
IntoUniversity works with universities to provide local learning centres where young people are inspired to achieve.

IntoUniversity Newcastle East
Annual Report

Prepared for
Newcastle University and
Northumbria University

2024/25

IntoUniversity 

Chief Executive Introduction



Dr Rachel Carr OBE

As we reflect on another impactful academic year for our partnership, I want to take the opportunity to thank everyone at Newcastle University and Northumbria University for your long-term, strategic collaboration with **Into**University, and for sharing in our mission to support better educational outcomes for young people across England and Scotland.

I'm really pleased to be able to share our latest annual report demonstrating some of the key achievements of our partnership across the 2024/25 academic year. As the report showcases, with your support, the work of **Into**University Newcastle East continues to have a transformative community impact, giving thousands of young people the vital tools they need to forge successful futures and make informed choices about their pathway beyond school. Your centre is part of a network of centres in England and Scotland, including four new centres recently opened in Bridlington, East Birmingham, Grimsby and Middlesbrough.

2025 has been a significant year for **Into**University as we reached a special milestone. Back in 2002 when we first began, we supported 75 students; in 2025, our 250,000th student walked through our doors. From Bristol to Bridlington, Great Yarmouth to Glasgow, that's 250,000 ambitions sparked, 250,000 talents unlocked, 250,000 futures shaped.

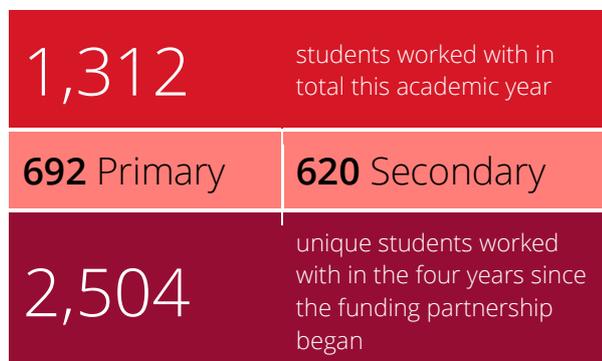
The ten-year old wearing a mortar board as they 'graduate' from a Primary FOCUS Week in your lecture theatre; the fifteen-year old creating a mug cake with their undergraduate student mentor whilst discussing a degree course they are interested in; the academic volunteering to help us improve our educational resources; our university partnerships are at the heart of everything we do to support our young people.

We are immensely grateful to Newcastle University and Northumbria University for your generous support and look forward to our ongoing collaboration, as we support the next 250,000 students on their journey to future success.

Chief Executive Officer
IntoUniversity

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Executive Summary



IntoUniversity Newcastle East has enjoyed another successful year, improving young people's attainment and raising aspirations.

In May, IntoUniversity Gateshead, based in the Design Works Business Centre in Felling, opened. Staff in the centre spent the remainder of the academic year building relationships with local schools and stakeholders in the community, and began to deliver in-school workshops to Primary and Secondary students after successfully onboarding a number of school partners. The team are looking forward to building on these relationships in the 2025/26 academic year, and welcoming more students to after-school Academic Support after having supported a number of Primary students in their first few months of operation.

Newcastle East H.E. progression rate

67% vs 12% local average

IntoUniversity nationwide H.E. progression rate

60% vs 29% national average*

*Estimated % of all maintained school pupils who entered H.E. by age 19 (2023/24)

130

students seen for Academic Support

671

students seen on Primary FOCUS programmes

564

students seen on Secondary FOCUS programmes

83

students seen on the Buddy and Mentoring programme



IntoUniversity and our Partnership

Town / city of IntoUniversity student	IntoUniversity students starting at Newcastle University in autumn 2025	IntoUniversity students starting at Newcastle University since partnership began (2021-2025)	IntoUniversity students starting at Northumbria University in autumn 2025	IntoUniversity students starting at Northumbria University since the partnership began (2021-2025)
Brighton	/	2	/	/
Bristol	1	3	/	/
Clacton-on-Sea	/	/	/	1
Great Yarmouth	/	1	/	/
Leeds	5	16	4	9
Leicester	/	/	/	/
Liverpool	/	/	/	/
London	4	21	/	5
Manchester	2	5	/	/
Newcastle	6	29	25	90
Norwich	/	1	/	/
Nottingham	3	5	1	3
Oxford	/	1	/	/
Total	21*	84	30*	108

* This represents the number of students whom we know have started their first year of study at the Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria in 2025.

A Newcastle University Volunteer's Perspective

Amy, a Politics student at Newcastle University, shared her experience of volunteering with IntoUniversity.

“I chose to volunteer with IntoUniversity because it seemed like a positive and rewarding environment. I am passionate about motivating young people to develop their skills and confidence.

I've really enjoyed the one-to-one mentoring sessions, as I've had the opportunity to plan and direct them. This has been rewarding because I've seen my mentee develop specific skills weekly which they can then implement at school or in the future.

I most enjoy the smiling faces of the young people when they attend the sessions. It has been lovely to witness their enjoyment of Academic Support. Knowing that I'm contributing to such a positive environment, makes my volunteering experience that much more enriching.

The weekly Academic Support sessions have provided me with opportunities to develop my public speaking skills, which was something I was aiming to improve on. Having to communicate effectively with students is a vital part of the volunteering role and something I will take with me into future job positions. The passionate and hardworking people at IntoUniversity motivate me to be my best.'

A Northumbria University Volunteer's Perspective

Karima, an Early Years and Childhood Studies student at Northumbria University, shared her experience of volunteering with IntoUniversity.

“I chose to volunteer with IntoUniversity because I wanted to be part of something that makes a difference to the lives of young people. I was especially interested because of its work in supporting students from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

My best memory was during the Group Mentoring programme. I was helping students who were transitioning into Year 6. My mentee, who was shy at first, began showing such confidence in herself, her dreams, and abilities by the end of the programme. I helped her figure out career paths based on her favourite subjects and it felt like I was contributing to making a difference in a young person's life.

I've been able to develop my communication skills and, through planning mentoring meetings, I've developed my leadership and time-management skills, balancing volunteering commitments with work and university.

I absolutely recommend volunteering with IntoUniversity. While I've been able to support students and inspire them, they've done the same for me. My experience at IntoUniversity has shaped my decision to pursue a career in Secondary school teaching, showing just how much you can gain from this experience.'

Academic Support

IntoUniversity staff provide sessions of structured academic study after school. The sessions raise attainment, encourage young people to become active, independent learners and help them to develop effective study skills. Students have access to essential resources that they may not have at home such as books, university prospectuses and computers.

Which age groups?

Years 3-13

What is the programme?

Students receive help with homework, coursework, revision and university applications. They are supported to complete their academic work to a high standard and on time.

Primary students may also study our tailored, termly curriculum which is based on university degree subjects. Each 'degree' covers key National Curriculum numeracy and literacy learning objectives.

Secondary students may also complete projects as part of the 'Future Readiness Award' where they develop the transferable skills necessary to become independent learners. This year, projects have included making lanterns for Diwali and creating flags for LGBTQ+ month.

A Parent's Perspective

Donna, mother of Nicky, shared how her son has benefitted from Academic Support.

“I decided to register my child at Academic Support so he could have better access to opportunities and university, as I didn't go. We are from a council estate in London, and university was not the 'done' thing. I want Nicky to be able to be the best version of himself and to be able to go on and do whatever he wants to be.

IntoUniversity has definitely helped with Nicky's confidence. He is so close with the staff and they have supported him through his transition to Secondary school; Secondary Academic Support was his safety net through this. He has been coming to Academic Support since day one and absolutely loves it. I can see that he now has access to different careers and pathways and the staff help him complete his homework.

Nicky's goals for the future are to do as well as he can do, he is very competitive and really wants to go to university in Manchester; he is keen on Sports Coaching. Nicky has a university student mentor who has helped him think about life in the future, opening up, and exploring new avenues. Other things, like Extending Horizons, have helped Nicky open up socially, and it was a great opportunity to see other universities and cities. Nicky's first time seeing a university was with **Into**University!

From my point of view, it's a great idea for young people who wouldn't normally have these sorts of opportunities, and I think there should be an **Into**University centre in every town. They really support parents in supporting their children, and they have supported me with all my children at various stages of their educational journey.'



Centre	Academic Support	Number of students
Newcastle East	Primary	60
	Secondary	70
	Holiday examination revision (students may also be attending term time Academic Support)	/
	Target number of students	120
	Actual number of students	130

Primary Academic Support 'degrees' and the modules covered in the 2024-25 academic year

Engineering

- Aeronautical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Robotic Engineering

Psychology

- Social Psychology
- Cognitive Psychology
- Dream Psychology

History of Art

- The Life of Artists
- Curating Art
- Art Criticism

Centre Highlight

In the summer term, Primary Academic Support students at **Into**University Newcastle East explored the world of art through the History of Art curriculum. Covering modules such as 'Life of Artists', 'Curating Art' and 'Art Criticism', students gained an insight into the creative and critical sides of the art world. Students particularly enjoyed taking part in their very own art auction, where they stepped into the roles of collectors and curators. Working in teams, they calculated their budgets, assessed the value of various artworks and engaged in a bidding war. This session allowed students to practice and develop their counting skills in a real-life context, whilst deepening their understanding of art and curation.

Student Evaluations

70%

of **Into**University Newcastle East students reported improved school grades as a result of Academic Support.

79%

of **Into**University Newcastle East students reported that they were working better at school as a result of Academic Support.



Since my daughter joined Academic Support last year, I have seen a tremendous change in her. She was hesitant when she started, as she sometimes struggled with language, but now her confidence has grown and she loves to talk to others. She tells us all about the things she learns at the centre and loves learning about different subjects. As parents, we are so happy for her to have all the opportunities that come with attending **Into**University, like the trips. It is difficult for lots of young people to have such opportunities, so we are very grateful that **Into**University is here to give these opportunities to them.'

**An Academic Support parent
IntoUniversity Newcastle East**

Primary FOCUS

A structured programme which supports and enhances the National Curriculum and inspires students to think about their future education and the world of work. The programme raises students' aspirations and promotes essential skills such as teamwork and communication.

Which age groups?

Years 3-6

What is the programme?

In Years 3 and 4, workshops provide students with a hands-on introduction to different jobs and careers. These workshops are optional and are not delivered to all partner schools.

In Year 5, students participate in a 'What is a University?' workshop where they are familiarised with university life and learning. Year 5 students also spend a whole FOCUS Day themed on one particular curriculum area or topic chosen by their school.

In Year 6, students participate in a FOCUS Week of concentrated learning on a university degree subject. They are immersed in the topic through workshops and trips, and end the week with a graduation ceremony at a university. They also attend a 'Transition' workshop to aid them with the move from Primary to Secondary school.

Some students also have the opportunity to take part in the Holiday FOCUS programme.

A Teacher's Perspective

A Year 5 teacher shared some of their highlights from the Primary FOCUS programme.

“**Into**University has had a really positive impact on our students. It has helped raise their aspirations by introducing them to new possibilities for their future. We've noticed an increase in their confidence - students return from sessions more enthusiastic, willing to share ideas, and more engaged in their learning. For some pupils, this has also translated into better classroom focus and some improved academic outcomes. **Into**University offers them experiences outside of their usual environment which motivates them to aim higher.

From a teacher's perspective, the best thing about **Into**University is how it broadens students' horizons in a structured, engaging, and genuinely supportive way. The sessions are well-planned and link meaningfully to both academic learning and personal development, helping pupils to connect their education to long-term goals. What makes this project stand out is its long-term commitment. Many of our students do not have the support at home or the mental resilience yet to pursue long-term ambitions, such as becoming the first in their family to attend university. **Into**University becomes a consistent helping hand - guiding, encouraging, and believing in them every step of the way. That kind of long-term investment can make a transformational difference. For many, the idea of Higher Education felt distant or unrealistic, but **Into**University makes it feel tangible and achievable.

IntoUniversity offers something rare: sustained, high-quality support that inspires children to dream bigger and gives them the tools to follow through.’



Centre	School	Number of activities delivered to schools					
		Year 3	Year 4	Year 5		Year 6	
		'What is a Career?' workshop	'Careers in Action' workshop	'What is a University?' workshop	FOCUS Day theme	FOCUS Week theme	'Transition' workshop
Newcastle East	Byker Primary School	/	2	2	2 Archaeology	2 Climate Change	3
	Central Walker Church of England Primary School	/	2	2	2 Sustainability	2 Chemistry	3
	St Lawrence's RC Primary	/	1	1	1 Sustainability	1 WWII	1
	Welbeck Academy	/	2	2	2 Sustainability	2 Engineering	2
	West Walker Primary School	/	1	1	1 Sustainability	1 Creative Arts	1
	Target number of students	500					
Actual number of students	671*						

*this includes a small number of Primary-aged students attending Holiday FOCUS.

<p>Trip Highlight</p> <p>Year 6 students from Welbeck Academy took part in an 'Engineering' Primary FOCUS Week, exploring aerospace, automotive, and electrical engineering through hands-on, team-based experiments. Throughout the week, students researched influential engineers such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel, developing their independent research and critical thinking skills. A visit to the Great North Museum included a planetarium show, offering an immersive tour of the solar system. At the end of the week, students took part in a graduation ceremony at Newcastle University, where students toured the campus, spoke with undergraduate students, and celebrated their achievements, gaining insight into university life and the possibilities for their future.</p>	<p>Student Evaluations</p> <p>73% of IntoUniversity Newcastle East students reported improved teamwork as a result of Primary FOCUS.</p> <p>74% of IntoUniversity Newcastle East students reported that they knew more about university as a result of Primary FOCUS.</p>	<p>“I have been working with IntoUniversity for over five years, and the programme has brought great benefits to our pupils at Byker Primary. It helps build their confidence and understanding of the opportunities available in Higher Education, showing them that university is accessible to all. The programme encourages our students to think more deeply about their futures and the wide range of careers they can explore. Alongside this, key skills such as self-esteem and determination to succeed are developed, empowering our pupils to aim higher and believe in their potential. Long may this working partnership continue!”</p> <p>A Year 6 teacher Byker Primary School</p>
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Lower Secondary

FOCUS

A series of workshops and trips that support students' learning and increase their knowledge of Higher Education, career opportunities and educational pathways. The programme increases motivation, strengthens aspiration and develops transferable skills such as adaptability, teamwork and communication.

Which age groups?

Years 7-11

What is the programme?

In Year 7, students focus on personal development targets and learn effective strategies for managing homework at Secondary school.

In Year 8, students explore different approaches to learning and understand how GCSE choices impact on future pathways.

In Year 9, students focus on connecting their current learning with post-school career possibilities and experience 'A Day of University Life'.

In Year 10, students learn about entrepreneurship and post-16 education options.

In Year 11, students focus on writing job applications and practice for interviews, and are prepared for independent life at university.

Some students also have the opportunity to take part in additional programmes including Holiday FOCUS, Business in FOCUS, Leadership in FOCUS and Careers in FOCUS. Please see pages 13 and 14 for more details.

A Teacher's Perspective

The Assistant Principal at a partner Secondary school shared their thoughts about working with **Into**University.

“In each **Into**University cohort, from Year 7 to 11, the workshops have definitely helped broaden the aspirations of each student. From the different classroom sessions to the trips and visits that the team has offered, it's important for our students to understand the different transferable skills that can help them with their personal development. For students with a range of different abilities, and especially for the students in the community that we serve, it's key that they have that exposure to university and Higher Education. **Into**University is really valuable to our students in terms of broadening their experience. Throughout the programme, **Into**University is a constant, which is a real positive as it helps students to build their confidence for future education and beyond.”

The Principal at a partner Secondary school shared their thoughts about working with **Into**University.

“**Into**University allows students to access expert advice and a forum to discuss and track their aspirations and ambitions as they go through school. It also helps students in older year groups see the wider picture beyond GCSE grades. The trips to universities and companies help widen students' experiences and give them the opportunity to be in important spaces. What **Into**University has done is made it clear that our students' aspirations are important and worth investing in. By investing in our young people and building a network of support around them, **Into**University is helping them realise their potential. The journey that our students have with **Into**University is a reminder that they are believed in and can be successful.”



Upper Secondary

FOCUS

A series of workshops and trips that develop skills and knowledge which support students to fulfil their educational and career ambitions. This programme also includes extra-curricular enrichment and networking activities that stand out on students' CVs and UCAS forms.

Which age groups?

Years 12-13

What is the programme?

The post-16 Secondary workshops focus on independent learning skills, support with CV writing, interview skills, UCAS and personal statement support and the transition to university or another chosen pathway.

Student enrichment opportunities range from work experiences and paid internships, to overseas challenges, to university summer schools. Most opportunities are only available through **IntoUniversity** and some lead to contextual university offers or paid employment.

A Teacher's Perspective

A Careers Leader at a partner Secondary school shared their experience of working with **IntoUniversity**.

“IntoUniversity at its core is about building the social mobility of young people in disadvantaged areas. It caters for our students and ensures that they're able to access Higher Education, further education, and different pathways. Staff also make sure they are building students' preparedness for the workplace. The confidence that staff allow our students to build throughout workshops is vital, as well as building aspirations and normalising conversations around aspirations; this feeds directly into the ethos that we have in the school around careers. I particularly value how **IntoUniversity** works with our sixth form; it's great that the programme builds upon the work that's been done in their Key Stage 3 and 4 education, so they truly believe that they can go on and achieve something that they might not have necessarily thought they could before. As a Careers Leader within the academy, I think **IntoUniversity** really supplements and benefits our overall careers programme.

IntoUniversity workshops have a tremendous impact on students' future aspirations. Often, they'll hear our voice telling them that they can achieve whatever they set out to achieve, but having additional voices that reinforce that message, that show them the available opportunities out there, is so important. The scaffolded approach of talking to them about personal statements at the end of Year 12, before sitting down with them at the start of Year 13, reading through their personal statements and having that one-to-one quality time, is integral. I would encourage all schools to take part in **IntoUniversity** because, at the end of it, your young people are going to come away with an extra layer of support that they didn't have previously.’



Centre	School	Number of activities delivered to schools	Number of students
Newcastle East	Benfield School	11	119
	Churchill Community College	16	153
	Jesmond Park Academy	19	266
	Out-of-school support (students from multiple schools)	n/a	79
	Target number of students		500
	Actual number of students		564

422 students were seen from Years 7-11 and 142 students from Years 12-13

*please note that the number in the column total may be less than the sum of the individual rows, as students who took part in both in-school and out-of-school activities are only counted once towards the total.

Years 7-11 workshops include:

- Choosing Success
- Becoming an Independent Learner
- Maximising Memory: Revision and Learning Techniques
- Pathways to Success: Choosing Your Options
- Transferable Skills and Careers
- Introduction to University Life
- Entrepreneurship
- Communication in the Workplace
- Education Choices Beyond 16
- Higher Education Beyond 18
- A Day of University Life

Years 12-13 workshops include:

- Independent Learning
- Writing Personal Statements and UCAS Alternative Pathways
- One-to-one Personal Statement Support
- Skills for the Future
- Student Finance and Budgeting
- Revision and Exam Technique
- Employability
- Professionalism in the Workplace
- Making the Most of Year 12

Programme Highlight

Year 12 students from Jesmond Park Academy enjoyed a 'Day of University Life' trip to Newcastle University. Students took part in a campus tour led by student ambassadors and were able to gain unique insights into the day-to-day life of a student. Students also learnt more about the benefits of university, what type of university and course might be right for them in the future, and practical tips for budgeting and student finance. After the programme, students commented that they knew much more about university learning and life.

Student Evaluations

74%

of **Into**University Newcastle East students reported that they knew more about university as a result of the 'Pathways to Success: Choosing Your Options' Secondary FOCUS workshop.

🗣️ The **Into**University programme has given essential knowledge and support in researching university options, writing applications and personal statements, and how to apply for Student Finance. I've particularly enjoyed hearing the advice from the **Into**University staff team, as it's good to have a different perspective. They've been so friendly, informative, and approachable.'

**A Year 13 student
Churchill Community College**

Mentoring

The Mentoring programme matches **Into**University students with university student volunteers, providing them with positive role models and the opportunity to develop their social skills, explore future options and improve academic attainment. Young people benefit from regular one-to-one support from a role model who can offer invaluable advice and guidance. In Year 13, students are paired with a corporate mentor who offers support with the transition from the final year of school through to university.

Which age groups?

Years 6-13

Buddy

The Buddy programme matches young people with university student volunteers over two days. Students participate in subject-based workshops, before spending a day at a university. The programme aims to enhance students' understanding of university life and different approaches to learning. Visiting a university and meeting undergraduates introduces students to a degree subject and helps them to view university as a realistic option for their future.

Which age groups?

Year 8

A Mentoring Pair's Perspective

Mentoring pair, Zenab and Issy, shared their experiences of the Mentoring programme.

“ Zenab (Mentee):

The best thing about **Into**University is being with my mentor, Issy, because she's a very nice person. She helped me pick my future job as a Space Scientist and plan out my future and what to study; it was amazing! She's taught me things I didn't know before, like in Geography, she taught me about the capital city of Pakistan. Issy also read some books with me that I'd never read, and I wasn't a big fan of reading before. The best moment I had with my mentor was when we read the book "You're a Bad Man, Mr Gum!" together. It's a very good book; you should try reading it.

Mentoring makes me more social. Before, I was nervous to talk to people, so then I decided to start the Mentoring programme. It's been one of the best memories I've ever had.'

“ Issy (Mentor):

I chose **Into**University because I love the way it prepares children of all ages for academia in the future. I was drawn to it because I feel that university is an opportunity that everyone deserves and when I saw the Mentoring programme, I felt it was something I could do. Volunteering at **Into**University is a really rewarding experience because Zenab is so lovely to be with. She's so energetic and sparky.

IntoUniversity's objectives are amazing and everyone I meet is so friendly and makes you feel so comfortable. You get to make special bonds with people, like I have done with Zenab. I like the idea of helping others and it always lifts my spirits being with like-minded people who also like to learn. It's lovely to have the opportunity to fill my spare time with making other people's lives just a little bit better - I hope I do.'



2024/25 Mentoring programmes at **Into**University Newcastle East

Centre	Types of Mentoring	Number of students
Newcastle East	University Pairs	23
	Corporate Pairs	/
	Buddy	60
	Target for Mentoring Programmes	102
	Total for Mentoring Programmes	83*

*students who attend both Buddy and Mentoring are counted twice towards this number.

<p>Student Evaluations</p> <p>72%</p> <p>of IntoUniversity Newcastle East students reported that they were more likely to go to university as a result of the Buddy programme.</p>	<p>Student Evaluations</p> <p>83%</p> <p>of IntoUniversity Newcastle East students reported that they knew more about university as a result of the Buddy programme.</p>
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<p>Mentoring Highlight</p> <p>Mentoring pairs from the Newcastle East centre visited Northumbria University for their Mentoring Celebration. The event began with a speech from a mentoring pair, highlighting the benefits of the programme and the skills they had developed. Throughout the day, mentors and mentees took part in a variety of academic, social, and future-focused activities, helping to strengthen their partnerships and connect with like-minded peers. Volunteers from Northumbria University also supported the event, giving mentees the chance to further develop their social skills and gain valuable insights into university life. The day concluded with an awards ceremony, celebrating the achievements and progress made by each mentoring pair.</p>	<p>“ Ever since I started mentoring, it has been so much easier to do my homework because I've had Lucy to support and guide me through it. During my first session, my confidence was low, but Lucy helped me boost my confidence and now I even gave a speech at the Mentoring Celebration. During the sessions, you can do a variety of activities, some school related, or others can be fun games or baking!</p> <p>A Year 7 mentee IntoUniversity Newcastle East</p> <p>“ It has been such an enjoyable and rewarding experience to help my mentee reach her goals. At the start of the year we set her goals, one of which was to improve public speaking and confidence, and another to practice art. My mentee has done amazingly in exceeding these goals with enthusiasm and positivity. One of my favourite sessions was when we made a nurse career fact file as I was able to help my mentee think about her future career and the steps she can take to achieve it. We also had a lot of fun making cornflake cakes in a baking session. I have loved being a mentor and it has helped me in my own career as well!</p> <p>A Northumbria University student mentor</p>
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Additional Programmes

Extending Horizons is a trip run in partnership with a university, which aims to raise students' aspirations and broaden their horizons.

Holiday FOCUS programmes introduce students to different careers, future pathways and degree subjects. Students work in teams, enjoy interactive, hands-on learning, meet professionals and visit cultural landmarks. We also provide bespoke holiday revision sessions for students in Years 6-13 with specialist tutors on hand.

Careers in FOCUS introduces students to different career possibilities. Volunteers from a range of professions speak about their work and lead an interactive session that demonstrates a transferable skill necessary to their job.

Business in FOCUS is a one-day challenge facilitated by a team of corporate volunteers, designed to promote skills in leadership and teamwork.

Leadership in FOCUS is a three-day programme exploring and developing leadership skills whilst raising aspiration, self-esteem and motivation.

Which age groups?

Years 3-13

A Corporate Volunteer's Perspective

Rishi, who works at **Into**University corporate partner *Norton Rose Fulbright*, shared his experiences as a volunteer in the Careers in FOCUS programme.

“**Into**University's mission really resonated with me. I went to a state school and, at the time, the idea of getting into Law felt almost impossible - there just weren't many opportunities or role models. **Into**University is all about changing that narrative and giving young people the confidence and tools to aim high.

One of my favourite memories was running a negotiation activity where the room got so heated with debate that it felt like a real-life boardroom. The students were so engaged and passionate about their positions - it was amazing to see them thinking critically, working as teams, and really throwing themselves into the challenge. It showed just how much potential they have when given the opportunity.

Volunteering with **Into**University has definitely sharpened my communication skills. I've also developed my leadership and mentoring skills, both with the students and with the colleagues I bring along to sessions. I enjoy bringing along paralegals and apprentices from my team - it gives them a chance to get involved, share their own journeys, and develop their skills too.

I would absolutely recommend volunteering with **Into**University. It's rewarding on so many levels - you're making a real difference to young people, you're having a real impact on social mobility, and you're developing your own skills at the same time. Plus, it's genuinely enjoyable. I want to help open up access to the legal profession for students who might not otherwise see it as an option.’



149
attendances on additional programmes

N.B. some students take part in multiple additional programmes, and therefore this does not represent a number of unique students.

Holiday FOCUS workshop themes:

Health
Sports and STEM

Holiday FOCUS trips and workshops:

Newcastle University Sports Centre
Newcastle United Foundation

Careers in FOCUS:

Students from Jesmond Park Academy enjoyed the Careers in FOCUS programme this year. Volunteers from a range of corporate partners led sessions about their education and career paths, followed by an interactive activity designed to give students an understanding of the skills required in their current role and sector.

Volunteer speakers included those from:
Legal Services Manager, Norton Rose Fulbright
Regional Partnerships Manager, Teach First
Social Impact Manager, Robertsons
Operational Excellence Officer, Siemens

Business in FOCUS:

Students from Churchill Community College took part in a 'Music Charity' Business in FOCUS Day, hosted by law firm, Ward Hadaway. In two teams, students were tasked with creating, promoting and running their own unique music charity to support a cause of their choice. Supported by Ward Hadaway volunteers, students immersed themselves in all aspects of the day, including drawing up a business plan, generating income from funding applications, calculating expenditure and planning and performing a fundraising concert! It was a fantastic way for the students to experience a corporate environment, and develop a variety of skills, including teamwork, leadership, time management and communication.

Holiday FOCUS Highlight

Secondary Academic Support students took part in a three-day 'Sports and STEM' themed Holiday FOCUS programme, including a visit to Newcastle University's sports centre to try new sports and build teamwork. At the Newcastle United Foundation, they explored coding, engineering, and virtual gaming, developing problem-solving and digital skills. The programme ended with a session on careers in sport, where students learned about pathways in the industry through a Q&A with a former professional footballer.

Student Evaluations

95%

of **Into**University Newcastle East students reported improved teamwork as a result of the Business in FOCUS programme.

89%

of **Into**University Newcastle East students reported improved communication skills as a result of the Careers in FOCUS programme.

“ Through the Business in FOCUS programme, our Year 10 students gained invaluable insights into the professional world by visiting Ward Hadaway law firm and engaging in a dynamic business simulation. They were actively engaged throughout the visit, developing key skills in teamwork, decision-making, and commercial awareness. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were thrilled to be in a real-life working environment for the day. The staff enjoyed it too!

A teacher
IntoUniversity Newcastle East
partner Secondary school

Welcoming our 250,000th Student

At **Into**University, we're privileged to support young people to realise their potential. In 2025, we'll welcome our 250,000th student through our doors. That's 250,000 ambitions sparked, 250,000 talents unlocked, 250,000 futures shaped.

From Bristol to Bridlington, Great Yarmouth to Glasgow, our university partners have been crucial on this journey.

Anglia Ruskin University
Christ Church, Oxford
De Montfort University
King's College, Cambridge
King's College London
Newcastle University
Northumbria University
Pembroke College, Cambridge
Queens' College, Cambridge
Trinity College, Cambridge
University College Birmingham
University of Bath
University of Bristol
University of East Anglia



250,000
FUTURES

University of Edinburgh
University of Exeter
University of Glasgow
University of Hull
University of Leeds
University of Leicester
University of Liverpool
University of Manchester
University of Nottingham
University of Oxford
University of Salford
University of Southampton
University of Warwick
University of York

Thank you!

The Journey to 250,000

IntoUniversity has gone from a small community after-school club to a national charity operating 46 learning centres across England and Scotland.



The "IntoUniversity scheme" receives funding to work with 75 young people in the North Kensington community.

Just **1** centre!

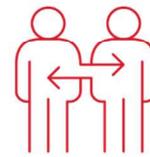
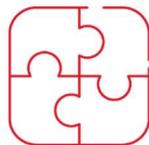
2002

2008

We support over **1,000** students a year for the first time.

IntoUniversity is now an independent charity.

4 centres across London.



We work with our **10,000th** student.

IntoUniversity launches its first formal university partnership with the University of Nottingham, opening centres beyond London for the first time.

This creates a model for collaboration now replicated in communities across England and Scotland.

2011

Lady Cigourney, former IntoUniversity North Kensington student, who studied at our partner the University of Liverpool

“ IntoUniversity has been a constant source of support and inspiration in my life. From the moment my parents discovered the North Kensington centre through our church, I was welcomed into a space filled with resources, encouragement, and people who truly believed in me. Meeting my Year 9 mentor – a young Black woman at university – was transformative; seeing someone from a background like mine thriving in higher education made me certain I could too. Their guidance helped me gain a scholarship to Rugby School for sixth form and, now as a young woman in my professional career, the team continues to cheer me on and advise me, opening doors I might never have found alone.

Being part of one of IntoUniversity's earliest cohorts and now volunteering as a mentor has been incredible. I've watched the charity grow from a single centre to reaching its 250,000th student, yet the warmth and dedication remain the same.'



Nigel, former IntoUniversity East Ham student, now doing his degree at our partner the University of Warwick

“ IntoUniversity helped me in my personal growth journey. Through programmes like Big City Bright Futures, they gave me access to work experience and insight days that opened my eyes to different career paths. They also ran workshops on university applications, helping me develop skills, structure my personal statement, and take part in activities that built my confidence.

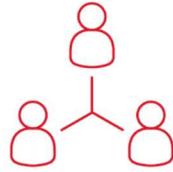
These experiences provided me with invaluable preparation for my higher education journey.'



2015

The **50,000th** student walks through the doors of one of our **21** centres.

The charity now has **7** formal university partners, hosting **390** campus visits and providing **348** university student mentors this year.



Our reach has doubled in the space of three years, and we work with our

100,000th

student at **28** centres.

This year, **593** university students mentored our young people.

2018

2023

We work with our

200,000th

student.

This year, **13,649** young people enjoy **510** campus visits at our partner universities!



2025

Since 2002, those 75 students have become

250,000...

Over **5,200** university students have mentored our young people, we've made more than **5,300** campus visits, and over **110,000** IntoUniversity students have visited a university!



250,000

FUTURES

Thanks to all our university partners – your support has been invaluable.

Delina, Year 8, currently attends IntoUniversity Coventry

“ I think every single child in the world should attend IntoUniversity. It has taught me so much – helped me gain confidence, learn new things, face my fears, and make new friends, which is the most important thing in life. Before coming to Academic Support, I didn't know about different careers – I thought a job was just something you did to get paid. IntoUniversity has shown me that you can build a future by studying and doing different things. One day, I want to go to university to make my mum proud. I'd like to study Maths so I can help other children with their Maths and English.’



University Partner Network



Partner network event

It's been another strong year for our partnership network, with continued progress in collaborative approaches to widening participation. We were pleased to host the network's second formal event at our headquarters, where external speakers led thought-provoking sessions on key sector issues. Thank you to Joanne Davies from the University of Bath, Louise Harrison from Northumbria University, and Alona Welby from Newcastle University for contributing to a timely panel discussion on OfS priorities and the future of regional collaboration. Attendees shared their own approaches and explored how the network can strengthen collective efforts in this area. We also heard from Robert Renfree, a lawyer at corporate partner Mills & Reeve, who led a compelling session on the role of AI in education, sparking discussion on its opportunities, challenges, and the importance of sharing best practice when working with young people.

Metacognition research project – successful in joint bid

In partnership with Anglia Ruskin University, **IntoUniversity** has secured support from the Office for Students' Equality in Higher Education Innovation Fund for a project exploring how metacognitive skills can improve attainment among Primary-aged students. The project is being delivered through Academic Support sessions at selected **IntoUniversity** centres, focusing on early, out-of-school interventions to build academic confidence and raise awareness of higher education. Findings will be used to refine our approach and shared with the wider sector. An initial report is expected in the spring.



Adult & Family Learning Project

We have also had the opportunity to partner with the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow on a pilot project across our three Scottish **IntoUniversity** centres: Craigmillar, Govan, and Maryhill. Running until the end of the 2025-26 academic year, the programme supports parents and carers of **IntoUniversity** students through adult learning opportunities that help them engage with their children's education. Activities have included sessions on different education pathways and university workshops during Primary FOCUS Week graduations. Based on insight and feedback gathered so far, the pilot continues to deliver targeted support for parents and carers throughout the 2025-26 academic year.



Programme Outputs

Please see below the breakdown of **Into**University Newcastle East's performance against targets.

Summary programme outputs	Actual students	Target	Difference	% of target achieved
Academic Support	130	120	+10	108%
Primary FOCUS programmes and additional opportunities	671	500	+171	134%
Primary FOCUS Year 3-4	211			
Primary FOCUS Year 5-6	455			
Holiday FOCUS / Extending Horizons	17			
Secondary FOCUS workshops and additional opportunities	564	500	+64	113%
Year 7-11	422			
Year 12-13	142			
Mentoring: Buddy and 1:1 support	83	102	-19	81%
Buddy	60			
Mentoring	23			
Total unique* students	1,312	1,000	+312	131%

*Students are only counted once, even if they take part in multiple programmes. Total unique students will be less than the combined total for each programme, as some students attend multiple programmes.

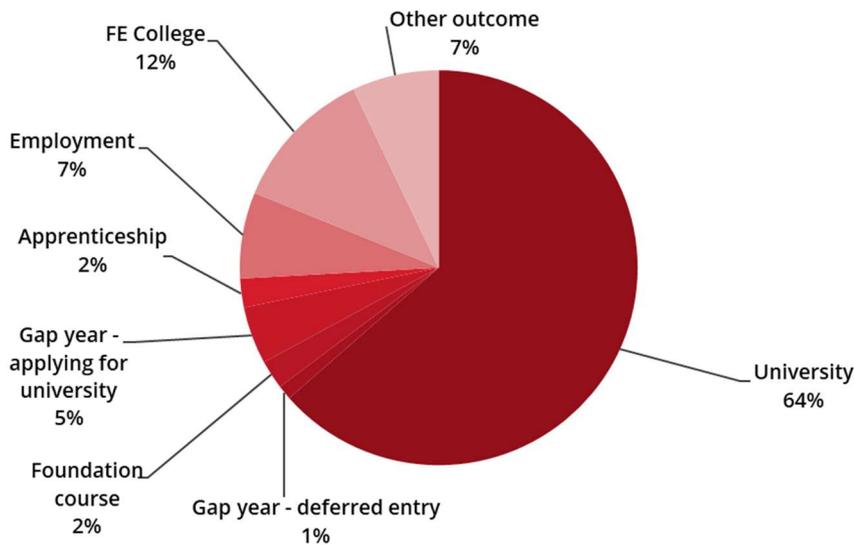
The centre ran the required number of Buddy programmes with partner schools this year, but student attendance on these programmes was lower than what would normally be expected. The team will continue to encourage schools to offer this programme to larger cohorts of students.

With support from both university partners, recruitment of volunteers for the Mentoring programme continues to be a priority for the centre.

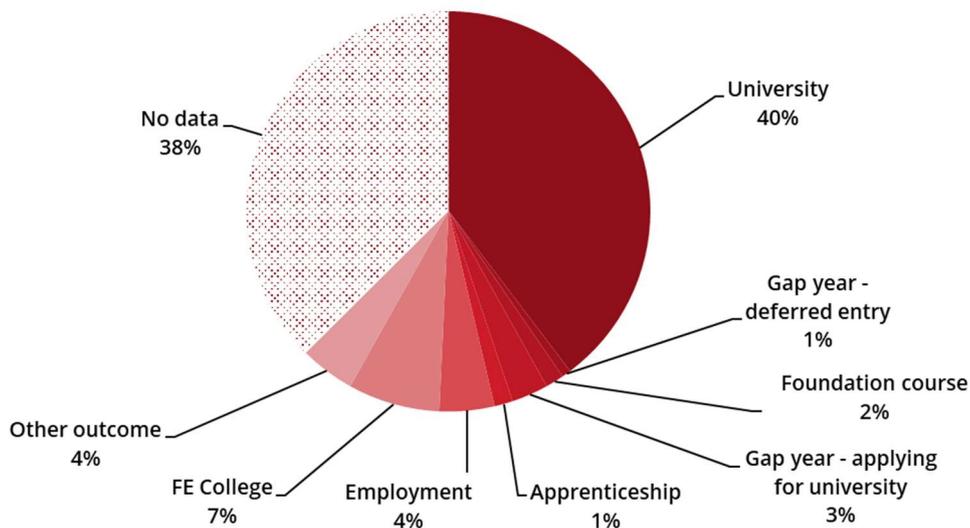
Higher Education Progression

Each year we collect data on the next steps of **IntoUniversity** students who are either finishing Year 13 or would have completed Year 13 had they stayed in school. The data is obtained either from our partner schools or by contacting students directly to find out what they are doing. Although staff made every effort to contact all students, there were some for whom we were unable to obtain data. This year we had a total of 136 **IntoUniversity** Newcastle East leavers and were able to obtain destination data for 85 of them. Of these, 57 (67%) gained a place at university (56 for entry this year, including two for a foundation course, one for entry next year). The first chart below shows data for the students we were able to get in touch with. The second chart shows all students, including those for whom we were unable to obtain data.

Destinations of IntoUniversity Newcastle East 2025 school leavers responding to our survey



Destinations of all IntoUniversity Newcastle East 2025 school leavers (including non-respondents)



IntoUniversity Newcastle East's cohort of students outperformed a range of local and national benchmarks by between 18 and 55 percentage points.

		Area	H.E. progression rate	Percentage point difference for IntoUniversity students
Benchmark	IntoUniversity Newcastle East		67%	n/a
	Estimated % of all FSM maintained school pupils who entered H.E. by age 19 (2023/24)*	Newcastle upon Tyne	27%	40 pp
		England	29%	38 pp
	Estimated % of all maintained school pupils (FSM and non-FSM) who entered H.E. by age 19 (2023/24)*	Newcastle upon Tyne	46%	21 pp
		England	46%	21 pp
	Estimated % of all disadvantaged students studying level 3 qualifications progressing to H.E. (2023/24)*	Newcastle upon Tyne	40%	27 pp
		England	45%	22 pp
	Estimated % of all (disadvantaged and all other) students studying level 3 qualifications progressing to H.E. (2023/24)*	Newcastle upon Tyne	45%	22 pp
		England	49%	18 pp
	% 18-year-olds who entered H.E. based on POLAR 4 (2009-2015)*	U.K.	37%	30 pp
		Newcastle upon Tyne	35%	32 pp
		Local area ('MSOA')** around the Newcastle East centre	12%	55 pp

*Most recent data available

**Middle Layer Super Output Area

The progression rate for IntoUniversity Newcastle East school leavers is slightly higher than last year, but within the range of variation we would expect. As a centre gets older, and the cohort of school leavers gets larger, the progression rate is likely to fluctuate somewhat from year to year.

In particular, we anticipate that the progression rate will drop once the centre is old enough that students who took part in Primary FOCUS reach school leaver age. For Primary FOCUS we work with whole classes, and our intentional targeting of schools with high levels of need means that many of these students come from backgrounds where university may not be considered a viable or familiar option. While we expect fewer of these students to go on to university than those joining further through school, the impact is arguably greater, broadening access among those further from opportunity.

OMR

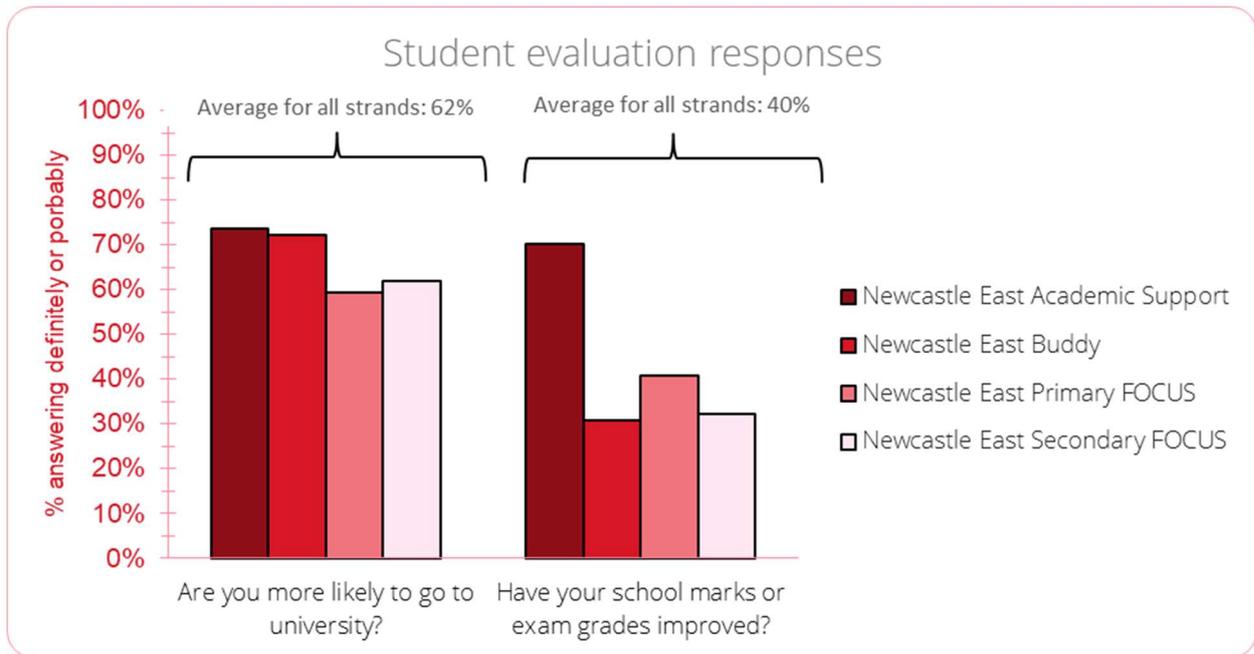
Evaluations

IntoUniversity has developed comprehensive systems for gathering and analysing self-reports from students. The charity aims to survey all students we work with using Optical Mark Reading (OMR) forms. These forms provide a detailed picture of young people's perceptions of the impact of various parts of the programme. This year we received 1,111 responses from **Into**University Newcastle East students. The full set of responses is available on the following page. Two of the key questions asked are:

As a result of attending **Into**University, are you more likely to go to university?

As a result of attending **Into**University, have your school marks or grades improved?

In analysing the combined responses, the charity considered the different strands that each student attended, i.e. a student attending Academic Support should primarily be reporting an improvement in their grades as this is the focus of their time spent with **Into**University, whilst a student attending Secondary FOCUS should primarily be reporting that they are more likely to go to university in comparison to other programme outcomes, due to the nature of the workshops.



We can see that 62% of students on all programmes reported that they were more likely to go to university as a result of attending **Into**University. The **Into**University programme is achieving its aim of informing students about Higher Education as shown by the fact that 68% of students on all programmes reported that they knew more about university as a result of attending **Into**University. As expected, students on the Academic Support programme are much more likely to report improved grades than students on other programmes.

OMR

Evaluations

Have you enjoyed yourself?			
	Positive	Maybe	Negative
All programmes	83%	11%	6%
Academic Support	93%	4%	4%
Buddy	87%	13%	0%
Primary FOCUS	84%	12%	4%
Secondary FOCUS	76%	14%	10%

Are you working better at school?			
	Positive	Maybe	Negative
All programmes	55%	29%	17%
Academic Support	79%	12%	9%
Buddy	41%	43%	16%
Primary FOCUS	64%	23%	13%
Secondary FOCUS	43%	34%	23%

Are you more likely to go to university?			
	Positive	Maybe	Negative
All programmes	62%	24%	14%
Academic Support	74%	21%	5%
Buddy	72%	24%	4%
Primary FOCUS	59%	28%	13%
Secondary FOCUS	62%	20%	18%

Do you know more about university?			
	Positive	Maybe	Negative
All programmes	68%	18%	14%
Academic Support	72%	11%	17%
Buddy	83%	13%	4%
Primary FOCUS	74%	13%	14%
Secondary FOCUS	63%	21%	16%

Has your confidence improved?			
	Positive	Maybe	Negative
All programmes	54%	25%	22%
Academic Support	73%	20%	7%
Buddy	44%	31%	25%
Primary FOCUS	56%	23%	21%
Secondary FOCUS	44%	28%	28%

Have your school marks or exam grades improved?			
	Positive	Maybe	Negative
All programmes	40%	31%	29%
Academic Support	70%	14%	15%
Buddy	31%	33%	37%
Primary FOCUS	41%	34%	25%
Secondary FOCUS	32%	31%	37%

Are you more likely to achieve your career goals?			
	Positive	Maybe	Negative
All programmes	62%	27%	10%
Academic Support	86%	8%	6%
Buddy	58%	27%	15%
Primary FOCUS	70%	22%	9%
Secondary FOCUS	51%	36%	13%

Are you more confident communicating with others, including adults?			
	Positive	Maybe	Negative
All programmes	62%	20%	19%
Academic Support	67%	20%	13%
Buddy	55%	30%	15%
Primary FOCUS	61%	17%	22%
Secondary FOCUS	59%	20%	21%

Can you work better in a team?			
	Positive	Maybe	Negative
All programmes	67%	20%	13%
Academic Support	75%	17%	8%
Buddy	55%	30%	15%
Primary FOCUS	73%	14%	12%
Secondary FOCUS	58%	26%	16%

Case Studies

Ionut, Year 7

We asked Centre Leader Kenza to tell us about Ionut's journey with IntoUniversity:

Ionut first joined Academic Support when he was in Primary school, where he quickly showed strong ambition and engagement. Though he initially struggled with his schoolwork, he has made significant progress, both academically and in confidence. Ionut and his family have a strong relationship with the centre team, who have supported him consistently, including during a period when he was out of formal education. Ionut values the calm and supportive nature of Academic Support, where he now feels comfortable asking for help and working independently.

What do you hope to achieve by coming to IntoUniversity?

'I want to learn skills that will help me in life. It's also a very calming space where I can get on with my work. Academic Support was particularly useful when I wasn't in school.'

How has IntoUniversity helped you?

'It has helped me achieve better grades at school. I am improving all the time. IntoUniversity has also helped me with a lot of personal issues, such as my mental health.'

Which programme did you find most beneficial?

'I enjoyed the 'Choosing Success' workshop in Year 7 because I liked learning about different careers. I also enjoy coming to Academic Support because I learn about topics such as e-commerce and business, which will help me in the future because I want to be an entrepreneur.'

How has IntoUniversity supported you to think about your future?

'It's taught me all about careers and has really encouraged me to build my confidence. I know more about universities and what I might need for my future goals.'



Yasmin, Year 7

We asked Centre Leader Kenza to tell us about Yasmin's journey with IntoUniversity:

When she joined Academic Support in September 2024, Yasmin had been having difficulties engaging in lessons which had affected her behaviour at school. Since starting at IntoUniversity Yasmin says she is much happier, knowing she has the extra support she needs with her work and social skills. Yasmin often finds herself focused and immersed in various projects started with her mentor, Kyra. The pair attended their Mentoring graduation in May at Northumbria University. Yasmin's confidence has dramatically improved and she has recently she has joined the Secondary Student Council.

What do you hope to achieve by coming to IntoUniversity?

'One thing that has motivated me to come to Academic Support [is that it] will help me to pass my GCSEs, and this will help me go to university and achieve my goals.'

How has IntoUniversity helped you?

'Since coming to Academic Support I have been completing my homework, either with help in the session, or with my mentor in one-to-one mentor meetings. I think that it has helped my confidence as I meet new people, like other students and my mentor, and get to practice speaking and debating.'

How has IntoUniversity supported you to think about your future?

'It has supported me to know that when I'm older I want to work at IntoUniversity or be a lawyer, because I want to help people. I have learnt how to debate and practiced with staff members. This has improved my confidence and public speaking.'



Photo Gallery



Clockwise from top left:

Primary Academic Support students playing chess; learning about dentistry on a three-day 'Health' Holiday FOCUS programme; a baking session for a mentee and their university student mentor; 'WWII' workshop at the Discovery Museum for a 'Modern History' Primary FOCUS Week; trip to Tynemouth Aquarium as part of a 'Climate Change' Primary FOCUS Week.

To find out more about
IntoUniversity please contact



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www.intouniversity.org

IntoUniversity The logo for IntoUniversity, featuring the letters 'iu' in white lowercase font inside a red right-pointing arrow.