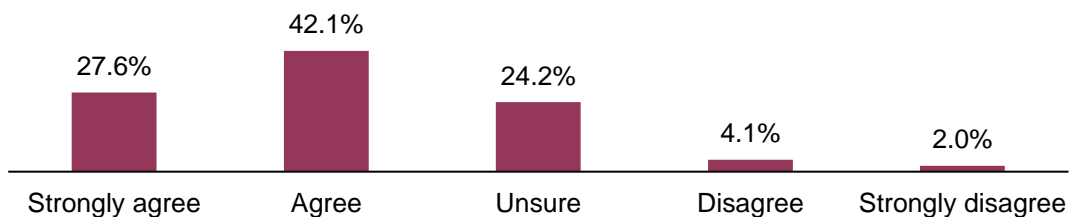


Figure 2. Students' feelings about whether they agree or disagree to statements relating to their campus visit.

Regarding student intentions towards going onto HE because of the session, 69.7% (n=694) stated that they 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' that they are more likely to consider going. Less certain were the 24.2% students who replied with 'Unsure'. Similarly, 23.8% were also 'Unsure' if they could make an informed decision on whether HE was right for them. It is not possible from the survey replies to establish the reason for these uncertain responses, but it is to be expected that some students remain undecided

about their futures and the role that HE will play in it. It is therefore likely that these respondents will benefit from continual engagement in the NSSW suite of activities.

To affirm their answers to statement d.), and to check whether a greater understanding about HE and their own futures had impacted on students' intentions to go to university, the survey asked participants to indicate their likelihood of applying to HE. The results are shown below in figure 3, which displays the data from 944 valid responses.

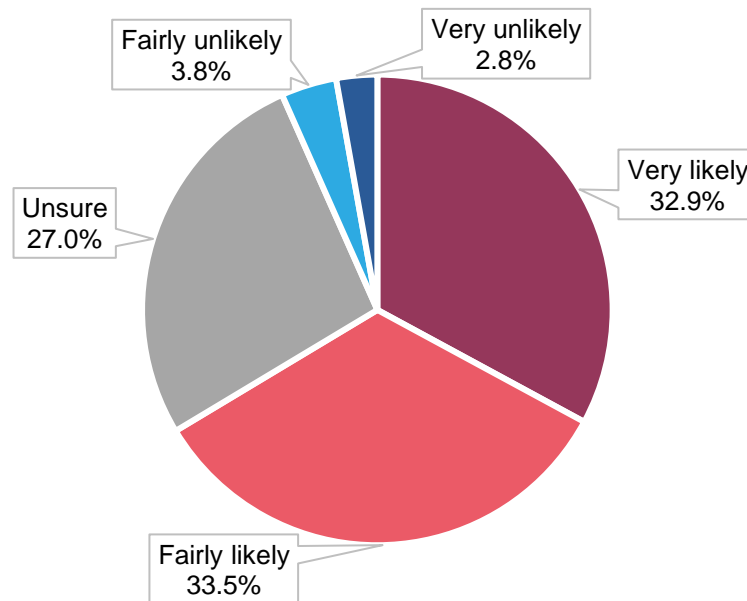


Figure 3: Likelihood of an HE application.

The data in figure 3 illustrates that Campus Visit attendees were 'Very likely' (32.9%) and 'Fairly likely' (33.5%) to apply for higher education study. 6.6% indicated that applying to HE was 'Fairly unlikely' or 'Very unlikely'. This shows that, in the main, students were preparing to go to HE. However, there were some students (27.0%) who felt 'Unsure' about applying. It is worth noting that not all students in KS4 will have decided on their post-18 options yet. Therefore, is it understandable that some participants were less certain about their future and making an application to HE.

Qualitative answers provided in the fourth survey question further illustrate the growth in knowledge that students gained from having taken part in the Campus Visit activity. Students were asked to provide two pieces of information or facts about what they had learnt about HE campuses from their visit. Out of the 996 survey responses, 766 students provided at least one example of something learnt about and 586 provided two examples. There was no response from 172 students, and a further 58 either responded that they did not know or put an answer unrelated to the question. Disregarding the 230 missing or invalid answers, the rest of the free-text answers were coded into thematic groups based on their commonalities to see the variation in the

data. Fifteen categories emerged from the data, and these are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' responses providing two facts or pieces of information about life on a higher education campus that they learnt about. The most popular response categories are shaded light grey.

Summary

Valid responses		Missing responses*		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
766	76.9%	230	23.1%	996	100%

* Blank and unrelated responses, and n=16 'Don't Know' replies

Response frequencies

Thematic category	Number of responses (1 st answer)	Number of responses (2 nd answer)	Feedback examples
Accommodation / Student Living	143	96	<p><i>"That you can choose different levels of accommodation"</i></p> <p><i>"That in your first year you generally stay in student accommodation but in your other years you can get a house with your friends or random people"</i></p> <p><i>"You can have catered and self-catered accommodation"</i></p>
Campus Amenities / Environment	94	107	<p><i>"The campus is big with many options"</i></p> <p><i>"Close to town and good healthcare and well-being facilities"</i></p> <p><i>"There is a student hub where the unions and societies are centred"</i></p>
Campus Settings	25	8	<p><i>"I found out the difference between a city and campus uni"</i></p> <p><i>"There are city universities that are more spaced out than smaller universities"</i></p> <p><i>"A campus has all student facilities in one place"</i></p>
Commuting / Travel	4	3	<p><i>"Takes 10-15min to walk from centre"</i></p> <p><i>"You can get a bus if needs be"</i></p>
Contact Hours / Teaching Methods	62	44	<p><i>"Average of 8 hours seminars and lectures"</i></p> <p><i>"You spend more time studying independently"</i></p> <p><i>"They do simulations and hands-on training"</i></p>
Entry Requirements / Pathways	10	7	<p><i>"There are many paths to HE"</i></p> <p><i>"You have to have a 4 in English and maths to be accepted"</i></p> <p><i>"I need certain qualifications and I can go to my local college"</i></p>



Finances & Costs / Budgeting	118	52	<p><i>"You don't pay back loan until after uni and you earn a certain amount"</i></p> <p><i>"That and you can be eligible for bursaries"</i></p> <p><i>"There is a hardship fund to ease financial stress"</i></p>
Independence	18	10	<p><i>"You become more independent"</i></p> <p><i>"And are able to learn how to be responsible for yourself"</i></p> <p><i>"Its got more freedom than secondary school"</i></p>
Opportunities / Benefits of HE	56	44	<p><i>"You can meet new people and learn new skills"</i></p> <p><i>"Higher education can help your further in life"</i></p> <p><i>"Choose what you would like to learn"</i></p>
Other	13	11	<p><i>"It's not as scary as I thought"</i></p> <p><i>"What 'Russel Group' actually means"</i></p> <p><i>"If you don't know what course you want to take, always go to taster sessions at your uni of choice"</i></p>
Part-time Work / Graduate Employment	25	26	<p><i>"You can have a part-time job while studying at university"</i></p> <p><i>"Gives you more opportunities to more jobs and higher income"</i></p> <p><i>"What people have done after doing a course"</i></p>
Qualifications / Courses / Modules	81	57	<p><i>"You can do a sandwich degree or a fast track degree"</i></p> <p><i>"There's a range of different courses as well as foundation courses and you can go on to do a masters"</i></p> <p><i>"You can take modules outside your subject that interest you"</i></p>
Societies / Social Aspects / Free Time	97	93	<p><i>"There is a wide range of clubs and social activities around them"</i></p> <p><i>"Fresher's Week is the week before term starts"</i></p> <p><i>"That social activities are important in HE life"</i></p>
Study Abroad / Placements	10	15	<p><i>"You can go abroad with your course"</i></p> <p><i>"Can learn internationally"</i></p> <p><i>"You can cancel your placement year if you don't want to do it"</i></p>
Support Services	10	13	<p><i>"There is lots of student support facilities"</i></p> <p><i>"You get support from staff if you don't understand"</i></p> <p><i>"Mental health is always valued"</i></p>



Table 2 shows that the more frequent comments related to some of the main aspects of campus life which included the student accommodation (17.7%), the campus and its immediate vicinity (14.9%), and societies/clubs (14.1%). Students also frequently recalled facts relating to student finance, costs, and budgeting (12.6%), and the wider benefits afford by HE (7.4%). A number of answers also pointed towards students learning about aspects specifically related to studying at HE and focused on the courses and modules (10.2%), contact hours and teaching methods (7.8%). In contrast, the responses coded as ‘Other’ were often less focused on the more objective aspects of HE and more on the students’ personal feelings and interpretations of HE campuses. Consequently, some answers coded as ‘Other’ mentioned that students understood that *“It’s not as scary as I thought”*, that it is *“Way more serious”*, or that *“It can be challenging”*.

Overall, a broad range of facts and information about higher education campuses was mentioned by students. This is testament to the success of the activity in informing HE and university life.

At the end of the survey, students were given the opportunity to feedback about what they still wanted to know about HE campuses, that they had not already gained from their visit. Due to the open nature of this survey question the responses were wide-ranging. To analyse the response themes, the data was likewise grouped based on commonalities in topic. Several students gave more than one answer to this question and therefore contributed more than once to the overall tallies. Table 3 below provides some examples of students’ comments for categorises that emerged from their responses.

Table 3. Students’ responses about what they would still like to know. The most popular response categories are shaded light grey.

Summary

Valid responses		Missing responses*		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
537	53.9%	459	46.1%	996	100%

* Blank and unrelated responses, and n=36 ‘Don’t Know’ replies

Response frequencies

Thematic category	Number of responses (n)	Response examples
Accommodation / Student Living	64	<i>“What the accommodation looks like inside”</i> <i>“The prices of accommodation”</i> <i>“How to apply to accommodation”</i>
Campus Amenities / Environment	39	<i>“Seeing different course rooms”</i> <i>“Are there specific zones for certain things?”</i> <i>“What new features are going to be added in the future?”</i>



Courses	119	<p><i>"All the courses they have to offer"</i></p> <p><i>"How long each course is"</i></p> <p><i>"How to know and choose your course if you're unsure"</i></p>
Entry Requirements / Pathways / Applying	26	<p><i>"Do you have to do a language to get into university?"</i></p> <p><i>"Routes into higher education"</i></p> <p><i>"The formal application process(es) for HE"</i></p>
Finance & Costs / Budgeting	66	<p><i>"What is an estimated total cost?"</i></p> <p><i>"What do you do if you run out of money?"</i></p> <p><i>"The most effective practices to save money"</i></p>
HEIs & Campuses	6	<p><i>"About different uni campuses"</i></p> <p><i>"How other campuses are layed out"</i></p> <p><i>"How do they compare to each other based on my subject?"</i></p>
Nothing	67	<p><i>"I already know enough"</i></p> <p><i>"Everything has been answered"</i></p> <p><i>"Nothing else"</i></p>
Other	21	<p><i>"Whether university is more beneficial than a HE apprenticeship"</i></p> <p><i>"What's the dress code?"</i></p> <p><i>"More things off campus"</i></p>
Part-time Work / Graduate Employment	16	<p><i>"What jobs are available on campus?"</i></p> <p><i>"What jobs you can get with higher qualifications?"</i></p> <p><i>"How it works around someone's job"</i></p>
Societies / Social Aspects / Free Time	26	<p><i>"I would like to know about what offers for sports there are"</i></p> <p><i>"How do societies work and what do you do in them?"</i></p> <p><i>"What can you do on weekends?"</i></p>
Student Life / Current Student Viewpoints	32	<p><i>"More real-life student experiences"</i></p> <p><i>"Talk to more current students"</i></p> <p><i>"What an average day looks like"</i></p>
Support Services	7	<p><i>"Do they support students with additional needs?"</i></p> <p><i>"Do they support students who are struggling financially?"</i></p> <p><i>"Do they support people from different countries?"</i></p>
Teaching & Learning	83	<p><i>"Whether you can talk to professors outside of class hours for advice"</i></p> <p><i>"How the courses are taught"</i></p> <p><i>"Are there strict lesson times?"</i></p>

Not all students replied to this survey question, so there are many responses (46.1%, n= 459) which were not categorised due to them being left blank, being unrelated, or



because the student indicated they were “*Not sure*” what they wanted to know. Those who did comment, indicated that they would like further information and help around the topics of ‘*Courses*’ (n=119) and ‘*Teaching & Learning*’ (n= 83). Specifically, they wanted further information about the range of courses available at different HEIs and more detail on lesson structure and how courses are taught. There was also interest in finding out about ‘*Finance & Costs / Budgeting*’ (n= 66) and ‘*Accommodation / Student Living*’ (n=64) which are clearly aspects that the students felt were important to their understanding of HE. A small number of students commented that they would like to know more about other ‘*HEIs / Campuses*’ (n= 6), the ‘*Support Services*’ (n= 7), and ‘*Part-time Work / Graduate Employment*’ (n= 16). This perhaps shows that there is some interest in exploring areas of HE that might be more personal to the individual’s own plans and attributes.

This positive feedback shows that students took a keen interest in the information they received and would like to continue developing their understanding about campuses, studying, and the details of university life.

Conclusion

In summary, the survey data analysed for this report demonstrates that the Campus Visit activity as delivered in Tranche 6 had a positive impact on the majority of its participants, from both a knowledge of HE and geographical perspective. The activity was successful in introducing students to what life on a local university campus is like, to the various aspects of student living, and in building knowledge of course and study options (see figure 1). Through their engagement on a university campus, students reported hearing first-hand about undergraduate experiences and becoming more knowledgeable about HE and university (see figure 2). They also confirmed a growth in their ability to decide about HE and a greater likelihood of progressing on to HE (see figures 2 and 3). In the students’ responses about what they have learnt (see table 2) there is evidence to show the students gained a broad range of knowledge and that they can now correctly identify facts and information of use to them. The success of the intervention in relation to its short-term outcomes is summarised in table 4.

Table 4 shows that the activity’s expected targets were met or exceeded, which reiterates the effectiveness of the intervention in helping students to know about campuses and higher education life, and the provision of HE in a local context. It also confirms the success of the activity in helping students address the barriers of ‘*Knowledge of HE*’ and ‘*Geography*’ that might prevent them from progressing into higher education. The positive impact on these barriers demonstrates that the Campus Visit activity is well designed and supportive to young people.

Table 4. Campus Visit activity outcomes achieved for T6.

Barrier to HE	Short-term outcomes	Indicators	Evidence	Outcome achieved
Knowledge of HE	Increased understanding of HE options	<p>Increased understanding of HE and student life in-situ for <u>≥ 60% of students</u></p> <p>- <i>Students can identify relevant course options</i></p>	<p>93.5% of students knew about the different courses and subjects available nationally</p> <p>80.7% agreed that they were more knowledgeable about HE and university</p> <p>73.2% agreed that they could make a more informed decision about whether HE study was right for them</p> <p>69.7% agreed that they were more likely to consider going to university/higher education</p> <p>66.4% are more likely to apply to HE</p> <p>Target 60%: Result: 66.4%+</p>	Achieved
	Increased understanding of student life in-situ	<p>- <i>Students can identify aspects of student life that appeal to them</i></p>	<p>92.0% of students knew about what life on a university campus was like</p> <p>90.8% of students knew about the different aspects of student life on campus</p> <p>76.9% agreed that they had heard real life student experiences that helped them understand more about HE</p> <p>76.9% of students provided one fact, and 58.8% of students provided two facts about life on a higher education campus</p> <p>Target 60%: Result 58.8%+</p>	
Geography	Increased experience of local HE context and provision	<p>Increased experience and understanding of local HE context and provision for <u>≥ 60% students</u></p>	<p><i>Not evidenced in survey, evidence by attendance</i></p>	Achieved
	Increased understanding of how to overcome perceived or physical challenges accessing HE	<p>- <i>Students engage in experience of local HE provisions</i></p> <p>- <i>Students can identify local and national provision</i></p>	<p>89.9% of students knew about the course options available in their local area</p> <p>Target 60%: Result 89.9%</p>	