



Olivia Found Her FutureMe @ Stockton Sixth Form



In 2021 Olivia achieved 2 A Levels and a BTEC qualification at Stockton Sixth Form College (part of the Tees Valley Collaborative Trust) in Religious Studies, Art & Design and Performing Arts. Olivia always had a passion for art and intended to be able to improve her skills while studying something she really enjoyed. That same year, she applied to study on a 'BA Hons in Fine Art' at the Northern School of Art with the aim of becoming a secondary school art teacher. Olivia is thoroughly enjoying her higher education course.

Olivia started her FutureMe journey by taking part in a range of activities aimed at helping students understand what progression options might be available to them. Stockton Sixth Form College's FutureMe programme aims to broaden horizons by providing students with advice on the range of higher education options available and provides support to enable them to make informed decisions about their future options. The activities on offer included:

- ▶ Introduction to HE Talk
- ▶ HE Subject Insight Sessions
- ▶ HE Campus Visits
- ▶ Understanding Student Finance & the HE Application Process
- ▶ Careers Talks
- ▶ HE Progression Support
- ▶ Developing Skills and Attainment Support

"I found the UCAS Guidance sessions where the application process was explained as well as how to search for different courses, universities and what I should be looking for when picking a course. I found the workshop on student finance very informative, which helped me understand how to budget. I also attended a careers one-2-one session where I got support from a Careers Advisor at the college and I also attended a virtual careers fair where I was able to talk to universities about what they had on offer, their application processes, what to include in personal statements. This helped me understand the pros and cons of university. I also enjoyed attending an online 'Employability course' - Post College Goals, looking at skills for university applications and future.

Olivia is now in her second year of undergraduate study at the Northern School of Art and is thoroughly enjoying her higher education experience where she is receiving technical training as an arts and media specialist in disciplines including fine art painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, video and sculpture.

Speaking of her experience Olivia said:

"Taking part in FutureMe activities gave me the chance to interact with a number of different universities and explore the options open to me. It also gave me lots of support when applying to university making sure I was making the right choices for me. Top tips I would like to pass on include:

- ▶ *Your future is in your hands it is down to yourself to be able to make a difference and to push yourself, you have the support from everyone around you but in the end only you can achieve it.*
- ▶ *Don't listen to anyone who says you can't do it because anything is possible if you put your mind to it.*
- ▶ *Be open to advice and help by those around you but do what is best for you."*

FutureMe is a programme of activity delivered in schools and colleges across the North East by the North East Uni Connect Programme. By taking part in FutureMe activity we want young people to:

- ▶ Have the opportunity to plan for their future and gain an understanding of what can support them in reaching their goals
- ▶ Have access to high quality information and support to help them consider whether higher education is the right option for them
- ▶ Have an increased awareness and understanding of higher education opportunities and progression pathways in the region.

The North East Uni Connect Programme is a partnership of all the universities and colleges in the North East working together to increase progression to higher education. This work is being carried out as part of the Office for Students' Uni Connect Programme.