



End of year newsletter

Inspiring Choices July 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to our newsletter for the end of the 24/25 academic year. We've had a busy year, launching several new projects - Beyond the Barracks, Destinations Festival and the Spark Programme to name a few - whilst visiting you in-school, delivering a variety of campus visits and even going out on residential!

Have a read through to discover all we've done since our last newsletter, and everything that we have upcoming too.

Newsletter highlights

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Data snapshot from 2024/2025

With the end of term in sight, and just a few more activities left to deliver, we can look back over the rest of the year. This year, we have engaged with 37 schools, colleges and community groups. We have delivered over 700 activities to over 3000 young people. These activities accounted for over 750 hours of contact time.

Our most popular workshops are our Employability workshops, which we have delivered 63 times. This year, we have delivered almost twice as many campus visits than last year, with 20 HE campus visits and 6 FE campus visits. We have also supported schools with their Careers Fairs and Mock Interview sessions; we participated in 14 careers fairs and delivered 142 individual mock interviews.

Laura Fenwick, Research and Impact Evaluation Officer



Activities: 703

Known Students: 3165

Contact Hours: 753.34

**Schools, Colleges and
Community Groups: 37**



Recent projects and events

Groundwork

The Groundwork project has come to an end for another year, with 3 schools participating across York and North Yorkshire. York High, Selby High and Graham School in Scarborough have all successfully completed a NOCN Level 1 award in Horticulture.

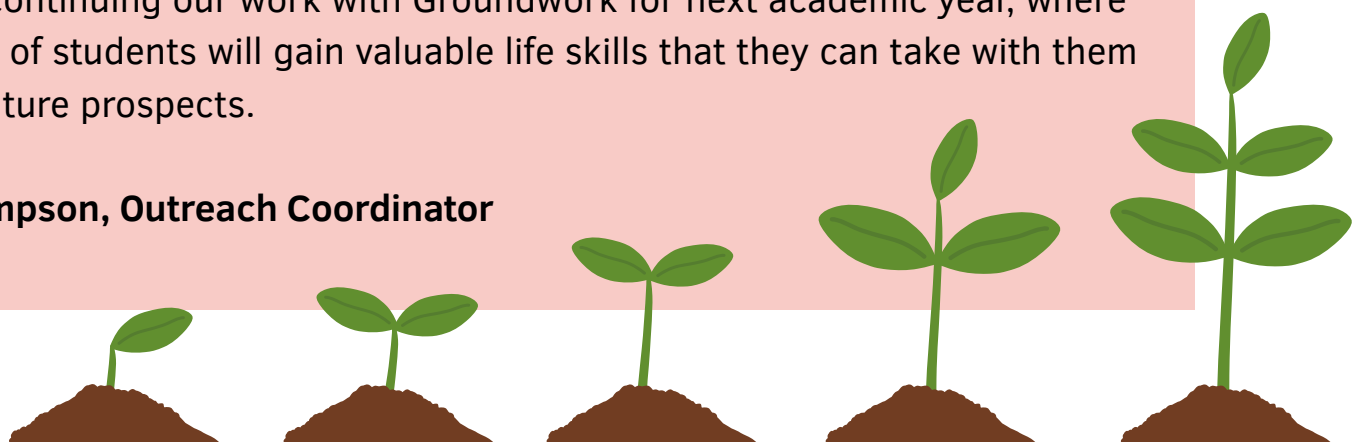
Throughout the 6 week project, between 4-6 students from each school worked with a member of the Groundwork team to transform an area of land on their school site or a neighboring site. The students also had coursework to complete which covered health & safety, soil types, using and maintaining hand tools, and lots more. The aim of the project was to give those students who struggle to focus within a classroom the chance to gain a practical qualification whilst doing something meaningful, and provide a welcoming space for students and staff alike to enjoy.

On the 6th week, each school had a visit to Askham Bryan College. A Land-based and Agricultural college in York, with a University Centre. The idea behind this trip was to give the students an insight into what they could achieve with their horticultural qualification, as well as provide information on the courses and facilities they have on site. The trip offered a guided tour of the grounds including the farm and wildlife park, and a frog dissection with a member of the science department. This trip was so valuable for the students as the following quote from a school staff member confirms:

“The visits to Askham Bryan have also opened up a whole new world for them and given them much to think about the opportunities they previously didn't know were available to them.”

We will be continuing our work with Groundwork for next academic year, where another set of students will gain valuable life skills that they can take with them into their future prospects.

Jamie Thompson, Outreach Coordinator



Quotes from the Groundwork Project

“I have had the absolute pleasure of working with Steve for the last 3 years completing the Groundworks project. We have had an array of children joining in, many of whom find it extremely difficult to easily communicate with adults they are not familiar with. Each and everyone of them have taken a shine to Steve as he has such a way with them, he easily engages them in conversation and gets them involved. I have been surprised how quickly he has been able to do this with some having seen them interact with others previously.”

“Beyond that, the project helps them all in different ways, not only have they gained skills and knowledge they will use throughout life, but confidence growth has been a massive thing. Some students who are so reserved and quiet in school, absolutely come alive in the garden joining in with activities, interacting with other students they wouldn't normally choose to work with and really thriving. A lot of our students may not have access to a garden at all so it really is a unique opportunity for them.”

“C finds imaginative writing very difficult. She also finds writing about thoughts and feelings difficult. These skills have to be developed for C's GCSE English Language examination. Having visited C in her garden and seeing how happy, confident and relaxed she was, enabled me to see her in a very different light. So when we next had an English lesson I was able to refer to her mood in the garden. She wrote so differently using her own positive experience, than she had done before by replicating her contented feelings on paper. The result was excellent.”

“The garden is a place where C can clearly grow. It is also a place that she can confidently write about. In other words where C felt failure she now feels success. This will have a positive impact on her.”

NEON Symposium

In June members of the team headed to University of Salford for two brilliant days at the NEON symposium, an annual conference which gives the widening participation sector the opportunity to meet and share best practice.

We were proud to present a paper about our Spark Programme; an intervention aimed at working class boys in Year 11 who have become disengaged with their education. We were also invited to co-present with Cosmos Engagement for their paper 'What FE Students wish you knew' showcasing how we used their FE Segmentation Toolkit to demonstrate the impact our workshops and activities have on young people.

Fans of Coronation Street were also excited to visit Media City - though we didn't attempt to get in the background of any BBC Breakfast shots!

Louisa Dobson, Head of Inspiring Choices



STEM Conference

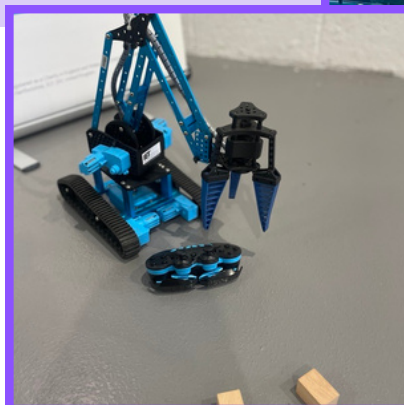
On 9th July, we welcomed three schools to the National Railway Museum for our fourth annual STEM Conference, which proved to be another fantastic opportunity for students to learn all about careers in STEM subjects and explore the museum's brilliant facilities.

Year 9 students from across North Yorkshire started the morning with a carousel of exciting activities. This included a visit to the Wonderlab, an interactive and experimental gallery for any budding scientists. Then, an employer's fair, which featured a model railway set from Network Rail, some creepy crawlies from Fera Science LTD, and the Institute of Engineering and Technology brought along a few of their robots. Finally, a panel with employers from Anglo-American, Croda, Fera Science LTD, and Inspiring Choices' very own Laura Fenwick, who all spoke about their careers and the various pathways you can take when working in STEM.

In the afternoon, we continued to explore the National Railway Museum, with their Explainers offering a museum tour – allowing everyone to look around at the incredible trains on display – a fiery display of engineering in their Wonderlab and a stop motion challenge featuring lego. Overall, it was another successful year for the STEM Conference, and a day that everyone at Inspiring Choices enjoyed!

We would like to extend a massive thank you to the staff at National Railway Museum for hosting the day and ensuring it ran smoothly. Additionally, every employer that attended the STEM Conference provided a brilliant prospective and insight into the careers available for the students that attended. Lastly, thank you to the schools that attended and the young people that engaged in every activity.

Molly Crowe, Outreach Coordinator



Care Leaver Residential

In June this year, a group of young people who are leaving care had the fantastic opportunity to travel to Edinburgh for a two-day residential full of opportunities to discover this amazing city, learn more about the university, and spend an inspirational and creative morning with some of the Edinburgh Fringe team.

Following an amazing train journey along the coast, the trip began with a visit to the University of Edinburgh, where the young people had a talk from staff from Edinburgh Cares and then a fantastic campus tour with a current student from the university who is studying medicine. There was the chance to ask questions about university life, course options, and the application process as well as all support options available. It was an interesting afternoon and started some of the group thinking about possible future options.

We walked to Pollock Halls where we were staying – one of the best halls of residence I have ever seen, with an incredible view of Arthur's Seat and, having found our rooms and settled in, went back into town for a well-deserved pizza, followed for some, by a tour of historical Edinburgh by Mercat Tours. Part of this tour took place in the very ancient vaults under West Bridge, with a few ghost stories thrown in for good measure.

Following an excellent night's sleep (for most), we caught the bus back into the centre of the city to the beautifully restored Charteris Community Centre, where we met Kirsty and Julie who told us a lot about the organisation of the biggest ticketed festival event in the UK and created a scavenger hunt which everyone took part in and discovered some fascinating new things about the city and its history.

Following a free afternoon which included where everyone did their own thing, including climbing to the top of Arthur's Seat, visiting the Scottish Parliament building, the National Museum of Scotland and doing plenty of souvenir shopping, we gathered at Edinburgh Waverley Station for a very quiet train journey back to York!

It was an amazing two days in a spectacular city and a huge thank you to all the North Yorkshire Leaving Care team, Edinburgh Cares and University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Fringe and, most importantly, the young people themselves, who made it an unforgettable trip.

Penny Garner, Outreach and Partnerships Manager

Stakeholder consultation

In February, we shared your valuable and informative feedback on how our activities and workshops from the Winter term had been received by staff and students in our stakeholder consultation. You can read the full report [here](#).

We also shared your feedback and our responses from all stakeholder consultations between 2022 -2024, in a document called Actions and Answers 2022 - 2024.

Please keep an eye on your inbox as we will shortly be sending out our Summer stakeholder consultation where you will have an opportunity to share your thoughts and ideas from all Inspiring Choices delivery between January and July 2025.

Your views and suggestions as stakeholders, as always, are essential to Inspiring Choices so we can ensure we are successfully delivering impartial careers and higher education information advice and guidance whilst also meeting the needs of the young people we work with. We look forward to reading and sharing your responses!

Jessica Ely, Evaluation Assistant



Please can you get your responses in by 31st July. Thank you, in anticipation for your participation.

Upcoming residential to Cambridge

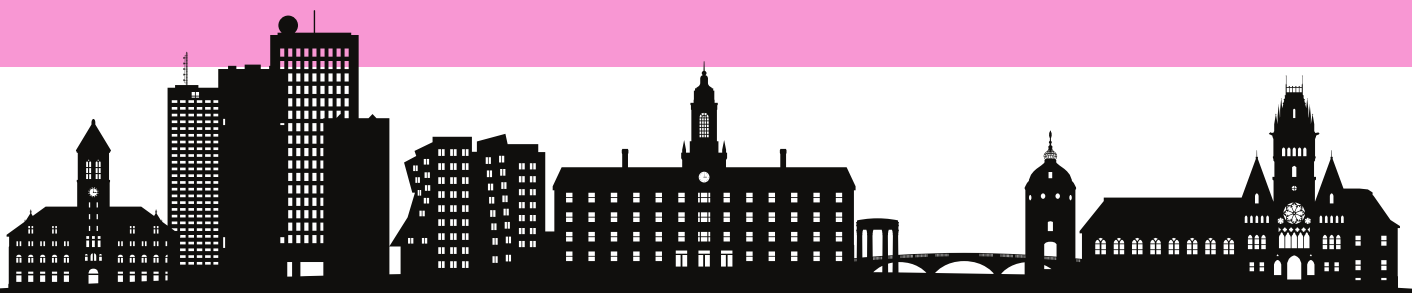
As the Summer holidays approach, Inspiring Choices still have one more exciting trip planned. A group of Military Service Children from Boroughbridge School will be travelling to Cambridge with us to take part in a two-day residential.

The residential will give students a chance to explore the city of Cambridge, experience a University campus and challenge themselves to share their own creative expression. Students will be visiting Anglia Ruskin University to learn about higher education and take a tour of the Anglia Ruskin campus, which is just a short distance from the city centre. We will also be staying in the University accommodation overnight to get a real feel for student life and living with their peers. We will be visiting pizza express on the evening, for dinner, before heading out into Cambridge city centre for a guided tour of historic Cambridge.

On day two the students will be taking part in a creative workshop led by Never Such Innocence, a charity dedicated to empowering military service children through creative mediums. The students will be taking part in a stop motion animation workshop, where they will have the chance to explore their voices, stories, and experiences through animation. We will also be taking a break in the middle of the day to get lunch at the Anglia Ruskin University eatery, which is usually frequented by Anglia Ruskin University students.

We are excited to get the residential underway for what promises to be two days packed with activities and opportunities to explore. Thanks to the staff at Anglia Ruskin University who have been incredibly supportive in planning this residential and to the staff at Never Such Innocence who have brought such a creative spark to the workshop. We hope that everyone on the residential has a fantastic time leading into a well-deserved summer break.

Abbie Salkeld, Outreach Coordinator



Thank you!

Finally, we would like to acknowledge all of our stakeholders, partners and the schools that we have worked with throughout the 24/25 academic year. We've had a fantastic year, with a lot of delivery and a variety of new programmes, all of which has been made possible by you! The Inspiring Choices team would like to say a big thank you for your continued support.

We look forward to another year working alongside you, but in the meantime, we hope everyone has a relaxing and wonderful summer!

Molly Crowe, Outreach Coordinator

Get in touch with us



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