
Inspiring Futures evaluation

Information for partner schools and colleges

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has received funding from The Rigby Foundation to undertake an evaluation of the Inspiring Futures programme. Inspiring Futures aims to improve education and employment outcomes by supporting your school or college to partner with charities, to provide students with mental health and wellbeing support, academic tutoring, skills development, and guidance and experience for post-16 pathways.

As part of our evaluation, we will visit each partner school and college in summer 2026. Out of the charity partners you are working with, we will choose up to two specific partners to focus on during our visit. These partners will be chosen so we can learn about each partner across different school and college settings.

The evaluation will comprise of the following activities:

An initial interview with the Inspiring Futures lead

- **An online interview with the Inspiring Futures school or college lead (up to 60 minutes)**

This interview will understand your experience and views of the first year of Inspiring Futures. We will also spend some time during the interview arranging a visit.

School/college visit (one day)

We would like to arrange a date to visit your school or college to talk to young people, staff and charity partner staff to understand experiences of the programme, the difference Inspiring Futures is making, and learning for future years. A key aim for the evaluation in 2025-26 is to support learning for future years. We encourage you to be honest about your experience, including any challenges, which are a normal part of establishing new partnerships and programmes.

- **Group interview with any other programme leads (up to 40 minutes)**

We would like to speak with the lead from each focus programme, where this is different from the main leader above.

- **Discussions with students (up to 40 minutes for a small group, up to 20 minutes for an individual/paired interview)**

We would like to speak with students taking part in the different programmes offered by charity partners as part of Inspiring Futures. Please consider whether students will feel most comfortable taking part in a discussion group, a paired interview or individual interviews with researchers. *In general, we suggest that more sensitive topics (such as support from Place2Be) are better suited to individual interviews, and paired interviews or discussion groups are used where students are used to working together as part of the programme (for*

example, they have been taking part in a tutoring session together) and/or are comfortable working together. We are happy to advise on specific cases.

To ensure students can speak freely to researchers, while minimising any safeguarding risks, we plan to interview students in semi-supervised environments (e.g. the corner of an otherwise empty classroom) while a member of staff is available to allow visual supervision but cannot hear what is being said.

For individual interviews, students can request to have an adult they trust with them. This could be their parent/carer or a staff member.

For the students you nominate, we will ask you to provide them (for students aged 16+) or their parents/carers (for students under 16) with an information sheet and agreement form to complete, to confirm agreement to participate.

- **Interviews with other relevant members of school or college staff (up to 20 minutes per programme)**

For each programme, please consider whether there is a member of school or college staff we can speak to, who works directly with some of the participating students, and can share what difference the programme has made, or their experience of supporting programme delivery. For example, this might be a subject teacher for tutoring, a form teacher for skills development, or a careers lead for post-16 choices. This is very helpful for understanding the experience and impact of the programmes within the day-to-day life of your school/college.

- **Individual interviews with charity delivery staff (up to 30 minutes per focus programme)**

We would like to speak to the charity staff who visit your school/college to deliver the focus programmes.

- **Sitting in on programme sessions**

If any programme sessions are happening during our visit, we would like to sit in on them where you think this is appropriate and will not disrupt the support for pupils. This is to support our contextual understanding, and we will not collect any data during these sessions.

Keeping staff, students and parents/carers involved in the study safe

The safety and wellbeing of school, college and charity staff and students involved in this study are very important to the research team. The team are experienced at working with children and young people. Formal agreement to participate will be collected from students (where 16+) or their parents/carers (where under 16). NFER has robust safeguarding protocols in place to protect individuals during the visit. All researchers undertaking the interviews and case-study visits have Enhanced DBS certificates.

How will NFER and use and protect the data collected?

With permission, interviews will be recorded using an encrypted audio-recorder when done in-person or using Microsoft Teams when done remotely. This will enable us to produce accurate interview transcripts.

All personal data gathered during this study will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR 2021, stored securely and treated in the strictest confidence by NFER. We will not name individuals, charities, schools or colleges in any reports arising from this work. We will aim to keep your views as confidential as possible. However please be aware that because of the nature of Inspiring Futures, there is the chance that other people you've worked with in the partnership may be able to identify you.

Further information about how your data will be processed and who to contact if you wish to withdraw from data processing can be found in the Privacy Notice for School and College Staff on our [project webpage](#).

How will the findings be reported?

The information we collect from everyone we speak to will be used to tell The Rigby Foundation and participating schools, colleges and charities how Inspiring Futures has worked this year, what difference it has made for young people, and how to make the programme better for future years.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions about the research more broadly, please contact Katherine Aston (k.aston@nfer.ac.uk) or call 01753 574123 (NFER head office).