



IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025

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INTRODUCTION

This report has been written in line with the requirements of the WPIF for colleges

This report details the 2024-5 outreach activities of St Catharine's College facilitated by the WPIF grant for travel funding granted to the college for the 2024-5 academic year, as well as the first term of the 2025-6 academic year.

The original proposal of this grant sought to break down the financial barriers associated with travel to Cambridge, with an aim to open up outreach opportunities for more schools and students. Though it was not mentioned in the original proposal, two key beneficiary groups emerged from this objective: students eligible for free school meals (a group still underrepresented at university level), and schools and students from underrepresented, often faraway regions, such as Yorkshire and the Humber.

The primary aim of the project was to engage with these groups through offering travel funding for outreach activities held at St Catharine's College. Though this project was sidetracked by an extended SLO handover period, it still has its successes, and we have been granted funding by the INT for another year of travel funding.

This report was prepared by Emily Lawson-Todd, Schools' Liaison and Outreach Officer (SLOO) for St Catharine's College, University of Cambridge for the Isaac Newton Trust's Widening Participation and Inclusion Fund (WPIF) committee.



2024-5 GOALS

An impact report is a way for organizations to communicate the issues they are trying to improve, as well as their strategy on how they facilitated change. It measures the impact that NFPs make in people's lives, focusing on their social or environmental outcomes, It isn't merely a description of the activities undertaken by the organization either, but it also provides the analysis on the results of these activities.

1

Encourage engagement from reluctant schools

From talking to link schools, we realised that one of the largest barriers to visiting Cambridge is finance, especially regarding the cost of coach hire. By subsidising coach costs, we aimed to expand school visits to a wider range of schools, including schools that have previously been reluctant to engage in our outreach programmes.

2

Change attitudes towards Oxbridge and Higher Education

From empirical feedback, including talking to current students from link area schools, we realised that one of the most impactful interventions to applying to Cambridge is the opportunity to visit the college. Many students are separated from the university, both physically and mentally, and so the chance to visit and talk to current staff and students helps to erode misconceptions surrounding Higher Education and Oxbridge.

3

Encourage applications to Oxbridge and higher education

Creating a good impact report means being transparent with your audience. Back up your claims with relevant data. Keep your sentences concise when necessary, but dive into detail when it comes to qualitative and quantitative evidence. Remember: an impact report is a combination of understanding your mission, your work, and your audience, and communicating that clearly with the rest of the world.

4

Increase engagement from FSM-eligible students

Creating a good impact report means being transparent with your audience. Back up your claims with relevant data. Keep your sentences concise when necessary, but dive into detail when it comes to qualitative and quantitative evidence. Remember: an impact report is a combination of understanding your mission, your work, and your audience, and communicating that clearly with the rest of the world.

£40

Cost per head for student
from Scarborough to go
on a trip to Cambridge

£1333.00

Average cost of a coach from Scarborough to
Cambridge

I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO VISIT ST CATHARINE'S AS BOTH A GCSE STUDENT IN YEAR 10 AND AS A YEAR 12 IN SIXTH FORM AS PART OF SCHOOL TRIPS FROM THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM IN SUFFOLK. AS A 14 YEAR-OLD I HAD VERY LITTLE IDEA OF WHAT UNIVERSITY WAS, AND EVEN LESS ABOUT CAMBRIDGE, BUT THE TRIPS INSPIRED ME TO NOT ONLY CONSIDER UNIVERSITY, BUT TO PUSH ME TO ASPIRE TO CAMBRIDGE. TRIPS TO ST CATHARINE'S INFORMED ME BOTH ABOUT UNIVERSITY MORE GENERALLY, AS WELL AS WHAT WAS UNIQUE ABOUT THE COLLEGE SYSTEM AT CAMBRIDGE. THE SLOS AND AMBASSADORS WERE ALWAYS EXTREMELY ENTHUSIASTIC AND INFORMATIVE REGARDING ANY QUESTIONS THAT I HAD, AND MADE BOTH UNIVERSITY AND CAMBRIDGE BOTH MORE IMAGINABLE AND MORE ACHIEVABLE AS A GOAL TO REACH. AS A CURRENT STUDENT AT ST CATHARINE'S AND AN AMBASSADOR I GREATLY ENJOY TOURING THE NEXT YEARS OF STUDENTS AROUND THE COLLEGE AND ANSWERING THEIR QUESTIONS WHEN THEY VISIT ON SCHOOL TRIPS - A LOVELY CYCLICAL MOMENT!

**Current third year History Undergraduate
at St Catharine's College**

2024-25 STRATEGY



Throughout the 2024-25 Academic Year, St Catharine's College Undertook the following outreach activities

- School visits to the college by schools participating in the university **area links** scheme. These visits are primarily targeted at KS4 (years 10-11) and KS5 (year 12).
- Outreach Subject 'Taster Days' aimed at students across the UK attending non-fee paying schools who are interested in studying certain subjects at university level.



PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
School Visits to St Catharine's College (KS4)	Whole day trip including sessions on introducing HE, tour of college, tour of other college/department, and academic sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raising aspirations• Familiarising students with HE (including competitive HE institutions)
School Visits to St Catharine's College (KS5)	Whole day trip including sessions on introducing Cambridge, tour of college, tour of other college/department, and academic sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Familiarising students with competitive HE• Encouraging applications to Oxbridge
Subject Taster Days	Introducing students to a specific subject, including admissions talks and taster lectures/classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Familiarising students with subjects• Encouraging applications to a specific subject

2024-25 STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

In order to capitalise off of the travel funding, we undertook the following:

- 100% travel bursary for students attending outreach events such as subject taster days who had been eligible for free school meals, pupil premium or the 16-19 bursary at any point over the past 6 years (ever6) and who were attending via public transport.
- 50% funding for coaches for schools from Suffolk, 50-100% funding for schools from North Yorkshire depending on percentage of students eligible for free school meals.
- Advertising our travel bursary to school via monthly teacher newsletters

Throughout the 2024-2025 academic year, we supported and organised a number of outreach activities including:

- 17 all-day school trips to St Catharine's College from Schools from Suffolk and North Yorkshire, as well as 15 additional partial day visits from both link area schools and schools visiting other colleges are part of the area links scheme.
- Hosted 3 subject taster days: History, Modern and Medieval Languages, and Medicine, with a combined total of 110 participants across all three days.

3

Outreach Taster Days

17

All-Day School Trips to St Catharine's College

400

Students visiting St Catharine's College



2024-25 EXPENDITURE

The below table details the total expenditure of the programme from 2024-205. There is a definite underspend, which can be accounted for primarily by two factors:

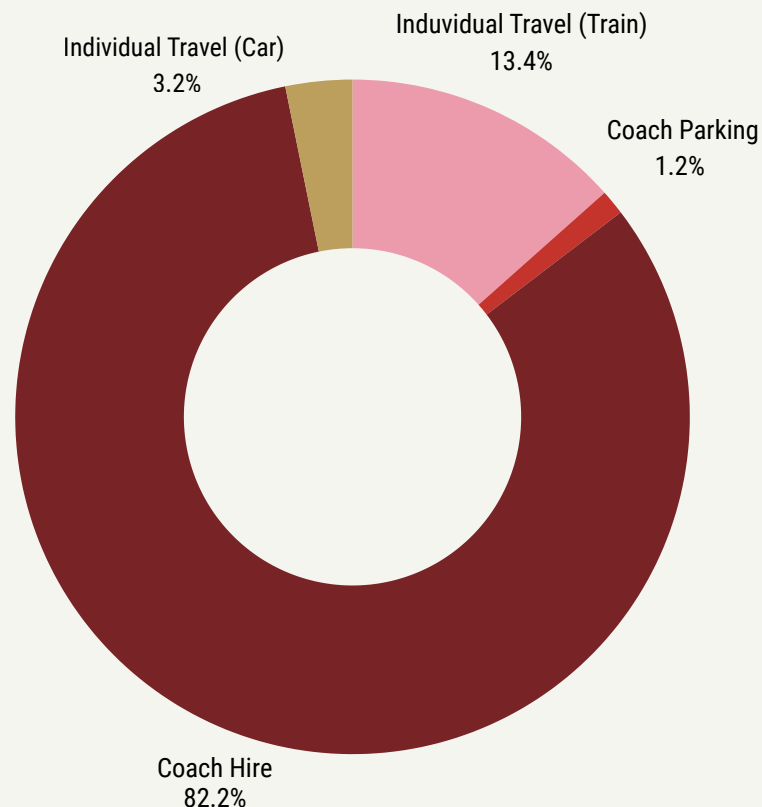
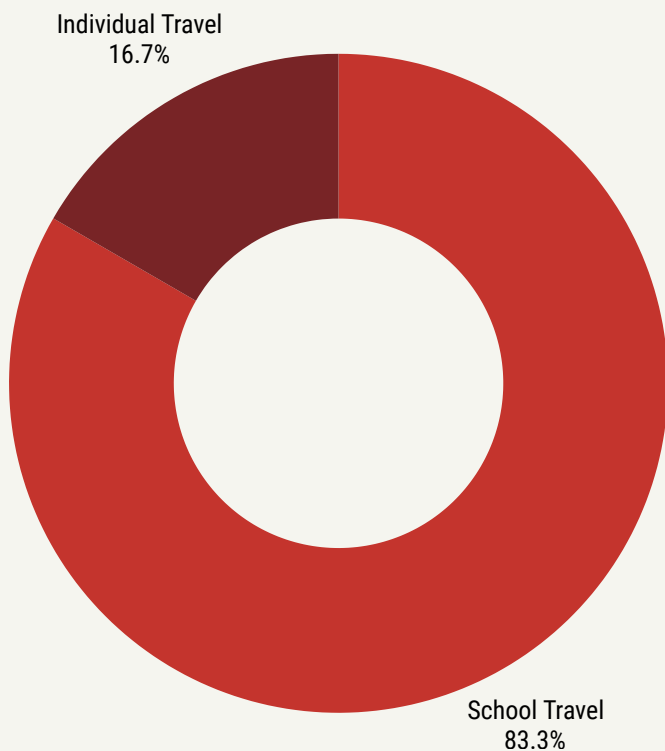
- Lack of an SLO in position from August-November 2024, and a pause in outreach activities until after the admissions period in February 2025
- Unfortunate lack of communication that this funding was available until April 2025, leading to a cautious underspend regarding allocation of travel funds to schools between February-March 2025, which is when we primarily run in-person visit days

Despite these setbacks, we were able to use the travel fund to cover costs such as coach hire, allocating amounts based on factors such as FSM-eligible student percentages at each school, as well as distance from Cambridge. We also covered parking costs for schools for every school visit to the college.

When offering travel support for students attending taster days, we offered a full travel bursary for any student who had been eligible for free school meals at any point over the last 6 years (ever6 FSM), and who was travelling by train. For our final taster day in July 2025, we expanded this to FSM-eligible students who were travelling by car.

SCHOOL COACH COSTS	INDIVIDUAL STUDENT TRAVEL COSTS	TOTAL COSTS
£465.00	£128.75	
£500.00	£18.20	
£25.00	£37.64	
£1333.06	£123.98	
£102.82	£44.21	
£235.00	£146.70	
£500.00	£13.56	
£333.00	£15.29	
£300.00	£111.15	
£30.00	£65.00	
	£59.72	
£3828.88	£764.20	£4,593.08

2024-25 EXPENDITURE



The figures above illustrate the allocation of funds to different forms of transportation

From these figures, we can observe the following:

- The majority (83.3%) of funds were allocated to school coach expense, with 82.2% of these expenses being coach or minibus hire.
- This percentage accounts for approximately 279 students in total, bringing the average cost per head to **£13.73 per student**
- 16.7% of funds were allocated directly to individual students, with the majority allocated towards rail travel.
- The cost per head for individual transport was **£69.47 per student**

The discrepancy between allocation to schools and allocation to individual students can be explained by the different criteria used to assess allocation.

- Individual students had to both be eligible for free school meals **and** using public transportation, whereas schools were automatically considered.
- Later revisions allowed students travelling by car to receive mileage reimbursement, but this was only the case for the final taster day.

EVALUATION OF IMPACT

CHANGING ATTITUDES

An impact report is a way for organizations to communicate their impact to their stakeholders.

- When asked what words they associated with 'Oxbridge' at the start of the visit day, the top 3 most common words were 'expensive', 'snobby', and 'rich'
- When asked the same question at the end of the day, responses were more varied, but largely positive, including words like 'cool', and phrases like 'maybe I can go'

Impact reports cater to a variety of audiences, so it's best to adjust it accordingly. First, identify your target reader.

- There were several positive trends between pre and post-participation surveys for taster days, including a 5% aggregated increase in applicants who 'strongly believed' they could fit in in a place like Oxbridge.
- Though these results are anonymised, so it's difficult to say whether these responses come from travel bursary recipients, the overall positive trends indicate that exposed access to HE institutions improves confidence in applying, and a sense of belonging.



ENCOURAGING APPLICATIONS

HEAT data is not yet available for the 205-6 application cycle, which has an impact on our capacity to report accurately on numbers of students applying to Cambridge (or Oxford) who have been the recipient of Catz travel funding. However, from looking through applications to St Catharine's College, we can partially measure impact.

- Overall, there were 11 direct applications from students who received (either individually or through their school) travel funding through the WPIF.
- Of those students, 4 (just over 25%) are ever6 FSM-eligible.
- 3 students were from IMD quintiles 1&2, and 3 were from schools classified as 'Low-Performing GCSE' by SAA classification.

11

NUMBER OF DIRECT
APPLICATIONS TO
ST CATHARINE'S BY STUDENTS
WHO RECEIVED
TRAVEL FUNDS

EVALUATION OF IMPACT



ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT

One of the primary aims of the travel funding was to encourage engagement from link schools who have been reluctant to visit in the past, with financial reasons often being a key barrier to engaging in outreach programmes. Thanks to the WPIF, we were able to engage with a previously-uncontacted school in **Scarborough**, in one of the most deprived postcodes in the UK, delivering a school visit for 30 KS4 students, many of whom are first-generation HE. This school has now started engaging in more of our sustained multi-stage intervention outreach programmes, including the North Yorkshire access roadshow organised with Brasenose College, Oxford.

Aside from this particular case study, we have also welcomed three Suffolk schools who last visited us in 2022, as well as a school who last visited in early 2020 (pre-pandemic). Thanks to travel funding, we were able to offer subsidies for coach hire.

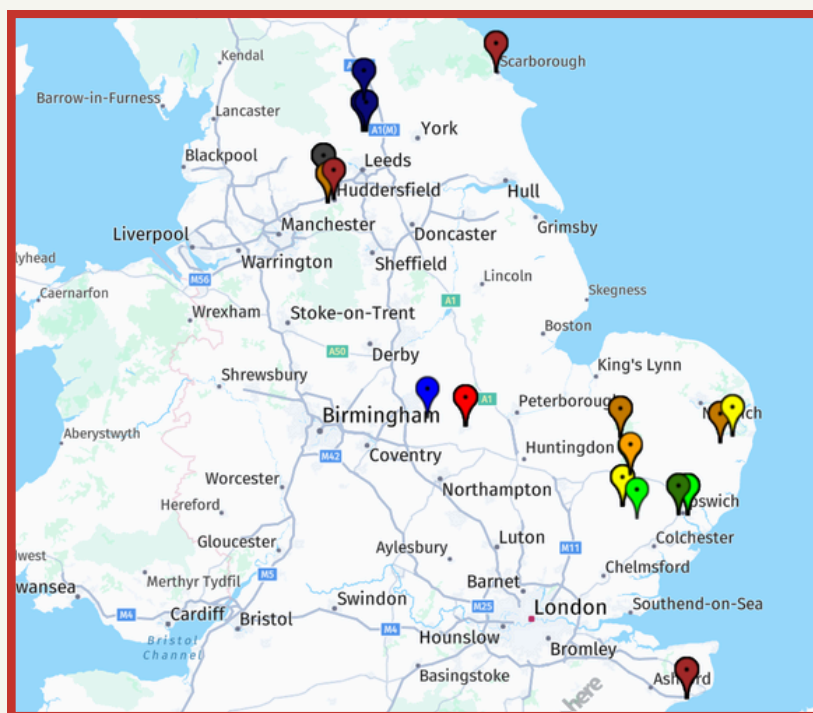
Visit days are a valuable way to form bonds with link schools, encouraging them to remain engaged in our outreach, and inspiring them to engage in our longer-term outreach programmes. Thanks to WPIF's travel fund, we were able to offer more schools the opportunity to visit St Catharine's in 2024-25 than the year before.



Alongside empirical findings, which are difficult to quantify, and tracked applications, which are not yet widely available via HEAT or HESA, we are also able to showcase geographical impact by considering the areas that recipients of travel funding are from. The map below was created using software that calculates the IMD decile of a postcode, allowing us to look at the number of beneficiaries in the two most deprived quintiles. This map compiles by individual and school postcodes.

MAP OF FUNDING RECIPIENTS

Below is a map showing location and IMD classification of all recipients of travel funding



This map shows 19 out of the 21 postcodes of recipients (either schools or individuals) who received travel funding. In 2 cases, we were not able to retrieve this data, however, as we have a mostly complete dataset, we can make the following observations:

- We were able to support travel funding for students as far north as Scarborough, and as far south as Folkestone.
- Of the beneficiaries, **8** of these were IMD quintiles 1&2 (deciles 1-4, represented by grey, dark red, red, and brown on the postcode indicators on the map). As we did not get individual postcodes for every student who took part in school visits, the number of **individuals** in these deciles is projected to be higher.
- The primary targeting of funding was concentrated around the East of England (primarily Suffolk, including Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Sudbury and areas surrounding Lowestoft), as well as Yorkshire and the Humber, including a concentration surrounding Halifax and Huddersfield.

10

Schools targeted

11

Ever6 FSM-eligible students given 100% travel bursary to attend activities

289

Students impacted by travel funding overall

2025-26 STRATEGY

Through reflecting on activities facilitated by the 2024-25 WPIF travel support, and with continued financial support by the INT for the 2025-26 academic year, we have drawn up the following main four strategy points in order to maximise our use of the fund, maximise impact, and avoid underspending.

1

Increased school visits to St Catarine's College in 2025-26

Due to a period of inactivity following a handover in the SLO position, we have expanded our school trip provision, and are set to welcome 6 more schools to college than in 2024-25. In order to optimise spending, **all** schools will be eligible for travel funding, with North Yorkshire schools eligible for £500-£1000 depending on FSM percentage, and Suffolk Schools eligible for £200-£500 funding dependent on the same criteria.

3

Expansion of eligibility provision for individual student travel funding

In 2024-25, we offered travel support to students who fell into the ever6 FSM category, who were also travelling to outreach events by train. This year, we have expanded our criteria to cover students who currently attend a non-fee paying school, and who fit one of two criteria:

- Ever6 FSM-eligible
- Live over 50 miles away from college

These changes seek to ameliorate additional barriers to students from outside the South-East attending outreach events.

2

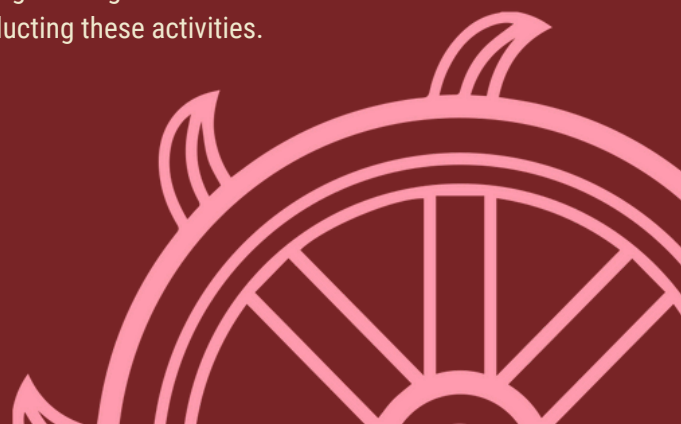
Use of travel funding in programmes with overnight stay

One of the primary barriers to using travel funding was the issue of students from further-away regions (in particular, the North-East, the North-West and Yorkshire and the Humber being unable to justify visiting for the day. In order to combat this barrier, we are offering more outreach events which incorporate an overnight stay into the programme.

4

Continuation of current efforts to remove financial barriers to HE

From evaluating the impact of travel funding on Outreach Activities delivered across the 2024-25 period, there is a clear correlation between accessing HE institutions, and potentially making an application to these institutions. These findings have given us the confidence to continue conducting these activities.



289

Students impacted by
funding

£4,593.08

Amount Spent 2024-25

“LIFE-CHANGING”

School Teacher from Link Area school in Scarborough,
located in an IMD decile 2 postcode



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was made entirely possible by the generous funding by the Isaac Newton Trust, whose continued support has allowed us to deliver outreach to a wider number of schools and students than ever before.

A special thanks is extended to Katie Barnes for her support and patience with the Caths SLO handover which happened midway through this project.

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All photo credits to Kat Steer.



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