

## Working together to improve access and participation



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## Summary

Villiers Park Educational Trust is a social mobility charity in the UK working with 14-19 year olds from less advantaged backgrounds to enable them to plan pathways to their ambitions and develop the skills, behaviours and attributes they need to fulfil and realise their potential.

We do this through bespoke programmes offering a unique blend of coaching, subject-specific courses and student-led projects which impact on others in the learning community from primary school age upwards.

We work collaboratively with university partners so that our combined expertise will provide a powerful and transformational experience for young people who need our help the most.

Our vision is a world in which everyone can realise their potential and lead society into an equitable, healthy future.

**Together we can make the biggest possible difference.**

## Creating Future Leaders

Our **Future Leaders Programme** is a pioneering four-year bespoke pathway designed to nurture young people's curiosity, tenacity and creativity and inspire them to become the leaders of tomorrow.

The Programme has been designed using the latest academic research and evaluation of our own work throughout our long history. Our Programme is based on a psychological theory called Possible Selves<sup>1</sup> which shows that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are less able to imagine different possible life outcomes or different pathways to the outcomes they want to achieve. They are less able to visualise their possible selves or take a broader view of post-16 options because they often have fewer, or more negative, frames of reference<sup>2</sup>. People who can envisage 'possible selves' have better academic performance, positive behaviour change and improved mental health.

Possible Selves theory has been successfully applied across a number of areas, such as youth development, criminology and delinquency, public health, and careers development. Villiers' new **Future Leaders Programme** is the first of its kind and differs from other programmes in recognising that we do not need to raise aspirations – our young people already have them – but we do need to support them in developing agency and self-efficacy over their own future, the skills they will need to get there and become leaders in their field.

Our Programme is underpinned by a non-directive method of coaching, to help our young people to navigate their options, build the skills to get there, and develop their own solutions to the challenges they face.

The main elements of the Programme are:

Coaching	Leadership Challenge	Workshops and courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Builds agency</li><li>• Supports them to understand their own motivations and strengths</li><li>• Supports them to plan a route through the programme</li><li>• Helps them to identify and overcome barriers to success</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A project of their own design</li><li>• Impacts communities and peer groups</li><li>• Opportunity to work in new ways</li><li>• Builds confidence, among other key behaviours and attributes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing key academic skills, such as research</li><li>• Experience what a subject might be like at university</li><li>• Experience what a particular career path might be like</li><li>• Develop core skills such as teamwork and public speaking</li></ul>

The Programme delivery schedule below illustrates the bespoke nature and flexibility built around a structured framework.

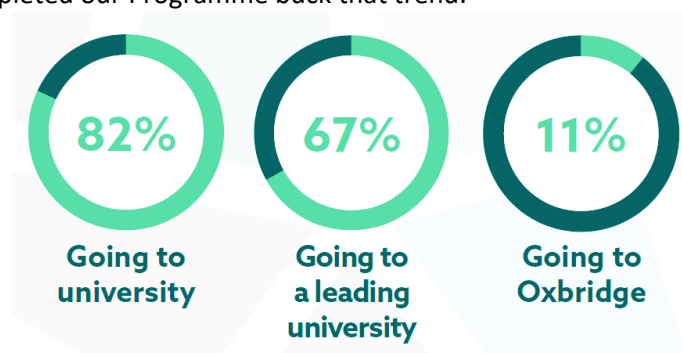
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Y10	Coaching – Purpose, values, confidence, skills and development		Coaching - Review
	Choice of courses and workshops		
		Leadership Challenge 1	
Y11		Coaching – Transition and belonging	
	Choice of courses and workshops		
Y12	Coaching – Purpose, values, confidence, skills and development		Coaching - Review
	Choice of courses and workshops		
		Leadership Challenge 2	
Y13		Coaching – Transition and belonging	
	Choice of courses and workshops		

### Our Young People

The young people we work with are from some of the most disadvantaged areas of the UK: areas that typically have higher levels of poverty and lower levels of engagement with post-16 education. Young people we work with include those specified by the Office for Students as underrepresented:

- People from areas of low participation in higher education
- Low household income or socioeconomic status groups
- Some black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
- Care Experienced
- Carers
- People estranged from their families
- People from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Children of military families

We work with young people who have the potential to have the most transformative experience on our Programmes, because they are at the greatest risk of underachieving without an intervention. We make sure that happens so that they have the best chance at a confident future. We know that **just 26% of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds go to the most selective universities compared to 43% of their wealthier peers**<sup>2</sup>. Young people that have completed our Programme buck that trend.



2018-2019 academic year

## Working together to improve access and participation

Villiers Park has been supporting disadvantaged young people for over 100 years. In this time we have helped tens of thousands of young people to develop their skills and knowledge, and we have always adapted with the times to provide help and guidance where and how it is most needed. We are experts in working with young people from backgrounds where they have significant barriers to overcome in order to participate in higher education.

This, in collaboration with your expertise in delivering high-quality higher education, can have a lasting impact on the young people we work with.

Broadly speaking we can collaborate in two ways: by supporting you to develop your widening participation offer and by supporting you to reach disadvantaged and underrepresented students.

## Supporting you to reach underrepresented students

Through our Future Leaders Programme we can help you to engage with young people and schools directly. Each year we work with over 160 schools and 850 students and these numbers are increasing year-on-year. Our experience and flexible Programme mean that we can move into new geographic locations with ease or focus on particular underrepresented groups. We can work with you by:

### Sharing your opportunities with more students

We will share your events and opportunities with our students and Alumni through our newsletters, opportunities board and our delivery team. You will also have the opportunity to host a Q&A session with our students and be featured in our annual Impact Report. You will also receive automatic membership to our community of practice.

Price £5,000

### Delivering your content to more students

Working together we can co-create and deliver a course to our students. This might be an online course on a particular study skill, a virtual workshop about making a university application or a subject-specific course or summer school to help students to understand what it is really like to study your flagship Programme. We will also share your opportunities with our students and alumni, feature you in our Impact Report, and give you automatic membership to our community of practice.

Prices range from £5,000 - £15,000

### Creating a bespoke programme

We can help you to deliver your access and participation plans with a bespoke Programme. Whether it is a specific geographic location or a particular student group, our Future Leaders Programme can help you to deliver high-impact activities without the need to take on additional staff capacity. You can offer the full programme described above, or select the particular interventions that would support your existing Widening Participation activities. We will also share your opportunities with our students and alumni, feature you in our Impact Report, and give you automatic membership to our community of practice.

Prices range from £25,000 - £150,000

*We now have long-term relationships with schools, can understand the context from which candidates are applying in ways in which spreadsheets can't convey, and can respond in mobile, real-time ways to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic with the benefit of on-the-ground information from teachers and senior leadership. The model which Villiers has facilitated for us is truly innovative in opening these kinds of doors for HE providers. **Dr Corinna Russell, Tutor for Admissions (Arts) Emmanuel College, Cambridge.***

## Knowledge exchange

We are a proactive voice in effective practice and policy within education and social mobility. Our purpose and goals are focused on making lasting change to the world around us. As such, we want to share our expertise with the wider sector. Our team can support your widening participation activities and delivery of your access and participation plan by supporting you to:

- develop a robust, bespoke evaluation process
- introduce a reflexive culture through organisational coaching
- equip your team with the skills to coach young people from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds

Our knowledge exchange programme is headed by

<p>Rae Tooth Chief Executive</p>	<p>Dr Julian Crockford Chief Programmes Officer</p>
<p>Before coming to Villiers Park, Rae was head of strategy and change at the Office for Students. She led the development and delivery national strategy relating to widening participation to higher education. She has worked with charities in different capacities as a trustee and a consultant and is also a member of the board of governors at the University of Winchester. She is recognised internationally as a leader in social mobility policy and is a Master Practitioner coach.</p>	<p>Julian set up one of the first widening participation research units, and has contributed to toolkits used sector-wide for evaluating and enhancing outreach practice. He sits on the board of NERUPI and provides consultancy for small, specialist institutions developing their outreach offer. Julian is supported by a senior management team who have extensive experience of teaching and developing impactful and engaging programmes.</p>

Prices for our Knowledge Exchange consultancy start from £5,000.

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1. Neil Harrison, 2018. "[Using the Lens of 'Possible Selves' to Explore Access to Higher Education: A New Conceptual Model for Practice, Policy, and Research](#)," *Social Sciences*, MDPI, Open Access Journal, vol. 7(10), pages 1-21, October.
  2. "[Social mobility in Great Britain – state of the nation 2018 to 2019](#)". Sixth annual report from the Social Mobility Commission, April 2019.