ColytonFoundation
Your Future Story

10 year programme to keep 1000 under resourced children on the pathway to university

1. Executive Summary

Your Future Story is an innovative new programme developed by a powerful coalition of partners from the schools, higher education and charitable sectors to tackle a critical and persistent challenge: high-attaining children from under-resourced backgrounds in the South West of England are significantly less likely to progress to higher education – especially to high-tariff universities – than their peers elsewhere in the country.

This regional inequality begins early and compounds over time. Children in the South West eligible for free school meals are the least likely in England to enter higher education and face some of the lowest attainment outcomes at every Key Stage. The problem is especially acute in rural and coastal areas of Devon, Somerset, and Cornwall, where educational isolation and limited access to opportunity exacerbate systemic barriers.

Your Future Story responds with a bold, long-term, and place-specific intervention. Each year, 100 high-attaining Year 7 students from under-resourced backgrounds will join a supportive cohort that stays with them through to university entry. Over ten years, 1,000 young people will benefit from a combination of academic support, personal development, university and employer engagement, and mentoring from specially trained school-based Teacher Champions.

Co-designed with leading universities and rooted in a robust theory of change, the programme builds aspiration, achievement, and a strong sense of belonging among participants—helping to close regional progression gaps and create a South West where background is no barrier to higher education.

2. Overview

Outcomes for academically able children in the South West are among the worst in the country. The situation is particularly bleak for academically able children from the least privileged backgrounds. The Colyton Foundation exists to change this.

In the South West, the barriers to academically able children from under-resourced backgrounds accessing high-tariff high education courses[1] are amongst the most significant in the country.

Under-resourced children in the South West with high Key Stage 2 attainment are significantly less likely to progress to higher education, and to high-tariff higher education institutions, than other children with high attainment at Key Stage 2.

Your Future Story is an ambitious programme which will work with 1000 high-attaining under-resourced children from Devon, Somerset and Cornwall[2] over 10 years to ensure they remain on the pathway to high-tariff higher education courses.

The programme will do so by ensuring:

- Participating children continue to attain highly throughout their time at secondary school

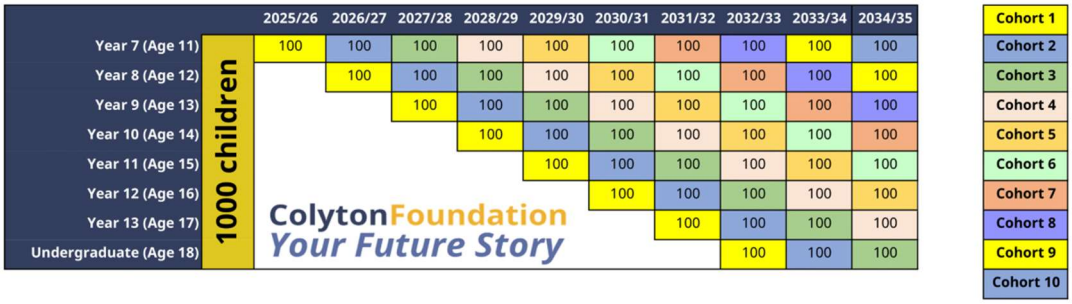
[1] Defined as courses offered by the 30% of providers with the highest average UCAS tariff points score in their undergraduate populations: Office for Students, *Provider Typologies* (2022)
[2] Throughout this paper, 'Devon' is used to refer to the ceremonial country of Devon, encompassing non-metropolitan county of Devon and Plymouth and Torbay unitary authorities. 'Somerset' refers to the geographical area within the Somerset Council local authority

- Participating children, and those supporting them (including teachers, parents, carers) maintain high expectations and aspirations of their progression to higher education
- Participating children are able to draw on a robust support network and form a mutually reinforcing cohort identity.

The programme will begin with a cohort of 100 Year 7 children, continuing to support this cohort until their first year of undergraduate study.

Each year, an additional Year 7 cohort of 100 students joins the programme, so that, in its eighth year, there will be 800 participating students, drawn from Years 7-13 and the first year of university study.

After 10 years, 1000 under-resourced children will have been supported by the programme to remain on the pathway to university study.



3. The Problem

In the South West, barriers to academically able children from an under-resourced background accessing high-tariff high education courses are amongst the most significant in the country.

HE Progression

- Attending university remains the surest route to social mobility. A low-income student is four times for likely to become socially mobile if they attend university.[3]
- A long term analysis of HE progression from 2012-2016 by the Office for Students found that the South West of England has the worst HE progression rate of any English region.[4]

In 2021/22:

- 47% of pupils in England progressed to higher education by age 19; 13.4% to high-tariff HE providers.
- In the South West, 41% of children progressed to HE (the lowest figure for any English region); 12% of students progressed to high-tariff providers (third lowest English region).
- Nationally 29% of pupils in receipt of free school meals progressed to HE; 5.3% to high-tariff providers.
- In the South West, 18.7% of FSM pupils progressed to HE (the lowest of any region; Inner London 52%) and 3.1% to high-tariff providers (the second lowest of any region; Inner London 13.6%).[5]

Attainment

[3] Sutton Trust, *Fair opportunity for all (2024)*
[4] Office for Students, *Place matters: Inequality, employment and the role of higher education* (2021)
[5] UK Government, *Widening participation in higher education* (2023)

- It is widely accepted that "Prior attainment is the dominant factor which determines whether and where a person studies, and aspirations appear to largely reflect this prior attainment."[6]
- GCSE attainment for disadvantaged high prior attaining pupils in the South West is amongst the worst in the country. In 2021/22 SW disadvantaged HPA pupils in the South West secured an average HPA Progress 8 score of –0.8 (national average for HPA disadvantaged -0.5; Inner London -0.2).[7]

Regional Gap

In comparison with disadvantaged children educated in London, disadvantaged children in the South West:

- Have an average GCSE Attainment 8 score 10.6 points lower
- Are half as likely to progress to A-Level study
- Are three times less likely to attend a Russell Group University
- Are two and a half times less likely to attend Oxford or Cambridge[8]

4. Evidence Base

The data above suggests that the poor progress of disadvantaged pupils who have attained highly at primary school contributes significantly to the South West's low HE progression rates (particularly to high-tariff institutions) for children from under-resourced backgrounds.

Under Resourcing at Key Stage 3

Recent studies have asserted the importance of a 'cradle to career' approach supporting under privileged children[9]. In terms of HE progression, this means taking a long-term view of the pathway to higher education, identifying broad barriers to good attainment and coordinating local assets to address these inequities at an early stage, rather than simply intervening in years immediately preceding HE.

Jerrim and Carvajal find that 'high-achieving children from poor families [experience] a particularly sharp relative decline in their attitudes towards school, behaviour, mental health and academic achievement between age 11 and 14' and that 'failure to fully capitalise on the early potential of this group is likely to be a key reason why the UK is failing to become a more socially fluid society'.[10]

Ofsted has raised concerns about a lack of challenge for the most able pupils at Key Stage 3 and that use of Pupil Premium funding to close attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is disproportionately directed towards Key Stage 4[11].

Additionally, Anthony finds that 44% of participants in HE outreach first engage with outreach after Year 11, while only 12% first engage with outreach during Year 7 and Year 8[12].

Attainment and Aspiration at Key Stage 4

There is a robust evidence base to suggest that children aged 11-15 generally hold high aspirations to attend university, regardless of socio-economic status[13], but that, for pupils

[6] Chowdry et al., *Widening participation in higher education: analysis using linked administrative data* (IFS; 2013)
Cummings et al., *Can attitudes and aspirations help close the attainment gap?* (Joseph Rowntree Foundation; 2012)
[7] Colyton Foundation: Freedom of information Request to Department for Education, Ref: 2023-0015740, 2023)
[8] Department for Education, *Progression to higher education or training* (2023)
[9] Sim and Elliot Major (2022)
Noyes et al., *The mathematics pipeline in England: Patterns, interventions and excellence* (University of Nottingham, 2023)
[10] Jerrim & Carvajal, *What happens to bright 5-year-olds from poor backgrounds? Longitudinal evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study* (UCL, 2024)
[11] Ofsted, *Key Stage 3: the wasted years?* (2015)
[12] Anthony, *'What works' and 'what makes sense' in Widening Participation: an investigation into the potential of university-led outreach to raise attainment in schools* (University of Kent, 2019) p.111

from under-resourced backgrounds, these aspirations fall away severely between age 15 & 18, constrained by the realities of the opportunities available to them[14]. For many under-resourced children in the South West, GCSE grades which are unlikely to facilitate HE progression are the most significant of these 'constraining realities'.

Educational Isolation: Schools

There is a substantial body of evidence to suggest that the specific context of the South West of England, particularly that of the rural and coastal counties of Somerset, Devon and Cornwall ('the South West peninsula'), has a detrimental impact on pupils' aspirations towards and, expectation of, HE progression.

Rural schools have particular difficulty breaking the link between poverty and low attainment[15]. Ovenden-Hope and Passey highlight the impact of educational isolation on schools and pupils. The dispersed rural and costal population distribution of the South West peninsula makes it particularly vulnerable to the effects of educational isolation. The resulting lack of resources for schools and pupils can be seen as a significant contributing factor to low HE progression rates in the region, both limiting attainment in schools and reducing expectations of HE progression.[16]

Various studies suggest that children from rural and coastal communities look less favourably on higher education than those living in urban areas[17]. Recent evidence suggests that young people aged 16-18 living in the South West are the more likely to enter employment at the earliest opportunity than in any other region.[18] It can be hypothesised that low HE progression levels over many years have led to lower expectations of HE progression for the region's children from schools, colleges, families and peers. Lasselle & Smith identify the expectations of parents and peers as instrumental to pupils assessment of their likelihood of progression to HE[19], while Dunne, King & Ahrens emphasise the impact of the institutional habitus of schools and colleges in the expectations they have of their pupils, and the information advice and guidance provided to students[20].

The number of pupils with high attainment at Key Stage 2 in the South West is strikingly low in comparison other regions[21]. As a result, academically able children, particularly those from under-resourced backgrounds, are likely to be isolated, with few other pupils in their schools on the pathway to high-tariff higher education courses. Freeman, Anderman and Jensen assert that a sense of belonging, and cohort identity improves academic outcomes and encourages HE progression and retention[22]. Under-resourced academically able children in the South West may find establishing such a sense of identity within their schools difficult.

Educational Isolation: Access to Opportunity

The South West peninsula's remoteness from the rest of the country and its poor public transport connections mean children in the region, particularly those experiencing poverty, struggle to access experiences, opportunities and support beyond school that support HE progression[23].

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[13] Atherton et al. *How Young People Formulate their Views about the Future (*2009)
Baker et al., *Aspirations, education and inequality in England* (2014)
St Clair et al., *Silver bullet or red herring? New evidence on the place of aspirations in education* (2013)
[14] Chowdry et al. *The Role of Attitudes and Behaviours in Explaining Socio-Economic Differences in Attainment at Age 16* (2009); Chowdry et al. (2013);
[15] Centre for Education and Youth, *Breaking the Link? Attainment, poverty and rural schools* (2019)
[16] Ovenden-Hope and Passey, *Educational Isolation: A challenge for schools in England* (Plymouth Marjon University, 2019)
[17] Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs, *Rural proofing: practical guidance to consider the outcomes of policies in rural areas* (2022)
Commission for Rural Communities, *Barriers to education, employment and training for young people in rural areas* (2010)
[18] Sim and Eliot Major, *Social Mobility in the South West: Levelling up through education* (University of Exeter, 2022)
[19] Lasselle & Smith *Expectations of progression to university among pupils in rural communities: the role of social influences* (Oxford Review of Education, 2024)
[20] Dunne, King, & Ahrens, *Applying to higher education: comparisons of independent and state schools* (Studies in Higher Education, 2013)
[21] In 2022, 7% of pupils in the South West met the higher standard in reading writing and maths at KS2, the joint lowest proportion of any region (national average 7%; London 12%).
[22] Freeman, Anderman & Jensen, *Sense of belonging in college freshmen at the classroom and campus levels* (Journal of Experimental Education, 2007).
[23] Sim and Eliot Major (2022)

HE widening access interventions delivered by universities and charities are predominantly delivered in urban areas with a high 'density of need'. As a result, such interventions fail to reach children affected by the dispersed rural poverty prevalent in the South West peninsula. Under-resourced children in the South West with high attainment at Key Stage 2, particularly those living in rural and coastal locations, are significantly less likely to access interventions support for continued high attainment and progression to higher education than those in other locations.[24]

Young people in rural and coastal areas face similar barriers in accessing the work experience, enrichment, and extracurricular activities which strengthen applications top tier universities, in particular engagement with employers in different sectors and high-quality work experience related to careers accessible through HE[25]. There are large number of employers in the South West peninsula with the potential to offer careers support, and subsequent employment opportunities, to young people, particularly in the peninsula's burgeoning technology sector. Currently, however, pupils from under-resourced backgrounds, and those advising them, may not be aware of, or able to access, these opportunities.[26]

5. Programme Design

Assumptions

The evidence, above, supports Playford, Mountford-Zimdars and Benham-Clarke's assertion that the South West is 'a special case for those wishing to increase educational opportunities and progression' and that intervention to support HE progression in the region must be designed to reflect the unique context of the region.[27] This principle lies behind the design of the *Your Future Story* programme.

Evaluation of different kinds of HE widening access interventions suggests that broad programmes with multiple elements of support are particularly effective in delivering increases in student aspirations and outcomes[28].

In light of the evidence above, programme design is based on the following assumptions:

We will ensure that the pathway to higher education remains open for high-attaining under-resourced children from Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, if we:

1. Support these children to **continue to attain highly at GCSE and A Level**
2. **Maintain high aspiration for, and expectation** of, progression to higher education in these children and those who support them
3. Form a **robust support network** for these children and help them develop a **strong cohort identity**
4. Ensure **support is sustained** from Year 7 to the first year of undergraduate study

Interventions:

1. Supporting Continued High Attainment

Under-resourced high attainers in the South West do not currently attain highly at GCSE. They are securing on average 0.8 of a grade lower per GCSE qualification

[24] Donnelly & Gamsu. (2018) *Home and Away: Social, ethnic, and spatial inequalities in student mobility* (Sutton Trust, 2018) p. 16. Bridge Group, *The influence of place: Geographical isolation and progression to higher education* (2019)
[25] Waite, Kashefpakdel and Patel, *Double Disadvantage: Does the decline in quality work experience impact state school students' access to Russell Group universities?* (2024)
[26] Jones, Sim and Elliot-Major, *The Teach Frontier: shaping the Future of the South-West peninsula* (2024)
[27] Playford, Mountford-Zimdars and Benham-Clarke, *Coast and City, It Matters Where You Live: How Geography Shapes Progression to Higher Education in England* (Social Sciences, 2023)
[28] Educational Policy Institute, *The impact of interventions for widening access to higher education: a review of the evidence* (2020)

than the average for all high prior attainers nationally[29]. The evidence of the central role of high attainment in maintaining the aspiration and expectation of HE progression is clear.

Your Future Story will employ the following interventions to support the high attainment of participating pupils:

- **Teacher Champions:** Schools referring pupils to the programme commit to designating a member of teaching staff as a Teacher Champion who will:
    - Receive ongoing training in the needs of high-attaining pupils, particularly those from under-resourced backgrounds
    - Provide mentoring to participating pupils
    - Closely monitor the progress of participating pupils and ensure the school is supporting their continued high attainment
- **School Leaders:** A senior leader from each participating school will:
    - Developing their knowledge of the needs of high-attaining pupils by participate in the Colyton Foundation's ***Leading High Attainment*** programme
    - Completing a leadership implementation project to improve provision for these pupils in their school
- **Participant personal development:** Throughout the programme supra-curricular extension and enrichment sessions to develop:
    - Communication skills
    - Resilience and self-efficacy
    - Supra-curricular subject and hinterland knowledge

2. Maintaining High Expectations and Aspirations of HE Progression

The evidence outlined above suggests that supporting continued high attainment is the most important mechanism for maintaining the aspiration and expectation of HE progression. It also suggests that combining these with a range of other strategies within the programme will maximise the chances of success. These strategies aim both to maintain programme participants' expectation that they will progress to HE progression, and to ensure that this expectation is shared and projected by those who support and advise participating children:

- **Explicit focus on goal of progression to high-tariff HE** from start of programme embodies expectation of progression for participants and other stakeholders
- **Residentials, trips, employer visits and work experience opportunities** develop aspirations and illustrate value of higher education, including linked career opportunities
- **Teacher Champions** maintain high expectations of HE progression through mentoring and supporting participants within schools and ensuring high expectations for participants are shared by all teachers
- **School leaders** develop a culture of high expectations and high attainment within schools
- **Sustained engagement with parents and carers** of programme participants to develop support for HE progression.

3. Forming a Strong Support Network and Cohort Identity

Programme design seeks to overcome the challenges of educational isolation and participant retention over the course of the programme by forming a robust support

[29] Colyton Foundation: Freedom of information Request to Department for Education, Ref: 2023-0015740, 2023)

network for participating children, and a strong cohort identity between participants. It does so through:

- A **cohort model** and **sustained 8 year programme** creating strong, mutually supportive relationships
- **Residentials, trips and employer** visits include focus on forming strong relationships within the cohort and with programme leads.
- **Teacher Champions** and **parental engagement** ensure support network for programme participants extends beyond delivery of programme elements

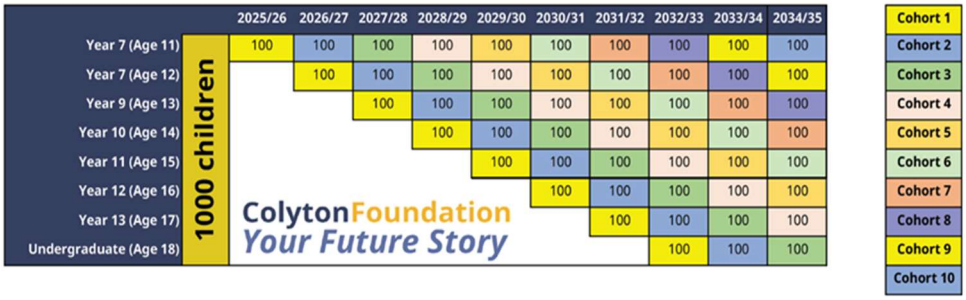
4. Sustained Support

To chart a pathway from primary school to high-tariff higher education destinations for under-resourced pupils with high attainment at Key Stage 2, *Your Future Story* provides continuous support from Year 7 to their first year in Higher Education ('Year 14'). Each year, of the programme from Year 7 to 13 follows the same structure (residential, trips & visits, teacher champions, scholarship masterclasses, direct attainment support), providing a sense of clarity and continuity to participants. At the same time, the programme content within these elements reflects the support required at each stage. In Year 14, the programme provides mentoring to participants as they begin higher education.

6. Programme Structure

Cohort Model

In its first year, the programme begins with Cohort 1, a cohort of 100 Year 7 pupils in Year 1. This cohort progresses through the programme until the end of Year 14. Each year, a new Year 7 cohort joins the programme, so that, by Year 8, there are 800 programme participants. After 10 years 1000 children will have participated in the programme.



Programme Content Overview

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
University & Employer Visits	**University & Employer Visits**	**University & Employer Visits**	**University & Employer Visits**
• Day visit (University of Bristol) • Employer visit	• Overnight trip (University of Bath) • Employer visit	• Day visit (University of Exeter) • Two day residential (University of Cambridge)	• Universityv • Employer visit
Personal Development	**Personal Development**	**Personal Development**	**Personal Development**
• Cohort building • Resilience • Introduction to Higher Education and Careers	• Cohort strengthening • Communication skills • Knowledge of HE & employment opportunities • Supra-curricular extension	• Junior Researcher Programme • Knowledge of HE & employment opportunities • Supra-curricular extension	• Cohort relationship development • Mock Academic Conference • Scholarship Masterclasses • Skills workshops
Teacher Champion Mentoring	**Teacher Champion Mentoring**	**Teacher Champion Mentoring**	**Teacher Champion Mentoring**
• Primary/secondary transition • Resilience • Study habits and skills • Independent reading • Supra-curricular personal development • Parent/carer engagement	• Communication skills • Supra-curricular personal development • Study habits and skills • Independent reading GCSE Options Advice • Parent/carer engagement	• GCSE Options Advice • Supra-curricular personal development • Study habits and skills • Independent reading and research • Parent/carer engagement	• Supra-curricular personal development: including partner work experience referral • Study habits and skills • Post GCSE Options Advice • Revision approaches • Targeting top Grades
Parent & Carer Engagement	**Parent & Carer Engagement**	**Parent & Carer Engagement**	**Parent & Carer Engagement**
• Welcome webinar • School/hub area meetings • Email & social media updates • Pre-trip webinar and comms • Check in conversations	• School/hub area meetings • Email & social media updates • Pre-trip webinar and comms • Check in conversations	• School/hub area meetings • Email & social media updates • Pre-trip webinar and comms • Check in conversations • Celebration event	• School/hub area meetings • Email & social media updates • Pre-trip webinar and comms • Check in conversations
← Continuous Teacher Champion and School Leader Training and Development →			

Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14 (Year 1 of Degree)
University & Employer Visits	**University & Employer Visits**	**University & Employer Visits**	**Mentoring**
• University residential • Employer Visit	• University residential • Employer visit	• University residential • Employer visit	• Undergraduate Mentors (programme alumni, were possible.
Personal Development	**Personal Development**	**Personal Development**	**Role Modelling**
• Cohort relationship development • Easter revision residential • Transition to A Level	• Cohort relationship development • HE and careers • Scholarship Masterclasses • Work Experience support & careers mentoring	• HE application workshops • Preparation for HE (including home leaving skills) • Scholarship Masterclasses • Work Experience support & careers mentoring	• Attend and speak at residentials for earlier programme years
Teacher Champion Mentoring	**HE Champion Mentoring**	**HE Champion Mentoring**	
• Supra-curricular personal development • Study habits and skills • Post GCSE Options Advice • Revision approaches • Targeting Top Grades • Parent/carer engagement	• KS4/5 transition • Supra-curricular personal development • Study habits and skills • Transition to A Level: independent work • Making informed HE choices • Parent/carer engagement	• Supra-curricular personal development • Study habits and skills • Making informed HE choices • UCAS, admission tests an interviews • A Level exam preparation • Preparing for Higher Education	
Parent & Carer Engagement	**Parent & Carer Engagement**	**Parent & Carer Engagement**	
• School/hub area meetings • Post 16 options webinar • Email & social media updates • Pre-trip webinar and comms • Check in conversations • Celebration event	• School/college/hub area meetings • HE webinar • Email & social media updates • Pre-trip webinar and comms • Check in conversations	• School/college/hub area meetings • Email & social media updates • Pre-trip webinar and comms • Check in conversations • Celebration event	
← Continuous Teacher Champion and School Leader Training and Development →			

See Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 for a detailed chronological overview of the programme for Years 7 to 9, and programme design rationale.

7. Partnerships

The *Your Future Story* programme's coalition of key partners gives the programme a unique combination of expertise, experience, reach and resources which will ensure it has maximum positive impact on the attainment and HE progression of participants.

Colyton Grammar School

Colyton Grammar School is a regional centre of excellence for high-attaining pupils in the South West peninsula. Judged outstanding by Ofsted in 2022, it is amongst the country's highest performing secondary schools, with a track record of supporting high attainment throughout the secondary phase and progression to competitive HE destinations, including for under resources pupils.

Through the Colyton Teaching School Hub and the South West Institute for Teaching, Colyton has excellent relationships with schools and multi academy trusts in the region, and a track record of delivering large-scale, multi-partner projects.

Universities

The programme aims to improve access to high-tariff higher education institutions for under-resourced children from the South West. Its success is dependent on partnerships with these high-tariff institutions for expertise and resources, including:

- Programme funding
- Expertise in widening participation
- Co-planning and co-delivery of programme elements
- Use of university facilities for residentials, trips and training
- Contribution of university staff to residentials, trips, Scholarship Masterclasses
- Use of Undergraduate students as tutors and HE Mentors
- Contextual offers for programme participants

Becoming a partner is potentially an attractive prospect for universities, offering the opportunity to:

- Precisely direct widening access resources towards under-resourced children in the South West with the potential to progress to high-tariff HE, including children other interventions struggle to reach
- Demonstrate measurable impact in improving attainment of pupils in secondary schools across the region

Schools & Multi Academy Trusts

Forming partnerships directly with schools and trusts to identify programme participants will maximise the programme's reach.

In addition, schools and trusts' knowledge of the contexts of the communities they serve will be instrumental to programme planning and delivery, particularly in relation to parental engagement.

It is anticipated that the benefits for participating students will make becoming a programme partner an attractive proposition for schools and trusts. Drawing on its existing strong relationships with all the large multi academy trusts in the region, the Colyton Foundation will enable a cohort of 100 pupils to reach a large proportion of high-attaining pupils from under-resourced backgrounds in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset[30].

[30] In 2023, 179 disadvantaged pupils in Cornwall, Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay) achieved the higher standard for reading, writing and maths. 123 did so in 2022. Department for Education, *Key stage 2 attainment* (2023)

In addition to the benefits programme for participating children, taking on the role of Teacher Champion provides an excellent professional development opportunity for teachers within participating schools. Teacher Champions receive access to the Colyton Foundations' *Leading High Attainment* course, focussing on supporting academically high-attaining pupils, particularly those from under-resourced backgrounds. The Teacher Champion role is designed to reinforce and complement leadership roles within schools focussing on provision for the more able and/or for Pupil Premium recipients.

Programme design is mindful of the many demands placed on limited school resources. There is no charge to schools for pupil participation in the programme or for Teacher Champion training. The only resource commitments required from participating schools are:

- Nomination of pupils meeting the criteria for programme participation
- Appointment of Teacher Champion
- Time for Teacher Champion training (maximum three days per academic year – cover costs provided by programme) and mentoring (four hours per pupil per year).
- Data sharing and support for questionnaire completion for evaluation purposes.

Businesses and Employers

The programme places considerable emphasis on building participants' understanding of the career opportunities created by higher education, including employer visits and the possibility of mentoring and work expereince placements. Forming partnerships with leading businesses in the region will be integral to these programme elements.

Charities

There are a number of national charities working to improve access to higher education for under-resourced children. For the reasons explored above, few of these are working directly with children in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. The Colyton Foundation has collaborated informally with some of these institutions, when developing the *Your Future Story Programme*, drawing on their knowledge and experience, and will engage with them to explore the possibility of further partnership as part of programme delivery.

Trusts, Foundations & Individual Donors

The programme will be of interest to individuals, charitable trusts and foundations with an interest in supporting initiatives to widen university access and improve the life chances of under-resourced children.

8. Identification of Programme Participants

The Colyton Foundation will work with partner schools and MATs to identify pupils within non-selective schools in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset to participate in each cohort. Programme leaders and the Teacher Champions will engage with identified children and their parents/carers to encourage participation.

Participation Criteria: Prior Attainment

The programme specifically aims to maintain the attainment of children from under-resourced backgrounds with high attainment at Key Stage 2. As a result, partner schools will be asked to refer children with high KS2 attainment, who also meet the participant background criteria (below).

It is important to note that the Department for Education defines high attainment differently in the performance measures published for Key Stage 2 and for Key Stage 4.

- At Key Stage 2, high attainment (called 'the higher standard') is defined as having a scaled score of 110 or more in both reading and maths, and a judgment of 'working at greater depth' in teacher assessment of writing.[31]
- At Key Stage 4, high prior attainment is defined as having an average KS2 scaled score in reading, writing and maths of greater than or equal to 110.

From 2020/21 to 2022/23 20% of pupils taking GCSE qualifications in England met the Key Stage 4 definition of high prior attainment[32]; in 2021/22 and 2022/23 years 7.5% of pupils sitting KS2 tests achieved the 'higher standard'[33].

The reliability of using the more exacting KS2 definition in the context of making judgments about individual pupils' attainment is open to question. Participating schools will, therefore, be asked to identify pupils using the broader KS4 measure.

Participation Criteria: Participant Background

The programme aims to support children from under-resourced backgrounds on the pathway to higher education. The Department of Education and schools in England focus particularly on eligibility, or previous eligibility, for free school meals (FSM) when reporting on outcomes for, and directing resources towards, disadvantaged children.

While FSM eligibility is a strong proxy for disadvantage[34], its limitations in fully capturing the range and complexity of disadvantage experienced by young people[35]. To ensure support reaches those who need it most, the programme prioritises FSM eligibility to target pupils with clear economic disadvantage while also using IMD postcode data to acknowledge the needs of under resourced pupils beyond this group.

In addition to meeting the criterion for high prior attainment, participants must meet at least one of the following criteria. If the programme is oversubscribed, priority will be given in the order the criteria are listed below.

1. Pupils currently eligible for free school meals
2. Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium (eligible for free school meals in the last 6 years)
3. Pupils who live in a low-income neighbourhood (Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1-4)

[31] Department for Education, *Primary school accountability in 2023: technical guide* (2023)
[32] Department for Education, *Key stage 4 performance, Academic year 2022/23* (2023)
[33] Department for Education, *Key stage 2 attainment* (2023) There was no KS2 assessment in 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
[34] Illie, Sutherland & Vignoles, *Revisiting Free School Meal Eligibility as a Proxy for Pupil Socio-Economic Deprivation,* (2017)
[35] National Governance Association, *Widening the lens on disadvantage* (2023)

9. Outcomes, Impact and Evaluation

The Colyton Foundation commissioned ImpactEd Evaluation as evaluation partners to develop the programme's theory of change (Appendix 1) and to design the evaluation framework to assess the programme's success in achieving its intended outcomes

A mixed-methods approach is used to assess the programme's impact on pupils, parents, and teacher champions. The evaluation focuses on six intermediate outcomes outlined in the Theory of Change and involves both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

For pupils, the evaluation tracks academic attainment, attitudes toward higher education, self-efficacy, and a sense of belonging. Data is collected through a combination of attainment records, validated surveys, custom questionnaires, and focus groups. Attainment data is used to measure academic progress, while validated surveys assess changes in pupils' expectations of HE, motivation, confidence, and knowledge of the HE system. Focus groups provide qualitative insights to complement the quantitative findings.

Parents and teacher champions are evaluated through custom surveys designed to gauge their knowledge of the HE system and expectations for pupils' progression into HE. Teacher champions also participate in focus groups, exploring their engagement with the programme and ability to support high-achieving students.

Data collection occurs twice annually, and qualitative feedback is gathered once per academic year. The evaluation also incorporates benchmarking, comparing outcomes against non-participating pupils.

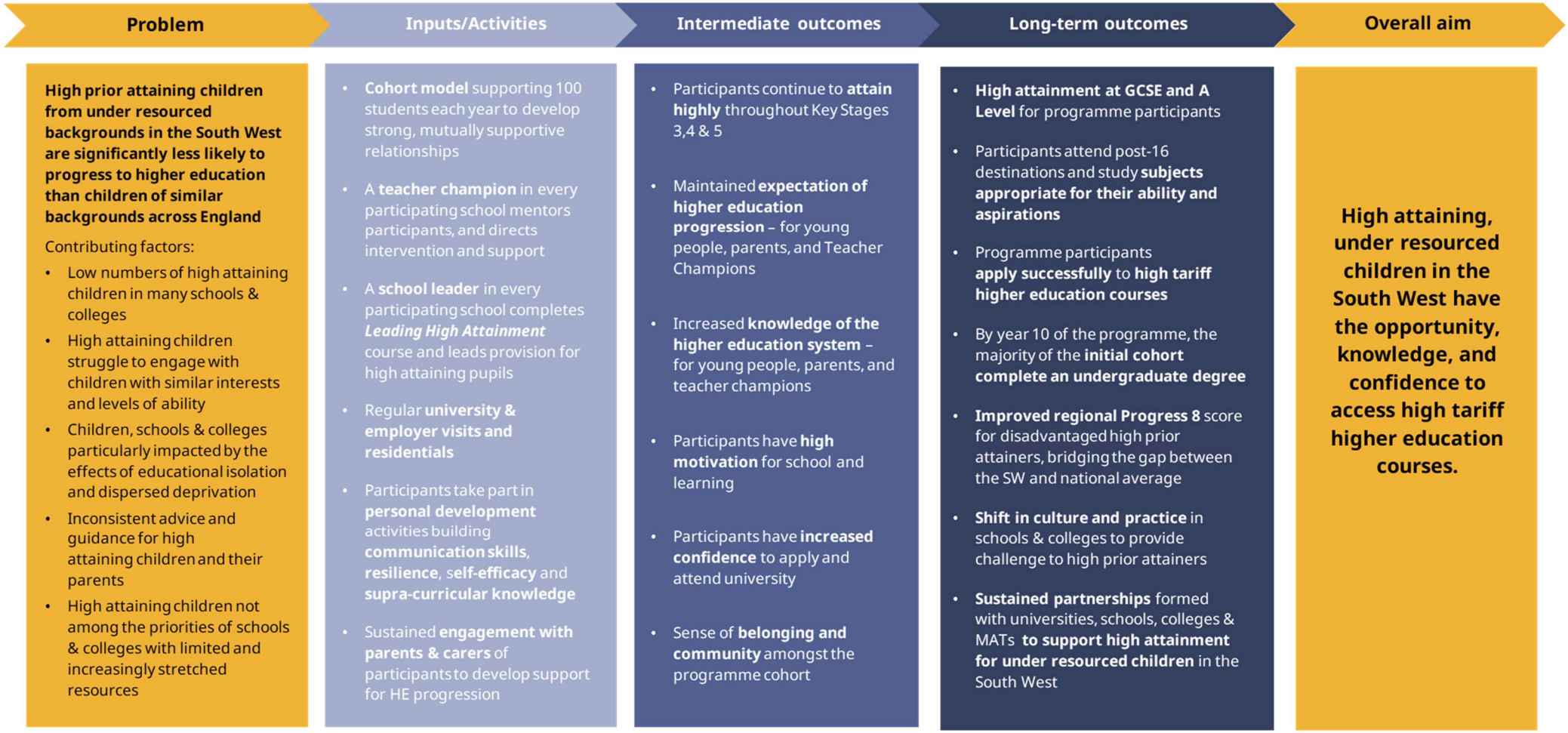
This structured and longitudinal approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the programme's effectiveness, providing both immediate and long-term feedback to guide future improvements

The table, below, summarises how intermediate outcomes are measured:

	Outcomes	Attainment data	TAPE surveys	TASO surveys	MSLQ surveys	Focus groups	Custom surveys
Pupils	Pupils continue to attain highly throughout their time at secondary school	X			X		
	Maintained expectation of higher education progression for young people			X			
	Increased knowledge of the higher education system for young people		X				
	High student motivation for school and learning				X		
	Increased confidence to apply and attend university		X				
	Sense of belonging and community amongst the programme cohort					X	X
Parents & Teacher champion	Maintained expectation of higher education progression for parents and teacher champions						X
	Increased knowledge of the higher education system for parents and teacher champions						X
	Sense of belonging and community amongst the programme cohort					X	

Appendix 1:

Theory of Change: *Your Future Story*



ColytonFoundation

ImpactEd Evaluation

Appendix 2:

ColytonFoundation
Your Future Story

Programme Structure: Years 7-9

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Teacher Champions	Reporting & Evaluation
Autumn 1					
				Teacher Champion Webinar	
	Welcome Webinar for participants, families and Teacher Champions		University Trip: Junior Researcher Launch	Welcome Webinar for participants, families and Teacher Champions	Baseline questionnaires: • Participants • Parents/carers • Teacher Champions
	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	
	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	
			Junior Researcher Tutorial 1		
Autumn 2		Employer Trip: Communication Skills			
			Junior Researcher Tutorial 2		
				Teacher Champion Webinar	
	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	
	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	
Spring 1					
	Employer Trip: Resilience & Cohort Building		Junior Researcher Tutorial 3	Teacher Champion Webinar	
				Attainment Progress Reporting & Intervention Monitoring	Attainment Data
	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	
	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	
Spring 2					
			Junior Researcher Tutorial 4	Teacher Champion Webinar	
	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	
	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	
			Complete Junior Researcher Essay		

Summer 1					
			Junior Researcher Tutorial 5: Presenting a Paper		
	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings : Present Papers	Mentoring Meetings	
	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings: Present Papers	Mentoring Meetings	
				Teacher Champion Webinar	
Summer 2				Teacher Champion Annual Conference & New TC induction/training (in person)	
				Attainment Progress Reporting & Intervention Monitoring	Attainment Data Follow up questionnaires: • Participants • Parents/carers • Teacher Champions Focus groups: • Participants • Teacher Champions
	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	Mentoring Meetings	
	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	Mentoring Meetings Family Check-in	
		University Residential (1 night): Understanding of HE and Communication Skills			
	University Trip: Resilience & Cohort Building and Intro to HE and Careers				
			University Residential (2 nights): Understanding of HE and Junior Researcher Conference		

Appendix 3:

ColytonFoundation
Your Future Story

Programme Design Rationale: Years to Year 9

Year 7

Outcome	Barriers	Interventions
Participants continue to attain highly throughout Key Stages 3,4 & 5	Primary to secondary transition: pupils not well prepared for different nature of secondary schools	Teacher Champion mentoring (supporting transition included in training)
	Lack of challenge at KS3 & secondary teachers lack of knowledge of KS2 curriculum	Teacher Champion training. TCs encouraged to enrol on Colyton Foundation Leading High Attainment course
	Pupils do not make expected progress during Year 7	Teacher Champion coordinates intervention
Participants have high motivation for school and learning	Lack of opportunities to develop communication skills, resilience and self-efficacy	Communication and resilience building focus of trips and residentials; co-curricular participation & study habits focus for Teacher Champion mentoring
	Pupils do not fully understand the benefits of performing well at school	Employer & university visits focus on value of degree and links to school curriculum
	Lack of role models: individuals flourishing at school and progressing to careers and HE less visible in SW context	In school pupil mentoring coordinated by Teacher Champion; role models during university and employer visits
Maintained expectation of higher education progression – for young people, parents, and Teacher Champions	Pupils have limitted knowledge and understanding of HE and careers	Trips and university visits offer introduction to HE and careers.
	Teachers do not have clear sense of long term pathway to HE	Teacher Champion training. TCs encouraged to enrol on Colyton Foundation *Leading High Attainment* course
Increased knowledge of the higher education system – for young people, parents, and teacher champions	Parents & families do not share sense of value of HE	Parent & family engagement: initial meeting; Teacher Champion termly meeting; email updates
Increased confidence to apply and attend university		
Sense of belonging and community amongst the programme cohort	Participants don't feel part of a peer group of similar pupils	At least two pupils from each participating school in cohort.
	Participants and families reluctant to engage with programme	Cohort building: initial online meeting, cohort building activities during trips and residentials, geographical hubs
	Disparate cohort spread across many schools and large geographical area	Geographical hubs, Current pupil role models In person events for teacher champions and participants.

Year 8

Outcome	Barriers	Interventions
Participants continue to attain highly throughout Key Stages 3,4 & 5	Lack of challenge at KS3 & secondary teachers lack of knowledge of KS2 curriculum	Teacher Champion training. TCs encouraged to enrol on Colyton Foundation *Leading High Attainment* course
	Pupils do not make expected progress during Year 8	Teacher Champion coordinates intervention
Participants have high motivation for school and learning	Lack of opportunities to develop communication skills, resilience and self-efficacy	Communication and resilience building focus of trips and residentials; co-curricular participation & study habits focus for Teacher Champion mentoring
	Pupils do not fully understand the benefits of performing well at school	Employer & university visits focus on value of degree and links to school curriculum
	Lack of role models: individuals flourishing at school and progressing to careers and HE less visible in SW context	In school pupil mentoring coordinated by Teacher Champion; role models during university and employer visits
Maintained expectation of higher education progression – for young people, parents, and Teacher Champions	Pupils have limitted knowledge and understanding of HE and careers	Trips and university visits develop knowledge of HE and careers & pathways
	Teachers do not have clear sense of long term pathway to HE	Teacher Champion training. TCs encouraged to enrol on Colyton Foundation *Leading High Attainment* course
Increased knowledge of the higher education system – for young people, parents, and Teacher Champions	Participants make GCSE choices which inhibit their chances of realising HE aspirations	GCSE options advice from teacher champion
Increased confidence to apply and attend university	Parents & families do not share sense of value of HE	Parent & family engagement: programme check in phone call/meeting; Teacher Champion termly meeting; email updates
Sense of belonging and community amongst the programme cohort	Participants don't feel part of a peer group of similar pupils	Cohort development: cohort building activities during trips and residentials, geographical hubs
	Participants and families reluctant to engage with programme	Geographical hubs, Current pupil role models In person events for Teacher Champions and participants
	Disparate cohort spread across many schools and large geographical area	
	Participants disengage from programme	Teacher Champion monitors and encourages, including engagement with parents

Year 9

Outcome	Barriers	Interventions
Participants continue to attain highly throughout Key Stages 3,4 & 5	Lack of challenge at KS3 & secondary teachers lack of knowledge of KS2 curriculum	Teacher Champion training. TCs encouraged to enrol on Colyton Foundation *Leading High Attainment* course Junior Researcher Programme & Mini Conference creates opportunities of challenge and opportunity to make links between curriculum content and applied contexts
	Pupils do not make expected progress during Year 8	Teacher Champion coordinates intervention
Participants have high motivation for school and learning	Pupils do not fully understand the benefits of performing well at school	Employer & university visits and Junior Researcher competition focus on value of degree and links to school curriculum
	Lack of role models: individuals flourishing at school and progressing to careers and HE less visible in SW context	In school pupil mentoring coordinated by Teacher Champion; role models during university and employer visits
Maintained expectation of higher education progression – for young people, parents, and Teacher Champions	Pupils have limitted knowledge and understanding of HE and careers	Trips and university visits develop knowledge of HE and careers & pathways; Junior Researcher Programme builds understadning of university level research.
Increased knowledge of the higher education system – for young people, parents, and Teacher Champions	Teachers do not have clear sense of long term pathway to HE	Teacher Champion training. TCs encouraged to enrol on Colyton Foundation *Leading High Attainment* course
Increased confidence to apply and attend university	Participants make GCSE choices which inhibit their chances of realising HE aspirations	GCSE options advice from Teacher Champion
	Parents & families do not share sense of value of HE	Parent & family engagement: programme check in phone call/meeting; Teacher Champion termly meeting; email updates
Sense of belonging and community amongst the programme cohort	Participants don't feel part of a peer group of similar pupils	Cohort development: cohort building activities during trips and residentials, geographical hubs
	Participants and families reluctant to engage with programme	Geographical hubs, Current pupil role models In person events for Teacher Champions and participants
	Disparate cohort spread across many schools and large geographical area	
	Participants disengage from programme	Teacher Champion monitors and encourages, including engagement with parents