



UNIVERSITY OF
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Take Your Place Phase 2 Mid-Phase Evaluation Report

Sonia Ilie & Ashton Brown

Faculty of Education University of Cambridge

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Preface

This evaluation report provides an overview of evaluation results concerning the first half of Phase 2 of the Take Your Place programme (September 2019 to October 2020), specifically focused on student outcomes. The report draws on four surveys carried out as part of a national evaluation effort around the Uni Connect programme. Given the timing of data collection through these surveys, and other (linked) data, some of the analysis reported here is able to explore outcomes for all activity under Take Your Place, that is Phase 1 and the first half of Phase 2 together.

The Take Your Place programme

Take Your Place (hereafter, the programme) is the name of the programme of collaborative outreach activity undertaken since 2017 by neaco, the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach. Working in the East of England, neaco is a partnership of five universities and nine further education colleges in the region. Through Take Your Place it delivers outreach in areas where the higher education participation of young people is lower than expected given average attainment at age 16, promoting available pathways and higher education providers impartially. This programme targeting is reflected in the evaluation approach and results outlined later in this report.

In Phase 1, the programme consisted of a complex mix of activities, all based on a core of provision as set out by a Progressive Framework (included in Appendix 1) originally developed by the Higher Education Access Network (now Causeway Education) in collaboration with the main neaco team.

The progressive framework sets out a package of activities (and associated outcomes) on two separate strands: “understanding and preparedness” and “passion and ambition”, and a third stream of wrap-around activities. The *progressive* element of Take Your Place is a key feature of the programme, in that it seeks to engage with students at multiple points, providing scaffolding of the information provided over time and allowing for students’ own preferences and aspirations to develop and be supported.

In Phase 2, the progressive framework and some of the activity underpinned by it evolved slightly, changing in relation to both learning on-the-ground during Phase 1, as well as changes to the overall structure of Uni Connect nationally. In both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the programme, Take Your Place activity was delivered by a number of Higher Education Champions (HECs), managed by coordinators in the three counties that neaco encompasses: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Norfolk, and Suffolk. In Phase 2, the programme has taken a more bespoke approach to in-school/in-college provision, accompanied by School/College delivery plans.

Across both phases, the aims of the project have remained consistent. Primarily, the project aims to equip learners with the knowledge, information, and attitudes to make the best educational choices in relation to higher education. Under the “passion and ambition” strand, the project aims to enable students to explore, identify and articulate their passions and aspirations, giving positive incentives for choosing post-16 and post-18 pathways. Under the “understanding and preparedness” activity strand, the project aims to provide students with information about the specific requirements, means and option choices through which they can realise their aspirations for transitions through schooling and into further and higher education.

Phase 2 evaluation approach

The local evaluation of Take Your Place (Phase 2) aims to understand the extent to which the programme is effective in achieving its aims. The approach to the local evaluation of the programme

was pre-specified (Appendix 2) and consists of two inter-related strands of work, spanning a range of research and evaluation designs and activities:

The *impact evaluation*, aimed at exploring the impact of the whole Take Your Place programme on pre-defined outcomes (outlined subsequently), employing quasi-experimental research approaches where possible; and aimed at exploring the impact of specific types and amounts of Take Your Place provision on the same set of outcomes (outside of the scope of this report).

The *process evaluation*, aimed at understanding *how* the intervention is implemented, *how* the different stakeholders engage with the intervention, as well as *how* the involved individuals and institutions perceive their involvement, and potential benefits from this involvement. This uses document analysis and further statistical analysis of feedback, and participant self-reports.

Report scope and contents

Of the range of evaluation approaches above (and in Appendix 2), this report covers only the full-programme student-outcomes focused impact evaluation component. In relation to the impact evaluation, intervention-specific analyses, whether in relation to type, amount, or more targeted evaluation of intensive, progressive activity are out of scope. All these will be explored upon completion of Phase 2, with the use of the fifth round of the survey (in Autumn 2021). Additionally, the whole process evaluation element of the evaluation is out of scope for this report and will be included in the full Phase 2 Evaluation Report.

This report therefore focuses on student outcomes only, and only reports on the impact evaluation component that looks at the full programme, in two sections:

Section 1 focuses on changes in students' higher education attitudes and knowledge associated with participation in the full Take Your Place programme so far. This makes use of the four rounds of survey data collected as part of national evaluation efforts around the Uni Connect national programme and considers Take Your Place participation as a whole. The analysis includes year-on-year analyses that consider baseline levels of attitudes and knowledge prior to students ever participating in Take Your Place, an analysis of an emerging longitudinal cohort (i.e., participants tracked over time, over the four Survey rounds), and analysis of linked administrative data.

Section 2 focuses on similar outcome measures but looks specifically at the outcomes associated with participation in only the first half of Phase 2 of the programme. This analysis is therefore limited to one longitudinal cohort (that is students participating in the Follow-Up 2 and Follow-Up 3 surveys) in the local implementation of the national survey, with a further longitudinal cohort to be included in the final Phase 2 Evaluation Report.

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Evaluation approach

In keeping with the specified approach of the evaluation plan for Phase 2 of Take Your Place, the main aim of this section of the Impact Evaluation is to understand the trends, patterns, and change in higher education related intentions, knowledge, and attitudes amongst participants in Take Your Place. These are sourced from four respective surveys (outlined below).

The impact analysis proceeds in two sections.

Section 1 focuses on the whole Take Your Place programme up to the mid-way through Phase 2 point. This makes use of the four rounds of survey data collected as part of national evaluation efforts around the Uni Connect national programme, as well as linked administrative data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency. The linked administrative data analysis relates to progression to higher education up to and including the 2019-20 academic year and therefore the relevant Take Your Place activity is full contained within Phase 1.

Section 2 focuses specifically on the first half of Phase 2 of the programme only. This analysis is therefore limited to one set, focusing on those students (in respective year groups) that responded to both the 2nd and 3rd Follow-up Surveys.

Data source: the surveys

Survey approach

Four large-scale surveys have been undertaken to support the collection of data for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation. The Baseline Survey (Round 0 for the national evaluation) was undertaken between September and November 2017. The First Follow-Up Survey was undertaken between September and October 2018. The Second Follow-Up Survey was undertaken October-November 2019. The Third Follow-Up Survey was mainly undertaken November-December 2020, with a small percentage of responses coming in January 2021.

In excess of 20,000 pupils and further education students in target schools and colleges responded to each of the first three Surveys. Although the fourth survey took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and had a slightly smaller sample size, it still received responses from over 11,000 pupils. Not all respondents to the Baseline Survey returned for the three Follow-Up surveys. This Report does not currently engage with evidence of the specific impact of the pandemic on outcomes but does contextualise the most recent (2020) survey in those circumstances.

Matching of respondents between the Baseline and the Follow-Up Surveys was undertaken using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) functionality, based on a variety of personal characteristics including names, date of birth, addresses, postcode, etc. The initial matching process was automated and identified all cases where the data for key characteristics was identical across responses. For cases where no perfect match was found, the personal characteristics were cross-checked manually, and the match confirmed or rejected.

Survey samples

The four surveys (Baseline and three Follow-Ups), to be used across Section 1 and Section 2 of the analysis below achieved very good response rates overall. The Baseline survey had an overall response of 21,371 valid responses; the first Follow-Up had an overall response of 21,213; the second Follow-Up had an overall response of 23,743 valid responses; the third Follow-Up had an overall response of 11,856 valid responses.

The number of respondents differed by year group (Table 1.1), and within that item non-response led to a further loss of sample, of various magnitudes, depending on each specific questionnaire item.

Table 1.1 Responses by year group (cross-sectional)

	Baseline	Follow-Up 1	Follow-Up 2	Follow-Up 3
	Responses	Responses	Response	Response
Year 9	4,555	4,394	5,030	2,711
Year 10	3,781	4,524	4,308	2,322
Year 11	3,545	4,377	3,967	1,900
Year 12	2,880	1,799	2,620	1,461
Year 13	1,814	1,806	1,710	914
College, level 2	2,035	1,453	1,262	880
College, level 3 year 1	1,735	1,509	1,658	1,062
College, level 3 year 2	1,026	1,169	1,187	606
Target* students in each survey round (%)	34.9%	38.3%	45.2%	49.1%
Total	21,371	21,213	23,743	11,856

*Note: target status not available for all students

Across all rounds (Table 1.1 above), the surveys were answered both by target students (those who live in neighbourhoods where the rate of higher education participation is lower than expected given levels of age 16 attainment) and non-target students attending the schools and colleges that engage with Take Your Place. The increasing rate of target student respondents by round (where this information is available) reflects the increasingly focused targeting on schools with higher numbers of target students.

In addition to the year-on-year cross-sectional analysis (Section 1 part 1), a small number of students participated in the survey in all four rounds. Using the matching algorithm based on names and other personal information (date of birth, post-code) within HEAT to ascertain matches, a total of 239 respondents were identified as responding to all four rounds. The breakdown by trackable year group for the data presented in this report is provided in Table 1.2, with the caveat that final year students (year 11 and year 13 students) were less likely to be captured over time as they had (most likely) left the schools where Take Your Place was active, or left education entirely. This is despite efforts to capture their response in an earlier iteration of the Follow-Up 1 (administered 6 months prior to the main first Follow-Up) to allow for these participants' perspectives to be captured.

Table 1.2 Responses by year group at first survey round (longitudinal cohort, students tracked over time)

	Tracked sample	
	Responses	
Year 9	134	Only two initial year groups used for the full four-survey-round longitudinal analysis
Year 10	92	
Year 11	5	
College, level 2	3	
College, level 3 year 1	1	
College, level 3 year 2	4	
Total	239	

To specifically evaluate the impact of Phase 2 only, it is possible to use the sample of students who responded to both the third and fourth surveys. Using a matching algorithm based on names and other personal information (date of birth, post-code) to ascertain matches, a total of 2,433 respondents were identified as responding to the Follow-Up 2 and Follow-Up 3 surveys. The breakdown by trackable year group for the data presented in this report is provided in Table 1.3. Of these tracked students, information about the students' target status was available for 740 students, with 51.2% of students recorded as target students.

Table 1.3 Responses by year group at 2019 survey round (Phase 2 longitudinal cohort, students tracked over time)

	Tracked sample
	Responses
Year 9	1,286
Year 10	469
Year 11	174
Year 12	239
Year 13	14
College, level 2	83
College, level 3 year 1	158
College, level 3 year 2	10
Total	2,433

All four surveys included the same set of demographic characteristics, which allow for some background information about participants to be gleaned. Table 1.4 illustrates the overall respondent profile for each survey, focusing on four key variables: gender (proportion female); first-in-family (proportion reporting they would be the first person in their immediate family to progress to higher education); knowledge of others in higher education (proportion reporting if they know anyone who has been to higher education); and target student status.

Female students make up 51% of respondents at Baseline, just over 52% of respondents at Follow-Up 1 and 2 and 55% of respondents at Follow-Up 3. In terms of first-in-family, 31% of respondents identify as such at Baseline, with just over 27% at the first Follow-Up, increasing slightly to just over 28% at the second and third Follow-Ups. Regarding knowledge of others with higher education experience, this sits at 71% at Baseline who did know others who attended HE, rises to just under 75% at the first Follow-Up, back to 72% at the second Follow-Up and finally just over 69% at Follow-Up 3. The latter two findings may be suggesting that year-on-year, students participating in Take Your Place activities are increasingly less connected to others (in their immediate families and beyond) with experience of higher education. This would suggest that the overall *targeting* of the programme is effective, as it supports young people who are on average less likely to benefit from knowledge of higher education from other sources.

Target status is derived from students' postcode, as per the neighbourhood-based targeting strategy outlined above. This is obtained both through the survey, and also through data entry into HEAT. However, there is still missing information on target status, so that: at Baseline, target information is available for 92.92% of students. Availability sits at 75.4% for Follow-Up 1, 40.7% for Follow-Up 2, and 27.2% at Follow-Up 3. This remains to be investigated more precisely for the main Phase 2 report, but for now the figures in the tables below are based on these available data and may explain the small sample sizes in some of the year groups in Tables 1.4 and 1.5.

Table 1.4 Demographic Characteristics of Cross-Sectional Samples

	Gender		First in Family to Attend HE		Know others to attend HE		Target status*	
	Female	Obs.	First-in-family	Obs.	Others in HE	Obs.	Target	Obs.
Baseline								
Year 9	49.9%	4,294	17.7%	4,124	64.0%	4,111	39.8%	4,041
Year 10	49.6%	3,566	21.9%	3,354	68.7%	3,360	39.9%	3,540
Year 11	51.3%	3,241	27.7%	3,147	71.1%	3,161	38.5%	3,311
Year 12	53.4%	2,843	39.0%	2,799	80.0%	2,795	32.0%	2,690
Year 13	58.0%	1,784	46.7%	1,762	86.7%	1,760	31.4%	1,709
College, level 2	42.2%	2,017	34.8%	1,981	58.0%	1,979	30.2%	1,923
College, Level 3 year 1	51.5%	1,727	40.7%	1,713	74.9%	1,707	23.8%	1,658
College, Level 3 year 2	49.1%	1,019	43.5%	1,009	80.2%	1,008	27.7%	985
Total	50.6%	20,491	30.6%	19,889	71.3%	19,881	34.9%	19,857
Follow-Up 1								
Year 9	50.0%	3,592	18.1%	3,331	68.1%	3,425	40.4%	3,316
Year 10	51.7%	3,888	19.6%	3,605	72.5%	3,660	39.8%	3,555
Year 11	52.6%	3,263	26.8%	3,098	73.2%	3,143	40.6%	3,433
Year 12	56.8%	1,166	38.0%	1,067	84.0%	1,056	38.9%	1,137
Year 13	58.2%	1,119	47.5%	1,042	86.4%	1,065	38.8%	1,105
College, level 2	48.7%	1,172	30.4%	1,131	77.4%	1,129	32.9%	1,187
College, Level 3 year 1	56.6%	1,047	35.1%	976	82.6%	969	30.3%	1,032
College, Level 3 year 2	55.1%	865	44.7%	810	79.4%	805	31.1%	878
Total	52.6%	16,112	27.1%	15,060	74.8%	15,252	38.3%	15,843
Follow-Up 2								
Year 9	51.1%	4,329	16.2%	4,235	68.7%	4,234	53.4%	73
Year 10	48.8%	3,903	20.6%	3,848	70.0%	3,840	46.1%	2,430
Year 11	51.9%	3,584	26.6%	3,531	74.0%	3,555	48.7%	2,788
Year 12	59.0%	2,394	38.8%	2,386	75.2%	2,384	45.1%	1,182
Year 13	58.3%	1,520	44.0%	1,513	83.6%	1,515	40.3%	983
College, level 2	50.0%	1,184	33.4%	1,176	56.5%	1,167	47.6%	326
College, Level 3 year 1	53.1%	1,544	37.2%	1,538	71.6%	1,541	42.1%	326
College, Level 3 year 2	48.5%	1,115	41.4%	1,107	77.1%	1,103	32.6%	515
Total	52.3%	19,573	28.1%	19,334	71.9%	19,339	45.2%	8,852
Follow-Up 3								
Year 9	49.4%	2,484	16.8%	2,467	60.7%	2,452	--	--
Year 10	53.0%	2,031	21.3%	2,011	67.2%	1,999	76.6%	124
Year 11	54.2%	1,687	27.4%	1,684	66.5%	1,676	56.8%	1,177
Year 12	62.0%	1,318	36.3%	1,315	77.7%	1,312	40.4%	784
Year 13	60.3%	838	44.4%	838	84.8%	836	47.7%	468
College, level 2	52.3%	821	32.7%	820	63.5%	820	40.3%	206
College, Level 3 year 1	58.0%	977	36.8%	972	72.6%	972	43.4%	286
College, Level 3 year 2	60.9%	562	42.1%	561	79.9%	561	42.2%	180
Total	54.9%	10,718	28.3%	10,668	69.1%	10,628	49.2%	3,227

*Note: Percentages of target students are from total of students with available data.

Table 1.5 provides a similar breakdown for the four round longitudinal cohort, using their characteristics at Baseline. Women dominate this cohort, at approximately 66% of the longitudinal sample. The longitudinal sample has a slightly lower proportion of young people who would be the first in their family to attend higher education if they were to pursue it compared to the overall cohort at Baseline (at just under 21%), and also a slightly higher proportion of young people reporting knowing others with higher education experience, at 71.5% compared to the overall Baseline cohort at just under 71.3%. Of those students where information on their target status exists (226 students), 52.7% in total were target students.

Table 1.5 Demographic characteristics of longitudinal cohort

	Gender		First in Family to Attend HE		Know others to attend HE?		Target status*	
	Female	Obs.	First-in-family	Obs.	Others in HE	Obs.	Target	Obs.
At baseline								
Year 9	63.0%	127	16.8%	125	71.0%	124	48.5%	65
Year 10	70.3%	91	24.2%	91	73.6%	91	58.7%	54
Total	65.8%	231	21.0%	229	71.5%	228	52.7%	226

*Note: Percentages of target students are from total of students with available data.

Table 1.6 provides a similar breakdown for the Phase 2 longitudinal cohort, using their characteristics at the second follow-up survey. Women dominate this cohort, at approximately 57% of the longitudinal sample. This longitudinal sample has a lower proportion of young people who would be the first in their family to attend higher education if they were to pursue it of 23.1% compared to the overall cohort at Follow-Up 2 (at just over 28%, Follow-up 2 totals in Table 1.4), and also a slightly higher proportion of young people reporting knowing others with higher education experience, at just under 70% compared to the overall cohort at Follow-Up 2, at just under 72%.

Table 1.6 Demographic characteristics of Phase 2-only longitudinal cohort

	Gender		First in Family to Attend HE		Know others to attend HE?		Target status*	
	Female	Obs.	First-in-family	Obs.	Others in HE	Obs.	Target	Obs.
At second follow-up								
Year 9	53.5%	1168	17.1%	1153	67.6%	1144	70.0%	20
Year 10	54.5%	433	20.4%	432	69.6%	427	50.4%	272
Year 11	67.5%	157	33.1%	154	77.7%	157	54.3%	94
Year 12	63.2%	228	37.4%	227	75.9%	228	48.4%	64
College, level 2	64.6%	82	30.9%	81	64.2%	81	50.0%	10
College, Level 3 year 1	62.7%	150	38.0%	150	71.3%	150	47.1%	17
Total	56.7%	2,237	23.1%	2,216	69.8%	2,206	51.6%	477

*Note: Percentages of target students are from total of students with available data.

Data source: linked HESA data

Linking approach

In addition to the survey data above, linked administrative data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) provides information on actual rates of higher education progression. For this report,

this is based on a third set of linked administrative data (the first two reported in the end of Phase 1 report).

The linkage takes place via HEAT, the Higher Education Access Tracker, and uses the full set of students entered into HEAT for the purposes of monitoring Take Your Place activity as the reference sample.

The linked data used here relates to the 2019-20 academic year, the most recent year for which HESA data is available. This means that, first, the relevant Take Your Place activity is all in Phase 1 (so that only activity prior to the measurement of higher education progression is included); and second that only the relevant cohorts, which are likely to have been the right age, 'HE-ready age' as defined by HEAT, are included in the analysis.

Linked sample

Given the way the linking works, with HEAT student records used as the 'master' cohort, to which HESA records are matched, where available, the most recent HESA-HEAT extract contains information on 39,330¹ records. Many of these are duplicate student records, so that the number of unique students in the extract is 15,540. These students are those who have engaged with Take Your Place, including by taking part in one of the annual Surveys, at any point since the start of the programme.

From the total student sample, 11,000 students were not identifiable in HESA at any point. This means that up to and including the 2019-20 academic year they had not enrolled in an institution of higher (or occasionally further) education that returns HESA data.

This means that 4,540 students were observed in the HESA data as having attended higher education. One of the advantages of the extract is that it lists when the student was first identified in the data. Table 1.7 below illustrates the first years when students were first found in the higher education student population in the HESA data. Given the age of students, and the likely years of first possible progression to higher education, we consider that all progression prior to 2017/18 (1.1% of the total returned sample) is likely to be other highly non-standard, or matching error, and therefore these records are not counted as having progressed to higher education.

Table 1.7 Academic year student first observed in higher education in the HESA data

	Observed in HE	
	Frequency	Proportion of total
<2017-18	170	1.1%
2017-18	105	0.7%
2018-19	1,645	10.6%
2019-20	2,620	16.8%
Not observed	11,005	70.8%
Total	15,540	100%

*Note: Counts are rounded to the nearest 5. Sub-counts may therefore not add up to stated total.

Therefore, a total of 28.1% of the returned HEAT-HESA sample (4,370 students) have been observed, at any relevant time (2017-18 to 2019-20), to have been enrolled in higher education. The demographic information for the sample of students having ever attended higher education, and comparatively those not observed in HE are illustrated in Table 1.8.

¹ All HESA-linkage derived numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.

Of these 15,540 matched HEAT-HESA records, 11,495 had meaningful HEAT identifiers that allowed us to match to this extract the information from either the surveys, or the general monitoring information on activities undertaken with Take Your Place. This is a HEAT match rate of 74%. By comparison, the same rate for the second HEAT-HESA extract, detailed in the evaluation report for Phase 1 of Take Your Place was 82%, but the absolute numbers were substantially lower then, at only 1,735 matched records.

Table 1.8 Demographic characteristics of HESA matched sample

		Gender		IMD quintile		POLAR4 quintile		Target status*	
		Female	Obs.	Most deprived	Obs.	Lowest participation	Obs.	Target	Obs.
Matched HEAT-HESA students	Ever attended HE	52.8%	3,390	19.6%	3,390	34.3%	3,390	31.3%	3,325
	Never attended HE	45.6%	8,100	20.5%	8,100	33.4%	8,100	30.0%	5,870
	Total	47.8%	11,495	20.2%	11,495	33.7%	11,495	30.5%	9,190

*Note: Counts are rounded to the nearest 5. Sub-counts may therefore not add up to stated total. Percentages of target students are from total of students with available data

As Table 1.8 above illustrates using HEAT-provided demographic variables, students progressing to higher education are more likely to be female, slightly less likely to come from the most deprived (IMD) neighbourhoods and slightly more likely to come from the lowest higher education (POLAR) participation neighbourhoods. The small, and sometimes seemingly counterintuitive, neighbourhood-based deprivation differences reflect the nature of the targeting of wards and areas by neaco and Take Your Place and therefore are in keeping with the neighbourhood-based deprivation indicators in the East of England region that Take Your Place covers. In terms of target status (the caveats about data availability outlined above notwithstanding), students ever observed to attend HE are slightly more likely to have target status.

Student outcomes

There are a number of student outcomes of interest for the evaluation of Take Your Place. These outcomes are split between primary and secondary outcome measures, as outlined in what follows. They all map onto the intended outcomes of Take Your Place as a programme and also speak to the Uni Connect aims more broadly.

Primary outcome measures

The first primary outcome measure is the likelihood of progression to higher education, for the purposes of this report captured with a question that asks participants about how likely they are to apply to higher education at age 18. This applies across all year groups responding to the survey. Unlike the secondary outcome measures below, this question used a seven-point response scale, where the last response option is “don’t know” and not included in the analysis.

A second primary outcome measure captures actual progression to higher education, using data linked to HEAT from the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Secondary outcome measures

The secondary outcome measures differ by the year group, as outlined by the main outcomes defined by the neaco progressive framework and are represented by students’ ratings of their own:

Year 9: knowledge of different educational options after GCSEs, both in general, and specific to the subjects each student was taking at the time of the survey;

Year 10: knowledge of different educational options after GCSEs, both in general, and specific to the subjects each student was taking at the time of the survey;

Year 11 and students taking level 2 qualifications in further education colleges: knowledge of different educational options after GCSEs, both in general, and specific to the subjects each student was taking at the time of the survey; knowledge of the subjects and qualifications required for higher education access for those indicating that they are at least slightly likely to apply to higher education at age 18/19;

Year 12 and students in the first year of a Level 3 qualification in further education colleges: knowledge of the different educational options, higher education application, and employment processes at the end of their current studies; knowledge of the subjects and qualifications required for higher education access for those indicating that they are at least slightly likely to apply to higher education at age 18/19;

Year 13 and students in the second year of a Level 3 qualification in further education colleges: knowledge of the different educational options, higher education application, and employment processes at the end of their current studies; knowledge of the subjects and qualifications required for higher education access for those indicating that they are at least slightly likely to apply to higher education at age 18/19.

Analytical approach

Survey data

The year-on-year analyses in Section 1 part 1 below consider baseline levels of attitudes and knowledge prior to students ever participating in Take Your Place (from the Baseline Survey), and analysis of an emerging longitudinal cohort (i.e., participants tracked over time). Results are provided both of simple year-on-year comparisons, and from linear regression models that account for the different characteristics of the students in the consecutive year group cohorts included in this analysis.

The longitudinal analysis simply looks at patterns over time, as the tracking of the same participants over time means that their background characteristics are (mostly) constant over time and therefore do not need to be separately accounted for in the analysis. The same analytical approach is taken both for Section 1 (the whole of Take Your Place so far) and Section 2 (the first half of Phase 2 only).

Linked data

The analysis for the primary outcome of actual HE participation (under Section 1 part 3 below) takes the form of linear probability models (chosen instead of logistic regression models) that model the likelihood of higher education participation (using the HESA data) as a function of contact hours in Take Your Place, and control for a range of student characteristics available in the HEAT data. Further information about students is available from their respective survey responses, as above, however, a substantial reduction in sample is observed when linking all three data sets together (Surveys, HEAT, HESA) and therefore only HEAT-derived demographic controls are included (as in Table 1.8 above). Mostly consistent with what would have been captured from the survey, these include: gender; year group during the activity (restricted to Year 12-13 and equivalent in Further Education Colleges); student membership to POLAR quintile 1 (an area-based measure of higher education participation derived from students' postcode); IMD decile, also an area-based measure, both to represent the geography-based targeting of the students, as well as students' target status.

This modelling approach allows for the estimation of the relationship between each additional hour of contact in Take Your Place and the likelihood of higher education participation for the linked HE cohort described above. Since Phase 2-only participants can't yet have been matched to HESA, this analysis is restricted to Section 1, under "Take Your Place so far".

Section 1: Take Your Place Phase 1 and Phase 2 so far

Overview

This section looks at Take Your Place as a whole. The analysis under this section proceeds in two parts.

Part 1: year-on-year comparisons

Part 2: cohorts of students tracked over time

Part 3: actual progression to higher education

For Part 1, analyses that use the full survey data do not account for how much or how well participants have engaged in Take Your Place. The key assumption is that in later rounds of the survey students will have had the *opportunity* to engage with Take Your Place. Therefore, these analyses should be considered akin to what experimental research defines as an intention-to-treat analysis. That is, it looks at the effect associated with the existence, or the offer, of the intervention, and not with actual engagement with it. As such, the results are conservative estimates and likely an underestimate of the effect that Take Your Place participation is likely to have resulted in.

For Part 2, responses to the Baseline survey round, undertaken at the start of the 2017-2018 academic year and therefore at the start of comprehensive Take Your Place activity, act as the comparison point for the same group of respondents tracked over time.

For Part 3, the monitoring data tracking actual participation in Take Your Place activity is combined with the linked administrative data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency HESA to provide an estimate of the relationship between amounts of Take Your Place participation and actual HE progression. Crucially, in this part, the activity data takes in activity in Phase 1 and in Phase 2 so far.

The existence of these comparison groups (or comparison points in time) is non-experimental in nature. However, it allows for a parsimonious analytical approach, comparing the outcomes, both year-on-year (Part 1) and for two separate tracked cohorts of students (Part 2). The Part 3 analysis is correlational only, despite accounting for a range of student background characteristics.

Section 1 part 1: year-on-year trends

This set of analyses focuses on year-on-year trends, for each year group of relevance (years 9 to 13 in schools and sixth-forms, and equivalent in further education colleges), and makes use of the timing of the four Surveys, as follows. The Baseline Survey acts as precisely that, a baseline of responses prior to the delivery of Take Your Place activity. We use this Baseline Survey therefore to compute an average baseline response per year group for each outcome measures of interest. We then use data from the third Follow-Up Survey (2020, mid-way through Phase 2) as an outcome measure, akin to a final measurement of the same outcomes of interest. For each respective outcome measure (split by year group, where relevant), we first present descriptive results and then report trends once accounting (with regression analyses) for the background characteristics of each of these cohorts, their clustering into schools and colleges, and the repeated measures nature of the questions.

As an example, we compare responses from Year 11 students at Baseline to Year 11 students in each respective Follow-Up Survey. We do this for each year group cohort, with one exception: Year 9 students responding to each respective Survey will not have had meaningful Take Your Place engagement by the time of the survey, because the programme does not engage with younger year groups; for this reason, the Year 9 analysis is presented descriptively in the Figures below, but not

included in the statistical models that account for the potentially different demographic characteristics of consecutive cohorts.

For every year group other than Year 9, therefore, the statistical analysis allows for an exploration of whether the descriptive patterns first identified hold, regardless of young people’s socio-economic and schooling circumstances.

Using the same methodology outlined above, we also present the model estimation results for target students only, that is students who at the time of engagement with Take Your Place resided in wards that originally the focus of the Uni Connect programme.

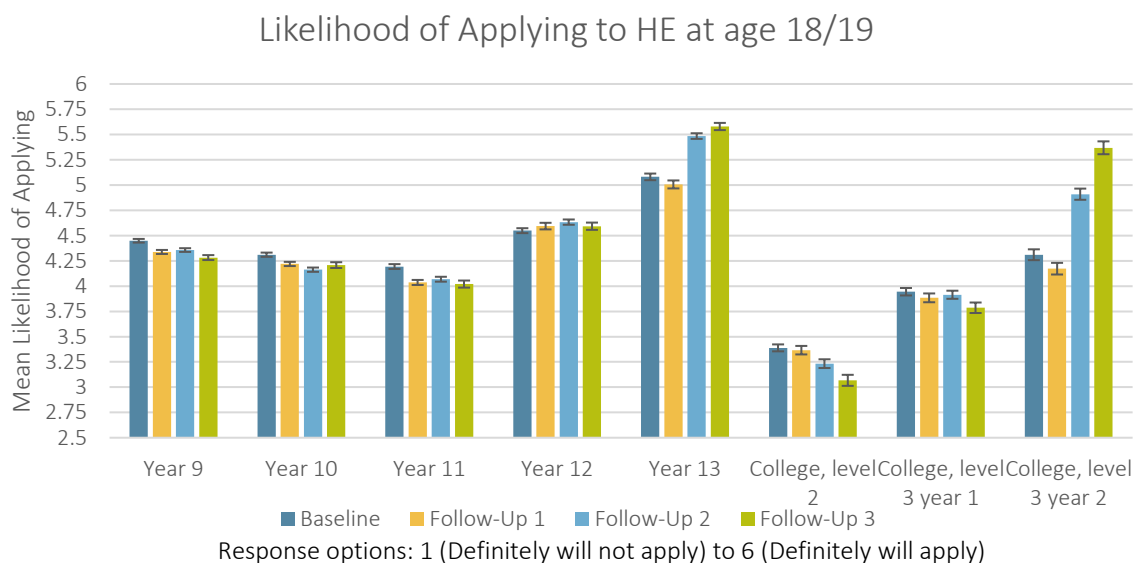
Higher education application intentions

The primary outcome measure captures the likelihood of progression to higher education and is reported using a 6-point Likert scale. This measure is based on two questions from the national survey. For most students, the outcome is the obtained from the CFE question which asked students to use a 6-point Likert scale to respond to the question “How likely are you to apply to higher education at age 18 or 19?”. The provided options ranged from “Definitely won’t apply” to “Definitely will apply”, with a “Don’t know” option. For students in year 13 the survey was structured so that these students were first asked whether they have applied to higher education. Those who responded “yes” to the question whether they had applied were included in the primary outcome measure as “Definitely will apply”.

Year-on-year, the Take Your Place cross-sectional cohorts show slight decreases in the primary outcome with the exception of Year 12, Year 13, and College Level 3, Year 2 students who show increases in the likelihood of applying in the later cohorts. As expected, the likelihood of applying increases in the final years, suggesting that as students approach the end of secondary schooling, they are more certain in their likelihood of applying (Figure 1.1).

In Figure 1.1 and all upcoming figures in this section we include the Year 9 cohort at each Survey round. This is only for the purposes of establishing a pre-Take Your Place level at each Survey round, since given the timing of each Survey (at the start of each academic year), Year 9 students will not have meaningfully engaged with Take Your Place yet.

Figure 1.1 Likelihood of Applying to HE



In addition to the descriptive analysis above, we are able to ascertain how higher education intentions have changed compared against the Baseline cohort which had not received substantive Take Your Place activity by also considering the background characteristics of participants (specifically gender, status as first in family to potentially attend higher education, and knowledge of anyone else with higher education experience). Table 1.9 below reports the results of the regression analysis focused on the change associated with participation in Take Your Place once the above socio-demographic characteristics have been controlled for, for each separate year group. This analysis compares, therefore, the responses by each given year group at Round 4 to the equivalent year group at Baseline, accounting for the potentially different socio-economic make-up of these groups at the two points.

It is important to note that these analyses estimate the effect associated with the existence, or the offer, of Take Your Place, and not with actual engagement of each individual with the programme. The results are therefore conservative estimates and likely an underestimate of the effect that Take Your Place participation is likely to have resulted in.

Table 1.9 Higher education application intentions: statistical results

Participation in Take Your Place				
	All students		Target students	
	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance
Year 10	-0.09	***	-0.34	**
Year 11	-0.17	***	-0.24	***
Year 12	0.01		-0.04	
Year 13	0.46	***	0.50	***
College, level 2	-0.34	***	0.02	
College, Level 3 year 1	-0.10		-0.17	
College, Level 3 year 2	0.91	***	0.99	***

Note: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Other control variables not tabled.

The results indicate that, background characteristics being held equal, later cohorts (who will have had the opportunity to participate in Take Your Place) have statistically significantly slightly lower levels of intentions to apply to higher education for year groups 9, 10, 11, and Level 2 college students; and significantly higher levels of intentions to apply to higher education for final year groups (13 and Level 3 year 2 students in colleges).

For target students, the results are very similar, and on the whole point to cohorts of students in Year 13 and in the second year of a Level 3 qualification in colleges improving in their intentions to apply to higher education.

This is consistent with trends outlined in the Phase 1 report, and again in the rest of this report, where in terms of young/non-final year groups, the year-on-year comparisons show stable or slightly lower levels of reported intentions to apply to higher education compared to the same year groups that did not have the opportunity to engage with Take Your Place (i.e. responses at Baseline). At the point of application, however, so in relation to final years (13 and year 2 in Level 3 qualifications in Colleges), students in Take Your Place cohorts show much higher and statistically significant levels of HE application intentions.

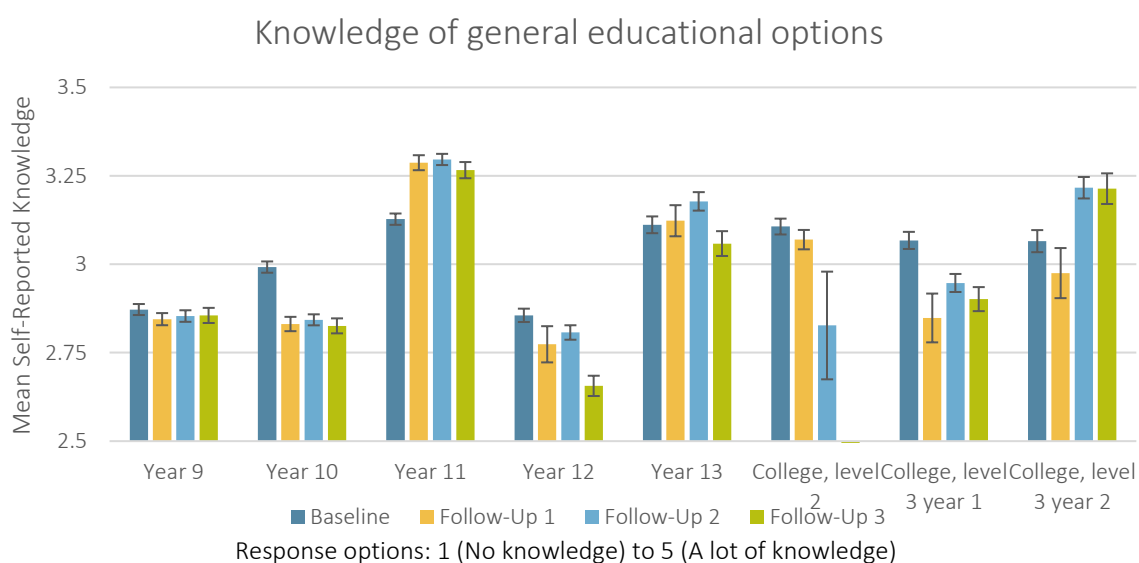
Knowledge of general educational options

Students in all year groups were asked across all three surveys to report their knowledge of their educational options beyond the qualifications they were taking at the time of the survey. These questions represent the main secondary outcomes for all year groups and are reported here in turn.

Year-on-year, the Take Your Place cross-sectional cohorts show stable patterns of knowledge of their respective general educational options (Figure 1.2, note no answers from College Level 2 students²). Asked about their general educational options post-GCSEs, students in the appropriate year-groups (below Year 11, and respectively taking Level 2 qualifications in further education colleges) generally report moderate knowledge of their options, with only small year-on-year differences. A slight decrease in the reported knowledge to the most recent mid-Phase 2 Follow-Up is present for Years 12 and 13.

Comparing between year groups, Year 12 and onwards students, and their peers in further education colleges taking Level 3 qualifications report slightly better knowledge than younger students, but again with only small year-on-year differences, without a clear pattern. The one consistent pattern is that final years (Years 11, 13, and year 2 in Level 3 qualifications in colleges) show slightly better knowledge than all others, suggesting that upcoming respective transition points may be prompting students to become better informed.

Figure 1.2 Knowledge of general educational options



As above, we then estimate the effect of offering Take Your Place on the levels of knowledge of general education options, again controlling for students' socio-demographic backgrounds (Table 1.10). As above, this analysis compares Round 4 responses with Baseline responses.

Table 1.10 Knowledge of general education options: statistical results

Participation in Take Your Place				
	All students		Target students	
	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance
Year 10	-0.15	***	-0.28	**

² Further data will be included in the Main Phase 2 report.

Year 11	0.14	***	0.14	**
Year 12	-0.16	***	-0.06	
Year 13	-0.04		-0.02	
College, level 2	-0.14		-0.09	
College, Level 3 year 1	-0.12	***	-0.16	
College, Level 3 year 2	0.15	***	-0.17	

Note: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Other control variables not tabled.

The background-adjusted comparison to students not yet offered Take Your Place (at baseline) suggests statistically significantly lower levels of reported knowledge for Year 10, Year 12, and College Level 3 year 1 students; stable levels of knowledge for Year 13 and College Level 2 students; and higher levels of knowledge for Year 11 and College Level 3 Year 2 students.

For target students, the results suggest very stable levels of self-reported knowledge, regardless of the opportunity to engage with Take Your Place. Only Year 10 groups show lower later levels of knowledge, while Year 11 groups with access to Take Your Place display a marked improvement in their self-reported knowledge.

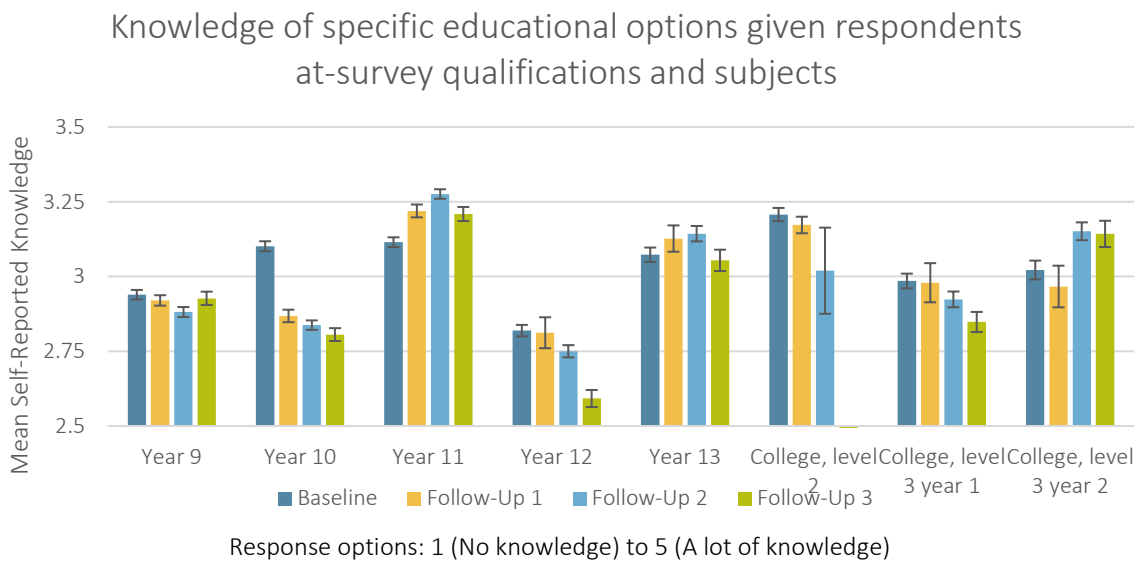
Knowledge of specific education options

In addition to their overall education options above, students were also asked to report on their knowledge of their specific future educational options, given the subjects and qualifications they were taking at the time of each survey (Figure 1.3). The pattern of responses is very similar to the general options knowledge above, that is a mixed picture of trends.

Compared to the Baseline, respondents at the mid-Phase 2 Follow-Up display better levels of reported knowledge for Year 11 and Year 2 Level 3 in College; stable levels of knowledge for Years 9 and 13; and lower levels of reported knowledge for all other Year groups. Overall, the most recent Follow-Up results show a slight decrease in knowledge compared to previous years, outside the two year groups above.

Comparing between year groups, final years (Year 11, 13, and to some extent year 2 for Level 3 qualifications in colleges) exhibit the highest self-reported knowledge. Remarkably, and similar to trends observed at the end of Phase 1, the year group reporting the least amount of knowledge of specific options are Year 12 students, followed by Year 1 students on Level 3 qualifications in colleges. This may be due to them having just cleared a previous high-stakes transition point (into a Level 3 qualification) and not yet turning their attention to post Level 3 options.

Figure 1.3 Knowledge of specific educational options



The results of the regression analysis comparing mid-Phase 2 responses to the no-Take-Your-Place yet Baseline reflect the patterns identified in relation to general knowledge of education options (Table 1.11). Only Year 11 and College Level 3 Year 2 students display statistically significantly higher levels of self-reported knowledge in the cohorts with opportunities to engage with Take Your Place. In relation to target students, the results also match those of the general options outcomes.

Table 1.11 Knowledge of specific education options: statistical results

Participation in Take Your Place	All students		Target students	
	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance
Year 10	-0.29	***	-0.49	***
Year 11	0.10	***	0.1	**
Year 12	-0.19	***	-0.12	
Year 13	0.01		0.01	
College, level 2	-0.16		0.05	
College, Level 3 year 1	-0.10	*	-0.25	**
College, Level 3 year 2	0.13	**	-0.06	

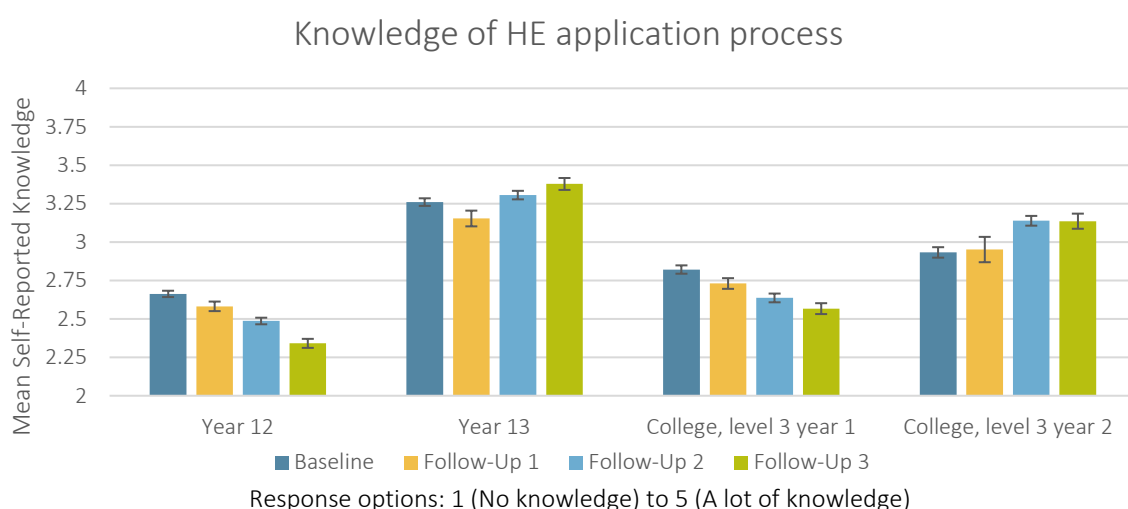
Note: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Other control variables not tabled.

Knowledge of how to apply to higher education

The questions about future education options were asked of all participants in the survey. Additionally, higher years were also asked questions specifically about the higher education application process. They were asked to report their knowledge of the higher education application process as well as of knowledge of sources of support and assistance with higher education applications.

In terms of knowledge of higher education applications processes, survey participants reported only moderate levels of knowledge. Mirroring the mixed patterns above, a similarly complex picture emerges here too (Figure 1.4)

Figure 1.4 Knowledge of higher education application process



Compared to Baseline reports where respondents had not yet participated in Take Your Place activity, the respective year groups responding to the mid-Phase 2 Follow-Up (when they would have had the opportunity to engage with the programme, however little), display lower levels of HE application process knowledge for Year 12s and for Level 3 Year 1 students in Colleges. For the Year 13 and Year 2 of Level 3 qualifications students, self-reported levels of knowledge are higher mid-Phase 2 than at Baseline. These patterns are consistent with results from the end of Phase 1. This suggests potentially different behaviour, or targeting of activity, towards terminal years, just ahead of transitions to higher education, and precisely for the two year-groups showing year-on-year improvement.

The same Round 4 to Baseline comparison then allows for potentially different student socio-economic make-up to be accounted for. For the question on knowledge of HE application process, the results are reported in Table 1.12.

Table 1.12 Knowledge of the HE application process: statistical results

Participation in Take Your Place	All students		Target students	
	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance
Year 12	-0.31	***	-0.28	**
Year 13	0.10	**	-0.01	
College, Level 3 year 1	-0.21	***	-0.29	*
College, Level 3 year 2	0.20	***	-0.03	

Note: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Other control variables not tabled.

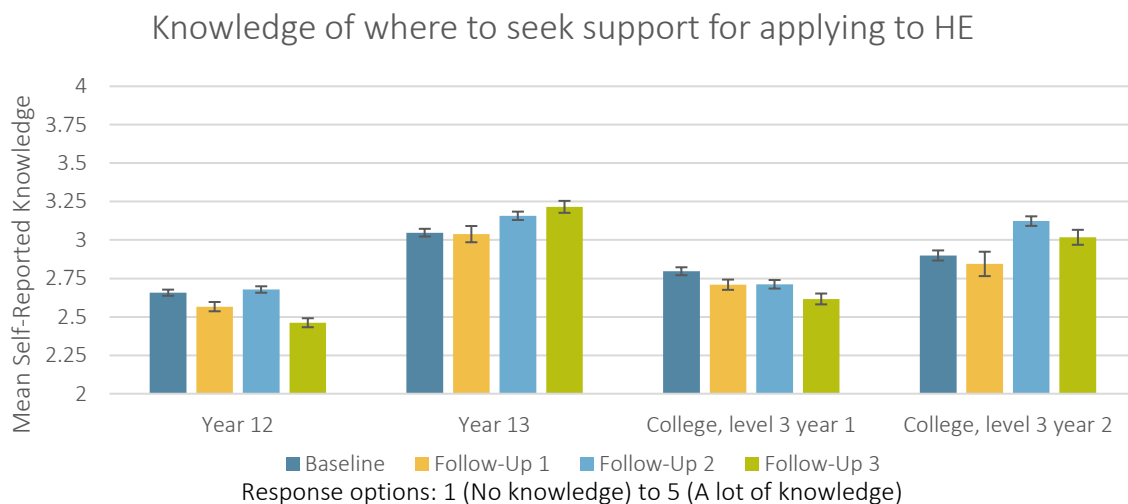
The results align with the descriptive analysis above, suggesting that later cohorts of Year 12 and college students in the first year of a Level 3 course report relatively less knowledge of the process of applying to higher education than the Baseline cohort, even after allowing for students' background characteristics. For target students, the results for Year 12 match the full cohort, as do (though at a weaker statistical significance level) the Level 3 Year 1 College cohort results. The other two year groups do not show changes between the cohort with access to Take Your Place and those without.

Knowledge of where to obtain support to apply to higher education

Assuming that participants would not have, or report, perfect information about the process of applying to higher education, the surveys also asked about knowledge of where to seek information and support

in relation to higher education applications. Again, levels of knowledge were only moderate across all year groups of whom this question was asked (Figure 1.5), and again the patterns identified above hold: first, final years report better knowledge than other year groups at the third Follow-Up; and second, these year groups also display year-on-year increases compared to the Baseline.

Figure 1.5 Knowledge of where to seek support for applying to higher education



Following on from the descriptive analysis, a set of statistical models was estimated, to explore the cohort-to-cohort change in knowledge of where to seek HE application support, compared to Baseline responses of participants without the opportunity to have participated in Take Your Place (Table 1.13).

Table 1.13 Knowledge of sources of support for HE application: statistical results

Participation in Take Your Place				
	All students		Target students	
	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance
Year 12	-0.16	***	-0.13	
Year 13	0.17	**	0.29	**
College, Level 3 year 1	-0.14	**	-0.29	**
College, Level 3 year 2	0.12	**	-0.05	

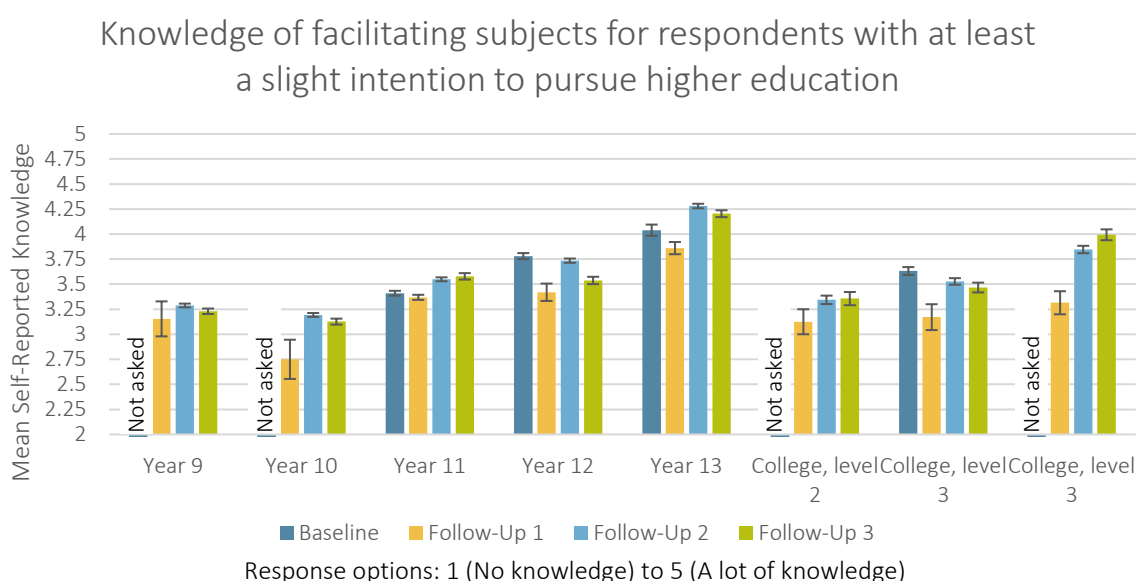
Note: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Other control variables not tabled.

Results of the regression analysis here mirror those of the question regarding knowledge of applying, with Year 13 and Level 3 Year 2 students with potential access to Take Your Place reporting better knowledge of how to obtain application support. The other year groups asked (12 and College Level 3 Year 1 students) display a negative trend to mid-Phase 2. As above, a slightly less marked pattern of change is identified for target students, but in similar directions to the full cohorts.

Knowledge of facilitating subjects

Once asked about their intentions to apply to higher education, higher year groups (Year 11 and equivalent, and above) responding that they were at least “slightly likely to apply to HE” were also asked about facilitating subjects and qualifications. In relation to knowledge of facilitating subjects, the overall levels of reported knowledge were higher than of general or specific future options above (Figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6 Knowledge of facilitating subjects



Compared to the Baseline (where available), Year 11 and Year 13 respondents reported higher levels of knowledge of facilitating subjects by mid-Phase 2. When the question was only asked at the first Follow-Up, compared to that, Year 9, Year 10, College Level 2, and second year of College Level 3 qualifications groups all also reported better knowledge. Only consecutive Year 12 and College Level 3 Year 1 cohorts reported lower levels of knowledge by mid-Phase 2 compared to Baseline.

Results from the statistical models accounting for socio-demographic characteristics of the respective cohorts, compared to the Baseline cohort are reported in Table 1.14 below.

Table 1.14 Knowledge of facilitating subjects for respondents with at least a slight intention to pursue higher education.

Participation in Take Your Place				
	All students		Target students	
	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance
Year 11	0.22	***	0.17	**
Year 12	-0.25	***	-0.22	**
Year 13	0.15	**	0.21	
College, Level 3 year 1	-0.13	**	-0.01	

Note: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Other control variables not tabled.

The results align with the descriptive analysis above for the cohorts where the question was asked at Baseline: Year 11 (including target students) and Year 13 students (but not Year 13 target students) report statistically significantly better knowledge of what subjects they need to pursue their desired educational paths. For the other year groups with data, the trend is statistically significantly negative for the full cohorts and shows no change for the later cohorts (with potential Take Your Place engagement) for target students.

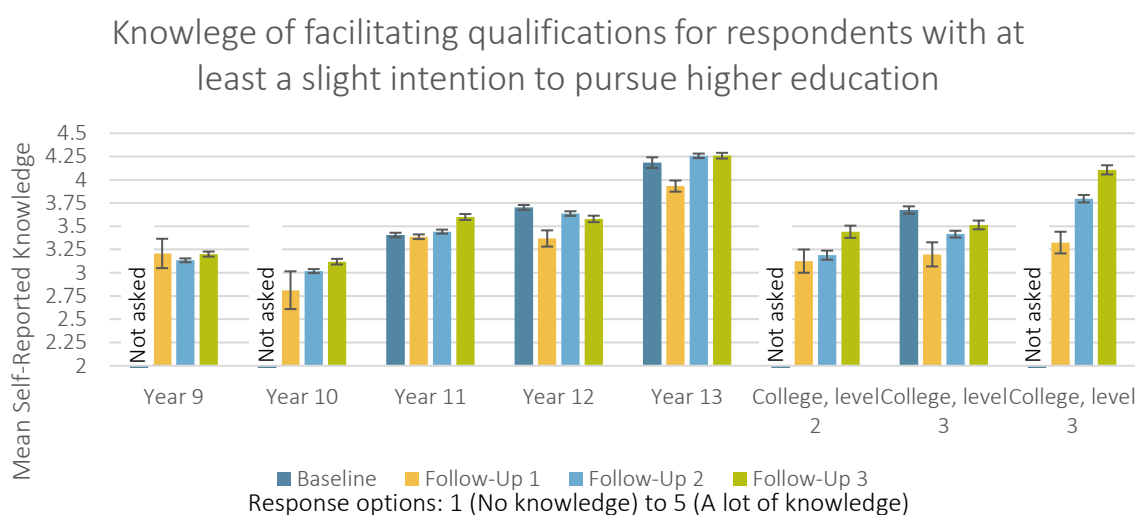
Knowledge of facilitating qualifications

Alongside facilitating subjects, young people who expressed at least a slight intention to apply to higher education were also asked by the surveys to report their knowledge of facilitating qualifications. This is, arguably, a more complex question, since it relies on students understanding that there are a

multitude of educational qualifications at Level 3 which allow for progression into higher education. Reported knowledge, however, appears to be moderate to high across all year groups of whom this question was asked (Figure 1.7).

As before, the response patterns suggest a slight improvement in self-reported knowledge over time, with all but one year group (Year 12 students) displaying higher rates of reported knowledge at the mid-Phase 2 Follow-Up (Follow-Up 3) compared to the Baseline cohorts, where asked.

Figure 1.7 Knowledge of facilitating qualifications



The results from the final set of statistical models exploring the changes between the 3rd Follow-Up (Round 4) mid-Phase 2 Survey comparing like-for-like responses from Baseline, here for the question around knowledge of facilitating qualifications are illustrated in Table 1.15.

Table 1.15 Knowledge of facilitating qualifications: statistical results

Participation in Take Your Place				
	All students		Target students	
	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance	Statistical coefficient	Statistical significance
Year 11	0.23	***	0.14	*
Year 12	-0.11	**	-0.08	
Year 13	0.06		0.1	
College, Level 3 year 1	-0.13	**	-0.01	

Note: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Other control variables not tabled.

These results suggest that reported knowledge of which qualifications would help students access their desired educational path was statistically significantly higher by mid-Phase 2 compared to students without the opportunity to have engaged with Take Your Place for Year 11 students only (including target students). For Year 13 students, there was no meaningful change, whereas for the other year groups a negative trend was observed to mid-Phase 2, though only for the full cohort and not for target students.

Conclusion

The cross-sectional cohort data reported above provides an indication of the year-on-year trends displayed by respondents in each survey, the Baseline and the three Follow-Ups, up to the mid-point of Phase 2 of Take Your Place. These results are not causal as such, despite the presence of a reference

comparison group (the same year group at the start of Take Your Place), and also do not capture the effect of taking part in Take Your Place, rather the opportunity to do so. A later full Phase 2 evaluation report will focus specifically on the full extent of activity participation and link this to student outcomes.

For now, the analysis presented above shows raw, unadjusted year-on-year comparisons, and also presents results once the potentially different socio-economic make-ups of the different year groups in the different survey years have been accounted for. We observe a mixed picture of year-on-year trends, with strong suggestions that the mid-Phase 2 Follow-Up 3 survey provides indications of either flattening or slightly downward trends for some year groups (e.g. College Level 3 Year 1, Years 9, 10), but also some positive upward trends for other year groups, especially those at the end of respective education stages (Years 11, 13, College Level 3 Year 2). There is of course variation within this, and even more so when considering the sub-group of target students. Even more, the difficult national circumstances for Follow-Up 3, occurring in the middle of a pandemic and receiving relatively fewer responses than the other three surveys should be considered when interpreting these results.

Section 1 part 2: four-round longitudinal trends

In addition to the overall year-on-year patterns identified above, the smaller but longitudinally tracked cohort of matched participants across all four rounds of the Survey allows for an exploration of how *the same* young people's responses change over time, against a baseline prior to Take Your Place activity delivery. This is therefore different to the year-on-year analysis above, in that it tracks the same individuals over time.

The consequences of this tracking over time are two-fold. First, since in this analysis we look only at the cohort tracked from the very start of Take Your Place (Baseline) to mid-Phase 2 (Follow-Up 3), participant characteristics which are essentially fixed (most importantly amongst which is socio-economic background) are intrinsically accounted for by the longitudinal design. Therefore, the analysis can focus on simple changes in the key outcome measures of the analysis. Second, though, the tracking also means that the sample size for this type of analysis is small, and decreasing with each additional round of the Survey, either through non-response, through participants moving to other schools or Colleges that do not engage with Take Your Place and the Survey, or through participants 'aging out' of the pre-HE system and therefore not being captured by the Survey anymore. This means that only students initially (at Baseline) in Year 9 and in Year 10 are included in this analysis. The total sample of students who responded to all 4 rounds of the Survey and were initially Year 9 or Year 10 is 239.

When we refer to year groups in this section, we always use the year group at which students were observed at Baseline: that is, Year 9 students are those students who were Year 9 when they responded to the Baseline Survey; they are tracked over time, so they were Year 10 for the first Follow-Up Survey; Year 11 at Follow-Up Survey 2; and so on, although we allow for them to be in any year of a College Level 3 qualifications at Follow-Up Survey 3.

As above, we also report results for the longitudinal cohort of target students but note that this is reduced to 122 target students, and therefore results should be interpreted even more cautiously.

Higher education application intentions

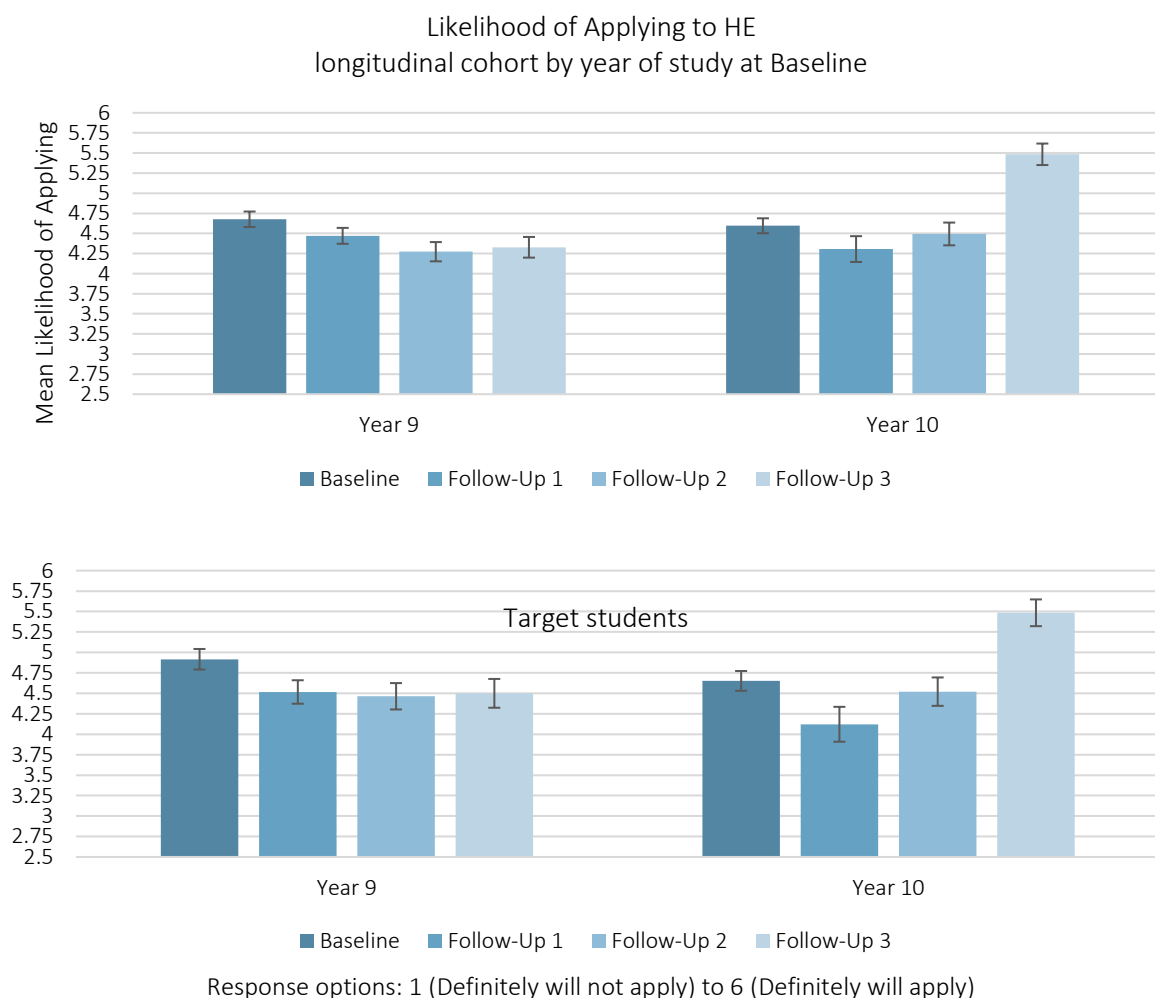
The primary outcome measure (HE application intentions) displays different longitudinal change patterns by initial year group (Figure 1.8).

For initially-Year 9 students, reported HE application intentions reduce slightly over time before a small, but statistically non-significant uptick for Follow-Up 3 (mid-Phase 2), when they were in Year 12 or equivalent in Colleges.

For initially-Year 10 students, after a small downturn at the first Follow-Up, reported intentions to apply to HE follow a clear upward trend, with a statistically significant increase in the likelihood to apply to HE by Follow-Up 3, which corresponds with them in (most likely) a final year of a qualification.

The same patterns are evident for the tracked cohort of target students.

Figure 1.8 Likelihood of applying to higher education for longitudinal tracked cohort, whole cohort and target students only



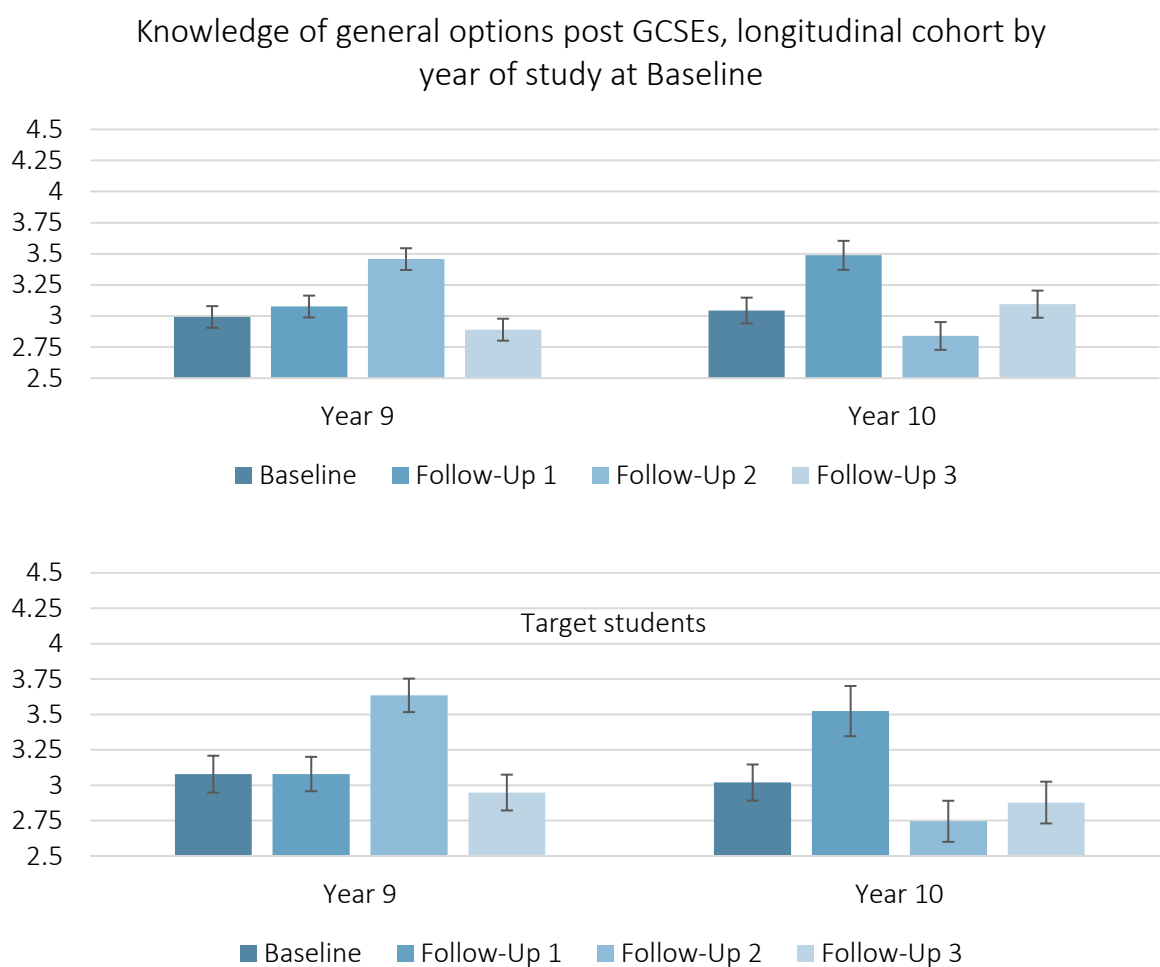
Knowledge of general educational options

Similar to the year-on-year change, the next outcome variable of interest consists of self-reported knowledge of general educational options.

In relation to knowledge of general future educational options, the pattern of longitudinal change from Baseline to mid-Phase 2 looks similar by year group (Figure 1.9), in that after a marked increase (at the first Follow-Up for initially Year 10 students; and at the second Follow-Up for initially Year 9 students), there follows a clear decrease to Follow-Up 3.

This pattern holds for target students tracked over the 4 Survey rounds.

Figure 1.9 Longitudinal cohort: knowledge of general educational options, whole cohort and target students only



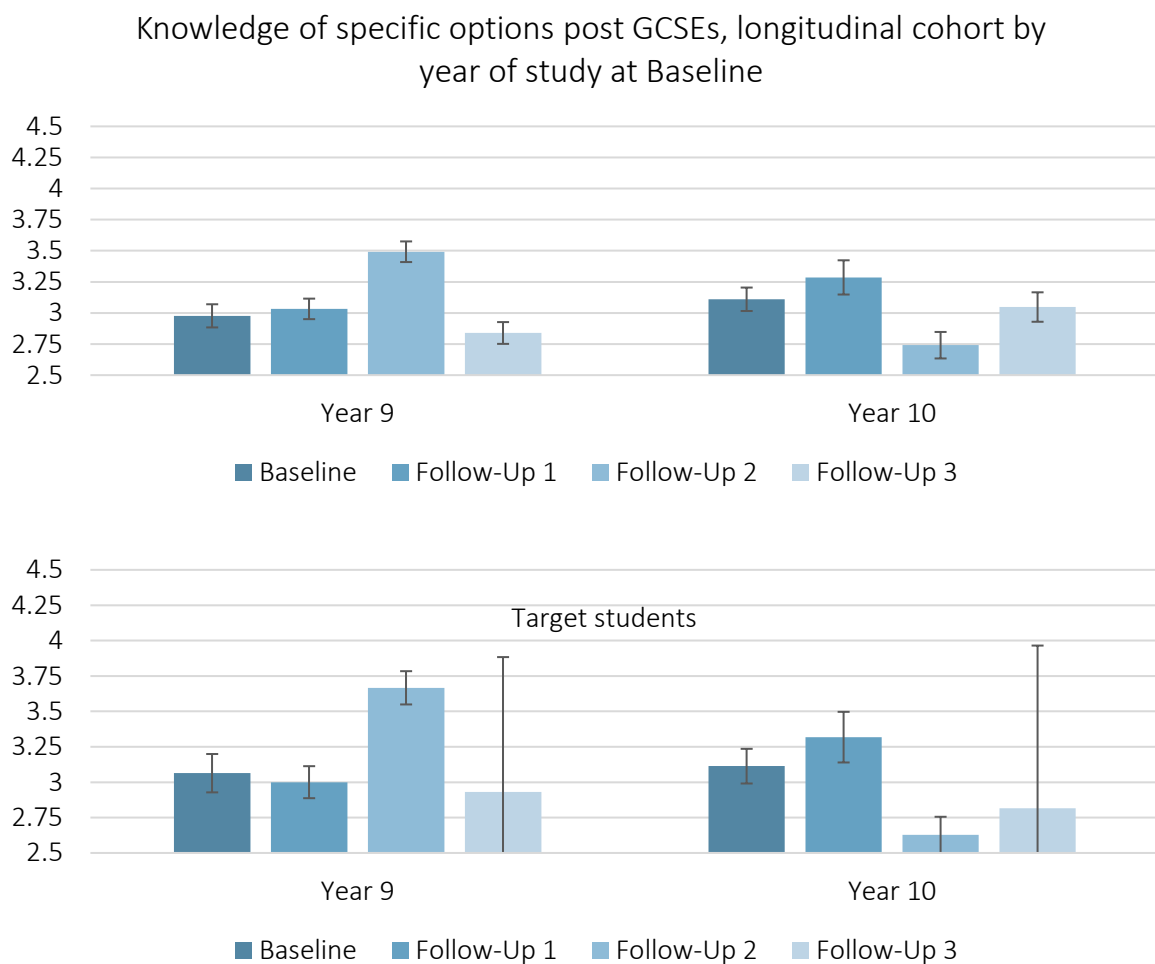
Knowledge of specific educational options

A similar pattern to self-reported knowledge of general educational options is observed for the question asking participants to rate their knowledge of specific educational options given what qualifications they were undertaking at the time of each survey.

In relation to this self-reported knowledge of specific options, the longitudinal pattern observed for the general options question holds (Figure 1.10). The levels of knowledge are lower at Follow-Up 3 compared to Follow-Up 2, returning to essentially the levels seen at the start of the programme at Baseline.

As above, this pattern holds for both the full tracked cohort and target students, though again we note the small sample size for this group. This leads to very large confidence intervals (indicated in each Figure, including Figure 1.10 below).

Figure 1.10 Longitudinal cohort: knowledge of specific educational options, whole cohort and target students only

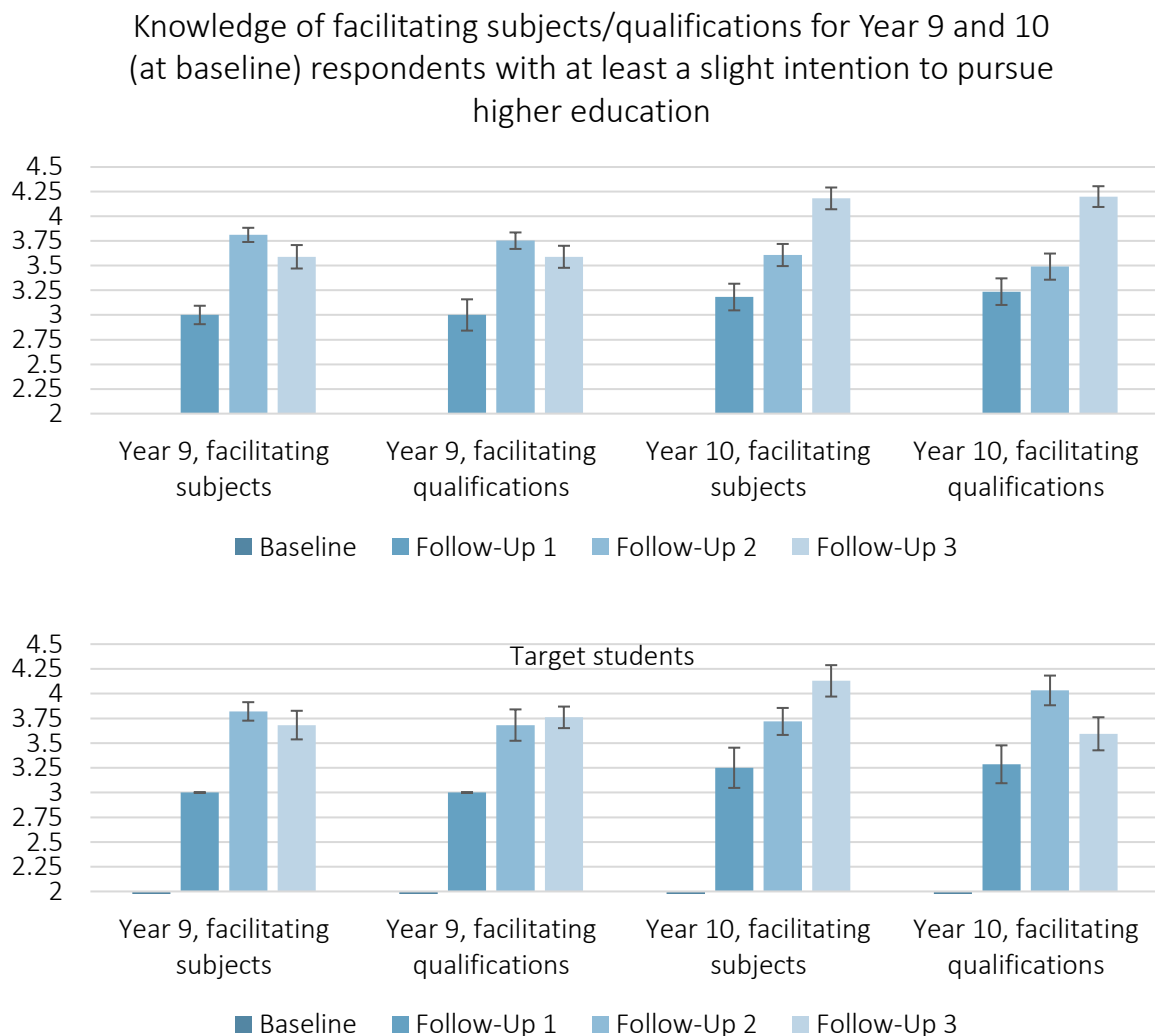


Knowledge of facilitating subjects and qualifications

Finally, the surveys allow for the tracking of knowledge of facilitating subjects, and respectively facilitating qualifications. These questions were not initially asked of all year groups, and as such is missing from Baseline for the four-rounds longitudinal cohort here. Additionally, these questions were only asked of students who had previously indicated at least a slight intention to pursue higher education at any point in the future. Figure 1.11 illustrates the patterns of change from Follow-Up 1 to mid-Phase 2 (Follow-Up 3) for these two aspects, for the full tracked cohort and target students.

For both subjects and qualifications, there is a clear pattern of improvement over time for young people in Year 10 at Baseline. Responses at Follow-Up 2 suggest a higher level of self-reported knowledge than at Follow-Up 1, with Follow-Up 3 levels even higher, for knowledge of both facilitating subjects and qualifications. Overall, this suggests that as young people in the Take Your Place survey get closer to a potential point of transition into higher education, their level of knowledge about what qualifications and subjects they may need to pursue their desired higher education options improves. This pattern holds almost the same for target students: facilitating qualifications knowledge at Follow-Up 3 is similar Follow-Up 1. For students in Year 9 at Baseline, Follow-Up 3 responses indicate higher levels of knowledge than at first Follow-Up (when questions first asked), for both the full cohort and the target student cohort.

Figure 1.11 Knowledge of facilitating subjects and qualifications, whole cohort and target students only



Conclusion

The longitudinal cohort over the four Survey rounds provides the opportunity to explore how the reported knowledge of young people responding to the Survey changed from the start of Take Your Place to the middle of Phase 2. The results above suggest a mixed picture, with some aspects improving broadly (e.g. knowledge of facilitating subjects and qualifications) over time, while others seeing a drop-off to Follow-Up 3 that follows a steady improvement from Baseline to Follow-Up 2. These results hold for both the full longitudinally tracked cohort, and that of target students only, with the caveat that over the four Survey rounds, both samples become extremely small and therefore requiring care in interpreting the results.

It remains to be seen, in work to be reported at a later date, how the pandemic may have affected these results, and those presented above, especially in relation to Follow-Up 3 self-reports being suppressed by difficult health, social, and economic circumstances both locally and nationally; and the wider difficulties encountered by all educational programmes including schooling during prolonged periods of online-only provision.

Section 1 part 3: higher education actual application rates

As mentioned previously, it is possible to explore the linked data provided second primary outcome measure of actual progression to higher education. This is achieved through the HEAT-HESA linked data.

It is very important to note that while this analysis looks at Contact Hours in terms of Take Your Place participation up to and including the end of the academic year ahead of the Follow-Up 3 survey, further Phase 2 activity has since been undertaken and therefore the results here should be interpreted with caution. Table 1.16 below illustrates the results from the linear probability model und (results are robust to the statistical specification, where a logistic regression model yields similar estimates).

Table 1.16

Higher Education Participation	Coefficient	Statistical significance
Contact Hours	0.073	<0.001
Year Group		
Year 11	-0.002	0.903
Year 12	0.193	0.004
Year 13	0.339	<0.001
College Level 2	-0.095	0.066
College Level 3 Year 1	0.011	0.829
College Level 3 Year 2	0.116	<0.001
Year group unknown	0.302	<0.001
Gender		
Female	0.030	<0.001
Target status		
Target student	-0.014	0.102
Target status unknown	-0.357	<0.001
Student POLAR		
Lowest participation quintile	0.015	0.042
Student IMD		
Most deprived quintile	-0.022	0.022
Constant	0.106	0.061

*Note: N=11,470. Coefficients are unstandardized coefficients.

Reference category for Year Group = Year 10 (at Baseline).

Distinct missing categories ("unknown" values) included in the analysis.

The regression results suggest that each additional hour of Take Your Place contact time is associated with a positive and statistically significant increase in the probability of progressing to higher education, once controlling for the small set of student characteristics in the model. The estimated relationship indicates that for each additional hour of activity, all else in the model held constant, students' probability of participation to higher education increases by 0.073 points, or 0.073%. Considering that the average number of contact hours for students in the analytical sample is 2.9, this suggest that all other things being equal, average engagement in Take Your Place is associated with a 0.2% increase in the probability of being enrolled in higher education compared to no engagement.

While the actual effect size is small, this statistically significant result is encouraging evidence of a positive link between Take Your Place and the hard outcome of higher education participation.

Further, at the same amount of contact hours, students initially in higher Year Groups are observed to be much more likely (e.g., Year 13 compared to Year 10) to progress to higher education. This suggests that some students may not be appearing in the HESA data simply because they have not *yet* had the opportunity to progress and may do so in the future. As a result, the analytical decision to restrict the analysis to only students at the appropriate ‘HE-ready’ age is valid. Interestingly, students undertaking Level 2 qualifications in colleges are least likely to progress to higher education all else being considered – even more so than similarly-aged students undertaking Level 2 qualifications (GCSEs) in schools. This remains an area for further research, despite other evidence³ also pointing to similar pattern.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936094/Level_2_study_programmes_231118.pdf), and therefore might tend to look to going into employment rather than HE.

Section 2: Take Your Place Phase 2 only

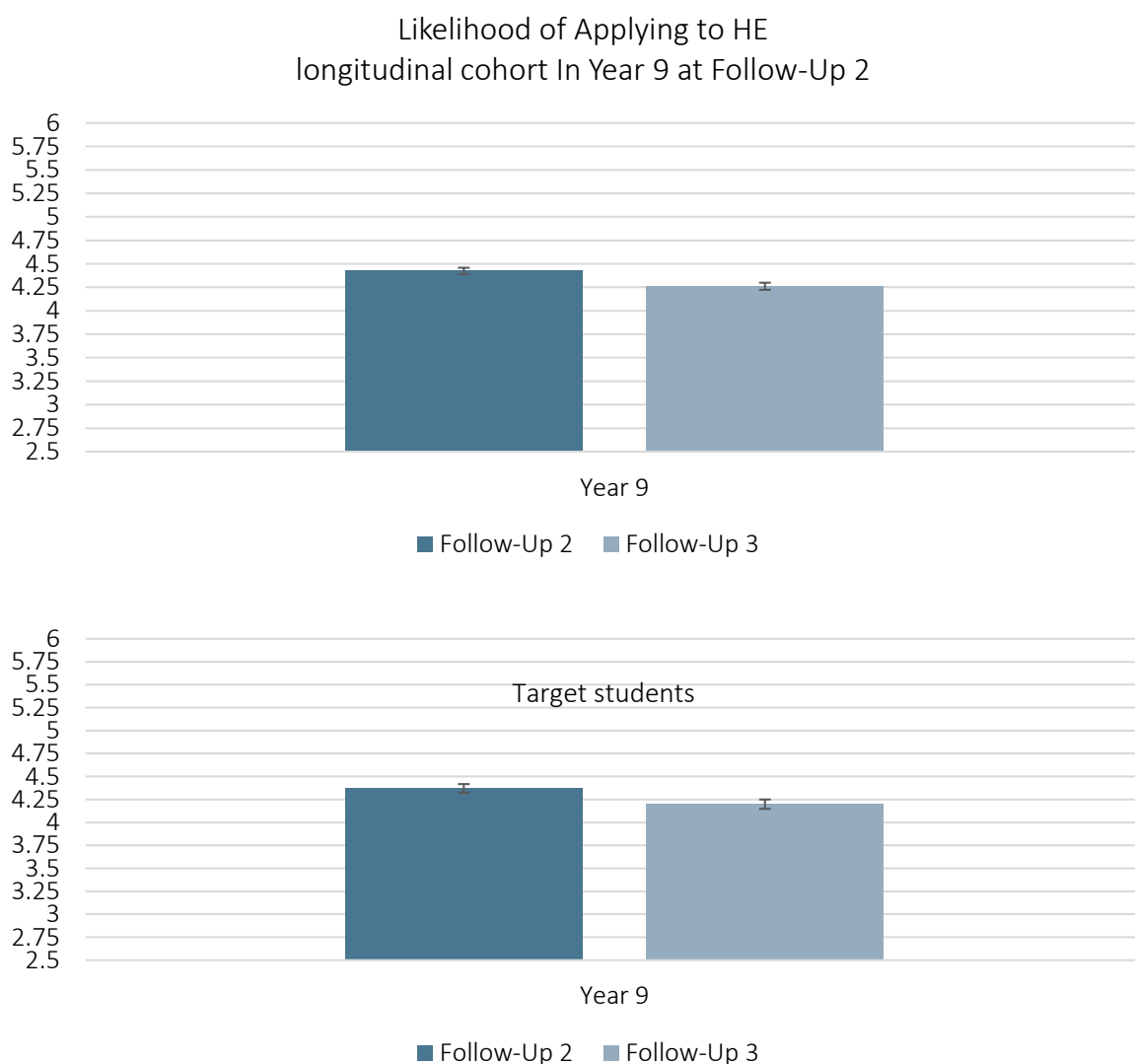
This report also looks at students who completed both the Follow-Up 2 and Follow-Up 3 surveys, whose responses can be examined to explore Phase 2 only programme outcomes. A total of 2,433 respondents were matched across the Follow-Up 2 and Follow-Up 3 survey rounds.

In order to isolate Phase 2 from the rest of the programme, the only meaningful comparison to be used as a reference point are students who at the second Follow-Up survey, that is at the start of Phase 2 activity, won't have had an opportunity to engage with Take Your Place. Consistent with the approach in Section 1 part 1, here this means the cohort who were in Year 9 at the 3rd Follow-Up only.

Higher education application intentions

The survey-based primary outcome measure (HE application intentions) displays a slight but statistically significant downward longitudinal trend for this tracked sub-cohort of students who were Year 9 at Follow Up 2.

Figure 2.1 Likelihood of applying to higher education for longitudinal tracked cohort, whole cohort, and target students only

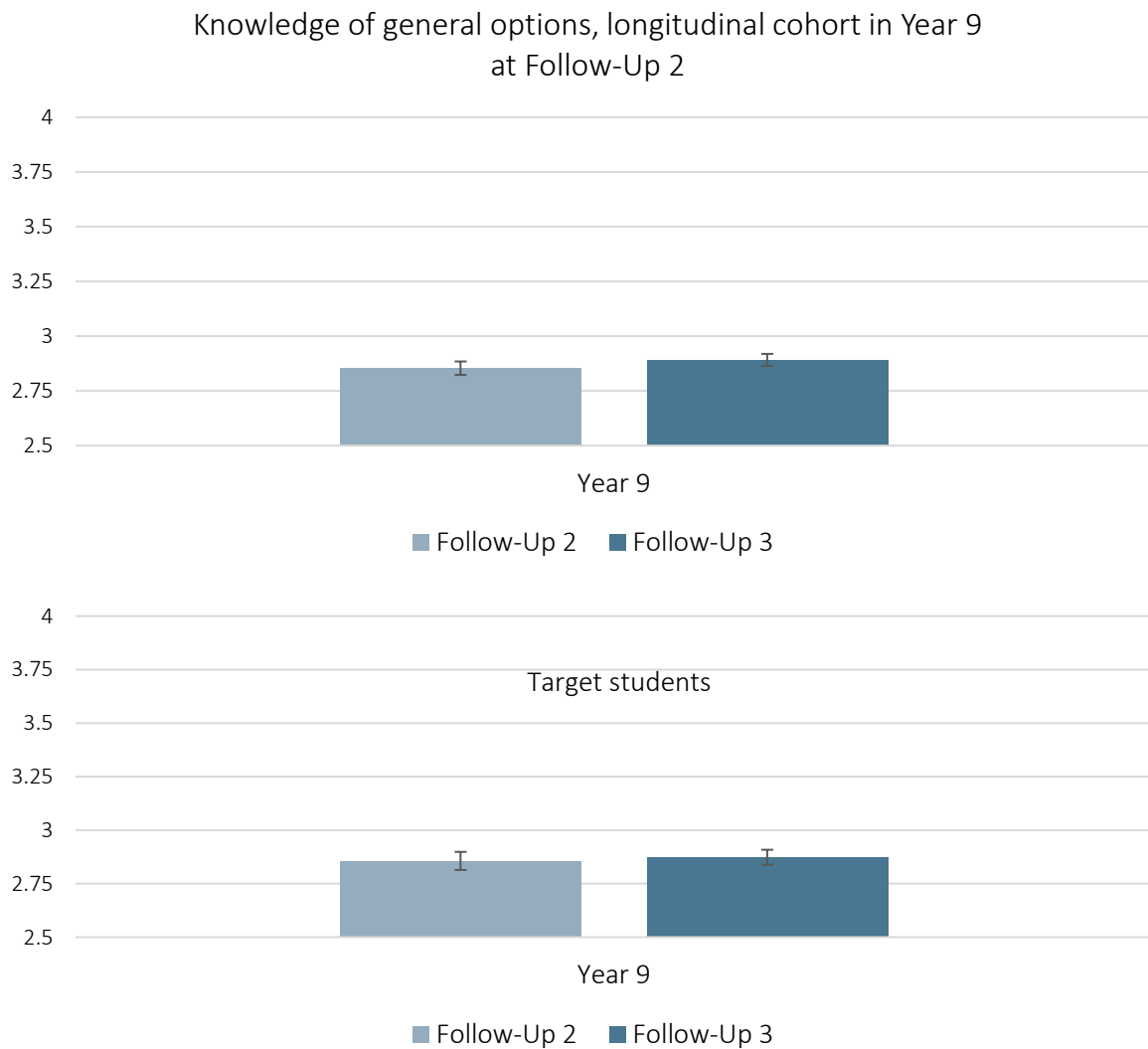


Both the full tracked cohort and tracked target students display a slightly downward trend from the 2nd to the 3rd follow-up Survey in terms of their self-reported likelihood to apply to higher education.

Knowledge of general educational options

As in Section 1, a series of secondary outcome measures are also available from the Surveys. In relation to self-reported knowledge of general educational options available to students, the tracked cohort in Year 9 at the time of the second Follow-Up Survey displays an upward trend to mid-Phase 2 (Follow-Up 3). This applies to both the full tracked cohort as well as target students (Figure 2.2).

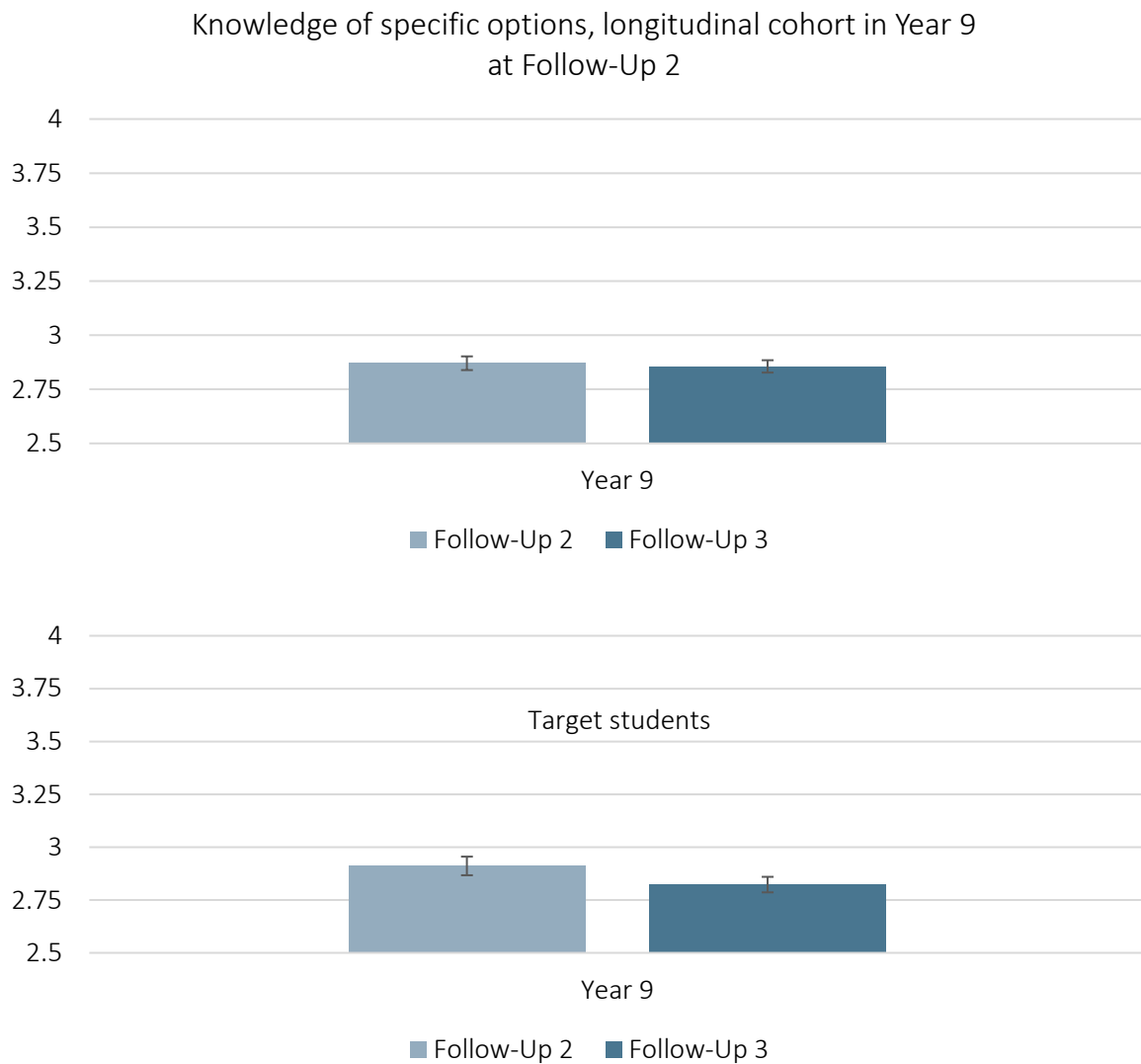
Figure 2.2 Longitudinal cohort: knowledge of general educational options, whole cohort, and target students only



Knowledge of specific educational options

As noted above, the general future educational options question was accompanied by a question on the specific future educational options given the qualifications young people were taking at the time of each survey. For the longitudinal cohort tracked for the purposes of looking at the first half of Phase 2 only, this again relates only to students in Year 9 at Follow-Up 2, and therefore the question relates to post-GCSE options (Figure 2.3 below)

Figure 2.3 Longitudinal cohort: knowledge of specific educational options, whole cohort, and target students only



For both the full tracked cohort and for target students only, the change from pre-Phase 2 (Follow-Up 2) to mid-Phase 2 (Follow-Up 3) is slightly negative, however not statistically significant. That is, tracked students' self-reported levels of knowledge remain stable between the two survey rounds.

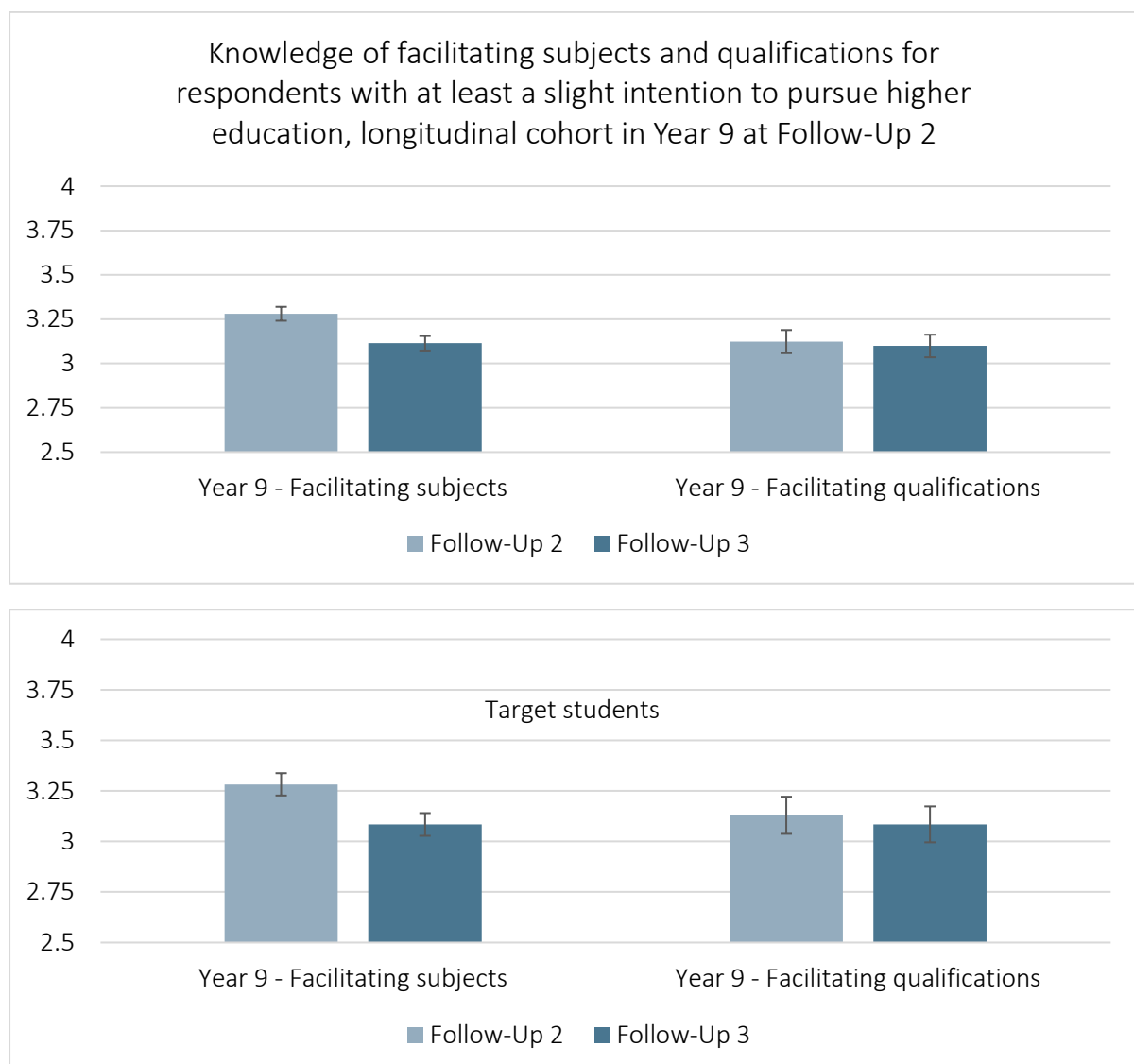
Knowledge of facilitating subjects and qualifications

Finally, the surveys allow for the tracking of knowledge of facilitating subjects, and respectively facilitating qualifications. This question is asked of Year 9 students at Follow-Up 2 and 3 who indicated at least a slight intention to pursue higher education at any point in the future.

Figure 2.4 illustrates the patterns of change compared to the Baseline for these two aspects, for both the full longitudinally tracked cohort and target students.

For both subjects and qualifications, there is a clear pattern of decreasing self-reported knowledge in relation to both facilitating subjects and facilitating qualifications. These differences are statistically significant in the case of facilitating subjects. This applies similarly to the full tracked cohort and target students only too.

Figure 2.4 Knowledge of facilitating subjects and qualifications for initially Year 11 respondents, whole cohort, and target students only



Conclusion

This mini longitudinal cohort provides the opportunity to focus specifically on Phase 2 of Take Your Place. This is achieved by using as a baseline, responses from Follow-Up 2 from a year group that had not had any prior opportunity to engage with Take Your Place, that is Year 9. Older cohorts also engaged with Take Your Place Phase 2 after Follow-Up 2, however they may have engaged with the rest of the programme previously and therefore do not constitute a 'clean' comparison group. This is precisely because the very nature of Take Your Place, as outlined above, is to provide progressive and sustained activity so that students engage with the programme at multiple points.

The Phase 2 only longitudinal trends are, as for the whole Take Your Place programme above, mixed. While the self-reported likelihood to apply to higher education decreases for students initially in Year 9 (at Follow-Up 3), their reported levels of knowledge either increase or stay generally stable across time. Perhaps this suggests that as students are improving their knowledge, they are using this knowledge to make better-informed decisions, which in some cases means choosing not to pursue higher education. It remains to be seen the extent to which this trend carries through to the end of Phase 2, especially given the likely negative (but uncaptured statistically here) of the pandemic on Follow-Up 3 responses.

Conclusions

The results of the mid-Phase 2 evaluation effort, currently only focused on student outcomes points to a mixed picture of fluctuating levels of self-reported knowledge, on various higher education aspects, and in terms of self-reported intentions to apply. With the mid-Phase 2 Follow-Up 3 survey taking place in the context of substantial disruption to the educational experience and to the economic and social conditions, the fact that there is also evidence of positive, improving trends, supports conclusions from the Phase 1 evaluation report that Take Your Place is contributing to an overall improvement in students' understandings, attitudes, and intentions regarding higher education. Interestingly, while intentions to apply to higher education show a mixed picture, self-reported knowledge of facilitating subjects and qualifications is broadly up for the whole programme, through showing a slight dip when looking at the first half of Phase 2 only. Knowledge of education options is up from Baseline to mid-Phase 2 (Follow-Up 3) but for tracked students responding to consecutive surveys a slight dip is observed across most year groups except those where at Follow-Up 3 students are in final years of respective educational stages. This finding reflects evidence from the Phase 1 evaluation report, also finding more positive trends, and higher overall levels of both knowledge and intentions to apply for students at the end of their respective education phases.

The results of the statistical analysis using linked administrative data from the Higher Education Agency that show a statistically significant, positive, though small, effect of each additional hour on rates of higher education progression. This analysis refers to Phase 1 Take Your Place activity only, due to the nature of the time delays around the availability of HESA data. Given the non-significant result obtained in previous similar analysis as part of the Phase 1 evaluation report, these findings indicate both that looking at full phases of the programme should be prioritised, and, importantly, that participation in the programme across a full phase is associated with better chances of actual progression to higher education.

Taken together and appropriately contextualised, the results therefore suggest that Take Your Place is generating interesting patterns of attitudinal and self-reported knowledge shift. Results also point to participation in the programme being associated with higher probabilities of progression to higher education later on. The full Phase 2 evaluation report will explore these aspects in greater detail, including an analysis of the type and amount of Take Your Place activity students engaged in, and how this relates to all key outcomes of interest. It will also analyse students' experiences of these activities as gathered through post-activity surveys and include a focus on specific elements of progressive and intensive activity within the wider Take Your Place programme, as generated through quasi-experimental evaluation methods. Given the particularly challenging public health and social context and negative impacts from the pandemic on education overall, the evidence here, and the evidence soon to be generated in the full Phase 2 report, will be used to explore the extent to which the full programme, and specific elements within it, have been able to address both the original aims of Take Your Place, and the newly developing challenges.