



LEAPS

Promoting access to higher education
since 1996



Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools
Annual Report Summary 2017-2018

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).

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Foreword

This report outlines the LEAPS programme's activity for the period 2017-2018. As you will see, this was another busy year for the LEAPS team. There are some significant headlines; 2056 students were supported by the LEAPS pre-application interview service, with 78% of those interviewed entering higher education.

We are indebted to our partners for their continued support of these students. In particular, the guidance they offered via their tailored responses to the 2305 pre-application enquiries that were raised for the cohort. For the students who are able to go on and make informed higher education applications as a result, this element of our work is invaluable.

Also of note for this period is our review of the LEAPS eligibility criteria. In their 2016 report *A Blueprint for Fairness*, the Commission on Widening Access identified the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as a valid marker of deprivation. In particular, they defined students from the most deprived backgrounds as being

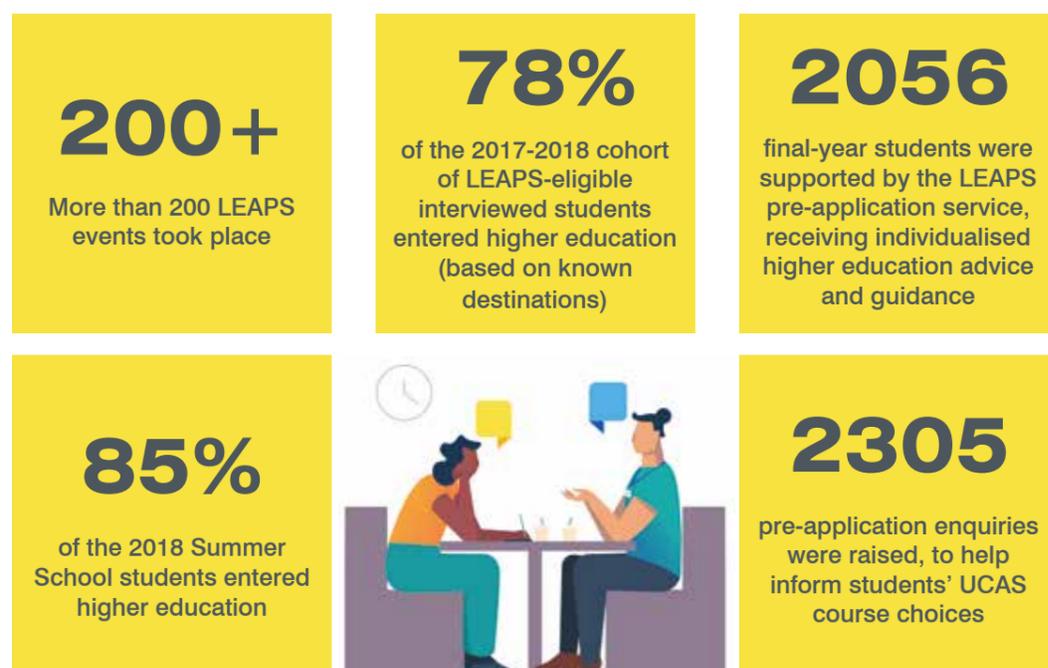
those from Scotland's 20% most deprived communities (SIMD20) and set ambitious targets to increase the number of students from these areas participating in higher education. Though we believe we were supporting LEAPS-eligible students from SIMD20 communities within our existing cohorts, to be sure of this we introduced living in an SIMD20 area as a LEAPS eligibility criterion in its own right.

Finally, this period saw LEAPS complete a longitudinal tracking project with our research partner at Heriot-Watt University. The research looked at two cohorts of students from enrolment through to completion of their degrees. It found that LEAPS-eligible (widening access) students were found to perform equivalently when compared to non-widening access students. At the time of writing, the authors are seeking to have the study published. Should you wish to read the report, please contact LEAPS.

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

Ged Lerpiniere, Director, LEAPS

2017-2018 Our Year in Numbers



LEAPS Eligibility and Schools

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 2017-2018, these were divided into Group 1 schools and Group 2 schools. The level of support which LEAPS provides to each school is typically determined by the school's progression rates to higher education. The inclusion of schools in both groups 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.

Group 2 Schools

In addition to working with schools with a tradition of low progression to higher education, LEAPS also works with school students who come from backgrounds that might suggest that they are less likely to proceed to university-level study. Schools in Group 2 typically have an established tradition of students progressing directly to higher education. Students in these schools who match any of the LEAPS eligibility criteria are entitled to individualised support during S5 and S6, as well as the LEAPS Summer School.

For details of LEAPS eligibility criteria, please visit www.leapsonline.org

To find out more about the LEAPS programme of activity delivered throughout 2017-2018, please see pages 8 to 11.

LEAPS Group 1 Schools (2017-2018)

Alloa Academy
 Armadale Academy
 Bannockburn High School
 Castlebrae Community High School
 Craigoyston Community High School
 Drummond Community High School
 Eyemouth High School
 Forrester High School

Gracemount High School
 Grangemouth High School
 Hawick High School
 Inveralmond Community High School
 Leith Academy
 Liberton High School
 Lornhill Academy
 Musselburgh Grammar School
 Newbattle Community High School
 Tynecastle High School
 Wester Hailes Education Centre
 Whitburn Academy

LEAPS Group 2 Schools (2017-2018)

Balerno Community 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
 Holy Rood RC High School
 James Gillespie's High School
 James Young High School
 Jedburgh Grammar School
 Kelso High School
 Knox Academy
 Lasswade High School Centre
 Linlithgow Academy
 North Berwick High School
 Peebles High School
 Penicuik High School
 Portobello High School
 Preston Lodge High School
 Queensferry Community High School
 Ross High School
 Royal High School
 Selkirk High School
 St Augustine's RC High School
 St David's RC High School
 St Kentigern's Academy
 St Margaret's RC Academy
 St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School
 Trinity Academy
 West Calder High School

Aims and Objectives

Aims

LEAPS is a unique partnership committed to widening access to higher education, supporting the young people with whom we work. 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.

"I first became involved with LEAPS back in S4 when I participated in their quiz workshop. It was really interesting to learn about what subjects you could study at university... I felt mostly unaware about the variety of opportunities [at university], but LEAPS made me feel reassured that my path was right for me and that was what mattered the most."

A former LEAPS-eligible student from Drummond Community High School (Graduate of Queen Margaret University)



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.

In 2017-2018, the LEAPS student volunteer team comprised 97 students studying at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. They supported 43 LEAPS events and made a total of 201 contributions to our 2017-2018 programme of activity and events.

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 range of academic disciplines, offering a range of student experiences to draw upon.

"I am a volunteer at LEAPS and it's amazing to continue to be part of LEAPS... to have the ability to help the students still at school, and to give them the student perspective. The idea of helping ease someone's big transition is always very exciting."

A former LEAPS Volunteer (Graduate of Edinburgh Napier University)

"It's good to still be involved... I can now give younger students tips that I learnt from LEAPS four years ago! The LEAPS team do a lot of great work and I'm proud to be associated with them."

A former LEAPS Volunteer (Graduate of the University of Stirling)



LEAPS 2017-2018 Programme of Activity: S3 and S4

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 **G2** = Group 2 Schools (See page 5 for more details.)

For the 2017-2018 school year, eligible pupils in LEAPS 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.



Campus Reporter **G1**

This campus-based event gives students the chance to explore university facilities as they gather information to create a report 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.

20 events reached 672 students

S4

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



High Flyers **G1** (selected schools)

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.

It provides enhanced support to selected schools in which rates of progression to higher education are some way below the national average.

This short residential 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 spend a day in each of these local universities, experiencing student life.

40 students attended High Flyers in June 2018

As part of a review of LEAPS activities across 2017-2018, the S3 Campus Reporter event was lengthened to incorporate elements of a previous standalone S3 workshop, amalgamating two S3 activities into one, and the S4 workshop was unavailable to allow for the development of a new S4 activity to be piloted in 2018-2019.

LEAPS 2017-2018 Programme of Activity: S5

For the 2017-2018 school year, eligible pupils in LEAPS Group 1 and LEAPS Group 2 schools participated in our S5 and S6 programme of activity as outlined on these pages. More details about these activities can be found on our website www.leapsonline.org

S5

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



Introduction to Higher Education Presentation **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.

63 events reached 4766 students

Typical Student Week Workshop **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.

19 events reached 671 students

S5 Interviews **G1**

In this one-to-one interview, 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.

746 interviews undertaken

S5Hub **G1 G2**

The S5Hub is an online blog providing advice and guidance to students via posts on different higher education topics. www.leapsonline.org/s5hub

2238 students contacted throughout the year with regular updates

Conference for S5 Students **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.

165 students attended the S5 Conference

LEAPS 2017-2018 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.

39 events reached 3005 students

Pre-application Interview G1 G2

The pre-application interview is an opportunity for the student to discuss their potential higher education applications in detail with a LEAPS adviser. 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.

2056 final-year students were supported by the LEAPS pre-application service

Creative Extras G1 G2

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 arts higher education applications. These activities are delivered in conjunction with our partner institutions and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

38 students took part in the art and design week

24 students took part in the acting, film, journalism and music masterclasses

UCAS Catch-up & LEAPS Summer School Talk G1 G2

This talk provides an overview of the post-application UCAS process, including how to respond to offers and submit potential college applications. It also advises students about the LEAPS Summer School.

59 events reached 1215 students

S6 Sessions G1 G2

The S6 Sessions are a programme of optional Friday afternoon and weekday evening sessions designed to help students put in an excellent application to college or university, and then aid their transition to higher education. Across 2017-2018, sessions included;

Personal Statement Workshop

106 students attended the Personal Statement workshop

Preparing for your Teaching University Course Interview Workshop

20 students attended the Teaching workshop

Preparing for your Nursing or Midwifery Course Interview Workshop

29 students attended the Nursing/Midwifery workshop

What to expect from University Study - Academic Skills Workshop

15 students attended the Academic Skills workshop

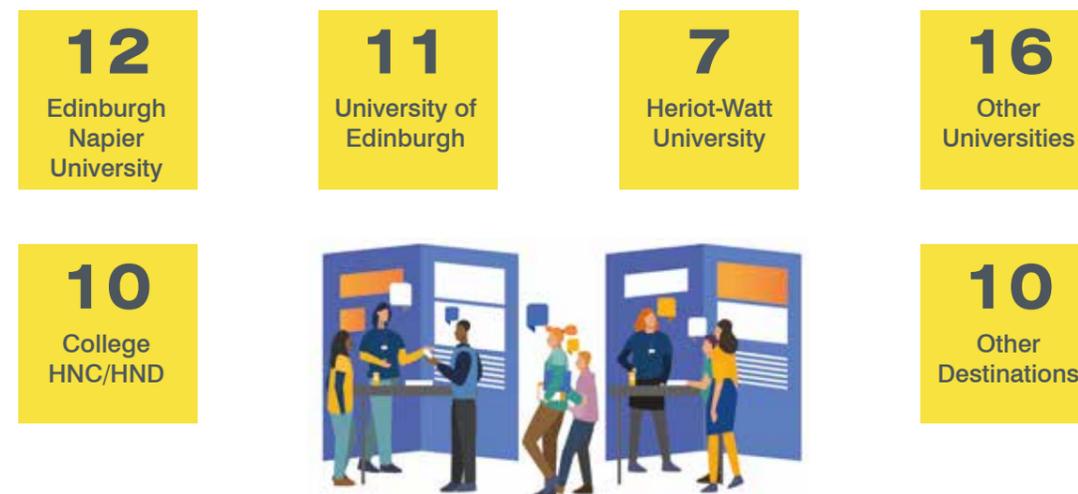
Higher Education at College Workshop

1 student attended the College workshop

LEAPS Summer School

The LEAPS Summer School is a seven-week programme held throughout June and July designed to support entry and smooth transition to university at a key transitional point, as well as improve retention. It provides students with an additional opportunity to demonstrate to university admissions staff that they have 'what it takes' to cope with degree-level work.

66 students graduated from the 2018 LEAPS Summer School



The data in the above graphic is based on the School Leaver Destination Returns (SLDR) provided by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to LEAPS in April 2019.

The category 'Other Destinations' above includes further education, school, employment and unknown destinations. Please note, where value could provide information on a cohort of less than five it has been suppressed (in the above, amalgamated into 'Other Universities' and 'Other Destinations').

Parents' and UCAS Events

School-based Parents' Events

The LEAPS team attend many parents' evenings at schools across South East Scotland, providing information, advice and guidance about the LEAPS programme.

23 events reached 544 participants (across S3 to S6)

Higher Education Conventions

The LEAPS team attended the Borders UCAS-organised higher education convention in September 2017, outlining the support available to LEAPS-eligible students.

1 event reached 30 participants

Campus-based Parents' Information Evenings

A LEAPS Parents' Information Evening took place in March 2018. This event was for parents of S5 LEAPS-eligible students. It outlined the support LEAPS offers to LEAPS-eligible students who are considering college or university and included sessions about choosing higher education courses, applying to college and university, and the financing of higher education study.

1 event reached 104 participants

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 2018	Total 2017	Total 2016
University %	452 63%	141 66%	124 63%	282 66%	158 60%	101 60%	1258 63%	1255 59%	1246 60%
College-HNC/HND %	95 13%	31 14%	37 19%	68 16%	35 13%	30 18%	296 15%	363 17%	328 16%
College-other courses %	78 11%	17 8%	13 7%	29 7%	*	*	164 8%	202 10%	187 9%
Employment %	47 7%	21 10%	18 9%	35 8%	29 11%	12 7%	162 8%	236 11%	247 12%
Unemployment %	12 2%	*	*	5 1%	*	*	25 1%	24 1%	37 2%
Other destinations %	32 4%	*	*	10 2%	19 7%	12 7%	82 4%	39 2%	32 2%
Total Known Destinations	716	215	197	429	262	168	1987	2119	2077

Other destinations shown above from 2018 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 69 students across the local authorities are unknown (3.36 % of the total). This figure was 3.37 % in 2017 and 2.7% in 2016. 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 2018	Total 2017	Total 2016
Universities			
Edinburgh Napier	279	187	230
Edinburgh	205	355	329
Heriot-Watt	144	145	121
Stirling	76	73	42
Dundee	67	74	67
Queen Margaret	61	69	79
Strathclyde	57	38	45
Glasgow	49	42	57
Aberdeen	46	28	58
Abertay	39	28	21
Robert Gordon	38	54	50
St Andrews	35	23	23
West of Scotland	33	20	14
Glasgow Caledonian	28	53	45
Highlands and Islands - Higher Education	16	23	28
SRUC - Higher Education	11	12	11
Other Universities	74	31	26
University Total	1258	1255	1246
Colleges			
Edinburgh College	285	357	318
West Lothian College	59	88	70
City of Glasgow College	28	26	19
Forth Valley College	28	25	23
Borders College	22	31	39
New College Lanarkshire	5	7	5
Other Colleges	33	31	41
College Total	460	565	515
Overall Total	1718	1820	1761

Table 1 and 2 notes

It should be noted that data in both tables for 2018 is based on the School Leaver Destination Returns (SLDR) provided by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to LEAPS in April 2019.

The total number of LEAPS students for whom we sought a destination was 2056 in 2018, compared to 2193 in 2017 and 2134 in 2016.

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

Financial Report

September 2017 to August 2018

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

In 2017-18 the LEAPS Local Council and University partners contributed £291,187, which included a one off contribution from the University of Edinburgh to offset the relocation costs of the LEAPS office.

Additionally, the SFC provided funding of £285,825 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 statutory level of redundancy contingency fund before the budget was set for 2017-18.

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 2017 to Aug 2018	2017/18 Budget	Actual spend total – Sep 2016 to Aug 2017
Staffing Costs	£454,133.93	£468,271	£446,005.05
General Budget	£33,630.58	£40,067	£31,024.79
Schools Programme	£24,680.38	£36,490	£36,978.31
Summer School	£61,356.44	£98,099	£89,662.40
Non Recurrent	£4,400.34	£15,280	£4,453.25
Totals	£578,201.67	£658,207	£608,123.80

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

LEAPS began a period of redevelopment during this 2017-2018 programme of activity. Consultation with school teachers and pupils provided much valued feedback, and helped us to begin reshaping some aspects of our programme. We look forward to piloting some redesigned activities in the 2018-2019 year, and trying out some new digital platforms as part of this.

In recent years it has become increasingly challenging to attract LEAPS-eligible students to participate in our seven-week long LEAPS Summer School, which is designed to support entry and smooth transition to university. We believe a number of factors have contributed to this, including the changing shape of contextual admissions policies and the offers which are made to LEAPS-eligible students as a result. Competition for students' time is also a challenge, when many wish to work to earn money before going to university or college as well as attend the 'school summer holiday' with school friends to celebrate finishing secondary school together.

The number of students participating in the 2018 LEAPS Summer School was significantly lower than in previous years. Going forward, LEAPS will review this strand of our programme and we will consider how it can be redeveloped to ensure it meets the needs of students in the current context.

LEAPS will be reviewing its school groupings next year, taking into consideration updated school-level progression to higher education statistics for the 59 schools with which we work. This is to ensure that our corresponding programme of activities for these schools is based on current data.

The impact of the Commission on Widening Access is now being felt. The 34 recommendations contained in their report *A Blueprint for Fairness*, along with the recommendations outlined in the first annual report of the Commissioner for Fair Access – *Laying the Foundations for Fair Access* – have provided guidance for higher education institutions and the strands of the Schools for Higher Education Programme to respond to. In addition, 2017 saw the Scottish Funding Council launch their School Engagement Framework, designed to support pupils into the right destinations for them through collaborative regional groups as part of a national programme.

These developments will shape the way that LEAPS evolves over the coming years, and we look forward to taking account of the changing shape of widening access in Scotland in our future planning.

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