

# Case Study:

## TAP 1-2-1 Sessions



### Background

Shaping Futures are committed to providing impartial information, advice and guidance to young people and adult learners in the Merseyside Region. At the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, which saw schools, colleges, universities and workplaces close their doors, we realised we needed to rethink our way of delivering outreach opportunities. Connecting learners with current university students who are able to share their experiences and expertise is a pivotal part of what we do. Research from OfS evaluation has demonstrated that Student Ambassadors increase the value of IAG mentoring by acting as role models. We were keen to find a virtual solution which replicated the conversations between these two groups which would organically be possible during campus visits and open days. We therefore commissioned The Ambassador Platform which enabled us to begin an online live chat which connected learners with current students. Alongside being a fantastic opportunity, this also fulfilled Gatsby Benchmarks 3 & 7, making it a popular in-school activity for many teachers and careers advisors.

### Summary of Activity

As part of the Uni Connect programme Shaping Futures have 12 Higher Education Partners, including both Further Education Colleges and University. This afforded us the unique opportunity to offer a platform whereby learners could access specialist support from our CIAG qualified team, alongside chatting to current university students who were studying across the Liverpool City Region. This wide reach meant that learners could have conversations with multiple students studying everything from Medicine to Music. Having a diverse range of student experiences was important to us, therefore we recruited Student Ambassadors who identified as being from a Widening Participation background such as being care experienced, from a low-income family or an adult learner. This allowed learners to have conversations with current students who may have faced similar barriers to higher education to their own.

## Outcome

Shaping Futures advertised the live chat through their school and college contacts, newsletters, social media and virtual delivery. We also produced a workbook which was used during sessions which supported learners with starting a conversation with an ambassador, offering prompts and conversation starters related to their age and stage in education. Overall 33 learners shared 55 conversations with ambassadors on the platform. It proved to be a fantastic tool enjoyed across the key stages. Y12 and Y13 students found it particularly insightful as they embarked on their transition to Higher Education, and had specific questions around how to choose an institution and course and the application process, including personal statements and student finance. Younger students also found it insightful learning more about the skills required in higher education and sharing study tips with university students. They were also able to link the subjects and topics learnt in school with courses and careers in the future.

Alongside the benefits to learners, the Student Ambassadors also enjoyed being able to interact with learners in a virtual way and sharing their experiences and successes. The Ambassador Platform allowed Student Ambassadors to upload photos and videos demonstrating what student life looked like during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was insightful, and Ambassadors commented that it was great to be able to make a positive out of the situation. The content the students uploaded can be found [here](#).

If you or your students would like to chat to an Ambassador you can do so [here](#). You can also contact [your HEPA](#) for more information on sessions available in your school or college which include interactions with Student Ambassadors.