# Future Focus 2025/26

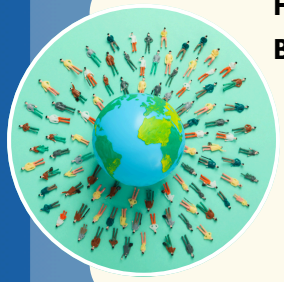
**Outreach for young people from Armed Forces families (service pupils)**

STUDY HIGHER

## What is Study Higher and why do we work with service pupils?

**Study Higher** is part of a national widening participation partnership called **Uni Connect**. We provide impartial information to young people who are underrepresented in higher education (HE), and since 2017 over 9,000 students that we have worked with have now progressed to HE. The Office for Students deems service pupils to be an at-risk group regarding equality of opportunity because their education and HE progression can be adversely affected by aspects of their military lives, such as mobility and deployment.

## Study Higher's service pupil outreach 2025/26



### Future Thinkers

**Buckinghamshire New University, November 2025**

- Subject-specific event - social sciences theme
- Workshops in forensic psychology, criminology and economics
- Speed-interviewing with professionals and HE students working in/studying social science fields

### Creative Thinkers

**Oxford Brookes University, March 2026**

- Subject-specific event - creative arts theme
- Workshops in drama, journalism and storyboarding
- Speed-interviewing with professionals and HE students working in/studying creative fields

### Future Forward

**Oxford Brookes University, July 2026**

- Event themed around post-18 HE options
- Workshops in personal identity and HE essentials
- Campus treasure hunt
- Speed-interviewing with professionals and HE students with experience of apprenticeships, studying abroad, sandwich years and more

## Who have we engaged with?

**85** service pupils engaged in 2025/26

**299** service pupils have engaged with Future Focus since 2021/22

### Numbers of young people who attended

- **44** Future Thinkers
- **51** Creative Thinkers
- **18** Future Forward
- **50** Year 9s
- **32** Year 10s
- **2** Year 11s*

*One student did not share this information

### 9 schools engaged with Future Focus in 2025/26, including 4 new schools

- Carterton Community College
- Faringdon Community College
- Fitzharrys School
- Icknield Community College
- Great Marlow School
- John Colet School
- Princes Risborough School
- The Willink School
- Wallingford School

### Future Focus has facilitated 19 events and workshops since 2021/22

We have worked with the following HE institutions:

- Buckinghamshire New University
- Oxford Brookes University
- Royal Agricultural University
- University of Oxford
- University of Reading
- University of the West of England

### Study Higher's additional work in 2025/26

- Hosted and chaired the SCiP Alliance Central England Hub, continuing into 2026/27.
- Produced a co-design report following our 2024/25 co-design project.
- Presented our co-design project at the SCiP Alliance conference in November 2025.

# Future Focus: Study Higher's outcomes in 2025/26

Study Higher aims for a holistic approach, addressing service pupils' experiences, needs and barriers to HE whilst also acknowledging positives and individual strengths. The outcomes summary below gathers feedback from all three events, broken down by key outreach objectives.

## Enjoyment

Young people genuinely enjoyed the activities

Across all events,
**98% - 100%**
of young people said they found them interesting.

*The boys have been full of enthusiasm for all the activities.*
-Teacher feedback

*Very interactive and engaging sessions. Well pitched to the age of the students.*
-Pupil feedback

*I thought it was fun.*
-Pupil feedback

## Skills and personal development

For current and future learning

**94%** of young people agreed that Future Forward was useful.

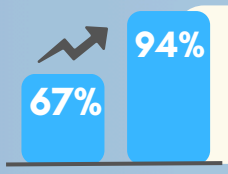
*The speed interview helped me with the options I am choosing for Year 10.*
-Pupil feedback

*[It] has shown me that I can leave my comfort zone.*
-Pupil feedback

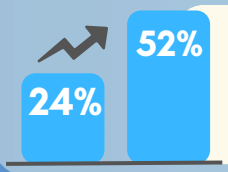
**86%** of young people attending Creative Thinkers agreed they learnt new things that they will use in the future.

## HE and belonging

These pathways are for 'people like me'



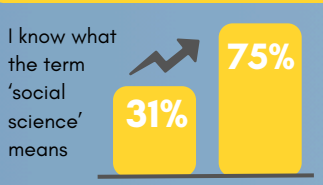

*Future Forward* - pre and post event: The percentage change of young people who agreed that they felt they would 'fit in' at university.

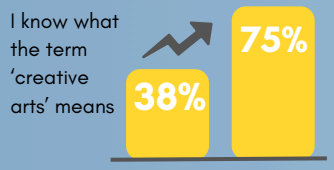



*Future Thinkers* - pre and post event: The percentage change of young people who agreed that they felt they would 'fit in' to the social sciences.

## Subject specific insights

Social sciences and the creative arts




Both Future Thinkers and Creative Thinkers saw an increase in the number young people who understood what 'social sciences' and 'creative arts' were, respectively. (Pre and post event comparisons).

*Changed student perception of creative arts not just being 'art'.*
-Teacher feedback

*I have been thinking about doing a career in creative arts but wasn't sure so it helped explain more.*
-Pupil feedback

## Key knowledge and future pathways

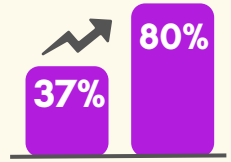
Cultural capital and supporting decision-making

*I now have a more detailed knowledge of what higher education means. E.g. I didn't know what an undergrad was.*
-Pupil feedback

*I wasn't very sure about what I wanted to do in the future, but I think today made it clearer.*
-Pupil feedback

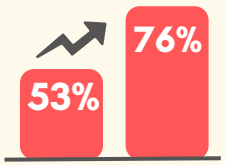
*Good exposure to other options rather than 'traditional' uni courses.*
-Teacher feedback

The percentage change of young people who agreed they 'know lots about different pathways and options in the social sciences' at Future Thinkers (pre and post event).




## Awareness of service pupil status

For both young people and school staff




The percentage change of young people who agreed they were aware of the benefits of sharing their service pupil status at Creative Thinkers (pre and post event).

*The event helped me to get some new experience. I can support Armed Forces families better.*
-Teacher feedback

*I now understand how to use my benefits as an Armed Forces child and I also know about different opportunities.*
-Pupil feedback

## Role models

Connecting with professionals and HE students

*Its helped me understand what life would be like at uni.*
-Pupil feedback

Across all events,
**93% - 94%**
of young people said they found it useful to meet university students and professionals.

*Having several adults in different roles who grew up as service pupils allows students to feel understood and not alone.*
-Teacher feedback

*Pupils received expert and inside knowledge from inspiring professionals.*
-Teacher feedback