

# InBradford 2022

The University of Bradford's Centre for Diversity and Inclusion offered an opportunity in 2022 to apply for a grant to run new initiatives to support the institutions Access and Participation Plan (APP). Careers and Employability Services successfully applied for funding to develop a pilot programme, 'In Bradford', which aimed to engage a group of 10 first year undergraduate students, with widening participation characteristics, in week of work experience, employer engagement and employability activities.



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## ACTION & APPROACH

The week-long InBradford pilot programme was devised by members of Careers and Employability Services in partnership with colleagues from the University's Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, leaders from five Bradford based employers, and a local elected councillor. **Transport and refreshments were provided to ensure that all barriers to access were removed.**

The programme aimed to provide students with **direct experience of the world of work, opportunities to network** with staff from a range of job roles and to learn about their responsibilities, career journeys so far, and **potential career pathways**. Students also worked in teams with their fellow students on tasks aimed at **developing a range of employability skills**.

Ten first year students were selected to participate in the pilot programme, following the completion of a short application form and interview. **All students were of ethnic minority background, one a care leaver, one a mature student, and two students with disclosed disabilities.**

Students visited a different employer each morning and would learn about the organisation, what it is like to be an employee, use their communication skills to engage and network with different staff teams, and complete a series of group learning activities aimed at developing their employability skills e.g. team working, problem solving, decision making, enterprise and innovation etc.

Students produced a presentation on the final day on the theme of Bradford City of Culture 2025, delivered to an invited audience. Presentations awarded first and second place were rewarded with a cash prize.

## IMPACT

The project was impactful for the students and employers. All students reported they were 'more confident' in their career planning skills and a range of employability skills, particularly communication, teamwork and networking, than when they started the InBradford programme.

All students said they would recommend the Career and Employability Services to other students, and all said they were likely to use the service in the future.

**90% of the students have subsequently accessed Career and Employability Services' activities since taking part in the programme.**

Employer feedback was very positive, with one employer reporting they were considering changing how they advertise part time roles based on feedback from students. One employer also offered a student a placement opportunity.

The success of the project has also created an opportunity for a participant from the last cohort to work with the team on developing this year's programme. This has given further opportunities to this student to increase their employability skills.

## CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNT

Following evaluation of the pilot programme a second iteration of InBradford is scheduled to commence on the 12th June 2023. This programme is kindly being sponsored by Enterprise Rent A Car as part of their partnership working with the University and their ongoing, highly proactive commitment to supporting social mobility and equality, diversity and inclusion.

The 2023 programme will involve 20 participants from widening participation backgrounds (numbers limited by space at employer premises) working with 5 Bradford businesses. Four of the five businesses are located within walking distance of the University. Students will follow a similar programme of activities to the pilot programme, this time with additional time built in across the week for reflection on career and employability skills and knowledge being gained.

The next aim, following a review of the 2023 programme model, is to significantly scale the programme to deliver a 50-60 place programme annually.