

***Be the Change: Analysis of  
feedback from participants in the  
Brighton & Hove 2020 programme***

**March 2021**

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## Acknowledgements from *Be the Change* staff

### **We would like to thank everyone who took part in the 2020 programme**

We are grateful to all our sponsoring organisations, these are Sussex Police, The Body Shop, American Express, Domestic & General, South East Apprentice Ambassador Network and Brighton and Hove City Council. Your support and belief in the programme make what we do possible.

Our participating schools were BACA, Patcham High, Varndean, Blatchington Mill, Longhill High and Cardinal Newman. This has been a difficult year for educators, and we are grateful for the commitment you have shown and the time you have spent helping us recruit and work with your students.

Our volunteer Business Guides are central to the programme, and the time you spend working with students is critical to their progress. Once again thanks - we could not do this without you.

Finally, we need to thank the students who took part. Always inspiring, surprising, fun, and challenging - you are why we do what we do, and you never let us down. We hope that you are managing to make it through all the disruption you have suffered this year. We know this will not get in your way - we just hope we have helped you to see how much you are capable of.

# Summary

## The programme

**Be the Change** is a groundbreaking, inspirational programme aimed at Year 9 students facing challenges and difficulties in school or with school life. It focuses on enhancing the happiness, confidence, hope, relationships, and employability of those taking part. It helps students understand why they need to make changes to their lives, what they need to change and how they can do this.

**Be the Change** provides an opportunity for businesses to engage with their future workforce and build awareness of their employer brand amongst local young people. It is an innovative way for employers to provide fulfilling and meaningful personal development opportunities for their employees. It helps open student's eyes to the world of work and the wealth of possibilities and career opportunities in their hometown and beyond.

**Be the Change** includes three conference events hosted by a specialist motivational speaker. These run alongside the work of volunteer Business Guides who each work with a small number of students. Each Business Guide conducts up to two 1:1 meetings with their young people and offers them an opportunity to visit their workplace. Working with their students Business Guides share their career stories, come to understand the challenges faced by each young person and expose them to the world of work and the opportunities offered by local employers.

**Be the Change Brighton & Hove 2020** was cut short by COVID restrictions. Two of the three intended conferences were delivered prior to restrictions alongside between one and two of the intended 1:1 mentoring activities (the number of 1:1s delivered varied between sponsors and schools). Evaluation activities were limited as plans for post-programme data collection could not take place as anticipated. To help fill in the gaps, this report draws on data collected from both the 2019 and 2020 Brighton & Hove programmes to try and understand the likely progress made by participating students.

## Student progress

Students started the programme most positive about their ability to *understand the impact of their decisions*, their awareness of *areas they needed to improve*, and *being inspired to change to be successful*. Students therefore typically start the programme understanding that they need to make a change, but not necessarily knowing how to do that.

The areas where the most change is predicted to have occurred (based on the progress made by 2019 participants at the point of the Stepping Up event) are in students *knowing what they needed to do to remove barriers to their success*, *being aware of their strengths*, *understanding what employers are looking for*, and *feeling positive about their future careers*.

**Be the Change** therefore appears to successfully meet its aims of empowering students, helping them understand their potential and giving them the tools they need to make changes. Contact with the Business Guides appears to have helped students understand future career opportunities. Student feedback also highlights how the programme helped build the confidence of individual students and allowed them to meet new people, both peers and adults, which helped to broaden their horizons.

There is also evidence that there is a longer-term impact on student behaviour when they return to the classroom. In one school, teachers observed that amongst participants:

- 97% of pupils reduced the number of behaviour points they received (i.e. their behaviour improved)
- 83% of pupils reduced the number of detentions they received
- 79% of pupils improved their punctuality

- 55% of students improved their attendance
- 50% overall reduction in behaviour points for the cohort (another indicator that their behaviour improved)
- 50% reduction in exclusions.

### Benefits to Business Guides

Previous evaluations of the programme have clearly demonstrated that Business Guides find the experience of volunteering with **Be the Change** empowering. Participants in the 2019 Brighton & Hove programme:

- enjoyed volunteering and felt good about being able to help others
- were satisfied with their experience of taking part in the programme
- would consider taking part again
- would recommend the programme to colleagues and other businesses.

The Business Guides taking part in the 2019 programme also saw a range of positive impacts on their feelings about work and on their management and coaching skills. After being on the **Be the Change** programme:

- 93% felt more positive about their organisation
- 93% felt that their training and coaching skills had improved
- 93% felt more positive about their job
- 78% felt that their management skills had improved.

The positive testimonials from 2020 Business Guides suggest that they also had a worthwhile experience and got a lot out of supporting students.

### Conclusions

To complete this report feedback from both 2020 and 2019 Brighton & Hove **Be the Change** participants was used because the 2020 evaluation was cut short by COVID.

Previous student cohorts have all demonstrated more positive attitudes and higher confidence having taken part in the programme. This year it was possible to include data from a school that directly observed longer-term impacts on classroom behaviours. The available data shows that the programme equips young people with the tools they need to make the changes they want to their lives and to expand their career horizons. Business Guides also tend to benefit personally and professionally from their involvement in the programme.

Students taking part in 2020 experienced a shorter programme than would normally be the case, but the available data suggest that participants are still likely to have benefitted from their involvement.

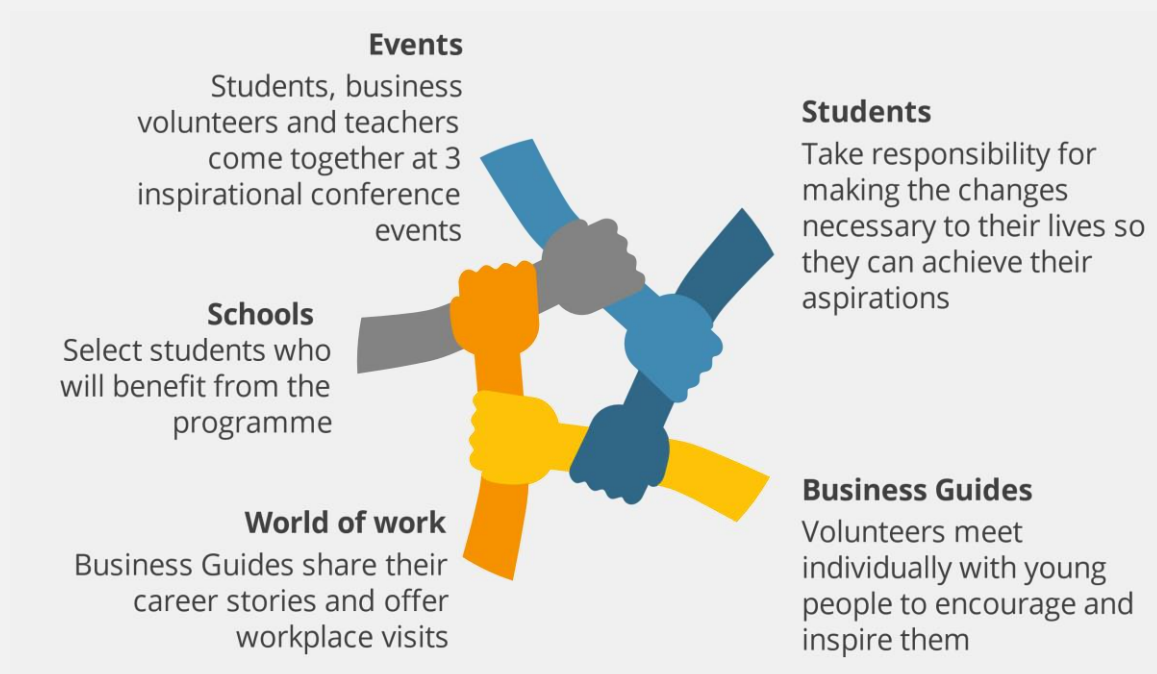
## The model

### ***Be the Change...***

Is a groundbreaking, inspirational programme aimed at Year 9 students facing challenges and difficulties in school or with school life.

Focuses on enhancing the happiness, confidence, hope, relationships, and employability of those taking part.

Helps students understand why they need to make changes to their lives, what they need to change and how they can do this.



Provides an opportunity for businesses to engage with their future workforce and build awareness of their employer brand amongst local young people.

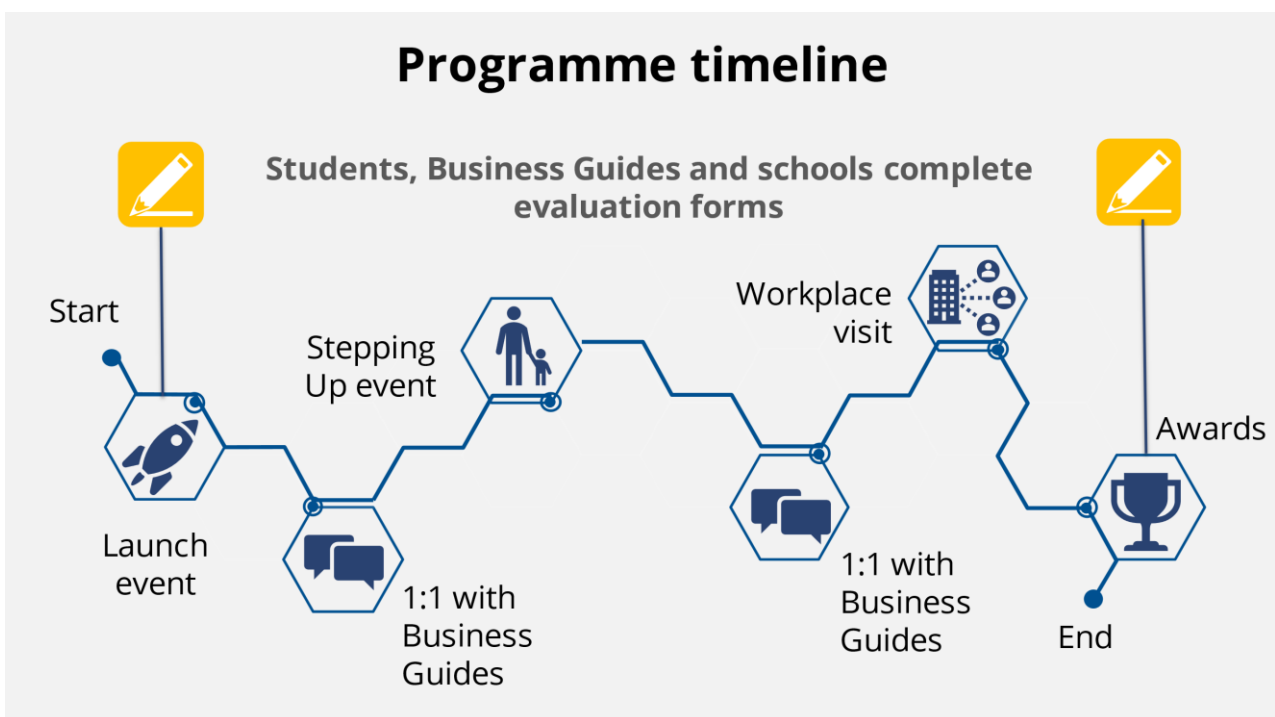
Is an innovative way for employers to provide fulfilling and meaningful personal development opportunities for their employees.

Helps open student's eyes to the world of work and the wealth of possibilities and career opportunities in their hometown and beyond.

## How the programme works

Each **Be the Change** programme includes **three conference events** hosted by a specialist motivational speaker which engage and inspire, and which bring together students and representatives from schools and local businesses. The events are:

- **A launch** - to engage students with the programme and build their confidence using inspiring talks and interactive group exercises.
- **'Stepping Up'** - which requires students to 'step up' by working with primary school students and taking responsibility for their actions.
- **Awards** - to celebrate success by reflecting on the progress students have made and allowing them to talk through changes they have made to their lives in both large and small group settings.



**Participating schools identify young people who could benefit from the programme** because they lack confidence, exhibit challenging behaviours at school, are underachieving academically and/or are disengaged from education. Teachers attend programme events and release students from teaching time to allow them to take part.

**Volunteers from local businesses act as 'Business Guides'**, each working with a small number of students. Guides share their career journeys, act as positive role models and listen to student stories during 1:1 sessions.

Business Guides:

- Come to understand the challenges that each young person faces daily and their strengths and aspirations.
- Encourage students to see their potential and help students recognise elements of their behaviour that prevent them from realising this.
- Provide the opportunity to visit their workplace and meet them and other staff in a real-world setting.

This **exposure to the world of work** helps students expand their horizons about work options, begin to understand what is required to be successful in business and gain experience of the workplace in a more general sense.

**The programme is evaluated** using survey forms which are administered at the start and end of the programme. In normal circumstances, evaluation data is collected from all young people, schools, and Business Guides at both time points. This data is analysed to determine any changes throughout the programme in student attitudes and positivity. In previous years, data was collected after each of the 3 events providing a strong 'historical' dataset of the programme's achievements. Analysis of the evaluation data is conducted by an external third party specialist research consultancy - Research Partners.

## The Brighton & Hove 2020 programme

***Be the Change Brighton & Hove*** 2020 involved 6 schools, 38 Business Guides and 97 students. It ran from November 2019 to February 2020. Workplace visits and the Awards event were not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The Brighton & Hove 2020 programme was unable to run the full ***Be the Change*** model due to COVID-19 restrictions. The main differences between the programme that ran in Brighton & Hove in 2020 and a 'typical' pre-COVID programme were that:

- Two of the three conference events ran (the launch and a 'Stepping Up' event) - it was not possible to run the final, 'Awards' event.
- Workplace visits to Business Guide employers were not possible, although initial face to face and later virtual 1:1 meetings took place between Business Guides and the young people they were mentoring
- Virtual 1:1 sessions were also held in Autumn 2020, where possible, to allow business guides and students to complete their mentoring sessions.

## Evaluating the programme

**The available evaluation data is limited to a smaller than normal number of post-programme assessments.** In determining the effects of the programme in 2020, the available evaluation data has been used alongside historical data from previous years to fill in the gaps.

### Evaluation could not proceed as planned due to COVID restrictions

Following several years of extensive data collection as part of the programme, it was decided to rationalise the evaluation process in 2020. This meant a switch from collecting survey data from Business Guides, students, and school representatives after each of the three events (and in the case of students before the first event as well), to a more streamlined process. The new process was designed to run as follows:

- Students complete a survey before the first event
- Business Guides and school representatives are contacted after the launch and Stepping Up events via a short, optional, open questionnaire which allows them to feedback in their own words
- Students and Business Guides complete a survey immediately after the Awards event
- Participating schools provide follow-up data on behavioural and attitudinal outcomes for participating students back in the classroom.

As the final Awards event did not run, key post-programme data from students and Business Guides could not be collected as planned. Programme staff attempted to collect data from students (with the support of teachers), school representatives and Business Guides during Spring 2021 asking them to reflect on the impact of the programme.

However, because of the delay between the end of the programme and data collection, there were fewer responses than would normally be the case. Also, COVID had affected participating businesses - some Business Guides were no longer working for their employers by this point or were on furlough. The period since the programme ended has been one of great uncertainty for schools, it is therefore not surprising that schools secured responses from only a few students.

### Filling in the gaps

To explore the potential impact of the programme data from both 2020 participants and historical data from the 2019 cohort of Brighton & Hove ***Be the Change*** participants has been used. The evaluation materials used in this report are summarised in Table 1.



**Table 1: Sources of information used to compile this report**

<b>Timepoint</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>After the 2020 programme Launch event (Nov 2019)</b>	Comments and feedback from 12 participating Business Guides
	Comments and feedback from two of the six participating schools
	Survey responses from 84 students
<b>After the 2020 programme Stepping Up event (Feb 2020)</b>	Comments and feedback from 10 participating Business Guides
<b>Data collected after the 2020 programme (February 2021)</b>	Data on participating cohort's behavioural outcomes from one school
	Reflections from seven students
<b>Historical data from the 2019 programme (February to May 2019)</b>	Survey responses from 88 students

Before applying the data from the 2019 cohort it was important to take account of:

- **any differences in the starting points of the 2020 and 2019 cohorts.** Compared to the 2019 Year 9 cohort, the Year 9 students taking part in 2020 were more negative across all indicators of impact at the start of the programme (see Figure A in the Appendix).
- **any differences in the programme that 2020 participants received.** They received a shorter intervention, experiencing four out of the six planned interactions.

In response to these differences, the % change achieved by the 2019 cohort by the point of the Stepping Up event was applied to pre-programme data from the 2020 cohort. This provides an indicative measure of the *possible scale of change* in behaviours and attitudes experienced by the 2020 cohort. It assumes that the 2020 cohort made the same amount of progress as the 2019 cohort by the point in the programme when the 2020 programme had to end. The projections made may not be 100% accurate, but they are based on actual changes to the attitudes and behaviours observed in previous evaluations.

The projected data has been used alongside comments from Business Guides and teachers to provide a best estimate of the benefits of the 2020 programme to participants.

It is interesting that students began the programme in 2020 with more negative attitudes and lower levels of confidence than the cohort of students who joined in 2019, although the pattern of responses across the indicators was similar for both groups. There is no obvious reason why this would be the case as the profile of participating schools was similar in both years. It may indicate that schools are changing who they select to take part in the programme and that the programme is successfully reaching out to more disadvantaged students over time. This can be explored further by considering the starting points of future cohorts.

## **Benefits of the programme for students**

***Be the Change*** tends to affect students the most in terms of knowing what they need to do to remove barriers to their success and their awareness of their strengths. The

programme also typically improves their understanding and awareness of local employment opportunities and how positive they feel about their future careers.

### Projected effects on students

As described, to compensate for a lack of post-programme data from the 2020 cohort of students, a **projection** of the potential benefits to students of taking part was made. The change in the percentage of those who agreed/strongly agreed with a range of measures of confidence and attitudes was calculated from the start of the 2019 programme to the point where they had completed the Stepping Up event. This figure was then applied to the percentage of 2020 students who agreed/strongly agreed with corresponding statements at the start of their programme. The results are presented in Figure 1.

The statements with which **students were initially most likely to agree** (i.e. before the start of the programme) were that they:

- *'understood the impact of their decisions'* (76 per cent agreed or strongly agreed),
- were *'aware of areas for improvement'* (63 per cent agreed or strongly agreed)
- were *'inspired to change to be successful'* (58 per cent agreed or strongly agreed).

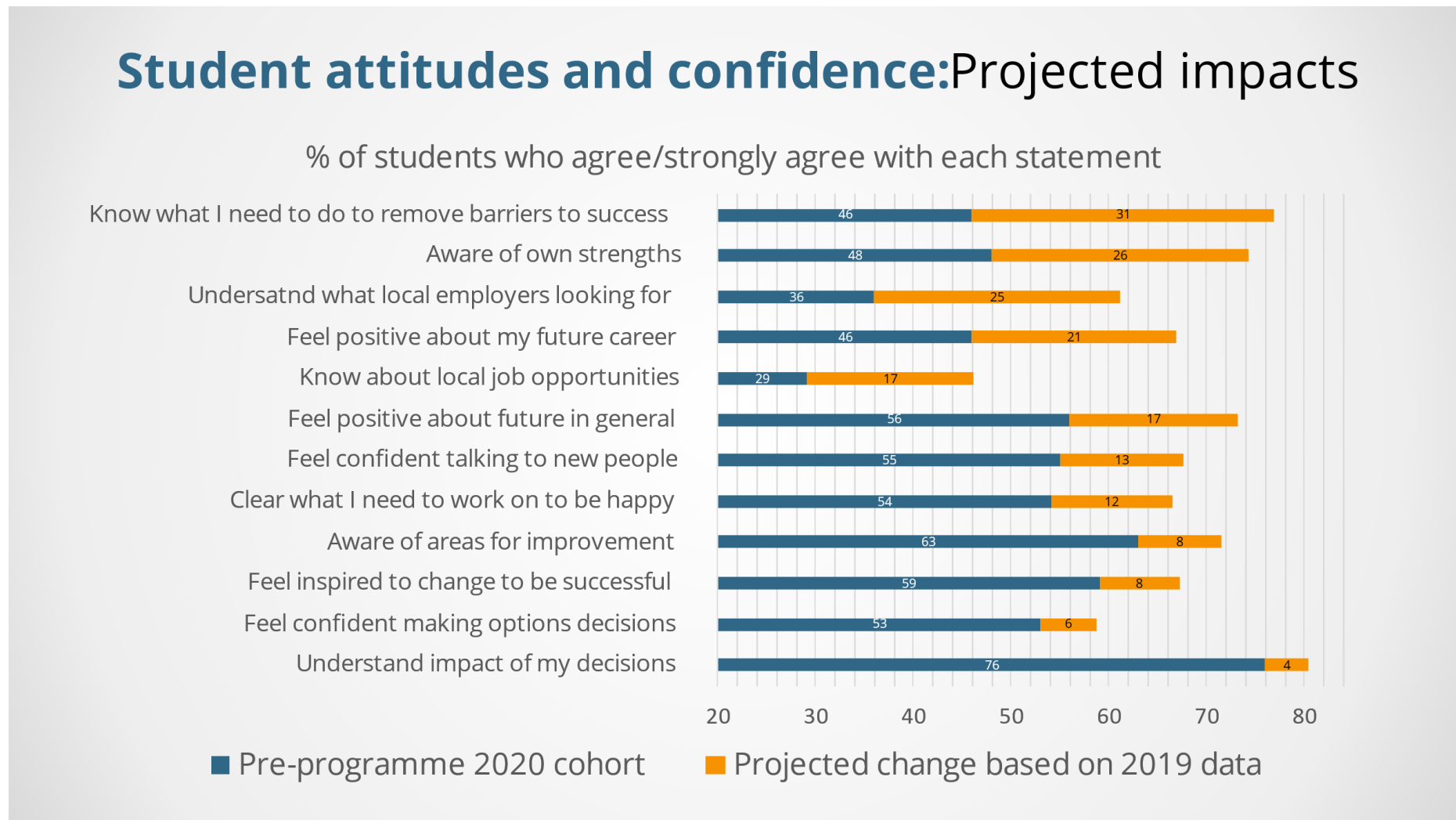
This indicates that students were aware, even before an intervention, that they have the power to change their circumstances and would like to do so. It is therefore not surprising that these areas are not those where the greatest programme effects are projected.

The areas where the **biggest improvements** are predicted after having participated in the programme are that students become more likely to:

- *'know what they need to do to remove barriers to success'* (a projected change of 31 per cent, resulting in 77 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing by the end of the programme)
- be *'aware of their own strengths'* (a projected change of 26 per cent, resulting in 74 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing by the end of the programme)
- *'understand what local employers are looking for'* (a projected change of 25 per cent, resulting in 61 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing by the end of the programme)
- *'feel positive about their future careers'* (a projected change of 21 per cent, resulting in 61 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing by the end of the programme)

This suggests that **Be the Change** does successfully meet its aim of empowering students to understand their potential whilst also giving them the tools they need to make positive changes to their lives. Contact with the Business Guides also appears to have helped students understand future career opportunities.

**Figure 1: Projected changes to 2020 students whilst on the programme**



*Source: Brighton & Hove cohort data from 2020 (84 students pre-programme) and 2019 (the difference between responses of 88 students pre-programme and 71 students post-Stepping Up event)*

## Feedback from students

Students also provided, in their own words, a description of how they saw some of the benefits of the programme to them. Comments have been drawn from both the 2019 and 2020 Brighton & Hove programmes in the figure below. The key theme that emerges from these comments is the increases in confidence that young people feel they have experienced because of the programme and the exposure to new people it provides.



*Source: Comments made by participants in the 2019 and 2020 Brighton & Hove **Be the Change** programme*

## Feedback from Business Guides

During the 2020 programme, Business Guides were asked to provide feedback after the Launch and Stepping Up events on their perceptions of how students responded. Guides were positive about the events and the potential for them to impact students.

Comments from the launch highlighted some of the difficulties in working with this cohort of students. Guides described working with young people with low attention spans, and who were easily distracted by their peers. Despite this, Guides felt that the initial event had been impactful for many students, although other young people may need time to reflect on the issues raised. The content and style of the event were highlighted by many Guides as a good way to try and engage a wide range of young people, even those who were reluctant to participate at the start of the day. It was also clear that Guides were keen to start working with students on a 1:1 basis to overcome the distractions present in a group setting.

The Stepping Up event also received positive comments. Business Guides felt that whilst many students were challenged by working with the Year 5 children, this did encourage them to 'step up' and act as role models.

## Business Guide Feedback



*"I am inspiring the younger generation to not go down the wrong paths in life and look to further themselves now to have the best start in life."*

*"WOW just WOW!"*

*"The programme helps children see their full potential"*

*"There was an improvement in behavior and I felt a sense of pride watching from the sidelines"*

*"Challenging yet rewarding"*

*"A fantastic day - very engaging"*

*"Some of the lessons taught in the session I didn't work out until much later in life e.g. don't let your past define your future"*



*"I think most of the students responded well to the launch with a couple taking longer to adjust. The two students I had with me were fantastic, did everything asked of them even if it made them a little uncomfortable"*  
(Business Guide after launch event)

*"Looking around and watching throughout the day the engagement and awe from both the students and the Business Guides I think illustrates that the launch was incredibly positive and that the message was clearly voiced and understood by all"*  
(Business Guide after launch event)



*"It helped bringing in the younger people for them to be role models to. This I feel had the most impact on the students that I am working with"* (Business Guide after Stepping Up event)

*"The best element was the joint session with year 5 students. My students found this challenging as it was the one part of the day where they had to play an active role and could 'get past themselves'"*  
(Business Guide after Stepping Up event)



Source: Business Guides Brighton & Hove 2020 programme, commenting after the Launch and Stepping Up events

## Feedback from schools

There was also a positive response from schools about the impact and benefits of being involved in *Be the Change*. One school was able to track several key behavioural indicators for participating pupils after the programme and several teachers provided comments on how they felt their students had responded.



"Wow! What a great day – a real roller coaster of emotions drawn out of the teenagers very cleverly. One of our quiet withdrawn students was inspired and given the confidence to speak up in front of 200 people. An experience we will never forget" (Headteacher)

**"Be the Change** is an inspiring programme that teaches students key life skills and helps them to develop career aspirations. The programme includes a series of workshops which enable students to reflect on their own behaviour, choices and how they respond to peer pressure. Throughout the programme, students receive 1:1 mentoring from a business guide, who provides additional support and ensures students meet the programme aims. This is a fantastic programme that I would recommend to all year 9 students at my school." (Teacher)



*Source: Teachers from the Brighton & Hove 2020 programme, commenting after the Launch and Stepping Up events*

## Benefits of the programme for Business Guides

Business Guides enjoy working on **Be the Change** and would recommend it to others. They also feel that their coaching skills and management skills improve as they participate. After being involved in the programme Business Guides also typically feel more positive about their employers and their jobs.

As highlighted, the plan for the 2020 programme was to survey Business Guides at the end of the final awards event to gauge their perceptions about the impact of the programme on students and them personally but this was not possible. However, as for the student data, historical data about how Business Guides benefit personally and professionally from being involved is available.

Previous programme evaluations have shown that many Business Guides are volunteering for the first time when they take part in **Be the Change** and that they get a lot out of it. By the end of 2019, **all** participating Business Guides agreed or strongly agreed that:

- they enjoyed volunteering and felt good about being able to help others
- they were satisfied with their experience of taking part in the programme
- they would consider taking part again
- they would recommend the programme to colleagues and other businesses.

The Business Guides taking part in the 2019 programme also saw a range of positive impacts on their feelings about work and their management and coaching skills. There is no reason to believe that the experience of guides on the 2020 programme was any less positive, although the absence of a workplace visit may have partially diluted their experience.



*Business Guide survey after the full Brighton & Hove programme 2019*



## Structuring the day

It is always good practice to seek feedback on elements of any programme that could be improved. In this case, Business Guides made several constructive suggestions after the two events which ran. An overview of the main points made is presented below to inform the planning of future events.

1. **Venue selection affects the overall experience of events.** Comments showed that some of the Business Guides found the venues used to be a little too small/noisy/cold or that their view of the speaker was restricted due to the design of the room.  
***Be the Change*** is reliant on the goodwill of its sponsors to either fund room hire or offer up a room for use, it may therefore be difficult to address these concerns. If given a choice of rooms, however, future programmes may be able to take these comments into account.
2. **The day must be structured around the least interested in the room.** Some Business Guides felt that their students found it difficult to concentrate or to do so over a long period. For these guides, some sessions were too long or repetitive to hold everyone's interest to the end.  
For future programmes, guides suggested that breaks and lunchtimes should be more tightly scheduled so that students get regular breaks at set times.
3. **Stepping Up events could use the Year 5 students more effectively.** Some guides felt that Year 5 students lacked an understanding of why they were taking part in the event. Also that too many Year 5 students were involved, making certain parts of the day overly long.  
This could potentially be addressed by closer liaison with primary schools, so that Year 5s can be selected and briefed to ensure everyone gets the most out of their involvement.

## Conclusions

It is unfortunate that it was not possible to complete the full ***Be the Change*** programme in 2020 and that there was limited opportunity to collect evaluation data. Data from the previous year is available, however, and this was used alongside the 2020 data to attempt to evaluate the programme's effects.

If the experience of students this year resembles that of students in previous years, following the programme participating students are likely to be more positive about themselves, their ability to change and their futures. The programme also typically provides young people with the tools they need to make the changes they want to their lives. There is no reason to think that this would not be the case in 2020, although the absence of a workplace visit may have affected their experiences somewhat.

Thanks to the efforts of one school it has been possible to see longer-term benefits of the programme on the behaviour and attitudes of the 2020 cohort of young people from that school when students returned to the classroom after the programme had finished. Their observations suggest that participants in ***Be the Change*** were less likely to be excluded or receive detentions than would have been expected and that their punctuality, attendance, and behaviour in school improved. It would be extremely useful moving forward if more schools could provide this type of data.

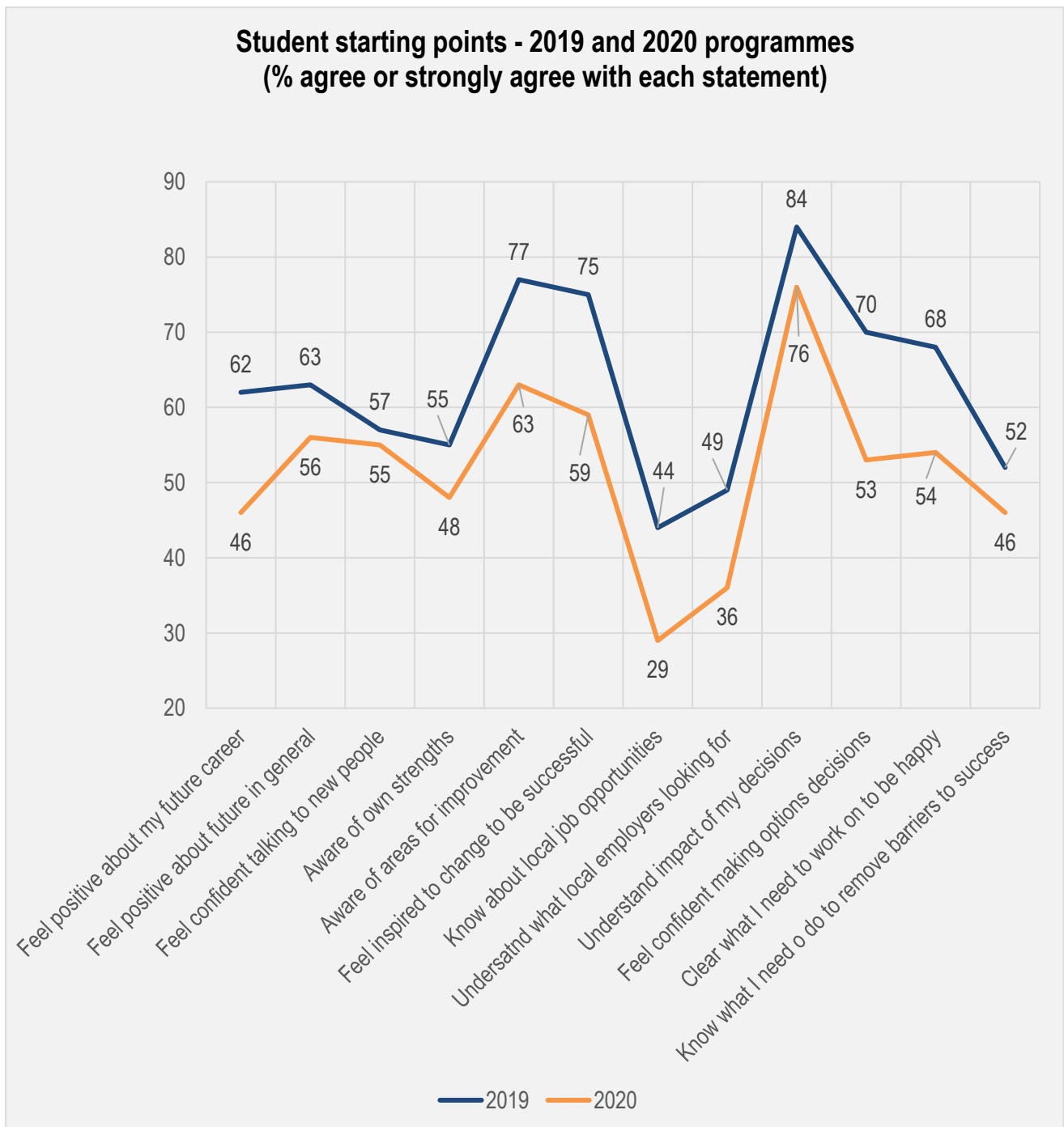
Business Guides and schools also responded positively to the programme and saw real benefits for the young people taking part. Business Guides also tend to benefit personally and professionally from their involvement in the programme.



The impacts on students in the 2020 cohort are likely to be somewhat less than those observed in cohorts who have been through the full programme. However, the available data suggest that participants still got a lot out of their participation and that the impacts on their behaviour and attitudes may last much longer than the programme itself.

## Appendix

**Figure A: Comparison of pre-programme surveys for 2019 & 2020 Brighton & Hove cohorts**



*Pre-programme questionnaires completed by students from the 2019 and 2020 Brighton & Hove **Be the Change** programmes*