BiGGY Summer Placements 2015 – Pilot Evaluation

Megan Baker, BiGGY Coordinator

University of Gloucestershire Students’ Union (October 2015)



Contents

[Executive Summary 4](#_Toc431546068)

[1. Pilot Evaluation 5](#_Toc431546069)

[1.1. The BiGGY vision and objectives: 5](#_Toc431546070)

[2. BiGGY Summer Placements 2015: Outline 5](#_Toc431546071)

[2.1. Participant Recruitment 5](#_Toc431546072)

[2.2. Securing Placements 6](#_Toc431546073)

[2.3. Programme Outline 7](#_Toc431546074)

[3. Achievements 8](#_Toc431546075)

[3.1. Participant Recruitment 8](#_Toc431546076)

[3.2. Placement Opportunities 8](#_Toc431546077)

[3.2.1. SU placement 9](#_Toc431546078)

[3.3. Placement Host Satisfaction 10](#_Toc431546079)

[Figure 3.3.1: How would you rate your overall experience with BiGGY? 12](#_Toc431546080)

[Figure 3.3.2: How would you rate the information provided prior to commencing hosting a placement? 12](#_Toc431546081)

[3.4. Participant Experiences and Learnings 12](#_Toc431546082)

[3.4.1. Training 12](#_Toc431546083)

[3.4.2. Overall experience 13](#_Toc431546084)

[3.4.3. Sustainability learning 15](#_Toc431546085)

[3.4.4. Goal setting, blogging and debriefing 16](#_Toc431546086)

[Figure 3.4.4.1 The best part of the debriefing day was… 17](#_Toc431546087)

[4. Challenges 18](#_Toc431546088)

[4.1. Engagement 18](#_Toc431546089)

[4.2. Communicating with placement hosts 18](#_Toc431546090)

[4.3. Funding 19](#_Toc431546091)

[4.3.1. Feedback from placement hosts: Future wage contribution 20](#_Toc431546092)

[4.3.2. Feedback from participants: Alternatives to National Living Wage 21](#_Toc431546093)

[Figure 4.3.2. What alternatives would you consider to the National Living Wage? 21](#_Toc431546094)

[5. Recommendations 22](#_Toc431546095)

[5.1. Programme Delivery 22](#_Toc431546096)

[5.2. Marketing and Recruitment 22](#_Toc431546097)

[5.2.1. BiGGY Programme Length 23](#_Toc431546098)

[5.3. The BiGGY name: 24](#_Toc431546099)

[5.4. Alternatives to National Living Wage (NLW) 25](#_Toc431546100)

[6. Conclusion 26](#_Toc431546101)

[Appendix i: Programme Outline 28](#_Toc431546102)

[Appendix ii: Training Week Timetable 29](#_Toc431546103)

[Appendix iii 30](#_Toc431546104)

# Executive Summary

University of Gloucestershire Students’ Union (UGSU) delivered BiGGY Summer Placements 2015 over July and August 2015 as a pilot for a sustainability themed placements programme. This built on the original idea of a community engagement/ citizen service lobbied for by James Derounian, senior lecturer at the University of Gloucestershire. Thanks to funding from the National Union of Students’ Green Fund, UGSU was able to conduct a feasibility study in 2014 and deliver a pilot for BiGGY during 2015 as one of 6 strands for the Greener Gloucestershire Project. Drawing on feedback from placement hosts and participants, and reflections and experiences of the BiGGY Coordinator, this evaluation highlights the successes and challenges to inform future delivery of the BiGGY programme.

100% of placement hosts stated that the BiGGY participants added value to their organisations; that they would recommend BiGGY to other organisations and that they would take on future participants. Predominantly working on sustainability themed projects or work assignments during their placements, the contributions participants made to Gloucestershire organisations supported them to become agents of positive change (social, environmental and economic) whilst gaining employability skills and bridging the gap between school and university thus fulfilling the BiGGY vision.

All participants were offered bespoke internship opportunities which connected their prospective university courses with sustainability, for example a participant going on to study medicine completed one placement researching the impacts of social prescribing and another placement drafting the sustainability plan for Gloucestershire Healthcare Trust. Participants commented on the deepening of their sustainability understanding, knowledge and skills as a result of the training and experience gained from BiGGY. This, combined with the early integration into university life, demonstrates BiGGY’s role in promoting transformative learning for sustainability to support development of forward thinking, engaged learners.

Pilot participants were paid the National Living Wage (NLW) in recognition of the work they contributed to their placement organisations. The cost of continuing to pay the NLW in the long term acts as a major barrier to future delivery. It has been suggested an alternative is offered, the most popular alternatives to this suggested by pilot participants are either the National Minimum Wage or a university bursary (around £1,000). It is unlikely this could be obtained entirely from placement organisations therefore either financial support from host universities of the BiGGY programme or external funding would need to be sought.

Feedback from participants, placement hosts and the BiGGY Coordinator (2014- 2015) provide the basis for future recommendations. It is advised that a meeting between participants and placement hosts prior to commencing the programme is embedded in the programme structure to ensure clarity of expectations for all parties during engagement with BiGGY. An improved marketing strategy needs to be developed to improve future recruitment; this would be supported by ensuring any BiGGY host university is fully on-board with marketing this to prospective students. Pilot participants identified a key hurdle to participant recruitment as the name of the programme. ‘Big Green Gap Year’ implies that this is a gap year therefore putting off young people who are not intending to take a year out before university.

# Pilot Evaluation

BiGGY Summer Placements 2015 was delivered by the University of Gloucestershire Students’ Union (UGSU) over July and August 2015 as a pilot for a sustainability themed placements programme. This built on the original idea of a community engagement/ citizen service lobbied for by James Derounian, senior lecturer at the University of Gloucestershire. Thanks to funding from the National Union of Students’ Green Fund, UGSU was able to deliver a feasibility study and pilot for BiGGY during 2015 as one of 6 strands for the Greener Gloucestershire Project. Drawing on feedback from placement hosts and participants, and reflections and experiences of the BiGGY Coordinator, this evaluation looks to highlight the successes and challenges of delivering this pilot to inform future delivery of the BiGGY programme.

## The BiGGY vision and objectives:

***To give students the opportunity to act as agents for positive change (social, environmental and economic) in communities, whilst developing employability skills and bridging the gap between school and university***

“During these placements you will contribute to real sustainability projects and become an integral part of the staff team. Before starting your placements BiGGY will work closely with the placement hosts to secure interesting and relevant projects for you to work on.” ([www.biggreengapyear.org](http://www.biggreengapyear.org), 2015)

# BiGGY Summer Placements 2015: Outline

This section provides an overview of how participants were recruited, how placements were secured and how the programme was delivered.

BiGGY is a bespoke internship programme which connects young 18 – 19 year olds prospective university courses with sustainability, for example a participant going on to study medicine completed two placements: one researching the impacts of social prescribing and another drafting the sustainability plan for Gloucestershire Healthcare Trust whilst shadowing the Corporate Social Responsibility Manager for the Trust.

## Participant Recruitment

The opportunity was promoted through the following pathways:

* Emails to Further Education colleges/ sixth forms and youth groups across Gloucestershire requesting posters were printed and promoted to year 12s. The BiGGY Coordinator offered to visit these FEIs to present on BiGGY
* Visits to Sixth Forms/ Colleges to talk with students
* Visits to youth groups to present on BiGGY
* Presence at University of Gloucestershire Open Days
* Attendance at 1 higher education Fayre at an FEI in Worcester on invitation
* Social Media - Facebook

Seven participants applied to participate in this pilot with one dropping out due to an alternative offering of summer work overseas therefore 6 participants completed the programme in the summer of 2015. Table 2.1.1 below highlights the range of pathways in which the pilot applicants found out about BiGGY.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 2.1.1. How did you find out about BiGGY Summer Placements 2015? |
| “I Googled summer placement opportunities and BiGGY came up.” |
| “Saw link posted on Girl Guiding Gloucestershire senior section Facebook” |
| “School email” |
| “I was pointed in the direction through my mum, who works for UoG Students' Union. After some research I felt that it was a programme that I was interested in” |
| “I found about BiGGY through a poster on the wall of my sixth form, where Meg had visited a few months previously, when I had been at an open day” |
| “Through a post on a Girl Guiding Gloucestershire Senior Section Facebook Group” |
| “I saw the posters and flyers at an Open Day for the University” |

Section 5.2 highlights additional future marketing strategies for BiGGY based on feedback from participants. The low number of applicants for this pilot suggests the marketing strategy needs significant improvement for successful future delivery of the programme.

## Securing Placements

Placements were sought to match the interests and prospective course of study for the individual BiGGY applicants. Potential placement hosts were contacted based on those who had provided positive interest during the BiGGY feasibility study, those who are members of the Regional Centre of Expertise for Sustainability Education (RCE Severn), hosted by the University of Gloucestershire, or where an organisation matched the interests of an applicant particularly well. 1st, 2nd and 3rd options for placements were set and shared with the applicants who were able to highlight which placement looked most appealing to them. Potential placement hosts organisations were contacted by email with a follow-up phone call and where possible a face-to-face meeting was held.

Securing placements was most successful where face-to-face contact was made or the organisation had time available to commit to taking on a placement participant and enthusiasm for the BiGGY programme. There was huge variation in the ease at which organisations were able to commit to take on participants and there appears to be no clear guidance for this as some organisations who had initially seemed very keen to be part of BiGGY dropped out at the last minute due to staffing/time or unexplained reasons. Some of the difficulties in securing placements lay in the timing of the pilot. Due to this being a busy holiday period a number of organisations were unable to provide sufficient support for a BiGGY participant. Conversely the summer is particularly busy for many environmental/ conservation organisations therefore although they were able to take on BiGGY participants, the quality of the placements they were able to offer was lower than hoped.

## Programme Outline

An outline of the BiGGY programme with a timeline of events is provided in appendix i. [Section 5.1](#_Programme_Delivery) uses participant and placement host feedback to consider the length of future BiGGY placements.

The five day training week prior to commencing placements prepared participants for their placements by encouraging the development of appropriate work-ready skills along with developing a mind-set for becoming pro-active interns. An outline of the training programme is provided in appendix ii. Highlights[[1]](#footnote-1) of this week for the participants included:

* Presentation skills training (mentioned by three participants)
* Assertiveness workshop
* Learning from all the different SU staff about how to act and be successful in a work place
* Getting to see the logistics of how a workplace environment works (the Students' Union. Also, meeting and getting to know the people I would be working with for the following weeks
* N/A, I did not attend, however, I think learning about what sustainability meant in practice was important to me

# Achievements

It was important to ensure that final delivery of the pilot programme met the BiGGY vision and objectives (see [section 1.1](#_The_BiGGY_vision)) therefore this evaluation looks at feedback from participants with regard to how empowered they felt to become agents for positive change; to what extent they feel they developed employability skills; and how successful the programme was in bridging the gap between school and university.

Feedback from placement hosts on the contributions BiGGY participants made to their organisations has been considered and the nature of the programmes of work offered to these participants is also evaluated.

## Participant Recruitment

The quality of applicants for the BiGGY pilot was incredibly high, which is a likely reflection of the type of young person who is motivated to spend their final summer before university focussing on personal and professional development. All applicants were expecting A-Level results graded A-C, with a high proportion expecting mostly As. This highlights the level at which these young people work and supported the delivery of a successful pilot programme.

As a Gloucestershire based programme, it was predominantly promoted to schools and colleges in the county and Bristol.

* 4 participants were from Gloucestershire
* 1 participant was from Shropshire[[2]](#footnote-2)
* 1 participant was from Bristol
* 1 applicant from was Lincolnshire[[3]](#footnote-3)

Despite the high calibre of applicants, the number was disappointing – 7 applied for the pilot in 2015, this is considered more deeply in section 4.1. Challenges: Engagement.

## Placement Opportunities

The quality of the placements offered to BiGGY participants surpassed the expectations of the participants on applying to the programme and met the aspirations of the BiGGY Coordinator. A summary of these is provided in Appendix iii. The quality of the work programmes developed by the placement hosts was, in general, of an extremely high standard. Most placement hosts took on-board the information provided about BiGGY and the importance of connecting these placements with sustainability and the participants’ prospective university course choices in order to provide placements well aligned to the needs of BiGGY participants.

Most participants felt that they were welcomed into the teams they worked for in their placements including their placement at the Students’ Union every Friday. The participants overall rating for their placements averaged 8.46 out of 10 for feeling welcomed into the team (with 10 being very welcome and 1 not feeling welcome). Including the UGSU placement, participants would recommend 9 out of the 10 placements for future participants.

The success of these placements was a result of numerous factors:

* Placement hosts who are invested in recognising the positive difference and contribution interns can offer
* Placement hosts who took the time to read background information provided on BiGGY and engage with the concept of developing meaningful work placements themed around sustainability
* Clear communication of BiGGY’s expectations of placement hosts[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Highly motivated and enthusiastic BiGGY participants – based on the idea of ‘the more you put in, the more you get out’
* Training participants prior to placements in order to set goals and establish their identity as BiGGY participants during their work placements
* Where it was possible to have face-to-face meetings with placement hosts prior to BiGGY the organisations were generally more in-tune with what was required of them in order to ensure placements facilitated meaningful work placements for both the placement hosts and participants

 *“A superb program much better than ordinary work experience and a better source of income than anything else available to my age group… the best preparation for work after university that I have experienced so far.” (Christopher Whitehouse, BiGGY Participant 2015)*

Those areas which should be built-on for future delivery of BiGGY are included in [Section 5](#_Recommendations); areas for development and future delivery

### SU placement

One day per week working together in the University of Gloucestershire Students’ Union gave participants a chance to feel part of a team working together on the BiGGY programme. It provided a space for participants to share their experiences and catch-up on their different programmes of work whilst also contributing to an online BiGGY blog.

Working in the SU environment on various sustainability projects also gave insight into the operational side of an SU. Many pre-university students have little to no idea what the role of a Students’ Union is, spending time meeting SU staff and working alongside them enabled participants to prepare for university by having a better understanding of university life.

* 100% of participants stated their SU placement added value to their BiGGY experience
* 100% of participants would recommend this placement to other participants
* This placement scared 9.5 out of 10 for participants feeling welcomed into the team

This participant’s feedback sums up his experience in this placement very positively:

*“My time spent at the SU was the most enjoyable part of my BiGGY experience and I can't fault the SU and my experience there at all.” (Lawrence Court, BiGGY Participant 2015)*

## Placement Host Satisfaction

Successful delivery of the BiGGY pilot and optimising potential for future delivery and scaling-up of BiGGY required placement hosts to be on-board with the programme. It was necessary to ensure that placement host organisations felt BiGGY participants added sufficient value to make this a worthwhile investment of time and energy. Comments from placements hosts on the value-added to their organisations are provided in table 3.3.1 below. Challenges of meeting this objective are outlined in [section 4.2](#_Communicating_with_placement). (Communicating with Placement Hosts) and suggestions for improvement are included in [section 5.1](#_Programme_Delivery). (Programme Delivery).

The positive feedback from all placement hosts who contributed to this evaluation highlights the success of the BiGGY pilot and shows its great potential for the future. 100% satisfaction was achieved in many areas of the evaluation through feedback from placement hosts. Where this was not achieved, the changes necessary to increase satisfaction have been identified in [section 4.2](#_Challenges) and [5.1.](#_Recommendations)

* 100% of placement hosts said their BiGGY participant added value to their organisation
* 100% of placement hosts said they would take on a BiGGY participant in the future
* 100% of placement hosts said they would recommend other organisations take on a BiGGY participant
* Figure 3.3.1. below shows the high level of placement host satisfaction with the overall BiGGY experience
* 7 out of 8[[5]](#footnote-5) placement hosts said the value added outweighed the time commitment required for having a BiGGY participant[[6]](#footnote-6). Comments in table 3.3.1 provide detailed feedback on the contributions made
* Placement host satisfaction with information provided prior to taking on a BiGGY participant ranged from average to very good (see figure 3.3.2). Although this suggests there was adequate information provided, in order for BiGGY to ensure placements offer a high quality work programme and participants add sufficient value to host organisations the system of communication prior to placements should be improved to ensure clarity of roles and expectations.

Prior to agreeing to take on a participant, organisations were provided with a background on the participant seeking a placement with them. This information included: what they were studying for A-levels, their predicted results, what they were going on to study, why they had applied to BiGGY, what they were hoping to achieve from participating in BiGGY, what their understanding of sustainability is and what their career ambitions are. Figure 3.3.2 shows placement host satisfaction with communications prior to commencing placements. For some placement hosts this was sufficient information as stated by one organisation:

*“All communications were very good. We received information about the placement and what their chosen career path was so we could try and plan a suitable task…” (County Community Projects, 2015)*

|  |
| --- |
| Table 3.3.1. Placement host feedback – Explain how/if the value-added outweighed the time commitment required for having a BiGGY participant with your organisation  |
| The work experience student completed tasks with a minimum of supervision and easily understood what was required. |
| The participant was easily one of the best students we have ever had within the XX team. He was committed to the task that had been set but was also willing to be flexible and take on additional jobs.  |
| There was relatively little work for us to do ahead of the placement, and the participant was highly independent in his work, requiring little hand-holding and only occasional direct supervision. Could be a different experience though with a less capable student.  |
| Yes a project got started that would otherwise not have got off the ground. |
| Lawrence worked extremely hard on a number of key CCRI projects, producing excellent results. For example, Lawrence’s work on commons management case studies will be directly used as part of an online teaching course in the 2015/16 academic year.  |
| It was difficult as the participant had a medical condition that was not conducive to our type of work, we said we would have her for 2 weeks and were put in a position where we had to have her for 4 as she was let down by another organisation. I don’t normally take work experience people in August |
| Time spent planning was balanced by work achieved by the participant and the pleasure of being able to support a young person with their future aspirations.  |
| It gave us a reliable volunteer during the peak event period |
| The participant was very motivated and able to work with minimal supervision once he had been asked to complete a task. We spent some time visiting other outlets and this gave time for exchanging ideas |

### Figure 3.3.1: How would you rate your overall experience with BiGGY?

### Figure 3.3.2: How would you rate the information provided prior to commencing hosting a placement?

## Participant Experiences and Learnings

The BiGGY pilot aimed to facilitate young peoples’ development of professional, personal, social and sustainability skills and understanding. The programme was purposefully planned to include appropriate training and support with space for deepening participants’ capacity for critical and innovative thinking, reflective and collaborative learning.

### Training

Participants completed a 5 day training week at the University of Gloucestershire Students’ Union delivered by the BiGGY Coordinator during the week before their placements commenced. The aim of the week was to prepare them for their placements, develop team spirit amongst BiGGY participants, and encourage understanding of sustainability, sustainability education and its relevance to professional and personal lives. This also provided an orientation week for participants to become familiar with the University and the workings of the Students’ Union prior to commencing placements. The week’s activities included numerous team building exercises, a sustainability workshop, assertiveness training, presentation skills training, a BiGGY launch lunch and a social enterprise workshop. A detailed schedule of the training week is available in appendix ii.

* The training week was rated 7.5 out of 10 for preparing the participants for their placements

Participant feedback on potential improvements to this training week for better preparing participants for placements, included the value that could have been added in meeting their placement hosts prior to starting work. It was also mentioned that more placement-specific training could have helped, however this may be difficult to achieve with such a variety of placements. See table 3.4.1.1 below for participants’ comments on the training week.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 3.4.1.1. Participant feedback from training week  |
| To prepare me for my placement I would have liked to have met my placement hosts and had a brief introduction/informal interview.  |
| I think that the training could have been more tailored to our exact projects on placement. The training on sustainability and assertiveness was great and really helpful however. I also think some more hands-on, practical team building would have been good to help us integrate as a group faster. |
| I think the training week was great, but to improve it maybe a session with our placement hosts. I know that would be difficult to coordinate but at my placements I felt like my hosts didn't really understand what BiGGY was. So maybe involving them in the launch so they see the value of the placements and understand more what it's about.  |
| I gave training a 6/10 I believe, my training was only one day, so I could not really give it much higher[[7]](#footnote-7) |
| I think the major thing would be just some sort of interview or meeting process between prospective placement hosts and participants at the start of the programme so we should have more in depth idea of what we were going to do and tailor the skill we need to learn to that. |
| The training week was good, I think the only real thing I would change would be meeting placement hosts as part of it (tricky to do) so that they could get a feel for what we'd be like and we could find out what we were doing sooner, but in my case I managed to arrange that outside of the training week. The main reason I think it scored only 7.5 is that I think for most of us it wasn't directly useful to our placements, but the skills and knowledge will be more useful relating to future employment (or at least that was the case for me, I thought I might need to be more assertive etc. but as it turned out I never really faced too many problems with that). |

### Overall experience

Participant feedback provided in the end of programme survey highlights the positive impact BiGGY Summer Placements 2015 had on participants. Bullet points below summarise the high levels of satisfaction in their overall experience whilst table 3.4.2.1 provides some insightful comments on the fulfilment achieved by participants.

* Rating their overall experience on the BiGGY programme, the average rating was 9 out of 10[[8]](#footnote-8)
* Rating BiGGY as whole experience in preparing the participants for university, the average rating was 8
* All participants stated that they would recommend the programme to a friend, and 4 out of 6 would participate in a similar programme lasting 6 months or more.
* BiGGY provided an opportunity for young people to meet interesting people and make new friends: all participants stated that they think they will stay in touch with their fellow participants

|  |
| --- |
| Table 3.4.2.1. What will be your lasting memory of BiGGY? |
| The work that I created being acceptable in professional organizations. |
| Friends I made (the other students) |
| There is a lot I could say here, but I think meeting so many different people is what will make it so memorable in years to come |
| The kindness of everyone involved from coordinator, placement host and their team to my fellow participants. I have met some inspirational people along the way that has been eye opening to me. |
| I think the people I met, if I'm honest. And I think that is why, although they could have been more organised, the Fridays were so important as you felt part of something big and important, not just "some summer placement" |
| Working with the other participants at the allotment on Fridays |
| What has been your favourite thing about BiGGY? |
| The invaluable work experience and professional connections I have made. |
| Paid relevant work experience. I would not have got this without BiGGY. |
| Working so closely with Cheltenham Green Party and really being accepted into the organisation |
| Meeting the other participants who I share interests with and whom I genuinely enjoyed being around. My experience was much better because my fellow BiGGY's were so good to get along with.  |
| Getting paid relevant work experience that will be beneficial to my future career. |
| My placement was the one highlight, but I think without the idea of sustainability behind it, i may not have learned so much. Business in school revolves around profit 99% of the time, so to look at how sustainability could influence business was something completely new and interesting. However, putting what I already knew to practice in industry with the amount of freedom i had was probably the highlight. |
| What has been your biggest challenge participating in BiGGY? |
| I did not encounter any significant challenges  |
| Being confident enough in my own abilities.  |
| Overcoming the problems I faced carrying out telephone surveys, I know I don't want to work in a call centre! |
| Self- motivation was a challenge, especially in my second placement where I was working from home and sometimes had little stimulation. I was able to keep on track during my time with CGD but at times work seemed minimal. Having said this however, I feel as if this was a learning curve because this is a true reflection of the real workplace.  |
| Unlike the others claimed in their presentations, I don't think confidence has ever been my issue, however, in arguments and confrontation, I tend to back down, but when I had to make recommendations on placement and support them against what my colleagues were saying, I found that difficult but think I did well. |
| Commuting and managing work load |

### Sustainability learning

In achieving the BiGGY vision to empower young people “to act as agents of positive change (social, environmental and economic) in communities, whilst developing employability skills and bridging the gap between school and university” ([www.biggreengapyear.org](http://www.biggreengapyear.org), 2015), BiGGY aimed to provide practical learning opportunities for sustainability. Bespoke placement opportunities connecting participants’ prospective university course choices with sustainability, sought to support participants to deepen their understanding of sustainability and its relevance to their future professional lives. This was a key element to BiGGY as it was integrated into the BiGGY application form, included in the training week and participants were encouraged to reflect on the sustainability element of the work placements throughout their experience through an online blog and documenting their experience on film. Table 3.4.3.1 below demonstrates the change in participants’ perception of sustainability as a result of participating in BiGGY Summer Placements 2015. It is inspiring to see how deeply participants have connected with sustainability as an agenda important to all. This is also something highlighted in participants’ comments on the BiGGY film produced for the pilot.

*“My placement was the one highlight, but I think without the idea of sustainability behind it, I may not have learned so much.” (Sean Jones, BiGGY Participant 2015).*

|  |
| --- |
| Table 3.4.3.1. Has BiGGY changed your perception of sustainability and, if so, how? |
| Yes, I have learned that it is not just about 'tree hugging' but more to do with the actions ( both long and short term ) than an individual or organization takes |
| I've seen how multifaceted it is and how it can be made applicable everywhere. |
| I think it has made me appreciate its social and economic side, not just its environmental one |
| Yes. It has changed because I now realise that sustainability comes is universal. By this I mean that it is not all about the environment but it's about people and culture and is linked to virtually everything. Essentially, initially I thought sustainability only covered conservation of the planet but now I know it is more wider and involves people and in many different ways. |
| Yes, it has made me appreciate the wider concept of sustainability and made me more thoughtful about what I do. |
| See answer to Q10 (d): My placement was the one highlight, but i think without the idea of sustainability behind it, I may not have learned so much. Business in school revolves around profit 99% of the time, so to look at how sustainability could influence business was something completely new and interesting. However, putting what I already knew to practice in industry with the amount of freedom I had was probably the highlight. |
| What have you learnt from participating in BiGGY? |
| That sustainability is applicable to a diverse range of careers and professions |
| How important it is to have a foot in the door with the organisations I'd like to work for. |
| It has given me a much better idea of the kind of work I would be happy doing after university |
| The most important thing I have learnt is what a workplace environment involves and what is expected from you as an employer but also what I expect from the employer. I have also learnt that sustainability is so important and is a field I am interested in- BiGGY may have even determined my career path.  |
| I have learnt that sustainability is not just environmental as my previous perception was, but that it is also social and economic which, effectively means the word and concept is three times as important as most think. Then learning how this is relevant to supporting local economies and filling consumer needs with as little waste as possible helped it link into my course. |
| I prioritised and focused on the tasks I did. I enjoyed the sense of achievement I got from leaning about gardening and seeing what I’ve grown in the allotment. Being in a work environment enabled me to learn how to work under pressure, against time constraints and remain positive. |

### Goal setting, blogging and debriefing

On the final day of the BiGGY training participants were asked to take some time setting realistic and achievable goals for themselves. These were required to include a professional, personal and educational goal. Feedback from participants shows goal setting encouraged deeper, more reflective thinking which can be assumed to have facilitated participants to engage more critically with their work placements.

* 4 out of 6 participants said their goals gave them a point of reference when reflecting on their placements
* 1 participants said their goals encouraged them to think more deeply about their placement opportunities
* 1 participant said their goals gave them more direction when working in placement

Participants were required to contribute to an online blog[[9]](#footnote-9) during their Friday SU placement days. The blog captures participants’ insights and experiences at a practical level explaining their day-to-day work programmes and at a deeper level showing learnings. This encouraged them to demonstrate the development of innovative forward thinking and gave space for reflection and critical thinking in terms of professional/ personal development. Blog extracts below give a sample of this:

*“Whilst working with CCP, I was privileged to get first-hand experience of Social Prescribing- which is connecting people to non-medical support and activities in their communities that could alleviate their medical need. The fact that this project crossed over with some of the work I did with the CCG made it even more relevant” (Joel Chilaka, BiGGY Participant, 2015)*

*“I led the pond dipping activity. These activities are really important in engaging children with wildlife. Even when the same child found pond snails for the 3rd time, it’s still exciting! By engaging with wildlife at such an early age there’s more chance they will want to protect wildlife in the future.” – On her placement with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (Fiona Day, BiGGY Participant, 2015)*

*“Where BiGGY is different is that, not only is it relevant to my university course, but that it revolves around sustainability. This is a new concept and a new perspective that I will consider in the workplace in my future in management” (Sean Jones, BiGGY Participant 2015)*

The final day of BiGGY provided an opportunity for participants to debrief on their experience with the BiGGY coordinator whilst having a final day of celebration. Placement hosts were invited to a presentation session where each participant delivered a 5 minute presentation on their BiGGY experience sharing their learnings, reflections and challenges they faced. Not only did this showcase the success of the BiGGY pilot, but it also gave placement hosts a chance to see the bigger picture of BiGGY which they had become a part of and to thank the participants for their contributions as interns in their organisations. Figure 3.4.4.1 below highlights the benefits identified by participants of including a debriefing day in the BiGGY programme.

* 50% of participants felt the debriefing day gave them a sense of closure to the experience
* 33% saw sharing their experience with others as a highlight of the day
* When asked how much value the debriefing day added to the BiGGY experience, participants rated[[10]](#footnote-10) this an average of 8.66 out of 10

### Figure 3.4.4.1 The best part of the debriefing day was…

# Challenges

It has been evidenced in this evaluation that the BiGGY pilot successfully achieved its objectives and the overarching BiGGY vision. In order to build on the success of this pilot, challenges faced and suggestions for overcoming these challenges have been highlighted in this section and the next.

## Engagement

Methods of engagement used for recruiting participants are outlined in [section 3.1](#_Participant_Recruitment) Participant Recruitment.

Although about 60 FEIs and over 40 youth groups were contacted it was difficult to break through and raise the profile of BiGGY in order to gain direct contact with young people.

Having a presence at Open Days consisted of flyers and posters promoting the programme. This method of promotion offers great opportunity for participant recruitment, suggestions for improving this marketing strategy include:

* Student Ambassadors delivering University tours could have been briefed on BiGGY to talk about this during the walk and talk
* During the welcome talk the opportunities BiGGY offer to pre-university students could have been promoted
* BiGGY Summer Placements could have been included in Open Day information packs and on the University of Gloucestershire recruitment webpages –this would provide an additional draw-factor for prospective students

Promoting a first time delivery of BiGGY made promotion of the programme far more challenging than would be the case for future delivery. With no previous case studies or examples of placements for these groups to base their perceptions, a significant challenge was emphasising the opportunities provided by BiGGY.

## Communicating with placement hosts

Due to work commitments of many placement hosts and therefore their limited availability, it was difficult to establish a face-to-face meeting prior to commencing placements. This would have supported the development of a high quality work programme for participants and ensured that all placement hosts understood the BiGGY vision and objectives.

Feedback from the majority of participants and placement hosts has emphasised a need to include pre-placement meetings or interviews for any future delivery of the programme. Table 4.2.1 below provides a sample of the comments made explicitly stating the need for placement hosts to meet with participants prior to commencing the programme. Similar comments have been made by participants as shown in table 3.4.1.1.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 4.2.1. Feedback highlighting a need for participants and placement hosts to meet prior to commencing the programme |
| I held an end of placement meeting with Joel and the hosting team. All parties felt that a meeting in advance of the placement would be beneficial to both the placement and host. This would allow time to plan a task that really met the needs of the placement and also would be most beneficial to the host.  |
| Probably need a face to face meeting or briefing but this just reflects my learning style and the range of things I am involved. No time to read lengthy documents. |
| I think might be a good idea in future to make a short presentation to CCRI staff on the BiGGY placement scheme prior to recruitment. This would give all staff a better feel of what it’s all about. This could be tagged on to one of our ‘CCRI Seminar Series’ talks. |
| More of an introduction and a face to face briefing session would have helped me to plan the work in advance to ensure that we booked in a broad spectrum of mini-projects for him to complete in the period. Also, it would have been useful to meet the candidate to assess their personality before setting tasks. Whilst I knew from the CV that he was bright I did not know whether he would be an effective communicator or his Excel skills for example. |

## Funding

The greatest expenses incurred delivering the BiGGY pilot comprised of the BiGGY Coordinator salary and the participants’ wages during their time in placements. The BiGGY Coordinator was employed on a part-time basis working 2 days per week from August 2014 – October 2015. Participants were paid the National Living Wage working 5 days per week during July and August. Participants had a significant amount of holiday booked during this time therefore the cost of these wages was less than would have been the case if participants had not previously booked holiday.

Table 4.3.1 below outlines the cost of paying participants if they were to work 5 days/week for 2 months and the actual costs incurred based on the number of hours worked by participants. The funding sources for the pilot are outlined in table 4.3.2 below, this highlights the large proportion of funding which was obtained from NUS Students’ Green fund, as this funding source has come to an end any future delivery will require an alternative funding source.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 4.3.1. Projected and actual cost of BiGGY participants |
| Living wage | £7.85  |  |
| Projected days working | 38 days |  |
| Total projected working hours (7hrs/day)/ participant  | 266 hours |  |
| Total hours worked by 6 participants | 1596 hours |  |
| Actual hours worked by 6 participants | **1279.95 hours** |  |
| Total projected cost/participant |  |  £2,088.10  |
| Total projected Cost/ 6 participants |  |  £12,528.60  |
| Actual Cost/ 6 Participants |  | **£10,047.61** |

|  |
| --- |
| Table 4.3.2. Funding for BiGGY participant wages |
| NUS Students’ Green Fund | £11,000 |
| County Community Projects (Placement host) | £637.00 (National Minimum Wage for participant working 4days/week for one month) |
| William Morris College (Placement host) | £714.35 (National Living Wage for participant working 4 days/week for one month[[11]](#footnote-11)) |
| Gloucester Green Party (Placement host) | £200.00 (Voluntary contribution) |

### 4.3.1. Feedback from placement hosts: Future wage contribution

The challenge of continuing to pay the NLW to participants is a result of NUS Students’ Green Fund coming to an end along with limited funding potential from placement host organisations. Table 4.3.1 below shows that although some organisations are likely to have the finances available to contribute to the NLW for BiGGY participants, over half the placement organisations stated that it is unlikely they would have the financial resources to support this.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 4.3.1. Would you/your organisation consider contributing towards a BiGGY participant’s wages in the future based on this experience?  |
| Probably no  | This is a reflection on the resources we have available not the worth of the work done by the work experience student. |
| Yes | (This placement host contributed the National Minimum Wage to the pilot) |
| N/A | I don't think I can answer that - one for the director! |
| No | Sorry but as a very small informal group we do not have the financial resources to contribute.  |
| Probably | If we had the funding. It was a good concept/programme which we are happy to support. |
| No | We would not be able to do this as we are subject to significant cost savings at the moment and we simply do not have any budget for additional wages |
| Maybe | Currently we have no budget to support the wages of any future students however as a charity we apply for funding and grants every year which can create new funding opportunities which may make supporting the students wage possible in the future if it meets the funders targets.  |
| Yes | (This placement host contributed the National Living Wage for the pilot) |

### 4.3.2. Feedback from participants: Alternatives to National Living Wage

Figure 4.3.2 below outlines alternatives the pilot participants said they would consider to the NLW for participating in the BiGGY programme. This feedback indicates that the programme does not necessarily require payment of the NLW to make it desirable to participants.

* 5 out of 6 stated they would have participated in BiGGY for the National Minimum Wage
* 4 out of 6 would have participated in BiGGY for a university bursary (around £1000)
* 3 out 6 would have participated in BiGGY for an accredited qualification
* Only 1 participant said they would only do BiGGY for the NLW but interestingly this participant also stated they would do BiGGY for National Minimum Wage
* 1 participant stated that the work experience alone was enough

### Figure 4.3.2. What alternatives would you consider to the National Living Wage?

# Recommendations

Feedback from participants and placement hosts has provided detailed commentary on areas for future development of the BiGGY programme. In order to ensure future successful delivery, it is recommended key areas such as marketing, the recruitment process, the BiGGY name and finding an alternative to the National Living Wage are developed.

## Programme Delivery

A common theme amongst feedback from both participants and placement hosts was that a face-to-face meeting between them prior to commencing the placements would have greatly benefitted all parties (see comments in table 4.2.1 and 5.1.1). It would have enabled participants to gain a greater understanding of the nature of the work they would be involved with and it would have supported placement hosts to better understand BiGGY and the needs and capabilities of the participants.

It is suggested that this is included in any future delivery of BiGGY or similar programmes.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 5.1.1. What would you change about BiGGY? |
| Perhaps a meet up between me and my placement hosts beforehand  |
| Longer time on FC placement |
| I think perhaps meeting placement hosts beforehand at the SU may have helped, but to be honest I think it all worked really well |
| I would have liked to have had more knowledge about the placements I was taking before joining them. For example I went to CCRI with little knowledge on what I was actually doing there. This made me slightly anxious however it wasn't really a problem after a few days in which I settled in. |
| I think the Fridays could have been more organised and tailored to our personal areas of expertise. |
| Meeting the placement hosts before starting the placement. |

## Marketing and Recruitment

The total number of applicants for this pilot was fairly disappointing, indicating the need to improve future marketing. Although the quality of the applicants was incredibly high, it is clear the marketing needs to be improved to increase applicant numbers. Feedback from participants supports this observation; the nature of the programme demands explanation of how BiGGY works and what it offers young people. Conversations with participants identified the BiGGY name as a deterrent for many young people applying as this was a summer placement programme and therefore not only available to young people taking a year out before university.

Suggestions from pilot participants:

* Increased social media presence
* Getting more schools on-board with promotion
* More school talks and handouts available in schools
* School talks not limited to Gloucestershire
* Futurewise Magazine
* Promote through other universities
* Advertise as a Summer Placement not a “Gap Year” (BiGGY: Big Green Gap Year)

*“Going into and directly speaking to prospective participants in their colleges to give a wider insight as to what BiGGY is about. I think that if students’ have it explained to them in person, they are more likely to engage with and be tempted by the programme” (Lawrence Court, BiGGY participant 2015).*

*“If prospective participants knew about the amazing experience I had then they would snap their fingers at once and apply - it really was that good. Therefore, I feel that the potential for BiGGY is huge. It is such a wonderful idea and has been coordinated brilliantly. Getting others to see this would be a challenge but if they did I think you would have many more applications” (Christopher Whitehouse, BiGGY participant 2015)*

BiGGY also offers potential as a recruitment tool for universities looking to increase their widening participation numbers. In offering this programme to young people aged 17 (during their penultimate summer before university) it would give participants a chance to gain experience of working in a university environment thus supporting their decision to apply for university.

Recruitment of placement hosts would also benefit with examples taken from the BiGGY pilot. Without previous examples it was difficult to emphasise the difference between BiGGY and traditional school work experience. Feedback from placement hosts is provided in section 3.3, and it should be used to provide background and case studies for new placement hosts in the future. These case studies from the 2015 pilot programme should support the process of securing placements in the future due to the positive feedback from these organisations.

### BiGGY Programme Length

Initially the BiGGY concept looked to provide 6 + month placement opportunities for young people prior to university. Due to funding restrictions for the pilot this was instead a 2 month programme. Where possible, participants were offered two main placements plus one day per week with UGSU. This aimed to provide participants with a broad overview of how different types of organisations operate and to gain a more varied experience. Table 5.2.1 provides participant and placement host feedback on this.

* 4 out of 6 pilot participants said they would consider participating in a similar programme lasting 6 months or more
* Placement hosts’ opinions on an optimum length of time for a placement such as this varied greatly however the most common time frame suggested 1 – 2 months.
* Only 1 out of 8 placement hosts highlight a placement of over 3 months as an ideal time period for offering a placement

Based on this information it should be recognised that securing placements for placements of over 2 months will likely be challenging, therefore greater time should be allocated for securing placements if BiGGY is to be extended beyond a summer placement programme.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 5.2.1. Participants were asked - If applicable, did you find it beneficial to have more than one main placement or would you have preferred to be with one organisation throughout? Please explain... |
| I think personally I enjoyed the variety of having two different placements. However i can see the merits of having one longer placement as more can be achieved. |
| I would have liked longer on just one placement, but I felt that having 2 was good because I didn't really enjoy my first placement as much as my second.  |
| My placements were both with the Green Party, which was helpful to allow crossover and development of skills |
| I found having two placements was great because it meant I saw a different side to the workplace life. By this I mean that my first placement differed so much to my second that my expectations of what a workplace life was not set in stone. Therefore, after Uni, I will keep an open mind as to what to expect from my employer. |
| I had one organisation throughout and thoroughly enjoyed my time at that placement, I think 2 months of placement on my final summer before university, when I want to spend time with my family and friends may have been too long for me.[[12]](#footnote-12) |
| Beneficial to have more than one placement. It gave a variety to the programme and was good to experience two different working environments. |
| As a placement host what would be the ideal time period for offering a placement  |
| 2 months worked well any less would make the completion of meaningful tasks more difficult longer might work but 6 months would be too long with a very small organisation like ours. |
| 2/3 months |
| 1 month |
| 1 month |
| 1 month |
| 4-6 months/ 6 - 12 months |
| 1/2/3 months |

## The BiGGY name:

With the pilot lasting two months and forming a summer placements programme the name BiGGY: Big Green Gap Year was somewhat misleading. Feedback from participants highlights how off putting this name was for them when they were not intending to take a gap year before university and this will have no doubt had similar negative impacts for recruiting more applicants.

Participants were asked for alternative name suggestions for which the main point was to ensure the emphasis is on “summer placements”. Suggestions included:

* Green Summer Internships
* Sustainable summer Placements
* BiGG Summer
* SuS Placements (Sustainable Summer)
* Your Big Summer

## Alternatives to National Living Wage (NLW)

During their participation on the programme, participants were paid the NLW for the contributions they made to the organisations they worked for. The source of funding for this wage is outlined in [section 4.3](#_Funding) Funding.

There is a strong argument for offering a financial contribution to participants as recognition of the value they add to placement host organisations; however the NLW significantly increases the cost of delivering BiGGY thus reducing the affordability for many organisations. By paying a wage to participants for their contributions to the organisations they work for, BiGGY becomes accessible for all therefore opening the doors to young people who would not be in a position to be financially supported by parents/ guardians during their participation in the programme. On an equal opportunities and diversity level this seems to be most fitting with the BiGGY vision and sustainability. Whether this be in the form of the NLW remains to be an issue of some contention. Feedback from pilot participants ([section 4.3.1](#_4.3.2._Feedback_from)) provides an informed alternative to the NLW, with the National Minimum Wage (NMW) being the most popular alternative. It is widely acknowledged that few young people aged less than 19 years would be paid higher than NMW. During the BiGGY programme young people gain training, experience, professional and personal development which should also be recognised as an in-kind payment to the young people for the work they contribute to their placement organisations.

Based on feedback from participants and placement hosts[[13]](#footnote-13) it is recommended that future delivery of BiGGY offers young people a financial contribution either in the form of wages or as a university bursary (about £1,000). Feedback from placement hosts highlighted that 2 out of 8 organisations would provide a financial contribution to future participants’ wages, 2 would not be able to afford a financial contribution and 4 out of 8 were unable to give a definite answer.

# Conclusion

High levels of satisfaction have been evidenced throughout this evaluation, proving a strong case for future delivery and development of the BiGGY programme. Feedback from participants with regard to their overall experience on BiGGY and the extent to which BiGGY prepared them for university demonstrates the role BiGGY could play in bridging the gap between school/college and university whilst promoting young peoples’ understanding of sustainability.

All participants commented on the opportunities BiGGY gave them to act as agents of positive change by making significant work contributions work to their placement organisations. The time spent working as part of the SU enabled participants to feel part of something bigger whilst becoming equipped with knowledge and understanding of university life.

[Section 3.4.3](#_Sustainability_learning) (Sustainability Learning) evidences the deep understanding participants developed for sustainability as a result of the BiGGY pilot. This could not have been achieved without the whole BiGGY ’package’ of pre-placement training, mentoring, goal setting and blogging, provision of bespoke work programmes and a final debriefing day. The whole ‘package’ approach encouraged participants to become critical thinkers reflecting on their learning and experiences.

Scope for future delivery of BiGGY is dependent on placement hosts and future funding of the programme. Recommendations and positive experiences of the 2015 placement hosts should support and inform future placement hosts in signing up to the programme. 100% of placement hosts stated that the BiGGY participants added value to their organisations, that they would recommend BiGGY to other organisations and that they would take on future BiGGY participants. You could not wish for better feedback than this. With only 2 out of 8 placement hosts stating that they could definitely contribute to participant wages (section 4.3), it is likely the programme will need to depend on alternative funding if participants are to be paid the NLW.

A key area for future development identified by the BiGGY Coordinator, placement hosts and participants is communications between participants and placement hosts. All parties acknowledged a preference for a face-to-face meeting prior to commencing placements. This would give clarity to placement hosts as to the capabilities of participants and offer participants information on the nature of the work they will undertake. It is recommended that any future delivery of BiGGY ensures this is incorporated into the programme outline.

The outcomes of this pilot have been highly successful providing a strong foundation for future delivery of the programme. Young people have demonstrated their deepened understanding of sustainability, connecting this with their future academic and career goals, and with this they have surpassed themselves in making a real positive difference through the work they have contributed in their placement organisations. The encouraging feedback from placement hosts goes beyond the expectations of the pilot offering case studies of well-constructed work programmes which support the development of young people whilst enabling them to be agents of positive change.

# Appendix i: Programme Outline

# Appendix ii: Training Week Timetable

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **AM (10 – 1230pm) (Tea/coffee/biscuits booked for 10.00am in each allocated room)** | **Lunch**  | **PM (1.30 – 4.30pm)** |
| **29th June** | **Introductions and Welcome** (FW013 - booked 0915 - 1315) |  | **Sustainable Development and ESD workshop** (TC203 1315 – 1700) |
|  | *(10 – 11.00)* *Welcome from MB to BiGGY Summer Placements 2015 explaining roles, responsibilities and expectations.* * Introductions
* *Walk around the Park campus*
 |  *(11.15 – 11.30)**Health and Safety in UGSU**Linda Farrall*  | *(11.30 – 12.30)**Intro from SU staff – explanation of roles/ responsibilities and what the SU does Participants intro themselves to SU staff* *All SU Staff who can please!* |  | * *Ice Breaker*
* *Use resources from previous workshops*
* *At the end – as a group create a poster of what a sustainable world looks like – MB provide resources*

*Ask to prepare 5 mins intro for launch day on Weds* |
| **30th June** | **Using Social media as a professional and blog writing** (TC202A 0915 – 1230) | **Admin session** (12.10 – 12.30) |  | **Leadership and team building workshop** (TC201 1230 – 1700) |
|  | MB give intro (10 – 11) – explain purposeSession facilitated by James Williams (11 – 12) – also explanation of how to log onto Wordpress etc.  | (12.00 – 12.30)Timesheets/ Payroll/ UoG loginMB/JC |  | NUS resourcesMB |
| **1st July** | **BiGGY Launch – Externals/internals** (TC202A 0915 – 1330) | **Launch Lunch** | **Park Allotment/ Team Building Activities** (TC014 1330 – 1700) |
|  | *Tea and coffee John Abell 10 -20 mins?, James Derounian, Graduates, Catherine Pinner (Ecotricity)* | *Silas/Kat* |
| **2nd July**  | **Presentation planning/ delivery session?** (TC013 0915 – 1700) | **MB away all day** | **Presentations/debrief on morning session** (13.30 – 2.30pm) | (TC013 0915 – 1700) **Social Enterprise** (2.40 – 3.30pm) | **Fresher Life**  |
|  | *JA/ Silas/ Ballard running – intro – work on task – present – debrief/discuss* |  | *JA/Ballard/Silas?* | *workshop (40mins) – Silas* | TBC |
| **3rd July** | **Goal Setting and progress logging** (FW013 0915 – 1700) | **Intro to work during SU placement**  |  | **Filming – (followed by drinks?)** (FW013 0915 – 1700) |
|  | *(10.00 – 12.00)**MB**Goal setting session (linked with professional aspirations and sustainability), blogging on biggreengapyear.org, twitter accounts and fb page.* | *(12.00 – 12.30)**MB* |  | *MB**Filming for BiGGY Student Media Project**Short documentation of each participant’s reason for taking part, their expectations and goals…* | (3.30) |

# Appendix iii

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Participants’ prospective university course** | **Placement 1** | **Placement 2** |
| History and Politics | **Cheltenham Green Party:** Preparing for the following year’s local elections by helping to draft their manifesto, whilst carrying out a membership survey. Work also involved formulating a Green response to the Cheltenham Plan consultation process on-going at the time (July/August 2015). | **Gloucester Green Party:** Drafting the party’s manifesto for next year’s local elections and analysing the significance of the Local Government Boundaries Commission for England’s changes to Gloucester City’s ward boundaries. |
| Biological Sciences | **Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust:**Supporting development of summer engagement activities for children, young people and adults; developing understanding and participating in conservation work of the trust – including clearance of invasive species and ecological surveys. Office admin tasks and data entry work. | **Forestry Commission:**Survey collection and analysis at Mallards Pike, shadowing seasonal rangers to ensure recreation sites effectively managed. Administrative tasks and survey analysis for a Foresters Forest Project involving engagement with forest users and site visitors. |
| Medicine | **Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust:**Working as part of the corporate and social responsibility group tasks involved: drafting a sustainability strategy for 2020 NHS Gloucester; data analysis of the Trust’s current sustainability, productivity and waste management; shadowing the Corporate Social Responsibility Manager. | **County Community Projects (Cheltenham):**Assigned to the Cheltenham Advice Network (CAN) team at Cheltenham First Stop (CFS). Supporting the team with client drop-ins and conducting research on customer satisfaction for their social prescribing clients. Work included creating a customer survey, carrying out the survey, analysing the data and producing a feedback based on the results.  |
| Business Management | **William Morris College Campus Hill Community (WMCC):**Producing a business plan with recommendations and advisory notes based on market research for the College’s food processing programme. Looking at a sustainable business model supporting the local economy, local businesses and providing opportunities for young adults with learning difficulties at WMCC.  | *One placement due to limited availability of participant* |
| Marine Biology | **University of Gloucestershire Students’ Union:**Supporting development of sustainability initiatives at the Students’ Union. Working on a project to make the campus allotment ready to be a student led project in September; from compiling an ‘allotment guide’ to clearing and re-organising the allotment. | **Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group:**Attending meetings with NFU members, farmers, land agents, and Gloucestershire Nature Partnership; investigating water flow and annotating maps for a stewardship application. Developing social media for FWAG SW, completing a grant application and Countryside Stewardship Agreement in addition to attending volunteer working groups on the canals and rivers in Gloucestershire. |
| Geography | **Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI):**Research work to support development of courses delivered by CCRI: Finding valid and relevant sources which will be used for inclusion in a short course on ‘Defending the Commons’; compiling a database of renewable energy courses; participating in a GIS course to evaluate for future course participants; building a case study on tuna for inclusion in a ‘defending the commons’ short course. | **Cheltenham Green Doors:**Working on a research project obtaining data and information, analysing, explaining and quantifying the total value of the Green Economy to Gloucestershire and more specifically, Cheltenham  |

1. Data taken from BiGGY Summer Placements 2015 participant feedback survey [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This participant found out about BiGGY from a Google search and was provided with halls accommodation at the University of Gloucestershire during his participation in the programme [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This applicant dropped out before the programme commenced due to an offering of overseas work, she found out about BiGGY at a University of Gloucestershire open day [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See section 3.3: Placement host satisfaction [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Feedback has not been received from all placement hosts therefore data provided here does not reflect the views and experiences of all 10 placement hosts [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The medical conditions of one participant did not fit appropriately with one placement host organisation due to the physical demands of the work required. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This particular participant was unable to make the BiGGY training week so an alternative one day induction was provided [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Rating was on a Likert scale of 1 – 10 with 10 being excellent and 1 being poor [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The blog is available at www.biggreengapyear.com/blog [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This was a Likert rating scale where 10 was positive and 1 was negative [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The participant in this placement worked a total of 91 hours therefore the contribution to his wages from William Morris College is a reflection of total hours worked for them. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This particular participant had various holiday booked therefore participated in a 6 week programme rather than the full 2 months [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See [sections4.3.1](#4.3.1. Feedback from placement hosts: Future wage contribution) and [4.3.2](#4.3.2. Feedback from participants: Alternatives to National Living Wage) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)