



LEAPS

Promoting access to higher education
since 1996



LEAPS Annual Report Summary **2020-2021**

LEAPS is a partnership of the following organisations:



LEAPS is a successful and unique widening participation programme, funded by its higher education institution and local council partners to increase progression to higher education in South East Scotland.

LEAPS is also supported by Skills Development Scotland and delivers the Scottish Funding Council's Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) in South East Scotland, in partnership with the National Schools Programme.

Contents

Foreword and Aims	4
Objectives	5
Our Year in Numbers	5
LEAPS Eligibility and Schools	6
University Student Volunteers	8
LEAPS 2020-2021 Programme of Activity: S3 and S4	9
LEAPS 2020-2021 Programme of Activity: S5	10
LEAPS 2020-2021 Programme of Activity: S6	11
LEAPS Transitions Course	13
LEAPS Student Case Study – Hannah	14
LEAPS Link Teacher Case Study – John	15
Destinations of LEAPS-eligible Interviewed Students	16
LEAPS Financial Report	18
Conclusion and Future Developments	19

Foreword

Having joined LEAPS in August 2022 the majority of work shared in this report took place before my tenure. I wish to acknowledge the work of my predecessor Ged Lerpiniere and the rest of the LEAPS team, alongside the support of our partners who made the work outlined possible.

The Covid-19 pandemic continued throughout 2020-21 and the impact of this was felt by all. Ongoing restrictions across the education sector, resulting from the pandemic, necessitated the majority of LEAPS' work being delivered remotely.

With the length of time and amount of disruption experienced throughout the year, it is unsurprising that not all schools or young people felt able to participate in everything that was offered. Schools were still having to deliver much of their own provision online and young people were no different to the rest of us in feeling a sense of online fatigue.

As has always been of critical importance to LEAPS, dialogue and feedback from schools was sought to allow LEAPS to prioritise what delivery would be available. The aim was to maximise the support for students in a meaningful and accessible way at the time it would be most valuable. 56 students were prioritised given the acute impact of the pandemic on their education journey.

The good news is that, despite these challenges, LEAPS planned expansion to working with 73 schools was successful. During 2020-21 all schools engaged with LEAPS to ensure they were successfully on-boarded and could take part in the programme either in the year, or in the case of four schools, the following year. We are grateful to everyone who enabled this, especially in the circumstances, I am delighted that as I write this in February 2023 all 73 schools are now actively part of the LEAPS programme, the majority of which is back to being delivered in-person.

Further cause for celebration in 2020-21 was LEAPS launching the pilot of the new LEAPS Transitions Course. The course had been in development during 2019-20 and a hybrid delivery model had been envisaged which had to pivot online. However, it was a successful start to the Course which continues to grow on the back of this starting year.

Finally, in the midst of everything else that happened in 2020-21, LEAPS celebrated 25 years! A significant landmark which was marked with online events and communications. Now we look forward to delivering our 27th year and continuing to make progress in the future.

Kirsty Wadsley, Director, LEAPS

Aims

LEAPS is a unique partnership committed to widening access to higher education. We are dedicated to supporting the young people we work with.

Our aims are to raise the expectation of attainment in academic study, to encourage the view that access to higher education is realistic and achievable, and to support transitions into higher education.

Objectives

- To provide young people, and their parents, carers and guardians, with current, impartial and realistic information, advice and guidance relating to higher education in universities and colleges.
- To work in partnership with schools to identify LEAPS-eligible students and ensure they take part in LEAPS activities, helping to create a strong culture of progression to higher education within the schools in which we work.
- To support secondary school teaching staff by providing impartial information, advice and guidance relating to higher education admissions and widening access policy.
- To liaise with admissions and recruitment staff within higher education institutions to deliver LEAPS activities and to discuss opportunities and admissions on behalf of the young people we work with.
- To enhance the expectation of success in academic study and prepare students for higher education by promoting a positive attitude to learning via LEAPS activities.
- To provide LEAPS higher education institution partners with data relating to students who enter their institutions to enable monitoring of progression.

2020-2021 Our Year in Numbers

86%

of the 2020-2021 cohort of LEAPS-eligible interviewed students entered higher education (based on known destinations)

2085

final-year students were supported by the LEAPS pre-application service, receiving individualised advice and guidance regarding higher education options

2158

pre-application enquiries were sent to universities, to help inform students' UCAS choices

140+

live online sessions took place throughout the year to support LEAPS-eligible students

2021-2022

2109

final-year students were supported by the LEAPS pre-application service, receiving individualised advice and guidance regarding higher education options

2222

pre-application enquiries were sent to universities, to help inform students' UCAS choices

Please note, a comprehensive summary of LEAPS delivery for the 2021-2022 year will follow in a future annual report. The information here is intended as a snapshot only.

LEAPS Eligibility and Schools

LEAPS was created with the aim of encouraging and advising students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. In 2020-21, LEAPS worked with 73 secondary schools throughout South East Scotland.

Having extended its reach in the Forth Valley region due to the planned expansion of the Scottish Funding Council’s Schools for Higher Education Programme, LEAPS now works in all secondary schools across eight local authorities (City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Midlothian, Scottish Borders, Stirling and West Lothian).

As part of this expansion all LEAPS schools now receive elements of the Schools for Higher Education Programme, with a focus on supporting specific individuals who are underrepresented in higher education.

For 2020-2021, the 73 schools LEAPS worked with were divided into Group 1+ schools, Group 1 schools, and Group 2 schools. The level of support which LEAPS provides to each school is typically determined by the school’s rates of progression to higher education. The inclusion of schools in each group is reviewed on a regular basis.

LEAPS Group 1+ Schools

Schools in Group 1 + have rates of progression to higher education that are some way below the national average. For this reason, students in these schools are normally entitled to participate in all aspects of the LEAPS programme, from S3 to S6, as well as some bespoke activities.

1. Castlebrae Community High School
2. Craigroyston Community High School
3. Forrester High School
4. Liberton High School
5. Newbattle High School
6. Tynecastle High School
7. Wester Hailes High School

LEAPS Group 1 Schools

Schools in Group 1 have rates of progression to higher education that are below the national average. For this reason, students in these schools are normally entitled to participate in all aspects of the LEAPS programme, from S4 to S6.

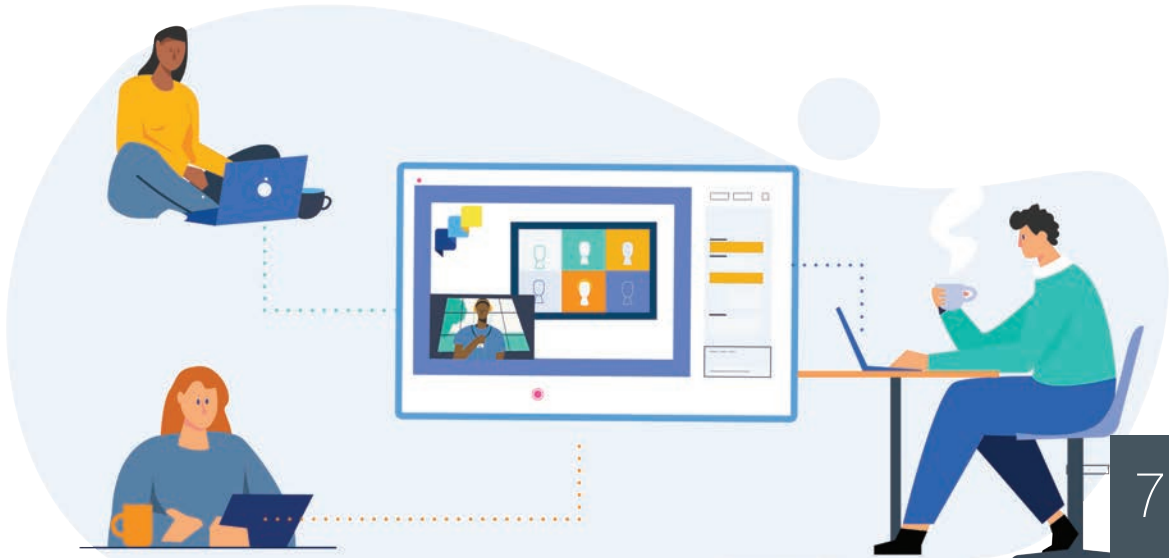
1. Alloa Academy
2. Armadale Academy
3. Bannockburn High School
4. Drummond Community High School
5. Eyemouth High School
6. Gracemount High School
7. Grangemouth High School
8. Lornhill Academy
9. Ross High School
10. St David’s RC High School



LEAPS Group 2 Schools

Schools in Group 2 typically have a more established tradition of students progressing to higher education. Students in these schools who match any of the LEAPS eligibility criteria (see www.leapsonline.org for details) are entitled to individualised support during S5 and S6, recognising that although the school might have an established rate of progression to higher education there are still students within the school who are underrepresented in higher education.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Alva Academy | 30. Kelso High School |
| 2. Balerno High School | 31. Knox Academy |
| 3. Balfron High School | 32. Larbert High School |
| 4. Bathgate Academy | 33. Lasswade High School |
| 5. Beeslack Community High School | 34. Leith Academy |
| 6. Berwickshire High School | 35. Linlithgow Academy |
| 7. Bo’ness Academy | 36. McLaren High School |
| 8. Boroughmuir High School | 37. Musselburgh Grammar School |
| 9. Braes High School | 38. North Berwick High School |
| 10. Broughton High School | 39. Peebles High School |
| 11. Broxburn Academy | 40. Penicuik High School |
| 12. Craigmount High School | 41. Portobello High School |
| 13. Currie Community High School | 42. Preston Lodge High School |
| 14. Dalkeith High School | 43. Queensferry High School |
| 15. Deans Community High School | 44. Royal High School |
| 16. Denny High School | 45. Selkirk High School |
| 17. Dunbar Grammar School | 46. St Augustine’s RC High School |
| 18. Dunblane High School | 47. St Kentigern’s Academy |
| 19. Earlston High School | 48. St Margaret’s Academy |
| 20. Falkirk High School | 49. St Modan’s High School |
| 21. Firrhill High School | 50. St Mungo’s High School |
| 22. Galashiels Academy | 51. St Thomas of Aquin’s RC High School |
| 23. Graeme High School | 52. Stirling High School |
| 24. Hawick High School | 53. Trinity Academy |
| 25. Holy Rood RC High School | 54. Wallace High School |
| 26. Inveralmond Community High School | 55. West Calder High School |
| 27. James Gillespie’s High School | 56. Whitburn Academy |
| 28. James Young High School | |
| 29. Jedburgh Grammar Campus | |



University Student Volunteers

Many of the events we deliver are designed around the input of current university students who choose to volunteer with LEAPS. Our university student volunteers are invaluable in bringing to life the benefits and challenges of higher education for young people. They come from across our partner institutions and study a variety of academic disciplines, offering a range of student experiences represented in our work with young people.

Our volunteers have traditionally supported us with in-person contributions at school-based workshops, campus visits, and conferences held at universities in and around Edinburgh. In 2020-2021, due to the continued impact of the pandemic, our programme was delivered remotely. After providing online volunteer training sessions, we were able to include university student volunteers in a range of digital opportunities across the LEAPS programme.

In 2020-2021 the LEAPS student volunteer team comprised 148 students studying at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. They supported 14 LEAPS events and made a total of 110 contributions to our 2020-2021 programme of activity and events. Please find further details of this within this report.

My experience with LEAPS started in S4 when I received some amazing advice from student volunteers who I can still remember to this day. So, when the opportunity to volunteer was given to me at university I jumped at the chance to help. I have loved giving top tips and words of advice to students as well as gaining self-confidence in speaking to audiences. It has been so rewarding to give something back to LEAPS who helped me when I needed advice.

**Lucy, Former LEAPS Volunteer & Student
(Graduate of Heriot-Watt University)**



LEAPS 2020-2021 Programme of Activity: S3 and S4

LEAPS delivers a range of activities from S3 through to S6.

The group of schools which took part in each LEAPS activity is indicated on the following pages using the key below: **G1+** = Group 1+ Schools **G1** = Group 1 Schools **G2** = Group 2 Schools (see pages 6 and 7 for more details.)

For the 2020-2021 school year, LEAPS-eligible students were offered our programme of activity as outlined on the following pages. This programme of activity was designed in close consultation with schools due to the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific feedback was sought on student engagement, online learning and teaching experiences, and key cohorts requiring support.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, our programme was delivered online during this period. For certain strands of our programme this provided us with some flexibility, and we were able to include LEAPS-eligible students from our Group 1 and Group 2 schools in some activities which they would not have participated in during previous years.

S3 The activity for S3 students is designed to raise aspirations, providing an early introduction to higher education and student life.

S3 Exploring University Workshop G1+ (March)

This live online workshop introduced S3 students to the role of LEAPS and to the idea of university as a possible future study option. With the help of university student volunteers, the workshop provided an early introduction to university and student life. Topics covered through discussion included the range of universities local to Edinburgh, learning and teaching at university, independent study, student accommodation, student sports clubs and societies and social opportunities.

- **6 online workshops reached 92 S3 students across 5 schools**

S4 The activities for S4 students are designed to raise aspirations and to encourage students to consider the range of opportunities at university and college.

S4 Exploring University Workshop G1+ G1 (April & May)

This live online workshop introduced S4 students to the role of LEAPS and to the idea of university as a possible future study option. It followed the same format as the S3 workshop outlined above.

We were mindful that this cohort had largely missed out on engaging with LEAPS in S3, as most of the on-campus sessions that they had been due to participate in the previous year (during March and April 2020) were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown. We kept this in mind when developing the content of this workshop and, for this reason, chose to follow the same format as the S3 Exploring University workshop due to the introduction it provided to LEAPS and higher education.

- **4 online workshops reached 60 S4 students across 4 schools**

S4 Conference & Resource G1+ G1 G2 (June)

We planned to offer a live online conference to S4 students, to support their transition to S5. However, due to a lack of sign-ups this event did not go ahead. Instead, an online resource was created to allow S4 students to explore higher education options further, including popular subjects available to study at university and college, key qualifications needed to achieve entry to these, and sample first-year university, HNC and HND, student timetables.

- **S4 online resource circulated to all schools engaged in the LEAPS programme**

Context Following a lockdown in January 2021, most in-person education settings closed until spring when a phased reopening of schools began. Feedback from teachers indicated that students were experiencing 'digital fatigue' in May and June, with students seemingly less willing to engage in online sessions having returned to in-person teaching full-time following the Easter break. This is reflected in the low uptake for the S4 workshops and the S4 conference in particular.

LEAPS 2020-2021 Programme of Activity: S5

S5 The S5 activities are designed to encourage students to recognise how valuable S5 is in terms of entry to college and university, with a particular focus on providing guidance around course choices and entry requirements. Advice is also provided via the LEAPS online blog for S5 students.

S5 Introduction to Higher Education Presentation G1+ G1 G2 (January)

This pre-recorded presentation outlined LEAPS eligibility criteria and support to S5 students, as well as providing an overview of higher education at college and university. It included key information relating to entry qualifications, application procedures, exit points and articulation (moving from college to university study). Students were invited to sign-up to our S5 mailing list to receive regular blog posts on a variety of topics to help them explore their higher education options.

- **S5 presentation circulated to all schools engaged in the LEAPS programme**

S5 Guidance Interviews G1+ G1 (January to March)

These one-to-one guidance interviews were carried out by phone. S5 students were able to discuss their higher education options and aims with a LEAPS advisor. Tailored advice on entry requirements was provided, to help students make informed S6 subject choices in line with their future higher education plans, as well as guidance on other opportunities that would strengthen an application such as work experience. Where phone interviews were unable to be scheduled, S5 Course Checker Forms were completed instead (see below).

- **501 S5 Interviews undertaken across 17 schools**

S5 Course Checker Forms G1+ G1 G2 (January to May)

S5 students were invited to complete our online S5 Course Checker Form, in order to receive an individualised email response from a LEAPS advisor to help them with their future higher education plans. As with the S5 Guidance Interviews, the focus was on key S6 subject choices and opportunities students could explore to help them make a strong higher education application. This was an optional offering primarily aimed at students in our Group 2 schools. This was also offered to students in our Group 1+ and Group 1 schools who missed their S5 Guidance Interview.

- **171 individualised responses were sent to S5 students across 36 schools**

S5 Parents' & Carers' Information Session G1+ G1 G2 (March)

This asynchronous information session was designed for parents and carers of S5 students. It included pre-recorded presentations and online resources. Topics covered included LEAPS support, the higher education application process, student funding, a guide to contacting colleges and universities with applicant queries, a higher education student panel, and advice on researching course options and routes and choosing S6 subjects.

- **S5 session circulated to all schools engaged in the LEAPS programme**

S5 Conference & Higher Education Exhibitions G1+ G1 G2 (May)

This live online conference and live online higher education exhibitions were for S5 students. The events aimed to help students understand the fundamentals of applying to higher education courses at college and university, and to support them to identify ways in which they could strengthen their applications. Topics covered included effective course research, understanding entry requirements, student funding and student life. Current university students, and colleagues from higher education institutions and SAAS, contributed to these events. Asynchronous resources were shared following the event to reach those unable to attend the live sessions.

- **73 S5 students attended the live online conference**
- **36 S5 students attended the two live online higher education exhibitions**
- **Asynchronous resources were circulated to all schools engaged in the LEAPS programme**

Context Following a lockdown in January 2021, most in-person education settings closed until spring when a phased reopening of schools began. The majority of students did not return to classrooms until after the Easter break at the end of April. It was an extremely challenging time for all, and engagement with our programme of activity was impacted as a result. We were extremely thankful to our LEAPS Link Teachers. Without their support, we would not have reached the students, parents and carers that we did.

LEAPS 2020-2021 Programme of Activity: S6

S6 The S6 activities are designed to provide further support to students as they apply to higher education, to ensure an effective transition to – and success in – their future studies. Advice is also provided via the LEAPS online blog for S6 students.

S6 What is LEAPS? Presentation G1+ G1 G2 (August & February)

This pre-recorded presentation reminded S6 students about LEAPS and the specific support LEAPS offers to LEAPS-eligible students who are aiming for higher education study. It was circulated at two key points in the year – one version in August, as students started their final year of school and began to consider their post-school options, and a second updated version in February after the UCAS deadline had passed. It reminded students that LEAPS support is available throughout the entire application cycle and with the transition into higher education.

- **S6 presentation circulated to all schools engaged in the LEAPS programme**

S6 Pre-application Interviews G1+ G1 G2 (August to November)

These one-to-one guidance interviews were carried out by phone. Students were able to discuss their potential higher education applications with a LEAPS advisor. Tailored, impartial advice and guidance was provided around potential course choices, entry requirements, and ways in which their application could be strengthened. As part of this interview, students had their LEAPS eligibility checked and confirmed so that it could be highlighted to higher education institutions for contextual admissions consideration. In some cases, pre-application enquiries to universities were raised on a student's behalf to reassure them of a likely offer and any conditions that might need to be met.

- **2085 final-year students from 69 schools were supported by the LEAPS pre-application service**

Amazing! Person I worked with was so helpful and so friendly, made applying to university seem a lot less scary, and guided me through my thoughts on my choices. I was unaware of the course that I have now applied for before I was recommended it by my LEAPS interviewer. Couldn't thank you enough.

S6 Personal Statement Resource G1+ G1 G2 (October)

This online resource supported students with their UCAS personal statement. It comprised two pre-recorded presentations, two blog posts, and a downloadable PDF guide. Advice on how to start writing a UCAS personal statement was provided, but there was a particular focus on how to edit and refine a draft with plenty of practical tips and exercises to help students to perfect and finalise their statement. Students were guided through various exercises by a member of the LEAPS team and by Fellows of the Royal Literary Fund, and were able to consult our Quick Reference Guide to Editing your UCAS Personal Statement.

- **2085 final-year students from 69 schools were sent this online resource**



LEAPS 2020-2021 Programme of Activity: S6

S6 Post-application UCAS Resource G1+ G1 G2 (January)

This interactive digital resource was made available online for students to access at any time. It guided students through the key steps – and considerations – required in the UCAS cycle after an application has been submitted. It covered how to make choices and respond to offers, the importance of post-application events, student finance, and how to explore college pathways and back-up options.

- 2085 final-year students from 69 schools were sent this online resource

S6 Unicafe Workshop G1+ G1 G2 (February to March)

This live online workshop provided an informal environment in which students were able to chat to current university students about any aspect of the transition from school to university – academic, social, moving away from home, any topic they wanted to explore. Students were encouraged to make a hot drink beforehand to try and bring a relaxed café-style vibe to the session. (Prior to the pandemic this session ran in person and we provided the teas and coffees!).

- 57 final-year students from 32 schools attended 5 online workshops

Widening Access to the Creative Industries Sessions G1+ G1 G2 (November)

Delivered by the WACI team at the Royal Conservatoire Scotland, these free online sessions primarily focused on audition and interview preparation for students aiming for higher education courses in the creative areas of Acting, Singing, Filmmaking and Theatre. The aim was to support students with the ‘extras’ over and above the academic qualifications required for creative applications.

- 17 final-year students from 14 schools attended multiple workshops

Results Day Helpline G1+ G1 G2 (August)

The LEAPS Results Day Helpline provided LEAPS-eligible students with key support as they received their verified grades on SQA Results Day. LEAPS advisers provided advice and guidance on a range of topics, including looking at courses available in Clearing, college options, and (if a student was moving into S6) any essential subjects to be achieved in S6 if a student was aiming for a particular higher education course.

- 28 students from 23 schools were supported by LEAPS around Results Day

Context SQA exams were cancelled due to the ongoing disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. Grades were awarded based on teacher judgement, supported by assessment resources and quality assurance. Students were issued provisional results in June. SQA verified grade data was made available to universities and colleges in August, meaning that they could not confirm places until SQA Results Day. We advised students holding conditional offers to explore back-up plans (as usual), but to wait until SQA Results Day to see the outcome of their application before making any changes to it.



LEAPS Transitions Course



The LEAPS Transitions Course is an S6 timetable option for LEAPS-eligible students. The aim of the course is to help students make a positive transition from school to university. It replaces the LEAPS Summer School, which previously ran for seven weeks each summer. The course is supported by academics, academic developers and librarians from our partner universities, as well as writing Fellows from the Royal Literary Fund, who contribute to the advisory group, lecture series, marking and moderation processes, and students' wider academic development.

The LEAPS Transitions Course pilot took place in 2020-2021 and involved LEAPS-eligible students from Midlothian secondary schools only. The initial plan was for a blended delivery model, comprising both on-campus and online sessions. However, due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the pilot took place entirely online. Sessions ran on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from September 2020 to March 2021, ensuring sustained engagement with the cohort.

I've learnt a lot about the academic skills I will need for university, as well as the standard of work that will be expected of me. I've gained a lot through being able to practise independent learning and tutorial discussions before going to university.

The LEAPS Transitions Course prepared me for how the university system works, and how online learning works at a university level. It was good practice for university.

**Emma, Former LEAPS Transitions Course Student
(Currently studying at the University of Glasgow)**

Designed to give students the skills and experience needed to make a positive transition from school to university, it focused on developing key first-year university-level academic skills. Topics covered included academic writing, critical thinking, referencing and plagiarism, discussion and presentation skills and feedback. There was also a lectures series as well as both independent study and group work.

The course was benchmarked at SCQF Level 7 (first-year university level) and students on the course completed three assessments. It provided students with an opportunity to demonstrate to university admissions staff that they have 'what it takes' to cope with degree-level work.

- 27 students completed the LEAPS Transitions Course from 5 Midlothian secondary schools
- More than 125 live online sessions were delivered throughout the LEAPS Transitions Course

LEAPS Student Case Study

Hannah's Story

Former LEAPS-eligible student at Penicuik High School & Former LEAPS Transitions Course Student

Currently studying: BSc Midwifery at Robert Gordon University



I first found out about LEAPS through my school teachers, and in my final year of school I took the LEAPS Transitions Course to help me prepare for university.

Since I was the first of all of my family to attend university, I was nervous and didn't know what to expect. LEAPS helped me to understand university courses, and the level of work that would be expected. Learning how to write an academic essay with citations was so helpful. I've used many skills I learnt on the course more than once now I'm at university, and I can even help my friends who may be struggling.

The LEAPS sessions ran every week from September to March. Our tutor groups were small and friendly, and everyone could speak freely. In these groups we were set tasks for the following week to do as homework to share with the group. We had a few assessments during the course – a presentation as a group task, an essay report, and a leaflet task. With all of these assessments I was supported well, and if needed there was one-to-one support available from our tutors. The support and interaction was great, and feedback was personal and constructive.

Even though my course at university is very practical, the academic skills I developed through LEAPS have helped my education so much. I've written reflection pieces, academic essays and have more to come in second year.

LEAPS prepared me for the unknown, and for the level of work that is expected at university. Without this course, I know for a fact I would have struggled when it came to the theory section of my university course.

“Since I was the first of all of my family to attend university, I was nervous and didn't know what to expect. LEAPS helped me to understand university courses, and the level of work that would be expected ... Without this course, I know for a fact I would have struggled when it came to the theory section of my university course.”

LEAPS Link Teacher Case Study

John's Story

LEAPS Link Teacher at Newbattle High School



I first found out about LEAPS when I joined Newbattle High School and became the LEAPS Link Teacher. This was over 20 years ago now, but my first impressions of the LEAPS team were positive – the team were supporting the school, helping our students make the step into university.

LEAPS delivers a wide-ranging programme for our school students, from S3 to S6, and as a priority school we have taken part in most of the activities offered by LEAPS.

The constant input from LEAPS each year to our school is the most valuable aspect of the programme, as it keeps the thought of university in students' minds going forward. Inviting students in S3 to see what life at university is like means they can experience at an early age something they might like to go on to achieve. Working with students year-on-year until they leave school helps to keep their minds focused on what's needed to attain their goals.

Our S3 students thoroughly enjoy the visit to the university campus, and being taken around the various areas of interest. Creating a report and delivering it in front of their peers is also a learning experience for them. The workshop for our S4 students opens their eyes to what university life is like and also gives them the chance to speak to current university students and find out from them what university is really like. Our senior students get a lot from the one-to-one higher education guidance interviews that they receive in S5 and S6. Tailored advice is given, which enables our students to make the right decisions for their future.

The support offered by LEAPS gives our students an insight into what university life is like, and what they need to do to get there. What LEAPS offers our school is invaluable to our students. A lot of our students find this guidance very valuable and, for some, it can be the difference between making it to university or not.

“The constant input from LEAPS each year to our school is the most valuable aspect of the programme, as it keeps the thought of university in students' minds going forward ... Working with students year-on-year until they leave school helps to keep their minds focused on what's needed to attain their goals.”

Destinations of LEAPS-eligible Interviewed Students

We track the destinations of LEAPS-eligible students who receive a pre-application interview and are supported by LEAPS. Their initial destination is shown in the following tables, firstly by council and secondly by higher education institution.

Table 1: Total destinations by local authority

Destinations of LEAPS Students	City of Edinburgh	Clackmannanshire	East Lothian	Falkirk	Mid-lothian	Scottish Borders	Stirling	West Lothian	Total 2021	Total 2020	Total 2019
University	473 72%	47 72%	167 77%	145 78%	131 74%	143 77%	60 78%	303 73%	1469 74%	1144 66%	1212 64%
College - HNC/HND	70 11%	* *	16 7%	22 12%	19 11%	15 8%	* *	66 16%	230 12%	265 15%	258 14%
College - other courses	55 8%	* *	13 6%	5 3%	10 6%	5 3%	* *	18 4%	111 6%	122 7%	168 9%
Employment	39 6%	* *	10 5%	* *	11 6%	17 9%	* *	18 4%	108 5%	120 7%	183 10%
Unemployment	7 1%	0 0%	* *	0 0%	* *	* *	* *	* *	17 1%	32 2%	8 0%
Other destinations	15 2%	0 0%	* *	* *	* *	* *	* *	* *	45 2%	52 3%	79 4%
Total Number of Students - Known Destinations	659	65	216	186	176	186	77	415	1980	1735	1908

Other destinations' shown above from 2021 include voluntary work, training, school pupil and modern apprenticeship.

The percentages in the above table have been rounded and are based on known destination information shown in the table.

The destinations of 105 students across the local authorities are unknown (5.04% of the total). This figure was 4.57% in 2020 and 3.83% in 2019. These have been omitted from the table above.

* Value could provide information on a cohort of less than five or has been suppressed to prevent calculation of data for a small cohort

Table 2: University & College Destinations

Destinations of LEAPS Students	Total 2021	Total 2020	Total 2019
UNIVERSITIES			
Edinburgh	251	195	167
Edinburgh Napier	250	226	254
Heriot-Watt	180	163	139
Stirling	105	73	75
Glasgow	96	72	63
Strathclyde	93	52	69
Aberdeen	78	46	60
Queen Margaret	72	84	73
Dundee	65	68	66
Glasgow Caledonian	59	27	41
St Andrews	38	14	24
Robert Gordon	34	26	36
Abertay	28	27	31
West of Scotland	26	25	23
SRUC - Higher Education	15	11	8
Other Universities	79	35	83
UNIVERSITY TOTAL	1469	1144	1212
COLLEGES			
Edinburgh College	185	223	244
West Lothian College	55	55	71
Forth Valley College	30	18	24
City of Glasgow College	23	30	30
Borders College	12	18	17
Other Colleges	36	43	40
COLLEGE TOTAL	341	387	426
OVERALL TOTAL	1810	1531	1638

It should be noted that data in both tables for 2021 is based on the School Leaver Destination Returns (SLDR) provided by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to LEAPS in July 2022.

The total number of LEAPS students for whom we sought a destination was 2085 in 2021 compared to 1818 in 2020 and 1984 in 2019.

Universities intake returns to the Higher Education Statistics Agency are available from partner universities.

Financial Report

LEAPS Financial Report September 2020 to August 2021

LEAPS is financed by a combination of contributions from LEAPS partners and the Scottish Funding Council.

In 2020-21 the LEAPS Local Council and University partners contributed £289,187.

Additionally, the Scottish Funding Council provided funding of £418,649 for delivery of the Schools for Higher Education Programme in the South East Region of Scotland. LEAPS expanded to offer full delivery of activities to all 73 schools in the South East of Scotland in 2020-21. This funding provided development, delivery, management and reporting of all activities relating to the Schools for Higher Education Programme.

It was agreed to set aside a redundancy contingency fund before the budget was set for 2020-21.

The LEAPS Budget is carefully managed and is shown below. This covers delivery across all 73 LEAPS schools and a note of the previous year's actual spend is also shown for comparison purposes. The spend for 2020-21 continued to be affected by impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as LEAPS continued to move delivery online.

Expenditure	Actual spend total - Sep 2020 to Aug 2021	Sep 2020 - Aug 2021 Budget	Actual spend total - Sep 2019 to Aug 2020
Staffing Costs	£535,728.01	£549,201	£520,283.75
General Budget	£16,831.43	£49,590	£33,008.09
Schools Programme	£1,266.35	£46,950	£20,231.04
Transition Events	£11,406.35	£24,100	£1,402.48
Non Recurrent	£8,357.90	£31,249	£13,939.88
Totals	£573,590.04	£701,090	£588,865.24

LEAPS would like to extend its grateful thanks to its partners, whose staff provide valuable in-kind contributions throughout the year. This includes the support of The University of Edinburgh who host LEAPS and provide Finance, IT Support and Human Resource services.

Conclusion and Future Developments

Writing this in 2023 when LEAPS is working in all schools in-person, it is important not to forget the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing economic crisis for the young people LEAPS works with. The report shows the effort required to deliver opportunities for students during the disruption of the pandemic. The tremendous work of all involved meant a large number of students still got access to information, advice, and guidance, at the time they needed it most. LEAPS also brought a new model of bridging programme into being to support students' transition to higher education. No small feat! The continued expansion of the LEAPS Transitions Course and LEAPS information, advice, and guidance work now across all schools is testament to the vision and work created.

As the rising cost of living puts even greater pressure on the areas and individuals already worst hit by inequality, we need to ask ourselves – how do we keep opportunities open and accessible?

LEAPS is in a unique position with the breadth of partners involved, and the experience this brings. As a long-standing and respected provider of information, advice, and guidance, experiential activities, and work that bridges the transition to university, now more than ever we need to draw on this to address the challenges being faced by those we seek to support.

Now is the time to review what we have learned from online work and how we can continue to facilitate a programme across a large and diverse geographic area. Information, advice, and guidance is critical for young people with their unprecedented experience in education these last few years and the continuing impact of this on their future. Expansion of the LEAPS Transitions Course from the pilot in LEAPS schools in Midlothian only in 2020-21, to 100 places offered across all LEAPS schools in all LEAPS local authorities for 2023-24, has been a step-change in provision. With a national focus on bridging programmes – we need to ask how do we work effectively to ensure there are relevant exit points for all students?

We cannot escape that we continue to need resource in challenging times and, with that, further developing our evidence of impact thus demonstrating we are maximising our potential alongside that of our students is vital. The voice of our school partners and students has always been important to us, and now more than ever we need to keep listening and involving them as we review our programme and delivery models. Most critically we need to keep sight of what LEAPS does best and keep all that is valuable and important to LEAPS in whatever developments the future holds.

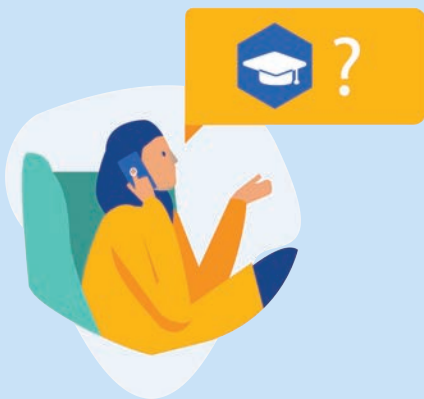
Many sincere thanks to all our partners and those who continue to support us in the delivery of our work.

Kirsty Wadsley, Director, LEAPS

LEAPS is a successful and unique widening participation programme, funded by its higher education institution and local council partners to increase progression to higher education in South East Scotland.

LEAPS is also supported by Skills Development Scotland.

LEAPS delivers the Scottish Funding Council's Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) in South East Scotland, in partnership with the National Schools Programme.



PROMOTING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION SINCE 1996

The LEAPS Office Room 1/06 Old Moray House Holyrood Road Edinburgh EH8 8AQ

Telephone: **0131 650 4676** Email: leaps@ed.ac.uk Website: www.leapsonline.org

Twitter and Instagram:

[@leaps1996](https://twitter.com/leaps1996)

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact: leaps@ed.ac.uk

Design: Graphic Design Service, LTW, ISG, The University of Edinburgh www.ed.ac.uk/is/graphic-design