

## **University of Manchester**

### **The Manchester Higher Success4Life project for looked after young people.**

#### **Category: Looked After Children**

Success4Life (S4L) is a high-intensity project delivered in partnership by The University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University for secondary school pupils in local authority care. Success4Life is a widening participation programme with a difference; whilst the theme of higher education runs through the project, there is a particular focus on the transferable life-long skills attendees develop and how these apply to education and careers more broadly. The project seeks to develop positive self-image, confidence, presentation and teamwork skills, through a range of group work activities and themed sessions. Pupils work alongside positive role models (current University students, some of whom are care experienced) and University staff.

The project works with a small group of targeted learners, on a very intense scale. Feedback from pupils, social workers and carers is consistently positive and quotes are given in the additional information. In postproject evaluations attendees responses consistently indicate an increased desire to stay in education after GCSEs and increased intention to apply to university.

S4L is one strand of a range of activities the Universities in Greater Manchester deliver in partnership for looked after children and their carers and advisors. Young people have the opportunity to attend S4L in subsequent years, should they wish to do so, and pupils have chosen to return to the project year on year.

Launched in 2012, there have been 6 projects, working with 70 pupils from Year 7 to Year 11; each running for ten weeks. Sessions are weekly on campus, culminating in a graduation, where carers, social workers and designated teachers are invited to attend. It is important to engage carers and key workers with the programme to:

- Sustain pupil engagement
- Provide these adults with knowledge about HE and care leaver support.

Guests at graduation completed a short survey; overall they stated that S4L had been a positive experience for their young person:

- “Both young people have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. They have now both expressed their wish to try and attend University”
- “This project has had a positive impact on my young person and she has enjoyed taking part”

End-of-programme evaluations make it clear that participants demonstrate increased confidence, feeling more comfortable taking part in discussions and group activities. A key aim of the project is building self-confidence in young people, so they feel able to make the most of opportunities open to them, including higher education in the future. Responses from learners include:

- “A lot because it’s built my confidence and communication skills”
- “They mean a lot because I’m building my confidence”

Attendees were asked if they would recommend the project to a friend:

- “Yes, so that they don’t just stay at home playing on the estate and getting into trouble”
- “Yes, so they could meet new people”

Key workers have also provided us with evidence impact:

- “Success4Life project significantly helped several of our young people from Trafford Local Authority. Each young person thoroughly enjoyed the project and gained confidence, new friends and brilliant life skills as well as having their aspirations raised. Virtual School, Trafford

If you would like to learn more about Success4Life or if you would like to get in touch with the University of Manchester, please contact Michael Naughton on [Michael.naughton@londonhigher.ac.uk](mailto:Michael.naughton@londonhigher.ac.uk)