Aimhigher Mentoring Scheme - Evaluation Report (2016-2017)
Aimhigher West Midlands

Contents

Introduction

What is the Aimhigher Mentoring Scheme?

The Aimhigher partnership coordinates an annual programme of mentoring. Aimhigher mentors are university students who support a group of around five school or college learners on a weekly basis, typically for between 12 and 15 weeks. The mentors deliver one-to-one and group sessions during the school or college day, and have access to a secure e-mentoring system which provides further contact opportunities and a range of learning and information resources for both mentors and learners. In 2016-2017 over 630 young people from 38 schools and colleges across the West Midlands were supported by 119 Aimhigher mentors. Young people are selected for the scheme because they have the potential to be considering higher education but come from disadvantaged backgrounds and communities that are under-represented in higher education.

Aimhigher mentors are role models for young people and help them by raising their aspirations, improving their study skills, increasing their awareness of higher education, and generally supporting their self-esteem, motivation and confidence. The Mentoring Scheme forms an important part of the wider Aimhigher programme in the West Midlands, which since the loss of government funding is now sustained by partner universities, schools, academies and colleges.

This report summarises the feedback received from learners during the 2016-2017 academic year. It explores the socio-economic characteristics of the learners involved and the impact of the mentoring experience on their educational and career aspirations. It very clearly and powerfully indicates that attending the Mentoring Scheme has a very positive impact, generating large positive shifts in attitudes to learning, knowledge and confidence about progression and motivation to succeed.

These learners will join a larger cohort of Aimhigher beneficiaries that will be tracked over the coming years to see how they perform in their GCSE and Level 3 studies, and if they do indeed go on to enter higher education. Aimhigher would like to thank the many staff and students at partner universities whose hard work and dedication makes the Mentoring Scheme possible. Thanks are also due to colleagues in schools, academies and colleges, for their support in identifying Mentoring learners and supporting their engagement, and to the parents and carers of the students, for their trust and support.
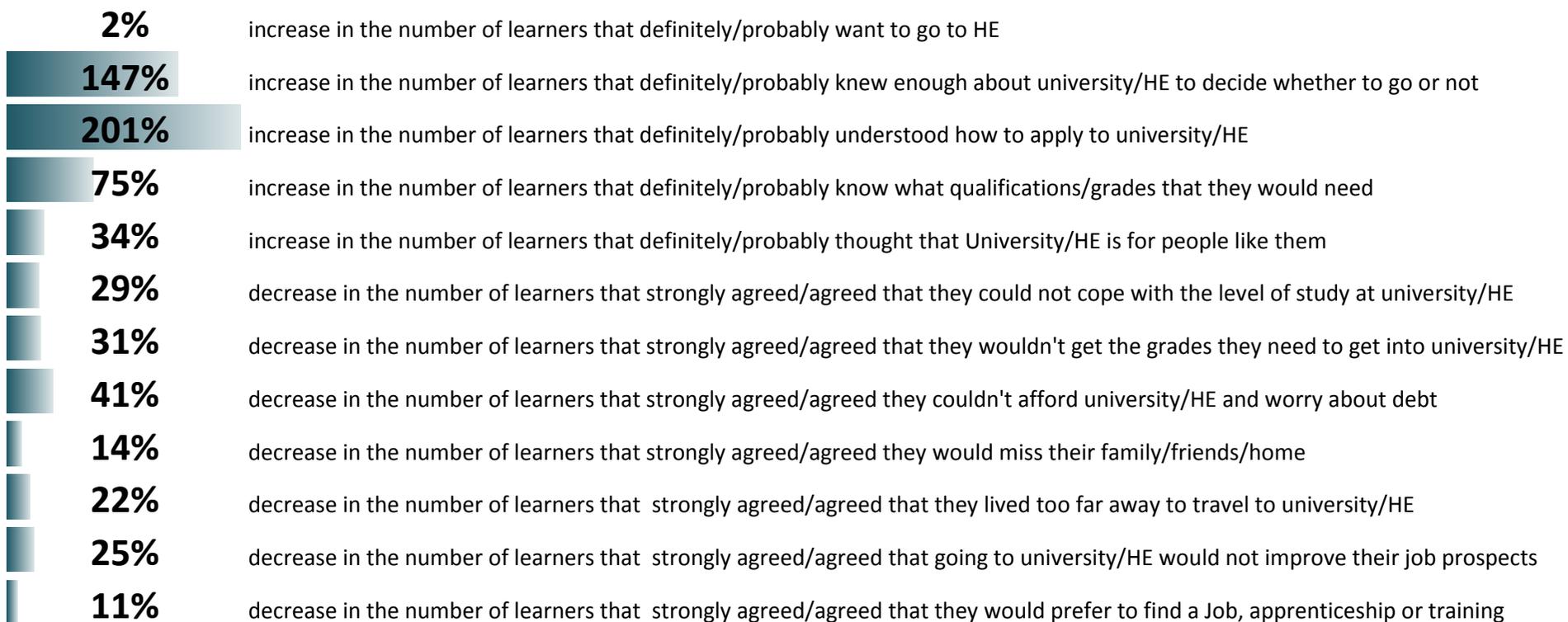
Executive Summary

During 2016-2017 the Aimhigher mentoring scheme achieved the following outcomes:

631 learners engaged in mentoring

5698 total learner engagements

9 engagements per learner

99.7% *of learners were very satisfied / satisfied with the scheme*

"The scheme has been very beneficial, I'm a lot less nervous about going to college and I now think I have the confidence to go to university."

How did the scheme benefit learners?

2% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably want to go to HE

147% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably knew enough about university/HE to decide whether to go or not

201% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably understood how to apply to university/HE

75% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably know what qualifications/grades that they would need

34% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably thought that University/HE is for people like them

29% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that they could not cope with the level of study at university/HE

31% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that they wouldn't get the grades they need to get into university/HE

41% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed they couldn't afford university/HE and worry about debt

14% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed they would miss their family/friends/home

22% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that they lived too far away to travel to university/HE

25% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that going to university/HE would not improve their job prospects

11% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that they would prefer to find a Job, apprenticeship or training

Methodology

The data used in this review has been collected from a number of sources:

Scheme attendance/engagement data was regularly monitored by mentors and used within this review.

Personal data forms which were completed by parents and learners and used to identify how effectively the scheme targeted disadvantaged young people (where required this was supplemented with school/college data).

Evaluations which were completed by learners at the start and end of the scheme. A standard set of questions which were repeated in both the pre and post event questionnaires. Questions aimed to identify learners' shifts in attitudes in terms of aspirations to HE, confidence towards HE and knowledge/understanding of HE. Other questions also explored learners' perceptions of the quality of the scheme.

Learner Engagement

38 schools engaged in mentoring
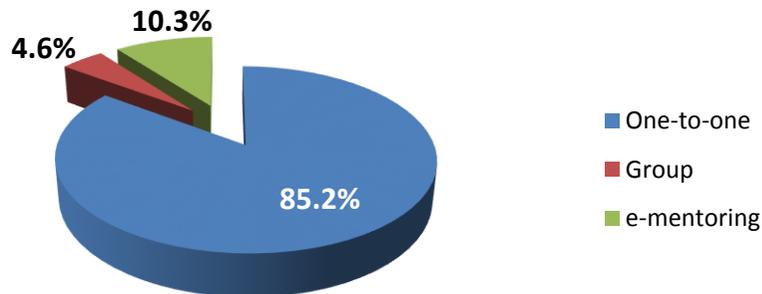
631 learners engaged in mentoring

5698 total learner engagements
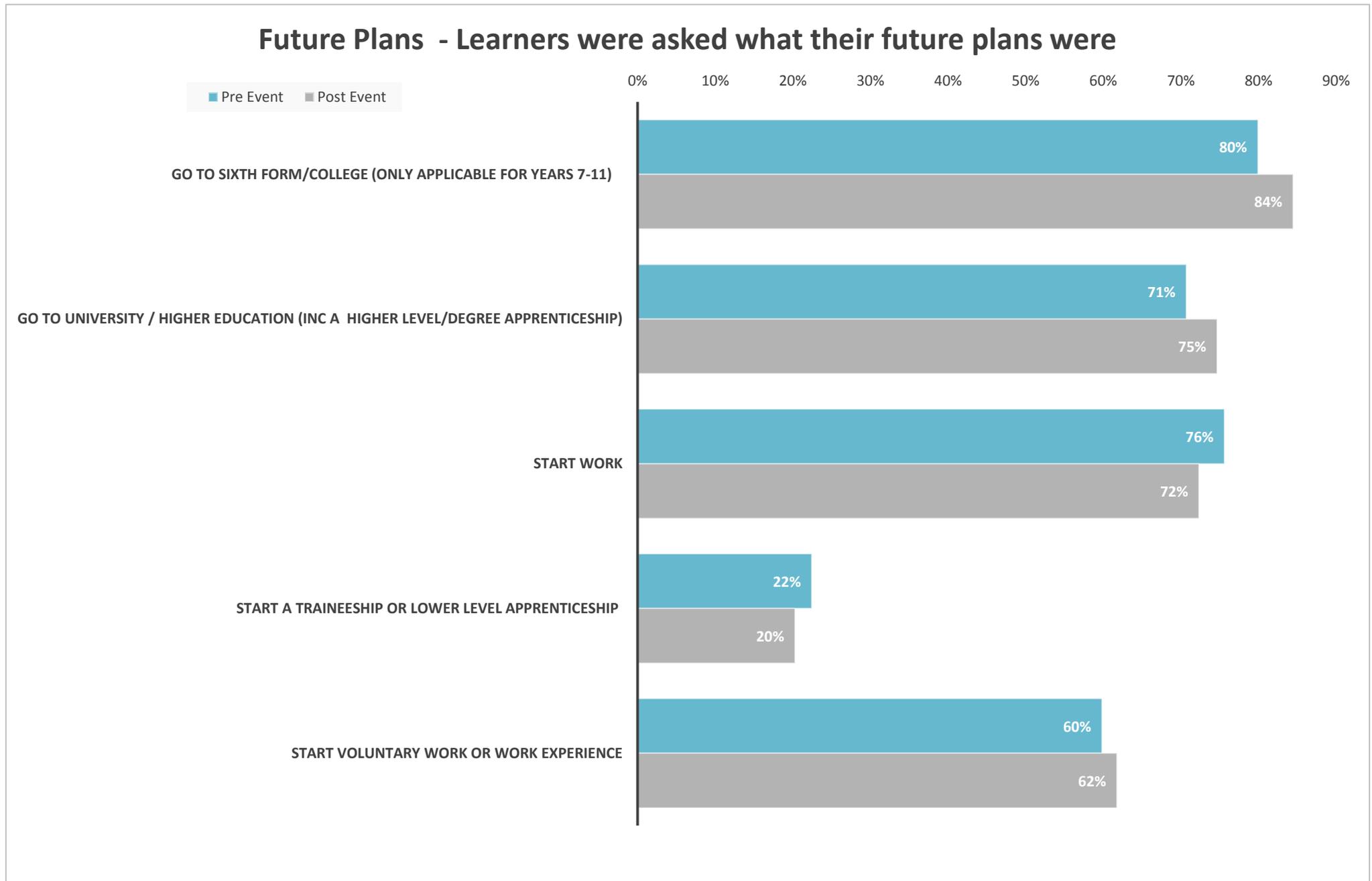
9.0 engagements per learner (average)

Learner Exchanges by activity type

- One-to-one
- Group
- e-mentoring

4.6%
10.3%
85.2%

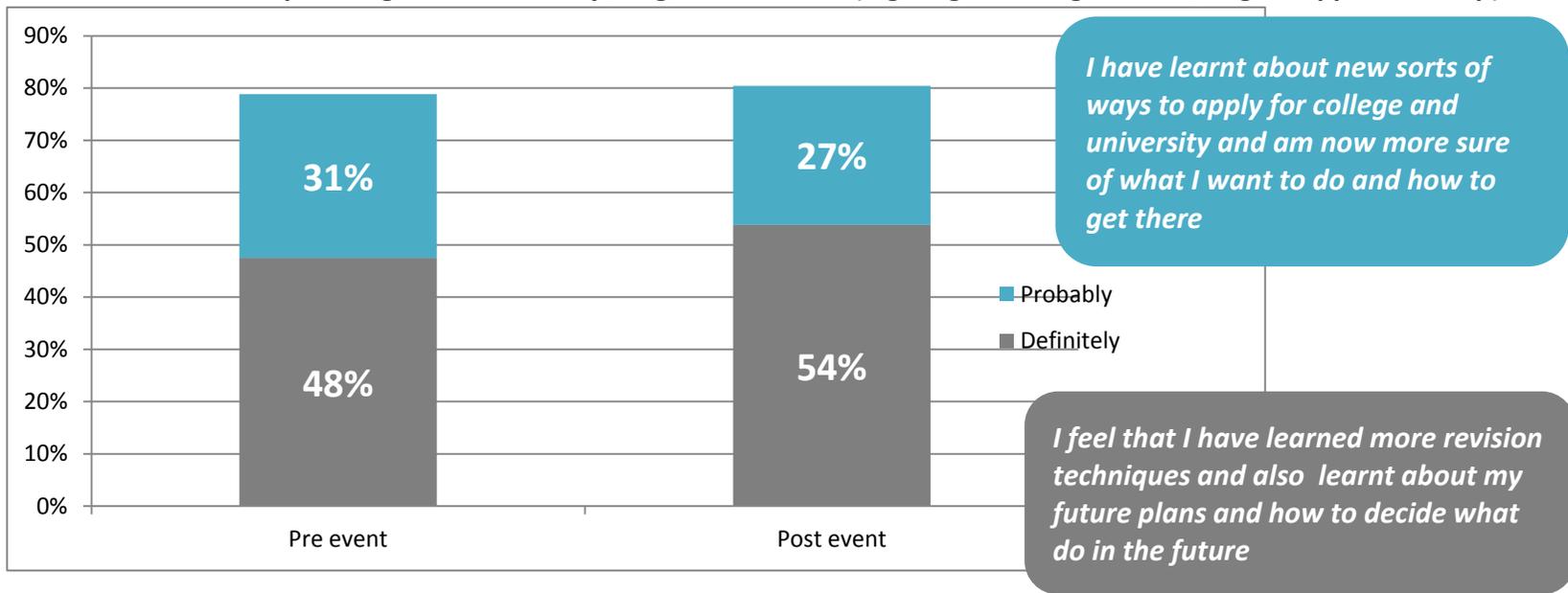*On average each learner engaged in 9 exchanges*

What Difference Did it Make?

The following analysis only includes the responses of learners who completed both the pre and post event questionnaires.

Future Plans - Learners were asked what their future plans were

Legend: Pre Event, Post Event

- GO TO SIXTH FORM/COLLEGE (ONLY APPLICABLE FOR YEARS 7-11): Pre Event 80%, Post Event 84%
- GO TO UNIVERSITY / HIGHER EDUCATION (INC A HIGHER LEVEL/DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP): Pre Event 71%, Post Event 75%
- START WORK: Pre Event 76%, Post Event 72%
- START A TRAINEESHIP OR LOWER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP: Pre Event 22%, Post Event 20%
- START VOLUNTARY WORK OR WORK EXPERIENCE: Pre Event 60%, Post Event 62%

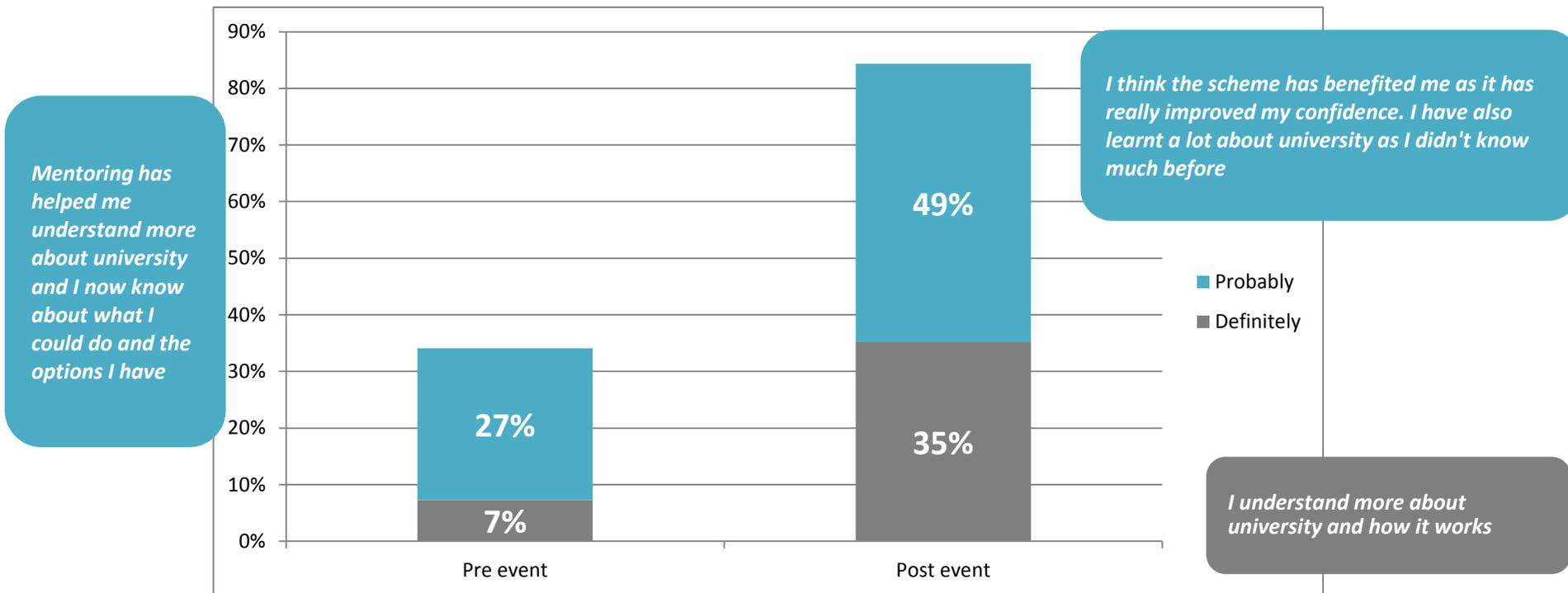**% I plan to go into university / higher education (e.g. degree or higher level/degree apprenticeship)**

They helped me think more about going to university

I have learnt about new sorts of ways to apply for college and university and am now more sure of what I want to do and how to get there

I feel that I have learned more revision techniques and also learnt about my future plans and how to decide what do in the future

Year group	Definitely					Probably				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	48%	42%	37%	52%	70%	31%	36%	37%	13%	25%
Post event	54%	50%	41%	52%	80%	27%	32%	34%	19%	15%

No response   9

Post Event there was a 2% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably want to go to HE

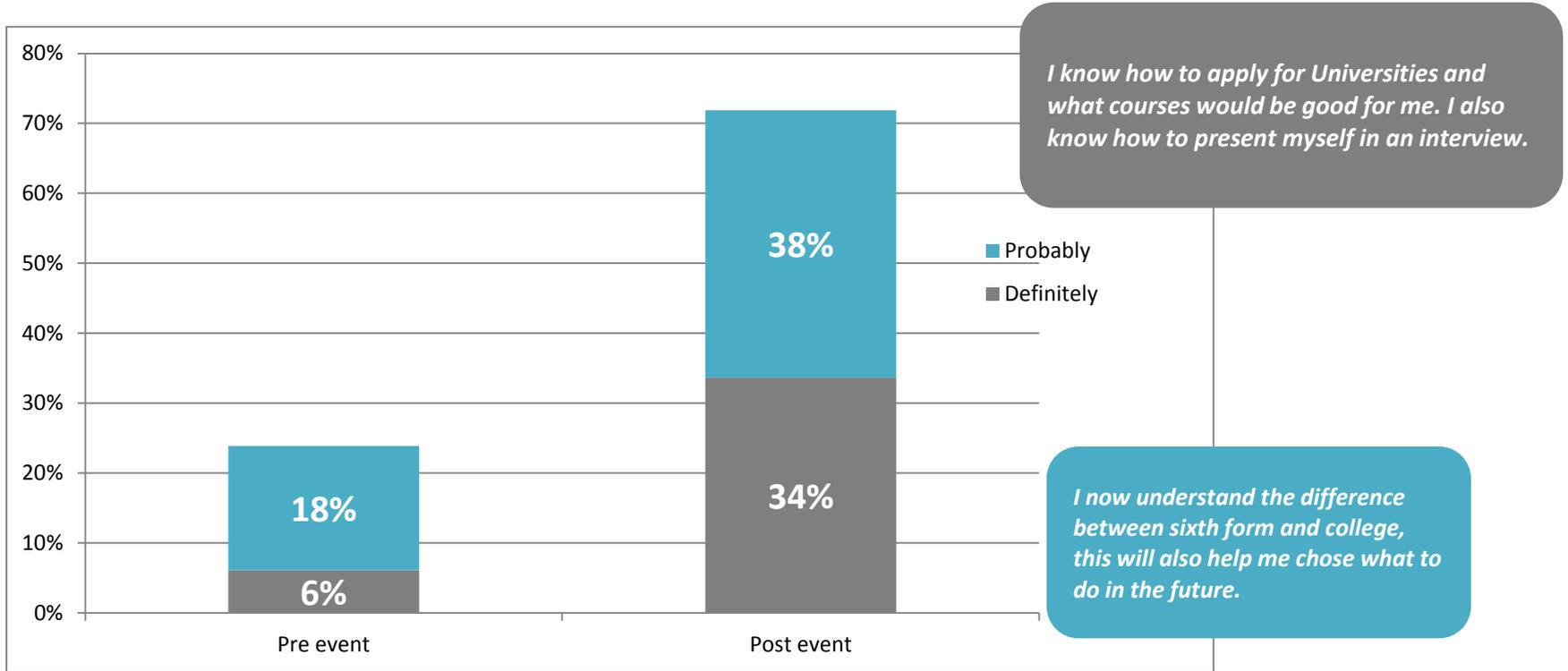**% I know enough about university / higher education to decide whether to go or not**

Mentoring has helped me understand more about university and I now know about what I could do and the options I have

I think the scheme has benefited me as it has really improved my confidence. I have also learnt a lot about university as I didn't know much before

I understand more about university and how it works

Pre event: Definitely 7%, Probably 27%
Post event: Definitely 35%, Probably 49%

- Probably
- Definitely

Year group	Definitely					Probably				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	7%	9%	4%	8%	11%	27%	20%	25%	19%	45%
Post event	35%	26%	34%	33%	49%	49%	52%	52%	38%	45%
No response	8									

Post event there was a 147% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably knew enough about university / higher education to decide whether to go or not

## % I understand how to apply to university / higher education

I know how to apply for Universities and what courses would be good for me. I also know how to present myself in an interview.

I now understand the difference between sixth form and college, this will also help me chose what to do in the future.

Year group	Definitely					Probably				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	6%	4%	6%	8%	8%	18%	16%	15%	16%	26%
Post event	34%	19%	30%	39%	55%	38%	36%	44%	27%	36%
No response	15									

Post event there was a 201% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably understood how to apply to university / higher education

% I know what qualifications / grades that I would need

My tutor has shown me what grades I need to get, giving me a better understanding and greater knowledge of what is needed
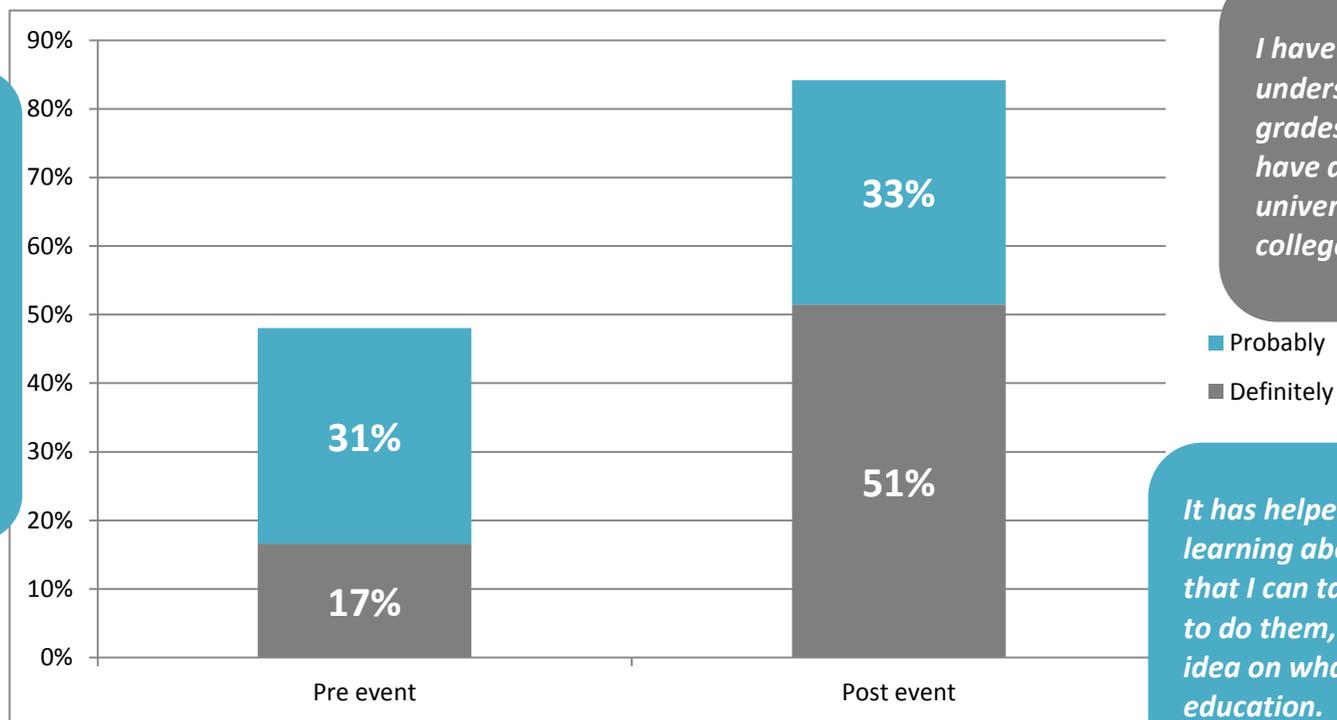
I have a clear understanding on what grades I would need to have access to the university/sixth form college I would like to go.
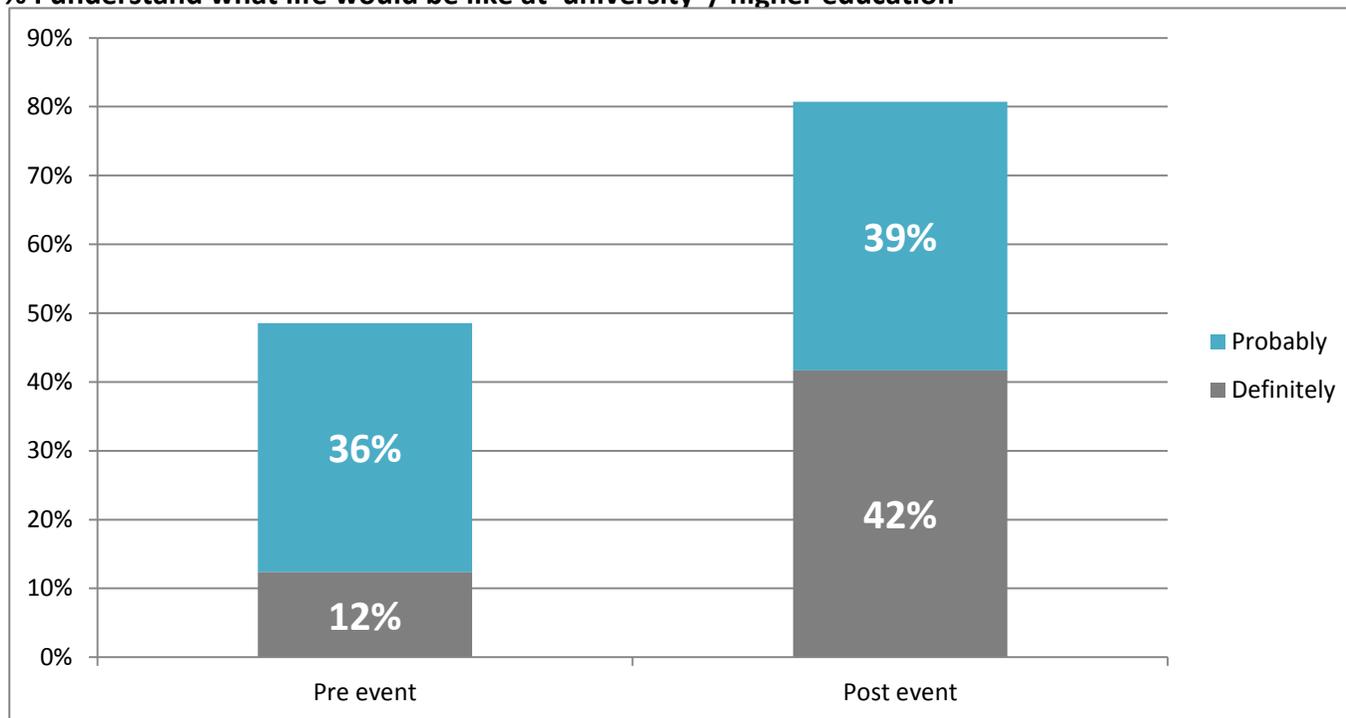
It has helped me a lot especially learning about the different courses that I can take and what grades I need to do them, it has given me a good idea on what to do for higher education.

Year group	Definitely					Probably				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	17%	10%	14%	26%	23%	31%	32%	32%	21%	37%
Post event	51%	36%	43%	55%	81%	33%	43%	42%	21%	14%
No response	13									

Post event there was a 75% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably know what qualifications / grades that they would need

% I understand what life would be like at university / higher education

Chart legend:
- Probably
- Definitely

Bar values:
- Pre event: Definitely 12%, Probably 36%
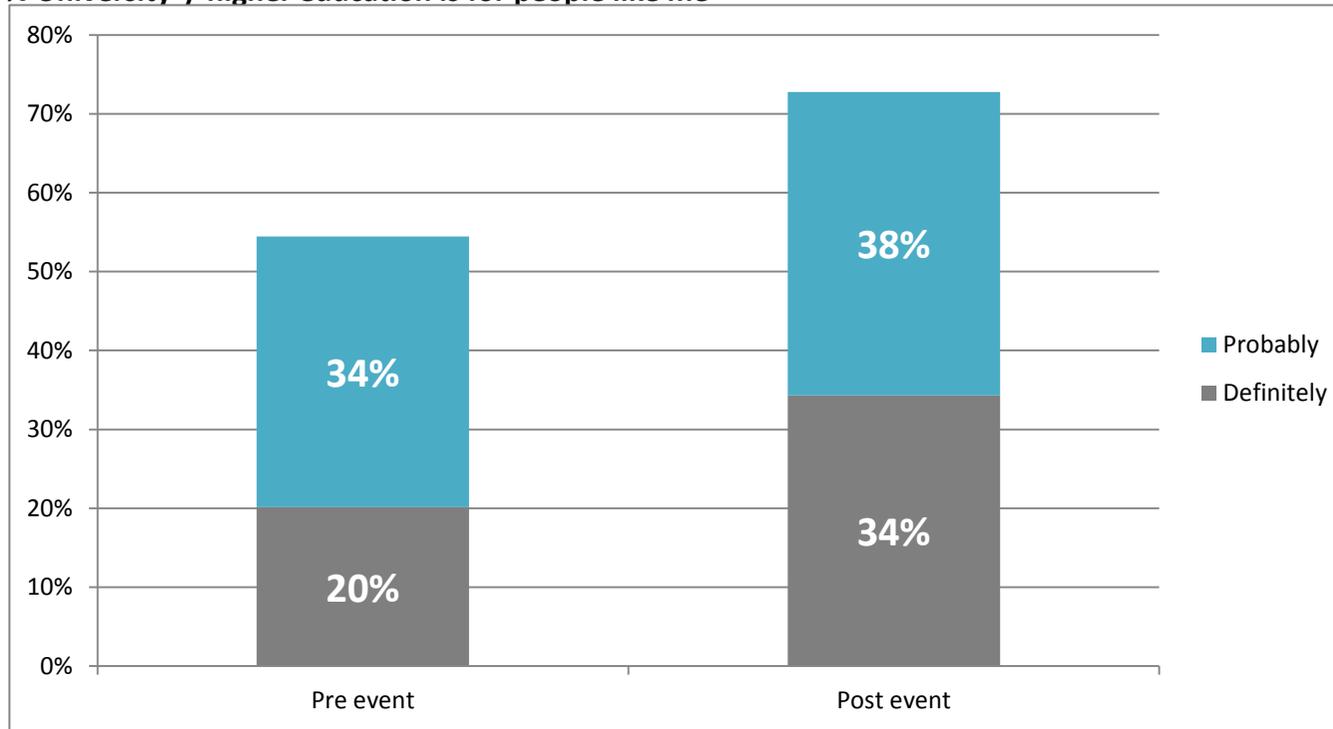- Post event: Definitely 42%, Probably 39%

> *I have a clearer understanding of life in university. I now have a very good CV to use when applying for a job. Made a short-list for the universities I would like to go to*

Year group	Definitely					Probably				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	12%	18%	10%	12%	9%	36%	36%	38%	27%	38%
Post event	42%	44%	40%	37%	40%	39%	42%	36%	27%	53%

No response   13

Post event there was a 66% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably understood what life would be like at university / higher education

% University / higher education is for people like me

**% University / higher education is for people like me**

Year group	Definitely					Probably				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	20%	21%	14%	17%	30%	34%	34%	35%	25%	39%
Post event	34%	36%	26%	32%	46%	38%	38%	40%	32%	41%

No response   10

Post event there was a 34% increase in the number of learners that definitely/probably thought that University / higher education is for people like them

% I could not cope with the level of study at university / higher education

We speak about a lot of important things that have improved my confidence against university
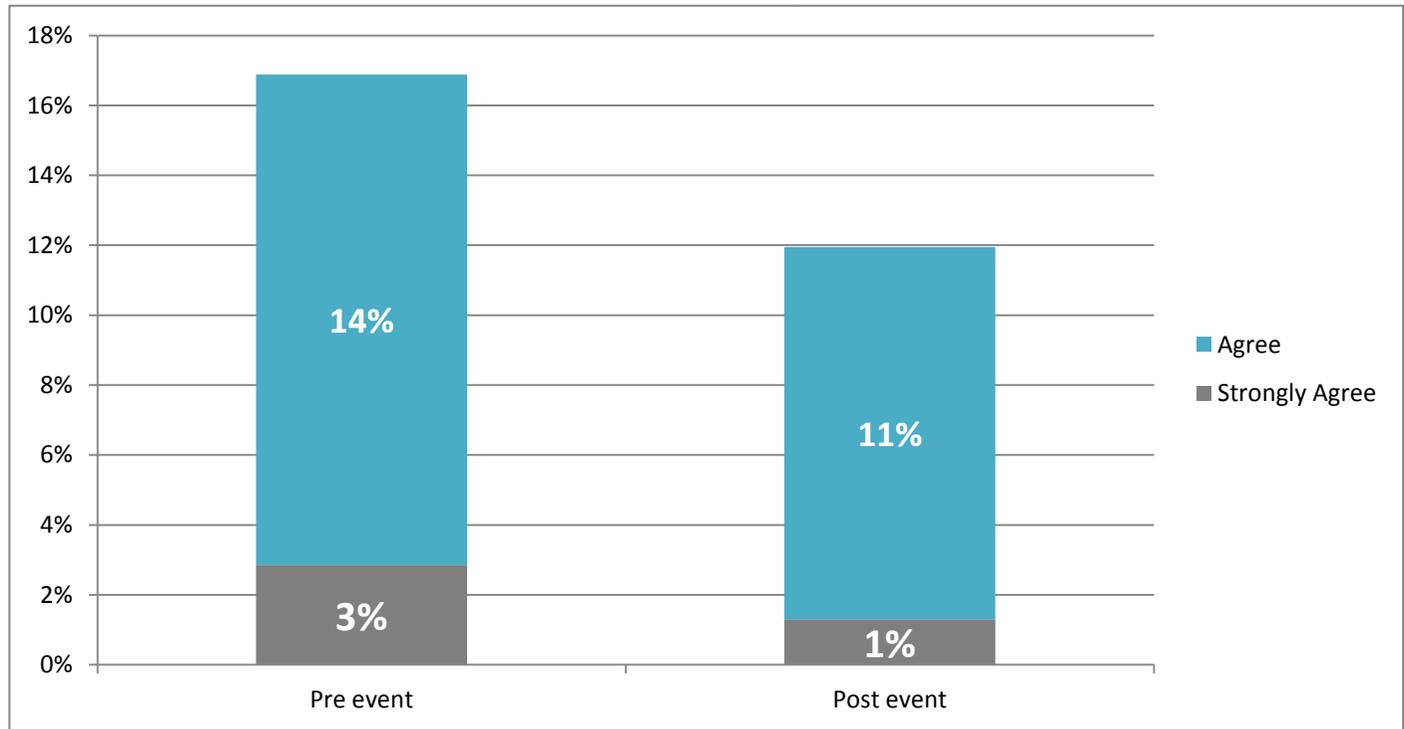
I have been given quite good support in ways of organising i.e. a study schedule, along with being given helpful insight on what could be expected at university and higher education which has made my worries become less worrying

Year group	Strongly Agree					Agree				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	3%	0%	2%	9%	4%	14%	17%	14%	11%	15%
Post event	1%	0%	1%	6%	1%	11%	6%	13%	13%	10%
No response	7									

Post event there was a 29% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that they could not cope with the level of study at university / higher education

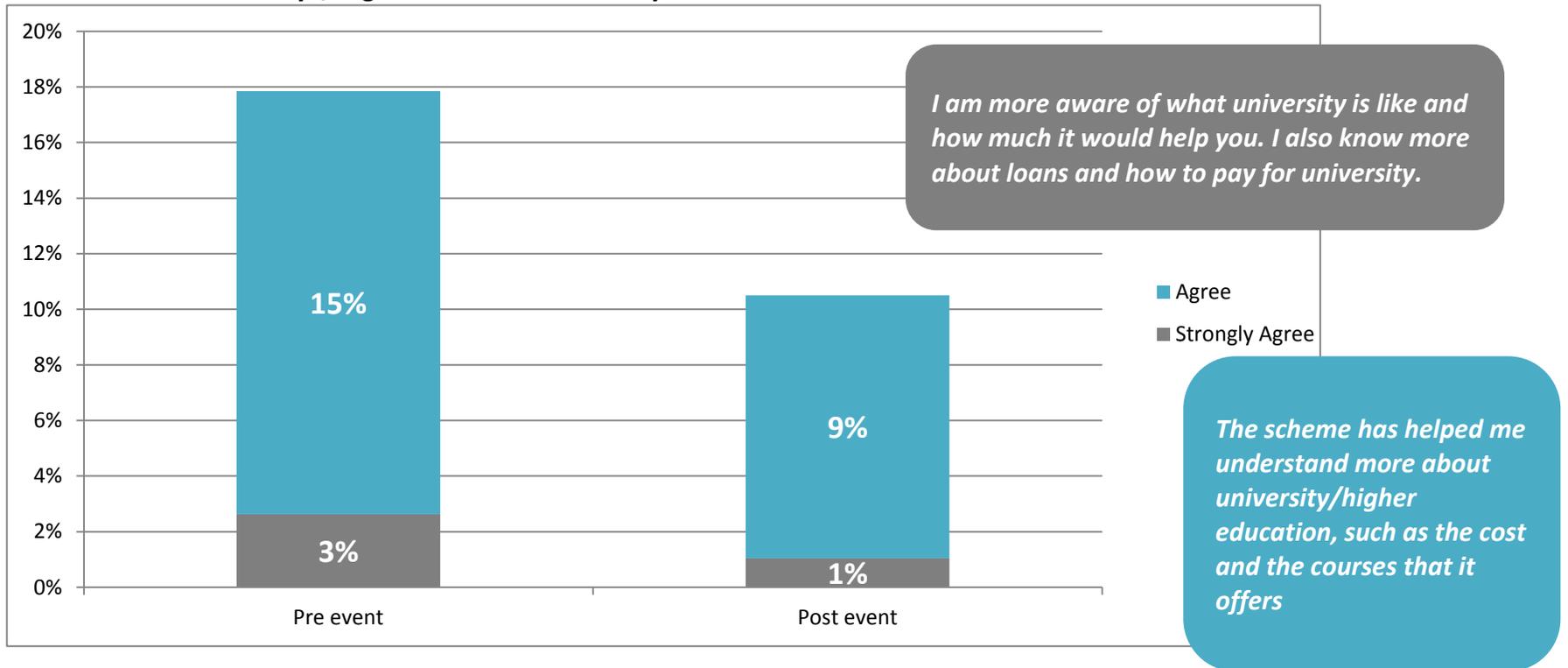**% I will not get the exam grades I need to get into university / higher education**
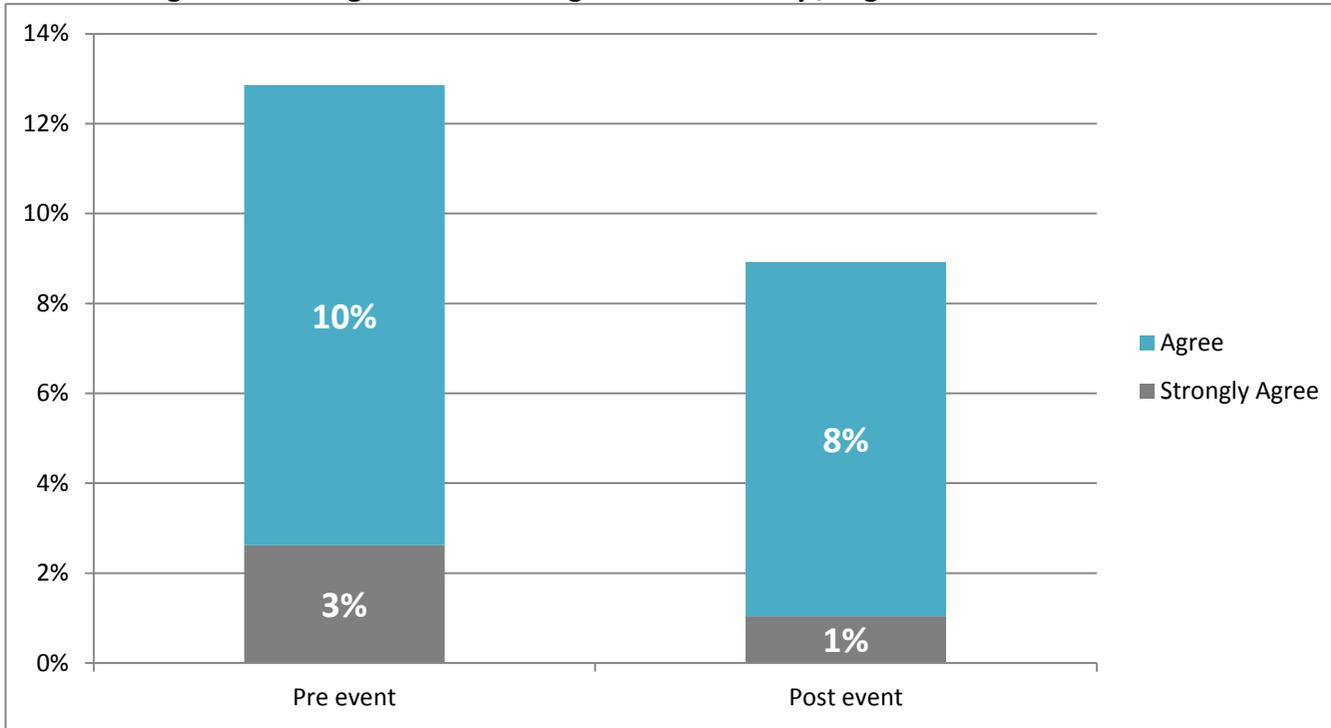
I have learnt a lot about University and its requirements as well as all the things that would happen in life there. Also, it encouraged me to look after my grades and education.

Year group	Strongly Agree					Agree				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	3%	1%	4%	2%	4%	10%	12%	10%	16%	6%
Post event	1%	0%	1%	0%	4%	8%	6%	7%	12%	9%
No response	11									

Post event there was a 31% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that they would not get the exam grades they need to get into university / higher education

% I can't afford university / higher education and worry about debt

> *I am more aware of what university is like and how much it would help you. I also know more about loans and how to pay for university.*

> *The scheme has helped me understand more about university/higher education, such as the cost and the courses that it offers*

Year group	Strongly Agree					Agree				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	3%	1%	4%	4%	3%	15%	16%	15%	6%	23%
Post event	1%	0%	1%	4%	1%	9%	9%	12%	8%	6%

No response   11

Post event there was a 41% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed they couldn't afford university / higher education and worry about debt

% I would miss my family/friends/home
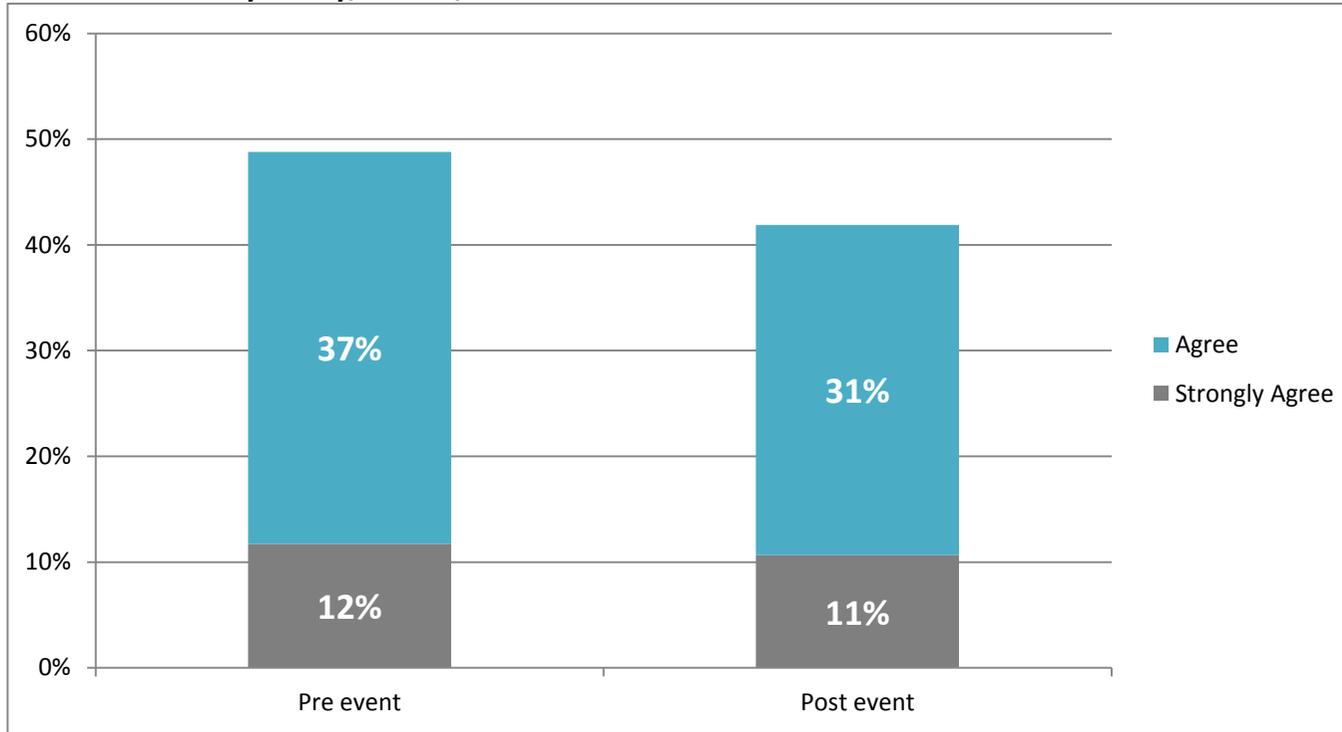
% I would miss my family/friends/home

	Strongly Agree					Agree				
Year group	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	12%	15%	11%	20%	5%	37%	35%	41%	22%	38%
Post event	11%	10%	12%	16%	4%	31%	33%	35%	27%	25%
No response	17									

Post event there was a 14% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed they would miss their family/friends/home

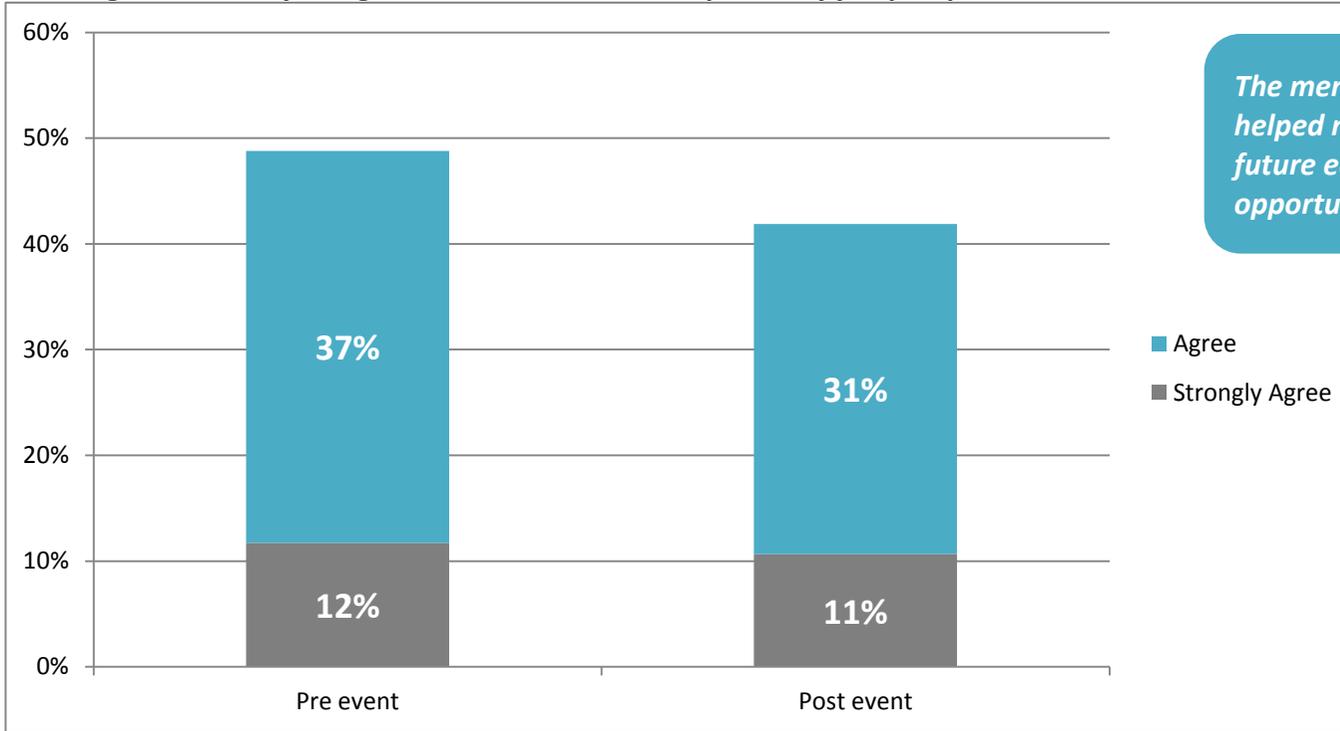**% I live too far away to travel to university / higher education**
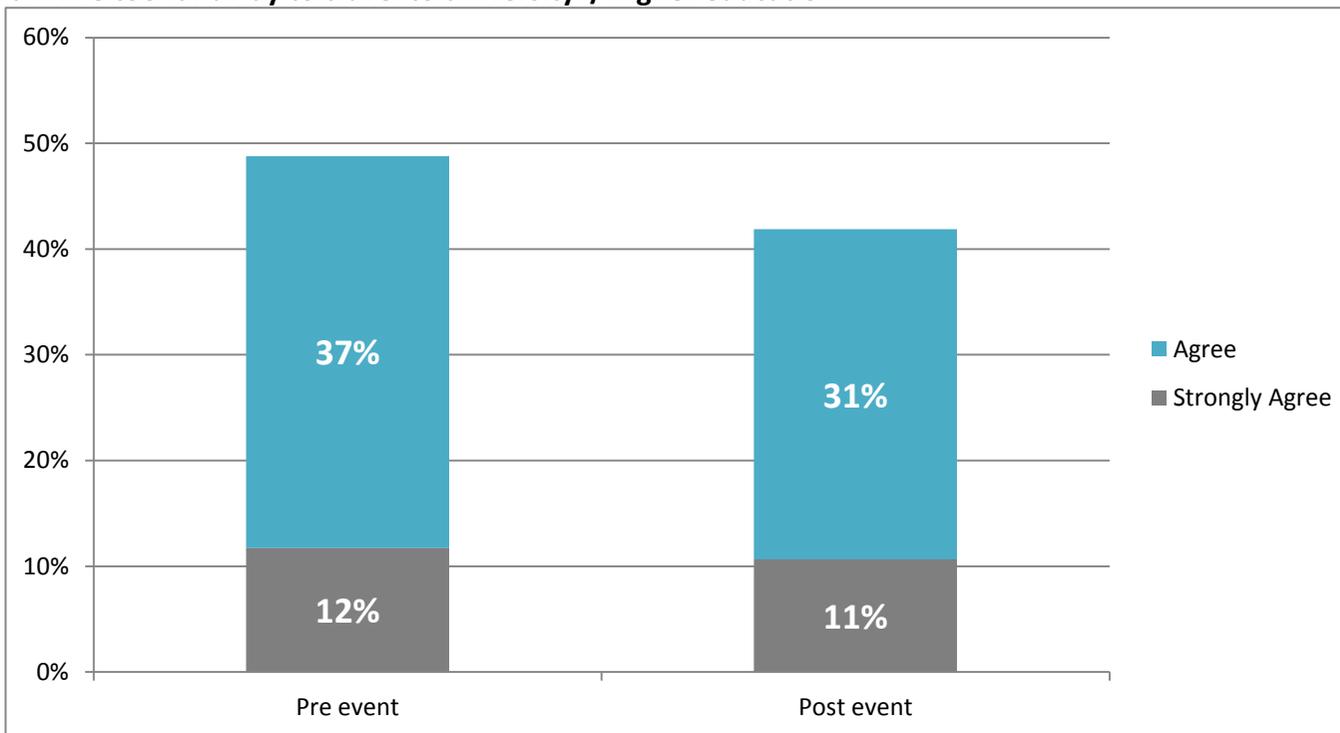
Year group	Strongly Agree					Agree				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%	7%	7%	7%	8%	6%
Post event	1%	0%	0%	6%	0%	6%	5%	4%	16%	4%

No response   16

Post event there was a 22% decrease in the proportions of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that they I lived too far away to travel to university / higher education

**% Going to university / higher education will not improve my job prospects**

The mentoring scheme has helped me think about my future education and job opportunities

Year group	Strongly Agree					Agree				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	7%	7%	4%	14%	7%	6%	8%	7%	4%	4%
Post event	4%	6%	2%	8%	2%	6%	7%	5%	12%	1%

No response   15

Post event there was a 25% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that going to university / higher education would not improve their job prospects

% I would prefer to find a job, apprenticeship or training
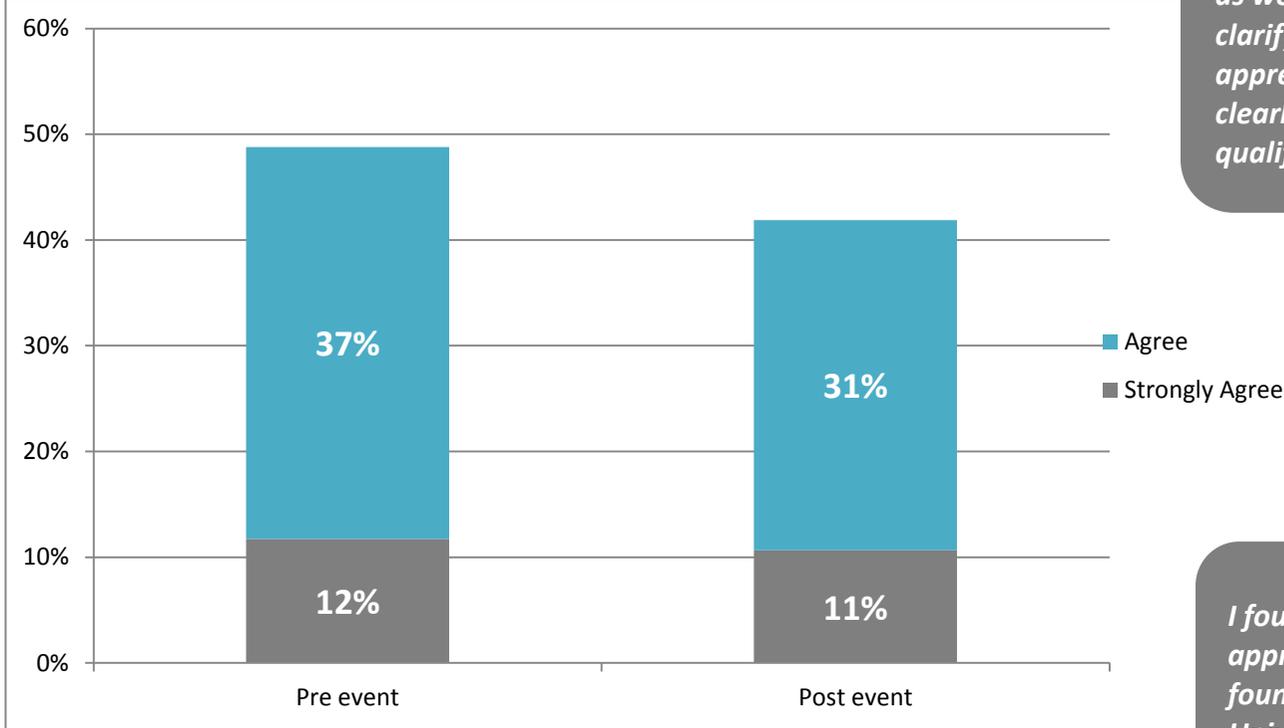
The mentoring scheme went well as we dedicated each session to clarify university and apprenticeships to me. I know clearly the difference and qualifications both offer

I found the lesson about finding apprenticeships most beneficial because it gives me an idea of what type of apprenticeship I want to do

I found out more about getting an apprenticeship when I'm older and found out more about Birmingham University

% I would prefer to find a job, apprenticeship or training

Year group	Strongly Agree					Agree				
	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12	All years	7 to 9	10	11	12
Pre event	9%	12%	7%	15%	3%	17%	16%	22%	19%	8%
Post event	9%	12%	9%	17%	1%	14%	14%	15%	17%	8%

No response   30

Post event there was a 11% decrease in the number of learners that strongly agreed/agreed that they would prefer to find a Job, apprenticeship or training

Learner Feedback

I've been given a wider range of techniques to use for revising and I understand more about going to university. I used to have doubts but I don't any more

Talking to the mentor about my worries and concerns released all of the stress and enabled me to concentrate on my exams.

I think that the sessions have shown me and helped me a lot with revision and what university is like so I think they helped me a lot

I know a lot more about university now and how to apply. I have also grown my confidence because of tasks I have been set to achieve within a certain period of time. I also know more about general adult stuff like taxes and I'm less worried about having to deal with it in the future now

The scheme has benefited me as now I have more knowledge in things like university and college.

0.3% 0.0%

36.0%

63.7%

Very Satisfied ■ **Satisfied** ■ **Dissatisfied** ■ **Very Dissatisfied**

99.7% of learners were very satisfied / satisfied with the scheme

I have found out about university and the finance that goes with it. I have understood how to write my personal statement in a way that can attract a university
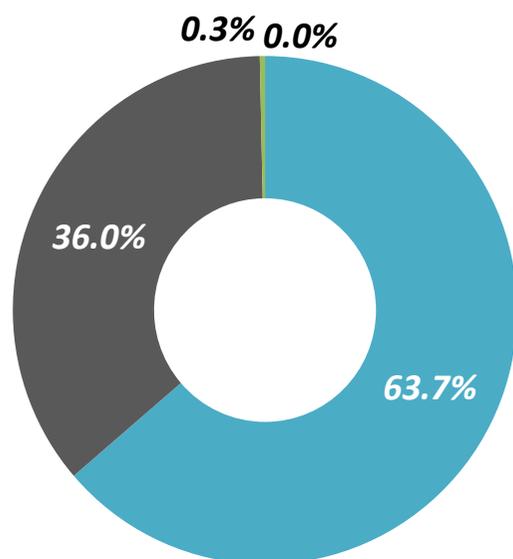
I have learned about the job I want to have and the qualifications I need to get it

I have understand what it takes to get into colleges, uni and apprenticeships, how to cope with uni life and the options out there.

The wordcloud represents the frequency of words used in free text responses.