

National Collaborative Outreach Programme

Pathways Bi-Annual Report 2018



National Collaborative
Outreach Programme

September
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What is NCOP?

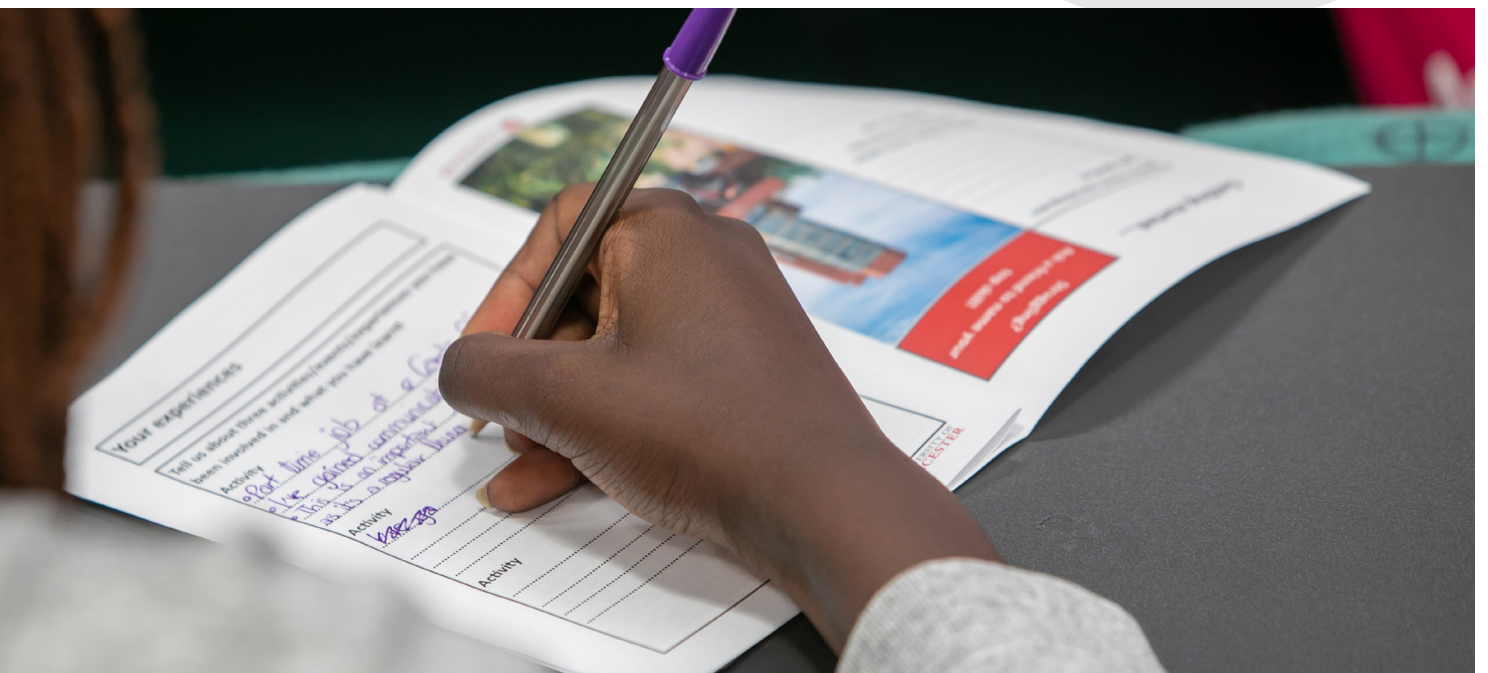
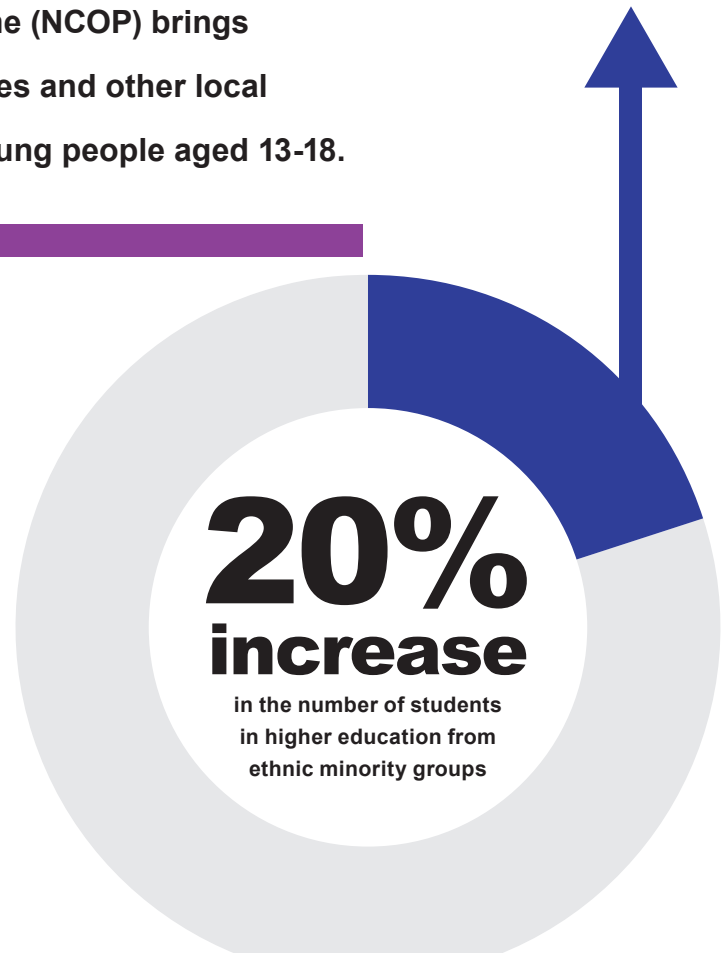
The National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) brings together 29 partnerships of universities, colleges and other local partners to deliver outreach programmes to young people aged 13-18.

Their work is focused on local areas where higher education participation is lower than might be expected given the GCSE results of the young people who live there.

The programme started in January 2017 and aims to support the government's goals to:

- double the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education by 2020
- increase by 20 per cent the number of students in higher education from ethnic minority groups
- address the under-representation of young men from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education.

Source: Office for Students <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk>



Who We Are

Pathways is a collaboration of Higher Education providers in Leicester City, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland.

Pathways have identified a programme of activities and events suited to the specific needs of young people and their families in these local areas, they aim to provide additional tools to raise attainment, develop transferable skills and gain knowledge of Higher Education opportunities.



The **Institute for Social Innovation and Impact (ISII)**, University of Northampton are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the work that Pathways do and the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership (EMWPREP) are responsible for monitoring and tracking Pathways activities and participants and providing quantitative data.



Pathways work with the 26 wards, identified by the Office for Students (OfS), which represent urban areas of Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Rutland and correlate to the priority areas for the counties in relation to chaotic families, crime, social housing policy, health and wellbeing.

Pathways work with schools and colleges on a range of different interventions, allowing students who take part in the events to experience life at university, develop new skills, explore future careers and more.



2017-18 in Review: Activities

A sample of activities provided by the Pathways team from September 2017 - July 2018:

September / October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commando Joes (bi-weekly throughout the year) • Towards Moves to Wellbeing • Creative Shed
November / December / January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine-a-day • Brightside Online Mentoring • Humanutopia • Podiatry training • Sports Journalism traineeship • Mature Student Study Skill Day
February / March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Mavericks • Big Bang Northants • Towards Moves to Wellbeing • English and Maths Mentoring • Girls into Stem
May / June / July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y10 Holiday Club • Car Crash Day • Year 12 Residential • Youth Sport Award Go Camp • Explore More

The aims of these activities are:

- To increase the application rate to HE of learners from identified schools in target wards 2020;
- To increase the proportion of learners in target schools with sufficient attainment at KS4 to successfully progress onto KS5 level study;
- To increase the number of female learners opting to study a STEM subject at HE by delivering activities aimed to raise awareness of women in science, technology, maths and industry;
- To increase the proportion of level 2 BTEC learners that progress to BTEC Level 3 as an alternative route to HE; and
- To ensure that the key influencers (i.e. parents, carers, and teachers) receive communication around all activities offered by Pathways and wider information about options into HE.

At a Glance

Figures shown by local wards

NCOP students who have consented to be tracked as part of the programme from September 2017 to July 2018

Leicestershire

North West Leicestershire

2017 2018
30 26

Charnwood

2017 2018
33 27

Leicester

2017 2018
190 136

Oadby and Wigston

2017 2018
10 5

Blaby

2017 2018
8 0

Harborough

2017 2018
5 0

Corby

2017 2018
599 324

Kettering

2017 2018
464 447

East Northamptonshire

2017 2018
166 47

Northamptonshire

Northampton

2017 2018
533 186

Daventry

2017 2018
378 215

South Northamptonshire

2017 2018
14 10

Other Areas	2017	2018
Norfolk	40	0
Cambridgeshire	5	16
Buckinghamshire	3	16
Suffolk	0	19
Derbyshire	19	9
Yorkshire	8	0
Nottinghamshire	21	0
Staffordshire	4	1
Warwickshire	3	4
Other Wards	25	14

Evidence Based Research

Evidence of impact, successes and challenges will allow NCOP to contribute towards a ‘step change’ in the way outreach work is undertaken in the sector.

To monitor and evaluate the work of Pathways a range of data collection tools have been used to help build a robust evidence base.

Following a literature review, a conceptual framework to understand the relationship between NCOP interventions and student outcomes was developed and used to guide the development of the data collection tools.

An online self-efficacy questionnaire enabled baseline data collection from both NCOP and non-NCOP students.

The online questionnaire was repeated early in the summer term, to allow a before-and-after comparison of the students’ situation after the first year of NCOP activities. The baseline survey was completed by 957 students across 18 schools in Northamptonshire and in Leicestershire.

Alongside the survey data, qualitative data was collected from a sample of relevant stakeholders: students, activity leaders and teaching staff at a range of NCOP activities across the year, including the Big Bang, Commando Joes, Mental Health workshop for school staff, Mentoring, Car Crash Careers Day, and Year 10 Holiday Club .



Raising Aspirations and Building Confidence

One of the aims of NCOP is to raise students' aspirations and help young people consider what they hope to achieve for themselves in the future.

Student feedback on a range of Pathways activities indicated that most of the activities helped them to feel more confident and raised their aspirations.

Analysis of the students' feedback from Commando Joes, a military-ethos intervention aiming to enhance engagement in learning and educational attainment, showed that students felt more confident after attending it. One student said:

“

Commando Joes has helped me by building my confidence and I have learnt that I can be more confident with what I do.

Improved confidence and communication skills through team work influenced their performance at school, another student said:

“

I have enjoyed Commando Joes. I believe the physical activities have improved my focus in lessons.

This view was echoed by another student:

“

I feel like I concentrate more towards my learning.

Another activity, Mad4Life, a workshop run by motivational speakers to help individuals with their goals, helped students to consider what they want from their lives and raise their aspirations. One of the students from the activity reported that:

“

This activity has helped me to look towards my goal, never give up and be positive.



Raising Aspirations and Building Confidence (cont.)

Figure 1: Mad4Life Student Workshop Feedback

100% of females and **90% of males** agreed that they are now more motivated to do well in their lives.



The Year 12 Residential, where students spent two days and one night at the University of Leicester, was another activity that helped to raise students' confidence and communication skills.

Most students who participated in the activity reported that the activity increased their confidence when expressing their opinions and gained more confidence when talking to new people. For example, one student reported that:



My confidence has improved greatly and I am now presenting in front of the whole group.

Figure 2: Year 12 Residential Student Feedback

The figure below indicates the students' responses before and after the survey regarding their communication skills. The students were asked how confident they felt about their communication skills.



32% claimed very high confidence in their communication skills after the event, compared with only 13% beforehand.



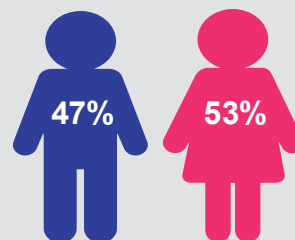
The number of students with only a moderate level confidence in their communication skills fell by 11% during the event.



Half of students who had low confidence in their communication skills before the event improved following the activity.

Key Stats: Year 12 Residential

Number of students = 51



Male

Female

Participants meeting NCOP criteria: 39%

Participants meeting WP Criteria: 86%

Broadening Students' Horizons

One of the dominant themes in the data gathered was broadening students' horizons.

The activities such as Mad4Life, English and Maths Mentoring and Imagine a Day seemed to widen students' views about different subjects as well as different options they have in life; out of their classrooms.

For example, one student stated that:

“

It [Mad4Life] taught me to have growth/open mindset and think positively about my future and that practice makes progress, not perfection.

Another student said:

“

I think this activity [Mad4Life] has improved my motivation and given me a more positive outlook towards life because it's shown me that with a growth mindset I can achieve more and do more with an openmind.

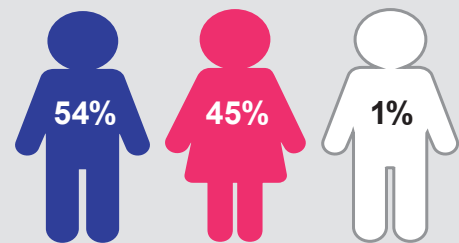
Medical Mavericks, which focuses on different career options in the medical field,

showed students how different things (i.e. taking blood, ultrasound, and keyhole surgery) work in real life and helped develop their knowledge and understanding.



Key Stats: Mad4Life

Number of students = 226



Male

Female

Unknown/
other

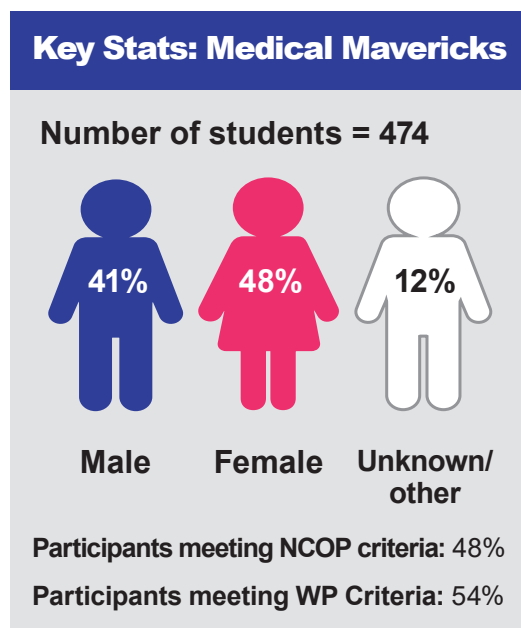
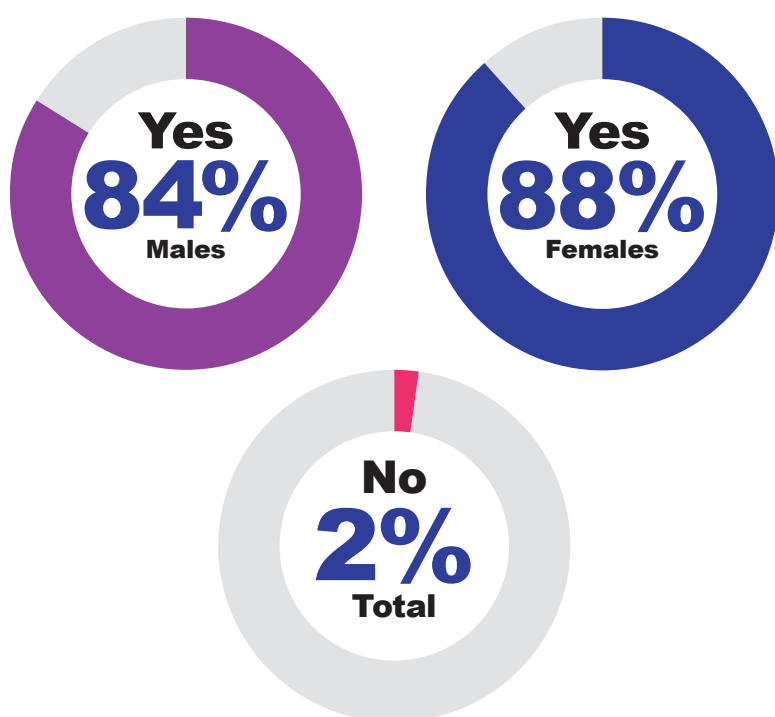
Participants meeting NCOP criteria: 29%

Participants meeting WP Criteria: 49%

Broadening Students' Horizons (cont.)

Figure 3: Medical Mavericks Student Feedback

The activity improved your knowledge about how different things work in the world?



The English and Maths mentoring programme focused specifically on students who live in NCOP ward areas and have the potential to go into Higher Education.

A team of 73 mentors were recruited from University of Leicester, De Montfort University and Loughborough University to provide support at eight schools and one further education college in Leicester. A total of 165 mentees received GCSE maths and/or English support, across 1,535 hours of mentor contact time with participants.

In Northamptonshire, six schools and two further education colleges took part in the scheme, using 44 mentors to help 105 mentees.

One of the mentors from the programme, when interviewed, stated that their programme was not only there to prepare students for exams but also open their minds to new possibilities. The mentor stated that the students get academic support but also gain practical advice and support, develop their communication and think more about their future.

Increasing Interest in STEAM Subjects

The students' engagement with STEAM subjects was another recurring theme in the qualitative data with many of them reporting that the activities they participated in increased their interest in this area.

Activities such as Podiatry training, Big Bang Northants, Medical Mavericks and Year 10 Holiday Club seemed to generate lots of interest and showed students that science is more practical and related to real life than what they learn in their classrooms.

When the ISII team interviewed students during the Big Bang event, which lasted a day and had different workshops on different STEAM fields, the students' comments indicated that these workshops increased their interests in science.

As one student stated:

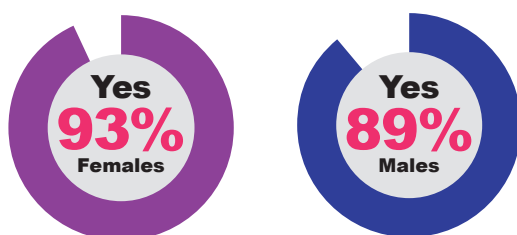
“ I thought science was a boring subject but here [the Big Bang] I have realised that it can be fun. It is more practical than I thought it was. ”

Some students commented on the fact that they have done things in the Big Bang that they possibly would not have done at school. Another student said it is:

“ Not like school where they just tell you what it's like... here you get to be a part of it and get to experience stuff you've never experienced before, you come here and you can go and look at everything, everything, it's all right here. ”

Figure 3: Big Bang Northants Student Feedback

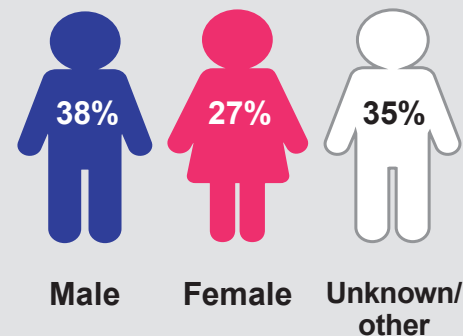
Big Bang improved students' interest in STEAM subjects?



The figure shows that attending Big Bang helped increased students' interest and awareness on STEAM subjects

Key Stats: Commando Joes

Number of students = 725

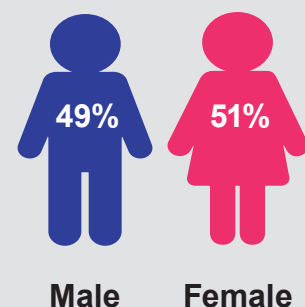


Participants meeting NCOP criteria: 54%

Participants meeting WP Criteria: 66%

Key Stats: The Big Bang

Number of students = 428



Participants meeting NCOP criteria: 12%

Participants meeting WP Criteria: 23%

Awareness of Higher Education

Most of the activities were designed to raise students' awareness of HE and help them consider different avenues for their next academic step.

Student feedback on Medical Mavericks, Year 10 Holiday Club, Year 12 Residential, Podiatry training, and data from the self-efficacy questionnaires indicated that the students' awareness of higher education increased by attending certain activities.

For example, one student said:



It [Medical Mavericks] has improved my knowledge on the different sectors that medical schools can take to.

Another stated that:



I liked these activities [Medical Mavericks] because it improved my understanding of the medical field thus I am more interested in it. This has made me think that medicine will be my degree in university.

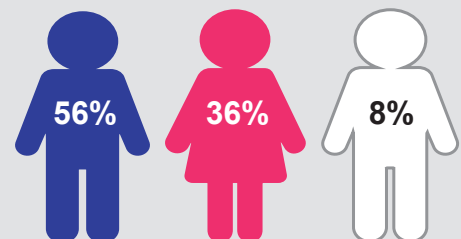
These results show that the students' knowledge of science-related subjects also improved. One student stated that, Podiatry traineeship, persuaded them to study medicine:



Podiatry traineeship convinced me to apply for a medicine degree.

Key Stats: Imagine-a-Day

Number of students = 66



Male

Female

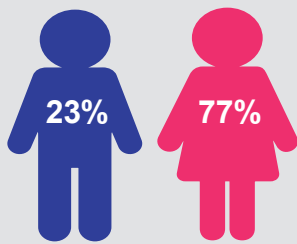
Unknown/
other

Participants meeting NCOP criteria: 86%

Participants meeting WP Criteria: 95%

Key Stats: Year 10 Holiday Club

Number of students = 93



Male Female

Participants meeting NCOP criteria: 43%

Participants meeting WP Criteria: 91%

Students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘I have a good understanding of university life’ substantially increased following the Holiday Club activity.



80% agreed that they had a good understanding of university life after the event, compared with only 30% beforehand



Only 4% felt they had little understanding about university life after the event, compared with 25% before the event.

As part of the data collection, teachers and activity leaders were also interviewed and, even though the activities are designed to raise students' awareness of higher education some practitioners questioned the long-term influence of the Pathways activities.

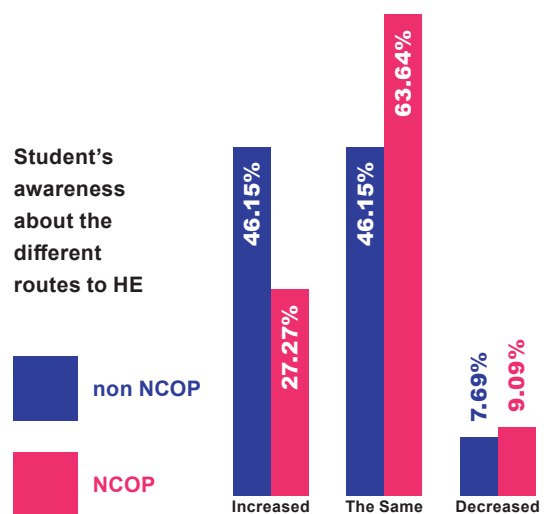
For example, one of the activity leaders reported how useful the activity has been to improve students' motivation and think about their futures, however, the activity leader raised the question on whether these short-term interventions influence students' behaviours long-term (A1).

One of the teachers interviewed also stated that:

“There should be more visits from universities to schools” (T1).

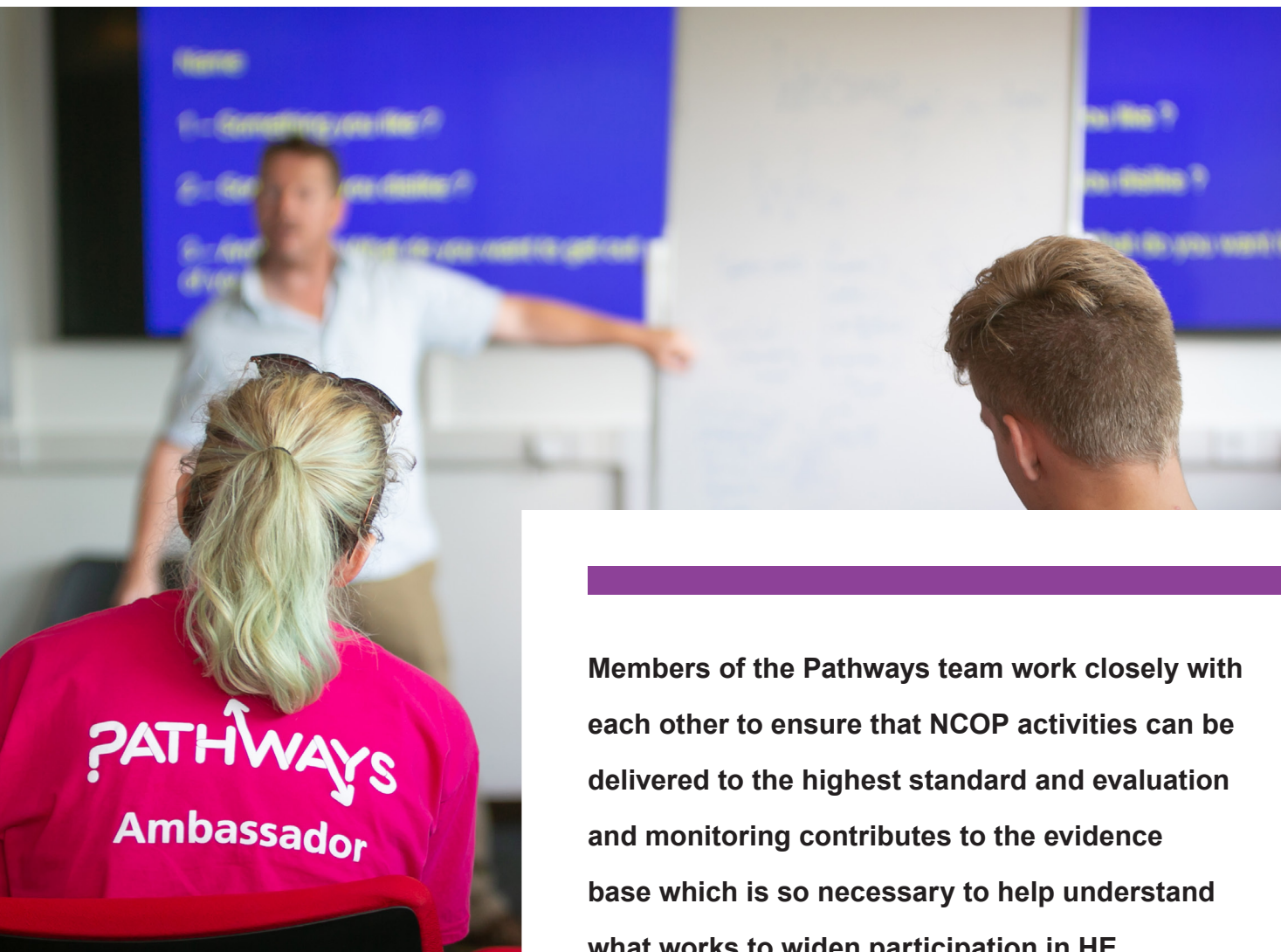
The teacher emphasised the importance of the collaboration between schools and the universities and how it will help teachers' understanding of how activities help students' performance and encourage their plans for the future.

**Figure 5:
Self-Efficacy Questionnaires**



Our Collaborative Approach

Regular Pathways team meetings allow evaluation and monitoring plans and research tools to be agreed, as well as allowing discussion and the resolution of challenges in relation to data, consent forms and relationships with schools.



Members of the Pathways team work closely with each other to ensure that NCOP activities can be delivered to the highest standard and evaluation and monitoring contributes to the evidence base which is so necessary to help understand what works to widen participation in HE.

Links with Schools

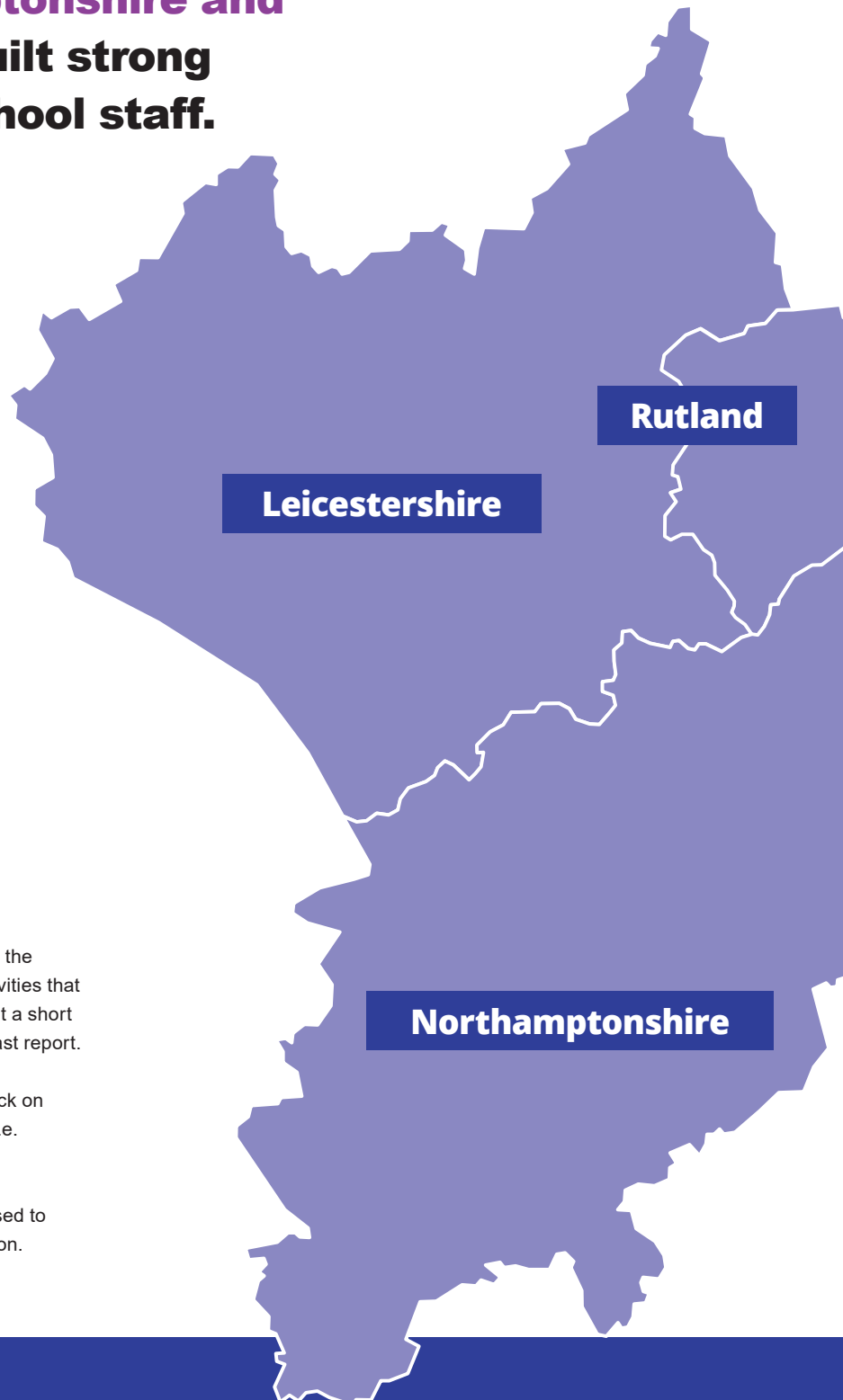
Currently Pathways has worked with over 30 target schools and colleges in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire and built strong relationships with school staff.

We value feedback from teachers about the impact of our activities on their learners and use their comments to continually develop our interventions.

It is very important to maintain a strong relationship with the schools and inform them about the outcomes of the activities that their students attended, and in keeping with this, we sent a short summary of the outcomes to the schools following our last report.

The ISII team engages with teachers to get their feedback on events that they attend both with students and without, i.e. those events organised specifically for teaching staff.

Telephone interviews and online research tools are utilised to ensure that busy teachers can contribute to the evaluation.



Outcomes and Plans

for the upcoming year

The plans for the upcoming year are to evaluate in more depth a sample of agreed activities across Pathways.

A sample of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and workshops will be conducted for these activities starting in September 2018 alongside pre- and post-evaluation surveys for all activities.

The baseline self-efficacy survey will be implemented again in September 2018 to collect students' views on HE and measure their general self-efficacy.

Based on the monitoring and evaluation evidence so far, next year there should be more focus on encouraging teachers and families to engage with the NCOP objectives and feedback on this engagement.

The literature on widening participation in HE clearly shows that families have a big influence on students' higher education choices, and their involvement in their children's future often have a positive impact (Ball et al., 2002).

The evaluation will help Pathways understand more about the key factors that lead to success for the targeted students and, over time, develop knowledge about the social, economic and cultural impacts of NCOP.





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