

The power of online mentoring:

Students three times more likely to access Higher Education

An impact analysis of over 9,000 students has found that there is a strong positive correlation between Brightside mentoring and the following outcomes:

1

Students from the lowest participation groups (POLAR4 Q1&2) who receive online mentoring through Brightside are more likely to be in higher education than those who don't

24%

National average

46%

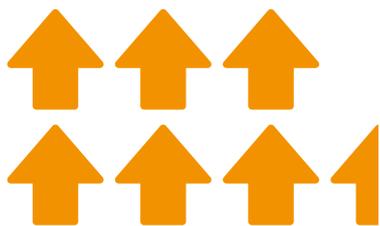
All students tracked through HEAT

77%

Those that took part in online mentoring

2

Higher attainment at GCSE level for free school meal recipients



Students eligible for free school meals who received online mentoring through Brightside before the age of 16 did better on average by

6.5 grades

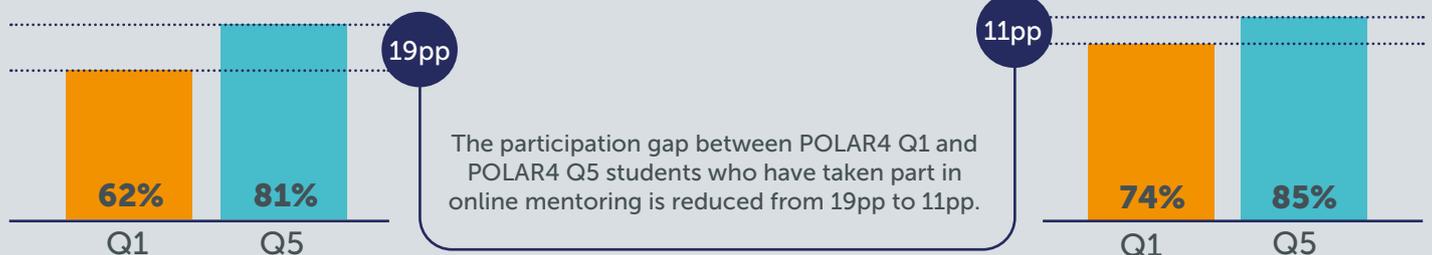
across all subjects at GCSE level, compared to other students eligible for free school meals with similar levels of attainment at key stage 2.

3

A reduced gap between lowest & highest participation groups

% of those who **did not** take part in online mentoring that went into HE

% of those who **did** take part in online mentoring that went into HE



About Brightside

Brightside is the UK's leading online mentoring provider and has supported 130,000 students since 2003. Brightside provides access to positive role models and gives students tailored information, advice and guidance. This helps build self-esteem and supports them to plan their futures.

The findings

We are pleased to make available to the public one of the largest data sets in the UK covering the longer-term impacts of online mentoring. This analysis shows the links between online mentoring, increased participation in higher education and a closing of the participation gap between the least represented and the most represented students.

Methodology

Using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT), Brightside has analysed the education trajectory of 9,253 higher education age ready students who were registered on a Brightside programme between 2009 and 2017. We analysed the number of messages sent by these students, their demographic backgrounds and their long-term outcomes.

The analysis looked at two groups, 6,172 students that registered on the Brightside platform and engaged with online mentoring, and a quasi-control group of 3,081 students that registered on the Brightside platform but did not send more than two messages to their mentor.

HEAT rounding and suppression rules have been applied to prevent the disclosure of personal information about any individual. This strategy involves rounding all numbers to the nearest multiple of 5 and percentages are suppressed if based on less than 22 individuals.

Alongside a strong positive correlation between Brightside mentoring and increased access to higher education from the lowest participation groups (using POLAR4), we have seen a similar positive link when looking at the cohort in relation to Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Students from the most deprived regions (IMD Q1&2) who took part in Brightside mentoring accessed higher education at a rate of 79%. For further details please see the full report.

Background information

HEAT is a membership body for widening participation (WP) outreach teams in higher education and specialist WP organisations. It monitors and evaluates outreach delivery and builds robust evidence of the impact of widening participation through longitudinal tracking.

'This is the first time that Brightside has been able to see the long term outcomes of the students we work with and I am delighted that our online mentoring support is clearly helping students achieve their potential.'

Anand Shukla, CEO of Brightside



"Thanks to my mentor, I have a new drive to succeed both personally and in terms of future career prospects. I now set myself goals which I once thought were impossible. I am now studying Law and Politics at University of Manchester, my first choice university. I credit this to the constant support and encouragement of my mentor and Brightside. My mentoring experience was invaluable."

Emily, mentee

"Students came to realise how many gaps they had in their knowledge of university courses, subjects and entry routes. They hadn't known what questions to ask because they hadn't known what they didn't know! They came away with a much better understanding of the higher education landscape and criteria for choice."

Teacher from Brightside programme

"The effective and efficient online mentoring that Brightside has pioneered has helped to motivate many thousands of students from non-traditional backgrounds to consider university, to smooth transition and improve their chances of success."

Professor Sir Leslie Ebdon CBE DL, Director of Fair Access to Higher Education 2012-2018

For the full report on these findings please visit the Brightside website

If you would like to find out more about working with Brightside, please contact Laura Gray on laura.gray@brightside.org.uk or visit brightside.org.uk

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