

WORKING WITH YOUR UNIVERSITY

OUR IMPACT
IN 2021 - 22

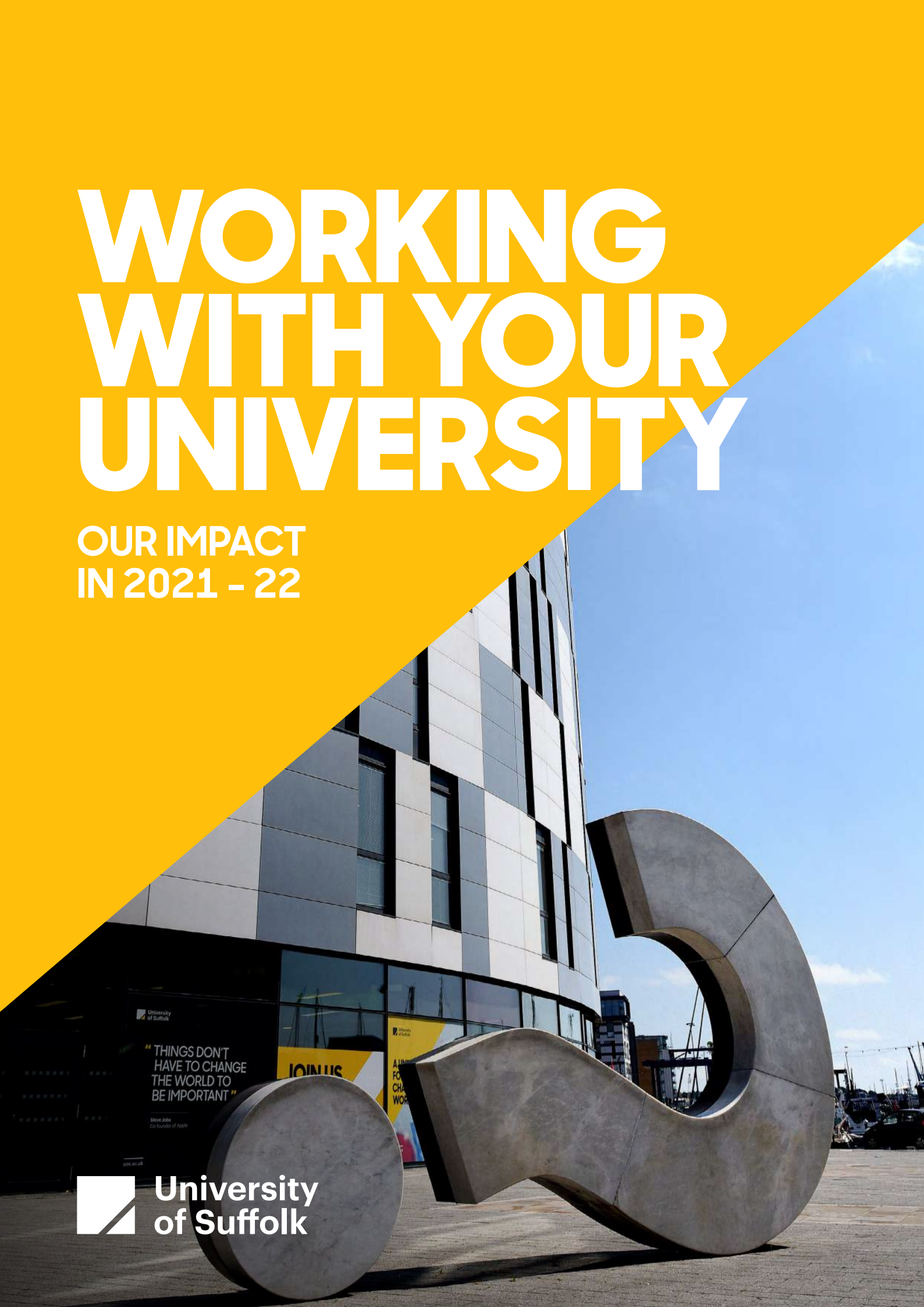
University of Suffolk
"THINGS DON'T
HAVE TO CHANGE
THE WORLD TO
BE IMPORTANT"

Steve Jobs
Co-founder of Apple

www.sussex.ac.uk

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UNIVERSITY OF SUFFOLK
A UNIVERSITY FOR
CHANGING
WORK



A GROUNDBREAKING YEAR



A groundbreaking year!

The 2021/22 year marks the first full year of operation for the Business Engagement, Careers and Employability Directorate (BECE). We have laid the foundations for our future impact, hiring new staff, developing our 2030 strategy and establishing exciting partnerships.

As our Alumni network has grown locally, nationally, and internationally, so has the support on offer, resulting in more Alumni engagements than ever before. Our increased focus on Development and Giving has seen the University receive its 3 largest donations, with a further 4 significant pledges being secured and 3 further 5 to 6 figure gifts in cultivation stage. We are confident this will continue to be an area of significant growth.

Our most recent Graduate Outcomes (GO) results saw 92% of students in employment or further study, with 82% in highly skilled roles, compared to a sector average of 78%, results we will continue to improve upon. We have enhanced our offer to students, with more events, opportunities and employer linkages. Work is underway to embed Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship into the curriculum, with additional investment secured to double the team in size and establish a dedicated careers hub.

Our Business Development and Knowledge Exchange team has generated over £1.8m in knowledge exchange income (a 500% increase in since 2017/18), collaborating with over 200 businesses. Our newly formed, and unique, partnership with the Innovation Labs Group launched in January 2022 – with more members accessing our facilities and engaging with the wider University and business support ecosystem, harnessing our student and academic expertise.

Following an Ofsted inspection in May 2022 we were recognised as being 'Good' in our apprenticeship provision. This was a fantastic outcome, recognising the work and investment across the University to ensure our apprentices and employers are at the heart of our programmes. This has helped to raise the University's profile, supporting our journey and vision of becoming an outstanding provider. We will now further expand our apprenticeship provision to support local and regional skills needs.

BECE had a successful inaugural year delivering real-world impact, and this review applauds our major achievements.



Professor Gurpreet Jagpal

Pro Vice-Chancellor,
Business and Entrepreneurship



Rated **Good**
by Ofsted for
Apprenticeship delivery

80% overall
apprenticeship
achievement



Apprenticeship
Retention at
95%



1620
students engaged
in employability &
enterprise sessions



51,000+
activities
completed in
FutureMe



152%
increase in
student
micro-placement
applications



12 student &
graduate start-ups
supported



82%
of graduates in high
skilled employment



54% of our
postgraduates
are alumni



20%
increase in alumni
engagement



250
businesses
engaged



4 new
partnerships with
large companies



£2,125,000
Knowledge
Exchange income
generated



4
proof of
concept
projects
supported



Increased **40**
places in national
KTP rankings



2
international
Knowledge Exchange
programmes delivered



£2,300,000
donated or pledged

**#unisuffolk
madame**
shortlisted for
'best engagement
campaign' at the
HEIST awards



100+ individual
supporters engaged



£1,250,000
highest ever
individual donation

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS AND ALUMNI



THOMAS MICRO-PLACEMENT

Whilst learning with us and after they graduate, our students have access to additional support and schemes to ensure they are prepared for the world of work. This case study is written from the perspective of one of our recent BSc in Wildlife, Ecology and Sectors graduates (completed degree in June 2022) about how they made the most of their time with us.

“Everyone you meet in the wildlife, ecology or sustainability sectors says that whilst being academic is an important step in gaining a job; it is the experience that will set yourself apart and without that experience you are a lot less likely to become employed in these sectors. With this in mind, and with the academic side in full flow, I had also been trying to build up my experience as much as possible through volunteering. In my first year, I was made aware of the Micro-Placement scheme by someone in the now Careers Employability and Enterprise team. Ultimately, life became too busy and then COVID-19 hit (so it was a wise decision not to apply). However, I still knew I wanted to participate – not applying would have been a big ‘missed opportunity’. With this philosophy, in my third year I decided to apply. I was interviewed, didn’t get the role, but I did gain valuable feedback from the interviewees. Using that, I reapplied in February and got the role! It just goes to show, using feedback will help you succeed in your ambitions and never, ever, give up.

My micro-placement was highly varied, and no two sessions were the same – I have learnt that variety is what I love. I completed a baseline survey of the Wildlife Garden, investigated and produced a short report summarising what businesses in the region are doing to become more sustainable and the actions they are taking to achieve net zero, and researched different wildflower plants and pond plants that will be suitable for both a) the wildflower patch and b) the Wildlife Garden at the University.

As you can imagine, through the varied activities, I developed many skills. These include; research, time management and organisation (I had to juggle writing my dissertation alongside another module and alongside family life), and my practical skills. I had completed a survey previously as part of the degree on the Practical Fieldwork research skills module but redoing this helped me to use the feedback from that module assignment and complete this activity to a higher quality. This will help the university as now they have a baseline to compare how the Wildlife Garden is doing in future years, which should implement future management plans.

Throughout the micro-placement, my supervisor was kind, friendly, full of enthusiasm, and extremely supportive of my workload particularly when I just needed to focus on my dissertation. She was a great teacher through whom I learned a lot, which I knew would stand in good stead for the future.

Since finishing my degree in June, I have been working at The Hold, initially as a part-time summer intern for 12-weeks but my contract has since been extended until the end of January. So, why did I pursue the internship? How did my micro-placement and degree experience help me get the position and what do I plan to do afterward? I was initially made aware of the internship by one of the university's career advisors. I reviewed the personal specification and the skills they were looking for matched. But most of all, it sounded both fun and intriguing.

Whilst my degree and micro-placement were not based on history, they both helped me gain valuable transferable skills, which I believe helped me in my application and interview for this role. For example, during my studies I developed strong literacy and numeracy skills, writing 24 essays; and my micro-placement further strengthened this. I also developed strong research skills, a meticulous eye for detail and project management skills.

Time management was probably the biggest skill gained from both the degree and micro-placement. It was challenging juggling weekly volunteering with completing assignments, being a student ambassador, and doing a micro-placement. Finally, being a student ambassador and completing a micro-placement helped improve my customer service, interpersonal and communication skills.

The plan from February is fluid and ever-changing. I see the next two years as being time for me to experience different sectors: trying them and seeing if they're for me and, if not, well at least I have gained valuable experience. Long-term: If you had asked me before finishing my degree, I would have said wildlife conservation having enjoyed every second of the internship. However, I am now strongly debating going into heritage instead. So, let's see where life takes me...



ALEN

MICRO-PLACEMENT

I was offered a micro-placement after successfully entering the University of Suffolk Student poster competition. I was asked to design an infographic for the Suffolk Life mentor to make sure that the students are aware of their presence and know how to reach them. Having the opportunity to work with the marketing team allowed me to gain a variety of skills including time management and planning.

I was able to create the poster with full freedom while making sure that it was what was wanted to be seen by students. This was an amazing experience where I was able to see how a design is created and how much planning was involved before it was printed and placed in public.

How did the Careers Service at University of Suffolk help you?

I've been working since I was 16 and in April 2020, I was made redundant at Carphone Warehouse. I was finishing my final year and this was the first time in my life I didn't have a job. During the middle of lockdown, it was impossible to get a job, and that's when I reached out to the CEE team for help.

They gave me amazing advice, went through my CV multiple times, and helped me with my cover letter by suggesting what to change and write. I won an employer posters competition during my final year and I was given a 30hr placement at the University which extended to 3 months. At the lowest career point of my life, the CEE team has been so helpful and very supportive.

How did their advice help your employability?

They often would send me roles which were suited to me and would help check over my CV or cover letter. After a few rejections, the team's confidence in me allowed me to keep going. A position at Maersk was also sent to me. I was successful at the interview stage and I am very happy to be working for this company currently.

Why would you recommend the team service to a fellow student?

I didn't use the careers service because I didn't think I needed it, but I was wrong. We are blessed with an amazing careers team who go above and beyond to help us. I would strongly advise everyone to contact them as soon as you can so you can get your future started! I have been able to work for the University on numerous occasions and it was all thanks to the CEE team.



RICHARD

MICRO-PLACEMENT

My experience with the Student Experience Ambassadors (SEAs) was a very enjoyable and rewarding experience. The team were very welcoming and have helped me learn about their role and the more complicated inner-workings of the University of Suffolk. I helped with many tasks, and I was able to take part in meetings and contribute any ideas and thoughts I had that could help the team. As I was a current student this helped massively as the team work with students on a daily basis.

Confidence Grew Massively

Whilst working with the Student Experience Ambassadors, my confidence overall has improved, with even my family and friends noting the change. Before I started my micro-placement, I was a very shy person with little confidence. Working with the SEAs has helped me massively.

Public Speaking Improved

I feel that my public speaking greatly improved from my placement, particularly as a result of tasks that required me to talk to students around the campus. I had to explain different events that were coming up, for example Mental Health Awareness Week. I helped the team explain what this was, why it was important to students, and the activity happening over the week for them to engage with.

A Professional Environment

The Student Experience Ambassadors work in a professional environment, and they have their own office located above the library group working spaces. Working in the office has prepared me for working in the future.

Outcome

When I finished University I applied for a Student Experience Ambassador role and got it. I would like to thank the Careers team for all their support with the micro-placement and with helping me get into my first graduate job.



STEPHANIE CALVER

- **BSc Nutrition and Human Health**
- **MSc Regenerative Medicine**
- **Product Development Manager, Nomad Foods**

Not wanting to stop my educational journey at the University of Suffolk after graduating from BSc Human Health and Nutrition, I decided to study MSc Regenerative Medicine. I wanted something which would set me apart from other potential candidates when it came to interviews and had already enjoyed my years of undergraduate study at the University, impressed with the lab facilities and support available.

The hard work paid off and I was able to secure my first job interview soon after graduating where I was chosen for the role of New Product Development Technologist for local a food company, Stoke's Sauces.

Here my main role was to design food products from concept to factory scale-up ready for manufacture, before being sold in shops all over the country, and even used in restaurant chains such as Miller and Carter, as well as on cruise ships and passenger planes. I still pinch myself when I see a product I developed on the shelves in the supermarkets!

I'm now lucky to have progressed into a fantastic job working for Europe's largest frozen food producer, Nomad Foods, as Product Development Manager for the Futures Research and Development team, working with brands such as Birdseye, Iglu and Findus.

As part of this team I am responsible for driving innovation and researching new ingredients and process technologies for our portfolio of food products sold all over Europe. You may have eaten a few made famous by a certain Captain! I find it so exciting that I can play a part in designing the future of the food we eat whilst working alongside a great team here in Suffolk. No two days are the same and I am proud to say I enjoy going to work!

The department and scientific research skills I learnt during both courses have since proved invaluable for my job, as well as the confidence boost I gained from being a Student Ambassador. Fast forward to now and I have recently filed two UK patent applications and am now managing a University of Suffolk undergraduate student during his placement year with our team.



AMINA ANWAR

- BA Business Management and Law
 - **Director of Sales Performance,**
PACE Digital Sales
-

I initially started at the University of East Anglia pursuing an education in Biological Sciences. However, things do not always go to plan and after a year and half of commuting to Norwich, I decided I wanted to pursue a different career path and transferred to the University of Suffolk, where I felt at home straight away, as a previous college student at West Suffolk College. The campus, lectures and the teaching environment was exactly what I was used to and made me feel very comfortable. Not only that, I was able to continue finding a part-time job to build my experience as well as manage my workload at university.

Choosing a combined honours degree opened up several career path options and allowed me to explore different areas of Business and Law. However, both became very relevant to the career I have since pursued. The University gave me the theory based knowledge which has been applied into my new role. Outside of the core modules, the University enhanced many skills by running workshops and inviting local Businesses to come in and share insights into their organisations which made students think differently.

The lecturers were also very keen and passionate about students setting up their profiles on LinkedIn and preparing a professional profile for when we left University, a tool which I now regularly use and since leaving have used in my everyday professional job, so if you are not on LinkedIn – I highly suggest it.

Since graduating in 2018, I took a risk and joined a start-up inside sales business – which only hired graduates. For me at the time, it was important for me to join an organisation which valued my degree. I knew very little about the industry but, the Managing Director had a great sales training programme that I was taken through. Fast forward 3 years I have grown from within the graduate model and I am now the newly appointed Sales Performance Director for PACE.

My role is to oversee the strategy that supports recruitment, hiring, training and the supervision of the Sales and Business Development teams. The support, training and development I have received over the last 3 years has transformed me from a young graduate into a business professional. My aim is to further coach, mentor and inspire the next future sale leaders by ensuring they have the confidence and experience to break down glass ceilings in the sales industry.

At the age of only 25, I have achieved an incredible amount, which all started by pursuing a degree and gaining invaluable skills and the confidence I needed to pursue a career professionally. I have still maintained a great relationship with the lecturers at the University and I hope I can share my journey with future students.



Mpume Mpofu
Programme Director, Tipe Ltd

Providing Expertise to Support Start-up Growth

A consumer regulatory body approached the University to enquire about the creation of some Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for their staff around witness statement preparation and witness familiarisation. The organisation then visited the University to look at our facilities. The mock court was well received, and it was agreed that by participating in CPD within a court environment staff would feel much better equipped when faced with a real-life court scenario.

Background

The relationship between successful start-up TIPE (Trauma Informed Practice Environments) and University of Suffolk began in March 2022 when the company approached the University for academic expertise. TIPE had created and delivered two widely acclaimed programmes, for which they have a continuous demand – iCoN (in Control of Now) brings together young people with difficult and challenging behaviours alongside their sector workers and other key professionals to better understand their behaviour and its causes. TIL (Trauma Informed Learning Environments) helps mainstream, specialist and alternative education providers to engage with schools in establishing their own trauma-informed and attachment-based learning environment.

Project Overview

Several projects have taken place between the organisations with more planned. These include consultancy, the creation of bespoke CPD and research.

- **Consultancy**

Dr Rachael Martin Senior Lecturer in Psychology initially provided expertise to deliver specialist knowledge sessions for social workers in Redbridge working in youth justice, as part of the company's iCoN and TILE programmes. This led to further discussions with other academics providing their expertise to enhance course content. Knowledge was exchanged from chartered psychologist and Counselling course leader Professor Sarah Corrie, and lecturer Vicky Lucas who has nineteen years of experience as a Mental Health Nurse & Psychotherapist.

- **CPD**

Following from her initial engagement with TIPE, and the identification of a market gap, Sarah Corrie worked with the company and Professor David Lane, director and co-founder of the Professional Development Foundation to create a new standalone CPD. This will be delivered through the University from 2023.

- **Research**

Conversations have also taken place with academics in the Institute for Social Justice and Crime around potential research projects for the future. Topics currently under review include:

- Social justice and complex behaviour in young people.
- Race, racism, criminal and youth justice and the experience of young black men.
- A shared definition and understanding of trauma-informed practice leading to the development of a rating scale of trauma-informed practices.
- The impact of trauma-informed practice on youth justice services and teams' key purposes.

Next steps

The consultancy projects have prompted a conversation around improving TIPE's business model. A UoS innovation voucher is providing the starting point for a project to generate a means for developing online knowledge sharing that will synergise with their current model and drive business growth. Once completed, this will then lead to a longer-term Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) project. Academics involved include Head of Business Claire Culley and Dr Kakia Chatsiou, Lecturer in Computing.



CHALLENGE LAB

An interactive Challenge Lab to address the impact of long COVID on sleep and mental health outcomes.



What challenge / need did the project address?

With much of the population contracting COVID and with approximately 3% going on to develop long COVID, our health system faces one of the largest mental health crises. The Challenge Lab set out to identify solutions to address this growing challenge.

Who?

16 individuals attended, representing the following external organisations: the University of Suffolk, Willis Towers Watson, Treatt, BT, Home Start, NHS Suffolk & North Essex, Suffolk County Council, Active Suffolk, and Mind Suffolk.

What activity took place?

Facilitated interactive sessions enabled participants to represent their unique view and experience to address this challenge creatively. Specific challenge areas were identified and teams worked on challenge areas, developing ideas and solutions and pitching for resources to take the idea forward.

What was the outcome?

Four key projects were defined to be taken forward:

- Gold Standard for employers supporting employees with long COVID.
 - Educating people to get better sleep.
 - Community based exercise groups.
 - Improving breathing awareness and control in those with long COVID.
-

“It was a new and innovative approach to this type of event and very well organised, and it felt good to contribute to the challenge posed.”

Paul Putland
BT Health Innovation Hub Manager
Applied Research Accelerator



BLUE NOVATION

CONTRACT RESEARCH WITH BLUE NOVATION

Project Overview

Training provider Blue Novation required expertise to assess the issues and needs of the target audience for a new Virtual Reality (VR) product they wished to develop, before making significant investment.

What challenge/need did the project address?

Following COVID, the company were aware that they needed to future-proof their business; providing innovative solutions to help clients achieve higher level skills that met the requirements of a rapidly changing and challenging workplace.

What activity took place?

- Desk-based review into the communication skills gap in the tech industry.
- Focus groups with both students and tech industry employees to understand how to create a VR environment where both will master communication skills and to understand what the current issues.
- Academic staff worked with Blue Novation on interview design and analysed the results.

Who was involved?

This project accessed expertise from the School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology and the School of Social Sciences and Humanities

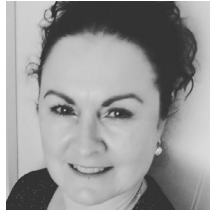
What did it mean for the business?

Blue Novation can now act on the report recommendations to implement this new business offering. Also, the business benefitted from Innovation Voucher funding; receiving a 75% financial subsidy.

"We are delighted to have had the opportunity to work with the University. Thanks to the Innovation Voucher grant, and terrific support from the University's academic staff and business development team, we have been able to pivot and adapt our training provision to incorporate cutting edge VR simulations."

Trudy Sore, MD, Blue Novation Ltd

OUR SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICES



LAURA HARRIDENCE

- Quality Assurance Professional, BT

Laura has been working at BT for 37 years and has held numerous management positions over that time. Laura's most current role as a Quality Assurance Professional aims to support apprentices in receiving a positive, safe and consistent apprenticeship experience, by working closely with external training providers to ensure quality education.

BT has used apprenticeships as a platform to hire, develop and retain great people for over 60 years, so has a lot of experience in welcoming apprentices and making sure that they have a great learning experience as they develop the job skills needed in order to be successful. Laura feels that apprentices bring fresh ideas and new perspectives to the business, which is truly valued.

At BT, apprenticeships are used to help the organisation grow their own talent in areas where they have identified future skills gaps – such as in Digital and Cyber Security at higher or degree levels. BT has a very high retention rate, with many apprentices staying and progressing throughout the company many years after their apprenticeship comes to an end.

Laura works collaboratively with the business and university to find creative ways to strike the balance between work and study commitments, with an additional focus on mental health and well-being.





ALEX PAYNE

- BSc Digital and Technology Solutions (Software Engineering)
 - Apprentice
-

Alex graduated from the University of Suffolk with a degree in BSc Digital and Technology Solutions (Software Engineering) and is working for BT as a member of the DevOps teams, ensuring key systems are operational, updated and free from vulnerabilities.

A typical working day includes various tasks such as writing test plans, research and responding to incidents and service requests as well as helping new apprentices to upskill and work within the team.

Looking back at his experience of his Tech Industry Gold Degree Apprenticeship, Alex praises his apprenticeship colleagues who, as a group including him, held regular knowledge sharing and revision sessions and push each other to do their best.

The biggest challenge, said Alex, was getting the right work, life and university balance all during the COVID-19 pandemic but he again praised the team around him for their support.

He said: "Having a great team around you makes all the difference in making this achievable."

Alex's team at BT continue to always ensure his degree came first, allowing him extra time to meet assignment deadlines. They also offered to proof read each assignment and provide valuable, constructive feedback.

During the development of his iOS app 'ReWired' which is a Stroke Recovery applications designed and developed for his dissertation, Alex's supervisor at university went above and beyond what was expected. He gained valuable connections who helped ensure the app would make a real difference and ensured he had support in areas outside his expertise like logo design.

Advice from Alex to anyone considering an apprenticeship is simple – be prepared to give it your all. It will be demanding at times but it will be worth it if you put the effort in and don't give up when the going gets tough.

Looking ahead, Alex will continue to progress his foundation of knowledge and technical skills within his current team as he gains further understanding around people management with the aim to hopefully manage a team in the future.

APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR



LIZZIE MAPPLEBECK

**APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR
(SUFFOLK ADULT LEARNER'S AWARDS 2022)**

Lizzie started the Level 7 Master of Business Administration (MBA) apprenticeship with Suffolk Business School at the University of Suffolk in September 2019, when employed by Suffolk and North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Groups as the Head of Corporate Transformation.

During the apprenticeship Lizzie has been promoted within the same employing organisation to manage more complex and strategic programmes. Lizzie says 'There were many barriers to overcome studying a Level 7 qualification whilst working full-time in the NHS during the pandemic and managing family life, but the University of Suffolk have provided such a great deal of support through expert academics and peer networks it was made much easier. I truly feel the apprenticeship has supported me to believe that life long learning and being put out of your comfort zone is so beneficial to becoming your best self both at work and at home.'

Lizzie was also awarded the Outstanding Apprentice of the Year award as part of the Suffolk Adult Learner Awards in June 2022. Lizzie expressed her happiness at receiving the award by saying 'It was truly an honour to be recognised for my tenacity and approach to the apprenticeship, I feel very lucky to be supported by a wonderful employer and have had the opportunity to study at the University of Suffolk.'

I left education after A Levels and never thought I would have the opportunity to study again; I would love this to inspire other adults that a learning journey doesn't have to follow a prescriptive process and you are never too old to go back into the classroom!'

Lizzie's dissertation research sought to understand if health alliances could perform as successful alliances during service and provider alignment, the outcomes of which have now gone forward to further inform commissioning and procurement processes within the wider NHS. Lizzie achieved the Master of Business Administration (MBA) with Distinction, which was awarded in 2022.

SUFFOLK ADULT LEARNERS' AWARDS 2022



University of Suffolk

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