



Higher
Horizons+



Higher Horizons Virtual Resources

Dr. Hannah Merry



A Sea Change



- What we think of 'traditional' widening access work ended over night with school closures... but the *need* for this work did not
- Higher Horizons key message: while schools are closed, we remain open online to support schools and young people
- But how do we do that? Are there models of best practice?
- Are there additional barriers that will exist for our learners to access resources and online sessions?
- More important than ever that we continue to work with young people to support them through this difficult time when so much of their school experience has changed

The Higher Horizons Approach



- Aimed to get things online, quickly, and drip-feed these to our target schools as a first step.
- Started by sending out a pre-16 and post-16 IAG pack to target schools before they closed with a message that more would come – these could be printed and sent home with the learners
- Concentrating on key year groups that face disruption
 - Y10 – lost learning during GCSEs
 - Y11 – exams cancelled, will they take their foot off the gas? What about their post-16 options?
 - Y12 – lost learning and facing the usual routes to universities (Open Days etc.) changing.
 - Y13 – cancelled exams and changing admissions system
- Decided that resources will focus on three key themes (3 of the 5 of our Progression Framework):
 - Information, Advice and Guidance (based on above needs)
 - Curriculum support (particularly for key subjects of Maths and English)
 - Wellbeing

The Higher Horizons Approach



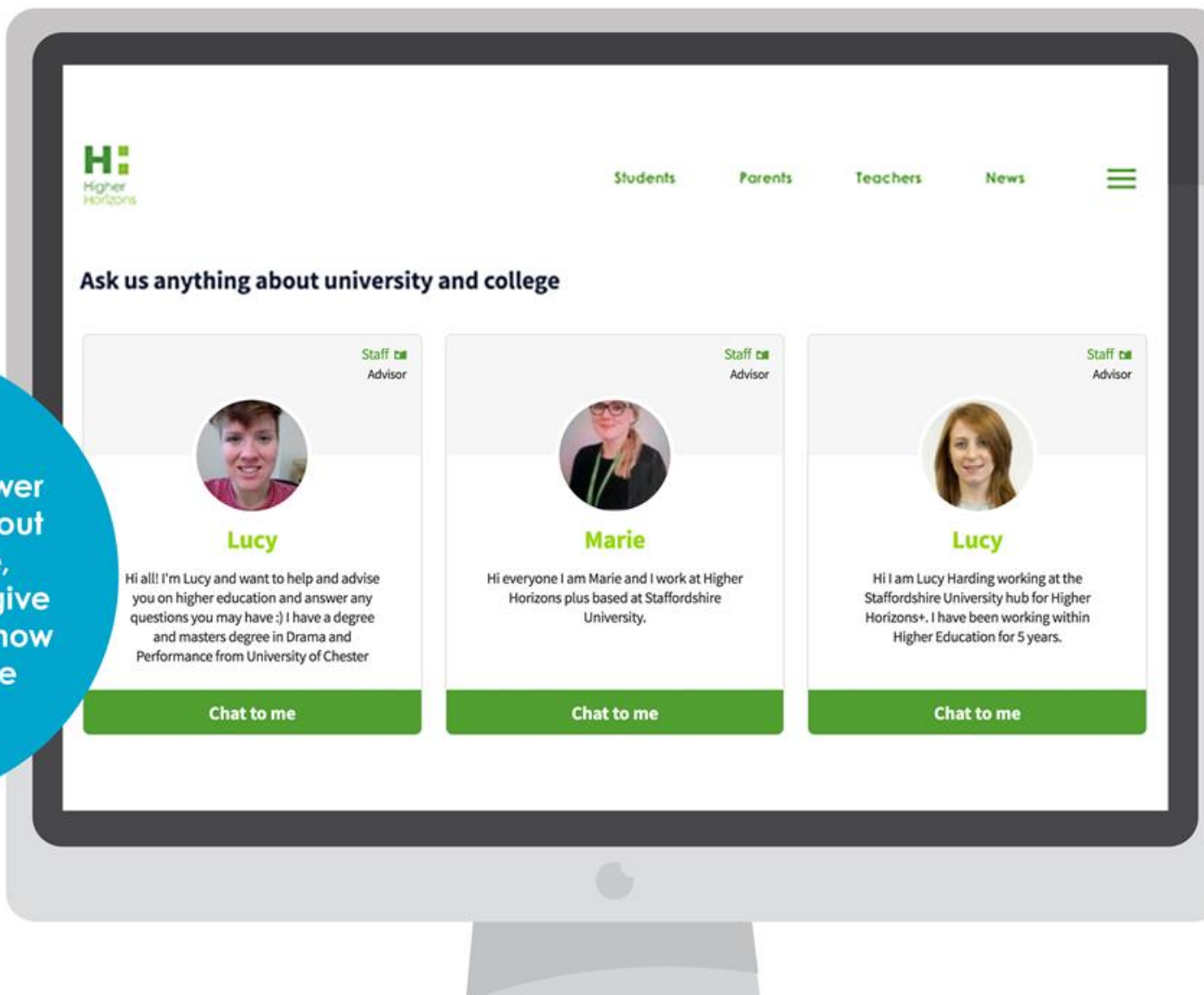
- We initially focused on downloadable resources rather than 'live' sessions
- Resources include:
 - Lesson packs, including worksheets or tasks to carry out
 - PDF Information booklets
 - Videos of our team presenting sessions
- Trying to maintain personal relationships and some personality to resources e.g. Bandicam for screen capture and recordings of our team presenting
- Considering ways to encourage engagement: can we incentivise participation via competitions or rewards for learners or schools who take part? For example, short story writing competition – reward submissions with book vouchers.
- Encouraging learners to complete tasks and contact members of our team on The Access Platform (TAP) to talk to them or ask for help
- TAP is promoted across all online resources using the following slide

Get in touch



You can chat to our team at www.higherhorizons.co.uk/ask

We can help answer any questions about school, college, university, or just give you some tips on how to study at home



Online Resources Portal



www.higherhorizons.co.uk/resources

The screenshot shows the Higher Horizons website interface. At the top left is the logo 'H: Higher Horizons'. A green navigation bar contains the following links: 'Students', 'Parents', 'Teachers', 'News', 'Resources', and a hamburger menu icon. Below this is a dark green bar with category filters: 'ALL' (highlighted with a white border), 'CURRICULUM', 'INFO PACKS', and 'WELLBEING'. The main content area features three resource cards:

- Revision Tips (Y11 - Y13)**
Category: Info Packs
Description: These worksheets include tips for young people and their parents/carers on how to get the most from your revision. There is a page of general tips, and pages for each subject, including English, Maths, Science, Languages and Humanities.
Call to Action: LET'S GO!
- Student Finance and Budgeting (Y10 - Y13)**
Category: Info Packs
Description: This video and work pack will teach you everything you need to know about student finance. It also includes a budgeting activity to show you how to work out a weekly budget at university and what you might spend your money on.
Call to Action: LET'S GO!
- Learning From Home (Y10 - Y13)**
Category: Wellbeing
Description: This session will give you some practical tips on how to look after yourself, stay healthy, and keep up your learning while you're at home.
Call to Action: LET'S GO!

Resource Examples



The video player thumbnail features the Higher Horizons+ logo in the top left. The main title is "What is university? Introduction to Higher Education". Below the title, there are several circular images showing students in various settings: one student looking at a laptop, two students talking, and a student in a video call. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with the "OfS Uni Connect Programme" logo and a progress indicator showing 0:07 / 32:55.

Examples of Self-care



Plan your day and give yourself breaks



Get outside when you can, following government guidance



Calling or video-calling your friends to stay in touch



Be creative or practice a hobby



Read a book you've always wanted to read



Re-watch your favourite show on Netflix



Revision Tips For Parents

Follow the tips below to help your child stay motivated to learn whilst at home!



- **Help your child to maintain a good routine whilst at home**
Small things like ensuring your child gets 8 hours sleep, a good breakfast and regular breaks with healthy snacks will help them stay focused and give structure to their day.
- **Get outside**
If possible, during one of your child's revision breaks, encourage them to go outside for at least 10 minutes – just a walk around the block or a kick about in the garden will do.
- **Try and minimise distractions**
Help your child set up a space that is designated for them to study in and have resources on hand to help them stay organised. Try to ensure this space has little distractions e.g. no tv or gaming consoles. If possible, encourage your child to leave their phone in another room while they work.
- **Take an active role in their revision**
Ask your child to teach you what they have been learning, this will enable them to recall information and explain their revision in their own words. You can also use your child's mind maps/flash cards/revision notes to help test what they can remember and what they understand.
- **Avoid working too many hours**
Revision can be quite stressful for students and they need time to relax. Encourage your child to 'switch off' at a certain time each day to unwind by watching tv, reading a book, or having a group video call with friends!
- **Stay positive**
This is stressful time for students so try and be as encouraging and motivating as possible. Everything will be disrupted this year, whether that is GCSE exams, missing a school leaving do, choosing which A Levels or BTECs to study, or waiting to find out about university places. It's okay not to have all the answers, but staying positive will help your child stay focused on keeping up with their school work while they wait for more information.

Sessions are:

- Video presentation (top left)
- PDF session on wellbeing when studying from home (bottom left)
- Revision or studying at home tips for parents (right)

Programme Development



- Moving some programmes online with some tweaks:
 - White Water Writers – virtual writing camps, and short story competition
 - Higher Horizons University Challenge (in partnership with Inspirational Learning Group)
 - Saturday Clubs – sent kit home to learners and have a closed group on Facebook for Learners and their parents where we post weekly tasks and video content
- As we move forward, combining resources into themed work packs based around year groups or activity type to provide more ‘structure’ for learners
- UNiFY Residential summer schools – approx. 400 learners signed up this year so we are now looking at ways to engage them online via existing online provision and hope to engage with them face-to-face next year

A New Evaluation Strategy



- Can we evaluate this? We know we will have to report on this period in our monitoring returns to the OfS.
- Can we use Google Analytics and page views to make claims about numbers of young people using resources or should we try to do something more?
- Category 1: Online resources (low intensity)
 - Devised simple post-resource survey embedded within sessions to try to capture data about learners, and very light-touch feedback on the sessions they've taken part in.
- Category 2: Longer term programmes organized through schools (higher intensity)
 - Pre- and Post-activity surveys to try to capture learner data and attitudinal change/distance travelled.
- Teacher surveys asking if they are using our resources and if they think they're useful are sent to teachers along with links to resources, weekly.
- Tracking: online EMWPREP forms launched to attempt to capture data.

A New Evaluation Strategy

- This plan is constantly evolving as we see what is and isn't working
- Current biggest challenge is lack of learners completing surveys
- In the week we launched we had approx. 850 unique views across our resources... but only 16 learners completed the survey.
- Currently thinking about ways to incentivise participation e.g. weekly draw for book vouchers or similar.
- EMWPREP tracking – currently launching online data collection forms so too soon to say how well this works, but we are desperate to link participants to activities in this period – particularly where they are learners we have engaged with before on face-to-face programmes and hopefully will again.

Accessibility for 'disadvantaged' learners



- [Sutton Trust research](#)
 - 19% of children from middle class homes had £100 or more spent on them since lockdown began, compared to 8% in working class home
 - 50% of teachers in private schools report they're receiving more than three quarters of work back, compared with 27% in the most advantaged state schools, and just 8% in the least advantaged state schools
- Locally we have heard from schools with a large number of learners who have no equipment at home to access online work. Working with some to provide funding for laptop loan schemes or dongles for internet access.
- Printing Bursary Scheme to support schools who have to print out and send work home along with our resources
- It is clear that even if the next academic year is back to normal there will be work to do to support learners who have missed out on work now – and will widening access be prioritised by schools if they have lost ground to make up?

Accessibility for 'disadvantaged' learners



- Uni Connect Partnerships have a huge role to play in the current climate
- We are (privileged to be) free of institutional politics, financial concerns, and not beholden to whatever this summer's admissions processes will look like
- OfS have asked us to particularly support this year's cohort as they make choices about their university places and offers – typically focus on younger year groups but can we maintain this work?
- Young people need impartial information, advice and guidance in what is a rapidly changing time
- Once schools are open again they may have other priorities – will we be allowed back in? Will this virtual outreach be the 'new normal'?

Where do we go from here?

- Facing the reality that this is likely to be a marathon and not a sprint
- A lot has changed over a short period of time but we now need to focus on making sure what were doing is accessible for the young people we support
- As a community, widening access practitioners need to share practice about what is working – and what isn't



Higher
Horizons+

Thanks for listening. Any questions?

www.higherhorizons.co.uk/ask



@Higher_Horizons



@HiHoPlus



higherhorizons



@higherhorizons

