Education Endowment Foundation

The Tutor Trust Post-16 Tutoring Programme

Pilot report

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NFER
National Foundation for Educational Research

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About the evaluator

The project was independently evaluated by a team from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). The project director for this study was Suzanne Straw (Research Director). Sarah Lynch (Senior Research Manager) led the evaluation team. They were supported by Jennie Harland (Research Manager), Eleanor Bradley (Researcher), Gustavo Henndel Lopes (Researcher), and Lisa O'Donnell (Research Associate). Gemma Schwendel (Senior Statistician) was the project statistician, supported by Cigdem Arikan (Psychometrician). The team was supported by NFER's research operations team for the collection of evaluation data and liaising with participants, including Kathryn Hurd, Sophie Ainsby, and Jishi Jose. Vrinder Atwal (Project Coordinator) supported the team with administrative tasks.

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Executive summary

The project

The **Tutor Trust** is a well-established charity which partners with schools, colleges, and other educational providers to deliver tutoring to young people in the North of England with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities. Tutor Trust's tutors are typically undergraduate and graduate learners at local partner universities, as well as qualified teachers in the North of England. To tutor GCSE English or maths in secondary or post-16 settings, they must have either qualified teacher status (QTS), or minimum GCSE grades of A/7 in their chosen subject. The aim was for Tutor Trust's trained tutors to provide a minimum of 12 hours (a maximum of 15 hours) across one academic year of one to one online or in-person tutoring to 240 learners (12 per setting) who did not pass GCSE English/maths at grade 4+ at Key Stage 4.

The programme includes training for tutors on coaching strategies that focus on relationships, confidence, and motivation building. Each setting is asked to nominate a Partnership Lead, to select learners for the tutoring programme, and provide the Tutor Trust with information on learners' needs. The pilot targeted learners in 20 post-16 settings (School Sixth Forms and Further Education (FE) colleges) in disadvantaged communities. The target was for 75% of learners receiving tutoring to be eligible for the 16–19 Bursary Fund. The intervention was delivered during the 2024/25 academic year, with tutoring provided prior to either the November 2024 or June 2025 resits.

This pilot used a mixed-methods approach to explore the feasibility of implementation, evidence of promise in terms of short-term outcomes for learners, and readiness of the pilot programme for trial. Methods included: collection and analysis of management and fidelity data; analysis of a screening test designed by the Tutor Trust quality team to reflect the content of the national curriculum; analysis of GCSE results; interviews with the Tutor Trust; a focus group with trainers; two focus groups with tutors; student baseline and endpoint surveys; a tutor proforma; and qualitative case studies and interviews with staff and learners involved in the programme.

Table 1: Summary of pilot findings

Area of research	Finding
Feasibility of implementation	The findings suggest successful programme inputs in relation to tutor recruitment, tutor training, and support. Despite challenges, the required number of 20 colleges/schools were recruited and retained in the pilot. Although initial recruitment of learners was a success, retaining them on the programme was often challenging—attendance can be more difficult to enforce in a post-16 context where learners have a higher degree of independence than in compulsory schooling. There was subsequently significant student dropout— 31% of learners (*N* = 75) either withdrew prior to delivery or did not attend any sessions, and only 39 learners (24%) attended the minimum of 12 hours of tutoring. This is consistent with challenges faced in retaining learners for other post-16 tutoring, such as that provided via the implementation of the 16–19 Tuition Fund[1]. Implementation and student engagement were most effective when there was a proactive and engaged Partnership Lead in the setting, who monitored student attendance. Factors perceived to contribute to student attendance included learners' motivation to achieve future goals that passing resists would help with, such as progression onto other courses, or securing a good career. However, there were some key barriers to student attendance, including lack of student buy-in and motivation, and timetable constraints.

[1] Bierman, Mackay, and Redondo, 2023

Area of research	Finding
Evidence of promise	There is some evidence of intended outcomes for learners who participated in tutoring, including more positive attitudes towards their progress in English and maths and increased motivation to achieve and confidence in their abilities. Staff and tutors perceived that the tutoring had improved learners' confidence and self-esteem, which was often linked to increased willingness to participate in lessons and more persistence when they found the subject difficult. Tutors reported enhanced knowledge, skills, and confidence resulting from the training. Overall, just over a quarter (26%) of the 117 learners for whom GCSE grades were received achieved a grade 4 or higher, which is higher than the national average pass rate for GCSE resits. However, these findings are based on a limited sample size, and given the low levels of attendance and lack of a comparator or control group, should be interpreted with caution. Lessons could be learnt from the more engaged settings and learners to support future delivery with post-16 settings.
Readiness for trial	There are some indicative positive findings from the pilot in terms of outcomes for tutors and learners. However, given the implementation challenges, the programme is not ready for trial in its current form. Furthermore, given that student attendance in the pilot was substantially lower than anticipated, Tutor Trust provided settings with significant input in organising the tutoring, which they acknowledged would not be sustainable on a larger scale. To minimise the need for Tutor Trust input, information about what is expected of settings needs to be clearer and guidance on what works best in terms of timetabling would also be beneficial for settings. Experiences of the pilot evaluation also suggest that challenges would be encountered in implementing an evaluation using a randomised controlled trial (RCT) design, including varying levels of engagement of key staff in settings in both supporting delivery and taking part in the evaluation, and student engagement and attendance. Increasing the number of learners per setting who are actively participating, as well as offering incentives to learners completing evaluation activities, could go some way to countering some of these challenges. Overall, implementation challenges, including lower than expected attendance and staff engagement, suggest that the pilot programme is not ready for trial in its current form. Adaptations were being considered by Tutor Trust that may lead to more successful implementation in a post-16 context (for example, small-group tutoring rather than one to one). As the pilot draws mostly on self-reported evidence (other than the results from the screening test and GCSE resits), the findings need to be treated with some degree of caution.

Additional findings

Perceptions of the untested coaching and mentoring element of the programme are positive. Tutors found the focus on coaching and mentoring a valuable element of their training for example, learning how to ask engaging questions, build a rapport with learners, and position themselves as different to teachers. Tutors perceived that the coaching element specifically contributed to student outcomes, including their confidence, their motivation to achieve, and improvements in their belief in their own abilities, and future ambitions and aspirations, both for future study and their careers.

Introduction

Background evidence

The Tutor Trust is a well-established tutoring charity with extensive experience in the English education system, including through the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) as an official Tuition Partner for the programme's entirety. The organisational aim is to provide quality tutoring for pupils, regardless of background, with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities in the North of England (Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and Merseyside). Historically, the Tutor Trust has worked more exclusively with primary and secondary schools and alternative provision providers, rather than post-16 settings. This pilot offers the opportunity to build on their existing tutoring model but with a focus on learners who are resitting GCSE maths and/or English in post-16 settings.

There is a large body of evidence that small-group tuition is effective pre-16, particularly where it is targeted at pupils' specific needs. The EEF toolkit pages on **small-group tuition** show that it can be an effective intervention, and that training and support for tutors contribute to the effectiveness of the tuition (EEF, 2021b). Effect sizes vary across studies, with an average impact of two months' additional progress for secondary schools and four months' additional progress for primary schools. A key finding is that the smaller the group and the more aligned it is to pupils' needs, the more effective the intervention.

In addition, **one to one tuition** has been found to provide approximately four additional months' progress in secondary schools (EEF, 2021a). However, effects in maths appear to be substantially lower than in literacy (three additional months' progress in maths compared with four additional months' progress in literacy). It is more likely to make an impact if it is delivered by an experienced teacher and additional to, or explicitly linked with, normal lessons.

Meta-analyses have shown that tutoring programmes yield consistent and substantial positive impacts on learning outcomes (EEF, 2021b).

Nickow, Oreopoulos and Quan (2020) found an overall pooled effect size estimate of 0.37 SD; Dietrichson, Bøg, Filges and Klint Jørgensen (2017) found a pooled effect size of 0.36 SD; and (Ritter *et al.*, 2009)found a pooled effect size of 0.30 SD.

There is evidence to suggest that the advantages of small-group tuition may be particularly relevant for disadvantaged pupils (Dietrichson, Bøg, Filges, and Jørgensen, 2017; Torgerson *et al.*, 2018). These pupils may face challenges in the classroom due to comparison to their peers. A perceived sense of failure may result in low motivation and low self-efficacy, leading to poor learning outcomes. In contrast, teaching these pupils in homogeneous small groups allows favourable comparisons between pupils and allows teachers to readily communicate pupil improvements (Mischo and Haag, 2002). These benefits, in turn, help maintain high levels of motivation (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002). In terms of one to one tuition, **studies in England** have shown that pupils eligible for free school meals and low-attaining learners are particularly likely to benefit from tutoring.

In the evaluation of the first year of the NTP, secondary schools which tutored more than 70% of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils in the Tuition Partners programme showed a positive impact on Year 11 Teacher Assessed Grades in English and maths (Lord, Poet and Styles, 2022). The evaluation of the second year of NTP found that participation in school-led tutoring (SLT) was associated with small improvements in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 maths outcomes. There was also some more limited evidence that participation in SLT was associated with small improvements in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 English outcomes (Lucas *et al.*, 2023). In the third year of the NTP, the programme was found to be effective for improving maths and English attainment at Key Stage 2 and some more limited evidence at Key Stage 4 (where all improvements seen were small) (Moore *et al.*, 2024).

An evaluation of the 16–19 Tuition Fund (Bierman, Mackay and Redondo, 2023), which was launched following the Covid-19 pandemic and delivered one to one and small-group tuition in English, maths, and other courses in post-16 settings, concluded that most learners who had attended tuition found it helpful and relevant. Learners reported more confidence in speaking in smaller groups and felt more disciplined and focused. However, only around a quarter of learners felt the tutoring would help them achieve better exam grades, but the survey was conducted prior to examinations taking place, so it was too early for results to be reflected in the study. However, the settings faced some issues with attendance and

dropout. Those who engaged early tended to attend regularly, but challenges were faced when disengaged learners did not attend sessions from the outset and required frequent reminders. Some learners were said to be demotivated because they had struggled in previous years or had already resat exams. Settings described multiple efforts to generate engagement, including offering tuition in a sensitive way that did not highlight underperformance, and considering the timing of sessions. Most learners survey respondents who did engage were satisfied with the tuition they attended, finding it useful and relevant.

Relating to the Tutor Trust programme specifically, there is evidence of it being effective in primary settings. An EEF-commissioned trial of the Tutor Trust programme (Torgerson *et al.*, 2018) found that children in Year 6 who received one to one and small-group tutoring made three months' additional progress in Key Stage 2 maths scores compared to children in control schools. This was also the case for pupils eligible for free school meals. More recently, another EEF-funded trial of the Tutor Trust programme (involving three other tutoring providers involved in the NTP) aimed to boost engagement in tutoring sessions in secondary schools (Tagliaferri *et al.*, 2022). The target was to increase attendance at tutoring sessions in the intervention group by five percentage points compared to the control group, and this target was slightly exceeded. These findings suggest that the Tutor Trust programme offers a promising approach. There is, however, no clear evidence on the impact of tutoring in general (or the Tutor Trust programme specifically) for post-16 learners. This project contributes to the evidence base for tutoring with the 16–19 age group and for GCSE maths and English resit learners in particular. In addition, the project explored the use of an additional and untested coaching and mentoring element of the programme.

Intervention

The Tutor Trust Post-16 Tutoring Programme is a one to one virtual and in-person tutoring programme targeted at disadvantaged GCSE English and maths post-16 resit learners. It was intended that, during the academic year 2024/25, learners would receive 15 hours of support (12 hours as a minimum) in GCSE maths or English which would reinforce classroom learning and target their individual learning gaps, leading up to them resitting their GCSE exams in either November 2024 or May/June 2025. Details of the intended programme delivery are provided using the Template for Intervention Description and Replication (TIDieR) framework below.

Intervention name

The Tutor Trust Post-16 Tutoring Programme.

Why? —Rationale, theory, and/or goal of essential elements of the intervention

Achieving a grade 4+ in GCSE English and maths at Key Stage 4 is critical in supporting positive study, training, and work transitions beyond formal education, with learners not achieving this level at the end of Key Stage 4 required to continue studying these subjects post-16. However, the proportion achieving a grade 4+ in resits remains low, with just 17.1% of those aged 17 years+ in England achieving this level in maths GCSE in summer 2025 and 20.9% in English[2]. Additionally, in 2024/25, the attainment gap at age 16 between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged learners was 3.91. This is a slight decline from 3.93 in 2023/24, but it still remains fairly wide[3], and wider than pre-pandemic levels.

Who? —Intervention providers/implementers

The Tutor Trust was responsible for the management and delivery of the intervention. The role of Tutor Trust Coordinators is to liaise with a member of staff in each setting who oversees the programme (the Partnership Lead).

The Tutor Trust recruits tutors with relevant subject knowledge and interpersonal skills who are likely to make inspiring tutors and role models. Their tutors typically include undergraduate and graduate learners at partner universities as well as qualified teachers in the North of England. They must have either qualified teacher status (QTS) or minimum GCSE grades of A/7 in the chosen subject to become tutors. Tutors are paid a minimum of £22 to plan and deliver each hour of tuition.

[2] https://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/

[3] **https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-catalogue/data-set/dbff4e55-5b10-44bc-be2b-23d9d68e0f98**. Further details on how the attainment gap is constructed can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398657/SFR_40_2014_Measuring_disadvantaged_pupils_attainment_gaps_over_time__updated_.pdf

The Tutor Trust aimed for around two-thirds of the tutors involved in the post-16 programme to be experienced tutors and a third to be new tutors. The experienced tutors were selected from the Tutor Trust's tutor cohort who had already been trained to teach GCSE and had experience of tutoring in secondary schools or alternative provision. New tutors initially completed an online application form. This was scored against several criteria, including experience of working with children and young people, understanding of Tutor Trust's mission and educational disadvantage, and commitment. Tutors who were successful at this stage were invited to an online interview with two interviewers. They were required to demonstrate communication skills, respond to a scenario (provided beforehand) in which a young person demonstrates poor behaviour during tutoring, and provide a five-minute tutoring session on a pre-given topic.

The Tutor Trust has qualified teachers with extensive experience in the education sector who provide initial compulsory training for all tutors. This includes initial online training followed by online live training:

- The initial online training for all new tutors and those without qualified teacher status (QTS) (10–12 hours) is provided through the Thinqi platform (a large library of resources accessible to all tutors). This is a combination of videos, texts, and reflection activities. Each module has a series of quiz sections which must be passed by the tutor before they can proceed. Topics covered include lesson planning and pedagogy, safeguarding, systems and structures, subject and sector-specific training, behaviour management, building relationships, access to resources, coaching and administration. Note that tutors with QTS receive a condensed version of the core training, focused on the differences between teaching and tutoring.

- The live Zoom sessions (three hours) include subject-specific aspects content, safeguarding and tutor expectations, and working with the Tutor Trust. The live sessions are opportunities to consolidate tutors' learning at key points in their training journey. The first one-hour session focuses on the principles behind high-quality tuition, and the second two-hour session focuses on planning tutoring sessions in a specific subject and age range.

The experienced tutors had already undertaken the initial training described above and did not need to repeat the training for the purposes of their involvement in this programme, although refresher training was offered (a condensed version of the core training). In addition to the initial training described above, all tutors (both new and experienced) were required to complete additional compulsory training on:

a) working with post-16 learners; and

b) coaching.

The training on working with post-16 learners includes two hours of online self-paced learning via Thinqi and a one-hour live interactive session. The post-16 training has seven units, focused on either English or maths, covering:

- how post-16 tuition differs from GCSE tuition;
- logistics of one to one tutoring in post-16 tuition settings;
- building relationships with post-16 students, including addressing feelings of failure linked to not achieving a grade 4 at GCSE;
- coaching and mentoring, covering active listening, open questions, and relationship-building;
- real-world links, such as relevance to learners' post-16 courses;
- lesson structure, incorporating coaching and mentoring; and
- post-16-specific tools and resources.

The training is integrated with coaching training and is delivered in an online, self-paced format. The coaching element comprises a module on Thinqi and a live session. It includes mentoring and coaching strategies that focus on relationships, confidence and motivation building, and setting targets. It has been developed in line with previous mentoring training for tutors (from Haili Hughes, a senior lecturer at Sunderland University, a published author, and the Senior Education Lead at Iris Connect) and the Tutor Trust's own Coaching Quality Manager (with QTS and experience in coaching and supporting tutors). Tutors are expected to be able to apply what they have learnt in the online training through role-play at the coaching live session.

Once they begin delivering tutoring, tutors have access to optional ongoing live training and support provided at least half-termly in addition to monthly podcasts. Topics of these podcasts include subject-specific pedagogy, behaviour management, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), coaching, social emotional and mental health (SEMH), and AI (ChatGPT) to support high-quality lesson planning, in addition to employability skills and tutor wellbeing. Tutors can also access other training and support based around individual needs. These needs are often identified following lesson plan spot checks or observations. To assess quality, selected tutors (for example, those who have not worked with Tutor Trust before or who have been observed during quality checks in the past) are asked to submit a lesson plan to the Tutor Trust ('lesson plan spot checks'). These are reviewed by the quality team (a team of qualified teachers who ensure that tutoring programmes meet high standards with the aim of increasing the positive impact on learners). If, following a lesson plan spot check, it is considered that a tutor needs a more in-depth quality check, a session observation is carried out. Moreover, given that many tutors involved in the pilot were expected to be new to post-16 tutoring, the intention was to observe as many tutors as possible, regardless of lesson plan spot checks.

Who? —Recipients

It was intended that the intervention would be delivered in 20 colleges/schools in the North of England. It is worth noting that, in a pure pilot study, all of the settings should be newly recruited. However, in this pilot, for ease of recruitment within the timescales, it was agreed that a target of 15 settings would be newly recruited, and five settings could already have established relationships with the Tutor Trust. Settings were to be based in disadvantaged communities in Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and Merseyside (due to the delivery team's focus and experience in these geographical areas). Each setting (post-16 education institutions—School Sixth Forms, Sixth Form Colleges, and Further Education Colleges) would nominate a Partnership Lead, who would select learners for the tutoring programme, and provide the Tutor Trust with information on learners' needs, tutoring content, and safeguarding (this is standard practice across all tuition programmes and regions).

The tutoring was intended to be provided to 240 learners (12 per college/school) in the 2024/25 academic year. The target group was Key Stage 5 (ages 16–19) learners who did not pass GCSE English and/or maths at grade 4+ (or the equivalent) at Key Stage 4. Settings were advised to select learners who had achieved a grade 3 in their first GCSE attempt, particularly for November resits, making them inherently more likely to pass following a more limited time window for tutoring. Settings did also select learners who had achieved lower than a grade 3 (see below, Table 11 in the 'GCSE performance' section).

The target was for 75% of learners to be eligible for the post-16 bursary (as a measure of disadvantage). Settings were also asked to select learners based on individual need and likelihood of engagement (no specific guidance was provided and settings were trusted to use their own judgement). Young people nominated were given the choice as to whether or not they wished to join the programme to help to ensure high engagement.

What? —Physical or informational materials used in the intervention

A range of materials/information supported the intervention:

- Materials from the Tutor Trust targeted at parents/families which explain the intervention and its benefits.
- Individual learning plans developed by tutors (bespoke curriculum) for each student receiving tutoring.
- A Foundation Maths scheme of learning of 15 lessons which tutors could use/adapt as they wished.
- A Snap Survey questionnaire[4], administered to learners at the start of tutoring which asks learners about their likes and dislikes and interests to help tutors build a rapport with learners by exploring common motivations and interests.
- A screening test[5] which is administered via an online platform (Socrative) at the beginning and end of the programme to assess learners' maths and/or English ability and areas where they need support.

[4] The Snap Survey is a quick, evidence-based, get-to-know-you tool designed by the Behavioural Insights Team for tutors and pupils to build rapport and identify shared interests. https://www.bi.team/snap-survey-a-step-by-step-guide-for-tutors/

[5] This is an online 20-question multiple-choice test designed by the Tutor Trust quality team to reflect the content of the national curriculum. For maths, the topics are taken from the GCSE Foundation paper topics and the questions are designed to address common misconceptions. For English, the questions focus on spelling, punctuation, and grammar, analysing language, and understanding of written passages. Tutor Trust analysis has consistently found the results of these assessments to positively correlate with results of standardised examinations (i.e., SATs/GCSEs) which indicate they are an effective tool at measuring the academic progress of pupils.

As well as the tutor training (described above), materials were available on Tutor Trust's online training platform (Thinqi) for tutors to use. This included information on useful websites, articles, podcasts, recommended further reading, and research which tutors could draw from to enhance the quality of their lessons.

What? —Procedures, activities, and/or processes used in the intervention

Learners were provided with one to one virtual and/or in-person tutoring in GCSE maths and/or English, prior to their GCSE resits in either November or May/June of the 2024/25 academic year.

For the November 2024 resit programme, the focus was on learners who were closer to achieving a grade 4 i.e., those who had achieved a high grade 3 in Year 11. If they did not pass their GCSE in the November, learners were enrolled for the May/June resit, but they did not receive any further tutoring (they were seen as two separate tutoring programmes of up to 15 hours).

The May/June 2025 resit programme focused on learners who had achieved lower grades (including those with lower than a grade 3) in their English or maths GCSE in Year 11 who needed longer to prepare for their resit.

Both programmes offered the same number of hours of tutoring: a maximum of 15 hours (with an aim of a minimum of 12 hours). Learners' learning needs and gaps were identified based on information from the college/school (including data from any assessments they administer), tutors' discussions with the learners, the Snap Survey, and the screening test administered at the start of the programme.

Alongside the tutoring, it was intended that tutors would provide learners with coaching to develop their resilience and confidence in learning. This was an untested element of the Tutor Trust's provision. The Tutor Trust team included a former teacher with experience of coaching who helped to further develop the approach and to support tutors with their own professional development in this area. This element included training for tutors to adopt coaching and mentoring techniques with their learners. In addition, staff were encouraged to use coaching and mentoring approaches with each other. As a result of this work, coaching and mentoring is becoming embedded within Tutor Trust's organisation.

Through a unique coaching model developed in training, the aim was that tutors would enable the post-16 learners to identify areas of weakness and focus on their individual learning plans, and in turn, learners would develop skills and strategies to feel empowered in tutoring and beyond. As part of the coaching, the tutor and student develop a shared 'contract', working through the learners' needs and their expectations of the tutor, with learners developing strategies such as organisation and prioritisation, and learning how to revise and tackle exam questions successfully.

The quality of tuition was monitored by the Tutor Trust's quality team, made up of qualified former teachers, through lesson observations and lesson plan spot checks.

The screening test was administered again at the end of the programme to explore learners' progress following tutoring. It is worth noting that tutors do not see the assessment questions prior to the baseline test or before the endpoint test (which contains questions about identical topics, but not identical questions). This is to deter tutors from 'teaching to the test.

How? —Mode of delivery

The tutoring was delivered using a hybrid model i.e., via sessions delivered either online and/or in person. The aim was for the first session in each programme to take place in person to help build rapport between the tutor and student. After that, the Tutor Trust's aim was for half in-person and half online tutoring sessions[6], although account is taken of student preferences and practicalities. In-person sessions might be preferred if tutors have several learners within the same setting or where the tutor develops a relationship with the setting. The online sessions took place via the online platform VEDAMO, and learners could be at their institution or at home[7].

[6] Tutor Trust aims for half in-person and half online sessions, taking on board feedback from settings which have shown a preference towards moving back to in-person provision.
[7] However, if the student is under the age of 18, an adult will need to be present during the session and offer passive supervision for safeguarding purposes. This may make in-home sessions more challenging.

Where?—Location of the intervention

The tutoring was targeted at post-16 education institutions—School Sixth Forms, Sixth Form Colleges, and Further Education (FE) Colleges, with a specific focus on those serving disadvantaged communities in the North of England (Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and West Yorkshire).

When and how much?—Duration and dosage of the intervention

The aim was to offer learners 15 hours of tutoring/coaching (ideally with a minimum of 12 hours received) prior to their GCSE resit in either November or May/June of the 2024/25 academic year. Tutoring was not necessarily delivered in one-hour sessions; longer sessions were delivered, particularly when attempting to maximise the number of hours received (especially prior to November resits). The November 2024 resit programme was intended to start as soon as possible in the autumn term, ideally the week commencing 2nd September 2024, which may be logistically difficult for settings to arrange. In the November programme, it was expected that learners would require more than one session per week (and possibly a half-term booster) to cover the required number of hours before the resits began week commencing 4th November 2024. For the May/June 2025 resit programme, tutoring needed to start early January 2025 to fit in one tutoring session per week prior to the resits starting week commencing 9th May 2025 (if it started later, more than one session per week would be required).

Tailoring—Adaptation of the intervention

The programme followed the same format for all settings. Tutors were prepared to adapt tuition and coaching to the learners' likes, dislikes, strengths, and gaps in learning, supported by the materials listed above under 'what?', and to heed guidelines that specific settings may have provided, for instance, around safeguarding or tuition content. Occasionally, session length and delivery format were adjusted to accommodate the number of sessions; for example, some tutoring sessions lasted more than an hour, were shifted online, or were rescheduled to alternative days.

How well (planned)?—Strategies to maximise effective implementation

Tutors were required to complete an attendance register for each student via an online platform (Connect) within 48 hours of the sessions. Completion of this register was a compulsory element of their job role. Tutors also provided the Tutor Trust with feedback on their satisfaction with the training, their confidence, and readiness to provide tutoring in the post-16 context, and their experience of the tutoring. They also provided feedback about learners' engagement and level of understanding.

The plan was for the Tutor Trust Coordinators, whose role is to liaise with college/school Partnership Leads, to review all tutor attendance data, and feedback and intervene if/when any issues emerged in relation to a student's attendance. It was intended that most tutors would also have a lesson plan reviewed and would be observed while tutoring, as described above.

It was planned that each setting would receive a review after three weeks of delivery. This would involve the setting's Partnership Lead and the Tutor Trust Coordinator discussing progress, agreeing actions to resolve any logistical issues, and identifying any learners who were not engaging as required and what action should be taken. It was Tutor Trust's usual practice to replace learners at this point if they were not attending. However, this was not the case for the pilot, as learners would not have participated in baseline activities.

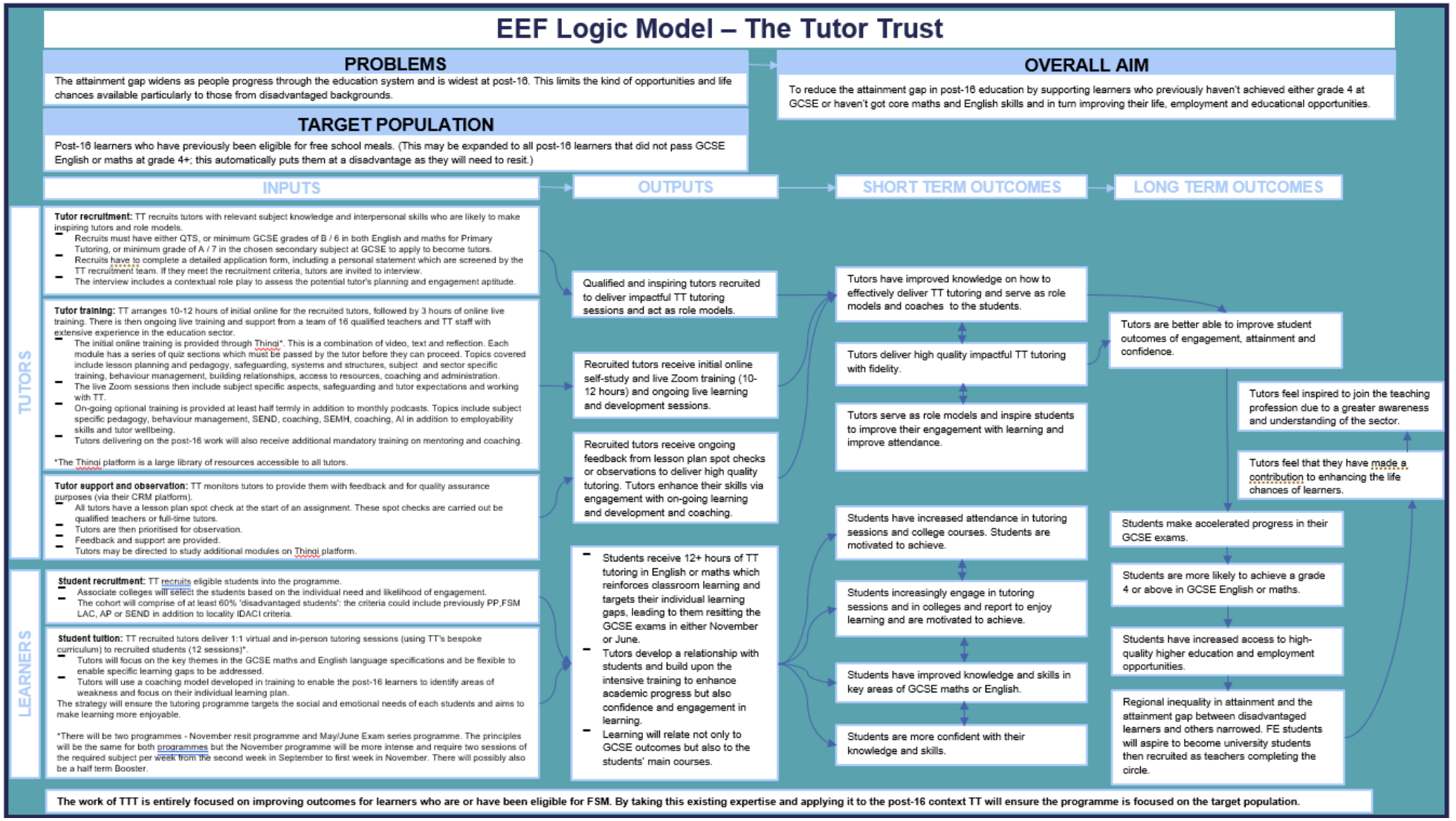
At the endpoint, it was expected that a review would be undertaken by the Tutor Trust Coordinator with the institution's Partnership Lead. This would provide an opportunity to review how the programme had progressed and short-term student outcomes (including drawing on endpoint screening test data and student feedback). It would also include a discussion on future partnership working.

Support was available for tutors throughout the duration of the programme as and when they needed it. Additionally, the Tutor Trust planned to keep in regular contact with settings, arranging further meetings if desired or necessary.

Theory of change/logic model

The theory of change (ToC)/logic model for the programme is shown in Figure 1. It was developed by the Tutor Trust then reviewed and finalised following an IDEA workshop with the Tutor Trust team, the EEF, and evaluators.

Figure 1: Theory of change/logic model



Research questions

The research themes included:

- Feasibility of programme implementation: feasibility, acceptability and appropriateness, fidelity, and effectiveness of implementation.
- Evidence of promise: evidence of the short-term outcomes for tutors and learners set out in the theory of change.
- Readiness for trial: including optimum dosage, any required modifications or further manualisation of the programme, and the plausibility of the theory of change.

The specific research questions relating to these three themes are detailed below.

Feasibility of implementation

RQ1. Is the Tutor Trust programme **feasible to implement in the post-16 context**?

- Have the required number of target colleges/schools and learners been recruited and retained?
- Has it been feasible to deliver the tutoring (for example, in terms of delivering 15 hours, student attendance)?
- Have there been any notable differences in the feasibility of implementation between new settings and those which had a prior relationship with Tutor Trust?

RQ2. Are programme **inputs for tutors acceptable and appropriate** (for example, training, resources, ongoing support)?

- Did tutors find the *initial training* and the associated resources acceptable and appropriate?
- Did tutors find the *post-16 training* and the associated resources acceptable and appropriate?
- Did tutors find the *coaching training* and the associated resources acceptable and appropriate?
- Did tutors find the *ongoing support* acceptable and appropriate?
- Were there any differences by: new/experienced tutors, teachers/graduates/undergraduates, and subject?
- Did tutors attend the required training?

RQ3. Has the **tutoring/coaching been implemented with fidelity** (for example, required dosage, customised to student need, mix of face-to-face and online delivery)?

- Have the intended number of tutoring hours been delivered?
- To what extent did tutors follow the intended delivery model/approach? What were the main challenges to fidelity, if any? Have any adaptations been made and why?
- Were there any differences by tutor characteristics (for example, new/experienced tutors, teachers/graduates/undergraduates, and subject)?
- Were there any differences in fidelity between newly recruited settings and settings with an established relationship with Tutor Trust?
- Is the tutoring distinct from existing practice?

RQ4. Is the **tutoring for learners acceptable/appropriate** (for example, content, mode, dosage)?

- Have the content and mode of tutoring met learners' needs and engaged them?

- Does the required dosage differ by learners' starting points, subject, programme (for example, November or June resit), and institutions' internal GCSE provision?
- Have there been any unintended consequences of participation for learners?

RQ5: Do colleges/schools view the **programme as affordable**?

Evidence of promise

RQ6. Is there **evidence of promise that the programme may lead to the longer-term changes in the post-16 context** expected in the theory of change (ToC)?

- What are the perceived shorter-term outcomes for tutors (new and experienced)?
- What are the perceived shorter-term outcomes for learners?
    - Do tutor characteristics affect student outcomes?
    - Do student outcomes vary by level of disadvantage?
    - Are there any other mediators/moderators to student outcomes?
    - What does the screening test and GCSE data tell us about student outcomes?

Readiness for trial

RQ7. What **modifications, if any, would be required/beneficial to scale the programme** and ensure readiness for efficacy trial in the post-16 context?

- Are any modifications required to: college/school recruitment, student eligibility criteria and recruitment, tutor recruitment and training/support/materials provided, tutoring delivery specification and approach, tutoring dosage, support for colleges/schools to implement, processes for collecting monitoring and fidelity data?

RQ8. Would the **delivery team have the capacity to deliver the programme with fidelity at scale?**

RQ9. To what extent **does the ToC provide a plausible account of how the programme works**?

- Are there any outcomes for non-participating learners ('spill over') which need to be considered?

RQ10. What potential **secondary outcome measure(s)** could be used in an efficacy trial and how should it/they be administered?

The success indicators in relation to the research questions and the three pilot themes of inquiry are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Programme success indicators

Pilot criteria	Success indicators	How to assess this?
Feasibility of implementation	The required number of targeted colleges/schools and learners have been recruited and retained (RQ1)	Monitoring data; interviews with developers
	Training/resources/support are acceptable and appropriate to tutors (RQ2)	Workshop with trainers; focus groups with tutors; online tutor proforma; interviews with developers
	Tutoring/coaching is implemented with fidelity (RQ3)	Fidelity data on the delivery of tutoring sessions for each student to programme intentions (e.g., number, length and mode of each session, and topic(s) covered) collected by Tutor Trust; tutor and staff interviews as part of college/school case studies
	Tutoring is acceptable and appropriate to learners (RQ4, RQ5)	Student survey; college/school case studies (staff interviews; student focus groups)
	Learners engage, with low drop out: 65% complete 15 hours and 70% complete 12 hours (RQ1 and RQ4)	Fidelity data collected by Tutor Trust
	The programme is considered affordable for colleges/schools (RQ5)	Staff interviews as part of college/school case studies
Evidence of promise	Findings indicate that the programme has prepared tutors to effectively deliver the programme (RQ6)	Focus groups with tutors; online tutor proforma; Tutor Trust monitoring data on tutor training/support/usage of resources; college/school case studies (tutor and staff interviews)
	There are indications of the programme leading to improvements in learners' confidence and progress in maths and/or English (RQ6)	Student surveys, college/school case studies (student focus groups; interviews with staff), analysis of internal screening test data and data on learners' pre- and post-intervention GCSE grades
Readiness for trial	The programme can be scaled for a future trial (with minor amendments) (RQ7, RQ10)	Assessment of all evaluation data
	The delivery team have the capacity to deliver the programme with fidelity at scale (RQ8)	Interviews with programme developers plus assessment of all evaluation data
	The ToC/logic model provides a plausible account of the programme (RQ9)	Assessment of all evaluation data
	There are viable processes to collect data to monitor compliance and fidelity (RQ7)	Assessment of all evaluation data

Ethical review

The project followed NFER's Code of Practice (CoP) which is aligned to ethical practice codes from research organisations such as BERA (British Educational Research Association) and SRA (Social Research Association). Ethical considerations were embedded in NFER's work and QA processes. NFER's Code of Practice Committee (CoPC) ensures appropriate ethical review of research and monitors and adjudicates on matters requiring ethical scrutiny. The project was deemed to

comply with the CoP, and therefore the proposal submission date was regarded as the date on which ethical approval was given.

NFER is committed to safeguarding the privacy of research participants. In this project, we primarily consulted with college/school staff, tutors, and learners. We were clear and open with participants about who we are, the nature and purpose of research, how and why their data was being used, and the value of participating. This was supported by privacy notices and information sheets. Participants could withdraw from data processing at any time during the evaluation, and instructions were provided in the privacy notice for how they could request their data is not processed. Parents/guardians were provided with an information letter which informed them of how they/their child could withdraw their child from the evaluation if they wished to. Relevant documents can be found in Appendix A.

In accordance with our Child Protection protocol, all NFER staff in contact with children and young people and/or their data receive safeguarding training. All staff complete bi-annual Child Protection Training and annual DBS checks are completed on staff going into colleges/schools or accessing children's data. All members of the evaluation team who visited colleges/schools were familiar with their safeguarding procedures and received appropriate training on safeguarding protocols. No safeguarding concerns arose during the course of the evaluation. Safeguarding due diligence checks were carried out specific to the pilot project. In-person interviews with learners were supervised by a member of the college/school staff.

NFER is committed to creating an environment where staff, partners, and clients experience equality, diversity, and inclusion. See NFER's equality, diversity, and inclusion policy.

Data protection

NFER is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and research projects comply with the six principles of data protection legislation (UK GDPR and the DPA 2018) and its underlying focus on accountability. NFER is ISO/IEC 27001 certified (GB17/872763) and holds Cyber Essentials Plus (219ff642-b4fe-46df-92a1-379e53ea8583). NFER maintains a full Information Security Management Strategy, including a Data Security Policy with which staff are required to comply. NFER's Head of Data Security oversees compliance with data protection legislation, ensuring policies and practices are legally compliant and in line with good practice.

The Tutor Trust was the data controller with responsibility for the Post-16 Tutoring Programme. The Tutor Trust was responsible for recruiting colleges/schools for the programme and the associated data collection. NFER was the data controller with responsibility for the evaluation. NFER made decisions about how and what personal data was used in accordance with the purposes set by the EEF. A data sharing agreement was signed to support the transfer of data from Tutor Trust to NFER. Data transfer was undertaken using a secure NFER portal.

NFER identified 'legitimate interests' as the legal basis for its processing of personal data during the course of the evaluation (covered by GDPR Article 6(1)(f)). The evaluation fulfilled NFER's core business purposes of undertaking research, evaluation, and information activities and had broad societal benefits by contributing to improving the educational experience of children and young people. The evaluation did not involve the collection or handling of special category personal data.

The college/school headteacher/principal was required to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) which set out requirements of participation in the programme and evaluation (see Appendix A). The MoU asked for the name and contact details for the headteacher/principal and the key contact.

The following personal data about college/school staff, learners, and tutors was also collected throughout the project via data templates populated and shared by the Tutor Trust via a secure portal.

For college/school staff:

- Name of the college/school Partnership Lead, principal/headteacher, and head of Literacy and maths
- Email address, telephone number, and job role/title for those members of staff.

For learners:

- Student name
- Student gender
- Student date of birth
- Student unique pupil number (UPN) or unique learner number (ULN)
- Whether a student is eligible for the post-16 bursary
- Student postcode (if post-16 bursary information not provided)
- Whether the student has a special educational need or disability (SEND—yes/no, not data on specific need)
- Whether the student is a looked after child (LAC)
- Whether the student speaks English as an additional language (EAL)
- Whether the student was doing maths and/or English tutoring
- Whether the student was doing GCSE resits in November and/or June
- Student main course of study
- Student previous GCSE grade in English and/or maths
- Student GCSE resit grade achieved in English and/or maths
- Student screening test score in English and/or maths (baseline and endpoint)
- Student percentage attendance rate for main course of study
- Participation in tutoring (session, length of session)
- Reasons for student dropout (if relevant).

For tutors:

- Tutor name
- Tutor qualification/experience
- Whether the tutor was teaching English or maths
- Tutor highest qualification in English or maths
- Whether the tutor was newly trained or an experienced tutor
- Tutor completion of TT (Tutor Trust) training (standard, post-16, and coaching training)
- Tutor usage of training resources
- Tutor delivery of tutoring sessions (date, in person or online, session length)
- Outcomes of tutor lesson review, lesson observation
- Data from review meetings with tutors

- Reasons for tutor dropout, if relevant.

NFER collected personal data via online surveys and interviews (including perceptions of the implementation of the pilot). All data subjects were assured of the confidentiality of their data and anonymity in reporting. All survey data was checked, cleaned, and quality assured prior to analysis.

All personal data is securely deleted within one year of the publication of the final report (earliest June 2026).

The privacy notices for this project are available at **https://www.nfer.ac.uk/for-schools/participate-in-research/participate-in-research-projects/evaluation-of-tutor-trust-targeted-tutoring-pilot/** and are attached in Appendix A.

Questback was used to collect student responses to online surveys. The Questback privacy notice is available here: **https://www.questback.com/assets/uploads/Survey_Privacy_Policy.pdf**.

Microsoft Teams was used for remote interviews. The privacy notice is available here: **https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/teams-privacy.**

Project team

Delivery team

The TT delivery team was responsible for recruiting colleges/schools for the pilot, delivering the tutoring programme, collecting data required for the pilot evaluation, and liaising with the evaluation team to ensure smooth operation of the evaluation.

Name	Role/responsibility	Organisation
Ed Marsh	Programme lead: CEO responsible for overall quality assurance	Tutor Trust
Mark Wyss	Overseeing delivery: Programme Director responsible for driving and overseeing college/school relationships and tutoring delivery	Tutor Trust
Matt Wallis	Overseeing quality and impact: Director of Quality and Impact, responsible for overseeing the overall quality of the pilot (including tuition quality), and the impact of tuition	Tutor Trust
Sammy Meynell	Project and Programme Manager: responsible for overseeing tutoring delivery	Tutor Trust
Keira MacAlister	Impact Manager: responsible for overseeing the impact of tuition and the collection of data	Tutor Trust

Evaluation team

The evaluation team was responsible for the design and implementation of the pilot evaluation, which included writing a study plan, (Straw, Lynch, and Schwendel, 2024) data collection, analysis, and report writing.

Name	Role/responsibility	Organisation
Suzanne Straw	Principal Investigator: responsible for intellectual leadership, overall quality assurance	NFER
Sarah Lynch	Project Manager: responsible for day-to-day project management	NFER
Gemma Schwendel	Statistician: responsible for analysis of student survey and Monitoring Information (MI)/fidelity data	NFER
Cigdem Arikan	Statistician: responsible for analysis of student survey and MI/fidelity data	NFER
Jennie Harland	Quantitative Researcher: responsible for design of student survey and tutor proforma and data collection	NFER

Eleanor Bradley	Qualitative/Quantitative Researcher: responsible for design of qualitative instruments, data collection, analysis of qualitative and quantitative tutor survey data, and reporting	NFER
Gustavo Henndel Lopes	Qualitative Researcher: responsible for data collection, analysis of qualitative data, and reporting	NFER
Kathryn Hurd	Survey Lead: responsible for administration of student surveys and transfer of MI/fidelity data from Tutor Trust	NFER
Jishi Jose	Survey Operations: responsible for supporting with survey administration and MI/fidelity data transfer	NFER

Methods

Recruitment

Colleges/schools

Recruitment to the pilot was the responsibility of the Tutor Trust. As intended, they recruited 20 institutions with provision for learners aged 16–19 years (more details are given below in the 'Findings' section under 'participants/institutions'). Participating settings were based within Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and Merseyside. Three settings had worked with the Tutor Trust previously and had delivered the post-16 programme in 2023–2024 (but had new cohorts of learners joining this programme in 2024–2025), while 17 settings had not worked with them before. This was slightly different from the original aim of 15 new settings and 5 existing settings. The smaller number of existing settings restricted the comparison of findings between new and existing settings.

Learners

The target was to recruit 240 learners (12 per college/school) in Key Stage 5 (ages 16–19) who did not pass GCSE English and/or maths at grade 4+ (or the equivalent) at Key Stage 4. A total of 240 learners were initially recruited, yet around one in three learners (31%) either withdrew from the programme (N = 61) or did not attend any tutoring (N = 14) (no reasons were given). Although it is Tutor Trust's usual practice to replace learners, this was not the case with the pilot due to the logistics of administering baseline activities. A total of 165 of the 240 learners (69%) who were recruited went on to receive tutoring (see the findings section 'feasibility of implementation' for details on the number of hours of tutoring received).

The aim was for 75% of the learners to be eligible for the post-16 bursary. Data on bursary eligibility was provided for 191 of the initially recruited learners. Just 51 of these 191 learners (27%) were eligible for the post-16 bursary. The criteria for 'disadvantage' could also include learners previously eligible for Pupil Premium/Free School Meals, looked after children (LAC), pupils in alternative provision, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and pupils in socially-economically deprived areas (using IDACI criteria—Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index).

The characteristics of the student participants are discussed in more detail below in the 'Findings' section under 'participants/learners'.

Data collection

Table 3 below provides an overview of the data collection methods that the pilot evaluation incorporated, alongside which research questions each method aimed to answer, achieved sample sizes, analysis methods, and timescales. Following the table is a detailed description of each of the methods.

The fact that this was a pilot evaluation, and not a trial with a control group of learners to compare to, must be considered when interpreting the findings. There may be contextual factors that we are not aware of that could have influenced the impacts on learners, alongside their involvement in the Tutor Trust pilot. These could include the approach to other resit teaching in settings, teaching quality, student motivation, and other targeted support. Caution must also be applied due to small sample sizes and the fact that some findings are based on student self-report data.

Table 3: Data collection methods overview

Pilot criteria	RQ addressed	Research method	Data collection method	Achieved sample	Data analysis methods
Feasibility of implementation; evidence of promise; readiness for trial	RQ1,2,3,6,7	Collection and analysis of MI and fidelity data supplied by Tutor Trust	Template provided for MI and fidelity data collection by Tutor Trust and transferred to NFER	Programme-wide	Frequency counts (actuals versus targets); descriptive analysis
Feasibility of implementation; evidence of promise; readiness for trial	RQ1,2,3,4,6,7,8, 9,10	Programme developer interviews	Semi-structured telephone/video interviews	Key staff Oct '24: *N* = 7 July/Aug '25: *N* = 6	Deductive and inductive coding; thematic analysis
Feasibility of implementation; evidence of promise; readiness for trial	RQ1,2,3,6,7	Focus group with trainers	Structured discussion following a) initial training and b) implementation	July '24: *N* = 4	Deductive and inductive coding; thematic analysis
Feasibility of implementation; evidence of promise	RQ2,6	Focus groups with tutors	Structured discussion following initial training	Sep '24: *N* = 5 Feb '25: *N* = 4	Deductive and inductive coding; thematic analysis
Feasibility of implementation; evidence of promise	RQ4,6	Student surveys	Baseline and endpoint online survey (aim for 1st and 14th tutoring session; administered by tutors)	Baseline *N* = 139/165 Endpoint *N* = 79/165 Both surveys *N* = 72/165	Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, correlations (e.g., regression)
Feasibility of implementation; evidence of promise; readiness for trial	RQ1,3,4,5,6,7	College/school case studies and interviews	Case studies: semi-structured face-to-face/telephone interviews with staff and student interviews/focus groups Following November and June resits Interviews (half institutions): semi-structured telephone interview with Partnership Lead	Jan/July '25 13 learners across 5 settings 11 tutors across 7 settings 10 Partnership Leads across 7 settings	Deductive and inductive coding; thematic analysis
Feasibility of implementation; evidence of promise; readiness for trial	RQ1,2,3,4,6,7	Tutor proforma	Online proforma with closed and open-ended questions	July '25 *N* = 23/46	Descriptive statistics; thematic analysis

Collection of MI, fidelity and outcome data, ongoing during delivery

A key element of the evaluation involved capturing and analysing programme monitoring and fidelity data collected by the Tutor Trust to explore the extent to which the programme targets had been achieved, and the programme delivered with fidelity. This data also supported analysis of findings in relation to evidence of promise, specifically student outcomes, and readiness for trial, including scalability and effective monitoring systems being in place.

A data template and fidelity log was agreed with the Tutor Trust, which they completed on an ongoing basis and shared the data with NFER. Outcome data that was collected by the programme team was also included (pre- and post-intervention screening test data and data on learners' GCSE grades and attendance). The data collected is listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Monitoring, fidelity, and outcome data collected by Tutor Trust

Monitoring data collection
Institutions recruited and engaged
Characteristics of institutions for example, type, region, level of attainment, socio-economic catchment, new or existing relationship with the Tutor Trust
Log of institution review meetings for example, at three weeks, mid-term, and end of intervention
Tutors recruited, engaged, and trained
Tutor characteristics for example, new/experienced tutor; qualified teacher/undergraduate/graduate; qualification level in maths and/or English; number of tutees; dropouts
Tutor completion of training modules
Tutor usage of resources (as part of training)
Tutor attendance at live training sessions
Data from implementation of quality criteria for lesson reviews and observations
Learners recruited and engaged
Student recruitment actual vs target (overall number; number by institution)
Student characteristics (gender; previous free school meal (FSM)/Pupil Premium eligibility; whether in receipt of post-16 bursary; English as an Additional Language (EAL), SEND and looked after status; course of study; and Key Stage 4 GCSE grade(s) in English/maths)
Fidelity data collected on tutoring delivered
Tutoring delivered to each student: number of sessions, length, format (online vs face to face), and subject of tutoring. Also, non-attendance (and reasons)
Student weekly attendance at sessions (via Insight)
Outcome data for learners
Percentage attendance at institution for main course of study (at baseline, three-week review, and endpoint)
Screening test scores pre- and post-implementation
GCSE pre- and post-implementation grades

Focus group with trainers, July 2024

To gather views on how the pre-implementation training programme has been received, a focus group (lasting around 30–45 minutes) was carried out with four trainers, including trainers of maths and English and those who were responsible for

the new post-16 and coaching elements. This qualitative data collection gathered in-depth data on what and how training was delivered and received and perceptions of tutors' preparedness for delivery.

Focus groups with tutors, September 2024 and February 2025

Two focus groups with tutors were conducted. The first was with five tutors who had worked with the Tutor Trust before, and the second was with four newly recruited tutors who were trained in time to deliver tutoring for the June resists. The focus groups explored views on the training received and placed a particular focus on the new elements which were the training for post-16 and coaching. The new tutors were also asked about their views on the standard initial tutoring training for example, the content and format of training and the extent to which they felt confident to commence tutoring.

Interview with programme developers, October 2024/July 2025

In the autumn of 2024, two small-group online qualitative interviews were conducted with a total of seven representatives from the Tutor Trust. At this early stage, the interviews explored whether recruitment targets had been met (for tutors, settings, and learners) and whether the intended training had been delivered to tutors. Questions related to what had worked well and less well, challenges/facilitators, feasibility of recruitment to the pilot, and areas for development.

At the end of the intervention, two further online interviews were carried out with a total of six representatives from the Tutor Trust (three of whom had also been interviewed in the autumn 2024, while three had not, meaning that overall ten individuals from the TT contributed across the two interviews). The aim was to look back at what had worked well and less well overall in the delivery of tutoring; facilitators and barriers; perceptions of impact; and thoughts on the future delivery of the programme (including the possibility of delivery at a larger scale).

Baseline and endpoint student attitude survey, as and when learners start and end tutoring (September 2024–May 2025)

To explore secondary outcomes for learners resulting from participation in the tutoring programme, we administered an online baseline and endpoint student attitude survey. Secondary outcomes explored within the surveys were aligned to the ToC and included questions about learners':

- confidence and motivation towards learning English/maths;
- confidence and motivation towards their studies more generally;
- perceptions of knowledge and skills in English/maths;
- enjoyment of English/maths;
- understanding of the importance of English/maths; and
- perceptions of their progress in English/maths.

The endpoint survey also captured learners' views on the tutoring that they had received (including its content, format, length, and benefits).

The baseline survey was administered by tutors in the first tutoring session (prior to either November 2024 or June 2025 resits). The endpoint survey was administered in the 14th tutoring session (for those still participating). Learners received a £10 voucher for each survey completion. Table 5 shows the response to each survey.

Table 5: Survey response

Survey instrument	Total dispatched	Total completed	Total not completed	Total percentage of completion
November 2024 resits				
Baseline survey	71	39	32	55%

Endpoint survey	71	32	39	45%
Total	**142**	**71**	**71**	**50%**
May/June 2025 resits				
Baseline survey	174	100	74	57%
Endpoint survey	174	47	127	27%
Total	**348**	**147**	**201**	**42%**

Due to substantial student dropout prior to the 14th tutoring session (when endpoint surveys were due to be administered), the response rates at endpoint were lower than expected.

For the November resit cohort, 27 learners (38%) completed both surveys. For the June resit cohort, 45 learners (26%) completed both surveys. These small numbers limit the ability to carry out robust analysis exploring change in outcomes over time.

Case studies/interviews, January and June 2025

To explore in depth how the intervention was implemented, we aimed to conduct case studies with half of the 20 programme settings (ten settings; five conducted in person and five conducted virtually), to conduct interviews with the Partnership Lead, heads of maths/English, tutors, and learners (in groups or individually). It proved challenging to recruit settings for case studies. All 20 settings were approached numerous times and, despite offering flexible options in terms of approach and timings, ten full case studies were not carried out. While one of the settings declined the invitation, citing that they had only one tutee enrolled in the programme, most did not respond to our outreach. We infer that this might be related to the low engagement levels observed among many settings taking part in the programme.

In total, interviews were carried out with ten school/college staff across seven settings; 13 learners across five settings; and 11 tutors who worked across seven settings (not necessarily the same seven settings as the staff). Overall, nine settings were represented in the interviews. In five settings, interviews were carried out with both staff and learners. In two settings, only tutors were represented. Of the nine settings represented, eight had not worked with the Tutor Trust previously, while only one had done so before. For this reason, the comparison of interview findings between new and existing settings could not be made.

The interviews in three settings were carried out soon after November 2024 resits, while the others were carried out after May/June 2025 resits. Stories from two of the case studies, where both learners and staff were interviewed, can be found in Appendix B. Given the small, achieved sample for these qualitative interviews, views may not be representative of all the pilot settings.

Interviews with staff and tutors explored: views on the programme aims, content, and delivery; student selection; the feasibility of implementation, including facilitators and challenges (for example, timetabling, tutor confidence/expertise, student engagement); fidelity (including dosage) and any adaptations; perceptions of early student outcomes; and costs incurred. In case study settings which had worked with Tutor Trust before ($N = 1$), we investigated what they had learnt over time and how the existing relationship and prior learning may have supported delivery.

The student interviews focused on: their reasons for participation; the specific tutoring they had undertaken (for example, number, length and mode of sessions, and the topics covered); the support they received from their institution to attend tutoring; the outcomes they had realised and expected to realise in the future; and how the tutoring had related to the resit sessions they had attended at college/school.

Learners were given a £10 voucher and settings a £100 voucher (if more than one interview took place) to thank them for their participation in case studies/interviews.

Online tutor proforma, July 2025

A proforma (using Microsoft Forms) was completed by 23 of the 46 tutors (50%) participating in the programme. It included both closed and open questions, exploring their views on the training and support they had received, the implementation of tutoring (both for November and June resits), student engagement, and perceived outcomes for learners.

Data analysis

Qualitative analysis

All qualitative interviews/focus groups were audio recorded (following agreement) and analysed using the MAXQDA software package. Deductive and inductive analysis approaches were used—first analysing data around ToC themes and research questions and then adding further codes emerging from the data. MAXQDA enabled the qualitative data to be grouped and analysed by category (for example, different staff roles).

Where a number of interviews took place within the same setting, we were able to analyse them as whole case studies, as well as exploring themes across interviewee types across all settings. Examples of full case study stories can be found in Appendix B.

The analysis explored differences between the November and May/June resit programmes and between English and maths tutoring. As only one new setting was represented in the interviews, the comparison between existing and new settings could not be made. Any differences were, however, explored in the quantitative analysis.

Quantitative analysis

Student baseline and endpoint surveys were analysed using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and simple inferential statistics (t-tests and chi-squared tests) to explore change over time (for example, in confidence and attitudes towards learning and English and maths) which may be related to the tutoring, and whether there were any differences between subjects, student subgroups, resit timing, and other student characteristics, such as type of institution attended. Likert-scale questions were compared to assess changes in distributions between baseline and endpoint, and subgroup differences were examined. Chi-squared tests were used to determine whether observed differences were statistically significant. For numerical questions, similar comparisons were made using independent-samples t-tests. We explored overall differences between baseline and endpoint and analysed endpoint views on tutoring received. Although a small subgroup of learners completed surveys at both baseline and endpoint, the numbers were insufficient for reliable paired analysis. Therefore, comparisons were made at the overall group level, treating samples as independent for practical purposes. This approach allowed us to explore general trends while acknowledging that individual-level changes could not be robustly assessed.

For the screening data, we analysed paired pre- and post-tutoring scores to assess overall impact, calculating mean differences and effect sizes to quantify change. For subgroup comparisons, we focused on endpoint screening data to identify differences between groups, again reporting means and effect sizes. For GCSE outcomes, we examined the percentage of learners achieving each grade and explored whether patterns varied across groups. Student pre- and post-intervention screening data, along with GCSE grades, were summarised using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and simple inferential tests (i.e., t-tests and chi-squared tests) to explore change over time. Paired analyses were used where data was available for the same learners at both time points; however, due to small matched samples, most comparisons were conducted at the aggregate level. Subject to data quality, we also investigated whether outcomes differed by student characteristics (for example, subject studied, Pupil Premium/FSM status, and institution type).

We produced frequencies from the closed questions in the tutor proforma. Due to the small population, we did not undertake any statistical comparisons by different tutor characteristics. Data from the proforma was primarily analysed qualitatively (see ‘Qualitative analysis’ section above).

We analysed the monitoring and fidelity data (i.e., recruitment and retention of post-16 providers and learners; training and support accessed and usage of resources; and tutoring dosage) to evaluate progress against targets and fidelity criteria (RQ 1, 2, 3, 6).

All quantitative analysis was conducted using RStudio and outputs were quality assured following NFER’s internal QA process.

Triangulation

We triangulated data sources (for example, qualitative, quantitative, and MI) to provide a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the programme and perceived outcomes, supported by a common coding frame.

All analysis supported testing out of the ToC, including the causal mechanisms and moderators.

Timeline

Dates	Activity
November 2023	IDEA workshop (NFER, EEF, Tutor Trust)
January 2024	Set up meeting (NFER, EEF, Tutor Trust)
January–March 2024	Design of privacy notices, information sheet, and MoU
	Design of study plan, research instruments, MI template, and fidelity log
April and October 2024, July 2025	Collection of MI on recruitment, initial training, and follow-up support
	Study plan published (June)
July 2024	Workshop with trainers and focus groups with tutors
October 2024	Interviews with Tutor Trust
September 2024–July 2025	Collection of fidelity data on tutoring
From September 2024 and ongoing as learners start tutoring	Baseline student survey (in 1st tutoring session)
November 2024 and June 2025	Endpoint student survey (in 14th tutoring session)
January and June/July 2025	Case studies/interviews
July 2025	Online proforma for tutors
July/August 2025	Interviews with Tutor Trust
July–September 2025	Analysis
October 2025	Key findings presentation
November 2025	First draft of report submitted
June 2026	Report published

Findings

Feasibility of implementation

Participants: institutions

Of the 20 post-16 institutions recruited to the pilot, 3 had existing relationships with the Tutor Trust, and 17 had not worked with them before. This exceeded the target of 15 new settings to include in the pilot. Across the 20 settings, 9 were 11–18 schools/academies with Sixth Forms, 7 were post-16 Further Education (FE) Colleges, 3 were free schools with post-16 provision, and one was a Sixth Form College. All institutions were located in the North of England, across Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and Merseyside. Details on the characteristics of institutions recruited to the pilot can be found in Appendix C.

Participants: learners

As intended, the Tutor Trust initially recruited 240 learners to the programme. However, around one in three learners (31%) either withdrew from the programme prior to delivery starting (N = 61) or did not attend any tutoring (N = 14). The Tutor Trust had feedback from settings that this related to learners not wanting tutoring or feeling they did not need tutoring or that the timing of tutoring did not match student availability (with some settings and tutors perceived to be better than others at trying to work around these barriers). A total of 165 of the 240 learners (69%) who were recruited went on to receive tutoring (see the 'Findings' section 'Feasibility of implementation' for details on the number of hours of tutoring received). Further details are provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Recruitment, withdrawal, and retention of learners in the Tutor Trust programme

Recruitment: *N* = 240				
Subject: English *N* = 72; Maths *N* = 165; Both *N* = 3	**Resit period*:** November *N* = 73; June *N* = 173	**Gender:** Female *N* = 127; Male *N* = 113	**Student characteristics**:** Bursary *N* = 51; SEND *N* = 57; EAL *N* = 27	**Institution:** Existing *N* = 55; New *N* = 185
Withdrawn/No tutoring received: *N* = 75				
Subject*: English *N* = 31; Maths *N* = 30	**Resit period**:** November *N* = 15; June *N* = 61	**Gender:** Female *N* = 30; Male *N* = 45	**Student characteristics:** Bursary *N* = 5; SEND *N* = 17; EAL *N* = 7	**Institution:** Existing *N* = 17; New *N* = 58
Retained and received at least 1 hour of tutoring: *N* = 165				
Subject: English *N* = 41; Maths *N* = 121; Both *N* = 3	**Resit period*:** November *N* = 57; June *N* = 113	**Gender:** Female *N* = 97; Male *N* = 68	**Student characteristics**:** Bursary *N* = 46; SEND *N* = 40; EAL *N* = 20	**Institution:** Existing *N* = 38; New *N* = 127

Source: Tutor Trust student monitoring information.

Notes on recruitment figures:

** Three recruited learners intended to sit resits in both November and June.*

***Bursary eligibility was provided for 191 of 240 learners. SEND status was provided for 230 of 240 learners. EAL status was provided for 226 of 240 learners.*

Notes on withdrawal/no tutoring received figures:

**Subject data available for 61 of 75 learners.*

***One student intended to retake their subject in both resit periods.*

Notes on retention figures:

**Five learners are double counted (2 learners took both English and maths in November; 3 learners resat their subject in both resit periods).*

***Bursary eligibility was available for 160 of 165 learners. SEND and EAL status was available for all 165 retained learners.*

Tutors

The Tutor Trust recruited and trained 50 tutors as part of the pilot; however, four tutors withdrew from the programme following training, leaving 46 tutors who delivered tutoring over the course of the pilot. As intended, all tutors had the required GCSE grade in the subject they tutored (grade A/7), although most had a higher qualification (either an A Level or degree/postgraduate degree). The Tutor Trust met their target of around two-thirds of tutors having prior experience with the organisation—of the 46 tutors who delivered tutoring through the pilot, 32 (70%) had already received training, and 14 (30%) were new to Tutor Trust. Figure 3 provides details of the characteristics of all recruited tutors and those who delivered tutoring.

Figure 3: Recruitment and retention of tutors to the Tutor Trust programme

Recruited: *N* = 50			
Tutoring subject*: English *N* = 19; Maths *N* = 33	**Qualification in tutoring subject*:** GCSE *N* = 10; A Level *N* = 24; Degree/Postgraduate *N* = 18	**Highest qualification:** Undergraduate *N* = 21; Graduate *N* = 18; Teacher *N* = 11	**Tutor Trust experience:** New *N* = 16; Already trained *N* = 34
Retained: *N* = 46			
Tutoring subject*: English *N* = 16; Maths *N* = 32	**Qualification in tutoring subject*:** GCSE *N* = 10; A Level *N* = 23; Degree/Postgraduate *N* = 15	**Highest qualification:** Undergraduate *N* = 20; Graduate *N* = 16; Teacher *N* = 10	**Tutor Trust experience:** New *N* = 14; Already trained *N* = 32

*Source: Tutor Trust tutor monitoring information. *Two tutors who were retained on the programme delivered both English and maths tutoring; therefore, recruitment figures relating to 'Tutoring subject' and 'Qualification in tutoring subject' sum to 52 rather than 50, while retention figures for these categories sum to 48 rather than 46.*

RQ1: Is the Tutor Trust programme feasible to implement in the post-16 context?

Have the required number of target colleges/schools been recruited and retained?

As detailed in the 'Participants' section of this report, the Tutor Trust recruited 20 post-16 institutions to the pilot as intended and all 20 institutions were retained. For ease of recruitment, it was initially agreed with the research team and with the EEF that 15 of these institutions would be new to working with Tutor Trust and 5 would have an existing relationship with the organisation. Final recruitment figures showed that 17 institutions (85%) were new to working with Tutor Trust (exceeding the target) and 3 (15%) had an existing relationship with them.

Interviews with representatives from the Tutor Trust provided further insight into their experiences of recruiting to the trial. They reported that their experience was typical of any recruitment process, with staff from regional teams meeting with setting staff in person. However, accessing student data and receiving signed MoUs by the required deadlines was challenging. This was particularly the case when recruiting institutions in readiness for the November resit period, as some institutions did not confirm their participation in the pilot until September. Where the Tutor Trust and an institution did not finalise an agreement, it was often because the institution contact who expressed an interest delegated programme implementation to someone else who was then difficult to communicate with, or the initial interest was expressed by someone who was a strategic decision-maker meaning that initial interest did not carry through to participation. Tutor Trust delivery team members reported that accessing such strategic contacts was easier in schools, compared to large post-16 institutions, with whom Tutor Trust have less experience.

Throughout the course of the programme, college/school staff were generally positive about the contact and help they received from the Tutor Trust to support their retention. Staff reported that the Tutor Trust had provided support with setting up the programme, recruiting learners, and accommodating timetable changes. Some Partnership Leads also liaised with the Tutor Trust to address safeguarding concerns raised by tutors, share feedback, and coordinate reporting to the Tutor

Trust. In some cases, contact was said to be frequent (described as '*back and forth*' and '*overcommunication is better than not enough communication*'), while in others, it was felt to be more limited.

Have the required number of learners been recruited and retained?

As detailed in the 'Participants' section of this report and shown in Figure 2, Tutor Trust initially recruited 240 learners to the pilot as intended. Of those, 69% of learners were selected to receive tutoring for maths (165 of 240) and 30% for English (72 of 240). Three learners (1%) were selected to receive tutoring for both English and maths. Just less than a third (30%) of learners were recruited with the intention that they would resit their subject in November 2024 (73 of 240), with the majority (72%, 173 of 240) resitting in June.[8]

Just over half of the recruited learners (53%, 127 of 240) were female. The target was for 75% of recruited learners to be eligible for the post-16 bursary. Data on bursary eligibility was provided for 191 of the recruited learners. Just 51 of these 191 learners (27%) were eligible for the post-16 bursary which was well below target. Information on SEND was provided for 230 of the 240 recruited learners, and 57 of these learners (25%) were recorded as having some form of SEND. Information on EAL was provided for 226 of the 240 recruited learners, and 27 of these learners (12%) were recorded as speaking EAL.

Not all of the 240 learners went on to participate in tutoring. A total of 165 learners (69%) received at least one hour of tutoring during the pilot. Of those, 121 learners (73%) received tutoring for maths, and 41 learners (25%) received tutoring for English. Three learners (2%) received tutoring for both subjects. Just over a third of learners (35%, 57 of 165) resat their GCSE in November with the remaining learners (68%, 113 of 165) resitting their exam in June (note that these figures sum to 170 due to two learners retaking both English and maths in November, and three learners resitting in both exam periods). The majority (59%, 97 of 165) of learners who received any tutoring were female. Data on bursary eligibility was available for 160 of the 165 participating learners. Of these 160 learners, 46 (29%) were eligible for the post-16 bursary, meaning that the target for 75% of learners in receipt of tutoring to also be eligible for the bursary was not met. SEND and EAL information was available for all 165 participating learners. Of those, 40 learners (24%) were recorded as having SEND and 20 learners (12%) were EAL. Most learners who received any tutoring (77%) were from institutions which had not worked with Tutor Trust before; 38 learners (23%) were from institutions with an existing Tutor Trust relationship.

Regarding student selection, staff who participated in an interview as part of the pilot shared their processes for selecting learners to participate in the pilot and their experiences of student recruitment. Selection criteria varied across institutions (discretion could be used within the parameters of Tutor Trust's guidance discussed above). Criteria included learners aged 16–19 (Year 12 and/or 13 in Sixth Form Colleges), the number of previous resit attempts (settings varied in their prioritisation of learners resitting for the first time or after previous attempts), previous GCSE scores and closeness to a grade 4, having a satisfactory attendance record and confidence in their engagement, timetable availability, having pastoral needs warranting further support, perceived need for support, lack of parental support at home, attitude and motivation (as assessed by teachers), Pupil Premium eligibility, ease in coordinating tutoring logistics across the setting, tutors, and learners, and being in formal education during the pilot. Some settings did not use disadvantage (eligibility for FSM means or the post-16 bursary or Pupil Premium eligibility) as criteria, either by choice or because vacancies were filled based on other criteria. One institution changed their approach to selection for the June cohort and did not just select learners who had achieved a grade 3, but rather those who other staff recommended, based on which learners they felt would benefit most from tutoring.

Staff who were interviewed reported some challenges with the student selection process, mostly related to the needs of the pilot administration. This included the requirement to submit a list of learners for the pilot before their previous GCSE resit results were available, which meant that some learners needed to be swapped once results were confirmed.

Most staff who were interviewed reported that they were able to recruit the desired number of learners for the programme. Some staff said that learners were strongly advised or 'pushed' to participate rather than simply being given the choice, whilst others emphasised the importance of learners making the decision for themselves to maximise engagement. There is no evidence from the pilot to suggest either approach is more effective than the other. Learners were encouraged to participate by being told it was free one to one support. One Tutor Trust delivery team member reported that learners who saw the benefits of the programme were more likely to be retained, compared to learners who were selected but '*didn't*

[8] Note that three learners sat both subjects and three learners were recorded as resitting in both exam periods, hence figures sum to 246.

really want to do it', '*didn't feel like they needed it*', or '*perhaps the timing of the session just didn't quite work*'. Some Tutor Trust delivery team members felt that, where learners '*self-selected*', they were more likely to be retained. Relatedly, another Tutor Trust delivery team member commented that it would have been helpful if the Tutor Trust had spoken to the learners about the programme before the first tutoring session. Some institutions also reported that they had contacted parents/carers regarding their child being offered tutoring—some responses received were positive, and others did not respond to the communication.

Learners who participated in a focus group or interview reported that they were told the tutoring would benefit them and help them pass their GCSE. This advice typically came from sixth form/college staff and occasionally from parents/carers. Learners felt they received enough general information about the tutoring at the start of the programme, such as knowing the support would be one to one and focused on the topics they found challenging. Most learners who participated in a focus group or interview welcomed the opportunity to receive tutoring. Although some were initially reluctant, they often viewed tutoring as a step towards broader goals, typically related to their future career. This helped to offset inconveniences like early scheduling or the need to study more of a subject they disliked.

Has it been feasible to implement the tutoring (for example, in terms of delivering 15 hours, student attendance)?

MI data relating to the number of hours delivered through the programme suggests it was not feasible to deliver 15 hours of tutoring, as just six learners received/attended this amount of tutoring. Details on the number of hours tutoring learners attended are discussed under RQ3 in relation to fidelity of tutoring implementation. Data collected from interviews and focus groups within settings and with the delivery team provided detail on the feasibility of delivering the tutoring and the facilitators and challenges experienced.

To increase attendance hours, many settings reported that they had supplemented in-person sessions with online delivery and scheduled sessions during half term. In one setting where the majority of learners received over 12 hours, this was achieved by offering longer sessions during half term (two hours) and extended sessions (four to five hours) for those needing to catch up prior to November resits. This setting also rearranged sessions for learners who missed or arrived late. In contrast, another setting reported that some learners were unable to attend longer half-term sessions.

There was significantly more involvement from the Tutor Trust in organising the tutoring sessions than they would typically expect, particularly where time constraints meant that setting staff were less engaged, and this especially applied to the November resits. The Tutor Trust and tutors often had to work directly with learners to arrange sessions, which was not perceived to be feasible if the programme was to be delivered on a larger scale. One tutor reported excessive administration work to set up sessions and a mismatch between their availability and learners' timetables, which led to some learners withdrawing from the programme.

Some settings reported close collaboration between tutors and college/school staff for monitoring attendance. Where staff were easily reachable and used instant messaging to contact learners about attendance, this was viewed positively. However, online sessions held in the evening without staff supervision made tracking attendance and reminding learners more difficult. The table below sets out the key factors that contributed to good attendance and which facilitated the delivery of the intended tutoring hours.

Table 6: Contributing factors for good attendance and delivery of the intended tutoring hours

Student motivation

- Learners were motivated by future personal goals, which passing their resits would assist with, such as securing a good career, earning money to purchase items like a new car, finishing school earlier in the summer rather than having to stay for summer resits, and progressing on to other courses.
- When the setting emphasised to learners that they were part of a specially selected group for tutoring, this helped foster commitment.

Tutor-student relationship

- Learners engaged well when they felt reassured and supported by tutors, appreciated their style, and built strong relationships (this was at times enhanced by the use of the Snap Survey and its results):

  'I liked how friendly they [the tutors] *were. You felt comfortable around them; you felt you could be open and say whatever, and they wouldn't judge. It just felt right. And I think that plays a crucial part in the tutoring because if they're not nice or you don't get on with them, that can just deconstruct the whole programme entirely.'* (Student)

  'The most important bit is establishing that relationship with the learners at the beginning.' (Tutor)

  'So, I think it depends on the actual tutors they get, whether they [learners] *can form a working relationship with them, whether they're warm. I think, you know, that's essential.'* (Subject leader)
- Tutors who understood learners' motivations could remind them of their goals, helping sustain engagement.
- Learners valued tutors' professionalism, with one student preferring tutoring over regular lessons due to perceived tutor competence.
- Tutors being of similar age to the learners was described as a positive factor for engagement in some tutor and school staff interviews:

  'It helped, particularly with some of the lads, because I think [the tutor] *was almost relatable*—[the tutor] *was at uni,* [the tutor] *wasn't much older. It's different from the normal teacher—the old person in the room.'* (Subject leader)
- Tutors emailing activities to learners who missed sessions due to illness.

Setting-level support and communication

- Effective timetabling for example, scheduling tutoring on days when learners were already in college/school.
- Some settings contacted learners on the morning of each session and asked tutors to report absences so staff could follow up.
- Regular check-ins with learners by staff helped monitor progress and maintain engagement.
- Consistent use of the same room for sessions helped learners know where to go, with consistency highlighted as important.
- For online tutoring, allowing direct communication between the tutor and the student via the learners' college/school email address.

Many learners had poor attendance at tutoring, either after a gradual or sudden decline, sometimes leading to withdrawal from the programme. Staff and tutors reported that challenges in delivering the intended number of tutoring hours were often linked to challenges such as learners' college/school avoidance, poor overall attendance in college/school, declining engagement, and timetable clashes. The table below sets out the key factors that contributed to poor attendance and which made the delivery of the intended tutoring hours challenging.

Table 7: Contributing factors to poor attendance and challenges in the delivery of intended tutoring

Student attitudes and prior engagement

- Some learners had pre-existing attendance issues or poor engagement in college/school.
- Some learners were resistant to resitting exams, feeling forced and demotivated after multiple attempts.
- Some wanted to focus on their main studies, not maths or English.
- Some learners did not engage as they perceived the tutoring as unnecessary, for instance, it was not needed for them to achieve their career goals:

  '*I want to go and be cabin crew. Why do I need to know Pythagoras? I'll be serving tea and coffee! I'm just going into the most basic career in the world.*' (Student)

Tutor-student relationship issues

- Individual student's lack of trust or rapport with their tutors.
- Inconsistent terminology between tutors and regular teachers (likely caused by a lack of communication between the setting and the tutor) confused learners and reduced confidence for example, a tutor might have referred to something as a '*technique*', whereas the teacher would have described it as '*subject terminology*' or a '*language feature.*'
- Lack of appropriate resources for pupils with SEND to meet their specific needs, such as blue paper.

Scheduling conflicts and time constraints

- Timetabling issues for example, tutoring scheduled on days when learners did not have other lessons or at unsuitable times such as the end of the day.
- Tutoring during free periods conflicting with other activities, hobbies, or appointments.
- Clashes with other lessons or exams.
- Learners sometimes having to work during tutoring hours.
- Studying both maths and English simultaneously.
- Sessions falling on bank holidays and not being rescheduled.

Communication gaps

- Learners not receiving reminders due to tutors' difficulties sending them (not helped by settings' low involvement) or email inbox issues. Suggestions included visual reminders, for instance, tutoring appearing on learners' class charts, similar to a normal lesson, or an app on learners' smartphones with notifications for learners and parents.

External and personal factors

- Illness.
- Pastoral issues such as bereavement, stress, or relationship difficulties.
- Lack of parental engagement or understanding of timetable constraints and the importance of attendance.

Effective timetabling was a key facilitator of student attendance, but issues with timetabling could also be a key barrier. Successful strategies included finding blocks of consecutive tutoring hours and avoiding certain periods (for example, at the end of the day when learners wanted to go home). A representative from the Tutor Trust said that giving learners 'a sheet with dates' can make a difference, but not all settings had staff available to do this. One subject leader felt online sessions would have been easier to timetable. A setting where all selected learners had 15 hours of tutoring reported seeking to ensure that the learners had another lesson on that day, as they felt that this would result in better attendance:

> *'We know how difficult it is sometimes, if maths or English gets placed on a day where there's no other lessons, sometimes we struggle to get those learners in. Whereas, if we made those tutoring sessions part of a day where they had three hours in the morning…that seems to help those learners to get into the sessions.'* (Partnership Lead)

Scheduling tutoring on days when learners were not normally timetabled to be on site was identified as contributing to poor attendance. One reason cited was the additional transport costs learners may incur. A Tutor Trust delivery team member also mentioned that student retention depended on whether learners and tutors could negotiate adjustments to the initial timetable, particularly when tutors were unable to offer better times if the initial schedule did not fit learners' needs. For example, one tutor was encouraged to find an alternative time to ensure the tutoring took place and, if needed, move the session online.

Have there been any notable differences in the feasibility of implementation between new settings and those which had a prior relationship with Tutor Trust?

Settings with an existing relationship with the Tutor Trust delivered, on average, ten hours of tutoring per student, notably higher than the seven hours per learner at new settings. All tutor sessions for existing settings were delivered face to face, whilst 10% of tutor sessions for new settings were delivered online. Otherwise, there are no notable differences in implementation between new settings and those with a prior relationship with Tutor Trust. For example, withdrawal of learners was broadly consistent across new and existing settings (i.e., 31% of learners from new (58 out of 185 learners) and existing (17 out of 55 learners) settings withdrew from the programme).

RQ2: Are the programme inputs for tutors acceptable and appropriate (for example, training, resources, ongoing support)?

Details about the training for tutors can be found in the 'Intervention' section above.

Did tutors attend the required training?

All 46 tutors who delivered tutoring through the pilot attended the compulsory initial training, coaching training, and mandatory live session of post-16 training (as reported by Tutor Trust through their MI data). Tutors were also offered additional optional sessions and yearly revision sessions focused on post-16, where they revisited GCSE exam content, examiner reports, and past materials. The Tutor Trust delivery team reported that attendance was low for the optional sessions.

Did tutors find the initial training and the associated resources acceptable and appropriate?

Satisfaction with the training and associated resources was high amongst the 23 tutors (50%) who responded to the tutor proforma. The majority agreed that they were satisfied with the content of the training, in terms of its relevance and quality. Most tutors were also satisfied with the delivery of the training, in terms of the mode of delivery, the opportunities it gave them to develop and practise their skills, and the expertise of the trainers who delivered the sessions. Most tutors were also satisfied with the usefulness and quality of the resources provided to support the training.

Tutors who completed the proforma and who participated in an interview provided further insight into the aspects of the training they felt worked well or could be improved. Tutors found the content of the training useful and highlighted the focus on building relationships with tutees, linking tutoring content to student interests, and providing examples/scenarios to explain concepts as particularly valuable for their practice. They would have, however, appreciated the initial training materials being accessible after they completed the course so that they could refer back to it. It was also felt that the training underestimated the gaps in learners' knowledge and assumed that tutoring sessions would comprise of revision rather than new teaching of concepts which learners had not grasped in Key Stage 4. They would have found it valuable to have been provided with different ways of teaching concepts, rather than repeating the original methods used in Key Stage 4 teaching, so they could better support pupils to master basic skills and increase their confidence.

Views on the mode of delivery varied amongst tutors. Several tutors had found the training content manageable and liked that it was delivered online in a self-led format because it allowed them to complete the training in their own time, at their own pace. However, others commented on the length of the training. Whilst some found it too short, others found the training too long and demanding. They suggested breaking the modules into smaller sections to make the content more manageable without compromising its thoroughness. Several tutors reported challenges related to the timing of the live sessions which were not always appropriate and would have been more convenient if scheduled later in the day or at weekends. Some tutors also commented that they found the live online Zoom sessions to be repetitive and lacking

interactivity. Several tutors would also have appreciated more in-person and group opportunities to meet with other tutors and share their experiences.

Tutors appreciated the range of resources available to them, such as the web bank of resources for subject topics and the exam questions. They acknowledged that resources needed to be tailored to an individual student's needs but found it helpful that they did not need to create everything from scratch. Tutors also appreciated the guidance they received for delivering online tuition when many sessions moved online to maximise delivery hours.

Did tutors find the post-16 training and the associated resources acceptable and appropriate?

All 46 tutors attended the new post-16 training. When interviewed, the Tutor Trust team reported that tutors rated the post-16 training highly in their own evaluation (surveys were administered with tutors before and after the training). For example, before the training, they scored on average 3.75 out of 5 for their confidence to conduct post-16 tutoring, compared with an average score of 4.47 out of 5 after the training.

A member of Tutor Trust's project delivery team also reported that tutors were keen to undertake this training, which is a new, additional element of the programme that mirrors secondary English and maths tutor training but is adjusted for the post-16 context. The delivery team reported that interest for this training was particularly strong amongst maths tutors who had previously delivered post-16 tuition.

Interview data from the tutors themselves was fairly limited, but two tutors reported that they had found the self-study modules manageable in length and were able to accommodate them within their available time. Another tutor commented that they had only completed the self-study modules after being prompted about incomplete training.

Engagement in the two live sessions was perceived to be strong by tutor trainers, who reported that tutors placed particular value on the opportunity to discuss lesson plans in breakout rooms, practise tutoring with one another, and provide/receive comments. Tutors reported that they enjoyed exchanging ideas with peers and reflecting on potential changes to make to their practice. Although feedback on these sessions was mostly positive, tutor trainers reported that tutors would have appreciated longer sessions.

New tutors especially found the post-16 training valuable for understanding the key differences between tutoring post-16 learners compared to tutoring learners in Key Stage 4 who are preparing to take their GCSE exams for the first time. Tutors valued the learning they gained relating to the negative impact that resitting can have on learners' self-esteem, attitudes, confidence, and their potential dislike of the subject—factors which meant tutors would need to spend more time building rapport with their tutees.

Interviewed tutors found several other aspects of the post-16 training particularly helpful. These included: learning about goal-free problems (where all necessary information is provided and learners choose their own calculations, which helps build confidence); supporting learners in identifying what they know and do not know from the specifications; guidance on coaching, mentoring, and safeguarding; and the multiple-choice recap questions at the end of each online module. Tutors would, however, have appreciated more resources designed specifically for post-16 learners.

Did tutors find the coaching training and the associated resources acceptable and appropriate?

Tutors found the focus on coaching and mentoring a valuable element of their training. The training emphasised the importance of acknowledging what learners could do well and encouraging them to change negative attitudes relating to not passing their GCSE exam in Key Stage 4. Tutors learnt about ways to ask engaging questions to post-16 learners and build rapport with their tutees through icebreakers. Tutors also learnt how to position themselves as different to teachers. A few interviewed tutors remarked that the self-study modules for coaching were manageable in length and feasible to complete.

Did tutors find the ongoing support acceptable and appropriate?

MI data from the Tutor Trust indicated that eight tutors received a lesson plan spot check during the pilot. Four of these tutors delivered English and four delivered maths tutoring. Six tutors were undergraduates and two were graduates—none of the tutors with a teaching qualification received a lesson plan spot check. Five tutors were new to Tutor Trust and three

had previously received training. However, 19 tutors responding to the tutor proforma reported that they had received a lesson plan spot check (as a smaller number was reported in the MI data, tutors responding to the proforma could have been referring to spot checks they had received outside of the pilot project). Most tutors found the spot check helpful (11 found it 'very helpful' and 6 found it 'quite helpful'). When assessed through lesson plan spot checks, tutors submitted lesson plans (around the third tutoring session) and accompanying resources to the Tutor Trust's quality team. These were evaluated using a quality matrix based on existing Tutor Trust approaches but refined for the post-16 context to include coaching, student engagement, and relationship-building.

Tutor Trust reported that if a tutor was found to need improvement (based on their lesson plan review), a lesson observation would follow. However, MI data indicated that many more tutors had received a lesson observation than a lesson plan review. Data showed that 33 tutors had received a lesson observation (25 maths tutors and 8 English tutors). Given that tutors were often tutoring for the first time in post-16 settings, the Tutor Trust wanted to observe as many tutors as possible. Of the 20 tutors[9] who reported through the proforma that they had received a lesson observation, 19 found it helpful (15 found it 'very helpful' and 4 found it 'quite helpful'). Tutors who responded to the proforma commented that they appreciated the specific advice they received from the observation and the identification of areas where they could improve their practice but also commented that the observation was disruptive for learners.

The Tutor Trust reported that tutors identified as needing support following the lesson observation were referred to a Tutor Trust staff member for lesson observation feedback (which outlined their strengths and areas of improvement). For these tutors, a support pathway was prepared, comprising of online training and coaching. The Tutor Trust interviewees reported that just three tutors required this form of support (two of whom were existing tutors), either because they needed support with post-16 delivery or with online engagement and technical setup. A Tutor Trust delivery team member noted that tutors trained more recently (outside the Covid-19 online tuition period) may lack online experience, but they are in the minority.

More widely, tutors praised the ongoing support they received from the Tutor Trust, specifically from the Tutor Trust Coordinators (who were the main contact for tutors and setting Partnership Leads), who tutors reported were responsive, experienced, and who they felt confident contacting in cases where they needed support. Tutors would, however, have appreciated more support with student attendance and with working with unmotivated learners.

Were there any differences by: new/experienced tutors, teachers/graduates/undergraduates, and subject?

New tutors were offered optional support through specific programmes, including peer mentoring by experienced tutors. However, uptake of this was limited, with one Tutor Trust interviewee attributing this to tutors feeling '*comfortable and secure enough*'. One tutor trainer observed that tutors without qualified teacher status (QTS) often feel that there is a lot of information to take in during the training; however, those aspiring to become teachers view the amount of content favourably. Otherwise, support provided to tutors with different characteristics was not differentiated. From their past experience and analysis of data, Tutor Trust reported that tutors who have been with Tutor Trust for two to three years, and have completed their training and review process, deliver quality tuition, and so consequently they prioritise new tutors for support.

RQ3: Has the tutoring/coaching been implemented with fidelity (for example, required dosage, customised to student need, mix of face-to-face and online delivery)?

Have the intended number of tutoring hours been delivered?

The aim was for learners to receive 15 hours of tuition (12 hours as a minimum). Across the 165 learners who received any tutoring, there was wide variation in the number of hours learners received, ranging from 1 to 17 hours. On average (mean), learners received 7 hours 49 minutes of tutoring over the course of the pilot. Overall, just 6 learners (4%) received 15 hours and 39 learners (24%) received the minimum intended 12 hours of tutoring. Of these 39 learners, 33 (20% overall) received between 12 and 14 hours of tutoring and just 6 learners (4% overall) received 15 to 17 hours of tutoring. These figures are notably lower than the success indicator (F5) which aimed for 65% of learners to complete 15 hours of tutoring, and 70% to complete 12 hours of tutoring.

[9] Note that just 23 of the 46 tutors responded to the proforma; therefore, views on the lesson observation were not collected from all tutors who received this form of support.

It should be noted that although the dosage was lower than intended, results among the sample of participating learners were positive and above the national average pass rates. Moreover, learners in the pilot who attended between 7 and 10 hours of tutoring were most likely amongst the sample to have achieved a grade 4+ in the resit. However, in the absence of a larger sample or control group, caution should be applied in interpreting this finding.

Figure 4 shows the proportions of learners, across subjects and student characteristics, who received the intended hours of tutoring. Interviewees at Tutor Trust reported that, specifically in relation to the November resit period, delivering the intended number of hours within the available time was challenging (Figure 4 shows that only 10% of learners resitting in November attended at least 12 hours of tutoring, and none of them received 15 hours or more). They felt this may have been more feasible in smaller Sixth Forms, whereas larger colleges would be better suited to starting the tutoring programme in September but aiming for learners to be entered into summer resits. However, despite more time in theory, only 14% of learners resitting in June received at least 12 hours of tutoring with just 4% receiving at least 15 hours.

Figure 4: Proportion of learners who received at least 12 hours and at least 15 hours of tutoring

	Subject		Resit period		Gender		Student characteristics		
	English	Maths	November	June	Female	Male	Eligible for bursary	SEND	EAL
Learners attending at least 12 hours of tutoring	4 (2%)	35 (21%)	16 (10%)	23 (14%)	30 (18%)	9 (5%)	5 (11%)	9 (23%)	3 (15%)
Learners attending at least 15 hours of tutoring	1 (1%)	5 (3%)	0	6 (4%)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	2 (4%)	3 (8%)	0

Source: Management information for tutoring logs, collected by the Tutor Trust. Notes: Percentages for subject, resit period, and gender are calculated out of all learners (N = 165). Percentages for bursary eligibility, SEND, and EAL are calculated out of the number of learners for whom data on these variables was provided and who were recorded as 'Yes' (i.e., being in receipt of the post-16 bursary (N = 46), with SEND (N = 40), and with EAL (N = 20)).

Tutoring was not always delivered in 1-hour sessions. The mean session length was 1 hour 10 minutes. There was little difference between the average length of English (1 hour 13 minutes) compared to maths (1 hour 10 minutes) sessions. However, sessions preparing learners for November resits (1 hour 19 minutes) were slightly longer than sessions in preparation for June resits (1 hour 6 minutes), likely because the time period to complete tutoring was shorter. Pupils with SEND received, on average, longer sessions (1 hour 17 minutes) than learners without SEND (1 hour 9 minutes). Minimal differences in average session length (i.e., less than 5 minutes difference) were recorded based on student gender, bursary eligibility, and EAL. Sessions delivered face to face were also, on average, longer than those delivered online (1 hour 11 minutes compared to 1 hour). Sessions in institutions with a new relationship with Tutor Trust were slightly longer (1 hour 12 minutes) than sessions in institutions with an existing relationship (1 hour 7 minutes). Qualitative data suggested that learners typically had one or two sessions per week. Tutors noted that session times occasionally changed due to exams or learners' other commitments. Sessions were almost always around one hour long, although we were told of examples of learners receiving more than this for example, both a weekly one-hour and two-hour session. During half term, arrangements varied, even within the same setting, including two-hour sessions, daily sessions, a few long sessions across the week, or a mix of long and half-day sessions. Where learners had two weekly sessions, some worked with the same tutor, others with two different tutors which required good communication between peer tutors to avoid overlap in content.

To what extent did tutors follow the intended delivery model/approach? What were the main challenges to fidelity, if any? Have any adaptations been made and why?

Analysis of Tutor Trusts' MI data showed that 93% of tutoring sessions were delivered in person and 7% were delivered online. Per student, the average delivery mode split was 79% in person and 21% online. Tutors reported through the

proforma that a range of factors influenced delivery mode, including: setting staff, student, and tutor preference (which tended to be for in-person tutoring); student availability and timetabling; tutor availability and location. In one setting, online sessions ran without staff supervision via a secure portal with recordings and disclaimers, which were considered sufficient for safeguarding. In another, online tutoring was not offered due to safeguarding and gender considerations:

> *'I think especially, like, the tutors that we were given were, like, quite young females, and the cohort that we had was quite boy-heavy, and we just didn't think that the dynamic of just a young, younger female talking singly to a young boy at home... It just didn't sit right with us, so we decided to go for kind of face to face, really.'* (Subject specialist)

Tutors, learners, and staff reported that in-person sessions took place in various spaces, including classrooms, dining halls, and other rooms within settings, although tutors considered some locations, such as dining halls, unsuitable due to noise. Online tutoring was hindered in some settings by ICT issues, which negatively affected learners' online tutoring experiences and caused frustration. In one setting with online tutoring, tutors and learners often had to use the chat box in several sessions (either for the whole or parts of the sessions) due to technical issues with computers or noisy environments that prevented the use of microphones and cameras. A student in this setting explained that, when internet access failed, the tutor would email the session content for the student to complete at home and follow up with questions via email.

Information on student needs

Tutors who responded to the proforma were asked if they had sufficient information on learners' learning gaps and tutoring needs to tailor their tutoring delivery. Eight out of 23 tutors (35%) indicated that they had sufficient information for all learners. Seven tutors (30%) had this information for most learners, and seven tutors (30%) had this information for some learners. Just one tutor did not have this information for any of their learners.

With some exceptions, most interviewed tutors reported that they had received general information about learners including (for example): names, ages, previous exam attempts and past resit grades, current studies, ability levels, and any SEND and personal circumstances which had affected previous performance. Where it was organised, having the opportunity to meet with learners for an introduction before the tutoring programme began was appreciated.

Some tutors who participated in an interview/focus group reported that they had input from settings on which topics to focus the tutoring on, based either on analysis of learners' most recent GCSE resit performance or teachers' perceptions of the topics that learners needed most support with. In one setting, tutors received a checklist from the school with topics rated red, amber, or green based on exam performance, and tutoring began with red-rated topics.

However, several tutors reported lacking information they considered important for preparing their sessions, such as learners' knowledge gaps. In these cases, tutors reported using baseline assessments and discussions with learners to understand their level of need and the topics they would like to cover in the tutoring sessions, along with making their own judgements as they got to know learners and the tutoring progressed. One student with SEND described also discussing preferred learning approaches with their tutor, such as digital or hands-on methods.

Planning and delivery of tutoring and coaching sessions

Through the proforma, tutors shared their methods for planning the tutoring sessions and tailoring the programme to individual student needs. Most tutors reported that their planning was an iterative process. They reported having a plan/outline for key topics to cover and how sessions would progress to ensure their delivery was structured but was flexible to be responsive to learners' needs (such as those outlined above) and interests, their progress over the course of the tutoring, and any questions learners raised in relation to the class lesson content.

Some learners and tutors reported that tutoring often focused on exam techniques and exam-style questions. In one instance, the tutor was instructed to focus on a specific part of the curriculum while the teacher covered other areas in regular provision. In some settings, the topics covered by tutors were the same as those taught in the setting (at the request of the setting). Where this happened, one student commented that the tutor explored the topic further (but still not to the depth they would have preferred). In another example, a tutor would have preferred to communicate with the subject teachers to avoid covering the same topics as the standard lessons.

Tutors also fed back their strategies for the delivery and foci of the coaching element of the programme. Interview responses suggested tutors had considerable discretion regarding how they delivered the coaching, with several tutors reporting through the proforma that they had integrated the coaching and tutoring. This approach may have contributed to several interviewed learners not explicitly recognising the term 'coaching' when describing their experience of the programme. Learners said that sessions tended to begin with '*light conversation*', such as discussing the previous week or upcoming plans, which had helped to build rapport. Tutors used coaching as an opportunity to improve learners' motivation for self-study and to achieve more widely. Coaching also largely focused on building learners' confidence, which was achieved through active praise, encouragement, and highlighting learners' strengths and past achievements.

Building learners' confidence in tackling exam questions, which learners found challenging, was achieved through scaffolding. This included working through questions together, then the tutor allowing the student to take the lead offering support, where required. This might include reminding learners to avoid simple mistakes: *'Even the basics, or stuff I would forget or make silly mistakes, she would remind me'* (Student). Tutors also emphasised to learners that more difficult questions built on easier questions and therefore supported them to draw their knowledge and skills together. Through the coaching, learners were also supported with revision techniques and study skills. This included giving learners the guidance and opportunity to test different strategies within the sessions and supporting them to implement effective study habits, including at home.

Several tutors reported that they had discussions with learners about their aspirations, career plans, personal background, and interests, and provided guidance on the steps they needed to take to achieve these (in some cases, based on their own or others' experiences). Some tutors discussed with learners how the skills and knowledge they gained from English and/or maths would support them in the future, as well as the advantages of achieving a grade 4. They also reported keeping tutoring content relevant to learners' aspirations to ensure they could see tangible links and benefits to attending the tutoring.

Use of resources

Tutors reported drawing on a range of resources that the Tutor Trust had provided to support their delivery of tutoring and coaching. These included: the icebreaker questions and Snap Survey to get to know learners and gauge their level of understanding; lesson planning proforma; Thinqi resources and post-16 resource bank to aid session delivery; and exam paper questions, including the First Five resource (practice questions from exam papers) and online sites including PiXL Maths[10] and Maths Genie[11].

College/school support for tutors to deliver the programme

Tutors' views on the relationship with settings were mixed, with the level and quality of contact between tutors and staff varying significantly across settings. Partnership Leads, subject leads, and occasionally other staff played similar roles, and different tutors had different levels of contact with one or more of them. Tutors felt their tutoring experience was better when staff in settings, such as the Partnership Lead or subject specialist, were responsive to their needs. This included practical support like printing resources, providing information on learners' learning and needs, and providing a quiet space for sessions, which helped learners feel more relaxed and less stressed. A few tutors reported having no contact with the Partnership Lead, with all communication going through Tutor Trust. Others met the Partnership Lead briefly during the initial session(s) only. Where there was more interaction with staff members, whether Partnership Leads or subject leads, it typically involved raising issues about student attendance or progress, in one reported case via WhatsApp (although communication could be inconsistent). More positively, some tutors appreciated the responsiveness of Partnership Leads to emails, support with printing resources, help contacting learners, and being informed about planned absences. While some tutors had limited interaction with subject leads, others reported deeper engagement, such as speaking almost weekly, discussing what learners were studying in normal provision, the challenges learners faced, hearing student feedback, and even holding debriefs. In some cases, contact was helped by the tutoring location being near the staff office.

[10] https://mathsapp.pixl.org.uk/
[11] https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/

Have there been any differences in fidelity by tutor characteristics (for example, new/experienced tutors, teachers/graduates/undergraduates, and subject)?

Tutor Trust delivery team members noted at the time of end-of-pilot interviews that analyses they had conducted did not identify differences in tutoring delivery and student progress based on tutors' characteristics, including tutor quality, QTS status, and whether tutors were new or returning. The team indicated that exploring the potential effects of tutor differences was ongoing. They also reported that their historical data suggested that tutors with at least two to three years' experience typically deliver high-quality tuition, which leads them deprioritising more experienced tutors in monitoring, which instead focuses on monitoring newer tutors to ensure that they are delivering to the required standard.

Have there been any differences in fidelity between newly recruited settings and settings with an established relationship with Tutor Trust?

As noted above, there were 17 settings involved in the pilot which had not worked with the Tutor Trust before to deliver tutoring to post-16 learners. The 3 settings which had an existing relationship with the Tutor Trust delivered more sessions, on average, than the 17 new settings (10.8 hours of tutoring per student compared with 7.5 hours respectively). However, this data suggests that even existing settings faced challenges in delivering the minimum number of tutoring hours. All tutoring sessions for existing settings were delivered face to face, whilst 10% of tutor sessions for new settings were delivered online. Otherwise, there are no notable differences in implementation between new settings and those with a prior relationship with Tutor Trust. As reported earlier, withdrawal of learners was broadly consistent across new and existing settings (both 31%). It proved difficult to recruit settings for qualitative case studies or interviews, with only one new setting being represented. Their experience of the pilot was positive and is summarised in the case study vignettes included in Appendix B (case study 01).

Is the tutoring distinct from existing practice?

Interviewed learners often contrasted the tutoring approach with typical classroom teaching, praising the opportunity to have one to one and tailored support, ask questions directly, and have concepts demonstrated, '*broken down*' or '*unpicked*', which helped them to understand and remember the content.

Learners who responded to the endpoint survey (16 who received English tutoring and 63 who received maths tutoring) provided information on the other support they had received in college/school to help them prepare for their resits. Responses were not mutually exclusive. Seven of the 16 respondents receiving English tutoring and 23 of the 63 respondents receiving maths tutoring had received revision sessions, either during or after college/college. Six learners receiving English tuition had received extra English lessons (in addition to their timetabled English class lessons) and 19 maths learners received extra maths lessons. A small number of learners provided other responses, including receiving revision questions and past papers, and participating in booster sessions during their lunchtime. Four of the 16 English learners and 21 of the 63 maths learners had not received any additional support beyond their timetabled English and maths lessons.

RQ4: Is the tutoring/coaching for learners acceptable and appropriate (for example, content, mode, dosage)?

Have the content and mode of tutoring met learners' needs and engaged them?

<u>Content of tutoring</u>

Through the endpoint survey, learners shared their views on their experiences of tutoring. Responses were received from 16 of the 44 learners who received English tutoring and 63 of the 124 learners who received maths tutoring. The majority of learners shared positive views about the tutoring sessions (across both subjects), including the content being interesting and engaging and aligning with the topics they needed support with (all English learners and at least 95% of maths learners). Most learners were also positive about the tutors' delivery/facilitation of the sessions, such as their organisation and their ability to explain topics and concepts clearly (all English learners and at least 95% of maths learners). Additionally, all English learners and at least 95% of maths learners agreed that they felt comfortable asking questions or saying if they were not sure about any of the content delivered. Overall, at least 80% of learners who responded said that they had enjoyed going to the tutoring sessions and reported that they were motivated to keep going even if they found a session challenging. English and maths learners were most likely to agree or strongly agree with the statements; however, maths learners were

more likely than English learners to disagree with some statements (for example, sessions being interesting and engaging, or enjoying the sessions). It should, however, be noted that there were many more maths learners who responded to the survey (*N* = 63) compared to English learners (*N* = 16).

Enhancing the survey findings, learners who participated in an interview/focus group highlighted several positive aspects of the tutoring sessions. They reported that tutors had made sessions engaging through providing clear explanations and visual aids, such as encouraging learners to use different colours to highlight content. Tutors had provided reminders of basic concepts and reviewed previous work, and had repeated topics until learners fully understood. This approach was compared favourably to fast-paced classroom teaching, particularly in preparation for November resits. Learners felt the tuition was targeted and liked the fact that they had greater control over the content they covered. However, some interview answers revealed that, at times, learners thought that the tutor's approach did not align with their abilities or learning needs, or learners would have preferred a stronger focus on advanced skills for grade improvement ('*What I'm feeling like, the thing* [the tutor] *teaches is the* [subject], *but the thing I needed is the skill to get a better grade in* [GCSE]').

Homework was not consistent across settings and was not a mandatory requirement for the programme—while some tutors assigned and marked past papers and worksheets, others did not. One tutor who described their rationale for setting homework said: '*I gave them just a few questions to work through each week, the sort of stuff that I thought that they could do on their own, from what we'd learnt that day, without being too worried or confused by it, to build up their confidence*.'

All tutors who responded to the endpoint proforma agreed that learners had engaged with the content of the tutoring sessions (13 of 23 agreed, 10 strongly agreed) and most also agreed that learners had engaged with the coaching element (13 of 23 agreed, 9 strongly agreed and 1 was unsure).

Mode of tutoring

Most learners who completed the endpoint survey were also satisfied with the delivery mode of the tutoring sessions. All 16 English learners and most (95%) of the maths learners (60 out of 63) indicated that the amount of face-to-face tutoring was about right. A few maths learners felt that there was too much tutoring delivered face to face, and they would have preferred more online tutoring, or indicated the opposite view, that there was too much online tutoring and they would have preferred more face-to-face delivery. This suggests that preferences for delivery mode can be unique to the individual. Most of the tutors who responded to the proforma (20 out of 23) similarly felt that the mode of tutoring had been appropriate for the learners they tutored. The remaining three tutors were unsure.

Across all interviewees, although some felt remote delivery could work well, in-person tutoring was generally preferred, with concerns being raised about student focus and monitoring in online tutoring. A few learners favoured online sessions, as they felt they were more relaxed and less intimidating than in-person sessions. Occasionally, learners and tutors had to interact through typing in the chat in online sessions when microphones were not working, and one student reacted positively to this situation: '*And* [I] *also like using chat room. I can just type the answer instead of writing, so it makes the lesson faster. And, also, I can give her the answer in a faster speed. So, I think it can like make the lesson have more content*.'

All interviewees reported that all sessions were one to one (as intended for the pilot). This format was appreciated for reducing distractions and allowing focused support. They cited its benefits for personalisation, engagement, and rapport-building, as well as helping learners who struggle with remote learning. However, some college staff and tutors suggested small-group formats could encourage peer interaction, improve attendance through shared responsibility, and reduce the session's intensity, which would pave the way for longer sessions. This suggests a small-group tutoring model (like the Tutor Trust's usual delivery model) could strengthen the feasibility of the programme in post-16 contexts. Having said this, one Partnership Lead believed the one to one model was better than their previous experiences of group tutoring.

Does the required dosage differ by learners' starting points, subject, programme (for example, November or June resit), and colleges'/schools' internal GCSE provision?

Of the learners who responded to the survey, 75% of English and 68% of maths learners felt the number of intended hours (i.e., 12–15) was about right in preparing them to resit their GCSE, although one in ten maths learners felt it was too little. The remaining learners said they didn't know. Tutors also shared their views on dosage through the proforma. Around half of tutors who responded to the question felt that 12–15 hours was about the right amount of tutoring time (12 out of 23);

however, just less than half felt it was too little (10 out of 23). This should be considered in the context that a minority of the learners received this number of hours.

Tutors who responded to the proforma felt that the required number of hours of tutoring differed across learners' circumstances. There was a view that 12 to 15 hours worked well for learners resitting in November; however, this was felt to be dependent on learners achieving a '*solid*' grade 3 in Key Stage 4, them being more motivated and committed to resitting and achieving in November, and being in receipt of other maths support. Learners with lower confidence, or who had already resat their GCSE numerous times and did not achieve a grade 4, were perceived to need more hours of tutoring. Other tutors felt that more hours dedicated to coaching specifically could help build learners' confidence.

Relating to session length, several learners who participated in an interview/focus group felt they would have benefitted from longer or more frequent sessions to cover additional topics, particularly if they were struggling with preparation and as they came closer to their exam date. Some tutors similarly reported that longer or more frequent sessions would be beneficial for allowing more content to be covered. However, other learners and tutors did not agree with this, believing that more tutoring might be excessive alongside learners' regular provision.

Insufficient data was obtained on colleges'/schools' internal GCSE provision to be able to explore any impact on tutoring dosage.

Have there been any unintended consequences of participation for learners?

No unintended consequences were reported by the range of interviewees taking part in the evaluation.

RQ5: Is the programme affordable for colleges/schools?

As this was a pilot and not a trial, there was not a full cost evaluation or the collection of quantitative cost data. Rather, setting staff were asked about costs during interviews, but limited information was obtained. Four interviewed settings reported minimal costs, describing them as manageable and worthwhile. These included a few staff hours for initial coordination and timetabling, photocopying, and some exercise books. In two settings, staff stated that the programme required a significant amount of time. One of these involved extensive student chasing, engagement with Tutor Trust, and general organisational effort.

Evidence of promise

When considering evidence of promise, caution must be applied to the results, as this was a pilot evaluation, with no comparator or control group to estimate what would have happened in the absence of the programme. Other contextual factors (such as the approach to other resit teaching in settings, teaching quality, student motivation, and other targeted support) could also influence results alongside involvement in the Tutor Trust pilot. The evidence is also largely based on self-report data collected from a small sample.

RQ6: Is there evidence of promise that the programme may lead to the longer-term changes in the post-16 context expected in the theory of change (ToC)?

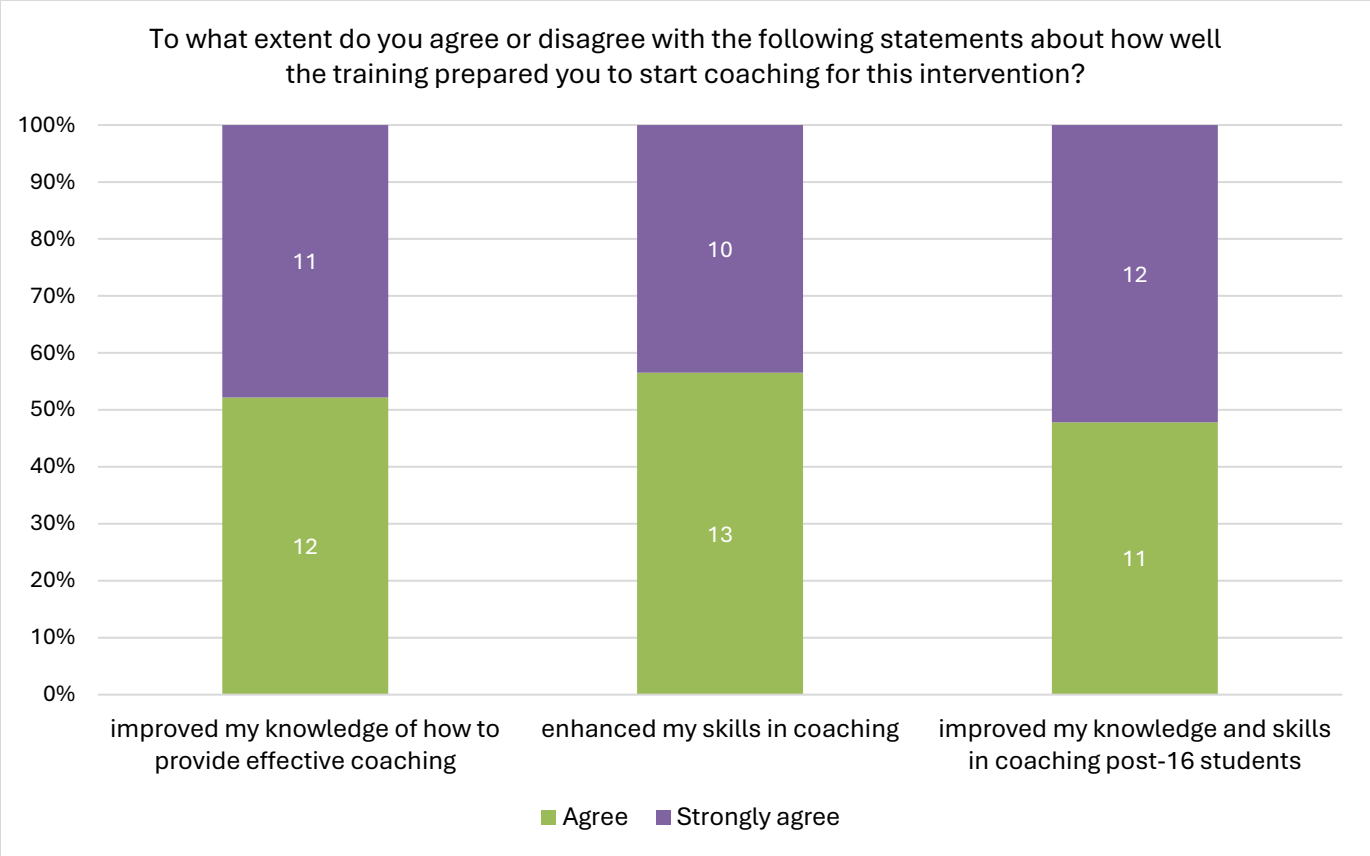
What are the perceived shorter-term outcomes for tutors (new and experienced)?

Tutors who responded to the proforma (N = 23) were mostly positive about the training they received through the programme, reporting that it prepared them effectively to deliver tutoring. All responding tutors indicated that the training had enhanced their skills in tutoring and had improved their knowledge and skills specifically in tutoring post-16 learners. Most responding tutors also agreed that the training had improved their knowledge in several areas, including their knowledge of how to provide effective tutoring, how to tutor their chosen subject, and how to be a positive role model for learners. Most responding tutors also agreed that the training improved their confidence in tutoring.

Tutors were similarly positive about the training they received to deliver coaching to learners through the programme. All tutors responding to the proforma agreed that the training gave them the knowledge and skills to provide coaching, and specifically to provide coaching to post-16 learners. Almost all tutors also agreed that the training gave them the confidence

to deliver coaching. Figure 5 provides full details of the extent to which tutors responding to the proforma agreed they were prepared to deliver coaching following the training.

Figure 5: Outcomes of the training for tutors' preparedness to deliver the coaching



Source: Tutor proforma ('To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how well the training prepared you to start coaching for this intervention?') N = 23 (which needs to be considered when interpreting percentages). Responses in relation to confidence in delivering coaching have been removed due to statistical disclosure control (SDC).

All responding tutors agreed (14 strongly agreed, 9 agreed) that, overall, training for the intervention made them better able to improve student outcomes, such as in terms of their confidence, engagement, and attainment. Many tutors reported that they had enjoyed delivering the tutoring and coaching, describing the experience as 'rewarding'.

Interviews with tutors and additional open questions within the proforma provided further insights into the outcomes they achieved for themselves, resulting from their participation in the programme. Aligned with the responses reported above, some tutors highlighted increased knowledge of post-16 tutoring and engaging with this age group:

> *'I think it's made me a bit more confident because it was kind of odd going into a room with someone that's like closer to your age, but you're like the adult. Like I've not really done that before, and I had to be like, OK, I'm the adult in the room.'* (Tutor)

Interviewed tutors appreciated working with learners who had clearer goals for the future and being able to focus more on teaching rather than managing behaviour, which they found more common with younger learners. The training had also encouraged and enabled them to link their tutoring to real-world scenarios. Two tutors had won post-16 tutoring awards (following three tutors being nominated for Post-16 Tutor of the Year at the Manchester Tutor Awards and three being nominated for the same category at the Merseyside Tutor Awards).

Tutors also reported improvements in their skills and confidence relating to planning and delivering post-16 tutoring. For example, some tutors reported being better able to prepare resources, structure sessions (such as using the I do, we do, you do pedagogy), and adapt materials and their delivery based on learners' needs and responses to the content.

Some tutors mentioned gaining a more holistic understanding of the curriculum and of how schools prepare learners for sitting GCSEs and the 9-to-1 grade scale. Maths tutors also noted greater understanding of maths-specific misconceptions that continue from primary to secondary. In addition, one tutor reported an improved ability to break down complex problems. Tutors also gave examples of being better able to scaffold learning for learners with different needs, provide learners with different resources to answer specific questions, draw on a range of strategies to teach concepts, or answer specific exam questions.

One tutor remarked that they appreciated tutoring for the specific purpose of helping learners pass exams, which they said is different from general tutoring. Some tutors also reported that they had learnt how to work with schools more effectively to improve attendance at tutoring sessions, noting the importance of not relying solely on programme leads who may be unavailable to chase pupils.

Many tutors embraced coaching, which they saw as a differentiating element of the Tutor Trust's model. Coaching encouraged tutors to reserve time for relationship-building and motivating learners, use more questioning at the beginning when learners struggled to open up, and for speaking to learners about their career aspirations. Tutors indicated that they had gained a greater awareness of how to build relationships and felt that the one to one context helped with this.

A longer-term outcome set out in the ToC was tutors being inspired to join the teaching profession as a result of participating in the programme. To an extent, this outcome may be achieved. Of the 17 tutors who responded to the proforma who were not already a teacher, 8 tutors reported that they were more interested in considering teaching as a career following their participation in the programme. A further two tutors reported that they were more interested in returning to teaching following their participation. However, seven tutors reported that they were not interested in teaching and participating in the programme had not changed their view.

Through the interviews, tutors also reflected on other outcomes which aligned with longer-term outcomes in the ToC. They commonly reported that the work was meaningful, believing tutoring made a significant difference to learners. Where tutor experiences were not positive, such as when faced with poor pupil attendance or feeling unheard by setting staff, tutors expressed frustration but acknowledged that these issues varied by setting, showing a balanced understanding of the sector's realities:

> *'I wasn't someone, say, not valued, because I don't want them* [college staff] *to value me, but I just don't know if they listened in when I was trying to maybe advocate a little bit for the student.'* (Tutor)

One tutor reported pursuing higher education in a tutoring-related subject after their interest was boosted through involvement in the programme, while another who also ran their own private tuition reported that they applied learning from the training to their own practice.

What are the perceived shorter-term outcomes for learners (for example, changes in confidence and motivation for learning, attendance, progress in English and maths)? Do they vary by level of student disadvantage?

The ToC intended that participating in the tutoring programme would result in a range of short-term personal and academic outcomes for learners. The extent to which these were achieved are discussed in the sections below.

Learners' enjoyment of learning English and maths

The attitudes of learners studying English towards the subject improved over the course of the programme, particularly in relation to their enjoyment of learning English. At baseline, just less than two-thirds of English learners who responded to the survey agreed that they enjoyed learning English (19 of 31, 61%); however, by endpoint, this proportion increased to around three-quarters (12 of 16, 75%). The enjoyment of learners studying maths was notably lower than that of English learners. At baseline, over half of maths learners (59 of 108, 55%) *disagreed* that they enjoyed learning maths with just 45% (49 of 108) agreeing. Whilst there were improvements in learners' enjoyment of maths by endpoint, with just over half agreeing with the statement (35 of 63, 56%), a large proportion still disagreed that they enjoyed learning maths (28 of 63, 44%). Tutors responding to the proforma tended to be more positive about this impact with 17 out of 22 (77%) agreeing that tutoring/coaching improved learners' enjoyment and learning of GCSE English/maths.

The student surveys also tested the ToC outcome that participation in tutoring would improve learners' enjoyment of learning more widely. The tutoring had limited overall impact on this outcome, with 89% agreeing at baseline, and 90% agreeing at endpoint that they liked learning at school/college. However, it is worth noting that the proportion of learners who selected 'slightly agree' reduced between baseline and endpoint, while the proportion of learners who selected 'agree' or 'strongly agree' improved.

Learners' motivation to achieve in English and maths and in their studies more broadly

Learners' motivation in English and maths appeared high at baseline with most learners indicating that they worked hard at their subject (English: 27 of 31 learners, 87%; maths: 93 of 108 learners, 86%). However, improvements were still seen in learners' motivation in both subjects by endpoint, with all 16 English learners who responded and 59 out of 63 (94%) maths learners agreeing that they worked hard in their GCSE subject. Aligned with these findings, almost all tutors who responded to the proforma agreed that tutoring/coaching had improved learners' motivation to achieve in GCSE English/maths.

More broadly, almost all learners agreed that the tutoring had motivated them to try their best in all their studies, although the proportion agreeing was higher amongst English learners (all 16 learners agreed to differing extents) compared to maths learners (92%, 58 out of 63 learners agreed to differing extents). Aligned with these findings, most tutors also agreed that tutoring/coaching improved learners' motivation to achieve in their studies more generally.

However, the perception as to whether tutoring had positively impacted student motivation was mixed among interviewed tutors, setting staff, and learners. While many of them saw improvements, other interview answers suggest that these improvements did not imply greater '*enthusiasm*' for the subject or, ultimately, exam success. Reasons for the latter included disinterest in the subject or wanting to focus on other studies, with learners saying things like '*I hate maths*' or '*I just want to focus on my level 3 studies*'. Yet, even when learners did not pass exams, some asked for tutoring to continue, highlighting its positive effect on them. This tended to be expressed where a strong tutor-student relationship had formed, and the student recognised their need for extra support.

Learners' confidence in English and maths and in their studies more broadly

All 16 GCSE English learners who responded to the endpoint survey indicated that the tutoring had helped them to feel more confident that they would achieve a grade 4 or higher when they resat GCSE English. Most maths learners also agreed that they felt more confident that they would achieve a grade 4 or higher in their GCSE maths resit. All 16 GCSE English learners and the majority of maths learners also agreed that the tutoring had helped them to feel more confident in their studies more broadly.

Interviewed tutors and college/school staff, as well as tutors who responded to the proforma, frequently reported that participation in the tutoring had improved learners' confidence and self-esteem. This was often linked to changes in behaviour (as observed by tutors within tutoring sessions and by college/school staff in class) such as willingness to have a go and increased participation in lessons, and volunteering to answer questions more frequently. Confidence was also associated with learners feeling less stressed and developing greater persistence (demonstrated through them not giving up on challenging tasks so easily, and completing more of these sort of activities). One to one tutoring was seen as key, allowing learners to speak more freely about subject-specific and life topics (including career plans), worry less about mistakes and understand that they are part of learning, and notice that someone cares for them and their outcomes—as a Tutor Trust delivery team member put it, '*a person a little bit more professional to say 'That's absolutely a possibility, let's work towards it*''. One tutor commented:

> *'Most of them* [learners] *actually did increase in their confidence in maths. I wouldn't ever say they came in skipping and jumping, and were pleased to be there, but their attitude was really good. So, I think once they started to get that confidence, and once they started to have that self-belief, that was really great to see.'* (Tutor)

Learners' knowledge and skills in GCSE English and maths

The ToC also intended that participation in tutoring would contribute to improvements in learners' confidence in their knowledge and skills in English and maths.

Knowledge and skills in GCSE English

Amongst learners resitting English GCSE, confidence in their knowledge and skills in English was relatively high at baseline, with 23 out of 31 learners (74%) agreeing that they were confident (although it should be noted that the largest proportion (42%) slightly agreed with the statement). Almost all 16 learners who responded to the survey at baseline agreed that they were confident in their knowledge and skills in English at endpoint. Most learners also agreed at baseline that they understood the work in their GCSE English lessons, although learners were most likely to slightly agree or agree, rather than strongly agree. This proportion increased at endpoint, with almost all learners agreeing with the statement (rather than slightly agreeing or strongly agreeing).

Both the baseline and endpoint surveys asked learners to comment on how well they felt they were doing in specific aspects of GCSE English. This included working with texts (including reading and understanding, summarising information, interpretation and evaluation, and comparing and analysing different types of texts/writing), use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar, and giving verbal presentations. The proportion of learners who agreed that they were competent in these topics increased between baseline and endpoint (an increase of 16%–36% in agreement across topics), demonstrating improvements in learners' perceptions of how well they were doing following participation in the tutoring.

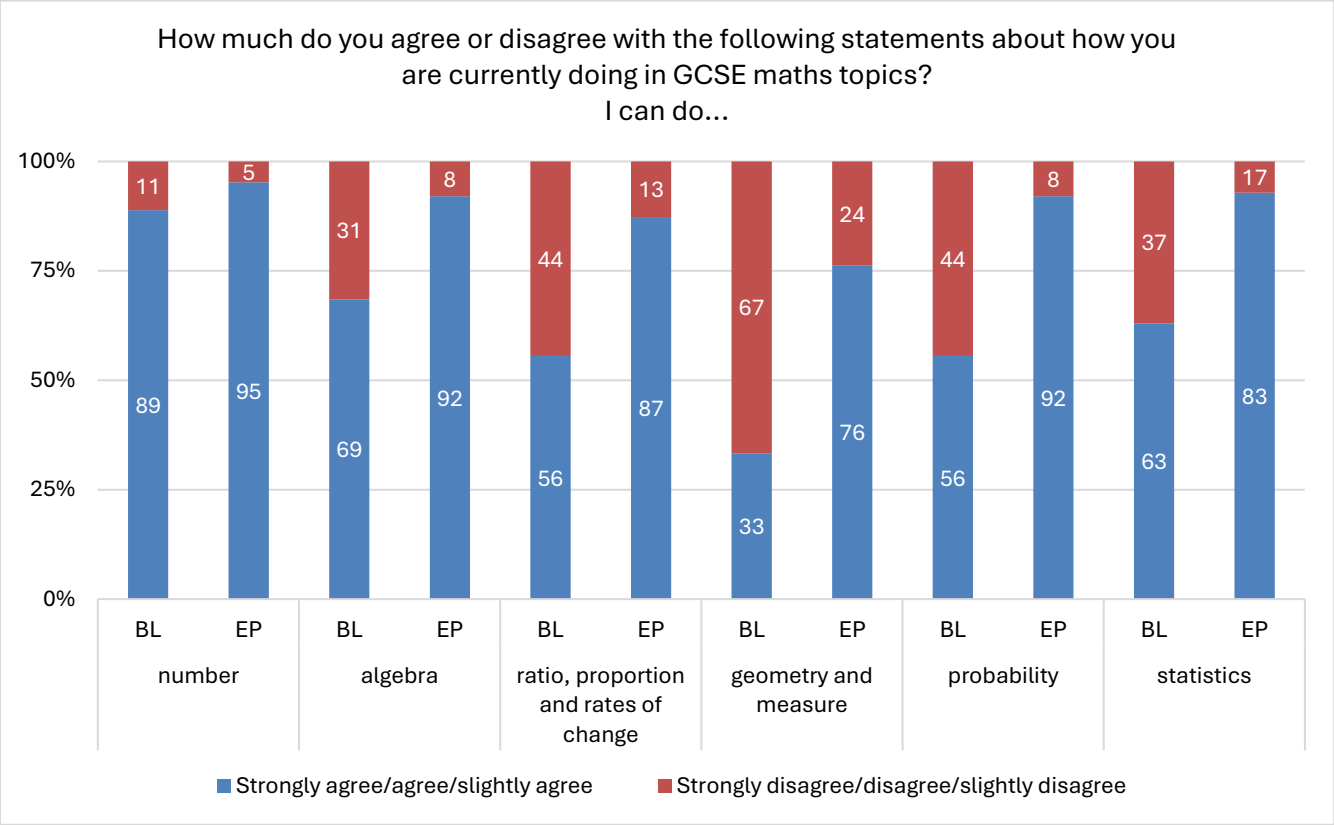
All 16 learners doing English resits who responded to the endpoint survey agreed that the tutoring had helped them to prepare to resit GCSE English. Relatedly, all learners agreed that the tutoring helped them to understand the topics which they found difficult.

Knowledge and skills in GCSE maths

Maths learners' confidence in their GCSE maths knowledge and skills appeared relatively low at baseline, with just over half of learners (61 of 108, 56%) *disagreeing* that they were confident. There was, however, a notable increase in agreement over the course of the programme, with almost two-fifths (49 of 63, 78%) agreeing that they were confident in their knowledge and skills at endpoint (although note that learners were more likely to slightly agree, rather than agree or strongly agree). Despite this relatively low confidence in knowledge and skills at baseline, just over half of learners agreed that they understood the work in GCSE maths (62 of 108, 57%). This proportion was notably higher by endpoint (53 of 63, 84% agreed).

At both baseline and endpoint, learners also indicated the extent to which they agreed they were doing well across specific maths GCSE topics. At endpoint, improvements were seen across all topics, with more learners agreeing to statements compared to baseline, and fewer learners disagreeing. The largest improvements in agreements were seen with the geometry and measure and probability.

Figure 6: Maths learners' perceptions of how well they felt they were doing across maths GCSE topics



Source: Student baseline and endpoint survey ('How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how you are currently doing in aspects of GCSE maths? I can do...'). Baseline (BL) N = 108; endpoint (EP) N = 63. Due to rounding, figures may not always sum to 100%.

Almost all of the 63 maths learners who responded to the endpoint survey agreed that the tutoring had helped them to prepare to resit GCSE maths. Related to this broad finding, almost all learners similarly agreed that the tutoring had helped them to better understand the GCSE maths topics which they found difficult and had helped them to improve their GCSE maths exam techniques.

All 22 tutors who completed the proforma questions on student outcomes agreed that the tutoring/coaching had a positive impact on learners' confidence in their knowledge and skills in their GCSE subject and in the GCSE English/maths topics which they found difficult.

During the interviews, college/school staff and tutors gave examples of improvements they had seen in learners' academic skills. These included better question interpretation (including not jumping straight to the answer), completing full exam papers on time, and increased independent study. One tutor had observed fewer 'careless mistakes' in maths, such as errors with negative number multiplication. A maths subject leader noticed progress in trigonometry. While in English, a tutor referred to an EAL student learning how to distinguish nouns from adjectives, an EAL student reported learning to identify paragraph features and using more advanced methods like 'imaginary connotation'. Improvements in the ability to explain issues were also mentioned by learners. For example, a student with SEND had learnt to adopt the writer's perspective to improve explanations, while another pupil developed skills in explaining shapes in maths. Another tutor reported that a student started to find the content in the class exercise book and worksheets easier since participating in tutoring.

Learners' perceptions of their progress and attainment in GCSE English and maths

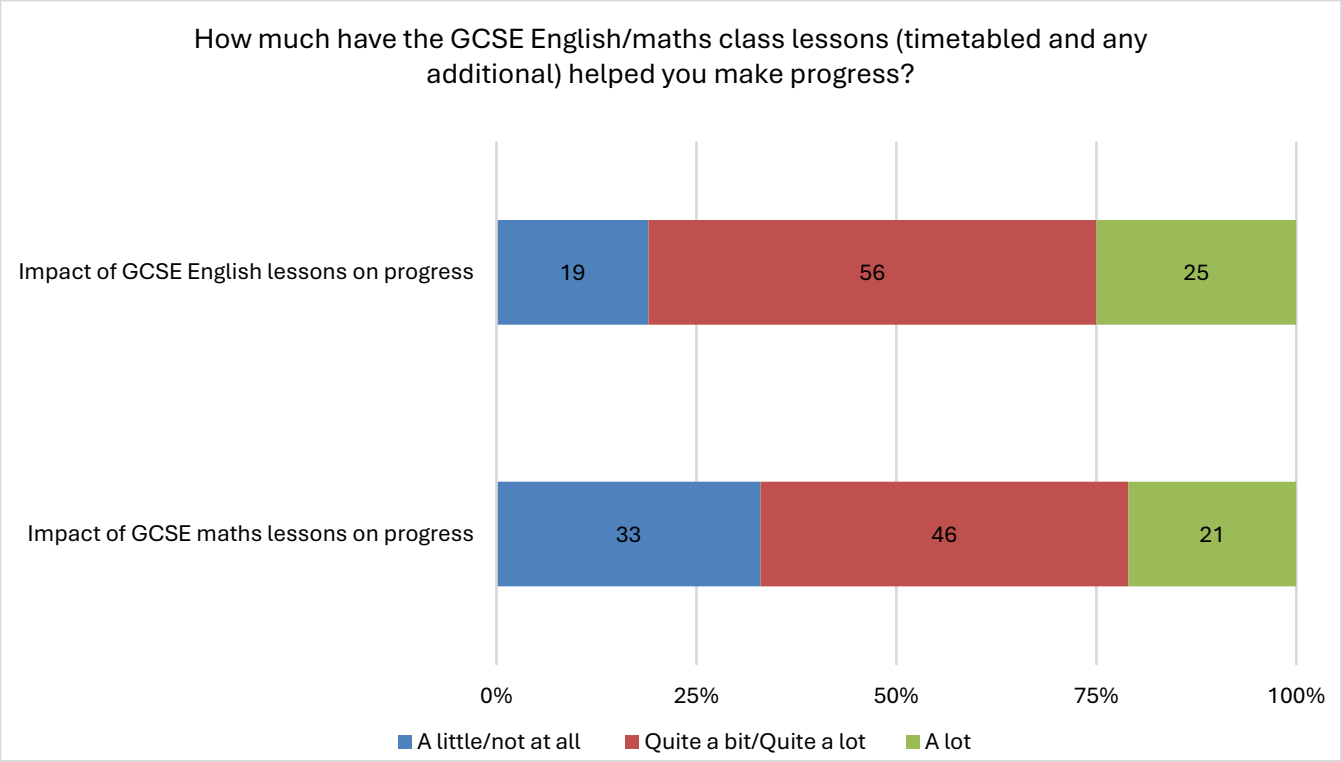
Participation in the programme appeared to have a notable impact on learners' perceptions that they were doing well in GCSE English. At baseline, around two-thirds of learners (68%) agreed that they were doing well, whereas by endpoint, almost all learners agreed. Almost nine out of ten (87%) of the 31 learners who responded at baseline felt that they were making progress in GCSE English; however, by endpoint, all 16 learners who responded to the survey agreed that they were making progress suggesting a positive impact of the programme.

Notable increases were also observed in the proportion of learners who agreed that they were doing well in GCSE maths over the course of the programme. At baseline, only two-fifths (42%) agreed that they were doing well in maths, whereas at endpoint, almost three-quarters (73%) agreed they were doing well (although note learners were most likely to slightly agree, rather than agree or strongly agree). Around three-quarters (74%) of maths learners agreed at baseline that they were making progress in GCSE maths, but there was a notable increase in learners' perception over the course of the programme, with almost all (92%) learners agreeing that they were making progress at endpoint.

All 22 tutors who responded to the relevant question in the proforma agreed that tutoring/coaching had improved learners' progress/attainment in GCSE maths/English.

It is worth noting that, at the same time as undertaking tutoring, learners were attending their regular GCSE English and maths classes in college/school which needs to be taken into account when assessing the extent to which the pilot impacted their progress in English and maths. Learners were asked to what extent their regular GCSE English and maths classes had also helped them to make progress. Around eight in ten learners (81%) felt that their English lessons in college/school helped them make reasonable progress (either quite a bit, quite a lot, or a lot), with a quarter overall (25%) feeling that their lessons had impacted a lot. The proportion overall who felt that their maths lessons had helped them make reasonable progress was a little lower at just over two-thirds (67%), although around one in five overall (21%) reported that their lessons had impacted a lot. Learners' responses are illustrated in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Learners' views on the extent to which English/maths lessons helped them make progress



Source: Endpoint student survey ('How much have the GCSE English/maths class lessons (timetabled and any additional) helped you make progress?'). English N = 16, maths N = 63. Due to rounding, figures may not always sum to 100%.

Learners' understanding the wider importance of GCSE English and maths

At baseline, *most* learners (25 out of 31, 81%) already agreed that they needed to study English for their future career. There was, therefore, minimal room for improvement. However, at endpoint, *all* 16 learners who responded to the survey agreed with the statement. Similarly, there was limited change in the proportion of learners who agreed at baseline and endpoint that GCSE English would help them in their daily life.

As with English, there appeared to be minimal improvement over the course of the programme on learners' understanding of the wider importance of GCSE maths. At both timepoints, around four-fifths (82% at baseline and 84% at endpoint) of learners agreed that maths would be useful in their future career. A large proportion of learners at both timepoints also agreed that GCSE maths would be helpful in their daily life (71% at baseline and 79% at endpoint).

Student self-reports through the endpoint survey also suggested that the tutoring had some benefits for their studies more widely; however, English learners were more likely to suggest this than maths learners. All 16 English learners agreed that doing the GCSE English tutoring had helped them in their other subjects/courses. Around two-thirds (65%) of GCSE maths learners also agreed that the GCSE maths tutoring had helped them in other subjects/courses; however, a notable proportion—around a third (35%)—disagreed that this outcome had been achieved.

Student reports on their attendance at regular English and maths classes

Student self-reports suggested limited impact of the programme on learners' attendance in their regular GCSE English or maths class lessons (although attendance was relatively good at baseline, particularly amongst English learners, most of whom reported 'always' attending). Amongst English learners, although the proportion of learners attending 'always' decreased between baseline and endpoint, the number of learners attending 'often' increased. Minor improvements were seen amongst maths learners in relation to the proportion of pupils attending 'always' or 'often'.

What do the screening test and GCSE data tell us about student outcomes?

At the beginning and end of the tutoring programme, learners completed a screening test, designed by the Tutor Trust quality team to reflect the content of the national curriculum, to measure their abilities in English and maths. Tutor Trust analysis

has consistently found the results of these tests to positively correlate with the results of standardised GCSE examinations which indicates they are an effective tool at measuring the academic progress of pupils. Further details of this test are available in the information about the intervention above and in footnote 5. The test was completed by 100 learners at the beginning of the programme and 44 learners at the end of the programme. Overall, 42 learners completed a screening test at both baseline and endpoint, and differences in scores between the two timepoints have been analysed. Overall, mean scores at each timepoint indicated that learners' scores improved between baseline and endpoint, with a paired t-test analysis showing that this improvement was significant (p = <0.0001) and represented a large effect size (d = 1.18). Please see Table 8 below. Due to the small numbers, the results should be treated with some caution, although they do suggest a positive outcome.

Table 8: Learners' baseline and endpoint screening test scores

	Mean baseline score	**Mean endpoint score**	**t-test statistic**	**Effect size (Cohen's *d*)**	***p*-value**
Overall	41.88	63.02	7.028	1.18	<0.0001

For the 42 learners who completed both baseline and endpoint screening tests, the change in their test scores was calculated. Independent t-tests were then conducted to explore whether improvements varied across subgroups (gender, bursary eligibility, SEND status, subject, and type of setting (FE college vs school)). All subgroup tests produced non-significant results (p-values > 0.5), suggesting that the improvement seen was not acting differentially between these groups. Please see Table 9 below.

Table 9: Mean difference between screening test scores by subgroup

Subgroup	**Level**	**Mean difference**	**t-test statistic**	**Effect size (Cohen's *d*)**	***p*-value**
Gender	Female	19.8	-0.520	-0.160	0.606
	Male	22.9			
Bursary	Eligible	19.4	-0.661	-0.202	0.513
	Not Eligible	23.3			
SEND status	Yes	23.3	0.414	0.147	0.684
	No	20.4			
Subject	English	22.7	0.418	0.114	0.679
	Maths	20.4			
Setting type	FE establishment	21.1	-0.011	-0.003	0.991
	School	21.1			

GCSE performance

When considering the findings from the analysis of GCSE resit results, the fact that this was a pilot evaluation, and not a trial with a control group, should be considered when interpreting the results.

Although at endpoint higher proportions of learners who were surveyed felt that they were doing well in English and maths compared to baseline, and there was a notable improvement in overall score for the learners completing the screening test at endpoint compared to baseline, these positive indications did not translate into a grade 4 or higher GCSE for many of the

cohort of learners. As shown in Table 10, overall, just over a quarter of the 117 learners[12] for whom a GCSE grade was received (26%) achieved a grade 4 or over in their November or June resit, with a higher pass rate seen amongst those resitting in November compared to June (39% compared to 21%). The overall pass rates seen amongst these 117 learners were higher than the national pass rates in 2025. The programme pass rate of 39% for GCSE English compared favourably to the national pass rate of 20.9%, and the programme pass rate of 22% for maths was higher than the national pass rate for maths of 17.1%. Although this was a pilot evaluation, with no results for a control group of learners to compare to, the findings give a positive indication that tutoring had helped in terms of overall GCSE pass rates. However, given the study was a pilot with no control group of learners to compare to, we were unable to gauge other factors (for example, settings' internal GCSE resit provision) which could have influenced results alongside involvement in the Tutor Trust pilot.

Some learners credited tutoring with having supported improved results, particularly the one to one format, which they felt better met their individual needs. Whilst there are some differences in pass rates by gender, bursary eligibility, and SEND, none are statistically significant, as determined by chi-squared tests.

Table 10: GCSE resit results for learners in the pilot

		GCSE resit grade	
		Under 4	**4 and over**
Overall		86 (74%)	31 (26%)
Subject	**English**	17 (61%)	11 (39%)
	Maths	69 (78%)	20 (22%)
Gender	**Girls**	56 (77%)	17 (23%)
	Boys	30 (68%)	14 (32%)
Eligible for post-16 bursary	**Yes ***	27 (84%)	5 (16%)
	No *	57 (69%)	26 (31%)
SEND	**Yes**	22 (81%)	5 (19%)
	No	64 (71%)	26 (29%)
Resit	**November**	22 (61%)	14 (39%)
	June	64 (79%)	17 (21%)

* *Bursary information missing for two learners*.

Table 11 shows that it was most likely, as would be expected, for learners who previously achieved a grade 3 in their GCSE to achieve a grade 4+ in their resit. The number of learners with a grade 3 who achieved a grade 4+ was a little higher in November than in June.

[12] Results were technically received for 116 individual learners as one did resits in both English and maths (so results for 117 GCSE resists were received).

Table 11: Student resit grade, by their previous GCSE grade

	GCSE grade*	GCSE resit grade	
		Under 4	4 and over
Overall	**Less than 3**	32 (91%)	3 (9%)
	3	54 (70%)	23 (30%)
November	**Less than 3**	8 (89%)	1 (11%)
	3	14 (64%)	8 (36%)
June	**Less than 3**	24 (92%)	2 (8%)
	3	40 (73%)	15 (27%)

** There are five learners whose GCSE grade is missing. They are excluded from this table.*

Although it appears that completing 7–10 sessions offered the highest likelihood of passing amongst the sample (Table 12), this pattern is likely an artefact of the relationship between original GCSE grade and resit timing. Learners resitting in November were more likely to have achieved a grade 3 in their GCSE—making them inherently more likely to pass—and the limited time window before the exam meant that completing more than 10 sessions was not always feasible.

Table 12: Student resit grade, by number of tutoring sessions

Number of sessions	GCSE resit grade	
	Under 4	4 and over
<5	12 (75%)	4 (25%)
5 – <7	25 (76%)	8 (24%)
7 – <10	15 (60%)	10 (40%)
10 – <15	31 (78%)	9 (23%)
15+	3 (100%)	0 (0%)

Due to rounding, figures may not always sum to 100%

Tutors and Partnership Leads highlighted the increased opportunities for learners that may come with passing GCSEs. Others stressed the intrinsic value of gaining confidence in using maths in the job market, regardless of final grades. Similarly, a tutor noted the lifelong benefit for a low-ability student who developed stronger independent study skills.

Do tutor characteristics affect student outcomes?

A Tutor Trust representative reported that previous analysis had not shown differences in learners' outcomes based on tutors' characteristics. These analyses included crosstabs by tutor quality, QTS status, and whether the tutor was new or returning. This is broadly reflected in the results from this study (see Table 13 below). GCSE resit data reveals some evidence of tutor characteristics affecting student outcomes. However, none of these observed differences were statistically significant when assessed using chi-squared tests, likely reflecting the limited statistical power associated with small sample sizes. Overall, learners with more highly qualified tutors saw a higher proportion achieving a grade 4 or higher, particularly those whose tutors were graduates. The pass rate was notably higher amongst learners whose tutors were already trained, with 31% achieving at least a grade 4, compared to just 17% of those whose tutors were new in 2024/25.

Examining the crosstab by highest qualification in their subject, learners whose tutor's highest qualification was an A Level achieved a higher pass rate, with 30% achieving at least a grade 4. Interestingly, learners taught by undergraduates rather

than graduates or teachers were more likely to achieve a grade 4. However, this analysis is limited, as it does not account for factors such as the number of hours tutoring and student characteristics. Future research should develop a predictive model incorporating these variables to better understand the likelihood of achieving at least a grade 4 exploring the impacts of, and relationships between, different factors.

Table 13: GCSE resit grade by tutor characteristics

	Under 4	4 and over
Highest level of overall qualification		
Undergraduate	26 (65%)	14 (35%)
Graduate	24 (86%)	4 (14%)
Teacher	36 (73%)	13 (27%)
Highest level of subject-specific qualification		
GCSE	18 (72%)	7 (28%)
A Level	31 (70%)	13 (30%)
Degree/Postgraduate	37 (77%)	11 (23%)
Tutors' relationship with Tutor Trust		
New	30 (83%)	6 (17%)
Already trained	56 (69%)	25 (31%)

Do student outcomes vary by level of disadvantage?

As shown in Table 10 above, GCSE outcomes vary by level of disadvantage, with learners eligible for the post-16 Bursary Fund less likely to achieve at least a grade 4. In addition, there were notable differences in perceived outcomes among those resitting GCSE English. Learners eligible for a bursary were less likely to agree that tutoring helped them prepare for the resit and were also less likely to feel that tutoring increased their overall motivation. By contrast, there were no notable differences amongst those resitting GCSE maths by bursary eligibility.

Note that as this was a pilot evaluation and not a trial with robust impact evaluation, statistical modelling was not carried out to explore interactions between student characteristics, other factors (such as prior GCSE grade), and outcomes.

Are there any other mediators/moderators to student outcomes?

Tutors perceived that the coaching element specifically contributed to learners' personal outcomes, including their confidence (in their knowledge and skills, and to sit their GCSE again), their motivation towards achieving their GCSE and in their other post-16 courses, and to improvements in their mindset and belief in their own abilities. Tutors also felt that the coaching had supported some learners' future ambitions and aspirations both for future study and their careers.

However, many college/school staff interviewed were unaware of the coaching element embedded within the tutoring. Learners who were interviewed were also unclear on this aspect of the programme (they might not have understood the difference between tutoring and coaching). This lack of understanding limits the extent to which their perceptions of outcomes can be directly linked with the coaching:

> *'I didn't realise* [coaching] *was an element of it. This, that, you mentioning that, is the first time I've heard of that bit [laughs] (…). It might have been taking place, I don't, I wouldn't know.'* (Setting subject specialist)

The characteristics which school staff and tutors perceived to facilitate, or hinder, outcomes are outlined below in Table 14.

Table 14: Student characteristics perceived to support or hinder outcomes

Student characteristics which supported student outcomes
• Learners with the motivation and determination to pass. Learners who were resitting their GCSE in November were perceived to be particularly motivated by the knowledge that, if they passed, they would no longer need to attend GCSE lessons and tutoring. • Learners who were receptive to the tutoring and understood the value of passing their GCSE for achieving future study or career aspirations. • Learners with greater initial confidence. • Regular, consistent attendance.
Student characteristics which hindered student outcomes
• Wider pastoral issues and personal challenges, such as safeguarding concerns, working long hours outside school, and recent bereavement. • Low confidence and lack of belief that they could pass the exam. In some cases, this belief was related to not passing the exam on previous attempts. • Feeling nervous and overwhelmed by the pressure of the exam environment (in some cases, despite feeling well prepared for the exam content). • Entrenched beliefs that they disliked the subject. • Desire to focus solely on their chosen main course. • Starting from a very low level. • Resitting two subjects. • Unmet SEND needs. • Difficulty understanding the future benefits of passing their subject. • Not having a device to support home study. • Poor attendance, both to college/school more widely and to the tutoring sessions.

Tutors who completed the proforma highlighted several subgroups of pupils who they felt had particularly benefitted from participating in the tutoring programme. These included learners who did not feel confident participating in English or maths lessons for fear of getting answers wrong, learners with lower confidence in their subject more widely, learners who did not engage well in the classroom environment, and learners who found reading challenging. These learners were perceived to particularly benefit from the tutoring environment, which provided one to one, tailored support, and gave learners the time and space to have concepts explained to them.

Tutors identified a range of other factors which facilitated and hindered the outcomes of tutoring and coaching for learners. Several tutors highlighted the impact of the timing of sessions. They felt that sessions earlier in the day, or during free periods, facilitated student attendance and engagement, whereas sessions at the end of the day or straight after their GCSE class lesson hindered attendance or, if learners did attend, their subsequent engagement in the session. Wider support was also perceived to impact the effectiveness of tutoring, including support from settings (such as allocating suitable spaces, or providing learners with a device) and encouragement from parents to attend.

Readiness for trial

RQ7: What modifications, if any, would be required/beneficial to scale the programme and ensure readiness for efficacy trial in the post-16 context?

Most interviewed setting staff were broadly satisfied with their experience of the programme overall, with some saying they would repeat it if possible. However, this view was often based on anecdotal impressions staff gained through informal interactions with learners and tutors. Only in one setting did staff state that they would only consider repeating the programme if logistics were significantly simplified, including reassessing whether it should be delivered online or in person.

Relatedly, Tutor Trust staff stressed that staff in settings often lacked clarity about their role, while our interviews also revealed a very substantial variation in the role they played in supporting the delivery of tutoring. Therefore, in any future iteration of the programme, information about what is expected from settings needs to be clearer from the outset. A process

flow visual may help with this, as Tutor Trust pointed out. Staff clarity on their role and responsibilities is crucial if challenges with student dropout and low attendance are to be addressed and to ensure tutors receive data on student needs to effectively tailor their tutoring. It is also essential to support the scalability of the intervention, as Tutor Trust staff commented that the amount of chasing on student attendance that was required in the pilot would not be sustainable if the intervention was scaled up.

Guidance on timetabling would also be beneficial, with pointers provided on the timing of tutoring sessions which tend to work best and a reminder strategy for learners. This would also help with improving student attendance and increase the feasibility of programme success post-16.

Thought should also be given to the timing of the programme, given the challenges faced in the pilot in fitting in the required number of tutoring sessions before the November resits. In settings which are likely to struggle to start the tutoring early enough in the autumn term, it may be worth considering whether it is more feasible to focus the tutoring on the summer resists to allow the required time to deliver the target number of tuition sessions. However, it is worth noting that a number of learners were motivated by the idea that they would be able to drop English and maths if they passed their November resit and the pass rate in November was higher than June, although learners entered for the November resit tended to have achieved a higher GCSE grade in school. The Tutor Trust and settings should consider how logistical challenges could be overcome to accommodate November resits if learners are more motivated by the possibility of passing their GCSEs earlier.

Based on conversations with settings, Tutor Trust staff commented on the small scale of the pilot set against the large number of learners in settings retaking GCSEs. As one Tutor Trust staff member commented: '*Twelve learners for some colleges is literally just not even a drop in their ocean*'. Within this context, there were suggestions from both staff in settings and Tutor Trust that a future iteration of the programme should be of a larger scale to ensure buy-in from settings and focus on addressing student attendance issues. This could be more easily achieved by offering small-group tutoring (for example, with three or four learners to each tutor), which is part of Tutor Trust's usual practice outside of the pilot. A trial of the Tutor Trust primary school-group tuition programme (Torgerson *et al.*, 2018) found that children in Year 6 who received small-group tutoring made three months' additional progress in Key Stage 2 maths scores compared to children in control schools (note that in the primary context one to one tutoring was also found to have a positive effect).

However, this post-16 evaluation has explored the feasibility and outcomes of a one to one model only, so we do not know what outcomes would be achieved from a group model within the post-16 context. It is also worth noting that many learners valued the one to one personalised approach and may not be as engaged, or benefit to the same extent, in a group model. It is also unclear to us how coaching, which proved highly valuable for tutees and tutors, would work in a group setting. It may be that the best model to test moving forwards would be a hybrid model with most tutoring taking place with student groups whilst allowing for one to one tutoring for learners who would benefit most from individual support. This individual tutoring would for example, include learners lacking in confidence in a class or group setting. This would follow a model the same as **Tutoring Plus**, which is a current model dedicated to supporting children in alternative provision, vulnerable children, and looked after children (LAC), with a combination of tutoring and emotional wellbeing support. This involves recruiting specific tutors to deliver bespoke one to one tuition to more vulnerable learners who have multiple needs. This includes people with particular expertise in engaging vulnerable young people in education. The training for this model would also need to be tailored, including a focus on strategies to effectively engage, retain, and tutor this student target group.

RQ8: Would the delivery team have the capacity to deliver the programme with fidelity at scale?

Tutor Trust did not encounter any particular problems in recruiting new settings for the pilot, so the assumption is that they would be able to scale up provision in the North of England where they deliver tutoring, particularly given the large numbers of learners who are resitting English and maths post-16 and the continually low pass rates. However, Tutor Trust does not intend to move to national delivery, which might pose some challenges in engaging a sufficient number of settings for a larger-scale trial.

In terms of the availability of a sufficient number of tutors, Tutor Trust can draw on its large network which would enable delivery at a larger scale, and, in terms of the training and support of tutors, this has worked well and the same model could be applied at scale.

However, in the current model of tutoring, there was significant student dropout and low student attendance. Consequently, the amount of work Tutor Trust needed to put in to even achieve the attendance levels reported would not be sustainable on a larger scale. Some/all of the changes suggested in the previous section would need to be actioned to enable the programme to be scaled up for a trial in its current form. In particular, college/school staff would need to take more responsibility for monitoring student attendance and achieving better attendance rates, and this might be more likely if the programme reached a larger number of learners for example, via a primarily small-group tutoring model with some allowance for individual tutoring.

Following the pilot, while no funding was secured for Tutor Trust to recruit additional settings, it did remain an ambition for them to undertake more post-16 tutoring work. As of March 2026, post-16 tuition was being delivered to 49 pupils in 7 settings across 3 regions.

RQ9: To what extent does the ToC provide a plausible account of how the programme works?

Considering the progress of the Tutor Trust post-16 pilot against the ToC, the pilot findings suggest successful inputs in relation to tutor recruitment, tutor training, and support. Tutors met the Tutor Trust's recruitment criteria, all received the compulsory training, and the training and support (for example, lesson observations and lesson plan spot checks) were considered useful (particularly the new post-16 and coaching elements).

Challenges were faced, however, in successfully implementing the ToC inputs for learners. There was significant student dropout, poor attendance, and retention. Around one in three learners either withdrew from the programme prior to delivery starting or did not attend any tutoring. Amongst those attending, dosage targets were not met. Only six learners received the desired 15+ hours (4% of the 165 who received at least one session, compared with the 65% target), while only 39 (24%) received the minimum goal of 12+ hours (compared with the 70% target). The tutoring was not always reaching the target audience—less than a third of the learners who received any tutoring were eligible for the post-16 bursary, significantly lower than the 75% target. However, when tutoring was delivered to learners, it seemed to be done with fidelity—it was all one to one, and there was evidence of tailoring and effective coaching. It was positively received by the learners attending, and they engaged with the content and generally favoured in-person tutoring.

There were many factors influencing the success of the programme inputs. Implementation was most effective when there was a proactive and engaged Partnership Lead, taking responsibility for ensuring learners were attending sessions and rescheduling them if not. There were some clear barriers to student attendance, including student buy-in and motivation, relationships between tutors and learners, timetable constraints, and communication gaps between the student, tutor, and setting Partnership Lead.

There was evidence of the desired outcomes in the ToC being achieved for learners who had received tutoring. There was a significant positive increase in learners' overall screening test scores by the end of the pilot. A greater proportion of learners in the pilot achieved grade 4+ in their resit than nationally, particularly for English. Those with a higher number of sessions were more likely to have achieved grade 4+, emphasising the importance of the dosage that many learners did not receive. Caution is needed when interpreting these results, however, due to small sample sizes. Learners reported some perceived impacts on their confidence in English and maths, knowledge and skills, motivation to achieve, progress, and enjoyment of the subjects, particularly English. Given this evidence of impact, it suggests the pilot could have been more successful for a larger number of learners if the implementation challenges discussed above were addressed.

There was also evidence of the outcomes for tutors in the ToC having been achieved. They reported enhanced knowledge, skills and confidence resulting from the training (relating to tutoring in general and in a post-16 context). In addition, half of the tutors who were not already teachers were more inspired to become teachers.

RQ10: What potential secondary outcome measure(s) could be used in an efficacy trial and how should it/they be administered?

The outcome measures explored in the pilot (GCSE results as a primary outcome measure and secondary outcomes in the student survey) would be appropriate for a trial. For the primary outcome, using GCSE **raw scores rather than grades** would provide a more sensitive and continuous measure of attainment. This greater granularity would support more powerful and precise statistical analyses, particularly when modelling effects using regression or other multivariable approaches. In

contrast, grade categories compress variation and may mask smaller but meaningful differences in student performance. For the secondary outcomes, the student survey measures appear suitable, provided they demonstrate adequate reliability and validity. Retaining these measures in a trial would enable exploration of intermediate impact and provide a broader understanding of how the intervention affects learners' experiences and attitudes alongside academic achievement. In addition, the screening test could serve as a valuable secondary outcome measure to support and add weight to the primary GCSE outcome, provided its psychometric properties are robust. Including this measure in the trial would strengthen the triangulation of evidence, help interpret effect sizes on the primary outcome, and offer insights into whether the intervention influences core capabilities that underpin GCSE performance.

Conclusion

Table 15: Summary of pilot findings

Area of research	Finding
Feasibility of implementation	The findings suggest successful programme inputs in relation to tutor recruitment, tutor training, and support. Despite challenges, the required number of 20 colleges/schools were recruited and retained in the pilot. Although initial recruitment of learners was a success, retaining them on the programme was often challenging—attendance can be more difficult to enforce in a post-16 context where learners have a higher degree of independence than in compulsory schooling. There was subsequently significant student dropout— 31% of learners (*N* = 75) either withdrew prior to delivery or did not attend any sessions, and only 39 learners (24%) attended the minimum of 12 hours of tutoring. This is consistent with challenges faced in retaining learners for other post-16 tutoring, such as that provided via the implementation of the 16–19 Tuition Fund[13]. Implementation and student engagement were most effective when there was a proactive and engaged Partnership Lead in the setting, who monitored student attendance. Factors perceived to contribute to student attendance included learners' motivation to achieve future goals that passing resists would help with, such as progression onto other courses, or securing a good career. However, there were some key barriers to student attendance, including lack of student buy-in and motivation, and timetable constraints.
Evidence of promise	There is some evidence of intended outcomes for learners who participated in tutoring, including more positive attitudes towards their progress in English and maths and increased motivation to achieve and confidence in their abilities. Staff and tutors perceived that the tutoring had improved learners' confidence and self-esteem, which was often linked to increased willingness to participate in lessons and more persistence when they found the subject difficult. Tutors reported enhanced knowledge, skills, and confidence resulting from the training. Overall, just over a quarter (26%) of the 117 learners for whom GCSE grades were received achieved a grade 4 or higher, which is higher than the national average pass rate for GCSE resits. However, these findings are based on a limited sample size, and given the low levels of attendance and lack of a comparator or control group, should be interpreted with caution. Lessons could be learnt from the more engaged settings and learners to support future delivery with post-16 settings.
Readiness for trial	There are some indicative positive findings from the pilot in terms of outcomes for tutors and learners. However, given the implementation challenges, the programme is not ready for trial in its current form. Furthermore, given that student attendance in the pilot was substantially lower than anticipated, Tutor Trust provided settings with significant input in organising the tutoring, which they acknowledged would not be sustainable on

[13] Bierman, Mackay, and Redondo, 2023

Area of research	Finding
	a larger scale. To minimise the need for Tutor Trust input, information about what is expected of settings needs to be clearer and guidance on what works best in terms of timetabling would also be beneficial for settings. Experiences of the pilot evaluation also suggest that challenges would be encountered in implementing an evaluation using a randomised controlled trial (RCT) design, including varying levels of engagement of key staff in settings in both supporting delivery and taking part in the evaluation, and student engagement and attendance. Increasing the number of learners per setting who are actively participating, as well as offering incentives to learners completing evaluation activities, could go some way to countering some of these challenges. Overall, implementation challenges, including lower than expected attendance and staff engagement, suggest that the pilot programme is not ready for trial in its current form. Adaptations were being considered by Tutor Trust that may lead to more successful implementation in a post-16 context (for example, small-group tutoring rather than one to one). As the pilot draws mostly on self-reported evidence (other than the results from the screening test and GCSE resits), the findings need to be treated with some degree of caution.

Formative findings

Overall, the findings suggest there were challenges in relation to implementation, particularly student engagement and attendance, and in recruiting the target disadvantaged learners, rather than issues with the content or design of the programme *per se* (because when learners did attend, the tutoring was well received). More effective implementation may well lead to a positive impact on a larger scale than was evident in the pilot. The role of the Partnership Lead in settings seems central to success. There is a need for a proactive and engaged member of staff who takes responsibility for effective timetabling, monitoring, and encouraging student attendance, and regularly communicating with tutors and learners. The Tutor Trust suggested that converting to their usual small-group tutoring model, which would benefit a larger number of learners, might be more appealing to staff who would view the time required to implement the programme as a more worthy investment. However, it should be noted that the impact of small-group tutoring in the post-16 context has not been explored in this pilot evaluation.

It was intended that the programme would be targeted at disadvantaged learners, with eligibility for the post-16 Bursary Fund used as a proxy for disadvantage. This aim was not realised in many cases, with a quarter rather than three-quarters of learners engaged being eligible for the bursary (settings sometimes used other data when Bursary Fund data was not available). In a future iteration of the programme, more guidance could be given to settings on student selection if the focus continues to be on this group, or other indicators of disadvantage could be considered in the absence of Bursary Fund data. Settings used different criteria to select learners, and some consistency in this regard would be helpful. This also links back to the central role of the Partnership Lead.

The training and support for tutors were well received, particularly relating to coaching, but there were some suggestions for minor improvements. For example, some tutors would have liked more coverage of different teaching methods to help learners master skills they had not obtained in Key Stage 4. Some tutors would have liked access to the training after completion to refer to. In addition, some tutors would have appreciated more in-person and group opportunities to meet with other tutors and share their experiences. The Tutor Trust could also consider how to encourage more take-up of optional training for tutors.

Interpretation

There is evidence to support the ToC in relation to inputs and outcomes for tutors. The Tutor Trust was successful at recruiting tutors who met their criteria; all tutors received compulsory training, and the training and support offered to tutors were well received (particularly the new post-16 and coaching elements). There was also evidence of the outcomes for tutors in the ToC having been achieved. They reported enhanced knowledge, skills, and confidence resulting from the

training (relating to tutoring in general and in a post-16 context). In addition, half of the tutors not already teachers were more inspired to become teachers.

The evidence to support the ToC in terms of inputs and outcomes for learners is more mixed. The tutoring was not always reaching the targeted disadvantaged learners (sometimes due to a lack of data to inform selection). There was significant student dropout, poor attendance, and retention. The target number of tutoring sessions was not met for most learners. There were some clear barriers to student attendance, including student buy-in and motivation, relationships between tutors and learners, timetable constraints, and communication gaps between the student, tutor, and setting Partnership Lead. As noted above, the role of the Partnership Lead in settings seemed key to the success of the programme. However, there was evidence of some effective practice and positive outcomes being realised for participating learners. There was a significant positive increase in overall screening test scores, and a greater proportion of learners in the pilot achieved grade 4+ in their GCSE resit than nationally. The findings give a positive indication that tutoring had helped in terms of overall GCSE pass rates. However, the fact that this was a pilot evaluation, and not a trial with a control group of learners to compare to, must be considered when interpreting the findings. There may be contextual factors that we are not aware of that could have influenced the impacts on learners, alongside their involvement in the Tutor Trust pilot.

Learners reported some perceived impacts on their confidence in English and maths, knowledge and skills, motivation to achieve, progress, and enjoyment (particularly of English).

Overall, the implementation challenges suggest that the pilot programme is not ready for trial. At the time of writing, the Tutor Trust did not have plans to recruit additional settings for their post-16 programme. They were considering adaptations to the current model (discussed above) which have not been explored during this pilot but may make the programme more feasible and impactful in a post-16 context.

Limitations of the evaluation

The qualitative findings summarised in the report represent a small sample of settings. The original intention was to carry out ten college/school case studies involving interviews with Partnership Leads, heads of maths/English, tutors, and learners, plus to also carry out a virtual interview with the Partnership Lead in the other ten pilot schools (so all schools were represented). It proved challenging to recruit for case studies or interviews—all 20 were approached on numerous occasions. In total, interviews were carried out with: 10 staff across 7 colleges/schools; 13 learners across 5 colleges/schools; and 11 tutors who worked across 7 colleges/schools. In only five settings were interviews carried out with both staff and learners. Given the achieved sample for these qualitative interviews, views may not be representative of all staff and learners within and across the pilot schools.

As the pilot draws mostly on self-reported evidence (other than the results from the screening test and GCSE resists), the findings need to be treated with some degree of caution. The evaluation did not include a comparator or control group which would allow an estimate of what would have happened in the absence of the programme. Other factors may have influenced the results for participating learners, such as attendance at other maths and/or English lessons alongside the tutoring. The GCSE analysis focused primarily on the effect of individual variables on achieving at least a grade 4. Future research should aim to develop a predictive model that integrates these variables, enabling a deeper understanding of the probability of attaining at least a grade 4 and examining the interactions and combined influence of multiple factors.

Differences between baseline and endpoint responses to the student survey for individual learners were not explored due to the small number of learners matched over time.

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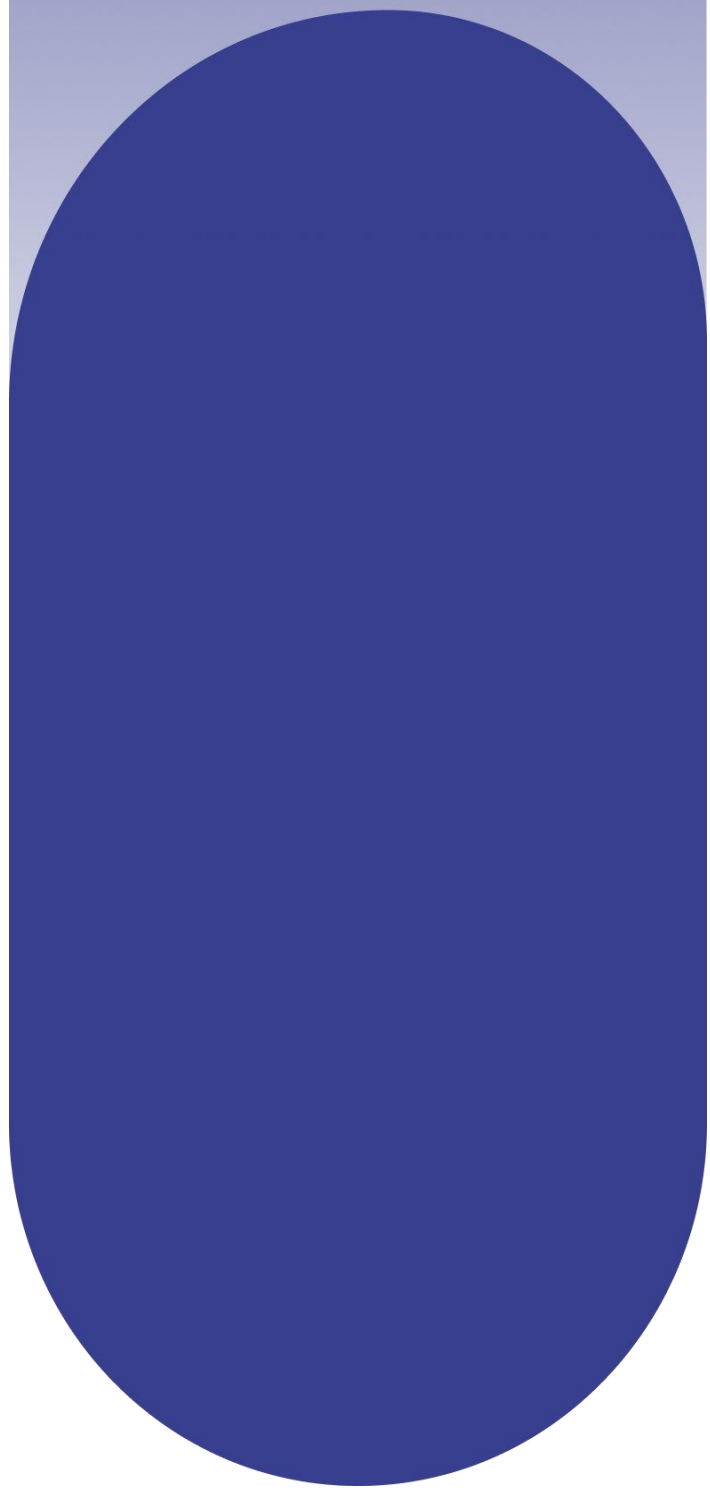
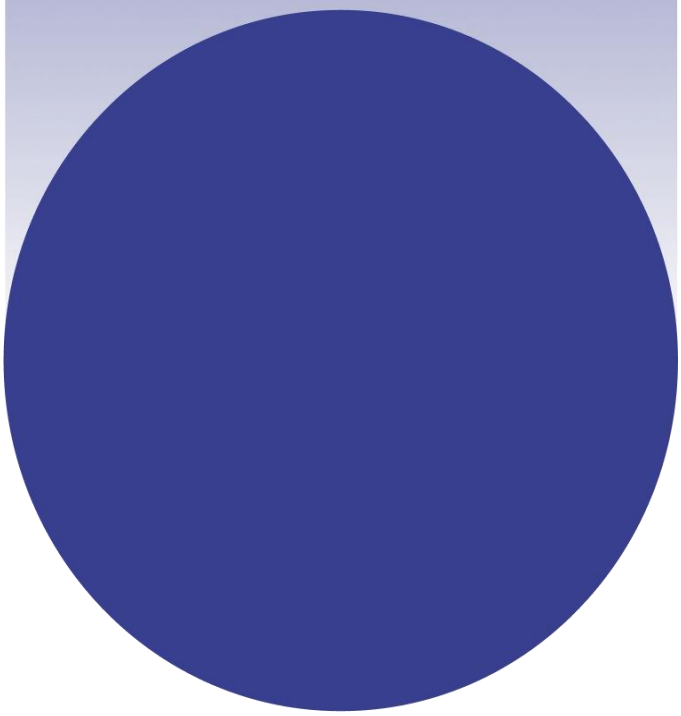
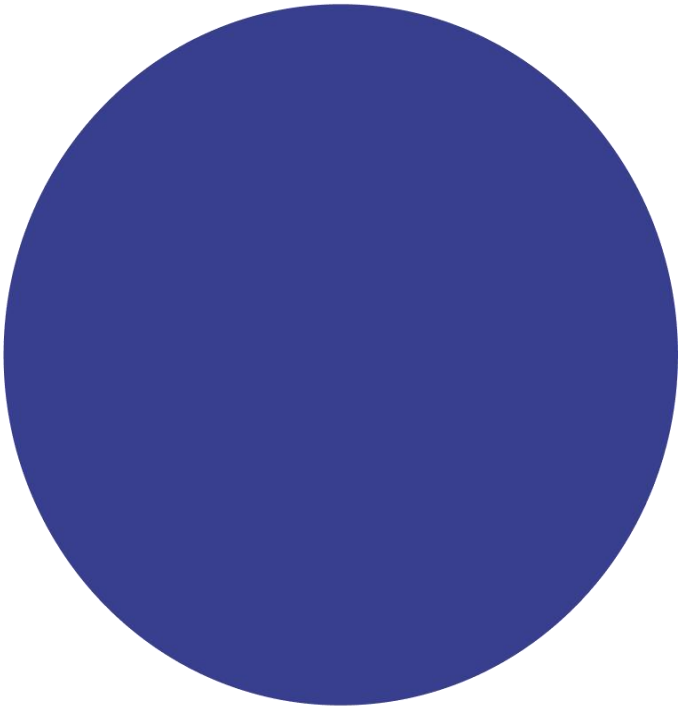
Appendices

Appendices A – C can be found published on the project page under ‘Appendices’.







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