

Written evidence submitted by Team Up

Team Up submission to Education Select Ctte on Impact of COVID 19

About Team Up

1. Team Up works to reduce the widening attainment gap in education by helping underachieving disadvantaged pupils double their expected progress and improve their future prospects. We do this through inspirational volunteer tutors, with the support of qualified teachers.

Reasons for Submission

2. There is ample evidence that being poor puts children and young people at a significant educational disadvantage and damages their life chances. The evidence is stark: The Education Policy Institute (EPI) Annual Report 2019 found that the disadvantage gap between the poorest and richest in English and Maths had increased for the first time since 2011 to 18.1 months. For five good GCSEs, the gap is 18.4 months. At current rates of progress, it would take 560 years to close the gap. Research by the Children's Commissioner for England (2019) found that one-in-six young people don't get five good GCSE passes. This rises to one-in-three for those on free school meals. The impact of COVID-19 can only exacerbate these divides.
3. There is strong evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation, EPI and others that small group face-to-face tutoring has a significant impact. We support calls for a National Tutoring Service of catch-up tutoring. We know many other organisations will be submitting such evidence, so we will focus on our practical experience.
4. We are making this submission on the impact of COVID-19 on Education and Children's Services, particularly the impact on disadvantaged and underachieving pupils based on our eight years of experience of delivering small group tutoring. In particular we wish to share our experience for delivering programmes outside areas traditionally reached by face-to-face tutoring organisations and our more recent experiences of online delivery since April 2020.

Our Tutoring Approach and Experience

5. We deliver small group tutoring in groups of 2 or 3 per tutor in English and Maths with pupils aged 9-16, with a particular focus on Years 7 and 11 in secondary schools. 65% of the pupils we work with are in receipt of Pupil Premium who on average make 0.8 levels of progress over our one term programme (i.e. 80% of a year of expected progress in one term). We are one of only three tutoring charities to be a Teach First Intervention partner.
6. A termly programme in secondary comprises ten 1 hour 30 min sessions plus a baseline and progress assessment. 80% attendance is required so 12 hours tutoring achieved (minimum found to have impact by EPI). We charge £200 to secondaries and effectively match fund from trusts and foundations. Schools pay with either Pupil Premium or catch-up funding. Our reporting is evidence for their PP strategy.

7. Tutors are all volunteers, almost half are sixth form students, who are fully trained and supported by our Programme Managers. They are interviewed, trained and DBS checked by Team Up.
8. Every school is assigned a dedicated Programme Manager (qualified teacher) to run sessions, train tutors and provide ongoing observation and appraisals. They also manage pupil attendance, behaviour and academic progress on a weekly basis. Schools are clear that this is a fundamental strength of our programme.

Online tutoring - positive but not a panacea

9. Team Up began delivering an online tutoring pilot in late April 2020 to around 40 pupils in seven London schools, primary and secondary.
10. Sessions last one hour per week which we believe is the most reasonable for an online session (though we are happy to extend in discussion with schools) and all sessions are monitored online by a Team Up Programme Manager.
11. Online tutoring only works in groups of two pupils and it is difficult to monitor more than 6 groups simultaneously online. In effect that means max 12 pupils in one hour online compared to 20-30 pupils in 1.5 hours face-to-face.
12. We've found that online tuition brings some new challenges compared to face-to-face delivery: for example we've reduced our average tutor:pupil ratio from 1:3 to 1:2 as it was clear larger groups did not work. We're able to deliver a tutor-to-pupil ratio that is lower than usual because tutor supply is strong in the current circumstances: our volunteers are keen to help now more than ever, and delivering online gives them more availability to do so.
13. Further, we have experienced a number of issues relating to the availability of technology, quality of internet and level of technical knowledge of pupils and parents.
14. Safeguarding is also a significant issue and there is a postcode lottery of schools, MATS and Local Authorities with varying policies to online tutoring, many of which do not permit it. We believe this needs to be addressed with clear national guidance.
15. We are now planning to deliver in schools remotely, with tutors online but pupils in school, which should alleviate some technical and safeguarding issues.
16. However, the evidence for the impact of online tutoring is limited and we understand from schools that they prefer to return to face-to face tutoring at the earliest opportunity.

Reaching disadvantaged pupils in non-metropolitan areas -tutor recruitment challenges

17. Tutor recruitment is one of the greatest challenges for face-to-face tutoring organisations and meeting demand from schools is a significant issue. Many volunteers are traditionally university students or professionals who find it difficult to volunteer within the working day when most school based tutoring programmes happen. This issue is exacerbated in smaller cities, towns and rural areas of disadvantage where there are no universities in close proximity or significant numbers of professionals available during the school day.
18. We currently work in London and the South East, focusing in particular in outer London Boroughs and places such as Thurrock - where tutoring programmes using university students and professionals find it more difficult to reach - by using higher performing sixth formers as tutors as well as students and adult volunteers.
19. We find that sixth formers in particular make excellent tutors (on average twice the impact of other tutors, 1.4 grades of progress which our data suggests is due to similarity in age and fact that sixth formers have only recently studied GCSE) and many of them are also facing a lack of structured volunteering opportunities as a result of the current crisis.
20. We have developed a meaningful sixth form tutoring offer including an individual reference. We also offer an SSAT accredited Student Leadership Award for all tutors completing a term of tuition which we equate to one week of work experience, aligned to Gatsby Benchmarks.
21. We believe the development of a meaningful tutor volunteering offer for Year 12 and 13 students, offering real experience will be attractive to these young people who have lost a great deal of enrichment during this crisis. We also believe this can work well for 11-18 schools using their own sixth formers as tutors. We have already tested this in several schools. We have a number of Multi-Academy Trusts and FE organisations who are interested and supportive of rolling out this approach.
22. We are also exploring the use of high-level apprentices as tutors and believe that tutoring will also be attractive to many of those seeking meaningful volunteering and work experience.
23. We believe significant thought should be given to the widest possible volunteer base to meet the significant demand for catch-up tutoring.

David Walker
CEO, Team Up
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