

Explore your options,
Discover your potential

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YOUR
PLACE**

An illustration of a hand with a teal sleeve pointing towards the text 'TAKE YOUR PLACE'. The hand is rendered in a stylized, dotted or stippled texture.

neaco

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Our Partners

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Easton&OtleyCollege



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BARRIERS TO MUSLIM UPTAKE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

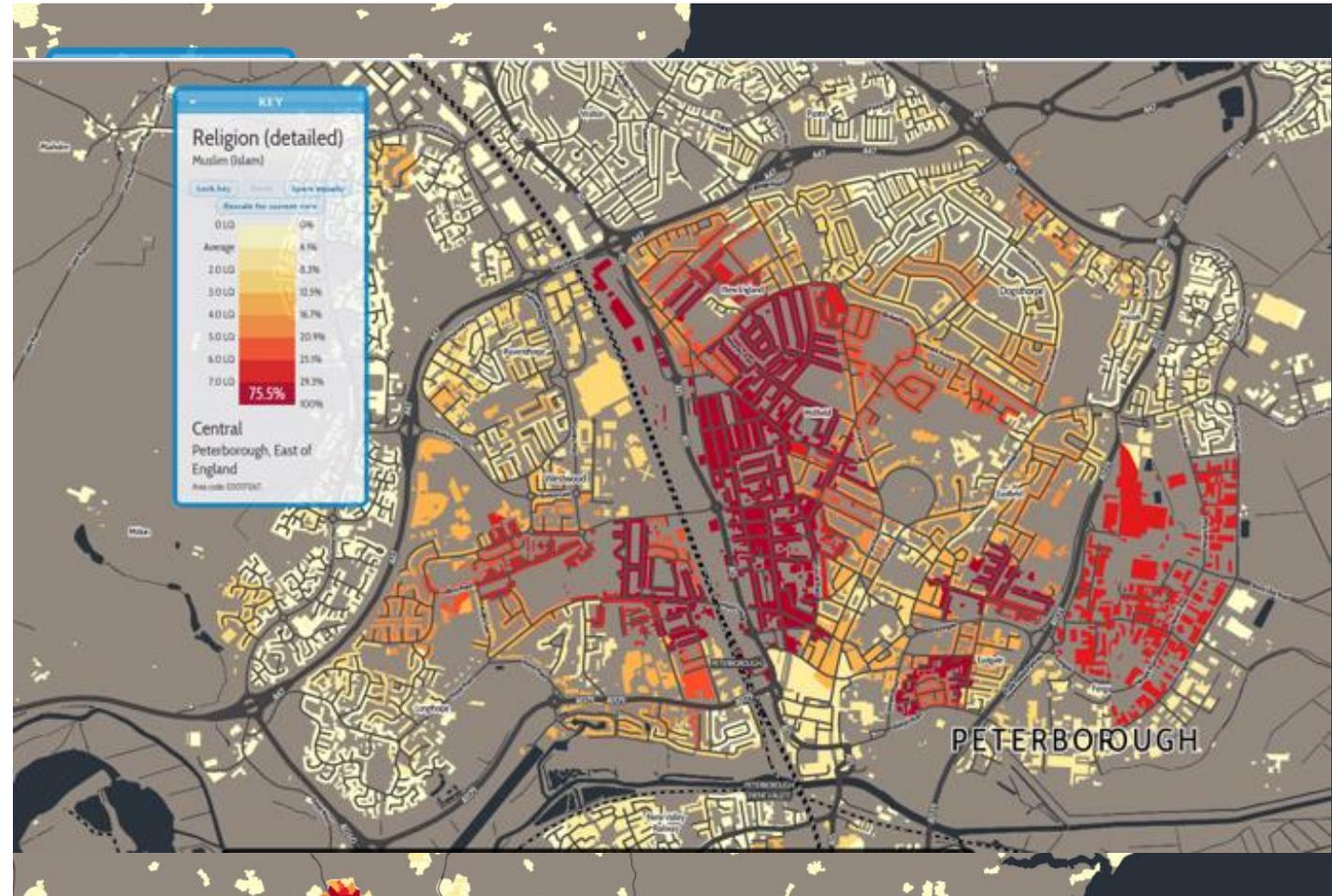
Experiences of
HE decision
making in
Peterborough



Research Context

Lower than expected levels of **young participation** in Higher Education, considering:

- **Key Stage 4 attainment**
- **Ethnicity** (POLAR3 Q1 or Q2)
- **Muslim students** predominant minority in affected wards.



Research Method (Qual Focus Groups)

Phase 1: Student Decision Making >< HE (Behavioural)_{n=16}

Research Questions:

1.) What are Motivators and Barriers to Higher Education pathways in the cohort?

2.) Who/ What is influencing decision making >< HE

3.) Can we improve uptake in the group?

CURRENT FACTORS
OF DECISION
MAKING

(High achieving level
3 Students)

RETROSPECTIVE
FACTORS OF
DECISION MAKING

(High achieving level
4+ Students)

DELIBERATED
FACTORS OF
DECISION MAKING

(High achieving L3
&4+ students)

Phase 2: Influencer opportunities (Deliberative)_{n=15}

REFLECTION ON
STUDENT
RESPONSES 1

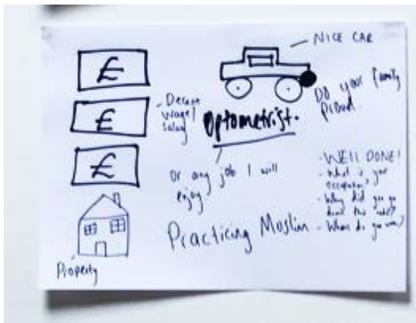
(Teachers & form
tutor)

REFLECTION ON
STUDENT
RESPONSES 2

(School decision
makers)

Questions we asked (L3)

Draw Hopes and Fears



What does the world look like in 5 years time if you achieve/ fail to achieve your goals.

How did you reach that point?

Pathway Awareness & Value Allocation



Write down all the options you are aware of

Allocate 10 coins across the options- give the most to the best options

Information Sources



How did you decide these were the best choices?

What about them?
Who says so?

Quiz: Assumptions about HE



Test 3 hypothesized barriers:

Campus life
Student Finance
Pathway awareness

Debate: HE, is It worth it?



2 teams

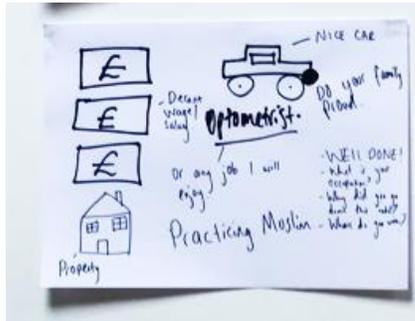
One argues for HE

One argues against

Conclusion: who is most convincing?

Questions we asked (L4)

Draw Hopes and Fears



What does the world look like in 5 years time if you achieve/ fail to achieve your goals.

How did you reach that point?

Discussion: Why are young Muslims not going to HE?



Understand unconditioned perspectives on the problem

Tipping the Scales



Thinking back what were your choices? Did you make the right decision? Who/ what influenced it? Would you choose the same again?

Reflective Exercise



Presentation of barriers from L3 group and statistics of Muslim Pakistani heritage participation

Create a Solution



How would you make decision making easier? What would you need? Who would do it?

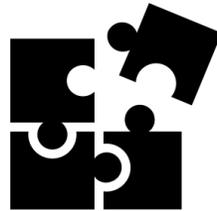
Questions we asked (Influencers)

Discussion:
Why are young Muslims not going to HE?



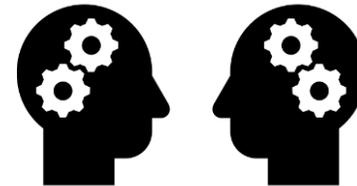
Understand
unconditioned
perspectives on
the problem

Presentation:
Aware/ Surprise



Seek responses
to student
feedback on the
problem

Deliberation:
How to improve uptake



Seek school
insight about how
we might improve
uptake of HE in
the demographic

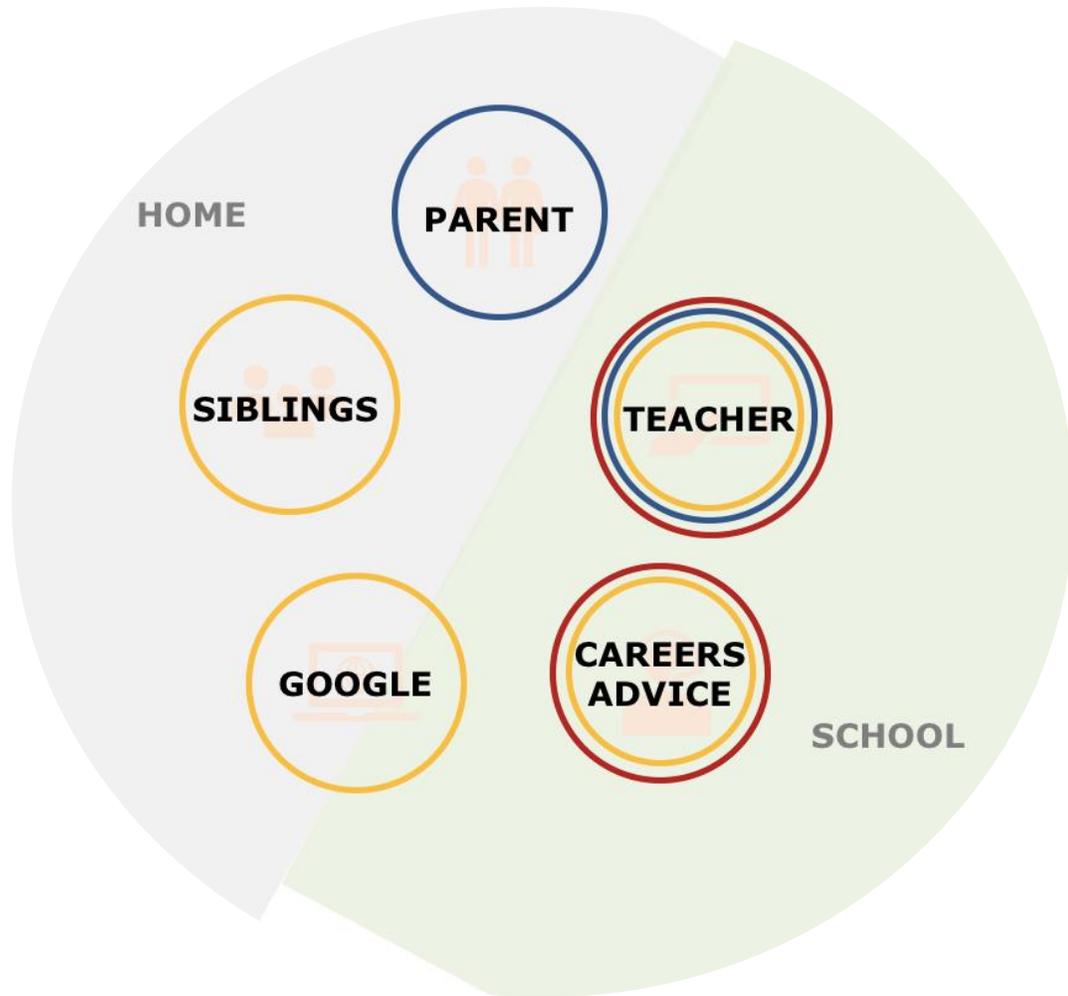
RESEARCH FINDINGS



Who influences HE decisions?



Home sets the goal. School offers the pathway.



Set Expectations

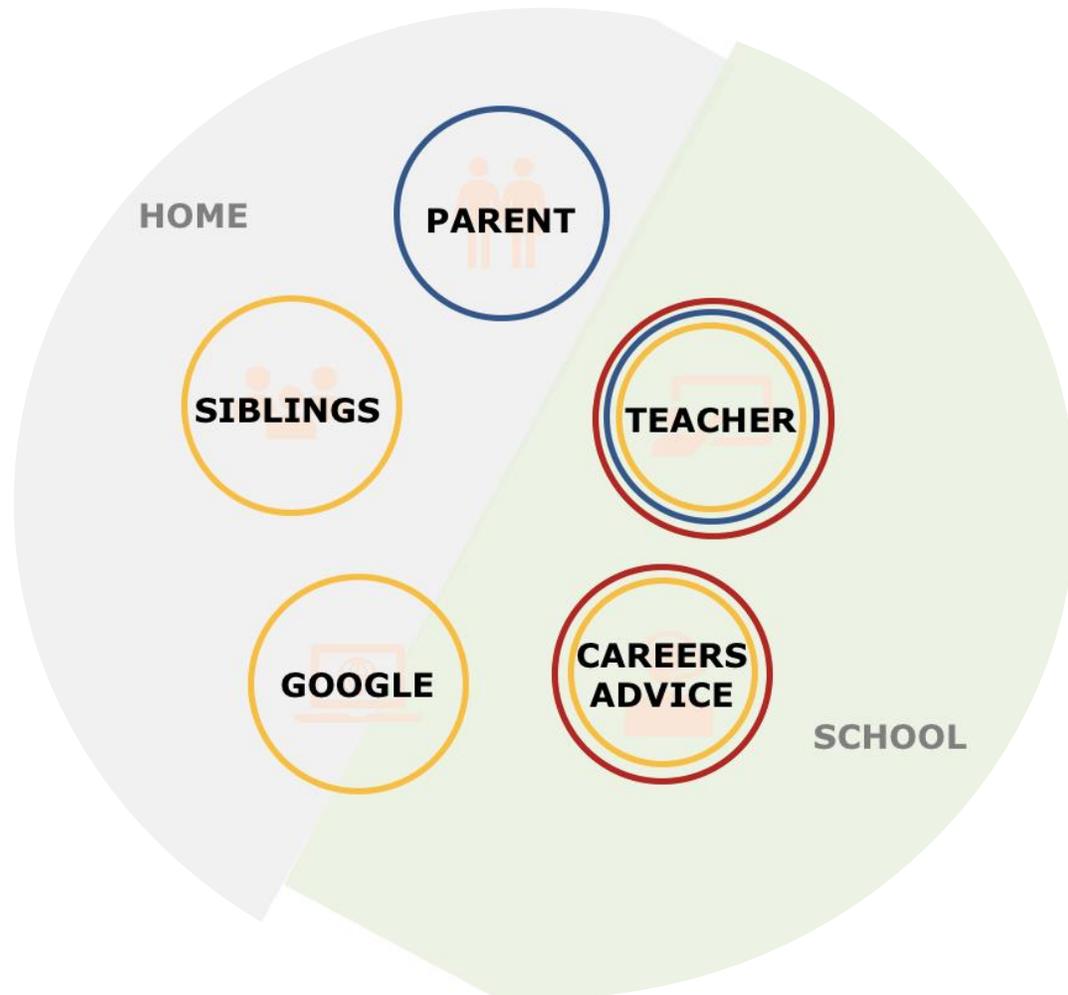


Guidance to Pathway



Decision Tipping Power

School – by far the greatest influence on pathway choice



I wanted to do journalism a year ago. Then I changed it because I got the top grades in the class in business & finance and my teacher recommended I do accounting and finance. I got an unconditional offer from BCU. Degree student

Nb. Tutors and subject teachers hold greatest sway over students because students seek out guidance from 'elders' they know and trust.

-  Set Expectations
-  Guidance to Pathway
-  Decision Tipping Power

Pathway Awareness & Value



Post school options: Limited Awareness/ Low Confidence



- Degrees are valued **by schools** and considered by pupils
- Apprenticeships are **undervalued by schools** but considered by students
- Gap years were taken by several students to **research wider options** and determine **personal choice**

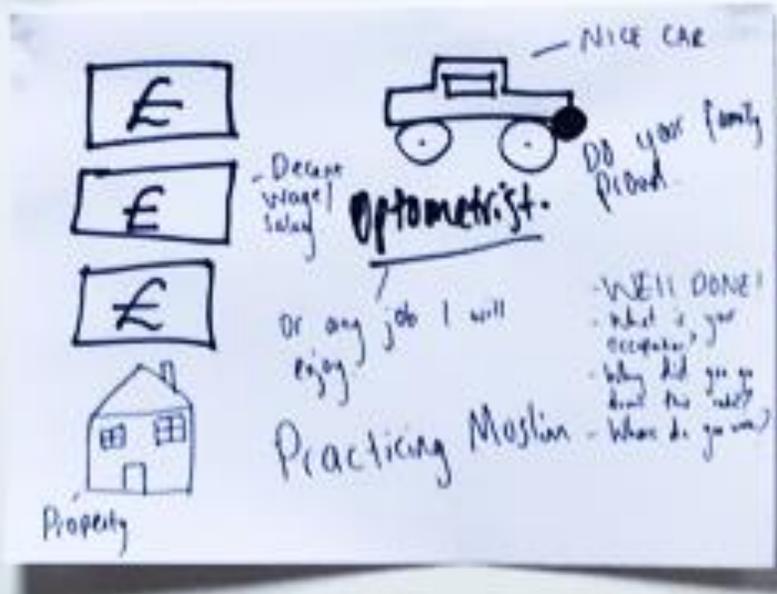
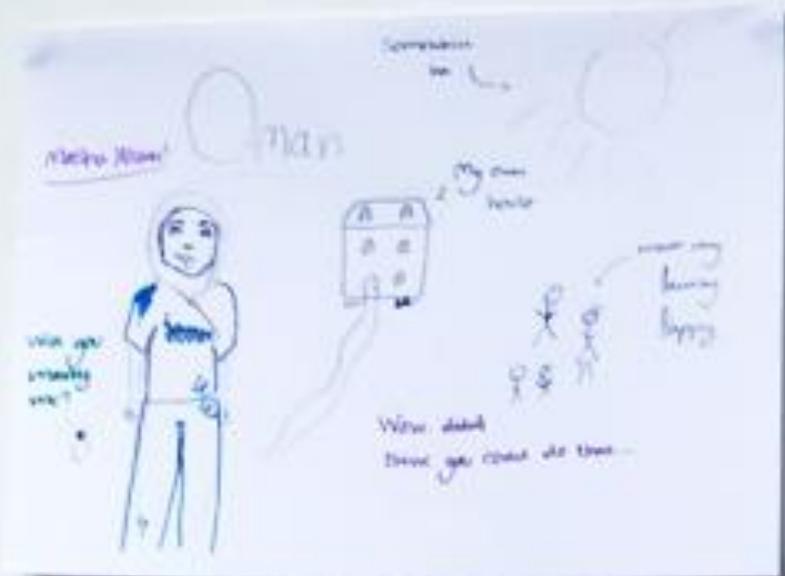
Student Dilemmas in the HE choice



Muslim student goal is a financially secure career

For our cohort, university is one possible stepping stone to their career aspiration. **They depict:**

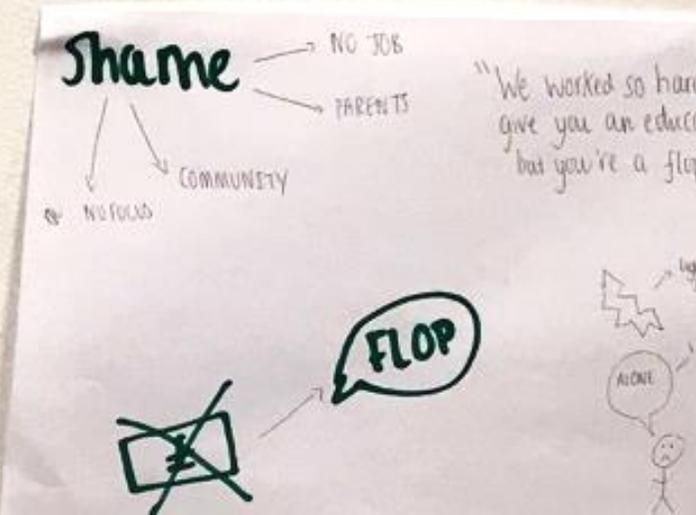
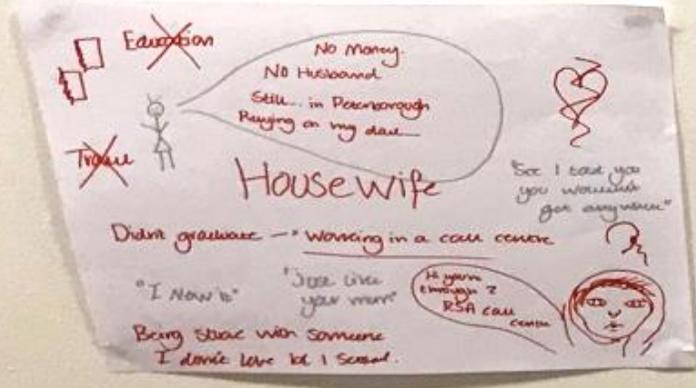
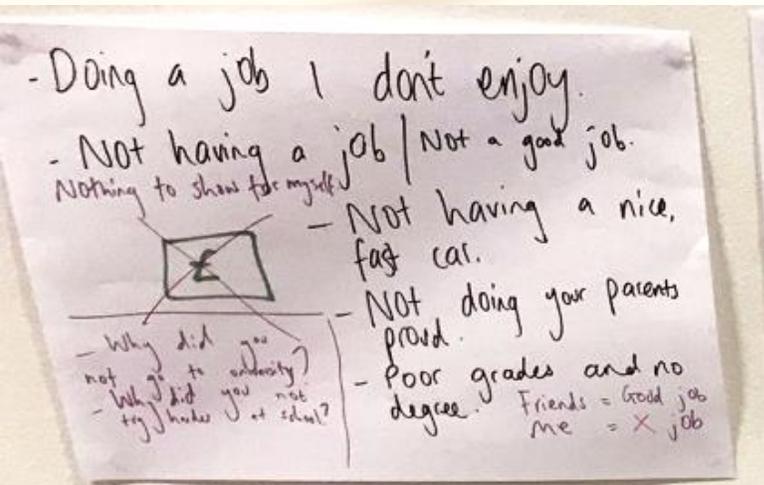
- A financially secure world
- A 'good career'
- Good income
- Enjoy their work
- Material possessions
- Provide for family members
- Travel/ leave Peterborough
- Family are proud



Muslim students fear wasted time & money

University has a role to play in their fears. They depict:

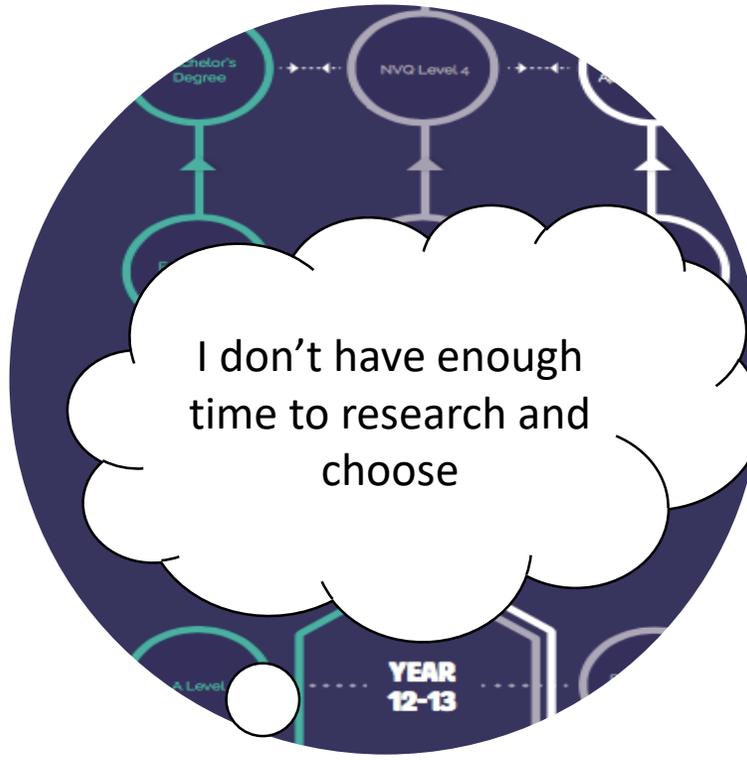
- Financially dependent on family
- In a dead end job that didn't require HE
- Money & time wasted on university
- Shamed by family as a result
- Women as housewife
- Not happy in their career





Is HE an investment
or a waste?

Financial Security
Dilemma



I don't have enough
time to research and
choose

Pathway Choice
Dilemma



Will I be socially
isolated ?

Cultural Place
Dilemma

1. Financial Security Dilemma



A degree is an investment in a better paid career School



Don't waste money on the wrong university course. You need a course with a career path! Parent

There is a job for you in the family business. Parent

You could come out of university and end up in the same job as if you hadn't been Sibling



2. Pathway Choice Dilemma



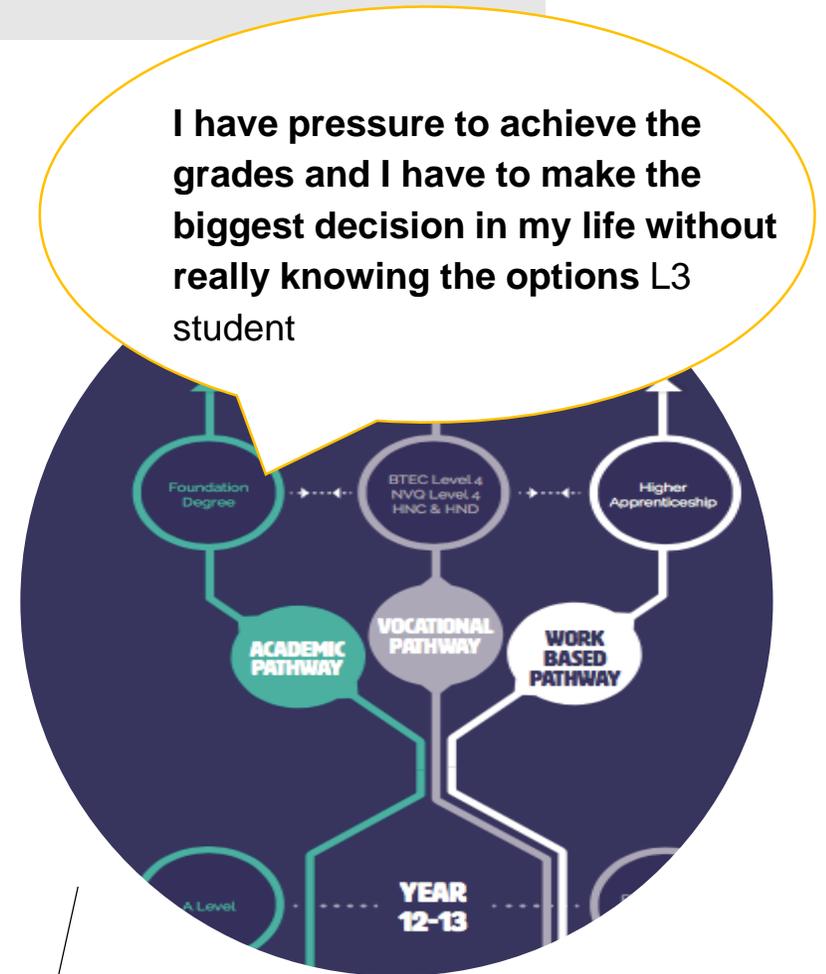
I don't know much about alternative pathways to a degree. I base my advice to you on my own HE experience. I can help a bit with your personal statement but don't necessarily know what should go in it
Subject Teacher/ Tutor

I worry that I am giving you the wrong advice
Subject Teacher/ Tutor

I can show you what your future might look like but you need to see me in enough time
Career Fayre Role Models



I can guide you through the options but you may need to take some time out to really do your research
Google/ Siblings



Choose the course that gives you a career at the end. STEM or finance. Don't ask me how.
Parent

3. Cultural Place Dilemma



You haven't engaged in extra-curricular activities. You go to madrassah or spend time with family. So your personal statement is unlikely to stand out.

SLT/School Leaders

Students don't understand the cultural value of higher education to their future career

SLT/School Leaders



Campuses social life is alcohol and clubbing

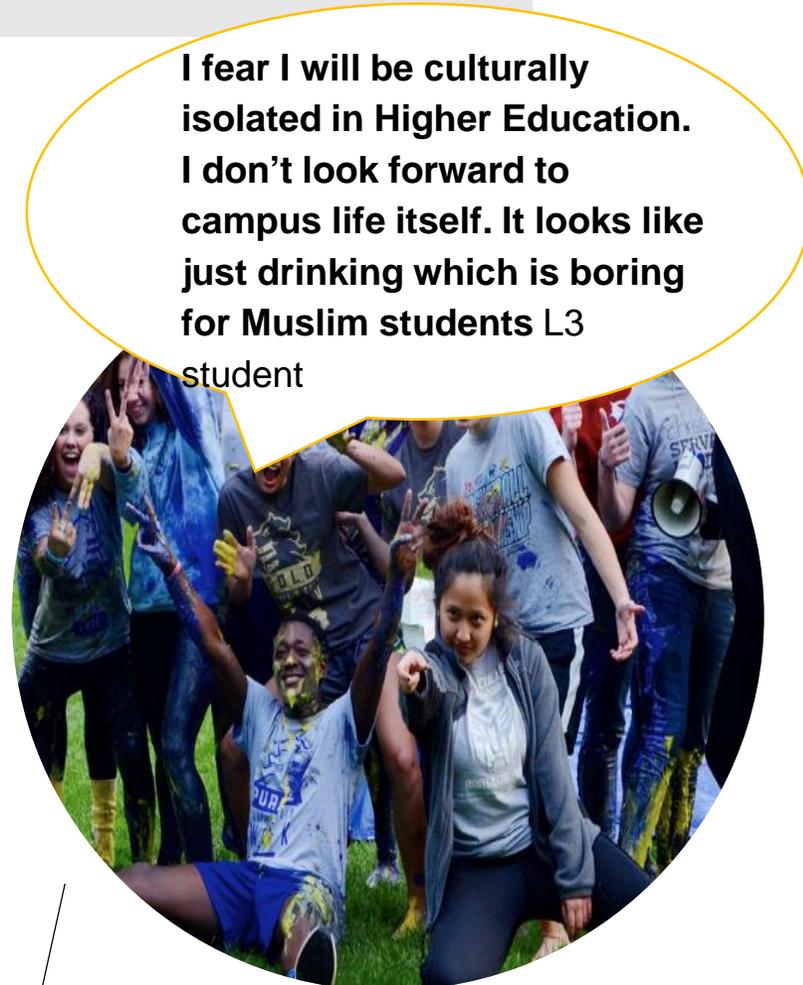
School / marketing/ siblings/ parents

There aren't social spaces for Muslim students on campus

School / marketing/ siblings/ parents



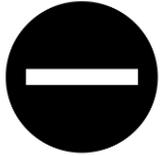
If you go to university, its safer to stay close to home



I fear I will be culturally isolated in Higher Education. I don't look forward to campus life itself. It looks like just drinking which is boring for Muslim students

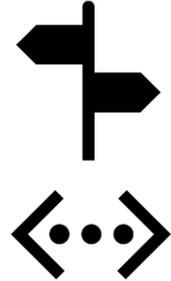
L3 student

So what? High pressure, low confidence in decisions...



Finance pressure from home

- Many Muslim students have family members with their own businesses.
- Going straight into business can feel like a more familiar step as students understand what this career path looks like.
- When choosing degree choices, there is family pressure to choose STEM, law and Finance which fit established ideas of 'stable careers' such as accountancy or working in the NHS.



Pathway pressure & low cultural kudos at School

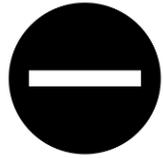
- Students feel under pressure by schools to achieve the grades to get them into university.
- Campus life is feared to be unstimulating, isolating or limited social and cultural fulfilment.
- Students falsely feel they have 'the wrong kind of culture' to fit in at uni
- They want time to look into wider range of HE/subject choices than presented by school & families.



Students need personal exploration time

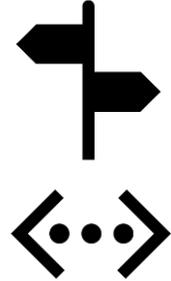
- The happiest students took a gap year to look at options fully.
- The most confident students had met role models in the career paths they then embarked upon.
- Some take an Access Course if they change from the parental direction and need grades in topics they did not take at L3.

What happens as a result of the dilemmas?



No progression

- Family business/ straight into business holds greater financial promise and is a less problematic decision



Gap Year

- Time to look into wider range of choices than presented by school
- Time to take Access Course if good grades in wrong topics



Dropout risk

- Course choice, parent led not student
- Low confidence in cultural fit in HE
- Campus life unstimulating, isolating or limited social and cultural fulfilment

What can
influence
HE
decisions
positively?



1. Support students to make **choices they are confident in.**
2. Present them with a broad set of **subjects & pathways to explore on their own**
3. Celebrate **academic and cultural** capital of students and HE options

Activities that encourage Confidence*

ROLE MODELS



Career Fayres
Assemblies
Resources
Parents
Evening

Broaden student horizons through Role Models

Broaden parent horizons at existing touch in points

CULTURAL VALIDATION

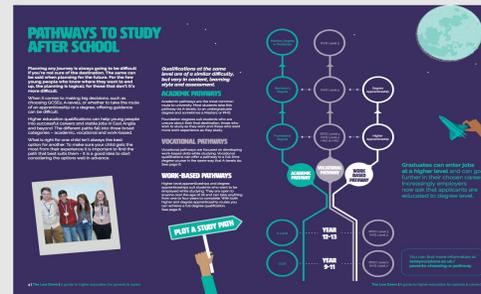


Explore relevant campus cultures to student needs.
E.g. present universities with societies relevant to their interests (Arabic society, debating society etc.)

Learn about & validate student cultural activities by competencies (e.g. providing community meals in Ramadan) not forum (e.g. NCS)

PATHWAY
EDUCATIO
N

Self study resources that show all pathway options



Teacher/ Tutor training in all pathways

*Based on conversations by students who felt confident or happy in their choice and suggestions made by students, teachers & school leaders

PATHWAYS TO STUDY AFTER SCHOOL

Planning any journey is always going to be difficult if you're not sure of the destination. The same can be said when planning for the future. For the few young people who know where they want to end up, the planning is logical; for those that don't it's more difficult.

When it comes to making big decisions, such as choosing GCSEs, A-levels, or whether to take the route of an apprenticeship or a degree, offering guidance can be difficult.

Higher education qualifications can help young people into successful careers and stable jobs in East Anglia and beyond. The different paths fall into three broad categories – academic, vocational and work-based.

What is right for one child isn't always the best option for another. To make sure your child gets the most from their experience it is important to find the path that best suits them – it is a good idea to start considering the options well in advance.



Qualifications at the same level are of a similar difficulty, but vary in content, learning style and assessment.

ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

Academic pathways are the most common route to university. Most students take this pathway via A-levels, to an undergraduate degree and sometimes a Masters or PHD.

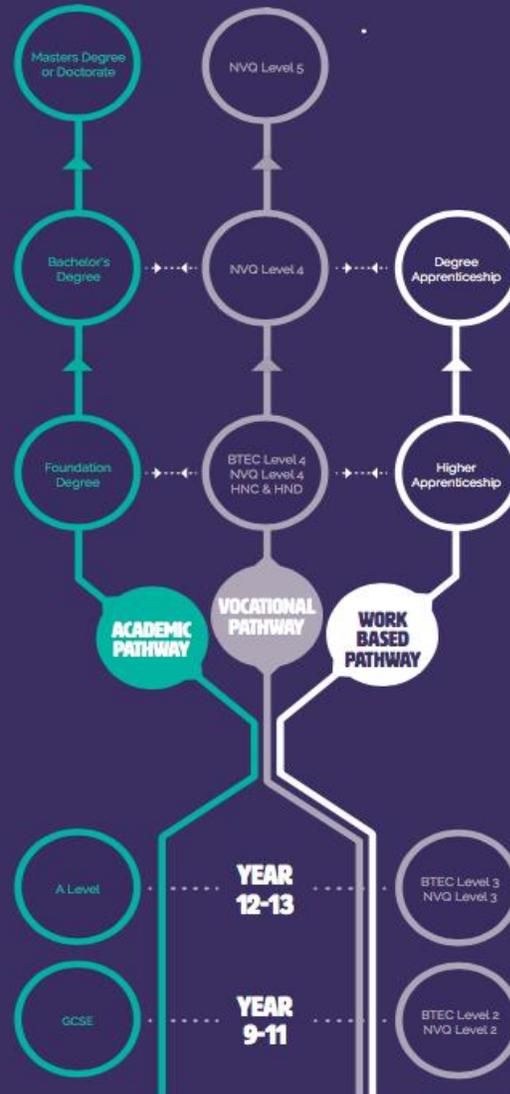
Foundation degrees suit students who are unsure about their final destination, those who wish to study as they work and those who want more work experience as they study.

VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Vocational pathways are focused on developing work-based skills while studying. Vocational qualifications can offer a pathway to a full-time degree course in the same way that A-levels do. See page 6.

WORK-BASED PATHWAYS

Higher level apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships suit students who want to be employed while studying. They are open to anyone over the age of 16 and can take anything from one to four years to complete. With both higher and degree apprenticeship routes you can achieve a full degree qualification. See page 6.



Graduates can enter jobs at a higher level and can go further in their chosen career. Increasingly employers now ask that applicants are educated to degree level.

You can find more information at takeyourplace.ac.uk/parents-choosing-a-pathway

Y9



- Present **all** pathways
- Value & encourage cultural activities
- Offer horizon broadening role models

Y11



- Discuss **all** pathways
- Value & encourage cultural activities
- Offer horizon broadening role models

Y12
/13



- Application support-time to consider all pathways
- Personal statement support - Choose 'competencies' not forums of cultural activity

Questions?

