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# A Sense of Belonging

How the SOAMS model promotes social change  
in communities local to Sheffield



# Key Themes

1. Access to professions – political backdrop
2. Case studies
3. SOAMS ‘model’
  - how we target local communities
  - programme structure
4. Reflections on the scheme
  - key features and what the future holds?

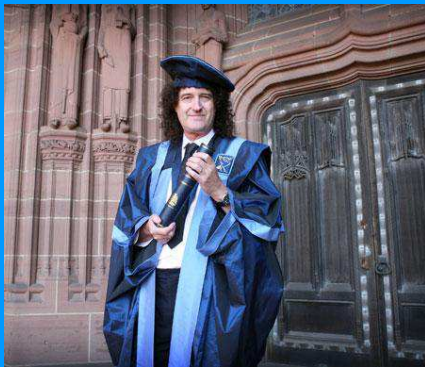




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- Various reports have stated that access to the professions is key to promoting social mobility
- Alan Milburn 2009 report on Access to the Professions





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**Sheffield's Outreach & Access to Medicine Scheme**



- Established 2001

- Broad aim

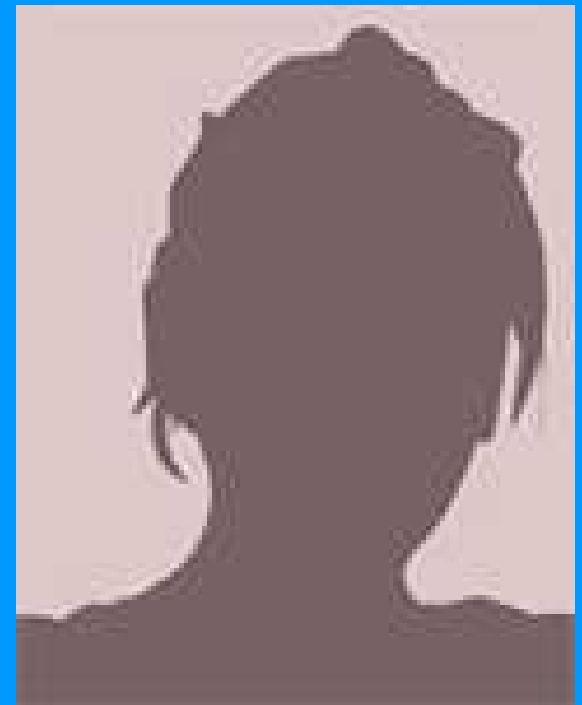
To make a career in Medicine a possibility  
for students from backgrounds  
underrepresented in HE and the medical  
profession



# Case studies from ex-SOAMS students

## Student A

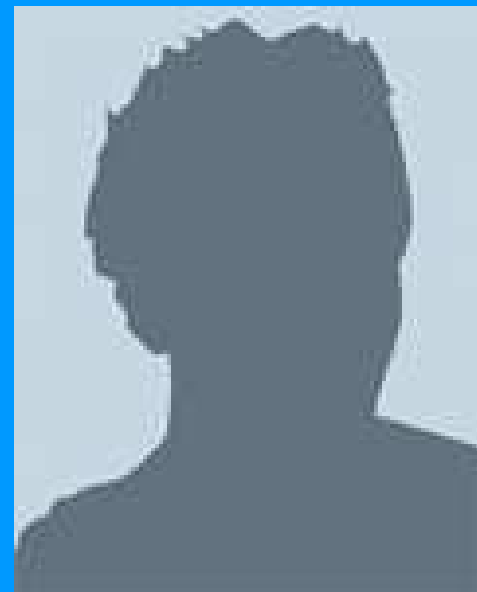
- Female
- Sheffield school with low progression rate to HE
- Parents did not attend university themselves
- Studying Medicine at Sheffield
- Works as ambassador





## Student B

- Male
- GCSEs – School in Chesterfield – very low progression rate
- A-Levels at high achieving secondary school
- Neither parent attended university
- Studying Medicine at Sheffield
- **Works as ambassador**



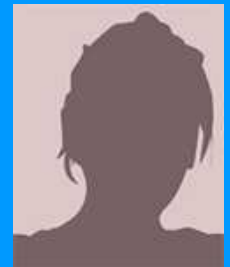


## Key themes emerging from case studies

- Lack of awareness of HE and Medicine/ lack of family knowledge

### Student A

‘ I had always heard of university but at the time I didn’t really understand what it was all about. Nobody in my circle of family and friends had been to university so we never really spoke about what it was.’







## Student B

‘I was extremely apprehensive about any career involving university simply on the basis of my very little knowledge about university coupled with the fears my parents had regarding the financial implications. My parents don’t hold degrees and do not know anyone with a degree education, so were initially apprehensive about my ideas of university education.’



# Lacking confidence



## Student A

'I knew that in order to study Medicine I had to go [to university] but I never thought I would actually get there!'



## Student B

'I was scared by the preconception that university was full off higher class students, with backgrounds completely different to me, who I would never be able to integrate with.'



## Sense of achievement

‘Ecstatic! I remember thinking what a great opportunity I had been given.’



‘I was very proud, as was my entire family ... I was excited that I was getting the unique opportunity to ‘test the waters’ in the concept of higher education and see it for myself. I knew I was hardworking and quite clever and now I had the chance to really push myself and excel. It was an opportunity I couldn’t miss or fail.’

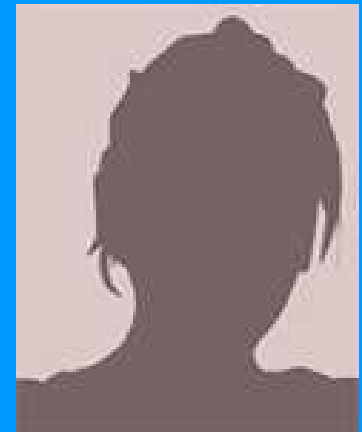




# Support from schools vital

## Student A

‘When I was in primary school I was always told how good I was at Science...One of my tutors at college had heard of the SOAMS scheme and encouraged me to apply. I think he was the first person to really believe in me.’



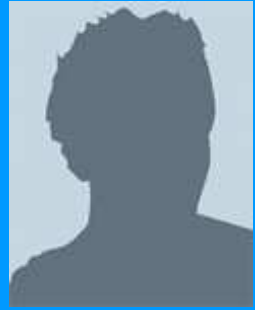


## Exposure to university environment vital



### Student A

'I had lived in Sheffield for a long time but had never been to the part of the city where the university is. When I walked onto the concourse everything was so exciting... The atmosphere was amazing and I remember thinking to myself how 'cool' it was – it was completely unexpected.'



## Student B

‘It was a very unique feeling standing in the middle of the student union, an insignificant little pupil in a sea of students rushing past in the daily life. It was very exciting and spurred me on to think more and more about medicine.’



# Ex - SOAMS students as 'role models'



## Student B

'A friend of my family is going through the A-Level process and I've been asked to go back to my old school to give her and others some support about the medical school process, interview techniques, UCAS form help etc.'



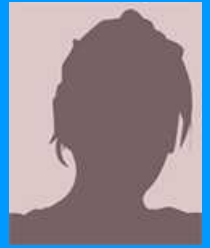
‘I also helped mentor a student with SOAMS e-mentoring and he has been accepted in to medicine at a London based medical school.

I think if you know people like you that have made it into medicine, it really helps you relate to the concept that you can do it too.’





# Student A



‘I feel really privileged to have had the opportunity. This has driven me to continue to be involved with the scheme throughout medical school as an ambassador and also encouraged me to get involved on a national scale with the BMA to ensure that all students have the same opportunities that I had.’

- Interviewed for newsbeat
- MSC Executive Lead on WP
- ISC Chair for Sheffield Medical School



## Reflections on case studies

- SOAMS aims to support young people in overcoming barriers – **real and perceived**
- Ex-SOAMS students as role models – vital to success of scheme
- Is there more we can do with regard to role models going forward?

# ‘Sense of Belonging’ The SOAMS Model

- SOAMS model – how we target communities in Sheffield and surrounding regions
- Raise awareness, aspiration, achievement
- Model can be applied to other outreach schemes





## SOAMS targeting guidelines (most able least likely)

- First generation HE ✓
- Need to study locally ✓ *or*
- Have personal circumstances that may limit aspirations ✓
- Good in Science and Maths – top 10% ✓
- Parental occupation – NS-SEC
- Postcode – IMD

\*Currently reviewing for “basket of indicators”\*

# SOAMS Targeting

- Targeting communities through school contacts
- Still get support that school/college offers – but can build relationships with individuals and their families – strong networks
- Risk factor – losing school contacts
- Selective scheme - sense of achievement and source of motivation for students



# Two Distinct Phases:

## PHASE 1

## Places

Year 9

90

Year 10

90

Year 11

90

## PHASE 2

## Places

Year 12

up to 45

Year 13

up to 45



# SOAMS Phase 1 Activity Programme

Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	<b>Ongoing support, advice and guidance</b>
1.) Welcome Evening	1.) Team Building Challenge Day	1.) Sheffield Hallam and Department Visit	
2.) ACE Day	2.) Thackray Medical Museum	2.) First Aid	
3.) Medicine :Fact or Fiction?	3.) DNA and Ethics	3.) GCSE Study Skills	
4.) Chemistry and Microbiology	4.) Powerlab	4.) Celebration Evening	

**General HE/Skills Development**

Medical **Science** Guidance and support



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# SOAMS Phase 2 – Programme of Activities

Year 12	Year 13	
Welcome Event and E-Mentee Training	UCAS Application Session	<b>Ongoing support, advice and guidance</b>
Medical Careers Conference	<b>NEW SESSION!</b>	
Mini-ILA	<b>Hollowford Team Building Day</b>	<b>Evaluation and tracking</b>
AS Study Skills	One-to-one session	<b>E-mentoring</b>
Chemistry Revision	Medical School Interview	
Optional Biology Revision	A Level Study Skills (Uni prep)	<b>Tailored, one-to one support</b>
<b>Open Day</b>	Chemistry Revision	
Summer School	Celebration Evening	<b>GI</b>



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# Key Features of the programme

•Guaranteed interview =



•Use of ambassador role models vital to success of scheme & \*within communities\*

•‘Lobbying’ force within university – able to operate at various levels – not just us – our ambassadors too! Can be political.

## Additional support for students

- Not a rigid programme
- Tailored support – large programme but can intervene at individual level
- Able to spot trends and offer appropriate, timely support i.e. one-to-one sessions



# SOAMS Destinations

## Summary of results of SOAMS students surveyed over the telephone

Date	Response rate	Starting uni	Defers	In FE no plans	Other	Working	Failed resits
2008	87%	74%	15%	5%	2%	3%	1%
2009	82%	68%	6%	4%	3%	6%	11%



## Conclusions

- SOAMS a robust model that can demonstrate success in driving the agenda forward – not in isolation
- Ex-students form networks and promote WP in wider community
- Could be applied to other outreach schemes – ADOPT, PPP etc





## Future considerations

- Student finance
- Greater work with departments
- Changes to targeting guidelines
- Promote Sheffield as a good choice
- Build on work with role models



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# SOAMS Graduates





# Quotes

- “I gained a far better understanding of the different aspects of the medical profession”
- “The Summer School was really fun”
- “Now I know that medicine is definitely for me”
- “The mock interview helped me to prepare for the real thing”
- “The UCAS guidance was excellent”
- “SOAMS gave me confidence to apply for medical school”
- “A most valuable insight into medicine as a career”
- “Excellent support and guidance”