



The Access Project

Impact report 2023:
Inspiring the next generation

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‘There’s no way I’d be where I am today without The Access Project, and I think that’s true for a lot of kids who benefit from their work. Above all, the charity gives hope. That means everything to a 16 year-old council estate lad like I was, who knows that the odds are stacked against him.’

Tahmid, Forbes Europe 30 Under 30 Listee in 2020 and former student with The Access Project, now on the board of trustees

‘The benefit of support [from The Access Project] is that I have more motivation than ever to achieve good grades in my exams.’

Bruno, a student with The Access Project

Foreword from our Chief Executive, Nathan Sansom

In the 2021/22 academic year, we have been proud to deliver our programme to more students than ever before. Our support has never been more essential for our students, especially those in Year 13 who were unable to sit their GCSEs in the summer of 2020 and embarked upon their A level examinations with no experience of public exams. They had also been unable to visit universities during the COVID years to get an early sense of university life. We knew we had to work even harder to prepare them for their exams and life at university.

We have made various changes to our delivery model to meet increased demand for tuition and to improve quality. The permanent transition to an online tutoring model has enabled us to recruit volunteers from across the country and we remain hugely grateful to our amazing volunteer tutors who support our talented young students and make such a difference to their lives. We also expanded our paid-tutor pilot, using more experienced tutors to support students in small groups.

We are now looking towards the future - and an exciting year ahead. We have launched our new four year strategy, Achieving Impact at Scale, and in September 2022 we expanded into Lancashire and Cumbria with the support of The Queen’s College, Oxford.



This is my final Impact Report as CEO of The Access Project, and August 2023 marks the final Results Day when I will be in school supporting students as they get their results. It has been a huge privilege to lead such a dedicated team, and an organisation with such a strong commitment to impact. In particular, I have been continually inspired by our young people, and it has been incredible to see those students who I supported at my first Results Day now graduating, forging their careers, and paying it forward to current students from The Access Project in various ways. I look forward to seeing the organisation going from strength to strength under new leadership.

Our mission

Our mission is to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access top universities, through a unique combination of tuition and in-school mentoring. We work with them to make good applications, get the grades and transition to university.

We believe that every young person should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and make the most of their education. We're passionate about reducing the educational barriers our students face so that they can follow their dreams.

Our work is vital as access to top universities in the UK is profoundly unequal. According to the Department for Education, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are five times less likely to attend top universities in comparison to more advantaged students. We are committed to delivering our highly impactful programme with our students to tackle this injustice.



'I have seen a huge increase of how interested I am in the subject, which really helped me make choices about my future and what I want to study, who I want to be.'

Ayaan*, a student with The Access Project

Of the students we worked with in 2021/22:

1%
receiving care or care leavers.

92%
from disadvantaged areas.

40%
receive free school meals (compared to 22% of the national average eligible for free school meals).

55% eligible for Pupil Premium (compared to 27% of the national average eligible for Pupil Premium).

'My grade has gone from a 5 to an 8. I feel very confident that I will do well in all of my upcoming History exams thanks to the tutoring.'

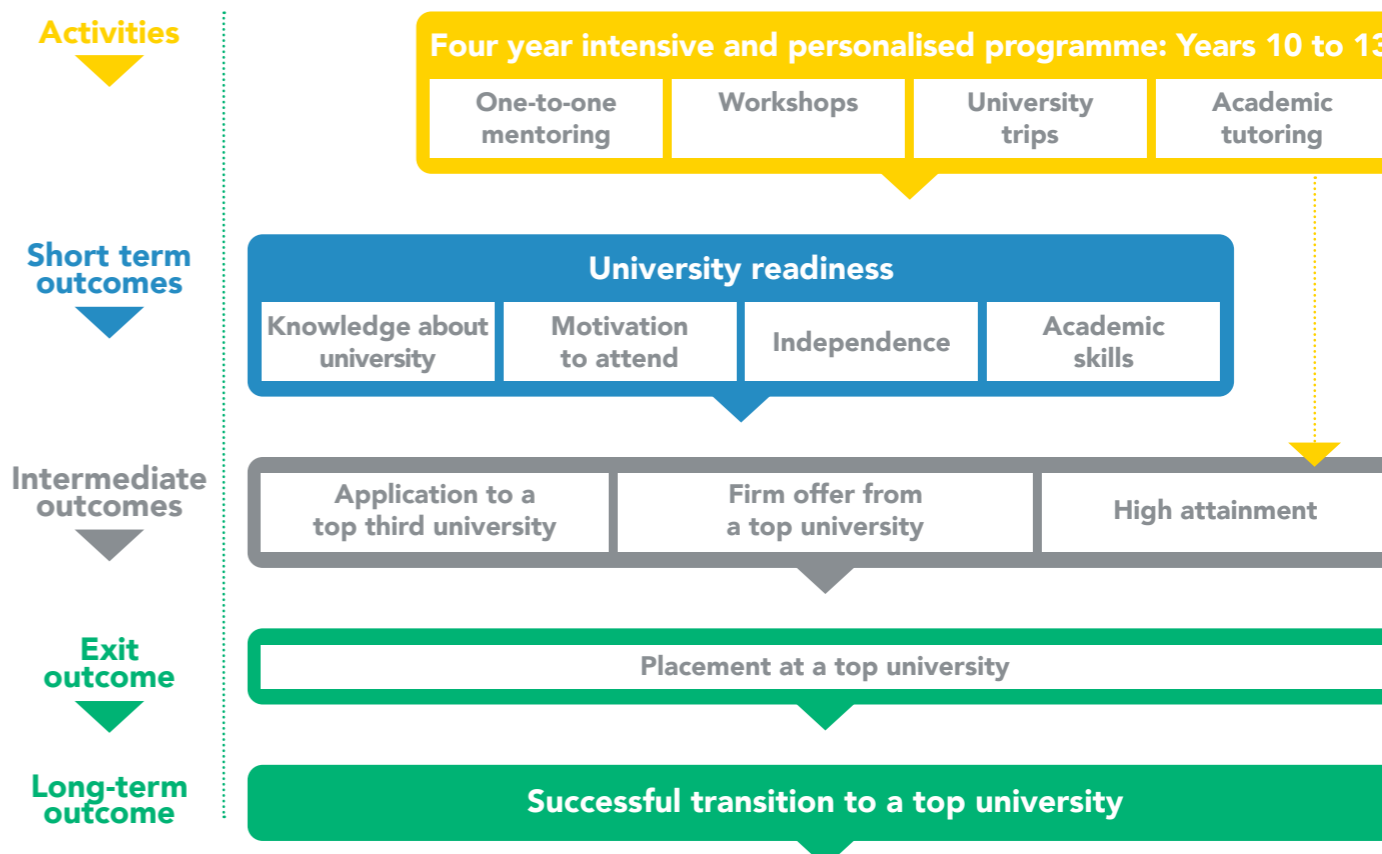
Irena*, a student with The Access Project

Our theory of change in 21/22

The Access Project supports students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access top universities by providing personalised tuition and university admissions support.

Our Theory of Change sets out a roadmap for how we set out to achieve our long-term outcome through the activities carried out by our University

Access Officers and our professional group and volunteer one-to-one tutors. Our Theory of Change holds us accountable to delivering activity which will have the greatest impact on our young people, and provides us with a strong foundation for year-on-year programme design and development, while remaining true to our mission and delivering against our desired long-term outcome.



'My tutorials gave me an opportunity to prove to myself that I can do well at school. Not only has this programme helped me with my academic achievements, but also personal qualities such as communication and team collaboration.'

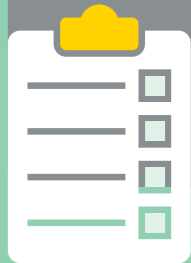
Jumi, a student with The Access Project



Our programme

In-school mentors

Known as University Access Officers (UAOs), our in-school mentors help students navigate their journey to university. They deliver workshops and one-to-one guidance, covering every stage of the university application process.



University visits

Our students experience student life on our visits to top universities across the country, and have an opportunity to attend career insight events hosted by our partner companies.



Our programme combats educational inequality and improves social mobility by raising students' grades and supporting them to understand the pathway to a top university.

Tutors

Our trained volunteer tutors and paid group tutors work with students for an hour a week in a specific subject to improve their grades and subject confidence.



Societies

Our societies for Oxbridge and Medicine & Dentistry provide additional support to students aiming to study some of the most challenging courses.



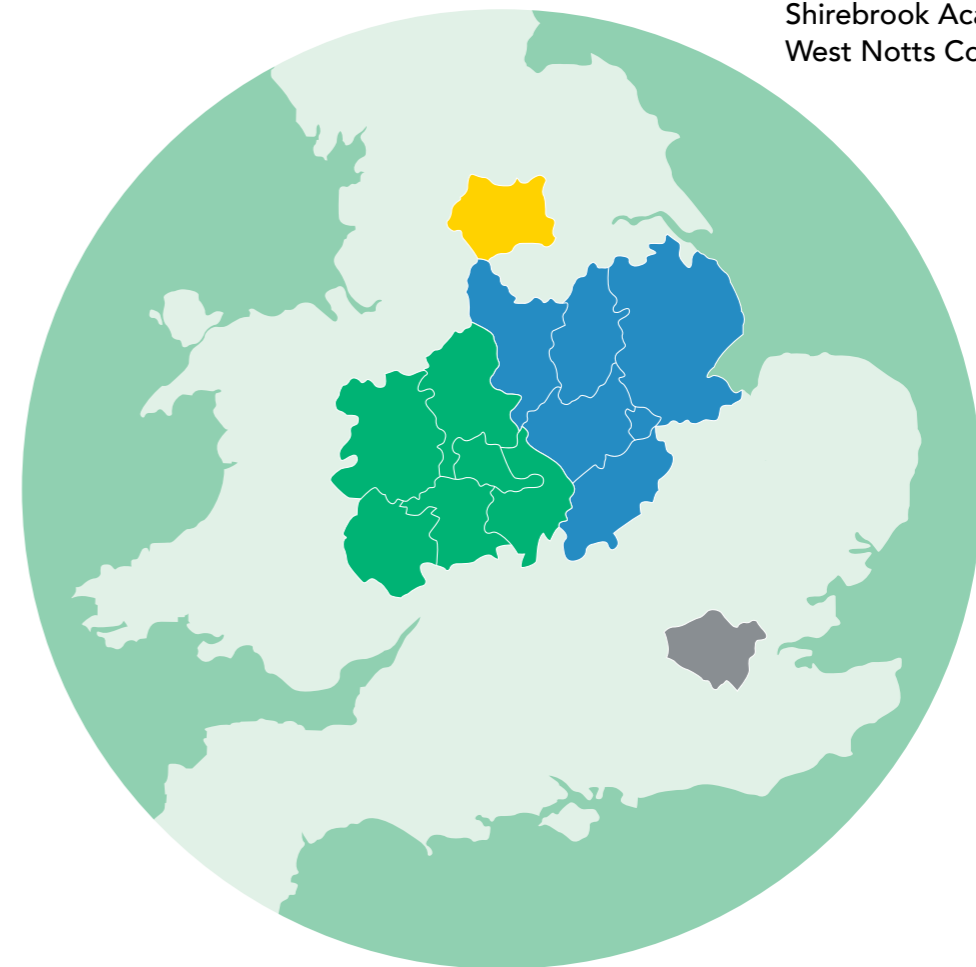
Where we work

2 West Yorkshire schools

Dixons Allerton Academy
Dixons Cottingley Academy

4 East Midlands schools

Ashfield School
Outwood Academy Portland
Shirebrook Academy
West Notts College



6 West Midlands schools

Colmers School and Sixth Form
Holte School
Moseley School
Ormiston Forge Academy
Waverley School
Wood Green Academy

23 London schools

Bishop Douglass Catholic School
Carshalton High School for Girls
Central Foundation Boys' School
Central Foundation Girls' School
Chelsea Academy
City of London Academy, Islington
George Green's School
Globe Academy
Haggerston School
Highbury Grove School
Hornsey School for Girls
Kensington Aldridge Academy
King Solomon Academy

Lilian Baylis Technology School
Lister Community School
Oasis Academy Hadley
University Academy of Engineering South Bank
St George's Roman Catholic School
St Thomas More Catholic School
The City Academy, Hackney
The Norwood School
The Urswick School
Woolwich Polytechnic School

Our impact

Students with The Access Project are almost twice as likely to attend top universities as similarly disadvantaged students, according to UCAS.

The Access Project students*		UCAS benchmarking group of statistically similar students* that have not taken part in The Access Project
93	Applied to a top university	58
82	Received an offer from a top university	51
53	Placed at a top university	33

*Out of 100 students.

Evaluating our impact

Our mission is to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access top universities. We deliver this through our University Readiness Programme, which is an evidence-based, data-driven intervention. We bring together data from a variety of sources to track students' progress and outcomes.

A crucial part of our work involves understanding the impact we are making to the lives of our students. Our Strategy and Impact Team works tirelessly to improve the quality of our programmes by evaluating their impact on our students as well as their relevance in the wider context of social mobility and widening participation in the UK.

We have been proud to support these amazing, resilient students through a challenging time. They have coped with tremendous disruption to their education: the transition to online learning, canceled exams and a loss of learning. In addition, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have been disproportionately affected. According to the Education Policy Institute, the disadvantage gap increased by the largest annual amount since comparable statistics have been available over the last decade.

Against this backdrop, it is an incredible achievement that our external evaluation via UCAS Outreach Evaluator showed that The Access Project students are almost twice as likely as their peers to secure a place at a top third university. This is credit to the hard work, dedication and adaptability of our staff, partner schools and the young people on our programmes.

41%
of our students received ABB grade or higher.



98%
of our students recommend The Access Project.



'The Access Project has been transformational for some of our students. It has created a platform for them to plan, prepare and eventually achieve their aspirations of attending university. The guidance, support and bespoke tutorials are excellent and allow students to be confident in their studies. As a school our students receive over 600 tutorials a year. The impact has been massive for our students.'

Martin Brookes, Assistant Headteacher, Colmers School

'My grades and confidence have grown since I started The Access Project and I now am more eager to work hard in order to get into a top university.'

Munashe*, a student with The Access Project

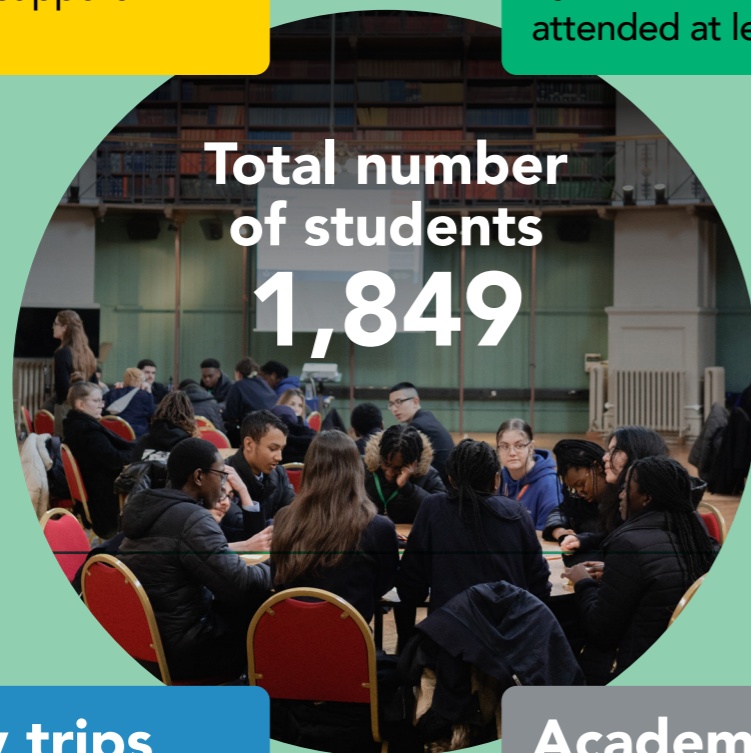
Our year in numbers



One-to-one mentoring
3,398 hours of support.



Workshops
735 workshops were delivered by UAOs. 1,835 students attended at least one workshop.



Total number of students
1,849

University trips
305 Year 12s attended 8 university trips, and 280 Year 10s attended 3 virtual trips.



Academic tutoring
34,581 hours of one-to-one tuition, 2,547 hours of group tuition (pilot project).



The impact of our volunteers

This year, as ever, we remain indebted to our incredible volunteer community, without whom we simply would not be able to deliver our full programme and enable our young students to fulfil their potential.

- 1,704 volunteers delivered at least one tutorial in AY21/22.

- During the course of 2021/22, we received 846 new volunteer applications, widening our geographical reach as online tuition continued to enable us to recruit across the country.
- We improved efficiencies in our onboarding processes and as a result were able to onboard new volunteers on average 11 days faster than the previous year.

97%

of students said that they enjoyed being tutored online, that tutorials helped motivate them and boosted their confidence communicating online.

91%

of students said that their tutor was knowledgeable, well prepared and addressed their academic needs; they said that they played an active role in tutorials and had a good working relationship with their tutor.

85%

of students said that their tutorials have helped them improve their time management.

Volunteer tutor spotlight

Kristof

Kristof has completed his first year of volunteering for The Access Project as a physics tutor. He has been tutoring students from Colmers School and Sixth Form.

Kristof explained, "I was motivated to tutor to combine my enjoyment of teaching physics and the opportunity to push the world closer towards equity via the pairings provided by The Access Project.

I have been able to practice empathy, time management, and social skills while also broadening my understanding of physics along the way as a bonus.

I would encourage others to apply to feel the pride that comes from helping where it is needed and lifting others up."



The impact of our mentors

Our student mentors, called **University Access Officers (UAOs)**, are vital to the success of our **University Readiness Programme**.

Mentor support

- **92%** of students felt that workshops were a good use of their time.
- **96%** of students felt that one-to-one sessions were a good use of their time.
- **97%** of students felt able to approach their UAO for advice and thought that the advice they were getting was personalised.

University readiness

- **93%** of students said they better understood how to get into a top university.
- **90%** of students felt more motivated to attend a top university.

Life skills

- **88%** of students agreed they had become more independent.
- **89%** of students felt that they had become more confident.

Spotlight on our University Access Officers

Rebecca Based in Birmingham, West Midlands

“My most heartwarming moment was when a student told me that he wouldn’t be the person he is today without The Access Project and that it had been an amazing experience to be part of the programme. This student was extremely nervous and lacked self-belief when I first met him in Year 12. I have seen him blossom into a confident and chatty young man who wrote an outstanding personal statement and had the courage to apply to Oxford, getting all the way to interview stage. To say I am proud of him would be an understatement - he threw himself into all the opportunities he was given and I am sure he will achieve his dream of being a Professor of Physics.”



Farena Based in Bradford, West Yorkshire

“The best thing about my job is supporting students to fly with their future aspirations and instil a can-do attitude in them. I love seeing how my students grow in confidence from Year 10 to Year 11, ready to fulfil their dreams and hopes for the future!”



Amy Based in London: two schools in Enfield and Lambeth

“My most memorable moment was Results Day. It was really rewarding to see my students get the results they deserve and secure their places at university. It was amazing to see the students’ faces when they saw their hard-earned results! One of my students achieved all A*s, which was an incredible achievement. I really enjoyed celebrating their success and seeing their hard work pay off. Another particularly memorable moment from Results Day was when one of my especially hard-working students got a call to say he had been moved off the waitlist and had secured a place to study Medicine. It was such a brilliant moment and I will always remember how excited he was!”



The impact of our funders

Our work is generously funded by a range of partners including corporates, trusts, major donors and universities as well as the schools where we deliver our programmes. We do not receive any government grants to deliver our work, and instead rely on the generosity of many to make a big difference to our students. We are grateful for the ongoing support we receive from our partners and donors.

In 2021/22, twenty three trusts and foundations funded our work, giving a total of over £700,000. Some supported specific schools or regions while others funded our infrastructure enabling The Access Project to run its core functions to support our students on the ground.

We partnered with six prestigious universities and Oxbridge colleges during 2021/22 who helped us fund school partnerships throughout the year with a total of £220,000. Our university partners gave our students a valuable insight into university life and contributed to their guidance on making the right choices.

Critical to The Access Project in 2021/22 were also the seven major donors who gave a total of £400,000, helping change the lives of students on The Access Project’s programmes.

Our corporate partners also provided us with the vital funding and support we needed to carry out our work and make a transformational difference to young people.

We work to create long standing, mutually beneficial partnerships with all our corporate partners. By engaging businesses in our mission and providing them with meaningful employee volunteering opportunities, we are able to work together to deliver impactful educational initiatives that make a real difference to our students.

In 2021/22, we worked with our corporate partners to host a number of exciting events for our students, from opening up their offices, to running employability workshops and career insight days. All of these opportunities provided our students with a valuable insight into the world of work whilst helping to raise their confidence and aspirations.

In 2021/22:

142 volunteers from across our corporate partners became active volunteer tutors.

2,283 tutorials were delivered across the course of the year.



Corporate partner event spotlight

World of Work Event

We partnered with **Rothschild & Co** to host our first ever **World of Work** event. This half day workshop took place at their offices with a group of students from Chelsea Academy in attendance. The day was facilitated by staff members from The Access Project with volunteers from Rothschild & Co working with small groups of students to lead breakout activities and facilitate discussions. The day helped to demystify the corporate world and opened up the students to some of the opportunities available to them.

This successful collaboration has since led to World of Work events being included in our corporate packages to ensure that more of our students and corporate partners can benefit.



Meet our students



Ridwan joined The Access Project at the start of Year 11. "I decided to join because I needed a lot of help with English. The Access Project helped me get from a grade 4 to a grade 7 in English by the end of that year. My second tutor was for Chemistry. He moulded my passion for Chemistry, which is now my favourite subject."

Ridwan took part in The Access Project's Medicine and Dentistry Society, which supports students who are applying for more challenging subjects at selective universities. "The Medicine and Dentistry Society introduced me to UCAT, which is the admissions test for these courses. Before that I had no idea what UCAT was or how to study for it."

With support from The Access Project, Ridwan secured a place at King's College London to study Dentistry, getting an incredible three A*s. "I had my eyes on King's since I started researching Dentistry. There are a couple of top universities with very highly ranked Dentistry courses, so I went with King's because it felt the most right for me."

Najibah secured a place at University College London (UCL) to study an Arts and Sciences degree, getting A*A*AB. "It has been incredible to have such a focused and personal source of support that helped me get accepted to all five of my shortlisted universities" Najibah told us.

Najibah joined The Access Project in Year 10. "I was generally positive about my academic abilities, but I lacked confidence in English. I applied for English tuition as I thought I would benefit from some extra support in achieving the exceptional grades I was aiming for."

For Najibah, the support from her tutors helped her regain confidence and make progress in English and Maths. "Coming into Year 12, I became very nervous about A level Maths. With my tutor's support, I started to really enjoy Maths again. I developed problem-solving skills that ultimately produced my A grade."

"The university-related support I have received from my UAOs has been invaluable," Najibah continued. "They helped me every step of the way, from shortlisting my universities to editing my personal statement, to finally planning for my life at university."

Dylan joined The Access Project in 2019 when he was in Year 10.

"I enrolled with The Access Project because I thought the tutoring would prove invaluable for my success with my GCSEs and A levels, and the university advice also greatly appealed to me.

My tutor Gareth was exceptional and helped me with English every step of the way. Without his incredible support I do not believe that I would have succeeded in English to the extent that I did.



My University Access Officers Beth and Marcella have made me much more aware of every opportunity that I can seize to make it much easier to find an excellent university to attend, and I am very thankful for their advice.

And what's next for Dylan? "I plan on studying law at university. I believe that The Access Project's advice is going to be a massive help with finally achieving all my dreams."

Thank you

We would like to thank everyone who supported our work in 2021 and 2022. Without your contributions, we would not be able to help as many talented students secure a place at a top university. Thank you to all our dedicated volunteers, partners and donors, including:

AimHigher West Midlands
Acadian Asset Management
Alta Advisers
Ashurst
Barclays
Bloomberg
Charterhouse Charitable Trust
CHK Foundation
CMS
The David & Elaine Potter Foundation
The David Farnham Memorial Gift
Deloitte
The Dulverton Trust
EQ Foundation
Friends and family of Professor Jeff Cash
Garfield Weston Foundation
The Hamilton Scott Charitable Trust
The Hedley Foundation
The Hobson Charity
Imperial College London
Impetus
Invesco
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Keble College, University of Oxford
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William A Cadbury Charitable Trust
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Thank you to our trustees for their time, passion and expertise:

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Fatos Nacakgedigi



The Access Project

'No one has attended university in my family before, and my parents can't provide me with the information and advice I might need in terms of how to find out more about finance and other things relating to my journey to university. My Access Project Officer is understanding and well informed, he always provides me with support and shows care for my studies and helps me with personalised one-to-one.'

**Millie*, a student
with The Access Project**

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