



Department
for Education

Evaluation of the 16-19 Tuition Fund

Implementation and process evaluation
report

July 2023

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Government
Social Research

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruption for all stages of education and learning. The disruption began with the first national lockdown in March 2020 and continued throughout the 2020/21 academic year due to the continued prevalence of the virus, multiple national and local lockdowns, and changing restrictions. Students entering or continuing their post-16 education since the start of the pandemic (including the 2021/22 academic year) were affected by lost learning time and notable changes to grading and assessments. This was the context in which the Department for Education (DfE) launched the 16-19 Tuition Fund in the 2020/21 academic year, as part of the government's education recovery programme. The programme provides additional funding for schools, colleges and other 16-19 institutions to deliver small group tuition in English, maths, and other courses where learning was disrupted, such as vocational courses where assessments were deferred. A total of £420m Government funding has been allocated to the 16-19 Tuition Fund (£96m for the 2020/21 academic year, £102m in 2021/22, £110m in 2022/23, and £112m in 2023/24).

The DfE commissioned Ipsos UK, in partnership with the Education Policy Institute (EPI), to undertake an independent evaluation of the 16-19 Tuition Fund for the 2021/22 academic year. The evaluation of the 16-19 Tuition Fund included an implementation and process evaluation (IPE) as well as an impact evaluation. This report details the findings of the IPE, which aimed to answer the following three questions:

1. How has the Tuition Fund been used by institutions?
2. How has the Tuition Fund been supporting eligible students?
3. How can the Tuition Fund be improved for future years?

Findings

There were 2,506 eligible institutions in the 2021/22 academic year, of which 1,567 institutions opted into the Fund (62%). The institutions that opted in represented approximately 94% of the funding available, or nearly £96m of the £102m available. Of those opting in, most (89%, 1,392) had also opted in for 2020/21, and 175 institutions had not opted in previously. Around 500 institutions carried over funding from 2020/21.

Around three in five eligible academies (61%) and local authority-maintained schools (57%) opted into the Tuition Fund, whereas almost all eligible colleges (96%) opted in. This suggests colleges were overall more likely to opt in.

Looking at the portfolio of the 1,567 institutions that opted in, over half were academies (896), followed by colleges such as General FE and Tertiary and sixth form colleges

(215), school sixth forms in local authority-maintained schools (206), and free schools including Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges (108). Combined, these four groups made up 91% of the institutions that opted in.

The funding amounts ranged from £180 to nearly £1.5m, highlighting significant variation across institutions, though most institutions (71%) received funding up to £20,000. Overall, colleges received larger amounts due to having more eligible students – for example, all allocations of £500,000 or more went to colleges. Evidence from the institution survey and case studies found that the amount of funding was a key motivation regarding decisions on whether to opt in or out so this likely explains, at least in part, why colleges had higher rates of opting in.

How has the Tuition Fund been used by institutions?

- **Resourcing:** According to the institution survey results, tuition was most frequently delivered by permanently employed teachers/lecturers with three in four (76%) respondents selecting this option. Institutions also reported using (which sometimes involved recruiting) teaching assistants, former teacher/lecturers, supply teachers, and trainee teachers – all of whom were more likely to have existing relationships with the institution. Other examples from case studies included recruiting alumni and learning coaches, who supported the development of study skills, including students' time management, organisational, essay-writing and note taking skills. Around one in five (20%) used an external tutoring agency, either as the core delivery model or in combination with delivery led by staff. Using existing staff, including those identified for the previous year of the Tuition Fund, was a practical option as they could be mobilised more quickly, had relationships with students, and understood the curriculum and institution context.
- **Subjects and activities:** Almost all institutions used the funding to deliver tuition in more than one subject or course, and student survey respondents were split similarly across those who attended tuition for one subject and those who attended tuition for multiple subjects.
 - Almost all institution survey respondents used the funding to provide tuition in maths (95%) and/or English (86%). Just over half (52%) delivered tuition in other academic subjects, such as chemistry, biology, psychology, physics, and sociology.
 - More than two in five (44%) institution survey respondents delivered tuition in vocational subjects, such as Health and Social Care, sport, digital technology, childcare, and building and construction.
 - A smaller proportion of institution survey respondents (12%) delivered tuition in non-academic subjects, including study skills, exam preparation, and employability skills. However, it is likely that a significantly larger proportion of institutions were embedding this focus into tuition on specific academic or vocational subjects, as staff interviewees highlighted the

importance of support with general organisational, time management, study and exam skills due to the impact of the pandemic.

- Just under a third (31%) of institution survey respondents used the funding for pastoral activities to improve confidence, engagement, mental health, and general wellbeing. For example, some provided mentoring or coaching whilst others offered specific catch-up support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- **Group vs one-to-one:** Most institutions delivered both one-to-one and small group tuition sessions. Half (50%) of the institution survey respondents tailored this to students so that some students received one-to-one support while others attended groups. A quarter (26%) reported that students typically have both one-to-one and small group sessions, and another quarter delivered only one-to-one (10%) or group (14%) sessions.
- **Group size:** Among those delivering tuition in groups, most institution survey respondents (76%) reported group sizes of 2 to 7 students, in line with the 16-19 Tuition Fund guidance. Findings from the case studies were positive about the benefits of delivering tuition in small groups (e.g. up to 5 students per group). Staff and students both recognised the value of working in smaller groups because it facilitated behaviour management and ability to focus. Some interviewees thought the groups worked best when they included students with similar needs.

However, one in five (20%) reported delivering tuition to groups larger than this. In interviews, there was some explanation that group size could vary by subject. For example, because maths and English were common subjects for tuition, these were more likely to be delivered in larger groups compared to less common subjects or courses.
- **Frequency and duration:** Around half of the institution (50%) and student (45%) survey respondents reported tuition taking place weekly, followed by several times a week (32% and 30% respectively). Sessions that lasted 1 to 2 hours were also most common, which was supported by the case studies as well. Around three in four student survey respondents thought that the frequency (76%) and length (72%) of their tutoring sessions were about right. This suggests that institutions appropriately judged the amount of support to provide. In interviews, staff explained that sessions that were 45 minutes to 1 hour were often easier to schedule alongside timetables and were better for students' concentration. On the other hand, some students in interviews said that they would have preferred sessions longer than 1 hour and more frequent than weekly.
- **Face-to-face vs online:** Most institution survey respondents (62%) delivered tuition sessions in-person only, but some provided tuition online only (12%) or a mix of face-to-face and online (23%). Interviewees, including both staff and students, preferred in-person sessions over online sessions where possible.

How has the Tuition Fund been supporting eligible students?

- **Students receiving tuition:** Survey respondents provided estimates for the number of students reached through the Tuition Fund, which ranged from a few students up to 3,000 students. Most institution survey respondents reported that they were targeting students in line with the guidance – including students that had not achieved a grade 4 or 5 in English and/or maths (87%) or those from an economic disadvantaged background (83%). Senior leaders emphasised in interviews the value in the second criteria for selecting students as this provided additional flexibilities. They described how, in their view, some students had teacher-assessed grades that did not appear to be an accurate or true representation of the students' current learning level, and the wider criteria on economic disadvantage sometimes enabled reaching these students.
- **Engaging students:** Senior leaders and tutors described multiple efforts to generate and improve engagement among students. For example, they were careful when offering tuition to do so in a sensitive way that did not highlight that students were underperforming, which could result in the student perceiving the support negatively. This was important regardless of whether the sessions were framed as mandatory or voluntary, and especially for students who were demotivated from previous years when they struggled or already resat exams.
- **Attendance:** While there were some issues of attendance and drop-outs, this was anticipated, especially when sessions were set up as drop-in sessions. Staff interviewees noted that students who engaged early tended to stay engaged and attend sessions regularly, so a key issue was when very disengaged students did not intend to attend sessions from the outset and required frequent reminders. Several interviewees reflected that introducing the tuition part way through the year, after the funding was received, caused challenges because students already had routines. Other barriers to attendance reported by student survey respondents included anxiety and poor mental health (26%) and difficulty staying focused (25%).
- **Perceived benefits on students:** Overall, most student survey respondents were satisfied with the tuition they attended (81%) and with the tutoring approach (83%). Most also found the tutoring helpful (89%) and relevant (88%).
 - In case studies, students frequently talked about how the small groups were what made the sessions most helpful because the tutor was focused on them rather than a whole class. Students also said they felt more confident to speak up in smaller groups and that it helped them to be more disciplined and focused.
 - In turn, staff and students described how this confidence sometimes continued into the classroom because students felt more informed about the content and better equipped to contribute. The findings from the student survey supported this with over one third (36%) reporting that tuition made

them feel more motivated to learn and one quarter (26%) reporting that tuition helped them engage more in their classes.

- After improvements in confidence, the most common benefits reported by student survey respondents were improved study skills (42%) and feeling more prepared for exams (39%). In interviews, these were often mentioned alongside improvements in confidence. For example, students described how they gained more study, revision, and exam preparation skills, which in turn made them feel more confident looking ahead to the exam period.
- Although a smaller percentage (19%) of students reported improvements in their mental health and wellbeing, some students in case studies felt that the tuition helped reduce their stress and anxiety associated with their workload, which felt more manageable, and exams.
- Looking at attainment, just under a quarter (23%) of student survey respondents reported that they felt they had achieved better grades as a result of the tuition. This figure is potentially lower than would be expected given the aims of the Tuition Fund, but this could be because students had not yet taken exams and it was too early to say. Equally, it is possible that the amount of tuition or content of tuition was not sufficient to improve attainment. The impact evaluation, which will be reported separately, will explore this further.

How can the Tuition Fund be improved for future years?

- **Eligibility criteria:** Two in three (65%) institution survey respondents agreed that the Tuition Fund eligibility criteria targeted the right students. However, in interviews, senior leaders expressed that they would like more autonomy, flexibility, and trust to identify students. They described how students may have a higher level of need for catch-up support for reasons that cannot be captured in the eligibility criteria. For example, students may have been more significantly affected by COVID-19 (e.g. bereavements), not have a supportive family, or space to study at home, all of which could influence their ability to catch-up after lost learning.
- **Guidance and opt-in process:** Overall, most institution survey respondents were satisfied with the 16-19 Tuition Fund (78%) and the process for opting in/out (69%). A similar proportion (71%) reported that the information and guidance about the 16-19 Tuition Fund was clear. In case studies, the primary issue senior leaders raised was the timeframes for communicating and distributing funding allocations. This had implications for recruiting staff and resourcing tuition, and it condensed the available time for delivering tuition to students.
- **Funding amounts:** Nearly three in four (73%) survey respondents expected to use the majority (75-100%) of their funding allocation. However, a significant

minority (19%) did not expect to use the full funding amount. This has implications for DfE and institutions as leftover funding must be recalled.

- **Reasons for opting out:** Only 113 institutions (5% of all eligible institutions) actively opted out of the Fund for the 2021/22 academic year by filling in the online form, meaning most that opted out did not engage in the process actively. A small number of institutions who opted out of the 2021/22 Tuition Fund (either actively or passively) took part in the survey. When asked why they decided to opt out, the primary reasons were due to low numbers of eligible students, concerns around the administrative burden associated with opting in and managing the funding, and funding allocations were too low to be worthwhile. Supporting this, a separate analysis of funding allocation data showed that there were 477 institutions that opted in for 2020/21 but chose not to in 2021/22 who, on average, had received smaller funding allocations compared with the wider portfolio of funding allocations in 2020/21.

Recommendations

The IPE identified seven recommendations to inform how the Tuition Fund, or small group tuition in 16-19 educational settings more generally, could be further improved in future. These recommended that the DfE/ESFA should:

1. Consider providing 16-19 institutions greater flexibility and autonomy in selecting students to participate in tuition.
2. Consider introducing minimum and maximum funding thresholds.
3. Provide practical and evidence-based examples to institutions on the format of tuition to be delivered.
4. Consider easing restrictions on the use of funding to cover non-staff costs.
5. Consider whether it is possible to confirm funding allocations before the academic year and disburse funding before or nearer the start of the academic year.
6. Support institutions to draw on existing or previous teachers to deliver small group tuition where possible.
7. Create opportunities for the sharing and dissemination of good practice in delivering tuition.

Overall, these findings should be treated with caution due to methodological limitations (e.g. low response rates, small sample sizes) and the possibility of bias. The impact evaluation will provide more insight into the impact of the 16-19 Tuition Fund on overall attainment, but it is important to note that this analysis will be limited due to the heterogenous nature of how tuition has been delivered across institutions and lack of monitoring data on this. For example, it is possible that some delivery formats are yielding an effect but that this is diluted in the overall assessment and therefore undetectable.

For future evaluation, capturing more detail from institutions on the nature and format of tuition delivered should be a priority. It would be much more efficient and effective to capture this through monitoring returns submitted to the DfE and built into the process rather than relying on surveys given the challenges engaging institutions in research. This could potentially enable subgroup analysis to be undertaken to inform a more detailed assessment of what works.

1. Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned Ipsos UK, in partnership with the Education Policy Institute (EPI), to undertake an independent evaluation of the 16-19 Tuition Fund for the 2021/22 academic year. This report details the findings from the implementation and process evaluation (IPE) strand of the evaluation.

1.1. Context and rationale

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruption for all stages of education and learning. The disruption began with the first national lockdown in March 2020 and continued throughout the 2020/21 academic year due to the continued prevalence of the virus, multiple national and local lockdowns, and changing restrictions. Students entering or continuing their post-16 education since the start of the pandemic (including the 2021/22 academic year) were affected by lost learning time and notable changes to grading and assessments¹. This was the context in which the 16-19 Tuition Fund was introduced, with the rationale to mitigate both immediate and longer-lasting effects of the pandemic. For example, one such challenge affecting students in the 2021/22 academic year was that many were sitting formal exams for the first time in 2022, following the transition from teacher-assessed grades back to exam-based assessment.

It is also worth highlighting that the pandemic introduced new challenges that widened the disadvantage attainment gap by disproportionately impacting poorer students. While research on the disadvantage attainment gap has typically focused on pupil outcomes at secondary school level and below, EPI conducted exploratory research (funded by the Nuffield Foundation) to measure the 16-19 disadvantage attainment gap. The research, which used data that pre-dated the pandemic, highlighted prolonged educational inequality with older students facing further attainment losses as they enter adulthood. It found that poorer students in sixth forms and colleges had worse educational outcomes than more affluent peers by as many as three A-level grades when taking qualifications at this level². Furthermore, those with SEND, who tend to have lower key stage 4 attainment, continued to have lower 16-19 attainment, most notably for disadvantaged students with SEND. The findings, which were published in March 2021, provided further evidence of the need for interventions and government funding to support disadvantaged students.

Education providers and students will continue to be impacted by the lasting effects of the pandemic. Mitigating these is considered key to supporting students who also face

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-progress-in-the-2020-to-2022-academic-years>

² https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Measuring-the-16-19-disadvantage-attainment-gap_EPI-2021.pdf

entering a labour market that has contracted due to the economic downturn, putting them at risk of long-term unemployment³.

1.2. The 16-19 Tuition Fund

Overview

As part of the government's education recovery programme⁴, the DfE launched the 16-19 Tuition Fund in the 2020/21 academic year to mitigate the disruption to learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme provides additional funding for schools, colleges and other 16-19 institutions to deliver small group tuition in English, maths, and other courses where learning was disrupted, such as vocational courses where assessments were deferred. A total of £420m Government funding has been allocated to the 16-19 Tuition Fund (£96m in 2020/21, £102m in 2021/22, £110m in 2022/23, and £112m in 2023/24).

It is worth highlighting that the continued disruption of the pandemic during the 2020/21 academic year affected institutions' plans to deliver of tuition. As such, institutions were allowed to carry forward underspend into the 2021/22 academic year, though many continued to face further disruptions in the first term of 2021/22.

Institution eligibility

All 16-19 institutions who receive annual funding allocations from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for the provision of 16-19 education are eligible for the Fund. The amount of funding is calculated using proxy measures for disadvantage and then distributed through their wider 16-19 funding allocation (see Box 1). The 2021/22 funding was released from December 2021 to March 2022 and ring-fenced for 16-19 small group tuition only.

There were 2,506 eligible institutions in the 2021/22 academic year, of which 1,567 institutions opted into the Fund (63%). This was a lower proportion relative to the 2020/21 academic year, where 1,868 institutions of 2,422 eligible institutions opted in (77%).

³ https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EPI-Policy-paper-Impact-of-Covid-19_docx.pdf

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-recovery-support>

Box 1: Funding calculations

The two existing proxy measures for disadvantage, which were used to calculate the number of instances attracting funding, were:

- **Students with low prior attainment**, meaning those who did not have a GCSE grade 4 or above in English and/or maths at age 16. The calculation of the disadvantage block 2 (DB2) element of 16 to 19 tuition funding is based on the DB2 figures in an institution's 2021 to 2022 16 to 19 funding statement and the English and maths instances data in the 'programme' sheet of the allocation and calculation toolkit (ACT) file.
- **Students from the 27% most economically deprived areas** of the country based on the index of multiple deprivation. To calculate the number of instances per student from the 27% most economically deprived areas, DfE used data on the proportion of students funded in the 2019/20 academic year with a disadvantage block 1 (DB1) uplift and then applied this to the number of funded students for 2021/22.

Each institution was allocated £100 per instance for full-time students and £60 for part-time students.

Student eligibility

In the first year of the Tuition Fund, institutions could use the funding for students on a 16-19 study programme who had not achieved a grade 5 at GCSE in English and/or maths. Young people with SEND aged 19 to 24 who had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan were also eligible for support.

The eligibility for students was broadened for the 2021/22 academic year to include economic disadvantage. Institutions were expected to use the small group tuition for students who:

- had not achieved grade 4 or 5 at GCSE in English and/or maths⁵, or
- were from the most economically disadvantaged background⁶ and needed catch-up support.

It is important to note that institutions were not directed or required to provide small group tuition to the specific students that attracted the funding. This was deliberately intended

⁵ Guidance for institutions asked them to prioritise tuition for those students who had not achieved a grade 4 in maths and/or English in the first instance (in line with the proxy measure used to calculate funding amounts) and then subsequently provide tuition on the basis of a student not having received a grade 5 in maths and/or English.

⁶ An economically disadvantaged background is defined as students from the 27% most economically deprived areas of the country in the Indices of Deprivation.

to give institutions the flexibility to identify students who meet the eligibility criteria and would most benefit from tuition.

Subjects

There were no requirements regarding subjects for tuition. As such, institutions could offer support in English, maths and other subjects that have been disrupted, including vocational and/or academic learning. Institutions had further flexibility around using the funding to help students with SEND catch up on vocational and academic skills, and skills and learning that are important for their preparation for adulthood, as well as pastoral support.

Group size

Another change for the 2021/22 academic year was further flexibility in the number of students that could be included in small groups. In 2020/21, the guidance specified groups of up to three and no more than five students. In 2021/22, this was increased to allow up to seven students in exceptional circumstances.

Use of funds

The funding was intended to cover the actual staff costs of delivering small group tuition or the costs of contracting a third party. It was not intended to cover costs such as diagnostic tools, room hire, equipment, laptops, transport, or stationery.

Stakeholder groups

It is worth briefly defining the key stakeholder groups involved in the 16-19 Tuition Fund. These include:

- **DfE:** Responsible for setting the policy for the 16-19 Tuition Fund, including the eligibility criteria, and working closely with ESFA on the design of key processes involved in the management and distribution of funding. DfE are accountable to HM Treasury for the allocated funding, for reporting on how it has been used, and the extent to which it has achieved the intended outcomes and impacts.
- **ESFA:** Responsible for the management and distribution of the funding, including liaising with eligible 16-19 organisations, managing the opt-in/out process, disbursement of the funding, and recovery of any underspend.
- **16-19 institutions and third-party providers:** This includes all eligible 16-19 institutions that opt in to receive funds and are responsible for coordinating and delivering academic, vocational and/or pastoral activities to support students to recover lost learning. Institutions could use their existing staff to deliver activities through the Fund, hire new staff, or source support from a third-party provider.

- **Students:** This includes students aged 16-19 years old, or up to 24 for those with an EHC plan, who receive tuition and/or participate in academic, vocational, or pastoral activities delivered through the 16-19 Tuition Fund.

Theory of Change

As part of the scoping and design stage of the evaluation (detailed further in Chapter 2), the evaluation team developed a Theory of Change (ToC) for the 16-19 Tuition Fund. This describes how key inputs and activities were expected to result in the intended outcomes and impacts for institutions and students. The ToC was developed to inform the design of the evaluation and to support an assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the 16-19 Tuition Fund.

Figure 1 depicts the logic model for the 16-19 Tuition Fund. The arrows in the diagram represent the anticipated pathways whereby activities are expected to lead to outputs and then outcomes, providing a set of causal chains or hypotheses. The assumptions that underpin the model have been mapped with numbers in the diagram.

Inputs

The rationale for the 16-19 Tuition Fund (and National Tutoring Programme) is grounded in existing research and evidence, which shows that one-to-one and small group tuition can be highly effective in supporting learning outcomes. The Education Endowment Fund's (EEF) Learning and Teaching Toolkit summarises the evidence base for small group tuition as having 'moderate impact for low cost based on moderate evidence'.⁷ Based on 62 studies (across education phases), the average impact of small group tuition is four additional months' progress over the course of a year. However, evidence on small group tuition in post-16 settings is very limited meaning this evaluation will be an important addition to the existing evidence base.

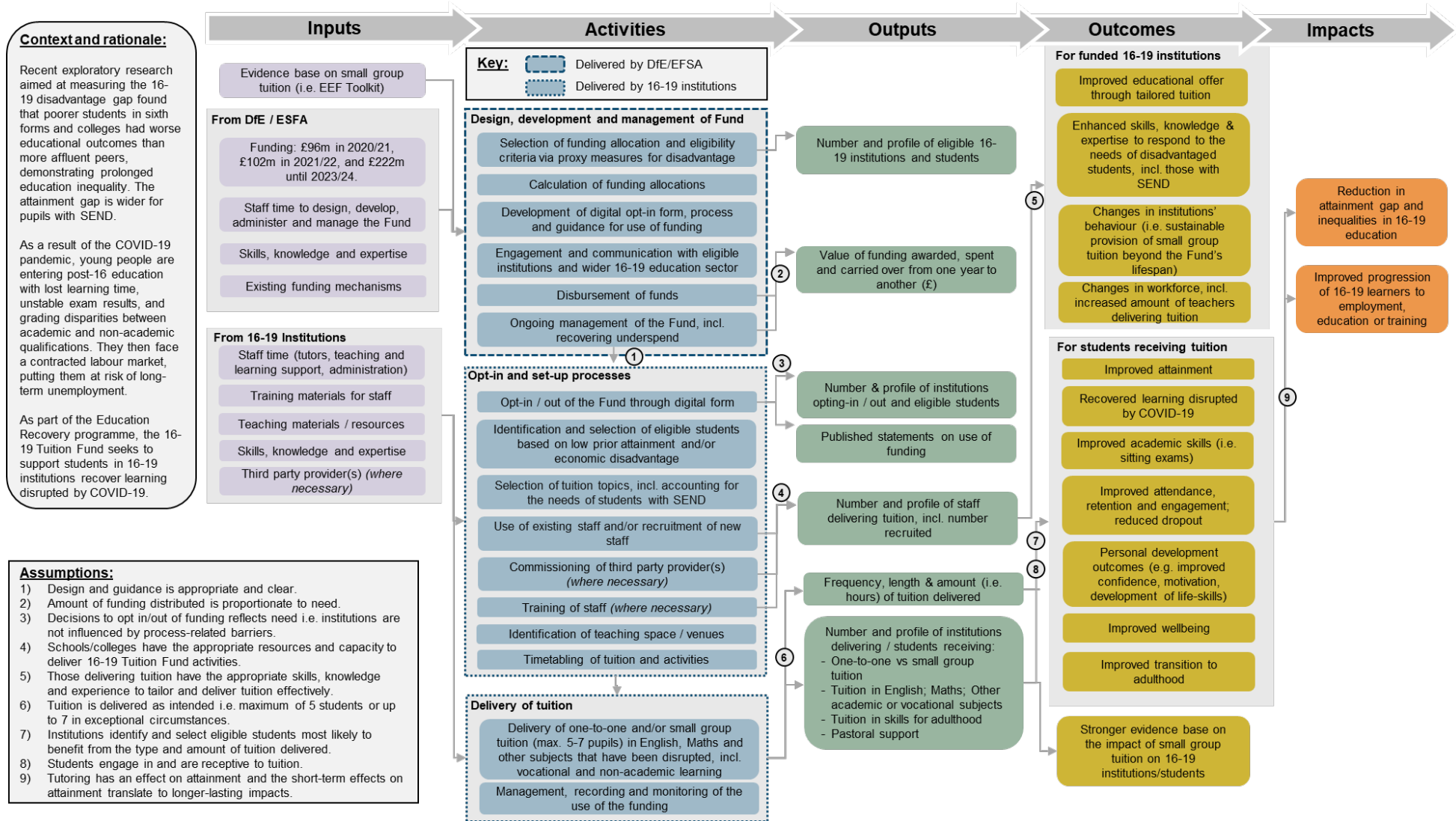
The guidance for the 16-19 Tuition Fund was informed by research findings. For example, findings have shown that smaller groups are generally more effective, with group sizes above six or seven students reducing effectiveness, and low attaining pupils particularly benefitting from small group tuition. At the same time, the 16-19 Tuition Fund offered significantly more flexibility in how institutions deliver tuition compared to findings that suggest that frequent sessions, three times a week or so, lasting up to an hour over about 10 weeks typically show the greatest impact on educational progress.

Inputs from the DfE and ESFA include the funding and skills, knowledge and expertise of staff to design, develop, administer and manage the Fund, as well as existing funding mechanisms that enable its distribution.

⁷ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/small-group-tuition>

Other inputs come in the form of staff time within 16-19 institutions to manage, organise and deliver tuition through the Fund, including from tutors, teaching and learning staff and wider support teams. Institutions also bring skills, knowledge and expertise, training materials and teaching materials and resources. Where necessary, some 16-19 institutions have brought in third party providers to deliver tuition through the Fund.

Figure 1: 16-19 Tuition Fund logic model



Source: Ipsos UK

Activities

The inputs to the Fund are used to deliver a series of activities, which can be grouped by those delivered by DfE/ESFA and those delivered by 16-19 institutions.

The DfE/ESFA have overall responsibility for the design, development and management of the 16-19 Tuition Fund including:

- Development of eligibility criteria for 16-19 institutions and students and calculation of funding allocations for institutions via proxy measures for disadvantage.
- Development and management of the opt-in process for the Fund, including the digital opt-in/opt-out form and associated processes and development of guidance for institutions on the use of funding.
- Engagement and communication with eligible organisations and the wider 16-19 education sector to raise awareness of the 16-19 Tuition Fund, encourage participation, respond to queries and gather feedback on the processes involved in the management and distribution of the Fund.
- Disbursement of funds to eligible institutions that have opted-in using existing funding mechanisms.
- Ongoing management and governance of the Fund, including recovering any underspend from institutions, strategic decision-making and planning and responding to queries from recipient organisations.

The 16-19 institutions are then responsible for opting in, setting up and delivering tuition. The ability of 16-19 institutions to do this is based on the assumption that the design of the Tuition Fund and guidance provided by the DfE/ESFA regarding eligibility criteria and opt-in/out processes is clear (Assumption 1). Institutions were expected to:

- Opt-in/out of the Fund via a dedicated digital form – this was introduced in the 2021/22 academic year to streamline and automate the processes involved in opting in/out of the Fund.
- Identify, engage and recruit eligible students to receive tuition based on low prior attainment and / or economic disadvantage.
- Select subject areas and types of activity to be delivered through the tuition, including accounting for the needs of students with SEND.
- Manage resourcing of the delivery of Tuition Fund activities through existing staff, recruitment of new staff, and/or commissioning and managing third-party provider(s) where necessary.

- Ensure that those delivering activities and support through the Fund have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience – providing training or additional support where necessary.
- Identify and source suitable teaching spaces or venues to deliver the tuition activities and support and timetabling of these activities.

Institutions receiving funding are also responsible for delivery of tuition, including:

- Delivery of one-to-one and/or small group tuition to groups of up to 5-7 pupils in English, maths and other subjects that have been disrupted, including vocational learning.
- Delivery of non-academic learning, such as pastoral support, for students with SEND.
- Managing, recording and monitoring the use of the funding, taking necessary steps to ensure alignment with the criteria for the funding and to ensure quality in delivery.

Outputs

The 16-19 Tuition Fund should generate a range of quantifiable outputs relating to the:

- Number and profile of eligible 16-19 institutions and students and, within those, the number and profile of institutions opting in or out.
- Value of funding awarded, spent, and carried over from 2020/21 to 2021/22.
- Institutions' published statements on their award of funding and intended use of this.
- Number and profile of staff delivering tuition, including number of staff recruited.
- Frequency, length and amount (i.e. in hours) of tuition delivered.
- Number and profile of institutions delivering / students receiving (i) one-to-one vs small group tuition; (ii) tuition in maths, English, and other academic or vocational subjects; (iii) tuition in skills for adulthood; (iv) pastoral support.

However, the achievement of these outputs is linked to several assumptions, including that:

- The amount of funding distributed to institutions is proportionate to the needs of students (Assumption 2)
- Institutions' decisions to opt-in/out of the Fund reflect their need and are not influenced by process-related barriers (Assumption 3)

- Schools and colleges have the appropriate resources and capacity to deliver the activities (Assumption 4)
- Tuition is delivered as intended with a maximum of five students or up to seven in exceptional circumstances (Assumption 6).

Outcomes

The activities and outputs delivered through the Fund, are expected to contribute to short and medium-term outcomes for 16-19 institutions opting into the Fund and for students receiving tuition. In order for intended outcomes to be realised, the model assumes that those delivering tuition have the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience (Assumption 5); institutions identify and select eligible students most likely to benefit from the type and amount of tuition being delivered (Assumption 7); and students engage in and are receptive to tuition (Assumption 8).

The anticipated outcomes for 16-19 institutions receiving funding include:

- Improved educational offer through tailored tuition.
- Enhanced skills, knowledge and expertise to respond to the needs of disadvantaged students, including those students with SEND.
- Changes in institutions' behaviour as a result of their participation, including sustaining the provision of small group tuition or other support activities beyond the Tuition Fund's lifespan (i.e. employing their own funds or other sources of funding).
- Changes in workforce, including an increased amount of people employed in the teaching sector due to increases in demand of teaching staff to deliver tuition, or an increase of teachers delivering tuition within institutions.

The anticipated outcomes for students receiving tuition include:

- Academic outcomes which include improved attainment, recovered learning disrupted by COVID-19, improved academic skills (such as sitting exams), improved attendance, retention and engagement, and reduced dropout.
- Non-academic outcomes relating to personal development (such as improved confidence, motivation and life-skills), wellbeing and improved transition to adulthood.

A final outcome expected through delivery of the Fund relates to the development of a stronger evidence base on the impact and effectiveness of small group tuition on 16-19 institutions and students.

Impacts

Finally, assuming that the activities delivered through the Tuition Fund contribute to improved attainment amongst students receiving support (Assumption 9), two longer-term impacts are expected:

- Reduction in the attainment gap and inequalities in 16-19 education.
- Improved progression of 16-19 learners to employment, education or training.

Risks

Consultations with stakeholders involved in the 16-19 Tuition Fund identified some potential risks to the ToC and the realisation of intended outcomes and impacts. These related to:

- Capacity of institutions to coordinate and manage the funding, as well as to deliver the tuition due to well-documented staff shortages, particularly within some vocational subjects.
- Access to high quality tutors with the relevant skills and experience who are able to deliver activities and support to the required quality, related to the above point around staff shortages.
- Access to appropriate spaces to deliver small group tuition, particularly for some vocational subjects (such as bricklaying), which require specialist venues and facilities.
- Eligible institutions do not opt-in to the Fund due to the perceived administrative burden associated with opting-in and managing the funding, a lack of awareness of the Tuition Fund and potential use of this (including for SEND students), having to manage underspend from 2020/21, or not feeling that recovery of lost learning is a priority (particularly if they already have a package of support in place to address this).
- Students most in need of tuition do not access this due to eligible institutions not opting-in to the Fund and/or due to low demand and take-up amongst eligible students. There was also some concern that this could arise from a misalignment between the way in which the funding is allocated and the eligibility criteria for support, which results in some institutions having more students who are eligible to receive tuition than they have attracted funding for.
- COVID-19 whereby high community transmission rates during the 2021/22 academic year could impact on the ability of students to attend tuition, as well as the capacity of institutions to deliver tuition as intended.

- Lack of additionality such that some institutions might use the funding to deliver activities and support that were already planned and would have gone ahead in the absence of the funding.

1.3. Structure of this document

The remainder of the document is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides detail on the methodology for the evaluation and specifically the IPE.
- Chapter 3 summarises the findings from the IPE on how the Tuition Fund was used by institutions, including how tuition was resourced, the range of subjects, and nature of the sessions (size, frequency, duration). (KEQ1)
- Chapter 4 details how institutions used the Tuition Fund to identify and support eligible students, including insights on engagement and perceived impact. (KEQ2)
- Chapter 5 reviews how the Tuition Fund can be improved in the future. (KEQ3)
- Chapter 6 concludes the report by summarising the key messages and recommendations.

2. Evaluation of the 16-19 Tuition Fund

The evaluation of the 16-19 Tuition Fund included an implementation and process evaluation (IPE) as well as an impact evaluation. The focus of the evaluation was the 2021/22 academic year. The evaluation aimed to answer six overarching key evaluation questions (KEQ).

The IPE aimed to answer the following three questions:

1. How has the Tuition Fund been used by institutions?
2. How has the Tuition Fund been supporting eligible students?
3. How can the Tuition Fund be improved for future years?

The impact evaluation, which will be reported separately, focused on the following three questions:

4. What is the impact of the Tuition Fund on educational attainment outcomes?
5. Does the impact of the Tuition Fund vary by subject?
6. Does the impact of the Tuition Fund differ by institution characteristics and student characteristics?

This chapter provides detail on the IPE methodology. The following three chapters are structured around each KEQ for the IPE.

2.1. Detailed IPE questions

Each of the three overarching KEQs had a set of sub-questions, which are detailed below.

1. How has the Tuition Fund been used by institutions?
 - a. What additional support did institutions use the Fund for?
 - i. What subjects were covered by the Fund?
 - ii. What activities were covered e.g. pastoral, enrichment?
 - b. How was the Fund spent?
 - i. Was the Fund spent on existing staff wages, bringing in new staff or third-party tuition?
 - ii. Has the Fund resulted in any changes to staff recruitment practices?

- iii. Was there any roll over or underspend from the Fund and how was this managed?
 - c. How did they deliver 1:1 or small group tuition in practice:
 - i. What size were the groups?
 - ii. How was this decided?
 - iii. How well did this work?
 - iv. How did they manage this day to day alongside usual teaching?
 - d. Who delivered the small group tuition?
 - i. How did institutions ensure staff had the appropriate skills/knowledge/experience?
 - ii. How did they ensure quality of provision?
 - iii. Did institutions use external tutoring services or internal staff?
- 2. How has the Tuition Fund been supporting eligible students?
 - a. Which students did institutions target funding towards, how were these students identified and why?
 - b. Which students have engaged most/least with small group tuition?
 - c. What barriers and enablers have students experienced around engaging with small group tuition? And how can these be overcome?
 - d. For those students who were most challenging to engage, what further support do they need? How would this best be delivered?
 - e. Do institutions feel that the right students were targeted? If not, why was that the case? Which other students could have been prioritised to receive the additional support?
 - f. What is the perceived impact of the support for institutions and students?
 - g. What is the perceived impact of the Tuition Fund on different types of students in terms of their attainment and addressing lost learning caused by Covid-19? How can this be demonstrated?
- 3. How can the Tuition Fund be improved for future years?
 - a. What barriers and opportunities did institutions face (if any) in providing the support from Tuition Fund? Were these resolved, and how?
 - b. What other areas of support do institutions feel they need to help students catch up with lost learning due to the pandemic?

2.2. Methodology

The IPE included three phases: first, a rapid scoping and design phase; second, the main data collection phase; and third, the analysis and triangulation stage.

Scoping and design

The evaluation began with an initial scoping and design phase to inform the development of a suite of data collection materials, establish data sharing arrangements, and undergo ethics review. The key activities undertaken to inform the evaluation design included:

- Reviewing relevant background documentation on the 16-19 Tuition Fund, including information shared with institutions about the Fund, covering how it can be used and the eligibility criteria for students, and opt-in/out templates.
- Reviewing the monitoring information collected during the opt-in/out process.
- Conducting eight familiarisation interviews with DfE and ESFA staff involved in the design of the Fund in March 2022.
- Developing the ToC for the 16-19 Tuition Fund included in Chapter 1. This was an iterative process incorporating insights from the above activities and collecting feedback during an online workshop with DfE and ESFA staff.
- Developing an Evaluation Framework mapping the research questions to the proposed methods and data sources (see Appendix A).

Scoping activities took place between February and April 2022.

Data collection

The main data collection phase consisted of four interlinked data collection strands.

Institution survey

The evaluation team invited institutions eligible for the 16-19 Tuition Fund for the 2021/22 academic year to take part in an online survey, including those who opted out. DfE provided email addresses for institutions using contact details from opt-in/out forms or using institutional email addresses in cases where institutions did not complete an online form to opt in or out. The sample included contact details for 2,487 institutions out of 2,506 eligible institutions. This included 1,567 institutions that opted in, 113 institutions that opted out, and 807 institutions who did not complete an online form. Duplicate contact details were removed for 83 institutions that opted in and 5 institutions that opted

out, which were due to instances where an academy group (or other group of providers) had a single contact. As such, a total of 2,399 institutions were invited to take part.

The email invite included a unique link to the online survey, and regular reminders were sent to institutions to encourage participation. The survey was in field for 10 weeks in total from 13th May to 22nd July 2022. The average response time was between 10 and 15 minutes.

A total of 254 institutions completed the online survey, yielding a response rate of approximately 11%. The majority of respondents (81%, 205) chose to opt into the Tuition Fund for the 2021/22 academic year, most of which (181) had also opted in for the 2020/21 academic year. While 49 respondents (19%) chose to opt out in the 2021/22 academic year, around half of them (26) had opted in for the previous year. As such, nine in ten survey respondents (91%, 231) opted into the Tuition Fund at least one year.

Most survey respondents were from academies (40%), colleges (20%) and local authority-maintained schools (13%). Remaining respondents included independent learning providers, free schools, special post-16 institutions (SPI), local authorities, universities, and independent schools. A breakdown of the institution survey respondents is provided in Appendix A.

The survey mainly captured quantitative close-ended responses, though there were a small number of open-ended questions for qualitative insights. Survey routing enabled questions tailored to those who opted in vs out. See Appendix B for the survey script.

Student survey

To gather the views and experiences of students who attended tuition, the evaluation team relied on institutions who opted into the Tuition Fund for the 2021/22 academic year to be gatekeepers. Using the email addresses supplied to DfE in opt-in forms, the evaluation team sent the weblink to the student survey to institutions and asked them to share this with students involved in tuition. The evaluation team provided a template email, short example text message, and poster with a QR code as options for institutions to share the link with students. The survey launched 6th June and closed 22nd July, totalling seven weeks in field. See Appendix B for the survey script.

A total of 491 students completed the student survey. Due to the nature of the recruitment approach, it is not possible to know how many students were invited to take part in the survey or calculate a response rate. A breakdown of the student survey sample is provided in Appendix A.

Case studies and student diaries

Case studies with 12 institutions that opted into the Tuition Fund were conducted between June and July 2022. Institutions were recruited through several routes:

- First, survey respondents that opted into the Tuition Fund were asked to provide their consent to be followed up regarding taking part in a case study. All survey respondents who provided consent were invited to take part in a case study.
- Second, reference to the case studies was included into a reminder for the institution survey to reach non-respondents.
- Third, a direct invite to take part in a case study was sent to a sample of 500 non-respondents, which were sampled to include a range of institution types, geographic locations, etc.

For each case study, researchers arranged introductory discussions with senior leaders to explain the purpose of the case study and identify potential participants. Researchers started by proposing one interview with a senior leader responsible for overseeing or managing the tuition, one to two interviews with teachers or tutors delivering tuition, and one focus group with students. The approach was intentionally flexible to suit each case study, for example, by offering one-to-one interviews with students if preferred.

In addition, 20 students taking part in case studies were invited to complete an online app-based diary over a two-week period while they received tuition and/or completed exams. Overall, five students from three institutions downloaded and created accounts with Ipsos AppLife but only four students from two institutions completed the tasks. Each day, students answered questions and follow-up prompts from moderators. The focus was on exploring what receiving small group tuition involved – where they go for this, how long it takes, what subjects they cover, how it makes them feel and what difference they think this makes (see Appendix A for a breakdown of the questions). Participants were also asked to share two video diaries (one per week). Participants were given £100 shopping vouchers as a thank you for their time and contribution.

Additional case studies with a further six institutions were delivered during November and December 2022. Institutions were recruited primarily from non-survey respondents and purposively sampled to improve the spread of case studies in terms of institution type and geographic location (see Appendix A for a breakdown of the case study institutions). These case studies encouraged participants to think about the previous academic year in its entirety given that the exam period was a common time for delivering tuition and their views on the perceived impact on students, taking consideration of exam results where possible. Senior leaders were also asked whether they opted into the 2022/23 academic

year and their rationale for this decision. The additional case studies did not incorporate online diaries with students.

In total, the 18 case studies included interviews and focus groups with:

- 18 senior leaders
- 14 teachers or tutors involved in delivering tuition
- 23 students who attended tuition

Management Information

The evaluation linked multiple datasets together to enable detailed interrogation of available information regarding the 16-19 Tuition Fund for the 2021/22 academic year. This included:

- **Survey sample data:** This data was provided by DfE and included institution names, contact details and UKPRN/URN, which enabled linking with other datasets to examine characteristics of eligible and opting-in institutions.
- **Institutions' opt-in responses:** This dataset was provided by DfE and included information such as institution name and type, whether they had previously opted in for 2020/21 and had carry over, and plans for using the 2021/22 funding.
- **16-19 Tuition Fund funding allocations:** This dataset is available online⁸ and includes the funding allocations for institutions that opted in.
- **Get Information about Schools (GIAS):** This dataset is available online⁹ and includes a wide range of variables about schools, colleges and other 16-19 institutions. For example, this included institution type, geographic location, number of pupils and so on.
- **Institution survey data:** Linking survey responses enabled a closer look at the data using information from the above data sources.

Analysis and triangulation

The approach to analysis sought to identify findings, themes and patterns within individual data sources. This was followed by triangulating findings from across data sources to add further breadth and depth in explaining findings, as well as providing greater confidence by validating findings from separate sources.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

⁹ <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>

Quantitative data analysis

The institution and student surveys yielded two raw datasets with individual level-responses to the questions. For each survey, the data was analysed using cross-tabulation to look at the results by total respondents and a series of segments. This included looking at findings by institution characteristics such as geography, size, and type, and student characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and SEND status (based on self-reported data). In some cases, this required linking datasets, for example, geographic location came from the GIAS dataset. By cutting the data into meaningful groups, the analysis involved looking for any notable differences in results across segments. Most of the analysis was descriptive though cross-tabs included significance testing to compare groups with segments.

Qualitative data analysis

Audio recordings¹⁰ from qualitative interviews and focus groups were transcribed to ensure accuracy. Researchers analysed transcripts using the industry gold-standard CAQDAS¹¹ tool, NVivo. A series of fieldwork team discussions and analysis sessions informed the development of a coding framework, which guided the process for reviewing, sorting and coding raw data into themes on Nvivo. Subsequent team analysis sessions focused on interpreting the findings, which focused on drawing out findings that spanned across case studies.

In addition, researchers analysed findings at a case-study level and drafted case study summaries. This enabled a closer examination of the relationships between how tuition was delivered, what worked well or less well, and perceptions among senior leaders, teachers/tutors, and students.

Data triangulation

This stage of the analysis focused on identifying findings, themes and patterns across multiple data sources to address the IPE questions with greater confidence in the findings. This was implemented through team discussions and analysis sessions and mapping data from different sources based on common themes.

2.3. Methodological limitations

There were several key challenges that should be considered when interpreting the findings in this report. These include:

¹⁰ Participants were explicitly asked for their consent to record interviews.

¹¹Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis

- **Sample sizes:** There were multiple challenges in engaging institutions in data collection. For example, available email addresses were often not for senior leaders with oversight or management responsibilities for the 16-19 Tuition Fund. For institutions that opted in, these included institutional or administrative email addresses or contact details for business or finance managers. For those who opted out, only institutional email addresses were available. This meant that some invites would not have reached the best person to complete the survey. This had knock-on effects for the student survey and case studies as well given that we were dependent on institutions for recruitment to these. As such, the sample sizes across data collection strands were lower than targets and limited some sub-group analysis.
- **Selection / response bias:** While all eligible institutions with available contact details were invited to take part in the institution survey, only a relatively small sample took part. While we can report on how the sample compares with the overall eligible or opted-in set of institutions (see Appendix A), it is possible that there are unobserved differences among the sample that mean the views are not representative of non-respondents.
- **Self-report bias:** Self-report bias refers to differences between self-reported and true values of the same measure. This report includes perception-based evidence on the implementation and impact of the 16-19 Tuition Fund, and these findings should be treated with caution recognising this represents the subjective views of participants.
- **Administrative vs self-reported data:** Building on the point above, the evaluation team identified discrepancies between self-reported survey data and administrative data (e.g. GIAS) regarding institution characteristics, for example, institution type. While this was generally inconsequential, there were a small number of instances where respondents reported that they had opted in or out of the funding that did not match the opt-in data from DfE and funding allocation data. Due to the routing in the survey, these respondents were asked questions according to their self-reported response. The analysis included in this report uses the data from DfE and therefore a small number of respondents are excluded from the base sizes for some questions.
- **Timing of fieldwork:** We know from the case studies with institutions that a notable proportion of the tuition delivered through the funding was concentrated in the summer term. This was partly due to the funding not being released until December 2021 but also because many focussed the tuition on preparing students for exams. The institution survey was launched in early May when most institutions were still delivering tuition. As a result, there may have been some

underreporting of activity delivered through the Tuition Fund given that delivery was still underway. Equally, given that the student survey and case studies were conducted mostly before or during the exam period, the views from students on the impact on their attainment was speculative. More generally, the timing was sometimes a barrier for engaging participants in fieldwork.

3. Use of funding

This chapter begins with an overview of the funding allocations at the programme-level to provide insights about the types of institutions opting in vs out and the spread of funding allocations. It then provides key findings from the primary data collection on how institutions used the 16-19 Tuition Fund (KEQ1). In line with the proposed sub-questions, the chapter highlights findings relating to:

- How tuition was resourced, for example, through existing staff, recruiting new staff or commissioning an external third-party provider.
- What subjects and activities were covered in tuition.
- How many students were in tuition groups and views on how this worked.
- How institutions ensured the quality of tuition.

3.1. Distribution of funding

There were 2,506 eligible institutions in the 2021/22 academic year, of which 1,567 institutions opted into the Fund (62%). The institutions that opted in represented approximately 94% of the funding available, or nearly £96m of the £102m available. Of those opting in, most (89%, 1,392) had also opted in for 2020/21, and 175 institutions had not opted in previously. Around 500 institutions carried over funding from 2020/21.

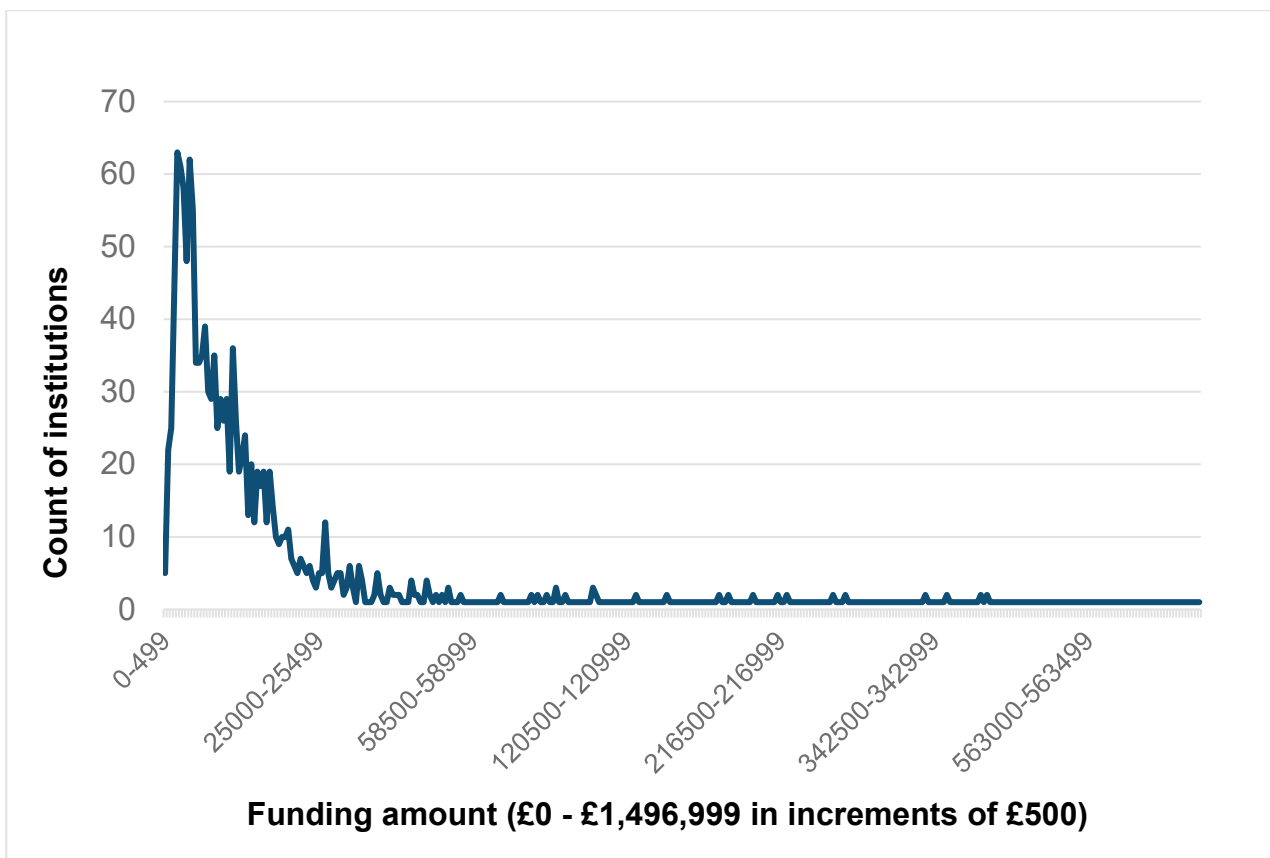
Academies were the dominant institution type in terms of those eligible and that opted in, followed by colleges, local authority-maintain schools, and free schools. Over half of the institutions that opted in were academies (896), followed by colleges such as General FE and Tertiary and sixth form colleges (215), school sixth forms in local authority-maintained schools (206), and free schools including Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges (108). Combined, these four groups made up 91% of the institutions that opted in.

Looking at the proportion of those opting in broken down by institution type, academies and local authority-maintained schools were generally less likely to opt in compared with colleges. Around three in five eligible academies (61%) and local authority-maintained schools (57%) opted into the Tuition Fund, whereas almost all eligible colleges (96%) opted in. This suggests colleges were overall more receptive and likely to opt in.

According to the available funding allocation data, the Tuition Fund distributed £95,883,769 across 1,566 institutions for the 2021/22 academic year (representing 94% of the available funding). The funding amounts ranged from £180 to nearly £1.5m,

highlighting significant variation across institutions. While the average was £61,228, the median was £10,478, which suggested that the average was skewed by a smaller number of institutions that received large funding amounts. Looking at the distribution of funding, as shown in Figure 2, most institutions (71%) received funding up to £20,000. Breaking this down by institution type shows that those receiving larger amounts were typically colleges – for example, all allocations of £500,000 or more were for colleges. Evidence from the institution survey and case studies found that the amount of funding was a key motivation regarding decisions on whether to opt in or out so this likely explains, at least in part, why colleges had higher rates of opting in.

Figure 2: 2021/22 funding allocations



Source: [16 to 19 allocation data: 2021 to 2022 academic year](#)

Resourcing tuition

The opt-in form asked a series of questions about how institutions intended to use the funding. When asked about how tuition would be resourced, using teaching staff was the most common delivery model intended (67%) though a good proportion of institutions also intended to use learning support staff (40%) and third-party providers (26%). However, at the time of completing the opt-in forms, at least a quarter of institutions were

still deciding how to resource tuition and whether they would use teaching staff (26%), learning support staff (33%) or a third party provider (39%).

According to the institution survey results, tuition was most frequently delivered by permanently employed teachers/lecturers with three in four (76%) respondents selecting this option. Institutions also reported using (which sometimes involved recruiting) teaching assistants (29%), former teacher/lecturers (17%), supply teachers (13%) and trainee teachers (12%) – all of whom were more likely to have existing relationships with the institution. Other examples from case studies included recruiting alumni and learning coaches, who supported the development of study skills, including students' time management, organisational, essay-writing and note taking skills.

Around one in five (20%) used an external tutoring agency, such as [MyTutor](#), either as the core delivery model or in combination with delivery led by staff. Senior leaders from institutions that used external tutoring agencies found that a combination of internal and external resources helped ensure that they had sufficient capacity for students and could cover any timetabling gaps. For one, this also meant that tutoring could be delivered on a one-to-one basis which gave students ample flexibility to arrange sessions.

Where we had to get some extra additionality was mathematics. Mathematics was tightly staffed. We have about 1,000 students doing maths here and about 13 tutors. There wasn't enough wriggle room to be able to have enough small groups. If you've got in the region of nearly 400 disadvantaged students in scope, trying to do that many small groups is near impossible [...] we decided to go with a [tutor] company. – *Senior leader, Sixth Form College*

In case studies, senior leaders explained decisions regarding resourcing. For many, using existing staff, including those identified for the previous year of the Tuition Fund, was a practical option if it was possible alongside teaching commitments. The reasons for this included that existing or retired staff:

- Had relationships with students, which supported them in their ability to understand and assess the needs of students. This was also perceived to facilitate student engagement. Linked to this, one senior leader noted that third party providers often deliver sessions online while their preference was face-to-face to support the development of relationships between tutors and students.
- Know the curriculum and teaching approaches within the institution (e.g. pedagogical approaches, specific models). They also had access to teaching materials, which meant they could 'pre-teach' content ahead of classes.

- Had specific skills that would otherwise be difficult to recruit. This was especially true for vocational courses.

We approached the teachers for those vocational practical subjects, and we did those within the holidays, so we set up a timetable within the holidays for those students. The only issue with that is where we had to have really small groups, we couldn't target as many students within those holiday periods, because they're only for a certain amount of time. – *Senior leader, Academy*

- Were generally easier to mobilise or recruit once funding allocations were known in September 2021 and/or funding was received from December 2021 onwards. Some interviewees described significant challenges with recruiting a new tutor or staff member due to the timeframes. However, once recruited, institutions were keen to continue arrangements – for example, from the previous year of Tuition Fund or looking ahead to next year.

Last year, we employed learning coaches in very specific areas. A lot of them were previous graduates and alumni from the college who were between teaching qualification or finishing. Some of them had just finished. [...] It's been a really, really cost-effective way of using the Fund, because it's hit the maximum number of students and because we're not using teaching staff. – *Senior leader, Sixth Form College*

It's really good because we've got 2 [tutors] coming back in September, hoping to do the funding again, who were a real hits with the students and the students felt very supported by them. – *Senior leader, Academy*

- Wanted additional hours added to their contract, such as an extra day or half of a day. One senior leader described how their college looked at utilisation reports to identify potential opportunities for targeting existing staff.

Overall, decisions around resourcing appeared successful as most institution survey respondents (94%) agreed that staff delivering tuition had the appropriate skills and expertise required. According to the case study interviews with senior leaders and tutors, institutions selected experienced staff and tutors so that very little, if any, training was provided. Some institutions provided onboarding and induction for any new staff or tutors to provide an overview of the teaching programme, the impact of the pandemic such as knowledge lost and key gaps, what skills were needed, safeguarding, and

recommendations for keeping students engaged. In one case, the tutor shadowed teachers to get up to speed on how they use platforms such as Jamboard and Microsoft Teams.

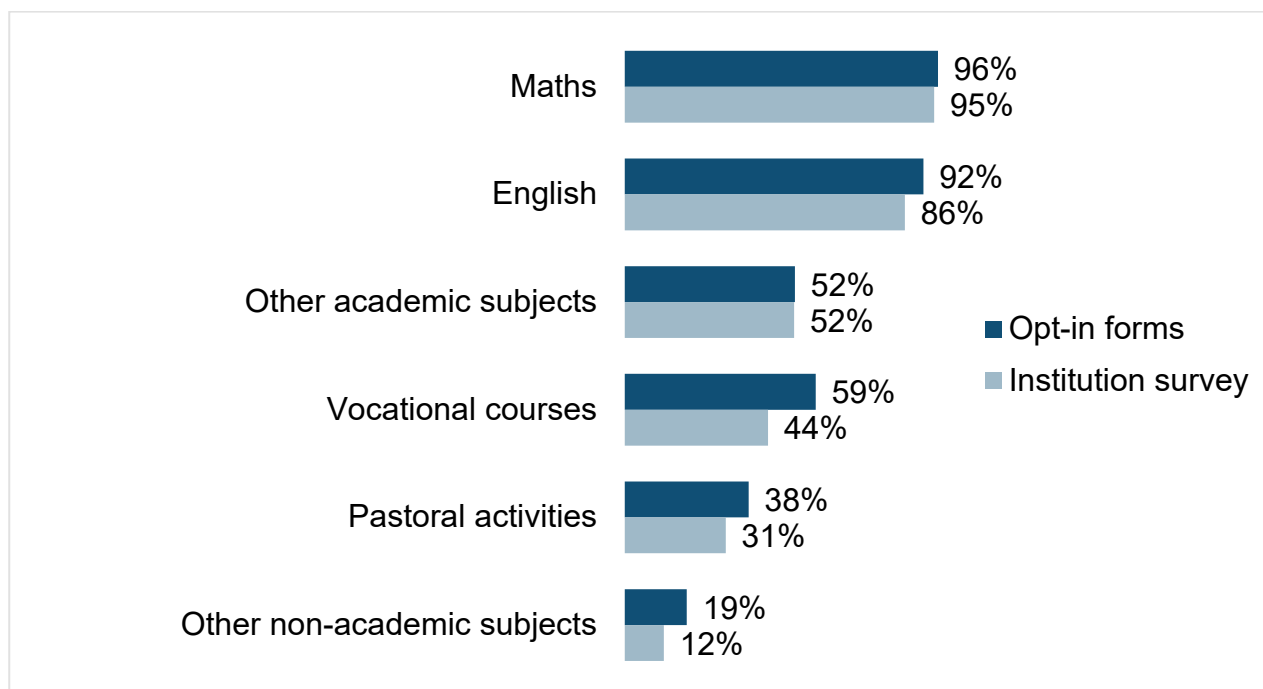
Institution survey respondents were less confident about whether their institution had sufficient capacity to deliver Tuition Fund activities, with three in five (61%) agreeing and more than a quarter (27%) disagreeing. A similar proportion (65%) reported that the workload of teaching staff increased as a result of delivering tuition. Evidence from the case studies highlighted that many staff were taking on more hours to deliver tuition, which sometimes involved holding sessions at weekends or during half-terms. Furthermore, staff interviewed highlighted that there were resourcing requirements above and beyond delivering tuition, such as following up with students to keep them engaged.

It's not difficult in the fact that we can't timetable them. [...] It's having someone there to oversee it and make sure that when they've forgotten, you can have someone there to chase them up, and making sure that you're keeping that momentum going. They know it's there for their good, but also they're still students at the end of the day. They need little reminders and need a little bit of encouragement sometimes. – *Senior leader, Academy*

3.2. Subjects and activities

A comparison of opt-in forms for all institutions and the institution survey results found large consistency between what subjects institutions intended to use the funding for and what they actually delivered based on the survey sample. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the subjects covered among survey respondents compared to opt-in forms. Almost all institutions used the funding to deliver tuition in more than one subject or course. Student respondents were split similarly across those who attended tuition for one subject (44%) and those who attended tuition for multiple subjects (48%).

Figure 3: Subjects intended / covered by tuition



Base: Institutions with opt-in forms (n=1,567); Institution survey respondents who opted in (n=214)

Source: Opt-in forms and Institution survey

When asked in interviews how decisions were made about which subjects or activities to deliver, senior leaders generally described two approaches. First, some institutions looked at it from a wide lens to identify subject areas where it was known that a substantive population of students were struggling. Then, targeting that subject, they identified students who met the eligibility criteria and needed catch-up support. Second, institutions started by identifying students who met the eligibility criteria and then assessed which subjects they needed most support with. Regardless of the approach taken, decisions were also dependent on the ability to resource and timetable tuition in those subjects for those students. Overall, it appeared that institutions were able to deliver tuition in the subject they wanted to but it took time to make arrangements.

Very straightforward for me from a curriculum point of view, very straightforward to match subjects, students, numbers, staff and put that together. Not a massive task but nonetheless a granular one. –
Senior leader, Sixth Form College

Really challenging because you've got to try and find a timetabled session where you've got all the students off at the same time, in a room that we are not using. So, we've had to take away social space to be able to put this on, which in itself, is quite a challenge and then

we haven't got a huge amount of flexibility in how the make-up of those small groups are made up because it all depends on who's available when. It's been a bit of a puzzle. – *Senior leader, Sixth Form College*

Academic subjects

Looking at the opt-in forms, almost all institutions intended to deliver tuition in maths or English. Findings from the institution survey confirmed that maths and English remained a priority for institutions who opted in with almost all respondents reporting that they used the funding to provide tuition in maths (95%) and/or English (86%). Maths and English were also the most common subjects among students who completed the student survey with more than half reporting that they attended tuition on these subjects (56% and 52% respectively). Tuition for Level 2 English and maths was most common (reported by 70% and 76% of institution survey respondents who opted in) followed by Foundation and/or Level 1 (English: 37%; math: 41%) and then Level 3 (English: 29%; math: 36%).

More than half (52%) indicated when opting in that they intended to deliver tuition in other academic subjects, and just over half (52%) of survey respondents indicated that they delivered tuition in other academic subjects. The most common subjects included chemistry, biology, psychology, physics and sociology. This was highly consistent with the findings from the student survey where biology, chemistry and psychology were the top three academic subjects (besides maths and English).

The box below provides a case study example on how a sixth form college was able to use the funding flexibly across a wide range of subjects to meet students' needs.

Case study example 1

A sixth form college in North West England with approximately 2,500 students used the funding to increase the hours of existing tutors already working at the college and to cover the costs of external tutoring companies run by ex-students to deliver extra tuition. Overall, more than 1,800 students received tuition in different subjects, including English, maths, languages, as well as 18 other academic subjects. Tuition groups were between four and six students and ranged from half an hour to two-hour sessions, the majority of which were during college hours.

The size of tuition group was considered to work effectively to support students and help them get back up to speed with course content. Small groups benefited both staff and students, as tutors had more time to focus on the needs of each individual.

Vocational courses

The proportion of institution survey respondents delivering tuition in vocational subjects was somewhat lower than expectations based on the proportion of institutions indicating that they intended to in opt-in forms (59%), though this was still a notable focus for more than two in five respondents (44%). Tuition for Health and Social Care was most frequently reported vocational subject by both institutions and students. Other key areas included sport and digital technology, childcare, and building and construction.

Non-academic subjects

Around one in five institutions (19%) intended to deliver tuition on non-academic subjects according to opt in forms and a slightly smaller proportion (12%) reported that this was a focus in the institution survey, including study skills, exam preparation, and employability skills. Findings from the student survey and case studies also consistently highlighted the importance of tuition support on exam preparation, study skills, and employability skills. Staff interviewees described how barriers to learning and attainment in specific subjects were often related to limitations in general organisational, time management, study and exam skills. Senior leaders and teaching staff described how skills development was particularly hindered by the pandemic. As such, it is likely that a significantly larger proportion of institutions were embedding this focus into tuition on specific academic or vocational subjects.

What we've done is we've designed a 6 week course, which is what we call a studentship course, and it covers those fundamental study skills that students are particularly lacking as they come to sixth form. There's a lot in there about time management, organisational skills, note taking, how to revise, how to structure your own learning, how to be an independent learner. – *Senior leader, Sixth Form College*

Pastoral activities

Over a third of institutions (38%) intended to deliver pastoral activities according to opt-in forms and just under a third (31%) reported doing so in the institution survey. These included activities to improve confidence, engagement, mental health, and general wellbeing. For example, some provided mentoring or coaching whilst others offered specific catch-up support for students with SEND. Interviewees were very aware of the toll that the pandemic had taken on students' mental health and actively sought to address related issues around stress and anxiety.

Pastoral-based support was also a focus for support students with SEND, including special post-16 institutions. The box below includes an example of one specialist college that delivered pastoral activities.

Case study example 2

A specialist college for young people in West Midlands with approximately 30 students with learning disabilities and healthcare used the funding to put on additional classes, such as music and art, where the focus was on students' interaction and participation. Existing teachers and carers provided the additional classes, but the college also hired a graffiti artist, a music therapist and a company that delivered drama sequences that focused on students' communication. All 31 students went on a trip to the Midlands Arts Centre where they were able to interact with more people, increasing a sense of community, lacking in the pandemic. School staff felt that the additional classes and trip organised with the funding awarded allowed students to achieve greater social interaction and communication.

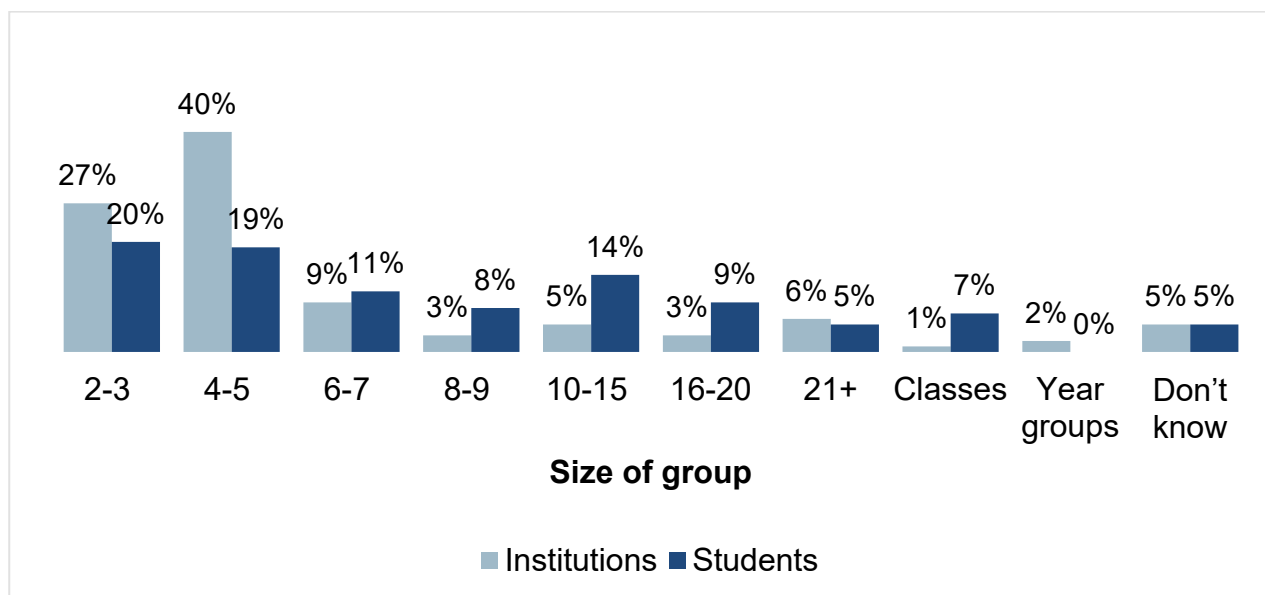
The great thing with a lot of these organisations that come in, it breaks down a lot of barriers, stereotypes. These guys benefit from the interaction, it builds up their social skills, their communication. It's just brilliant. – *Carer*

3.3. Group size

According to the data in opt-in forms and institution survey, most institutions delivered both one-to-one and small group tuition sessions. Half (50%) of the survey respondents reported tailoring this decision to students so that some students received one-to-one support while others attended groups. A quarter (26%) reported that students typically have both one-to-one and small group sessions. Another quarter delivered only one-to-one (10%) or group (14%) sessions.

Among those delivering tuition in groups, most institutions (76%) reported group sizes of 2 to 7 students, in line with the 16-19 Tuition Fund guidance. However, one in five (20%) reported delivering tuition to groups larger than this. The most common group size was 4 to 5 students (see Figure 4). Furthermore, responses from the student survey suggested that a significant proportion of students (43%) attended sessions groups larger than 7 students.

Figure 4: Group size reported by institutions and students



Base: Institution survey respondents delivering tuition in groups (n=193); Student survey respondents who attended group sessions (n=366)

Source: Institution and student surveys

Unfortunately, it was not clear from the survey the context of these larger groups. Respondents were allowed to select multiple options and therefore it is possible that most tuition was delivered in small groups but they also held an assembly on one occasion. In interviews, staff and students typically described one-to-one sessions and small groups of 2 to 3 students, but usually no more than 6 students. There was some explanation that group size could vary by subject. For example, because maths and English were common subjects for tuition, these were more likely to be delivered in larger groups compared to less common subjects or courses.

Another explanation for these survey responses could be because institutions brought together larger groups of students with multiple tutors, as explained by this senior leader:

I've got other members of staff across the college where we capitalised on the small print where it said, 'You can have students up to 7 but you can have 14 if the room allows, but then you need 2 tutors'. [...] So we've got 2 tutors with 14 but split across a large computer room. [...] But then, on that note, some areas we did a rotation basis. Let's say you've got 21 students in a group, you'd have 7 for 4 weeks, the next 7 for another 4 weeks, and then the following 7 for another 4 weeks, and then it'd start again. – *Senior leader, General FE and Tertiary College*

A student from the same institution corroborated this.

When we had the break up from college, when we had that 2 days, the first day we had between 10 and 13 students in the classroom. But next day you have 5 of us and some of them came just once. – *Student, General FE and Tertiary College*

As such, the survey may not have been able to successfully capture the nuances of student-to-tutor ratios.

Findings from the case studies were positive about the benefits of delivering tuition in small groups (e.g. up to 5 students per group). In particular, staff and students both recognised the value of working in smaller groups because it facilitated behaviour management and ability to focus:

What I really like is being able to teach content without having to worry about behaviour management, especially in small groups you can really just focus on actual teaching. – *Tutor, Academy*

It was good having a controlled environment with extra people there to support you and to help motivate you, but also to help you academically. – *Student, General FE and Tertiary College*

Some interviewees thought the groups worked best when they included students with similar needs. Senior leaders generally thought that small groups were an effective way of targeting support for students who fall behind for a range of reasons.

Could you imagine if every student had the opportunity to have a small group once every week, or every other week, just to do something that they didn't get, or weren't that confident, or had missed at school? That would be brilliant. – *Senior leader, General FE and Tertiary College*

Because it was so individualised, they could ask me things for themselves, nobody around. Very often students who fall into that category [meeting the criteria] are not very forthcoming about speaking up about what they need, and they didn't have to worry about anybody else. – *Tutor, Academy*

3.4. Delivery

Frequency and duration

When asked in surveys how frequently tuition sessions took place, the most frequent response was weekly among both institutions (50%) and students (45%) followed by several times a week (32% and 30% respectively). Sessions that lasted 1 to 2 hours were also most common, which was supported by the case studies as well. The length of sessions varied by subject, for example, longer sessions for vocational courses.

Generally, they are around an hour long for our English and maths. For our Science guys, they were running a 2-hour workshop because it would include some practical stuff as well. Again, Early Years and Health and Social Care, the vocational stuff was a lot more assignment-based rather than prep for an exam or revision of topics for an exam and so forth. Their sessions are longer, generally a couple of hours. – *Senior leader, Agricultural and Horticultural College*

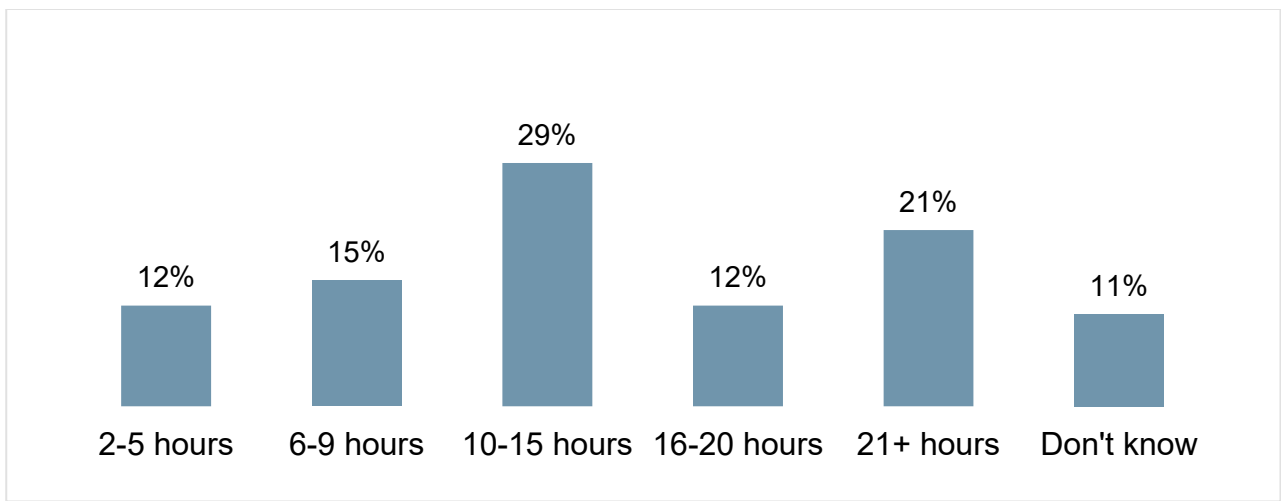
Around three in four student survey respondents thought that the frequency (76%) and length (72%) of their tutoring sessions were about right. This suggests that institutions appropriately judged the amount of support to provide. In interviews, staff explained that sessions that were 45 minutes to 1 hour were often easier to schedule alongside timetables and were better for students' concentration. On the other hand, some students in interviews said that they would have preferred sessions longer than 1 hour and more frequent than weekly. Only a small number of case studies included sessions longer than 2 hours. In one case, half-day sessions were delivered outside of term time, such as half-term holidays, with an intensive approach to exam preparation and revision. However, some students described how they found it difficult to maintain focus during long sessions.

Institution survey respondents estimated the average number of hours a student received in total. Responses varied but most respondents estimated 10 to 15 hours (see Figure 5). The case studies provided examples of how the total amount of time per student varied and largely depended on whether tuition was delivered as a drop-in session for students or a more formal programme of support.

We've delivered about 9,898 hours and that's over 741 students. That averages out about 13 hours per student, but some students have got much more. – *Senior leader, General FE and Tertiary College*

Some students are just dipping in and out of that support, so they might have just 1 or 2 weeks where they're going for an extra session. Other students will be on a regular weekly programme of support. It's all really dependent on the student and what the teachers have identified as being their need. [...] Our teachers have identified students who would really benefit from an intensive, 5-week block of support, and so students have 2 hourly sessions each week in their subject with MyTutor. – Senior leader, *Academy*

Figure 5: Accumulated hours of tuition per student



Base: Institution survey respondents who opted in (n=214)

Source: Institution survey

Mode and location

Most institution survey respondents (62%) delivered tuition sessions in-person only, but some provided tuition online only (12%) or a mix of face-to-face and online (23%). Three in four (74%) student survey respondents reported that sessions took place in a classroom and were satisfied with the location of their tutoring sessions. According to case studies, sessions took place at a range of different times, including morning and afternoon sessions that worked around core lessons, weekends, and holidays. Where possible, institutions sought to schedule sessions during free time in students' timetables, for example between lessons. Timetabling for one-to-one sessions was generally easier than scheduling sessions for groups.

Interviewees, including both staff and students, preferred in-person sessions over online sessions where possible. One senior leader described how they could better monitor the

quality if the sessions were face-to-face in the college, while others decided face-to-face would be more impactful for students.

I didn't want them to do it online, I wanted it to have more of the impact of face-to-face, and have the students build up those relationships. I felt like they'd had enough online, and I didn't feel that was going to have the impact that it desired. We wanted to spend the Fund wisely to have an impact, not just to do it online. – *Senior leader, Academy*

I found both of them [online and face-to-face sessions] really productive and useful. But online, it was quite difficult, because you can't really put your hand up and be like, 'I need help.' There's a Google Chat in there where you could send a message and they'd see it, but it's not really as helpful, because it's not face to face. Whereas my face-to-face tutor, it was probably better for me just because I could put up my hand, they could see what I was struggling with and help me with that. It was probably a lot better as well. Don't get me wrong, the teaching online was brilliant, but I think face-to-face is just better when it comes to learning for me, personally. – *Student, Agricultural and Horticultural College*

However, staff sometimes opted for online sessions for practical reasons. For example, in one case study, students were typically in college 3 to 4 days a week and tuition sessions were delivered when students were not in college face-to-face. The tutor interviewed also described the convenience of online sessions as an advantage as well as the fact that some students were still struggling with anxiety returning to face-to-face teaching.

Regardless of mode, sessions were often activity-based and discussion-based. Examples from case studies include writing exercises, mock exams, focusing on particular models of learning, or going through content in advance of the whole class. The latter approach was highlighted by students as a way to make them feel more confident in class and engage more actively.

3.5. Monitoring quality

Based on the case study interviews with senior leaders, systems for monitoring the 16-19 Tuition Fund varied significantly as there was no set way to do this apart from flagging which students received tuition in the annual return data for the National Pupil Database

or Individualised Learner Record. Most institution survey respondents monitored delivery and its quality by:

- Monitoring of students receiving tuition.
- Tracking students' attainment outcomes.
- Collecting feedback from students (including feedback questionnaires), tutors, and teachers.

For example, in case studies, senior leaders described how they carried out their usual quality assurance processes, such as reviewing and discussing lesson plans, observing lessons, and monitoring registers and attendance. Some also described using line management arrangements to check in and team meetings to discuss progress. This helped identify any overarching challenges or specific issues with a student.

We have team meetings to discuss how it's going and what we feel is working and isn't working, and to make sure that the tuition is relevant and of a good quality. And sometimes it happens that there's a student that just doesn't gel with a certain tutor, so having meetings and being able to talk about that [...] and say, "Okay look, this person, I'm not getting anywhere with, I don't know what's going on, can we move them to another tutor and see how that works?" That works well. – *Senior leader, Agricultural and Horticultural College*

Overall, institution survey respondents were satisfied with the quality of the tuition (91%) and how it aligned with the curriculum (89%), as well as the relationships between tutors and students (89%).

Case Study A

Case Study A is a secondary school and sixth form located in an urban area with over approximately 1,500 students, including 300+ sixth form students. The school is part of a Trust which collectively offers over 40 A Level and vocational subjects across two campuses. The school first applied for and received the 16-19 Tuition Fund in the 2021-22 academic year.

The pandemic impacted students in several ways. Students' subject knowledge was behind where it should have been, whilst students of practical-based subjects, such as Engineering and Design, had missed opportunities to develop necessary practical skills. Disruptions both inside and outside schools caused by the pandemic also negatively impacted students' social and personal development. When schools reopened, student and teacher isolation and sickness meant that students' education continued to be disrupted. The school applied to the 16-19 Tuition Fund in the 2021-22 academic year because they wanted to support their students the best they could to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

***It was definitely harder in the pandemic because you weren't face-to-face with teachers. [With online lessons] you can only gain so much from what they're saying, you can't ask as many one-on-one questions."* – Student**

How was the funding used?

The Fund was used to recruit three tutors to deliver face-to-face maths, English and science tuition weekly in small groups starting in February 2022. It was also used to increase staff hours for existing vocational subject teachers to deliver practical sessions during school holidays from Easter 2022. The rationale behind these decisions was that, whilst new tutors delivering weekly tuition would quickly develop rapport and understanding of students' needs, existing teachers already knew students and their development needs, meaning practical sessions would be tailored and targeted.

In total, funding was used to deliver tuition to 85 students. The school spent all of their 2021-22 funding and have opted into the Fund for the 2022-23 academic year.

What difference did the Tuition Fund make for students?

For students receiving tuition in maths, English and science, improving their grades was a key reason for taking part and those spoken to thought they had performed better in their exams because of tuition. Tuition was tailored to the students' individual development needs meaning sessions would focus on developing core skills, improving

subject knowledge (often for content that their classes had moved on from) or finetuning exam skills, whichever the student needed most. By being in small groups (usually one-to-ones), students could ask as many questions as they needed and the immediate, tailored feedback to their work helped them understand their own development needs necessary to make quick progress.

***Well, instantly, my grades improved in English. [My tutor] was not teaching me the content, he was teaching me how to write. [...] That's what I struggled with."* – Student**

For students of vocational subjects, catch-up sessions provided opportunities to develop missing practical skills necessary for their course. By being delivered by their usual teachers, students were able to make rapid progress as their teacher understood their development needs and had existing rapport.

Students and tutors highlighted how tuition had positive non-academic impacts on students. One tutor noted that over the course of tuition some students became visibly more confident and more willing to share their ideas, whilst similarly, one student said they felt more confident asking questions in class as a result of receiving tuition.

***[I] ask more questions in class [now] because you're asking so many in the tutoring session that you don't even notice [during class]."* – Student**

What difference did the Tuition Fund make for the institution, staff and tutors?

Overall, the Fund improved the school's educational offer to students resitting and/or behind in their subjects. Feedback from students also highlighted how valuable the tuition had been for them. Because of this, the school has opted-in to the Fund for the 2022-23 academic year.

***There were real positives coming out of [the tuition including] feedback from the students. It was a really good experience, and had a positive impact [...] so why wouldn't we [apply for next year]?"* – School Leader**

For tutors, delivering tuition resulted in high job satisfaction. Delivering to small groups meant that behaviour management was not an issue like in a regular classroom and therefore tutors could just focus on teaching. Similarly, the freedom and flexibility given to deliver tuition was professionally rewarding as it gave tutors opportunities improve their skills knowledge and to best support students.

What I really like is being able to teach content without having to worry about behaviour management, especially in small groups you can really just focus on actual teaching” – Tutor

What were three key lessons learnt?

1. Recruiting tutors to deliver face-to-face tuition was a greater challenge and more time-consuming than anticipated. The resource required and timeframes to plan and launch the tuition meant that maths, English and science tuition were largely separate from their subject departments, with existing department staff not particularly involved. It was also noted that delivery required more day-to-day project management time than was anticipated. In the next year of the Fund, the school plans to better embed and integrate tuition and tutors within departments and devolve responsibilities amongst more school staff.
2. The school’s promotion of tuition focused on the positive impact that tuition would have on students’ progress and grades, though it was identified a small number of students did not engage due to anxiety and their mental health. In the next year of the Fund, the school plans to prioritise how better to engage these students to ensure all students who need tuition access it.
3. The Fund will have a positive long-term impact on the school’s educational offer for maths, English and science as materials and resources created by tutors were kept by the schools to support GCSEs students and those resitting in the future.

4. Student experience and perceived impact

This chapter provides key findings from the primary data collection on how institutions identified and selected students for tuition and the perceived impact of tuition on these students. In line with the proposed sub-questions, the chapter highlights findings relating to:

- Characteristics of students selected for tuition.
- Reflections on the eligibility criteria and whether it targets the right students and has sufficient flexibility.
- Facilitators and barriers to engaging students in small group tuition, and how to overcome challenges.
- Perceived impact for students and institutions.

4.1. Identifying students

Eligibility criteria

In 2021/22, small group tuition should have been directed at students who:

- have not achieved grade 4 or 5 at GCSE in English and/or maths, or
- are from an economically disadvantaged background and would need catch-up support.

Two in three (65%) institution survey respondents agreed that the Tuition Fund eligibility criteria targeted the right students, which was generally supported in case studies. However, 17% of respondents disagreed and case study interviewees also highlighted appetite for more flexibility. Among survey respondents who disagreed, they reported wanting to see more flexibility on:

- Students with mental health needs
- Students with lower academic ability than teacher assessed grades suggest
- Students who are high achieving but experiencing disadvantage
- Other vulnerable students e.g., carers, students who have been in care.

In several case studies, senior leaders also highlighted that students with autism were sometimes not eligible because their results were higher but that they would benefit from small group tuition to support their social skills. Linked to this, senior leaders welcomed that the eligibility criteria was widened for the 2022/23 academic year to include those

who had not achieved a grade 6 or above. As noted above, some senior leaders echoed concerns about the validity of teacher assessed grades.

I think an awful lot of schools gave students 4s when potentially they weren't a 4. [...] I think maybe a 5 or a 6 from the past couple of years could be traditionally a 4 or a 5. – *Tutor, Sixth Form College*

More generally, senior leaders expressed in interviews that they would like more autonomy, flexibility, and trust to identify students. They described how students may have a higher level of need for catch-up support for reasons that cannot be captured in the eligibility criteria. For example, students may have been more significantly affected by COVID-19 (e.g. bereavements), not have a supportive family, or space to study at home, all of which could influence their ability to catch-up after lost learning.

Disadvantaged is a relative term. [...] we will have somebody below progress, sitting in a disadvantaged area on one side of the street, [and] literally on the other, not disadvantaged, still below progress, not receiving any tuition. And yet, both students would require some input. In fact, the one not in the disadvantaged area might actually be more disadvantaged in some ways. – *Senior leader, Sixth Form College*

In this context, it is interesting to note that some senior leaders of institutions with high numbers of eligible students were not able to deliver tuition to all of them. However, they felt able to identify about half of those students that they believed needed the support most from the larger pool. This might be the case for more institutions with the widened criteria, which could have implications in terms of what is feasible for institutions to deliver.

Selecting students

When asked in case studies how decisions were made about which students to offer tuition, senior leaders described semi-systematic processes. Beyond identifying students who met the eligibility criteria, this often involved consulting with heads of departments and teachers, especially those in English and maths, about student performance including formative and summative assessments.

[The Head of School] put together a list and then sent the list out to the teachers and said, "Can you say yes or no as to whether you think these students would benefit from this programme?" [...] and if

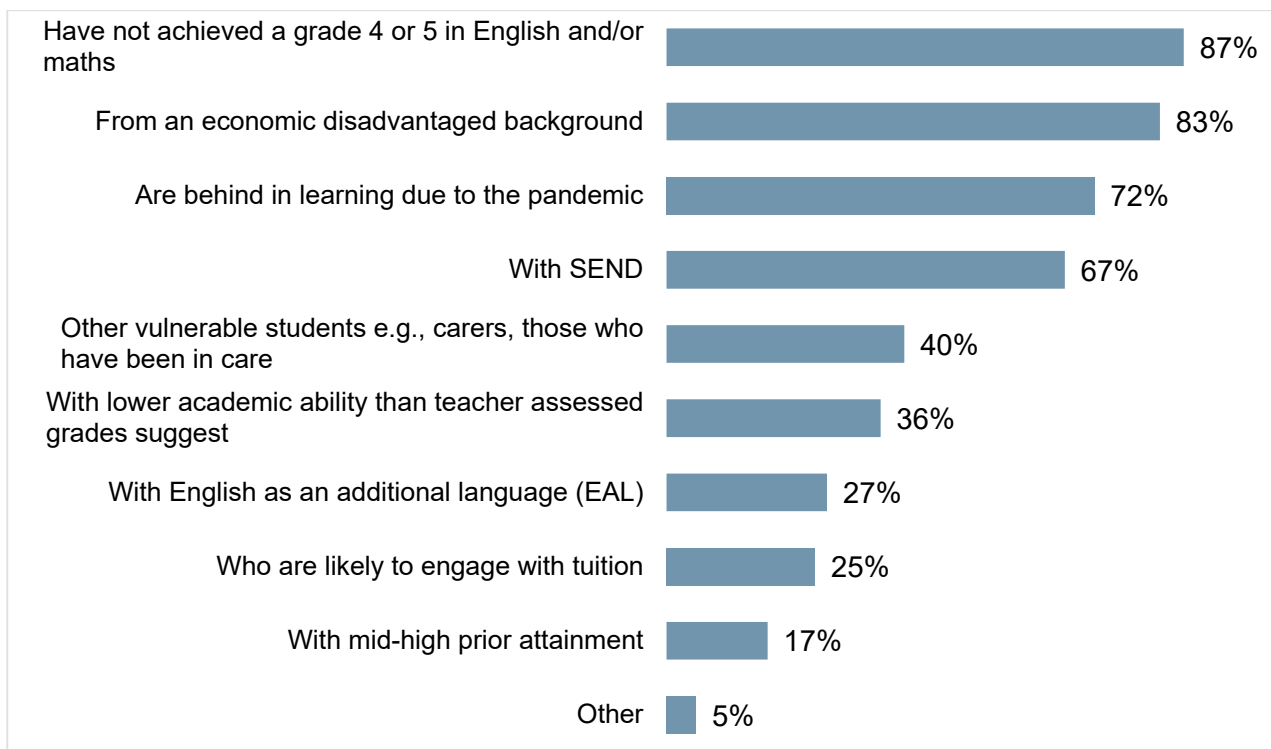
there were enough teachers saying yes, then they would go on it [if they met the eligibility criteria]. – *Tutor, Sixth Form College*

They also reported working with the pastoral and welfare team who were sometimes aware of students that asked their pastoral link for extra help. Some also engaged with parents and students themselves to get a sense of their interest. For example, in several case studies, they offered it to all eligible students and either asked them to respond if they wanted to sign up or made sessions more voluntary.

Student characteristics

Most institution survey respondents reported that they were targeting students in line with the guidance – including students that had not achieved a grade 4 or 5 in English and/or maths (87%) or those from an economic disadvantaged background (83%) – see Figure 6. Senior leaders emphasised in interviews the value in the second criteria for selecting students as this provided additional flexibilities. As noted above, they described how some students had teacher-assessed grades that did not appear to be an accurate or true representation, and the wider criteria on economic disadvantage sometimes enabled reaching these students.

Figure 6: Students receiving tuition



Base: Institution survey respondents who opted in (n=214)

Source: Institution survey

4.2. Engaging students

Survey respondents provided estimates for the number of students reached through the Tuition Fund, which ranged from a few students up to 3,000 students.

In case studies, senior leaders and tutors described multiple efforts to generate and improve engagement among students. For example, they were careful when offering tuition to do so in a sensitive way that did not highlight that students were underperforming, which could result in the student perceiving the support negatively. This was important regardless of whether the sessions were framed as mandatory or voluntary, and especially for students who were demotivated from previous years when they struggled or already resat exams.

While there were some issues of attendance and drop-outs, this was anticipated and not significantly different than their expectations, especially when sessions were intended to be drop-in sessions. They noted that students who engaged early tended to stay engaged and attend sessions regularly, so a key issue was when very disengaged students did not intend to attend sessions from the outset and required frequent reminders. Several interviewees reflected that introducing the tuition part way through the year, after the funding was received, caused challenges because students already had routines. For example, they reported that some students did not want to give up their free time, especially if tuition took place on a day they were not normally on site.

To offer learning coaching halfway through the year was a challenge because students were suddenly having to change their routines and didn't really know the value of it. [...] once we were able to get the student into the room and to experience what the tuition was like, they saw the value in it and were able to come back. – *Senior leader, Sixth Form College*

Despite these challenges, senior leaders and tutors interviewed were positive about the levels of take-up and engagement among students offered tuition. In focus groups, students explained that when they first heard about the tuition, they did not have any worries or concerns. In general, students viewed tuition as an opportunity to get help and support where they needed it. Students hoped that as a result of the tuition that they would achieve better grades.

Student 1: I thought it was a good idea because I would take any tuition or extra lessons that I can get just to help improve my grades, so, I thought it was a really good idea.

Student 2: I wanted to improve my grades mostly and also my confidence at exam questions, because I can do well in the classrooms and things but not in exams. – *Students, Academy*

In interviews, senior leader and tutors described what they did to keep students engaged. Most of these efforts were ways to tailor tuition to students. For example, tutors asked students what content or topic they wanted to work on, offered flexibility, and encouraged ownership. One tutor explained how they set targets for students so they were better able to assess their needs according to those targets.

According to case studies, tailoring tuition to align with the curriculum was another successful way to engage students and ensure tuition was relevant to them. Where necessary, tutors worked closely with teaching departments so that they could target specific topics. Some tutors pre-taught material ahead of lessons while others followed up with students to check their understanding of key topics.

So, the tutors will go to the student, “I know that you did transformations this week. How did you find it? Is there anything that you want to go over, or was there anything else that you don't understand?” And quite often you'll get back, “Oh I wasn't quite sure about this centre point of origin. How do I measure that, and what do I do?” and so on. [...] Sometimes there's a request from a teacher to pre-teach a subject to a student that they know is going to find a particular topic challenging. So, a student will be taught that week's lesson almost prior to them starting, so that they're familiar and they have a good grounding. – *Senior leader, Agricultural and Horticultural College*

Overall, most student survey respondents were satisfied with the tuition they attended (81%) and with the tutoring approach (83%). Almost all respondents found the tutoring helpful (89%) and relevant (88%). In case studies, students frequently talked about how the small groups were what made the sessions most helpful because the tutor was focused on them rather than a whole class. Students also said they felt more confident to speak up in smaller groups and that it helped them to be more disciplined and focused.

I think it was the 1 on 1 element of it. You could write an exam question and the tutor would mark it straight away and tell you feedback immediately, which you don't really get in lessons. – *Student, Academy*

For me, I think the class sizes are perfect because it's not so little that you feel awkward, and you've got a lot of pressure on you. [...] I feel with there being about 5 people, it's easier to have conversations between us, try and work stuff out ourselves. – *Student, Sixth Form College*

The box below includes a case study example demonstrating feedback from students on how the tuition helped them.

Case study example 3

A further education college with approximately 3,000 students used the funding to support students' vocational training, deliver additional English and maths tuition, and support skills development in a wide range of areas, including Construction and Hair and Beauty. The tuition started in a hybrid mode in the first year and became mostly in-person in the subsequent year.

Students receiving tuition recognised that it had been very helpful in improving their academic skills and building their confidence. This is because the in-person tuition allowed them to break down large volume of materials into easy-to-digest pieces. Additionally, giving students the exposure to learning materials ahead of their actual classes made them feel confident, motivated, and well-prepared.

The tuition fostered students' interest in the subject and helped them build independence. Students who received the tuition were able to engage in more independent thinking and recognised that it had a positive impact on their mental health.

...with the workload, as it helped us with that, it sort of put less stress on us. And 'it's good for our mental health. – *Student, General FE and Tertiary College*

However, some students still experienced barriers and challenges when attending tuition sessions. One in four (26%) student survey respondents reported issues due to anxiety and poor mental health. A similar proportion (25%) have found it difficult to stay focused in the sessions. Both staff and students interviewed described how returning to structured learning has been challenging as some students struggle with focus, motivation, and anxiety. Several interviewees also reflected that parents could be either an enabler or a barrier for student engagement.

4.3. Perceived benefits on students

The institution survey asked respondents to what extent they agreed that the tuition would contribute to a series of outcomes for students, and student survey respondents were asked to select any benefits they experienced as a result of attending tuition.

Figures 7 and 8 below show the findings, which are discussed alongside findings from the case studies below.

Survey respondents and case study participants all agreed that tuition improved confidence of students. Specifically, around half (47%) of the student survey respondents reported having better confidence as a result of the tuition (see Figure 8). In interviews, students explained how small group tuition sessions enabled them to be more actively engaged, which helped them be more confident during the sessions and when working independently.

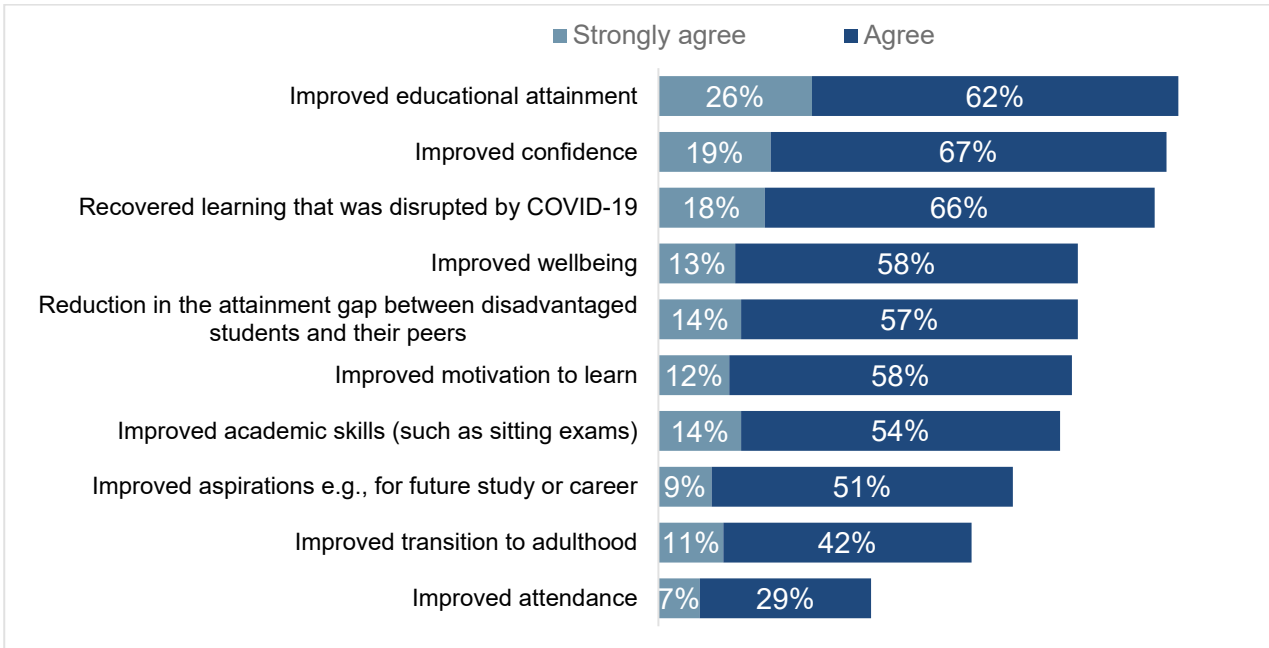
My confidence in answering questions in front of people has definitely got better because I don't feel like they're going to judge me for getting it wrong. They're probably going to get it wrong as well. – *Student, Academy*

There was one student who, at first, she didn't want to turn up to the sessions on her own. She felt really nervous, and she felt like she wouldn't be able to say anything. But after a couple of weeks, she was actually very happy to turn up on her own and she was talking quite a lot and she was being very engaged. So there was a clear difference there in terms of her confidence and wellbeing. – *Tutor, Academy*

In turn, staff and students described how this confidence sometimes continued into the classroom because students felt more informed about the content and better equipped to contribute. The findings from the student survey supported this with over one third (36%) reporting that tuition made them feel more motivated to learn and one quarter (26%) reporting that tuition helped them engage more in their classes (see Figure 8).

Although a smaller percentage (19%) of students reported improvements in their mental health and wellbeing, some students in case studies felt that the tuition helped reduce their stress and anxiety associated with their workload, which felt more manageable, and exams.

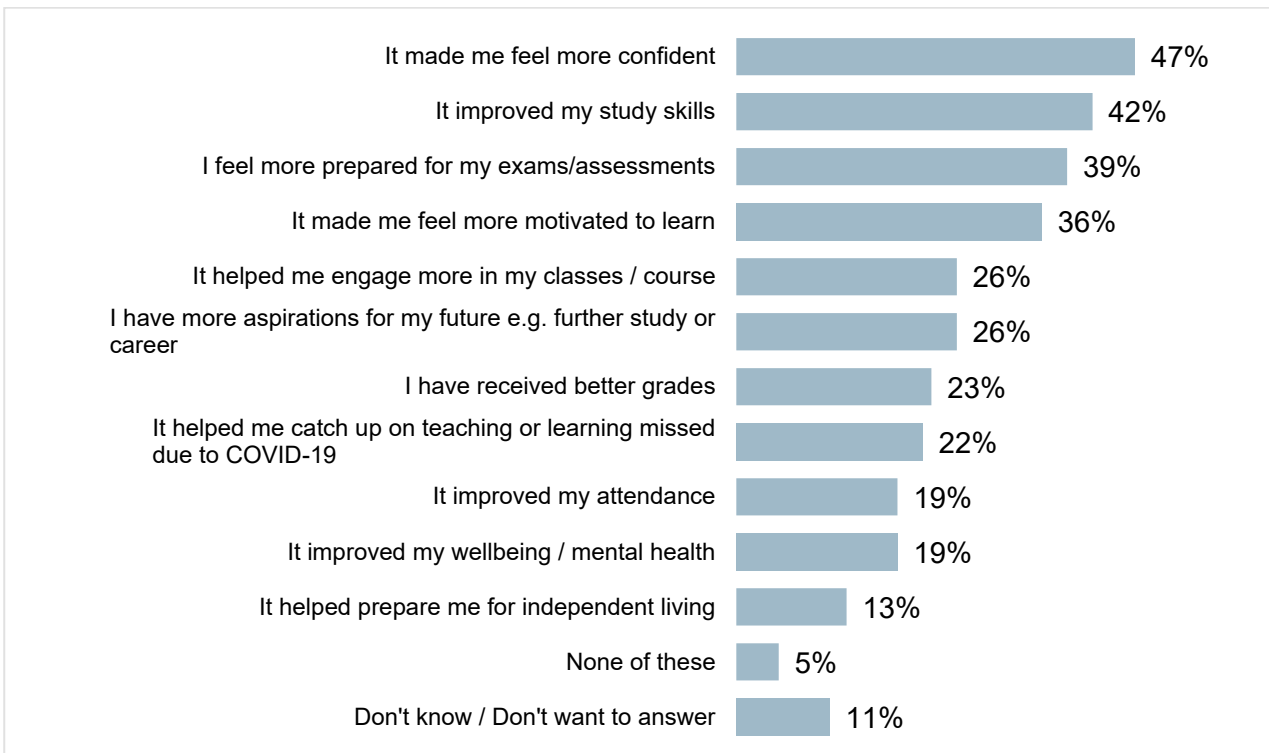
Figure 7: Perceived benefits for students among senior leaders



Base: Institution survey respondents who opted in (n=214)

Source: Institution survey

Figure 8: Students' self-reported outcomes



Base: Student survey respondents (n=491)

Source: Student survey

After improvements in confidence, the most common benefits reported by student survey respondents were improved study skills (42%) and feeling more prepared for exams (39%). In interviews, these were often mentioned alongside improvements in confidence. For example, students described how they gained more study, revision, and exam preparation skills, which in turn made them feel more confident looking ahead to the exam period. The box below provides an example from one student who participated in the student diaries and the tuition improved her confidence.

Student diary example 1

A participant currently studying maths, further maths, physics and Spanish A Levels felt that during the pandemic, she missed out content of key subjects and was worried about being behind during the next academic year.

I didn't feel that I was at the standard I should've been starting year 12. – *Student, Sixth Form College*

She attended one-hour sessions once a week with a Spanish conversation tutor, and although tuition was not mandatory for her, she decided to join the group after hearing the content covered from a friend. The frequency of the sessions, the length and the small group size were considered ideal to work collaboratively with other students and have enough time to receive individual support. Students could decide what content they wanted to cover during the sessions and, after attending the small group tuition, she felt more confident with her language skills.

I feel the main impact the tuition has had is that it has increased my confidence with Spanish. There were many grammar points that hadn't been covered fully at GCSE and going over them in these sessions has made me feel a lot more confident when it comes to exams and even just being able to speak out loud in class and join in class conversations. – *Student, Sixth Form College*

Looking at attainment, just under a quarter (23%) of student survey respondents reported that they received better grades as a result of the tuition. This figure is potentially lower than would be expected given the aims of the Tuition Fund, but this could be because students had not yet taken exams and it was too early to say. Equally, it is possible that the amount of tuition or content of tuition was not sufficient to improve attainment. The impact evaluation, which will be reported separately, will explore this further. However, looking at the perceived impact, there were multiple examples where both staff and students noted improvements in grades that helped students recover from lost learning.

I was always terrible at maths, I was really terrible. I failed maths a couple of times. This college and this tuition and everything has really helped me to become better at maths. [...] I feel like I've done well in the exams, so I'm hoping to pass Maths this year. – *Student, Agricultural and Horticultural College*

I failed my first criminology assessment and my teacher offered to do this tuition. I would say I went from a U to a high C and almost got a B with this tuition, so, yes, it did really help me. – *Student, Academy*

I would definitely say that the tuition has help to improve my grades. At the start of the year, before tuition, I would get Cs, now I am predicted A's. – *Student, Sixth Form College*

We have been in the position where students have been down nearer the bottom end, on a U grade, and they're one or two grades below where they should be. Looking at the ones that we've brought into [tuition] and been going along, I would say that the attainment and the data is showing that it's positive. [...] I'm sure that's not the only reason, but it certainly helped. – *Senior leader, LA School Sixth Form*

The box below provides an example from the student diaries about a student planning to apply for a university course since tuition helped improve his grades after the pandemic.

Student diary example 2

A student studying biology, chemistry and maths struggled during the pandemic and started attending tuition sessions delivered by an external provider once a week, then twice a week. The student found the sessions helpful because they were tailored to him and it allowed him the time he needed to understand topics. He also noticed that it helped with his confidence by practicing exam techniques and helped him improve his grades that suffered during the pandemic. He now has the predicted grades he needs for his future aspirations to study chemistry at university.

[Without the tuition] I would not be able to do the university course I want to because I wouldn't have the predicted grade in biology that I need. I would be struggling in biology, and I wouldn't have a strong foundation for second year. – *Student, Academy*

Case Study B

Case Study B is a further education and tertiary education college with approximately 6,000 students, including adult learners and SEND students. The college received funding in both 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years.

The pandemic and school closures impacted the College's learners in different ways. Teaching staff recognised that students were facing behaviour issues such as lack of engagement, punctuality, and attendance, and some of them were suffering from anxiety once they returned to the College after its closure during the pandemic. Behaviour issues were coupled with lost learning in key subjects such as maths and English, and students acknowledged that the pandemic impacted their motivation to attend classes.

I found it difficult because the sessions would be normally at 8 o'clock in the morning and I just wanted to stay at home sleeping, not getting up, so my motivation was not there" – Student

How was the funding used?

The Fund was used to deliver catch-up sessions for diverse subjects including maths, English and vocational courses such as construction, health and social care, hair and beauty, and art, and pastoral support. The sessions were delivered by internal tutors as well as external ones that were recruited by the College's Human Resources team. The College offered multiple weekly catch-up sessions per subject for students to attend the most convenient ones. The sessions were delivered within regular college hours, but they were also delivered during half-term holidays and bank holidays. The length of the sessions ranged from 30 minutes to two hours and the group size could range from one student (one-to-one session) up to seven students per tutor.

The College carried over some funding from the 2020/21 year and, at the time of the research, they were on track to spend the funding of the 2021/22 year. They have also applied for 2022/23 to ensure students can still benefit from extra support.

What difference did the Tuition Fund make for students?

By providing tailored support to students, teachers observed academic improvements among learners attending catch-up sessions, and students themselves recognised that the sessions allowed them to bridge the gaps in their learning and improve their writing and English skills.

I've learnt a lot for English; I know how many paragraphs I need to do for each question, how long I need to read the text for" – Student

Teachers also reported improvements in students' attendance rates, punctuality, engagement in lessons and independence. They also observed students expanding their relationships with other colleagues when working together during the catch-up sessions. Overall, students were also very positive about the non-academic outcomes they have achieved as a result of the sessions; they reported gaining confidence and appreciated the support they were receiving.

Now I'm confident to work on the questions I usually missed out in my exams (...) I'm more confident on being independent and doing my work on my own" – Student

What difference did the Tuition Fund make for institutions, staff and tutors?

Through the Fund, the college has been able to deliver catch up sessions for a wide range of subjects, recruiting new skilled staff to support with the delivery as well as existing staff. Although some of the new recruits are expected to stay in the college in the future, the college recognised that if the support sessions cease, they will not be able to retain them.

[Through the recruitment of new staff] we found a couple of staff that are shining lights and we want to keep them." – School Leader

College teachers interviewed were very pleased with their involvement in the delivery of catch-up sessions. Delivering the sessions did not incur extra workload for them, as they prepared materials for the sessions during their regular working hours. Teachers did not have to undertake any type of training to deliver the sessions as they were already specialists in the subjects they were teaching, and they felt the sessions were just a continuation of their everyday job. The Fund enabled them to strengthen their relationships with students, giving them a feeling of reward.

I've loved it. I've been really lucky to have this opportunity this year to have these one to one [sessions] (...) seeing that transformation where they don't absolutely hate it [English lessons] anymore"–Teacher

What were three key lessons learnt?

1. Teaching staff recognised the importance and potential of using small group tuition to focus on the development of students' soft and social skills. The sessions were

seen as an opportunity to provide students with the tools and confidence to chase their career paths.

2. Small group tuition teachers collaborated with tutors to discuss the materials and content that had been covered in the catch up sessions and identify other areas that could be covered in upcoming sessions to support students learning needs. Small group tuition allowed teachers to be flexible with the structure and content of the session to meet students' needs.
3. Encouraging students to take part in catch-up sessions was challenging, as they did not want to take extra lessons, but once they joined, they saw the value of those sessions. Teaching staff reported that students attending catch up sessions gained confidence in themselves. For instance, one student proactively discussed with their catch up teacher their next steps and progression once college ended, and other students started making new friendships as a result of the sessions.

5. Future improvements

This chapter details findings on KEQ3 on how the Tuition Fund can be improved for future years. It includes a summary of the findings relating to:

- The 16-19 Tuition Fund guidance and opt-in process.
- Reasons why institutions chose to opt out.
- Demand for small group tuition.
- Other support needed to help students recover from lost learning.

5.1. 16-19 Tuition Fund processes

Guidance and opt-in process

Overall, most institution survey respondents were satisfied with the 16-19 Tuition Fund (78%) and the process for opting in/out (69%). A similar proportion (71%) reported that the information and guidance about the 16-19 Tuition Fund was clear. This was echoed by senior leaders in case studies with most reporting that the guidance on eligibility criteria and how the funding could be used was easy to understand. However, one exception was about whether funding could be used for materials. Overall, interviewees interpreted the guidance as not including materials and therefore did not use the funding in this way but highlighted that this was sometimes a limitation for their delivery.

We're in a digital age and lots of our students and programmes all operate online, it's all online marking, online assessments. But we weren't able to purchase laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, anything like that to support the project. So, that was a bit of a hindrance for us because we'd got some rooms [library, breakout rooms] in some instances, but then we hadn't got the resources for the students to do the work. – *Senior leader, General FE and Tertiary College*

In case studies, the primary issue senior leaders raised was the timeframes for communicating and distributing funding allocations. This had implications for recruiting staff and resourcing tuition, and it condensed the available time for delivering tuition to students. In turn, this occasionally affected students' engagement with the tuition because it started part way through the year.

Our timetables were done in June for next September and we don't find out how much we've got until way after that. [...] It's really difficult

to logistically plan it. You end up, you haven't got the staff to deliver it because we're going through recruitment now. – *Senior leader, General FE and Tertiary*

It's much more successful if we're able to add that tuition from day one, when [students] come to us in September. So, now we know that the Tuition Fund is coming our way next year [...] we're taking a bit of a leap of faith in recruiting a large amount of learning coaches, not knowing what funding we're going to get. We're doing that anyway so that, in September, we can identify these students at enrolment and their first week will include some tuition and once they're in that routine, we can keep them there. – *Senior leader, Sixth Form College*

Satisfaction with DfE's reporting and assurance processes was somewhat lower (58%) among institution survey respondents. Senior leaders interviewed described some challenges around the administrative burden associated with the funding. For example, this included all the processes to set up tuition sessions, such as identifying eligible students, selecting subjects, determining the amount of resource required, identifying existing staff or recruiting new staff, and timetabling sessions, as well as ongoing monitoring on the quality of tuition, attendance among students, and impact on students.

Carry-over

According to the opt-in response data, of the 1,392 institutions that opted into the Tuition Fund for both the 2020/21 and 2021/22, nearly two in five (39%) had carry over. Institutions were allowed to use this funding in recognition that there continued to be disruption due to the pandemic and lockdowns in the 2020/21 academic year that prevented plans for tuition going ahead.

Nearly three in four (73%) survey respondents expected to use the majority (75-100%) of their funding allocation. However, a significant minority (19%) did not expect to use the full funding amount. This has implications for DfE and institutions as leftover funding must be recalled. In one case study, a senior leader described how they had a large number of students who were affected by the pandemic and needed support but did not meet the eligibility criteria. As a result, the institution used their own budget to support these students, which were sometimes perceived as being a higher priority than those eligible. This meant that when staff capacity was limited, the Tuition Fund was under-utilised.

5.2. Reasons for opting out

Only 113 institutions (5% of all eligible institutions) actively opted out of the Fund for the 2021/22 academic year by filling in the online form, meaning most that opted out did not engage in the process actively.

A small number of institutions who opted out of the 2021/22 Tuition Fund (either actively or passively) took part in the survey. When asked why they decided to opt out, the primary reasons were due to low numbers of eligible students and concerns around the administrative burden associated with opting in and managing the funding, as described above.

The third most common reason was that funding allocations were too low to be worthwhile. Supporting this, analysis of the funding allocation data examined 477 institutions that opted in for 2020/21 but chose not to in 2021/22 and found that these institutions had typically received smaller funding allocations. The funding received by these institutions in 2020/21 ranged from less than £150 to greater than £400,000, which was in line with the vast majority of other funding allocations. However, while 51% of all institutions received funding under £5,000 with a median of £4,900, this was the case for 72% of these institutions with a median of just over £2,500.

5.3. Demand for small group tuition

Most institution survey respondents reported that they would be likely to opt into the Tuition Fund for 2022/23 as well as continuing to deliver tutoring in the longer term if the funding remains available. The majority of student survey respondents (61%) also expressed interest in attending tuition in the future. Only 6% reported that they would be very uninterested.

In case studies, there was clear interest among staff in delivering small group tuition in the future. They saw value in it for their students and its longer-term potential. While most were generally satisfied with the parameters of the Fund, some senior leaders felt more significantly limited by the eligibility criteria and/or small funding amounts. Both suggest additional demand for small group tuition because 1) institutions were unable to support students in need but did not meet the eligibility criteria and 2) institutions were unable to include eligible students because the funding was insufficient. However, these are clearly at odds with one another – if the eligibility criteria are expanded, then it is more likely that institutions will not reach all eligible students. This would need to be clearly communicated to institutions to acknowledge that they should use the funding to target those they identify as most in need, rather than trying to take a blanket approach.

Without the 16-19 Tuition Fund, over half of the institution survey respondents (56%) reported that they would be unlikely to deliver tuition. This suggests that the delivery of small group tuition is heavily reliant on additional funding. Therefore, there is a risk that when the Tuition Fund ends, institutions will cease providing small group tuition on a larger scale despite support from staff in interviews that it would be valuable for some students beyond the pandemic recovery period.

Legacy from 16-19 Tuition Fund

In some cases, tuition activities have left a legacy on courses as tools and techniques have been adopted, or tutors are being retained. For example, the box below provides an example where the institution intends to continue delivering small group tuition in the future.

One recommendation from the case studies was to introduce a way for institutions to learn more about how others are using the Tuition Fund. For example, interviewees suggested example case studies or a forum that enabled discussion between schools and colleges.

It would be really interesting to know what other schools and colleges are doing so that we can steal ideas from others, and they might be able to steal ideas from us, because it is quite tricky to know what you can do, and there may be things that we just haven't thought about which if we'd known about, we may have been able to utilise. – *Senior leader, Academy*

Just bouncing off other teachers who were at other establishments, that would have been really helpful, and really beneficial. Because I wasn't sure, at the start, how many students do I do. I didn't want to put my catchment too wide, because then you lose your impact. So I think that was the biggest thing, really. Making sure that there's a central-, or a buddy system, where you could help one another, with similar schools, maybe. – *Senior leader, Academy*

Case study example 4

A sixth-form college in South East England with approximately 2,000 students delivered a six-week course three times during the academic year to improve students' fundamental study skills. It also offered students subject-related support for diverse subjects such as maths and English. The fundamental study skills and subject-specific sessions started halfway through the academic year, as the allocation of funds took longer than anticipated. This created a challenge to engage students, who had to change their routines to accommodate the new sessions and did not understand why they had to take part in them. To boost engagement in the next academic year, the College has already planned the delivery of 2022/23 sessions so these can be introduced and delivered to students at the beginning of the academic year.

The Fund allowed the college to recruit new staff to deliver subject-specific support sessions. The participation of staff in the delivery of tuition resulted in increased job satisfaction, and motivation to remain in the education world.

For me personally, it [the tuition] has shown me that I can work with young people as a mentor, [be] back in education, and enjoy it in a place that I feel supported. I've just loved working with the students" – *Learning coach, Sixth Form College*

Beyond the study skills course, the college plans to continue delivering small group tuition beyond the pandemic recovery period as it acknowledges the importance that the sessions had on students' personal development and attitudes, and therefore considers these should feature in their curriculum.

5.4. Additional support

While small group tuition offers one approach to supporting students to recover from lost learning, institutions highlighted additional areas where support would be welcomed. This included:

- One-to-one reviews, tutorials, mentoring or pastoral support (73%)
- Support for mental health and / or wellbeing (73%)
- Additional in-person classes during term time (62%)
- Personal and / or social development / enrichment activities (58%)

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Introduction

This document has reported the findings from an IPE of the 16-19 Tuition Fund, focussing on delivery during the 2021/22 academic year. This final chapter provides summary conclusions and resultant recommendations as to how delivery of tuition in 16-19 educational settings could be further improved in future.

6.2. Future delivery

The 16-19 Tuition Fund is now in its third year. The guidance for the 2022/23 Tuition Fund included additional flexibilities in the eligibility criteria for students. In particular, it included widening the criteria on attainment to those who have not achieved a grade 6 or above in GCSE English and/or GCSE maths. However, the guidance encouraged institutions to prioritise tuition for students who have not achieved a grade 4 in GCSE maths and/or English. Students from the 27% more economically deprived areas continued to be eligible as well as those who meet the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund eligibility criteria¹², even where their prior attainment is high. Funding is currently available up to the end of 2023/24. The recommendations from this evaluation should therefore be considered by DfE/ESFA and 16-19 institutions when planning future delivery.

DfE recently announced an £800m investment over the next three years to fund 40 additional hours for students in 16-19 education (e.g. A-levels, vocational, T-levels). Institutions are expected to use the additional hours for teacher/tutor led qualification activity, prioritising maths where needed given significant learning loss in maths. They can also use the hours to support mental health, wellbeing and study skills to overcome barriers to learning. At present, institutions with 16-19 Tuition Funding must use this separately to these additional hours, although there is scope for institutions to use the funding for additional hours (or their wider 16-19 funding allocation) to deliver small group tuition if/when the 16-19 Tuition Fund ends after 2023/24. Therefore, the recommendations are likely to be relevant for the DfE/ESFA and 16-19 institutions delivering tuition beyond the lifetime of the Tuition Fund.

¹² For more information, see: <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/eligibility>

6.3. Key recommendations

The 16-19 Tuition Fund was found to have been well received and highly valued by senior leaders, teachers/tutors and students. The evaluation found high levels of satisfaction regarding the quality and format of tuition delivered. Both staff and students perceived benefits for students' confidence, study and exam preparation skills, and engagement in classes. There was also evidence that some staff and students saw improvements in grades, which they attributed to the tuition received. However, this finding should be treated with caution due to the possibility of self-reporting bias. The impact evaluation will provide more insight into the impact of the 16-19 Tuition Fund on overall attainment.

However, the evaluation also identified some potential areas for consideration as to how the Tuition Fund, or small group tuition in 16-19 educational settings more generally, could be further improved in future.

Recommendation 1: Consider providing 16-19 institutions greater flexibility and autonomy in selecting students to participate in tuition.

The flexibilities introduced to the eligibility criteria for Year 2 of the Tuition Fund were well received by institutions, enabling them to target students from disadvantaged backgrounds who would benefit from small group tuition. Institutions would welcome additional flexibility and autonomy to select those students that they feel would most benefit from tuition. They consider themselves best placed to make this selection based on their knowledge of individual students' circumstances, which takes account of a wider range of factors such as individuals' mental health needs or willingness / ability to engage with tuition. Moreover, the application of the current eligibility criteria was often perceived as inefficient and not always straightforward, with some institutions reporting challenges in identifying which students met this. Related to this, institutions would welcome flexibility to offer tuition to high performing students who may not meet the current criteria, but for whom tuition has the potential to have an even greater impact on attainment. For Year 3 of the Tuition Fund, the eligibility criteria were broadened to include students who did not achieve a grade 6 in GCSE English and/or maths.

If these additional flexibilities were to be introduced, proxy measures of disadvantage could still be used to determine the allocation of funding to institutions. This would ensure that it continued to be concentrated in areas of greatest need. It could be considered contentious for funding to be calculated based on the prevalence of students who do not necessarily receive the support, but this could be mitigated by guidance that ensures those students are prioritised whilst not prohibiting the use of the funding on others. As participation in tuition is optional, this would enable institutions to open the opportunity up

to a wider cohort of students who could potentially benefit even if they are not those who attracted the funding.

Recommendation 2: Consider introducing minimum and maximum funding thresholds.

The current formula for calculating the allocation of funding is resulting in some institutions attracting less than £200 whilst others attract over £1.5m. Based on analysis of funding allocations, carry-over and underspend, as well as feedback from institutions who did not opt into the Tuition Fund in 2021/22, this broad range was found to be creating issues for institutions at both ends of the distribution scale. Some of those eligible for the lowest levels of funding considered the administrative burden associated with opting-in to the Fund not to be worthwhile for such small amounts. It also created challenges for them in designing and delivering meaningful tuition. At the other end of the scale, those with the highest levels of funding often faced challenges in spending this within the academic year (particularly given that they only had four to seven months to do this due to funding being distributed from December 2021 to March 2022).

These issues could be resolved by setting minimum and maximum thresholds for funding. In this scenario, proxy measures of disadvantage could still be used to determine the allocation, which could then be rounded up or down where required to fit within the agreed thresholds. This would ensure that it was worthwhile for all institutions to opt-in to funding even if they have small numbers of students who could potentially benefit, and that those students do not miss out on the opportunity. It is also likely to reduce levels of underspend and administrative burden associated with recovering this.

Recommendation 3: Provide practical and evidence-based examples to institutions on the format of tuition to be delivered.

The evaluation found wide variation between institutions on the format of tuition being delivered in terms of length, duration, frequency, and format. This creates challenges for the evaluation in understanding which models of tuition make the most difference. It might be helpful to provide advice to institutions on the amount of tuition to be delivered to students, such as by number of sessions or hours delivered for a subject. The evaluation found that the most common delivery approaches reported by institutions were weekly (50%), one hour (71%), and totalling an average of 10-15 hours of tuition (29%) – however, some also delivered one-off sessions. In interviews, staff noted their interest in how other institutions used the funding and delivered tuition. They expressed that examples would be helpful both for understanding the guidance on how the funding can be used as well as gathering ideas for delivering tuition and what has worked well for others (see Recommendation 7).

This analysis could form the basis of advice and examples to be issued to institutions, alongside insights from the wider evidence base on small group tuition which supports delivering tuition over a sustained period. However, there was also clear consensus across institutions that they preferred having the flexibility to use the funding to deliver tuition in a way that best-suited their students' needs and circumstances (as noted in Recommendation 1). As such, it would be inappropriate to request one particular model of delivery, unless a future evaluation is designed to specifically test this. Instead, setting out a small number of minimum expectations for delivery and examples could guide institutions towards a more common, evidence-supported model. For example, institutions could be advised to develop sets of tuition sessions rather than one-off sessions, which most currently do.

Once identified, these minimum expectations could also be used to inform minimum funding thresholds (Recommendation 2).

Recommendation 4: Consider easing restrictions on the use of funding to cover non-staff costs.

Currently, Tuition Fund monies can only be used for staff time. However, this does not always cover the costs associated with delivering tuition. For example, some vocational courses require materials or venue hire, whilst some academic courses require textbooks or printed resources. Where institutions are commissioning external partners to deliver tuition through the Fund, some of these additional costs are likely to be covered. This means that institutions who use their own staff are potentially at a disadvantage in terms of covering additional costs associated with delivering tuition through the Fund. Furthermore, institutions highlighted additional costs associated with management and administration relating to delivery. While interviewed institutions covered these costs, some reflected that this increased the burden of opting into the Fund, especially where they received smaller funding amounts.

If the rules were to be relaxed on the use of the funding to cover some of these additional costs, clear guidance would need to be provided to institutions on what proportion of their overall funding could be used for non-staff costs and what types of costs would be eligible. This should include specific examples to provide assurances to institutions that they were interpreting the guidance correctly and mitigate concerns about funding potentially being clawed back.

Recommendation 5: Consider whether it is possible to confirm funding allocations before the academic year and disburse funding before or nearer the start of the academic year.

Institutions were informed about their funding allocation offer in September and October 2021 and received the funding between December 2021 and March 2022. This resulted in delays getting provision in place to deliver the tuition, including through recruitment, appointment of external providers, or confirmation of additional hours for existing staff. It also limited the length and duration of tuition that was possible, contributing to a concentration of tuition being delivered in the final term ahead of exams. If funding allocations were communicated before the academic year and monies disbursed earlier, there would be greater scope for institutions to deliver sustained tuition over the course of the academic year, which would also reduce the risk of underspend.

At a minimum, it is recommended that funding allocation amounts are shared as early as possible in advance of the start of the academic year to facilitate planning. For example, some senior leaders described how they kept tutors 'warm' between the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years in anticipation of the funding. However, this was often based on goodwill and represented a risk to their delivery plans.

The DfE has already taken action to address this issue. For the 2022/23 academic year, institutions were notified of their funding allocation offers in May 2022 and payments started in September and October 2022.

Recommendation 6: Support institutions to draw on existing or previous teachers to deliver small group tuition where possible.

The evaluation found that tuition delivered by existing or retired teachers often worked well as they had existing relationships with the students and knew the curriculum well. This meant that the tuition could be tailored to students' individual needs and fully aligned and complementary to what they were learning in their other classes. It also meant that the enhanced skills and experience of teachers / tutors from delivering small group tuition were retained within the institution. However, it is not always possible or feasible for institutions to resource tuition in this way. This is particularly true of those with large populations of eligible students and large allocations of funding to spend.

Recommendation 7: Create opportunities for the sharing and dissemination of good practice in delivering tuition.

A lot of learning has been gained across the 16-19 education sector as a result of the Tuition Fund. For some institutions, delivering small group tuition was a new area of activity and they have had to design and develop new approaches to delivering this. Consideration should be given to creating opportunities for sharing and disseminating learning gained across the sector, such as through the establishment of a good practice network or events. The current evaluation will provide useful insights to support the

dissemination of learning, but there is also likely to be value in bringing institutions together to share experiences and learning.

6.4. Future evaluation

This evaluation will provide an important contribution to the evidence base on the effectiveness and impact of small group tuition in 16-19 educational settings. However, there are some limitations on what can be concluded from the implementation, process and impact strands of the evaluation given the heterogenous nature of how tuition has been delivered across institutions and lack of monitoring data on this. While the evaluation sought to overcome this by collecting information through surveys, these ultimately had lower response rates than expected and relatively small sample sizes. There were multiple challenges to engaging institutions in the evaluation despite efforts to minimise burden by keeping the survey short and extending the window for data collection to offer more time and flexibility, including additional reminders. Furthermore, the evaluation design relied on institutions as gatekeepers to reach students taking part in small group tuition. Therefore, it is unknown how many students were actually invited to take part and how this affected the sample of students. Overall, these limitations increased the risk of bias such that the findings set out in this report must be viewed cautiously, especially while the impact evaluation is still underway.

The lack of comprehensive monitoring requirements for the Fund was understandable in the context of it being a COVID-19 response. The priority was getting additional support in place for students who needed it most, recognising the pressures institutions were under. Furthermore, the DfE sought to deliberately minimise burden on institutions in this respect. However, it would be helpful to any future evaluation if more detailed information could be captured from institutions on the nature and format of tuition delivered. It would be much more efficient and effective to capture this through monitoring rather than relying on surveys given the challenges engaging institutions in research.

If comprehensive data were to be captured on the format of tuition delivered (e.g. by length, frequency, duration and mode), this would enable subgroup analysis to be undertaken to inform a more detailed assessment of what works. In the absence of this detail, there is the potential that the overall assessment of impact is diluted.

We would recommend that a feasibility study is undertaken to explore options for delivering a more defined approach to small group tuition in 16-19 educational settings, which could potentially be scaled up in future to more robust experimental approaches.



Department
for Education

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Reference: RR1361

ISBN: 978-1-83870-484-1

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