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# NEW COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES (NCH): EVALUATION OF RESILIENCE COACHING IN SCHOOLS AUTUMN '21

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## INTRODUCTION

The resilience programme was developed and delivered by NCH to support the development of resilience, motivation and confidence amongst targeted learners. The programme has been developed following feedback from HE counsellors that, following disruption to their studies as a result of Covid-19, learners have struggled with motivation and persistence. This was identified as a risk factor for learner attainment and progression.

The coaching programme involves 10 modules with digital and in-person materials to be delivered by a facilitator in-school/college. Schools and colleges are able to select those modules most relevant to their learners, to be delivered over a series of weeks. Each module has different learning outcomes, which are reviewed in lesson evaluations, and the overall aim of the programme is to improve participant levels of confidence and motivation, with reference to specific skills helpful to learning.

## EVALUATION DESIGN

This evaluation examines a pilot of the scheme carried out at Havering College over four consecutive weeks. Four groups of learners were selected, three of which were humanities mixed A-level/BTEC learners and a larger vocational learner group. These groups were selected for having high numbers of 'ward learners' i.e. those targeted as part of the national Uni Connect widening participation programme. The coordinator at the college reported that 61 learners were in the classes selected, with 16 of these indicated as ward learners.

To evaluate the scheme, learners were asked to complete a pre and post survey asking them to rate their current perceptions of their skills, resilience, knowledge and confidence. They were also asked their expectations and impressions of the scheme. In addition, the coordinator of the scheme at Havering College was interviewed about their perceptions of the scheme and its impact on learners and the college.

Detailed below are response rates for the pre and post surveys. Students were asked for their full name to enable some pre and post matching of responses, however this was not completed or completed consistently by all students and hence results presented here are based on cohort change and not individual matched responses.

**Table 1: Survey response rates**

Survey	Responded
Pre-activity	45
Post-activity	39
Pre and post activity	24

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on survey responses and interview data, the coaching programme appears to have provided positive outcomes for students but has shown little impact on their self-perception of motivation, knowledge and skills. Several participants felt that the programme had led to positive behavior change and increased motivation and direction. Although not part of the theory of change for this programme, one positive outcome for

participants, and also noted by the college contact, is the development of peer relationships within their coaching group and increased levels of comfort in their learning environment.

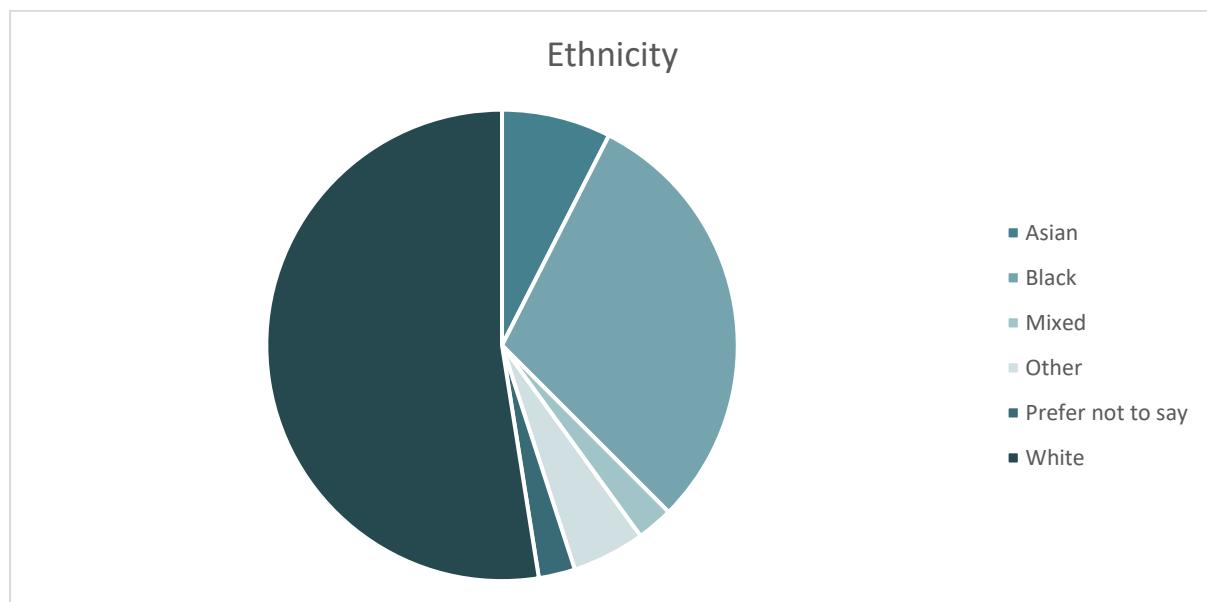
The findings indicated in the survey and interview data suggest that coaching in schools is seen as a worthwhile intervention but that there is limited evidence of its impact on participants attitudes over four weeks.

## COHORT PROFILE

Respondents to the pre survey were asked a series of demographic questions. Note: not all respondents completed all questions, response numbers are indicated below each chart.

### ETHNICITY

More than half of respondents (53%) would describe their ethnicity as white and 30% of respondents would describe their ethnicity as black. 8% of respondents would describe their ethnicity as Asian, whilst 5% of respondents would describe their ethnicity as other and 3% of respondents indicated that they would prefer not to say.



**Figure 1: How would you describe your ethnicity? (n=40)**

### POSTCODE PROFILES

As shown in figure 2, the majority of respondents who provided their postcode came from IMD quintiles 1-2 and, as shown in figure 3, the majority of respondents also came from POLAR4 quintiles 1-2. Collectively, 27 of 35 respondents (77%) of respondents came from either an IMD or POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2 area.

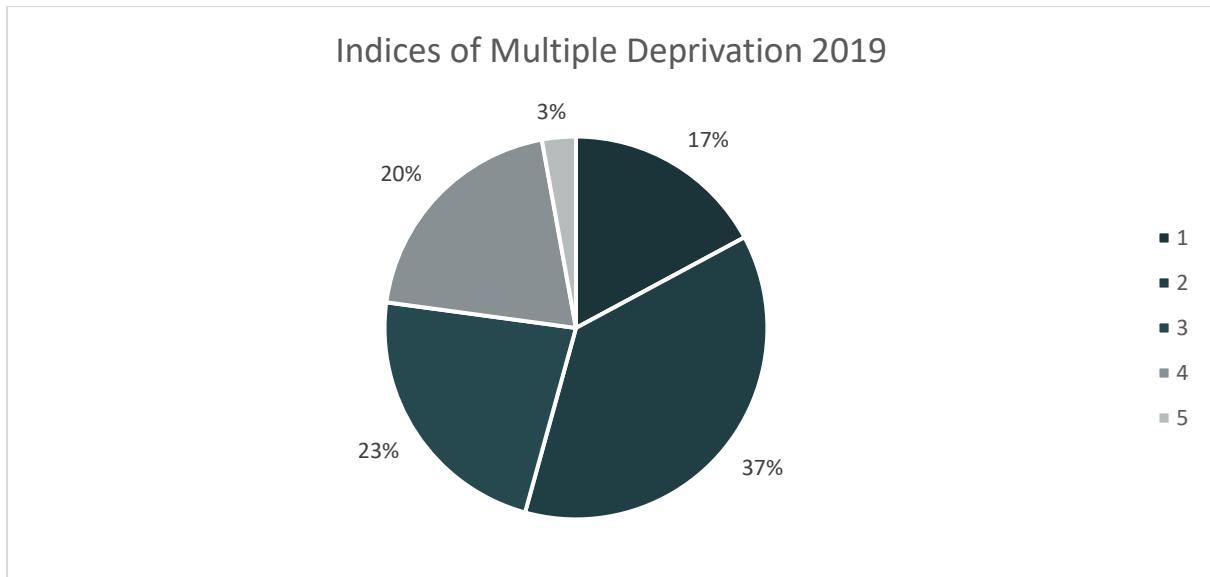


Figure 2: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (based on supplied postcode) (n=35)

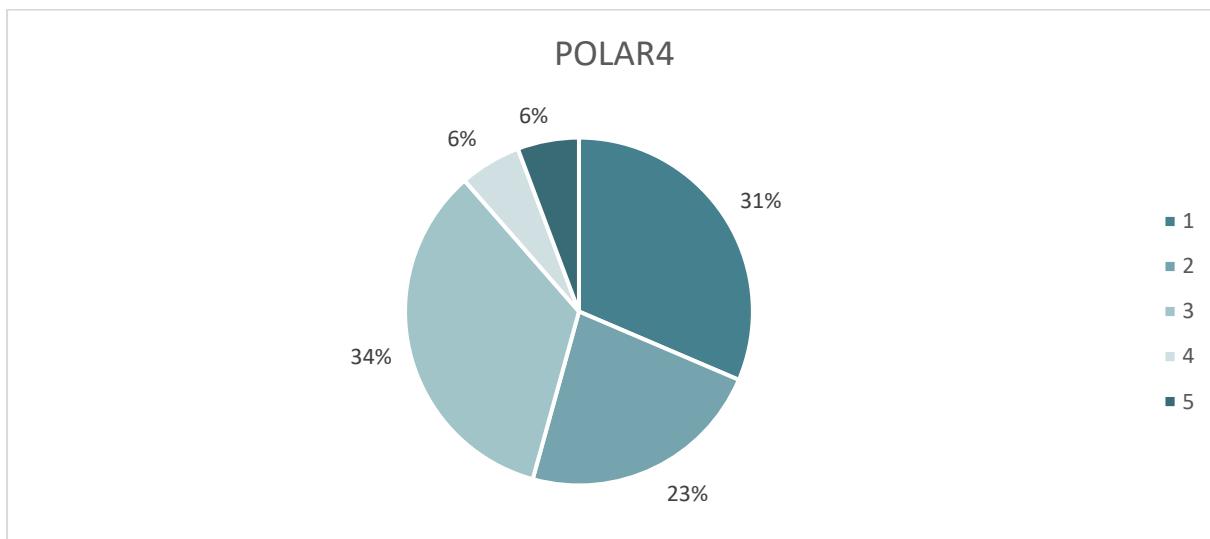
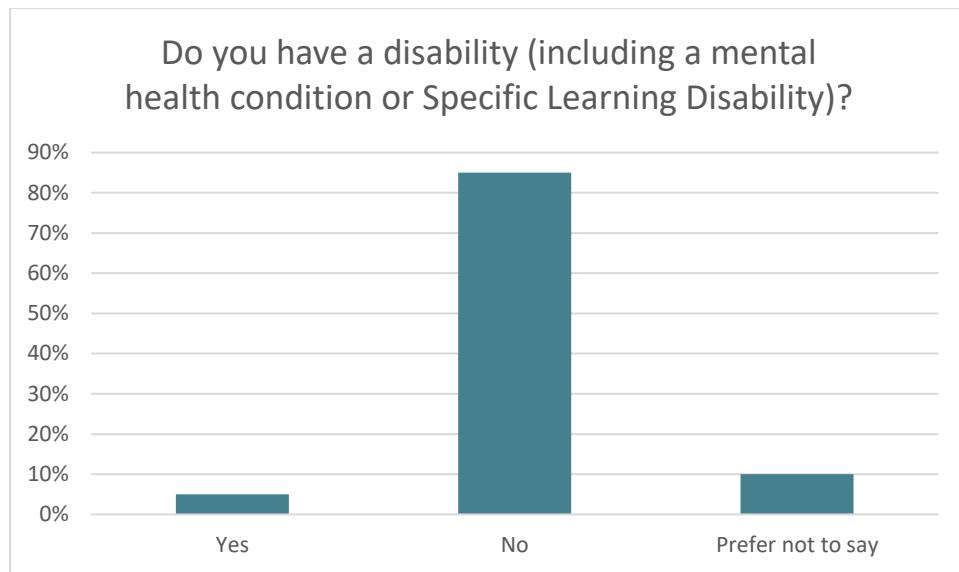


Figure 3: POLAR4 (based on supplied postcode) (n=35)

#### DISABILITY

As shown in figure 4, 85% of respondents said they did not have a disability, whilst 5% of respondents said that they did have a disability and 10% of respondents said that they would prefer not to say.



**Figure 4: Do you have a disability (including a mental health condition or Specific Learning Disability)? (n=40)**

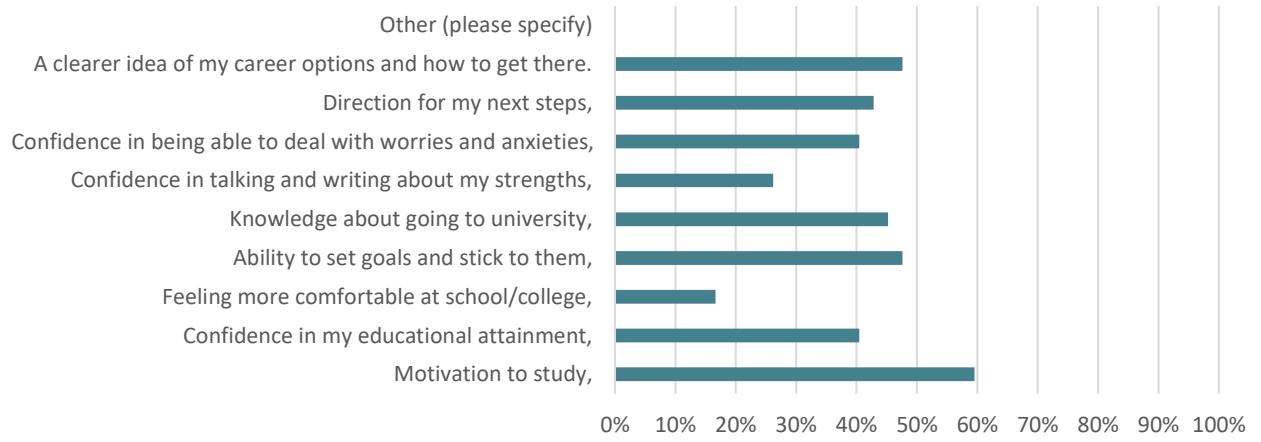
#### OTHER CATEGORIES

Participants were also asked to indicate whether they had ever been in foster care, whether they had received free school meals, whether they were an asylum seeker or refugee and whether they were from a military family. Two participants (5% of respondents) indicated that they were from a military family, one student (3% of respondents) indicated that they did not wish to disclose whether they were an asylum seeker or refugee. All other respondents answered “no” or “not sure” to these questions.

#### SURVEY FINDINGS – EXPECTATIONS

The following questions were posed to students pre and post taking part in the scheme. Although these questions are the same, they should not be taken as a direct comparison as students can select more than one option. This question, posed at the start of the scheme assesses participant expectations. These may be informed by the information they have received about the programme and their personal goals. Prior to completing the programme, participants selected multiple hopes for the programme.

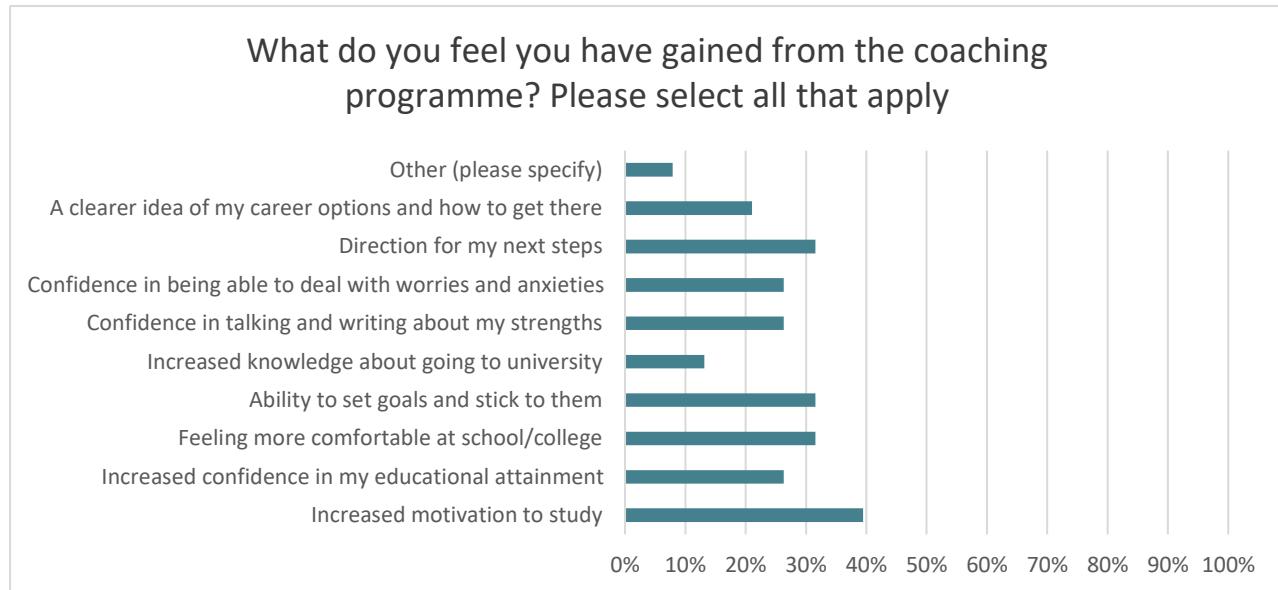
#### What do you hope to gain from the coaching programme? Please select all that apply



**Figure 5 What do you hope to gain from the coaching programme? Please select all that apply (Pre-Programme) (n=42)**

As shown in figure 5, the largest proportion (60%) of respondents hoped to gain motivation to study from the coaching programme. Almost half of respondents (48%) hoped to gain a clearer idea of their career options and how to get there and 48% of respondents hoped to gain the ability to set goals and stick to them. The smallest proportion of respondents (17%) hoped to feel more comfortable at school or college.

## SURVEY FINDINGS – OUTCOMES



**Figure 6: What do you feel you have gained from the coaching programme? Please select all that apply (n=38)**

Following the programme, participants selected from a list of outcomes what they felt that they had gained from the scheme. Not all of these possible outcomes may have been covered within the course content, as participants experienced four of a possible ten sessions. As shown in figure 6, the largest proportion (39%) of respondents felt that they gained increased motivation to study from the sessions that they received. 32% of respondents felt that they gained direction for their next steps, 32% of respondents felt that they gained the ability to set goals and stick to them and 32% of respondents felt more comfortable at school or college as a result of the coaching programme. In comparison, only 13% of respondents felt that they gained increased knowledge about going to university.

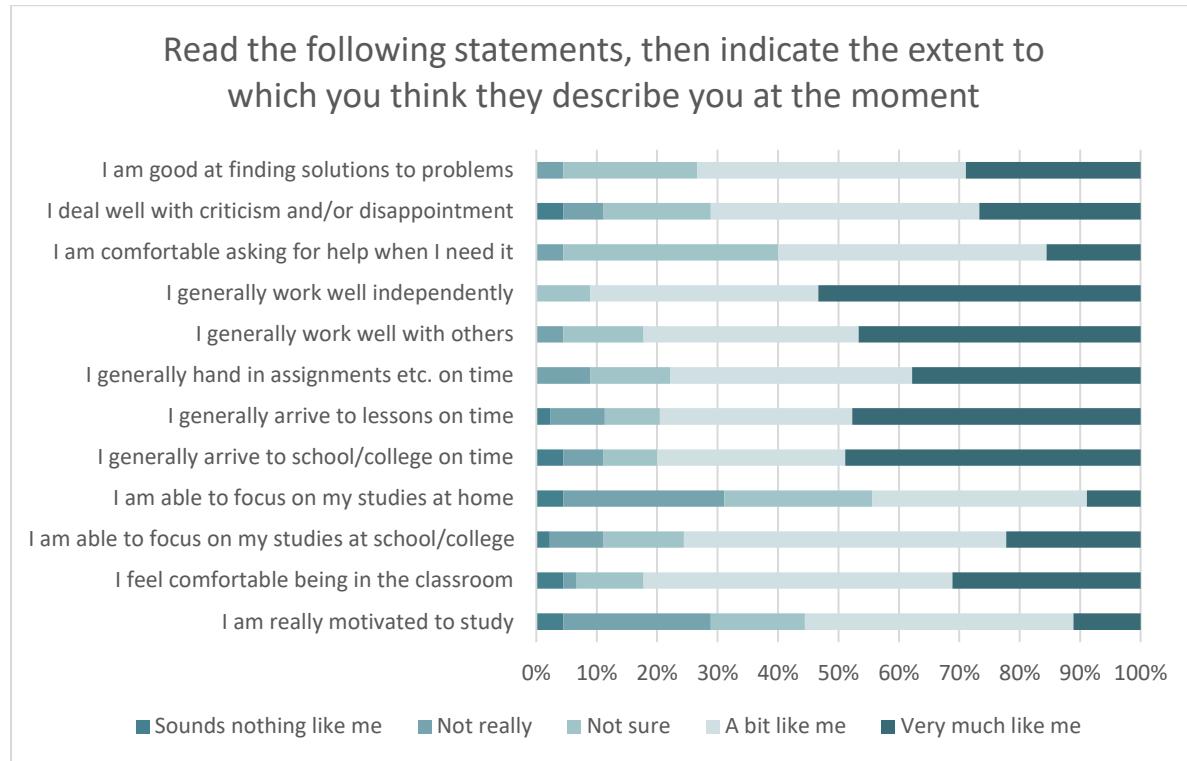
In comparison with learner expectations, fewer students appeared to have increased their motivation than anticipated this. However, still over a third of participants had this outcome. Far more students than expected increased their level of comfort at school/college, suggesting that the programme had a valuable social effect for participants. Every student indicated at least one outcome from the scheme, though one student did indicate by selecting ‘other’ that they felt that they had gained “nothing” from the programme.

It is worth noting that, at the start of the scheme, respondents selected far more possible outcomes in line with their more limited knowledge of the scheme at that stage. 45% of respondents indicated 4 or more desired outcomes at the start, though none indicated any ‘other’ expectations. In the post survey, only 18% of respondents selected this many outcomes.

## SURVEY FINDINGS – SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

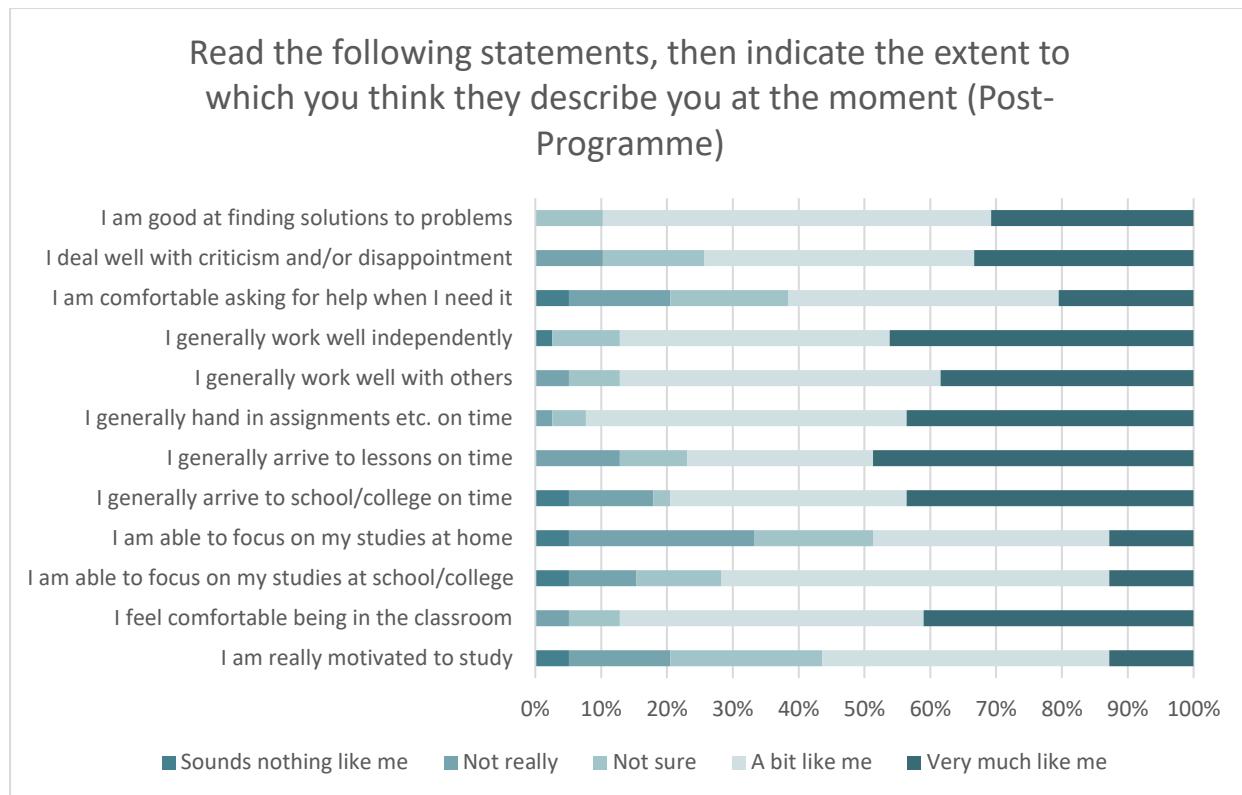
The following questions were posed to students pre and post the four coaching sessions.

## SELF ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS AND QUALITIES



**Figure 7: Read the following statements, then indicate the extent to which you think they describe you at the moment (Pre-Programme)**

As shown in figure 7, prior to the scheme starting, respondents felt that they generally worked well independently as 53% of respondents said it was very much like them and a further 38% of respondents said it was a bit like them (total:91%). Students also felt that they generally arrive to school or college on time as 49% of students said it was very much like them and a further 31% of respondents said it was a bit like them (total:80%). Students also felt that they generally arrive to lessons on time, they generally work well with others and they generally hand in assignments etc. on time. However, students struggled to focus on their studies at home a total of 31% of respondents indicated that they felt this was not really or nothing like them. Respondents were also struggling to stay motivated to study as 24% of students said that the statement did not really describe them at the moment and 4% of students said it sounded nothing like them.

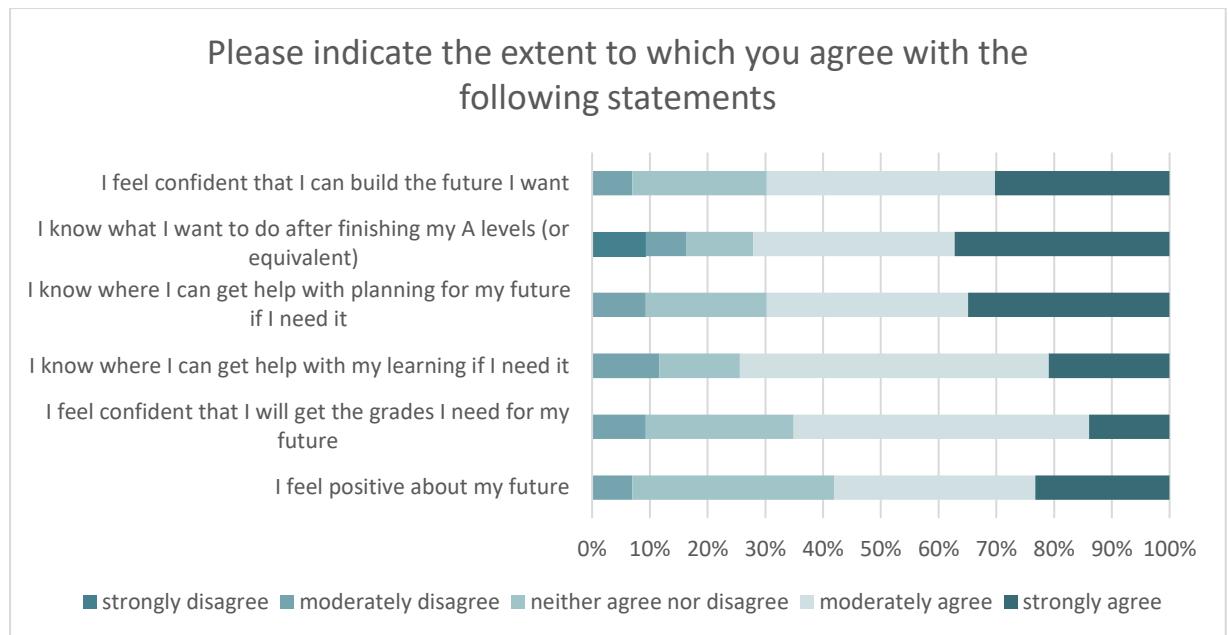


**Figure 8: Read the following statements, then indicate the extent to which you think they describe you at the moment (Post-Programme)**

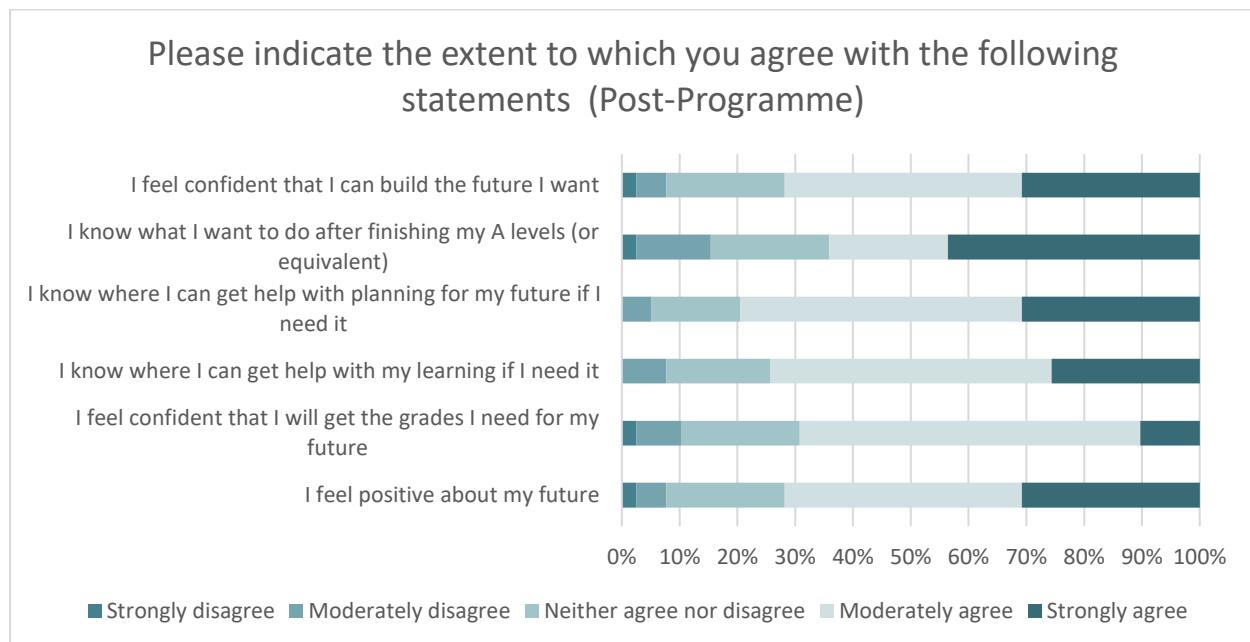
As shown in figure 8, after completing the coaching programme there were only small shifts in participant self-assessments. There was a small positive increase in the percentage of respondents who felt more comfortable in the classroom (82% to 87%) and a small positive increase in those who felt that they handed in their assignments on time (78% to 92%). There were however also some negative shifts, with a greater percentage of students indicating that they did not feel comfortable asking for help (4% to 21%) and that they did not arrive to school or college on time (11% to 18%).

### SURVEY FINDINGS – CONFIDENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

37% of respondents strongly agreed that they knew what they wanted to do after finishing their A Levels and a 35% of respondents moderately agreed, whilst 9% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. 70% of respondents either moderately or strongly agreed that they knew where they could get help with planning for their future if they need it. 70% of respondents either moderately or strongly agreed that they felt confident that they could build the future they wanted.



**Figure 9 Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements**



**Figure 10 Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements (Post-Programme)**

As with skills development, the changes in student perceptions over the course of the programme were small. After the programme there was a positive increase in the percentage of participants feeling positive about their future (58% to 72%) and also a small positive increase in the percentage of students who felt they knew where to get help planning for their future (70% to 79%). There were no notable negative changes.

## SURVEY FINDINGS – FREE TEXT RESPONSES

Participants were asked what the most useful part of the coaching programme was for them, indicating that this was the ‘team activities’ and ‘group discussions’. Students found that they gained ‘motivation’ and ‘confidence’, particularly in ‘communicating with others’. A number of students said the most useful part of

the coaching programme was learning about their own strengths and weaknesses and planning for their future.

Students were asked what, if anything, they had done differently as a result of taking part in the coaching programme. Some students responded that they hadn't done anything differently, whilst others responded that their 'punctuality has improved', they have been 'more organised' and they have been 'more motivated'. Students also said that they 'talk to my classmates a lot more' and 'have been more positive'.

Students were asked to help NCH improve the coaching programme in future by sharing what they would add to the programme, keep about the programme and change to the programme. A number of students responded that they felt that 'there is nothing to improve' about the programme and they 'found it very useful'. However, some students suggested that in the future they include 'more group activities' and 'add more about writing a CV or personal statement'. Students said that NCH should keep 'the idea of pitching a product to the audience', 'the videos about resilience' and 'being able to talk to your coach about anything'. Students suggested that NCH changes the 'amount of handouts and 'gets rid of the videos' as 'the man in the video is annoying to listen to'

Students were asked whether there was anything else they wanted to share about their experience of the coaching programme. Most students responded that there wasn't anything they wanted to add, however a number of students shared the merits of the coaching programme. Students responded that the 'organiser was very nice' and 'the talker was very enthusiastic'. One student said they 'really enjoyed the interactive aspects of each part of the programme' and another 'thought Layla was brilliant and really motivational and helped keep us energised and focus on the activities'. One student made a suggestion for improvement, responding that the coaching programme could 'involve more people'.

### STAFF INTERVIEW

A 30-minute interview was conducted by both NCH and SEER with the coordinator of the programme within the college. They were able to provide an overview of their impression of the programme's delivery and of the impact on learners. Key points made included:

- Learners appeared to enjoy the experience, particularly because this was an outside facilitator and a more active style of learning than they might usually experience in the dedicated 'coaching' or 'tutor' time used for these sessions.
- Facilitation of the sessions was excellent and was enhanced by the involvement of someone from the college (the interviewee) also being present to support. This additional support was beneficial for conversations and activities within sessions as the staff member was able to offer direct support as part of their careers role and also manage group discussions.
- The resources provided (videos and paper sheets) were generally felt to be good quality but ultimately were adapted for the sessions as they were considered less engaging than group discussion for participants. Worksheets were used to generate discussion questions in small groups.
- Icebreakers were seen as an important part of the delivery and helped engagement.
- It was noted that some of the content within the recorded materials referred to earlier stages of education than the learners and was potentially 'dated', with risks that this could be off-putting.
- Learners mostly engaged well with the content, with this working well for the majority of participants.
- A bonding effect, particularly amongst those learners who were only usually together for these sessions, was noted and seen as positive.
- Learners from these sessions had sought additional careers support, potentially as a result of participating in the sessions.
- Staff feedback (of teachers within the sessions) had been positive, with some staff planning to incorporate elements of the programme into other coaching sessions and lessons.

- The in-session evaluation sheets could have been shorter as some learners disengaged with these over time.
- The timing of the programme in the school year worked but ideally would have been earlier to allow more time for the college to focus on UCAS applications.

The interviewee felt that the programme had been a positive experience but had few opportunities to observe whether there had been a change of behaviour in participants, or whether participants appeared any different in their attitudes and motivations to non-participants. There is future evaluation and discussion planned, with 1-1 feedback being sought from participants and further discussions with teachers leading these groups of learners.

## CONCLUSIONS

The survey responses and interview indicate that coaching in schools is seen as a valuable and worthwhile programme by participants and the college. Participants indicate that they gained motivation, ability to set goals, increased comfort in college and confidence in being able to deal with their worries and anxieties. Some also felt more organised and more motivated, in line with the goals of the programme. There also appear to have been benefits for learners in building relationships with their peers and developing their comfort in college and some learners appear to have engaged with career support services as a result of participation and the engagement of careers staff in the session.

However, there is little indication of shifts in confidence, knowledge or skills development within student self-assessments. It may be that four weeks is not enough time for students to identify changes, or that the scheme content did not produce the desired outcomes within the timeframe of evaluation.

Participants and staff appear to have valued the interactive format of the scheme, the delivery style of the facilitator and opportunities to engage as a group. However, some adaptation of workshop materials to support and focus on these more interactive elements was suggested by participants and staff.