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Evaluation of the University of Warwick's  
outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick  
Young Achievers' Programme:  
Report 9: Impact.

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**DRAFT**

14 November, 2018.

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## Executive summary

### This report

This report draws together impact data relating to UniTracks from November 2015 – June 2018. The data are drawn from eight evaluation reports covering UniTracks' Launch Day; the Big Deal competition; Shooting the Past; GCSE Bootcamp; and E-mentoring.

The impact data have been presented under four key headings which relate to the stated aims of the UniTracks programme; that is: building confidence, acquiring skill, understanding university, and building aspirations.

Limitations on the evaluation processes (i.e., that the use of control groups is not possible) mean that the data relating to impact is of OFFA Level 2, Standards of Evaluation Practice<sup>1</sup>, with both quantitative and qualitative evidence of impact being available. The complete range of stakeholders in UniTracks have participated in the evaluations – participating young people; mentors; undergraduates; parents, school staff; the Brightside Trust; and university staff.

### Overall findings

Impact has been demonstrated across the four key areas, albeit to different degrees. The most notable impact, as evidenced across the stakeholder groups, has been in terms of understanding university, and acquiring skills. Skills acquisition appeared to be most notable in terms of the Big Deal, and both business-related skills, along with more general skills, for example, deadline keeping, and public speaking. In relation to understanding university, the

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<sup>1</sup> Crawford, C, Dytham, S., Naylor, R. (2017), *The Evaluation of the Impact of Outreach; proposed standards of evaluation; practice and associated guidance* (The Sutton Trust, University of Warwick, OFFA, Department for Education), p. 5.

aspects of UniTracks' membership which enhanced this key element were the impact of visiting the university, taking part in learning experiences at the university, being mentored by university undergraduates, attending short residential events at the university, and being part of the university's UniTracks scheme. All these were highly valued.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. UniTracks core offers and evaluation, 2015-2018

UniTracks forms part of the University of Warwick's widening participation programme. It engages between 440-520 school students from Years 10 – 13 (ages 14 – 18 years) in a programme of outreach and widening participation events aimed at talented/highly able school students (top 10-5% nationally) from 23 partner schools. The participating school students all meet strict eligibility requirements relating, for example, to no parental history of higher education, residents of low participation neighbourhoods, and residents of areas of significant socio-economic deprivation. The overriding aim of UniTracks is to support school student members to successfully apply to the UK's most competitive, research intensive universities.

Each of the UniTracks' cohorts are offered differing interventions, events and support for each year of their membership. The Year 10 members have been offered three events in their first year as UniTracks members. These were: the Launch Day at the University of Warwick, the Big Deal Enterprise Challenge (Big Deal), and the 'Shooting the Past' Competition. The Big Deal competition is an established part of UniTracks, and earlier University of Warwick outreach work, and gives young people the chance to take part in a business and enterprise focused project. This well-established scheme has proved itself as a popular and effective programme, and, in its current incarnation, was evaluated by the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR) in 2016, 2017, and 2018<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the same cohort has been offered, since 2016, an alternative, history and film-focused, project, 'Shooting the Past'. In its first presentation, various difficulties led

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<sup>2</sup> Cullen, Stephen M., (July 2016) *Evaluation of the University of Warwick's outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers' Programme: Report 2: The Big Deal Enterprise Challenge*, 2016, CEDAR, University of Warwick. Cullen, Stephen M., & Thomas, Ruth (July 2017), *Evaluation of the University of Warwick's outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers' Programme: Report 5: The Big Deal Enterprise Challenge*, 2016, CEDAR, University of Warwick. Cullen, Stephen M, (September 2018), *Evaluation of the University of Warwick's outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers' Programme: Report 8: UniTracks' Big Deal, Shooting the Past, and Mentoring*, 2018, CEDAR, University of Warwick.



to its cancellation<sup>3</sup>, but the following two years saw successful presentations of the programme<sup>4</sup>.

For Year 12 members of UniTracks, the academic year 2016-2017 saw the first offering of an e-mentoring scheme. The scheme, operated in partnership with the Brightside Trust<sup>5</sup>, was evaluated by CEDAR<sup>6</sup>, and was a successful offering for the Year 12 members. The 2017-2018 offer was delayed, with little mentoring being undertaken until the summer term of that school year, as a result, the evaluation of the programme was limited<sup>7</sup>.

Year 11 and Year 13 members of UniTracks are offered support during the period of their public examinations – GCSE and A level. In 2017, CEDAR evaluated the Year 11 offer, which is a ‘GCSE Bootcamp’. The ‘Bootcamp’ is a residential GCSE revision course in one of four subjects, mathematics, English language, chemistry or physics. It involves a two night stay at the University of Warwick, and two and a half days of revision teaching and learning. The CEDAR evaluation showed that the 2017 presentation was a successful one for the UniTracks members<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Cullen, Stephen M, (July 2016), *Evaluation of the University of Warwick’s outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers’ Programme: Report 3: ‘Shooting the Past’, 2016*, CEDAR, University of Warwick.

<sup>4</sup> Cullen, Stephen M., & Thomas, Ruth, (August 2017), *Evaluation of the University of Warwick’s outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers’ Programme: Report 6: ‘Shooting the Past’, 2017*, CEDAR, University of Warwick. Cullen, Stephen M, (September 2018), *Evaluation of the University of Warwick’s outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers’ Programme: Report 8: UniTracks’ Big Deal, Shooting the Past, and Mentoring, 2018*, CEDAR, University of Warwick.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.thebrightsidetrust.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Cullen, Stephen M, & Thomas, Ruth (September 2017), *Evaluation of the University of Warwick’s outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers’ Programme: Report 7: E-mentoring, 2016-2017*, CEDAR, University of Warwick.

<sup>7</sup> Cullen, Stephen M, (September 2018), *Evaluation of the University of Warwick’s outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers’ Programme: Report 8: UniTracks’ Big Deal, Shooting the Past, and Mentoring, 2018*, CEDAR, University of Warwick.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas, Ruth, (May 2017), *Evaluation of the University of Warwick’s outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers’ Programme: Report 4: UniTracks: GCSE Bootcamp*, CEDAR, University of Warwick.

## 1.2 UniTracks, and its evaluation, 2015-2018

CEDAR was asked by Warwick's Widening Participation and Outreach department to undertake a longitudinal evaluation of UniTracks from over the school years 2015-2019. The evaluation was intended to be both a formative and summative evaluation. The evaluation is concerned with the process of the delivery of the various UniTracks' offers, and in establishing the impact of those offers on participating young people who are members of Unitracks.

The eight evaluation reports produced so far have covered both process and impact elements. The reports have focused on particular UniTracks offers and experiences:

- UniTracks Year 10s Launch Event, November 2015.
- The Big Deal Enterprise Challenge, 2016.
- Shooting the Past, 2016.
- GCSE Bootcamp, 2017.
- The Big Deal Enterprise Challenge, 2017.
- Shooting the Past, 2017.
- E-mentoring, 2016-2017.
- The Big Deal Enterprise Challenge, 2018.
- Shooting the Past, 2018.
- Mentoring, 2018.

Each report covered the running of the programme or event in question, and gathered data from participating young people, school and university staff, business mentors, university undergraduate mentors, and the Brightside Trust (the main provider of web-based platforms for the programme). Data was gathered using paper and e-questionnaires,

researcher observations, engagement data (from the Brightside Trust), focus groups, and semi-structured interviews carried out both face-to-face and by telephone. The evaluation methods are presented in each report. Data gathering was focused on generating information about the experience of each event or offer and on trying to the impact – both in terms of the event or offer itself, and in terms of the wider experience of UniTracks.

### 1.3 This evaluation report

The aim of this evaluation report is to consolidate the impact data gathered so far in the evaluation process. It is hoped that the findings presented here will enable an overall assessment of the impact of UniTracks during the period November 2015 – July 2018, and provide indicators for the evaluation during the school year 2018-2019.

Taking all the evaluation data gathered so far provides a data pool of some 127 interviews, and 341 questionnaires. The total data gathered are presented in Table 1, while the breakdown of data gathered by event and offer is presented in Table 2.

*Table 1 Total data collection, UniTracks evaluation, November 2015 - July 2018.*

<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Numbers interviewed</b>
Participating young people (including 4 focus groups).	66
Mentors.	24
Student Ambassadors, student mentors.	12
School teachers.	17

Parents	4
University staff.	2
Brightside representatives.	2
<b><i>TOTAL INTERVIEWS</i></b>	<b><i>127</i></b>
Total number of questionnaires, participating young people.	<b>341</b>

*Table 2 Data collection by event and offer, UniTracks evaluation, November 2015 - July 2018*

<b>Programme/event</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Data type &amp; source</b>	<b>Number</b>
UniTracks Launch Event for Y10s	2015	Semi-structured interviews. Parents.	4
		Semi-structured interviews. School teachers.	2
		Pre-launch event questionnaire for participating young people	81
		Post-launch event questionnaire for participating young people	57
Big Deal	2016	Semi-structured interviews. Business mentors	9

		Semi-structured interviews. School teachers	3
		Semi-structured interviews. Student mentors.	3
		Semi-structured interviews. Brightside staff.	1
		Questionnaires, participating young people	20
GCSE 'Boot Camp'	2016	4 x Focus groups (41 Young People in total)	41 Young People in total in the focus groups.
		Post-event questionnaire, participating young people.	41
Big Deal	2017	Semi-structured interviews. Participating young people.	5
		Semi-structured interviews. Business mentors.	7
		Semi-structured interviews. School teachers.	3
		Semi-structured interviews. Brightside staff.	1

		Pre-Big Deal questionnaire for participating young people.	46
		Post-Big Deal questionnaire for participating young people.	24
		Brightside Big Deal blogs engagement data.	N/A
Shooting the Past	2017	Semi-structured interviews. University staff.	2
		Semi-structured interviews. Student Ambassadors.	4
		Semi-structured interviews. School teachers.	3
		Semi-structured interviews. Participating Young People.	6
		Pre-Shooting the Past questionnaires for participating young people.	16
		Post-Shooting the Past questionnaires for participating young people.	16
E-mentoring (Year 12)	2016-2017	Semi-structured interviews. Participating Young People.	5

		Semi-structured interviews. Undergraduate mentors.	5
Big Deal	2018	Semi-structured interviews.  School teachers.	3
		Semi-structured interviews.  Participating young people.	3
		Semi-structured interviews. Mentors.	2
		Pre-Big Deal questionnaire for participating young people.	16
		Post-Big Deal questionnaire for participating young people	10
Shooting the Past	2018	Semi-structured interviews. School teachers.	3
		Semi-structured interviews. Participating young people.	6
		Semi-structured interviews. Mentors.	6
		Pre-Shooting the Past questionnaire for participating young people	10

		Post-Shooting the Past questionnaire for participating young people	4
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## 1.4 The structure of this report

This report is built on the UniTracks mission statement which stated that young people who join the UniTracks programme will learn:

‘about university life [and] the benefits of pursuing university studies, and how to make an application to the best universities in the country. UniTracks members are supported in this work through events and workshops designed to build their *skills, confidence, and academic attainment*. [...] Our aim is that, by the end of their four-year commitment to the programme, UniTracks participants will be in a position to make *informed choices* about their future and have the necessary qualifications, skills, and attributes to achieve the next step in their journey.’<sup>9</sup> [Our stress]

UniTracks is collecting its own data on qualifications and UniTracks membership, along with post-school destinations of members. In relation to the impact of UniTracks membership, the CEDAR evaluation focuses on those elements of the UniTracks experiences and offers that fall under the headings of the acquisition of ‘*skills, confidence, and academic attainment*’ and the elements of UniTracks which enable the young people to make ‘*informed choices*’.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/programme/unitracks> , accessed 28 June, 2017.



This report brings together data derived from all sources (Table 2), and presents findings relating to impact as seen by the differing groups of stake holders – parents, teachers, and mentors<sup>10</sup>. Their views of impact on the young people are presented under the following headings:

- Building confidence.
- Acquiring skills.
- Understanding university.
- Building aspirations.

The views of the young people are presented separately (Section 3 below).

## 2 The adult view of the impact of UniTracks' membership on young people

### 2.1. Parent views on impact

Only a very small number of parents have been interviewed as part of the evaluation so far. At the UniTracks launch for Year 10 members on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2015, four mothers, who had accompanied their children to the event, were interviewed, face-to-face. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule, were recorded (with informed consent) and fully transcribed for analysis<sup>11</sup>. The mothers' UniTracks' children were three daughters and a son, who attended three different schools in two different English regions. In terms of the impact of joining UniTracks, and the hopes and expectations of the new UniTracks members, the interviewees gave accounts that focused on the self-confidence of

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<sup>10</sup> The two academic staff from Warwick who were interviewed as part of the evaluation of Shooting the Past, 2017 were only interviewed about the processes of running the scheme.

<sup>11</sup> For details, see Cullen, Stephen, & Lindsay, Geoff (2015) *Evaluation of the University of Warwick's outreach programme, UniTracks: The Warwick Young Achievers' Programme: Report 1, UniTracks Launch Day, Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2015*, CEDAR, University of Warwick.

their children. The interviewees themselves hoped that their children would benefit from being members of UniTracks in terms of increased self-confidence, support, and making new friendships. These hoped-for benefits were seen by the parents as important, enabling factors that would help their children achieve their post-school goals.

### 2.1.1 Building confidence

The interviewees hoped that UniTracks' membership would boost their children's self-confidence at school and in relation to attending university. Although the young people had only just joined UniTracks, the parents were able to give examples of the impact on their children of being chosen for the scheme. One mother explained that her son was very quiet, and had been affected by deaths in his family in the past year. The prospect of being able to join UniTracks had already enthused him; he had said, for instance, 'I need to get this', and his mother believed that his successful application had already brought about change, as he had 'all of a sudden [...] taken it upon himself to start finding out about things'. In a similar fashion, another interviewee explained how her daughter had been excited and pleased by being accepted for UniTracks, and that she had woken up early on the Launch Day and said to her mother – 'just let me go there!'.

## 2.2 School teachers' views on impact

Seventeen school teachers with responsibility for all or part of the UniTracks' offer in their schools have been interviewed. The teachers were interviewed for all elements reported on by the evaluation with the exception of the GCSE Bootcamp, and E-mentoring. Two of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, the remainder by telephone. The interviews were all conducted using semi-structured interview schedules, recorded (with informed consent), and fully transcribed for analysis. For each event or project, the teachers were asked what their perception of the impact of event or project was on their school pupils. In addition, the teachers were asked about their view of the impact of the entire UniTracks offer on the pupils

### 2.2.1 Building confidence

Teachers gave examples of cases in which young people who lacked confidence benefited from taking part in UniTracks' events and projects. This was most noticeable in a few pupils who had exhibited low levels of confidence in school settings, and seemed to benefit from UniTracks work. An appreciation of this potential impact underpinned, for example, one school's decision to pick a particular pupil to take part in the Big Deal competition:

'We chose one boy this year, just as an example, who doesn't speak. And I was reluctant to choose him, but the head of Year 10 said that she interviewed him, because we do an interview for them, that he really wanted to try and improve how he was in front of people, to improve his skills. So we gave him a chance, and said, OK, you know you've got to stand up in front of a whole room of people and give a presentation. So we've used that to try and improve their confidence. So, I think that's one of the main skills, outcomes, really. [...] We specifically chose him because he made a point of saying to us, "I really want to try and improve how I am as a person" – we thought that was lovely, so we chose him.'

Some teachers also talked about building confidence among *parents* who had not themselves been to university. The view was that the young people's reports of good UniTracks' experiences helped build the confidence of their parents in the scheme and in university. An example was:

'We live in an area where they don't actually leave this area. They don't travel, they don't like to go out of the area. I just think it shows them that they can do it, they can leave home and go somewhere else to study. And I think the involvement of the

parents is important because it just gives them more confidence, that the launch day and everything I think really shows them how well it's organised and that the kids are safe and inspires them. I've had quite a few parents come up to me afterwards and say "oh my God, it made me want to go". So it is inspiring definitely for the parents as well.'

### 2.2.2 Acquiring skills

The interviewed teachers stressed the role of UniTracks in helping their pupils acquire skills, particularly those skills they termed 'soft skills' – social skills, communication skills, team-working skills, and organisational skills. This impact, along with increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of university, was the most frequently mentioned by the teachers. For example, one interviewee said that 'the skills these kids pick up during these challenges [Big Deal] are absolutely priceless I think, not just the social aspect, but also the organisation, the communication between each other'. Another example of the stress on skills acquisition was:

'I think its benefits are in terms of their soft skills and their cultural capital because some of the students [...]. In terms of the actual skills that they learn on the challenge are they applicable, probably the independent work skills and having to complete something without somebody on your back, because our school like quite a lot of others, is quite hands-on making deadlines met and things like that.'

There was also evidence that the Big Deal competition had a direct impact on subject-related skills acquisition for those young people who were studying business studies at school, with one responsible teacher commenting that the competition 'is inspiring, and it's realistic, and they develop their skills fantastically'. Similarly, teachers noted that both the

GCSE Bootcamp, and Shooting the Past enhanced subject-specific skills and knowledge, as well as the more generally applicable skills. For example, one teacher said of Shooting the Past that skills acquisition was the most important impact – ‘the skills are really organisation, planning, teamwork, communication – I think that all these things they absolutely had to employ’.

### 2.2.3 Understanding university

The teachers were uniformly positive about the impact UniTracks had on their pupils in relation to finding out about, and understanding university. Of the four impact themes, this was the theme most frequently mentioned by school staff. Impact was identified in relation to the school students seeing and experiencing a university campus, meeting undergraduates, finding out about university courses and life, as well as about finance and funding. All of these were regarded, by the school staff, as being important for the young people in terms of enhancing the likelihood of them attending university.

The interviewees stressed the importance of the young people visiting, seeing and staying on the Warwick campus. A typical view of the impact of visiting the university was that it ‘helps them to realise what life would be like at university [...] I think the first thing is that they actually went to the university itself, and they could see what a lecture theatre looks like, people milling about, the students themselves, and I think they got a little bit of a taster.’. In a similar vein, another teacher explained that young people from her school who had not been keen to attend university were impacted by their residential stay for Shooting the Past:

‘We’re trying to get one of the girls to go to university because she is a very, very bright girl. Well, all of them are obviously, but one of them was quite anti, and none

of the others have anyone in their family that has been to university. So I think it has made them realise, especially going to the campus and spending the two days there, made them realise it could be something they would want to do’.

A final example is provided by a teacher who overheard their school pupils talking after visiting the university – ‘they were taking about the university, they were having conversations, they are 14 and 15 and they were having conversation about where they would like to go, whether they’d like to go to a campus university or not; so it [the UniTracks’ visit] was very inspiring’.

#### 2.2.4 Building aspirations

Typically, school staff said that their school pupils already had high aspirations in relation to examination success, attendance at university and career choices. In these cases, it was argued that their involvement in UniTracks enhanced pre-existing, and high, levels of aspiration. Nonetheless, examples were provided of the positive impact of participation in UniTracks on the aspirations of some of the pupils who had been unsure about their futures. This was the case in relation to pupils who had little experience of life outside their home and school, whether that was young people living in an inner city, or in a rural town – ‘they liked the campus [...] they’ve never been to a university [...] this is quite a small community, and it’s quite isolated from other towns and cities. I think widening their eyes for them to think there is more to it’.

### 2.3 Mentors’ views on impact

#### 2.3.1 Building confidence

Mentors provided little in the way of direct evidence of confidence-building as a discrete impact of young people taking part in UniTracks. However, there was an appreciation that

the acquisition of new skills, finding out about university, and taking part in the various UniTracks' offers had the combined effect of boosting confidence.

### 2.3.2 Acquiring skills

The mentors gave accounts of the positive impact in relation to skills acquisition that were very positive, particularly in relation to the Big Deal. Accounts of participation in the Big Deal stressed the acquisition of business-related skills, such as budgeting, market research, cash flows, and costs, along with more generic skills, such as team-working, working to deadlines, presentation skills, and public speaking. The mentors were clear that, with the right attitude, the school pupils were able to benefit strongly from taking part in the Big Deal. An example was given by one of the business mentors, who noted the range of skills involved in the Big Deal work on the launch day, the engagement of young people, and the need for them to develop new skills when faced with difficulties:

'We were introducing a whole number of business concepts and jargon and challenges, and that was good, I think they [the pupils] really engaged with that and took a lot of things on board. And then the structure of the business plan kind of enabled them to think about the business, and some of the disciplines and rigours of what you need to do in business. I definitely do think that they have had some difficulty in terms of team working, and that's been a good thing because it's actually made them think about how they got together, and they have learnt from one another.'

### 2.3.3 Understanding university

The mentors for the Big Deal reported that although they were aware of the UniTracks' goals in terms of the young people and university choice, the participants in the Big Deal

were, as expected, more focused on the immediate challenges of the competition itself. Nonetheless, mentors took opportunities to talk about university, and to answer questions on universities when they arose; for example: 'I talked to the about university and when they apply, and what to think about, and just really shared my experiences of what it was like for me applying'.

The mentors from the 2016-17 e-mentoring scheme for Year 12 UniTracks' members were all undergraduates, and the scheme enabled a direct focus on university choices for the school pupils. Of the five undergraduate mentors interviewed from the 2016-17 e-mentoring offer, four stressed the reassurance that the participating pupils received about choosing, applying for, and attending university. All of the mentors said that they thought the mentees were benefiting from having a source of trusted, up-to-date, reliable information about university and university life. Most of the mentors were matched with UniTracks' members who had similar academic and subject interests, and there were, therefore, opportunities for subject-specific advice and knowledge to be gained by the school pupils. One of the mentors explained what they saw as the value and impact of the scheme:

'I think the first [benefit] is that they [the pupils] are making an informed decision, because I think a lot of young people, particularly myself at that age, because none of my family went to university or anything like that [and] I was completely making the decision on a whim, scraping information together, not knowing if the information was right or anything like that, but just happy to trust it. It's quite good for them to make an informed decision, and they're going to university knowing "I want to go to campus or non-campus, I want to go to this university, and study this course"'.



The e-mentoring scheme was seen by the mentors to have provided an effective platform that enabled good communication between undergraduates and UniTracks' members – 'it's nice for them [pupils] to have an extra resource, someone that you know has legitimate answers and not just someone random on a forum'; and, as another undergraduate explained, 'she [pupil] told me when I met her that I'm the only person she knows that goes to university'.

#### 2.3.4 Building aspirations

As with confidence-building, there was little evidence provided by the mentors in relation to building aspirations.

### 2.4 The Brightside Trust data

The Brightside Trust<sup>12</sup> has been one of UniTracks' partner in the delivery of some of UniTracks' programmes, most notably, the Big Deal and e-mentoring. Part of Brightside's package was, for the Big Deal, 2016 and 2017, the provision a 'skills tracker', and site engagement record. Data regarding site engagement - that is with the 11 weekly tasks and contact with the business mentor for each team. In addition, the school pupils were able to track their own, self-assessed, skills development over the course of the Big Deal competition using the Brightside skills tracker.

The skills tracker related to the Big Deal and building confidence, communication skills, creativity, motivation and presentation skills. The data for the 2016 Big Deal competition is presented in tables 3 and 4 below.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thebrightsidetrust.org/> (accessed, 12 November, 2018).

Table 3: Big Deal 2016: Self-assessed skills tracking by young people (14 teams, c.42 pupils)

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Average initial value</b>	<b>Average target value</b>	<b>Average final value (immediately prior to competition day)</b>
Confidence	6.4	8.6	8
Communication skills	6.3	8.7	7.6
Creativity	6.2	8.3	7.6
Motivation	7.2	9	7.8
Presentation skills	5.9	8.1	7.1

The average skills acquisition show that in no category was the average final value reached. However, the figures presented in Table 4, below, show that in each category, a majority of the participating young people did see an improvement in their key skills.

Table 4: Big Deal 2016: Skills tracker data relating to percentage of young people (immediately prior to competition day) who improved key skills.

<b>Skill</b>	<b>% of participants who improved skill</b>
Confidence	88%
Communication skills	74%
Creativity	73%
Motivation	54%
Presentation skills	54%

Low levels of skills improvement in relation to motivation and presentation skills may, possibly, be related to the group already possessing high levels of these skills prior to the Big Deal.

For the 2017 presentation of the Big Deal, the participating teams had fewer (nine as opposed to 11) weekly tasks, but, per task, engagement (measured by team) was slightly higher than in 2016. In terms of skills acquisition, the data presented in Table 5 show improvements in averages of key skills, but a more mixed picture in terms of final average values and target values. Overall, however, it is possible to say that average target values were reached.

Table 5: Big Deal 2017: Self-assessed skills tracking by young people (n = 27)

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Average initial value</b>	<b>Average target value</b>	<b>Average final value</b>
Confidence	6.9	7.9	7.9
Communication skills	6.7	8.0	8.1
Creativity	6.2	7.5	7.4
Motivation	7.2	8.3	8.2
Presentation skills	6.7	7.6	7.7

As in 2016, the majority of 2017 Big Deal participants recorded tskills improvements; Table 6.

Table 6: Big Deal 2017: Skills tracker data relating to percentage of young people (n = 27) who improved key skills

<b>Skill</b>	<b>% of young people who improved their skills</b>
Confidence	61%
Communication skills	65%
Creativity	69%
Motivation	58%
Presentation skills	62%

As with the data provided by the skills tracker in 2016, it is difficult to interpret this basic data from Brightside, but it is reasonable to assume that where there are comparatively low percentages in term of the young people who recorded improved skills, then that is a reflection of pre-existing high rates of motivation, or confidence. Nonetheless, in all categories, the majority of participants recorded improved skills.

### 3. The participating young people's views of impact

#### 3.1 The data

In total, the evaluation has gathered data from 66 young people in focus groups (four, all from the GCSE Bootcamp, 2016), and interviews (with young people participating in the Big Deal, 2016, 2017 and 2018; Shooting the Past, 2017 and 2018; and e-mentoring, 2017). In addition, 341 questionnaires have been completed by young people taking part in the various UniTracks programmes covered by the evaluation. The various interviews, questionnaires and focus groups were designed to generate data about the individual UniTracks projects, and the impact of participation on the young people involved. The data about the process of the projects has been presented in the relevant reports; what is presented here are amalgamated findings in relation to impact, presented by the four

themes: confidence, skills, university and aspirations. Of the four themes, the most frequently occurring in the data related to finding out about university and subject choices, and university life. Impact in term of enhanced aspirations did not appear as a discrete theme, but, rather, could be inferred from comments regarding enthusiasm for university attendance.

### 3.2 Building confidence

The young people typically spoke about UniTracks' programmes boosting confidence in relation to skills and knowledge. Increased confidence in deploying skills acquired through taking part in the Big Deal, or Shooting the Past were most frequently mentioned. There was, however, some evidence provided by the young people relating to improved confidence in a wider sense, arising out of participation in UniTracks; for example, one Big Deal competitor said: 'I have become a lot more confident in all aspects and have seen myself become a lot more professional'.

The GCSE Bootcamp, 2017, offered 41 young people a residential revision course at the university in maths, English language, chemistry, or physics. This was a popular and very successful offer, and participating students gave accounts of the impact of attending the residential course that stressed improved confidence and motivation – the two most frequently mentioned outcomes of attendance.

### 3.3 Acquiring skills

There was general agreement among Big Deal and Shooting the Past participants that taking part in these UniTracks' offers helped build their skills. Team-working, negotiating, research, and public speaking skills were all enhanced by participation in the two schemes. In addition, more specific skills, such as video editing for Shooting the Past, or budgeting for

the Big Deal, were acquired or enhanced. For example, the Big Deal 2018 data provided examples of skills acquisition and associated improvements in confidence:

‘I think it [the Big Deal] just helps me to have a bit more confidence in myself. I’m quite a confident person, but in the things I do [in the Big Deal] it’s helped me become more confident, and coming up with ideas, I was, like, “we need you to do this”. I was more confident. It helps you to prepare to react as a team because we all had completely different experience, and obviously, when you are older you’re not going to be working with people exactly like you, and it just helps you to learn different ways of working with people.’

In addition, business-related skills, and public speaking skills were mentioned by young people, with one interviewee, for instance, saying, ‘I mentioned the public speaking thing, which I thought was really good, and a lot about the spreadsheets, and how you do budgeting, and things like that. I thought that was all useful’.

### 3.4 Understanding university

Of the four key areas relating to the aims of UniTracks, it was the fourth – understanding university – which was most frequently noted by the young people as being a result of taking part in UniTracks’ events and programmes. From the data collected, and presented in the previous eight evaluation reports, the impact of visiting the university, taking part in learning experiences at the university, being mentored by university undergraduates, attending short residential events at the university, and being part of the university’s UniTracks scheme, have the most salient impact on the schools pupils. Their understanding of what a university is; what a campus university like Warwick looks like; the variety of degree options available; what it is like, in terms of study, leisure and living, to be an

undergraduate; issues relating to finance, entry requirements and possible future careers, were all enhanced by participation in UniTracks.

One example of the impact of UniTracks in terms of understanding university was given by a participant in the 2017 Big Deal competition:

‘It’s opened my eyes to the university world, I think, because I didn’t really know just how many different options there were at university before I did this, because on the first day [Launch Day] we got a tour round the campus. Some students at the university showed us round and we got a chance to chat to them, which was really good.’

Another participant from the same presentation of the Big Deal explained how visiting, and working at the university, as well as doing the Big Deal, had impacted on their view of university, degree choice and future career:

‘I think it [the Big Deal] was really effective in showing me personally what university, especially the business side of things, was going to be like because I’ve never really been exposed to something like this before, and I was always strict about what I wanted to do, something with maths and physics, but it has made me consider possibly not being so strict to those things, and looking elsewhere at what else I could do, because I really did enjoy working up this business with other people, and I didn’t think it was something that I was very good at, and I thought that I’d not be as effective as I could be, but it turned out that I did play quite a big part with the other people as well [...] it opened my eyes as to what I could actually do.’

There were numerous, similar examples of commentary and reflection by the school pupils relating to impact in terms of understanding university. From the data provided by these young people, it appears that contact and interaction with current university undergraduates had the potential for being particularly useful. Two examples, taken from the E-mentoring 2016-17 scheme illustrate this:

‘I think it has [made a difference] because I always thought that university was, like, you go there and you study hard. [But] it’s not going to be that bad, and it will be more fun if you really enjoy your degree. It’s helping me decide, do I actually want to do pharmacy, or do I want to do something, not cooler, but different.’

While another young person explained:

‘She [the mentor] was asking if I’d gone to open days, and she was saying, especially if I want to do medicine, because the deadline is earlier, I should look into starting to go to some before the summer. That was really helpful because I’ve [now] started looking at when some of the open days are that I’d like to go to.’

## Conclusion

This report draws together impact data relating to UniTracks from November 2015 – June 2018. The data are drawn from eight evaluation reports covering UniTracks’ Launch Day; the Big Deal competition; Shooting the Past; GCSE Bootcamp; and E-mentoring. The impact data have been presented under four key headings which relate to the stated aims of the



UniTracks programme; that is: building confidence, acquiring skill, understanding university, and building aspirations. Limitations on the evaluation processes (i.e., that the use of control groups is not possible) mean that the data relating to impact is of OFFA Level 2, Standards of Evaluation Practice<sup>13</sup>, with both quantitative and qualitative evidence of impact being available. The complete range of stakeholders in UniTracks have participated in the evaluations – participating young people; mentors; undergraduates; parents; school staff; the Brightside Trust; and university staff.

Impact has been demonstrated across the four key areas, albeit to different degrees. The most notable impact, as evidenced across the stakeholder groups, has been in terms of understanding university, and acquiring skills. Skills acquisition appeared to be most notable in terms of the Big Deal, and both business-related skills, along with more general skills, for example, deadline keeping, and public speaking. In relation to understanding university, the aspects of UniTracks' membership which enhanced this key element were the impact of visiting the university, taking part in learning experiences at the university, being mentored by university undergraduates, attending short residential events at the university, and being part of the university's UniTracks scheme. All these were highly valued.

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<sup>13</sup> Crawford, C, Dytham, S., Naylor, R. (2017), *The Evaluation of the Impact of Outreach; proposed standards of evaluation; practice and associated guidance* (The Sutton Trust, University of Warwick, OFFA, Department for Education), p. 5.