Trinity Academy HE Can Programme – Case Study

Introduction

HE Can is a targeted programme delivered through HeppSY that aims to increase participation in higher education among boys from underrepresented backgrounds. The project is designed to raise aspirations, build confidence, and provide young men with opportunities to explore higher education and future career pathways.

By engaging students in a series of exciting workshops, university visits, and enrichment activities, HE Can helps participants develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to make informed decisions about their future. The programme encourages students to recognise their potential and understand that higher education is an achievable option, regardless of their background.

The project focuses on three key aims:

- Building confidence and resilience.
- Raising awareness of higher education and graduate careers.
- Broadening horizons through meaningful educational and cultural experiences.

Breaking Down Barriers

Research suggests that boys from underrepresented groups can face barriers to higher education, including a lack of awareness of available opportunities, limited access to role models, and misconceptions about university life.

HE Can was developed to address these challenges by providing students with first-hand experiences of higher education, opportunities to engage with university staff and students, and activities that help them develop key personal and employability skills. By exposing students to a variety of educational and career pathways, the programme aims to raise aspirations and encourage participants to consider higher education as part of their future.

The Journey

A group of Year 9 boys from Trinity Academy participated in the HE Can programme and took part in a range of activities designed to broaden their horizons and help them develop confidence in their future ambitions.

As part of the programme, students visited Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Derby, where they participated in an engaging forensic science investigation. Acting as detectives, the students analysed fingerprint evidence, examined the chemicals found in pen ink, and tested fake urine samples to identify the presence of steroids. Using the evidence they collected, they worked collaboratively to identify the culprit, developing their teamwork, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills throughout the activity.

During their university visits, students also experienced one of the institutions' state-of-the-art 360-degree immersive learning environments. Surrounded by interactive technology and digital displays, they participated in a range of activities that demonstrated how innovative technology can enhance learning, collaboration, and engagement.

In addition to the university-based activities, students took part in a bowling trip, providing valuable opportunities to build friendships, strengthen teamwork skills, and enjoy a positive shared experience outside the classroom.

These experiences enabled students to explore university facilities, learn about a range of academic subjects, and gain a greater understanding of how higher education can open doors to a wide variety of careers and future opportunities.

The Impact

The HE Can programme had a significant positive impact on participating students.

Evaluation feedback demonstrated that the programme successfully increased students' awareness of higher education and improved their confidence when considering future education and career pathways.

Following participation in the programme:

- 100% of students reported that the HE Can project made them more interested in going to university.
- 100% of students said they enjoyed the activities and experiences provided.
- 100% of students reported learning more about university life.
- 100% of students said they felt more confident about their future education and career options.
- 100% of students stated that they would recommend the HE Can project to students in the next year group.

The project helped students develop a better understanding of higher education while encouraging them to recognise their own potential and consider a wider range of future opportunities.

The Result

HE Can has equipped Trinity Academy students with the confidence, knowledge, and aspirations needed to make positive choices about their futures.

Through engaging workshops, university experiences, and enrichment activities, participants developed valuable life skills, gained insight into university life, and explored pathways that may previously have seemed out of reach.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback received from students demonstrates the success of the programme in raising aspirations and helping young people see higher education as a realistic and achievable option. The experiences gained through HE Can will continue to support students as they progress through their education and begin planning their future careers.