



2023 Impact Report



March 2024

Introduction

2023 was a pivotal year for With Insight Education. We turned five years old and reached a number of milestones which are integral to our progress.

We hit the **1000 mentees** mark. It was a catch-my-breath moment when it happened not just because 1,000 is a significant number but because behind that number is 1,000 individual stories of lives transformed and dreams achieved.

This coincided with us welcoming the **500th mentor** onto our programmes. Our mentors are our lifeblood, without whom our social impact would not be possible.

Following years of social distancing, it was lovely to fully embrace face to face events last year. This enabled us to introduce **new programmes** such as Career Insight Days into our portfolio.

Growing a thriving alumni community where members 'lift as they climb,' is a cornerstone of our ambition as it has such a profound ripple effect. Understandably, it takes time to nurture this and 2023 became the year that we saw this aspiration start to bloom. For the first time we had former **mentees returning as mentors**. We also warmly welcomed past mentors that had since graduated as participants in our Career Talks, sharing the benefit of their own personal insights and experiences with the next generation of black-heritage students.

They are living exemplars that the mould can be broken, that change is possible and that students like them can thrive at top-tier universities and pursue professional careers.


Particularly special to me was our **first in person alumni event** in November. The community feel was palpable as our programme participants from across the years bonded.

In comparison, the discourse around EDI became increasingly fractured last year. Weaponised as part of the culture wars and impacted by strained organisational finances, we saw budgets cut and attention turn elsewhere.

Despite these challenges, we remain resolute about the need for our work. Black-heritage children are almost **twice as likely** to grow up in **poverty** than their white peers. They continue to be much more likely to attend lower tier universities and they have less access to the social and cultural capital that act as springboards for social mobility.

Last year, we received **twice as many applications** for our university access programme, Insight2Uni, than we had spaces. Clear testament to the support that students like ours recognise that they require to succeed.

Christine Kinnear
Founder & CEO



"In England, young people from the Black major ethnic group are... less likely to obtain high grades, enter 'prestigious' universities, end up in a highly skilled job, study further or have career satisfaction."

The House of Commons Library Report (Oct 2023)



The scale of the problem

At every stage of education and as careers are pursued, black-heritage individuals are disproportionately disadvantaged, reducing their chances of social mobility.

A disproportionate number (**48%**) grow up in poverty which adversely affects their school educational outcomes.

Their challenges continue into the higher education sector with black-heritage students persistently having the lowest acceptance rates to prestigious universities, experiencing the highest dropout rates (**15.7%**) and achieving poor degree outcomes – just **62.7%** of full-time black-heritage undergraduates were awarded a 2:1 or 1st class degree. This compares to **83%** of their white peers.

This negatively impacts on the opportunity for black-heritage students to secure highly sought after early career opportunities.

At **With Insight Education**, we recognise that this talent drain is occurring and our programmes are explicitly designed to address it: giving our students the confidence, knowledge and ability to excel whilst enhancing the skills and outlook of those that have the means to eliminate the barriers that our students face.

About With Insight Education

Our driving force

2023 marked our fifth year of working towards a society where the representation of black-heritage students accurately reflects the talent available.

How we work

We are determined to remove the perceptual and structural barriers that our students face and believe that creating opportunities for purposeful interactions with **top universities** and **leading organisations** is fundamental to achieving a more prosperous future for both them and wider society.

The core of our work is the delivery of innovative, **tailor-made mentoring** and skill development programmes which are designed to ensure that our students have improved access to opportunities that provide a springboard for **social mobility**.

Our partners are universities and corporate organisations that embrace the **cultural** and **financial benefits** of diversity and inclusion. Each partner is assigned a Programme Lead who works closely with them to train and support the programme participants to be high impact mentors and advisors.



What we offer

Our mentoring and skill development programmes provide enriching experiences that improve the leadership capabilities and outlook of our mentors while supporting our students to realise their potential.

Our year in stats

350+

students

200+

mentors

75+

schools



53%

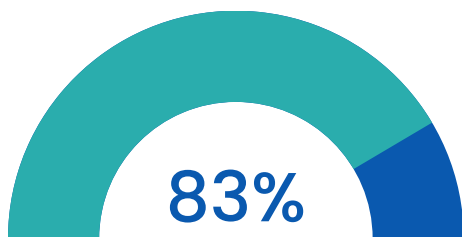
of our students are 1st generation to go to university



38%

of our students are Free school meal (FSM)

IMPROVING UNIVERSITY ACCESS



Of our mentees secure offers from top universities

EMPOWERING CHANGE

Improved employability skills **95%**



Adopted new study skills **81%**



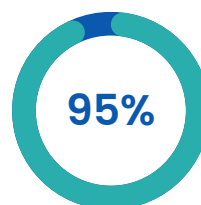
Feel more comfortable to go to a top university **73%**



ENRICHING EXPERIENCES FOR MENTORS & MENTEES



Employee mentors report that being a mentor improved their professional development.



Elevate mentees gained an improved understanding of the world of work.

Our programmes

Insight2Uni

Aimed at academically able black-heritage pupils in Year 12, Insight2Uni provides support during the pivotal period of applying to university.

We were thrilled to welcome Newcastle University to the programme last year. In total, over 150 pupils were matched to current university students of black-heritage from our six collaborator universities who supported them to build the confidence, knowledge and ability to successfully navigate a pathway to a leading university.

Foresight

This year 9 & 10 programme brings together black-heritage student mentors with pupils to broaden their world of possibilities and give them the confidence to aim for a higher education future at a leading university.

Elevate

Our careers-focused programme offers companies enriching employee engagement opportunities to support our students to develop recruitment ready soft skills and build their understanding of the working world.

The desire to succeed professionally is palpable within our student body so last year, we expanded our career focused portfolio to better reflect the support that they need.

In addition to our core Elevate mentoring programme, we introduced the following:

Career Insight Days

Co-created with our corporate clients, these provide a valuable introductory snapshot of a business for students while enabling employees to interact and learn from this cohort.

Career Talks

In these one-hour online talks, we host black-heritage professionals who talk about their educational to career journeys and impart the key lessons learnt along the way. These inspirational sessions provide our students with, what is for many of them, a unique opportunity to ask questions of a professional in their field of interest and gain valuable insights.

Bespoke programmes

We developed the Pathway to Success programme with Experian. This interactive four-week programme was designed to improve the soft skills of both the students and the employee volunteers whilst giving the students the opportunity to respond to a business specific real-world project.

"I truly valued the support I received throughout the programme. The guidance provided was invaluable, and having someone who could relate and understand the stress I was under meant a lot to me."

Angelica, Leeds Insight2Uni mentee



Our impact

Breaking barriers is never easy and we are realistic that the sustained societal change that we want requires a foundational shift in how black-heritage students are perceived and received in aspirational spaces.

For this reason, our work seeks to have an impact across three areas.

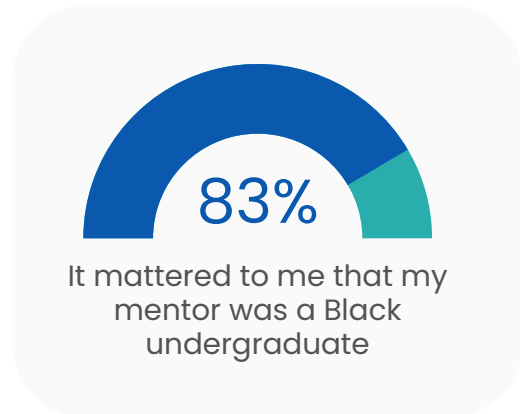
1. Confidence building

"I absolutely loved that our students had the opportunity to be involved in this programme. It has a huge impact on them. They could really start seeing themselves at the university and it becomes very real to them. It's clear that for some of the students that were involved, it has given them a clear purpose: they know where they want to go or what they want to do."

Laura Morris, Teacher, Cedar Mount Academy

The old adage that you can't be what you can't see still holds true. Providing our students with mentors of **shared heritage** continued to be an effective way for them to confidently visualise their future selves progressing to leading universities and into professional careers.

Crucially, this approach to our programme design also helped to allay their concerns about being a minority. The result was a **12%** drop in our Insight2Uni mentees reporting that they were put off from attending leading universities because there aren't many black-heritage students there.



The growth in confidence was not just confined to our mentees. Our Elevate career mentors are often of a different ethnicity, age bracket and all are at a more mature life stage to our students but their time on the programme bridged these gaps.

The mentors developed their **cultural competence**, gaining a fresh perspective on the students' reality and how to confidently support them as typified by this quote from a Bank of England mentor:

"As I develop as a leader and manager, it is important to me to develop my ability to empathise and relate to challenges my team may have. The With Insight Education Mentorship provides an opportunity for this, but in a context that is different to the day to day role which I believe enables you to think 'outside the box', learn from this and take it back to your role."

Joseph, Bank of England mentor

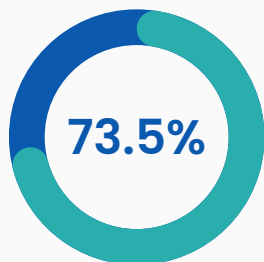
2. Bridging the knowledge gap

Our education system demands that pupils make defining choices in their mid-teens which places a huge expectation on young people to have a life plan.

Yet, we know that too many of them make these decisions without access to the breadth of information that they vitally need. The risk of this myopic experience is that they make ill-informed sub-optimal choices.

The nature of our programmes counteracted this happening. Students were invited into university and work spaces to **experience it for themselves**.

They were also provided with supporting resources, empowering them with the tools and structure to effectively navigate their next steps.



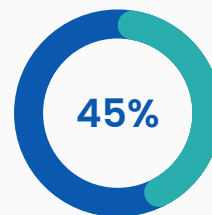
I understand what the UCAS application process involves.

Importantly, they were actively encouraged to ask probing questions of their mentors/advisors within the **safe space** that was provided. These were questions about fitting in, standing out, and how to overcome the inevitable challenges of being a minority in a predominantly white space.

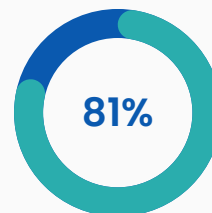
Such honesty of conversation runs through all of our work and we were delighted with the results.



Elevate mentees reported an improved understanding of the world of work.



Increase in Insight2Uni mentees reporting that they have a solid understanding of what it will be like to study at university.



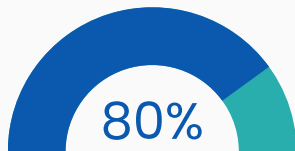
Foresight mentees told us that they were using more effective study skills that they had learnt from their mentor.

3. Ability boosting

Our mantra is **Breaking Barriers, Unleashing Potential** which requires that our students are able to translate their aspirations into reality.

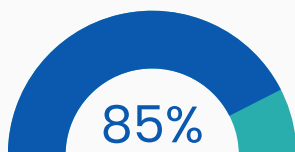
To accomplish this, we renewed the focus on the skill development elements of our programmes last year with positive results.

Insight2Uni impact

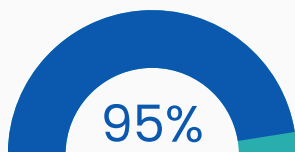


80% of our mentees felt better prepared to apply to a top third ranked university than before taking part in the mentoring programme.

Elevate impact



85% felt better prepared to handle interviews.



95% reported a growth in communication skills.



3.1 Mentor benefits

Our mentors are essential to the success of our work and we endeavour to ensure that our programmes provide an enriching experience for them. This is just as true for Student mentors like Lois who shares her story in the overleaf as it is for our Employee mentors like Fraser from the Bank of England. When asked what he gained from the experience, Fraser was clear that it was a great learning experience for him.

“As a younger person that has not managed anyone before, this was an unique opportunity to understand different perspectives. Being able to show the options available rather than simply guide someone into making a decision was an important and new skill.”

Fraser, Elevate mentor, Bank of England

For Lois, the experience of guiding the next generation of female students into university was deeply rewarding. Mentoring also allowed her to embark on a personal journey of growth and learning. She was left with no doubt that other students should embrace the opportunity to become a mentor.



"It was a humbling experience to discover the power of empathy and understanding. The insight provided by being a mentor was invaluable, and I can attest to the significant impact it has had on my mentees."

Lois, University of Manchester mentor

Building our community

One of our longer term aims is to cultivate an **active alumni community** where members are empowered to help those that follow in their footsteps as this enables us to extend our impact far beyond those that we work with directly.

In 2023, we started to see clear evidence of this:

- Previous **mentees** like Imani and Divina rejoined us as Insight2Uni **mentors** on our University of Durham programme.
- Student mentors that had graduated returned to participate in our **Career Talks**.
- Former Foresight mentor, Luke Peters, successfully secured a **£8,000** grant for us from the AKO Foundation.

We also hosted our **first in person alumni event**. We were kindly gifted space in Zinc's central London office which allowed us to bring together mentees and mentors, old and new, from across our programmes.

The atmosphere was electric and we're delighted that the bonds created that night have led to the attendees continuing to support each other.



Looking to the future

The landscape in which we operate is evolving and so too must we.

Black-heritage students are dropping out of university at an alarming rate. Therefore, within the university space, we plan to roll out a **Student Success** programme with the aim of supporting more students to stay and thrive at university.

The interest in **Apprenticeships** within our student population has grown but black-heritage students are under-represented in this area and less likely to finish their training programme. We aim to create an initiative to tackle this.

The role of our employee mentors as a pool of people managers who have the capability to positively impact their mentees' personal and professional development is vital.

They consistently feedback how much of a learning opportunity participating in our programmes has been and we hope to work with a growing number of partners in 2024 who grasp the mutual benefit of collaborating with us.

Thanks to our partners



Bank of England



IMPERIAL





Break barriers, unleash potential with us.

Christine Kinnear
Founder & CEO
07700 141 808
christine@withinsight.org

Follow our conversation:

 [/with-insight-education](https://www.linkedin.com/company/with-insight-education)

 [@withinsightedu](https://www.instagram.com/withinsightedu)

 [/withinsightedu](https://twitter.com/withinsightedu)

With Insight Education
www.withinsightedu.org
Charity Number 1198026