



LEAPS

Promoting access to higher education
since 1996



Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools
Annual Report Summary 2018-2019

This report outlines the LEAPS programme's activity for the period 2018-2019.

At LEAPS we regularly review the composition of our school groupings, and this period saw us create three groups – what we refer to as our Group 1+, Group 1, and Group 2 schools – allowing us to further tailor the level of support we offer to the schools in each group. As a result of this review, four schools which are part of the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) in South East Scotland became Group 2 schools for the first time. This should be viewed in a positive light, as it shows that there has been significant improvement in progression to higher education in those schools. (Please see page 5 for more details of our school groupings.)

In terms of delivery and outcomes, this has been a successful year for LEAPS. We delivered over 250 events to school students across the year groups S3 to S6, both in school and in higher education institution settings. Of the 1984 final-year students supported by the LEAPS pre-application service, 78% of them went on to higher education study – 64% to degree level study at university and 14% to study an HNC or an HND at college. In

total, 2414 pre-application enquiries were sent to universities on behalf of students to help inform their applications to higher education study – a phenomenal effort by all involved.

One noticeable change in our 2018-2019 programme was that the Summer School did not take place. The Summer School has run to a similar format for over twenty years, and as a partnership we feel the time is right to review the delivery of this crucial element of our work. Moving forward, LEAPS will be conducting research into redeveloping the Summer School and will focus on exploring alternative ways in which we can support senior phase school students to prepare for the transition from school to higher education study.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners and stakeholders across universities, colleges, the Scottish Funding Council, local authorities and schools for their continued support.

We hope you enjoy reading about the LEAPS programme's activity for 2018-2019 in this report.

Ged Lerpiniere, Director, LEAPS

2018-2019 Our Year in Numbers

250+

More than 250 LEAPS events took place

1984

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

78%

of the 2018-2019 cohort of LEAPS-eligible interviewed students entered higher education (based on known destinations)



2414

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

LEAPS was created with the aim of encouraging and advising students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

LEAPS works with 59 schools throughout South East Scotland. For 2018-2019, these 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.

Group 1+ Schools

Schools in Group 1+ typically 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.

Castlebrae Community High School*
 Craigoyston Community High School*
 Forrester High School*
 Liberton High School*
 Newbattle Community High School*
 Tynecastle High School*
 Wester Hailes Education Centre*

LEAPS Group 1 Schools

Schools in Group 1 typically 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.

Alloa Academy*
 Armadale Academy*
 Bannockburn High School*
 Drummond Community High School*
 Eyemouth High School*
 Gracemount High School*
 Grangemouth High School*
 Lornhill Academy*
 Ross High School
 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) are entitled to individualised support during S5 and S6.

Balerno High School
 Bathgate Academy
 Beeslack Community High School
 Berwickshire High School
 Boroughmuir High School
 Broughton High School
 Broxburn Academy
 Craigmount High School
 Currie Community High School
 Dalkeith High School
 Deans Community High School
 Dunbar Grammar School
 Earlston High School
 Firrhill High School
 Galashiels Academy
 Hawick High School*
 Holy Rood RC High School
 Inveralmond Community High School*
 James Gillespie's High School
 James Young High School
 Jedburgh Grammar School
 Kelso High School
 Knox Academy
 Lasswade High School
 Leith Academy*
 Linlithgow Academy
 Musselburgh Grammar School
 North Berwick High School
 Peebles High School
 Penicuik High School
 Portobello High School
 Preston Lodge High School
 Queensferry High School
 Royal High School
 Selkirk High School
 St Augustine's RC High School
 St Kentigern's Academy
 St Margaret's Academy
 St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School
 Trinity Academy
 West Calder High School
 Whitburn Academy*

*Part of the Schools for Higher Education Programme

Aims and Objectives

Aims

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

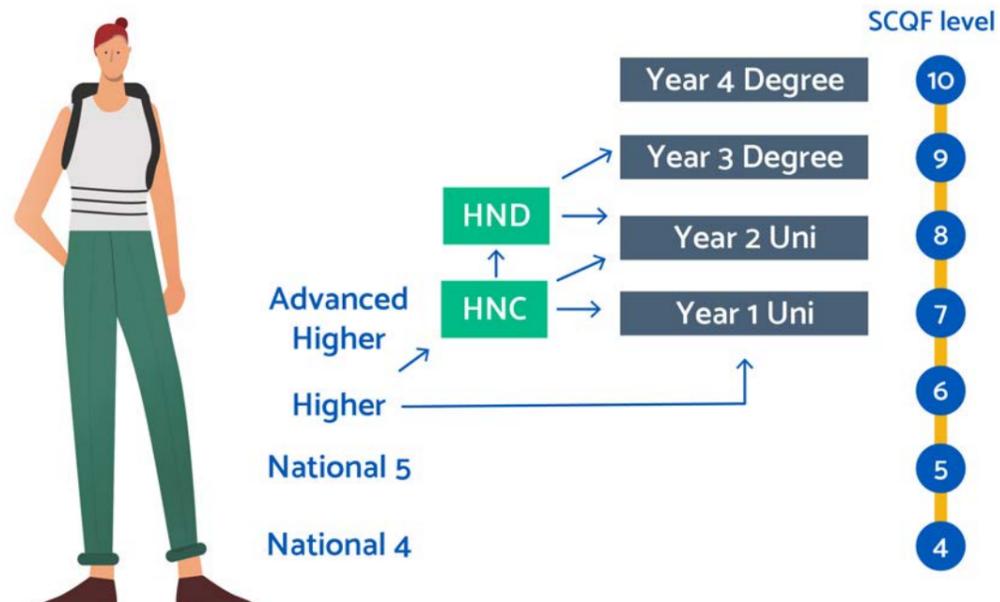
Our aims are to raise the expectation of attainment in academic study, to encourage the view that access to higher education is realistic and achievable, and to support transitions into higher education.

“LEAPS came into my school and held talks about the application process for university. This was something no one in my family had ever done before. Their talks started to open my eyes to the possibility of going to university.”

A former LEAPS-eligible student and LEAPS Volunteer (Graduate of the University of Edinburgh)

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.



University Student Volunteers

Many of the events we deliver are designed around the input of current university students who choose to volunteer with LEAPS, including school-based workshops, campus visits and conferences held at universities in and around Edinburgh.

Our student volunteers are invaluable in helping us to make the young people we work with aware of the benefits and challenges of higher education. They come from across our partner institutions and study a variety of academic disciplines, offering a range of student experiences to draw upon.

In 2018-2019 the LEAPS student volunteer team comprised 77 students studying at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. They supported 62 LEAPS events and made a total of 320 contributions to our 2018-2019 programme of activity and events.

“Thank you for allowing all these opportunities, I really have enjoyed my time with LEAPS both as a student and as a volunteer.”

A former LEAPS-eligible student and LEAPS Volunteer (Graduate of Edinburgh Napier University)

“My experience with LEAPS couldn’t have been more positive; they have shaped my university experience for the better. In my last two years I have been a student volunteer with LEAPS and loved it. We run workshops and conferences with school pupils, enabling them to meet real students from backgrounds similar to their own. It truly feels great to give something back, and I will always be grateful for the work done by LEAPS. I can really see myself in the pupils we work with and hope that I can give them the same help and advice that I received. It is so important that students from all backgrounds know that they are valued at university and their place is just as important as anyone else’s.”

A former LEAPS-eligible student and LEAPS Volunteer (Graduate of the University of Edinburgh)



LEAPS delivers a range of activities, both in and out of school, from S3 through to S6. The group of schools entitled to take 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 page 5 for more details.)

For the 2018-2019 school year, eligible pupils in Group 1+ and Group 1 schools participated in our S3 and S4 programme of activity as outlined below. More details about these activities can be found on our website www.leapsonline.org

S3

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

On Campus **G1+**

This campus-based event gives students the chance to explore university facilities as they gather images and information to create a presentation about an aspect of university life. University student volunteers are key to its success, acting as guides around the campus and providing a direct insight into university life. As part of this activity, students are also encouraged to consider which school subjects are required for certain higher education courses and explore different pathways into a variety of careers.

7 events reached 220 students

S4

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

Courses & Qualifications Workshop **G1+ G1**

This workshop runs over a school period. Students explore different aspects of higher education life with the help of a current university student, our 'uni experts'. Conversation cards are used as prompts and topics include what learning is like at university, student social life, and the transition to becoming a more independent learner.

27 events reached 642 students

High Flyers **G1+**

High Flyers takes place as students are transitioning from S4 to S5, aiming to inspire them to further consider post-school higher education options and what might be required to achieve them.

42 students attended High Flyers in June 2019

This event is delivered in conjunction with four of our partner institutions, Edinburgh Napier University, Heriot-Watt University, Queen Margaret University and the University of Edinburgh. Students attend a range of academic and social sessions at each of these local universities, supported by current university student mentors.

For the 2018-2019 school year, eligible pupils in Group 1+, Group 1 and Group 2 schools participated in our S5 and S6 programme of activity as outlined on the following pages. More details about these activities can be found on our website www.leapsonline.org

S5

The activities for S5 students encourage students to recognise how valuable S5 is in terms of entry to college and university, providing advice and guidance on course choices and entry requirements.

Introduction to Higher Education Presentation **G1+ G1 G2**

Focusing on a timeline, students are given an overview of higher education including key aspects such as entry qualifications, application procedures, exit points and articulation. The support LEAPS offers to eligible students aiming for higher education study at college or university is also explained.

66 events reached 4752 students

Typical Student Week Workshop **G1+ G1**

Students interview a current university student volunteer about their typical week at university, learning about the focus on independent study at university and the difference in learning styles in comparison to school.

21 events reached 581 students

S5 Interviews **G1+**

In this one-to-one interview with a LEAPS adviser, students are identified as having the potential to go on to higher education and are offered tailored advice and guidance on entry requirements, S6 course choices and opportunities such as work experience required for certain courses.

157 S5 Interviews undertaken

S5 Higher Education Guidance Sessions **G1**

Following a short presentation to a cohort of students, which focuses on how to select higher education courses, students are offered a short one-to-one guidance session with a LEAPS adviser to discuss higher education course entry requirements and any other relevant application guidance for courses that they are considering.

212 S5 HE Guidance Sessions undertaken

Conference for S5 Students **G1+ G1 G2**

The S5 Conference is a campus-based event designed to help students begin making decisions about their future studies. Students can collect course information and speak to college and university staff and students, as well as learn strategies for selecting courses and for making an effective higher education application.

209 students attended the S5 Conference

S5 Parents' & Carers' Information Evening **G1+ G1 G2**

This event for parents and carers of S5 LEAPS-eligible students outlines the support LEAPS offer to LEAPS-eligible students who are considering college or university. It includes sessions about choosing higher education courses, applying to college and university, and the financing of higher education study.

1 event reached 149 attendees

LEAPS 2018-2019 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.

What is LEAPS? Presentation G1+ G2

This presentation is designed to remind the S6 cohort about the support LEAPS can offer them as they begin to apply to higher education.

49 events reached 3547 students

Local University Open Days G1+

University Open Days provide a chance for students to visit institutions to find out more about the courses on offer and what it is like to study there. Students planning to apply to university were invited to attend local university open days in autumn 2018, along with LEAPS advisers, to help them explore their options and make informed applications to higher education.

22 students attended the Edinburgh Napier University Open Day

29 students attended the Heriot-Watt University Open Day

15 students attended the Queen Margaret University Open Day

23 students attended the University of Edinburgh Open Day

Pre-application Interview G1+ G1 G2

The pre-application interview is an opportunity for students to discuss their potential higher education applications in detail in a one-to-one setting with a LEAPS adviser, along with actions they can undertake to help strengthen their applications. It may be followed up by a pre-application enquiry to a university on a student's behalf, to reassure them of a likely offer and any conditions that might need to be met.

1984 final-year students were supported by the LEAPS pre-application service

Post-UCAS Application Session G1+ G1 G2

This session provides an overview of the UCAS process after an application has been submitted, including how to make choices and respond to offers, the importance of post-application events, and how to explore college pathways and back-up options.

57 events reached 1285 students

Unicafe Workshop G1+

In this informal, relaxed session, students chat to current university students about any aspect of the transition from school to university – academic, social, moving away, anything they want to explore.

5 events reached 109 students

Advice and guidance is also provided via the LEAPS online blogs for S5 and S6 students. We also attend school parents' evenings and UCAS events where possible.

S6

S6 Sessions G1+ G1 G2

The S6 Sessions are designed to help students put in an excellent application to college or university, and then aid their transition to higher education. These optional activities offer final-year students who are applying to higher education study a more flexible way to engage with targeted LEAPS support. Across 2018-2019, sessions included;

Personal Statement Workshop

This interactive workshop helps students to put the final touches to their UCAS personal statement. Students are supported to edit a completed draft of their personal statement, with guidance from LEAPS advisers and Royal Literary Fellows.

67 students took part in the Personal Statement Workshop

Creative Extras

Creative Extras is a series of activities designed to offer advice, guidance and experience with portfolio, audition and interview preparation; the 'extras' over and above the academic requirements for creative higher education applications.

37 students took part in the Art & Design Week

8 students took part in the Journalism Workshop

16 students took part in the Acting Workshops

Preparing for your UCAS Nursing Interview Workshop

This workshop is designed to support students who have received an invitation to interview for entry to a nursing or midwifery course at university, a crucial part of the selection process. An academic who conducts interviews for these courses and current nursing students provide advice and insights to help students prepare for the interview process.

35 students took part in the Nursing Workshop

Preparing for your UCAS Teaching Interview Workshop

This workshop is designed to support students who have received an invitation to interview for entry to a teaching course at university, a crucial part of the selection process. A member of a university admissions team, current teaching students, and current teachers provide advice and insights to help students prepare for the interview process.

22 students took part in the Teaching Workshop

Unicafe On-Campus Workshop

In this informal, relaxed session, students visit a university campus and chat to current university students about any aspect of the transition from school to university. It also provides the chance to make new connections, as students may meet others from nearby schools at the event who are also planning to go on to higher education study.

23 students took part in the Unicafe On-Campus Workshop

Higher Education at College Workshop

This workshop focuses on studying at college in Scotland, including applying for HNC and HND qualifications and how you can use these to progress to university. A current HN student and a current university student who used the college route to get into university share their own experiences of this higher education study route.

5 students took part in the Higher Education at College Workshop

Destinations of LEAPS-eligible Interviewed Students

We track the destinations of LEAPS-eligible students who receive a pre-application interview and who 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 | East Lothian | Midlothian | West Lothian | Scottish Borders | Forth Valley | Total 2019 | Total 2018 | Total 2017 |
|--|-------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| University % | 436 65% | 150 61% | 107 70% | 288 64% | 138 60% | 93 59% | 1212 64% | 1258 63% | 1255 59% |
| College-HNC/HND % | 88 13% | 20 8% | 12 8% | 77 17% | 30 13% | 31 20% | 258 14% | 296 15% | 363 17% |
| College-other courses % | 72 11% | 23 9% | 13 8% | 33 7% | 15 7% | 12 8% | 168 9% | 164 8% | 202 10% |
| Employment % | 54 8% | 33 13% | 12 8% | 37 8% | 35 15% | 12 8% | 183 10% | 162 8% | 236 11% |
| Unemployment % | * | * | * | * | * | * | 8 0% | 25 1% | 24 1% |
| Other destinations % | * | * | * | * | * | * | 79 4% | 82 4% | 39 2% |
| Total Number of Students - Known Destinations | 671 | 245 | 153 | 453 | 229 | 157 | 1908 | 1987 | 2119 |

Other destinations shown above from 2019 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 76 students across the local authorities are unknown (3.83% of the total). This figure was 3.36% in 2018 and 3.37% in 2017. 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 and College destinations

| Destinations of LEAPS students | Total 2019 | Total 2018 | Total 2017 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Universities | | | |
| Edinburgh Napier | 254 | 279 | 187 |
| Edinburgh | 167 | 205 | 355 |
| Heriot-Watt | 139 | 144 | 145 |
| Stirling | 75 | 76 | 73 |
| Queen Margaret | 73 | 61 | 69 |
| Strathclyde | 69 | 57 | 38 |
| Dundee | 66 | 67 | 74 |
| Glasgow | 63 | 49 | 42 |
| Aberdeen | 60 | 46 | 28 |
| Glasgow Caledonian | 41 | 28 | 53 |
| Robert Gordon | 36 | 38 | 54 |
| Abertay | 31 | 39 | 28 |
| St Andrews | 24 | 35 | 23 |
| West of Scotland | 23 | 33 | 20 |
| Highlands and Islands - Higher Education | 11 | 16 | 23 |
| SRUC - Higher Education | 8 | 11 | 12 |
| Other Universities | 72 | 74 | 31 |
| University Total | 1212 | 1258 | 1255 |
| Colleges | | | |
| Edinburgh College | 244 | 285 | 357 |
| West Lothian College | 71 | 59 | 88 |
| City of Glasgow College | 30 | 28 | 26 |
| Forth Valley College | 24 | 28 | 25 |
| Borders College | 17 | 22 | 31 |
| New College Lanarkshire | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Other Colleges | 34 | 33 | 31 |
| College Total | 426 | 460 | 565 |
| Overall Total | 1638 | 1718 | 1820 |

Table 1 and 2 notes

It should be noted that data in both tables for 2019 is based on the School Leaver Destination Returns (SLDR) provided by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to LEAPS in August 2020.

The total number of LEAPS students for whom we sought a destination was 1984 in 2019, compared to 2056 in 2018 and 2193 in 2017.

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

Financial Report

September 2018 to August 2019

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

In 2018-19 the LEAPS Local Council and University partners contributed £289,187.

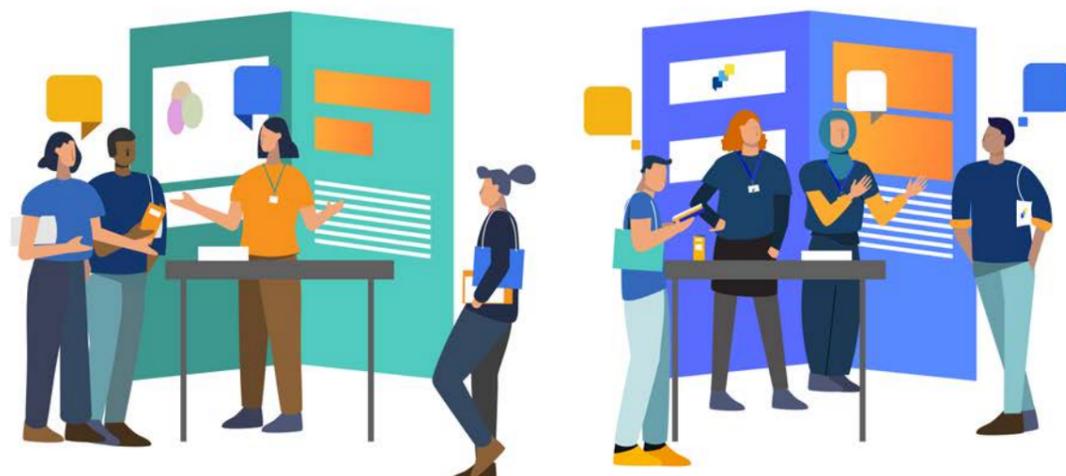
Additionally, the SFC provided funding of £328,825 for delivery of the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) in the South East region of Scotland. SHEP is delivered by LEAPS across 19 schools in this region. This funding provided development, delivery, management and reporting of SHEP activities.

It was agreed to set aside a redundancy contingency fund before the budget was set for 2018-19.

The LEAPS Budget is carefully managed and is shown below. This covers delivery across all 59 LEAPS schools (including the 19 SHEP schools) and a note of the previous year's actual spend is also shown for comparison purposes.

| Expenditure | Actual spend total – Sep 2018 to Aug 2019 | Sep 2018- Aug 2019 Budget | Actual spend total - Sep 2017 to Aug 2018 |
|-------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| Staffing Costs | £488,393.08 | £493,862 | £454,133.93 |
| General Budget | £38,707.41 | £45,655 | £33,630.58 |
| Schools Programme | £27,944.24 | £42,372 | £24,680.38 |
| Transition Events | £9,083.93 | £27,729 | £61,356.44 |
| Non Recurrent | £16,396.52 | £32,900 | £4,400.34 |
| Totals | £580,525.18 | £642,518 | £578,201.67 |

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

The coming year will present LEAPS with significant challenges. The review of the SHEP programme and the movement towards a national School Engagement Framework will be progressed in line with the recommendations within the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA). One of the most significant changes will be that LEAPS will expand delivery to cover all state secondary schools across eight different local authority areas in South East Scotland; Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Midlothian, Scottish Borders, Stirling and West Lothian councils. This will account for an increase of 14 schools, taking the total of schools LEAPS will be working with to 73.

At the beginning of this report, I wrote about how LEAPS will be looking to redevelop the Summer School in line with Recommendation 7 from the CoWa's report *A Blueprint for Fairness* which states that 'The Scottish Funding Council, working with professionals, should develop a model of how bridging programmes can be expanded nationally to match need.'

To this end, LEAPS will review models of bridging and transition programmes so that we can best serve the interests of the students in the schools in which we work. There are several models in the UK and Ireland that we intend to research, so that we can strike the right balance for students as well as our partners and stakeholders in schools, universities and colleges. One aspect we will explore is delivery of a programme during school term time, as opposed to during the summer.

LEAPS will also be working with the Scottish Funding Council, providing support and research papers for the Bridging Programmes Advisory Group (BPAG) which is charged with developing a national cohesive plan in relation to bridging in line with Recommendation 7 of the CoWA report.

The growth of the LEAPS programme means that LEAPS must look to the future in relation to how the programme is to be delivered across more schools and a wider geographical area. To this end we are redesigning much of our activity and will be piloting it to ensure that we best serve the students in the 73 schools we will be working with. We must do this in line with the CoWA recommendations, but also with the schools and students in mind. This means that we will be required to look into new delivery methods, for example how to best use digital technology.

In conclusion, there are many challenges ahead, one of which will be to produce a new operational plan for the period beyond the current funding cycle. These are changing times, and the partnership must adapt to a changing educational and political landscape. A new operational plan will require flexibility, commitment, and imagination to meet these demands and we will work together to achieve this.

I look forward to reporting developments in 2019-2020. Thank you to all partners for your continued support.

Ged Lerpiniere, 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).



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