HELOA

Session Title:	**Mission-driven partnership- School Prioritisation for maximum impact**
Speaker(s):	**Victoria Dee, Director of School Partnerships- The Brilliant Club**
Chair:	**Becci Williams**
Reporter:	**Hannah Henry-Wake**

Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:	**The Brilliant Club:** -The Brilliant Club is a UK social mobility charity (est. 2012) working with less advantaged students to increase access to the most competitive universities by mobilising the PhD community to deliver university-style learning in schools. -The organisation works across primary, secondary, sixth forms, colleges, and universities, having supported 150,000+ students nationwide -The Brilliant Club run a series of programmes and data shows that programmes work: raising attainment and recruitment wise The organisation is in its final year of its current strategy and will be introducing a new strategy from 2026-2029.
Overview/Aim of session:	-Learn more about The Brilliant Club: their mission, their offering and work across the UK -Share best practice and discuss school prioritisation in the room with The Brilliant Club's approach as a guide.
Workshop Content	The Brilliant Club's School Prioritisation approach: -School prioritisation is central to maximising impact. -Main planning tool: Sutton Trust Opportunity Index (STOI), ranking English constituencies by: • School attainment • Access to higher education • Employment status • Earnings of FSM-eligible young people

	- Utilising this to prioritise where they work to aid their objectives and meet targets -Lowest 25% of constituencies are converted into local education authority (LEA) target areas (acknowledging data limitations). Working in Target Areas: 1. Securing relationships with schools: external marketing and cold outreach. Emailing and phone calling. Some creative licence with guessing emails. 4 officers across UK and they have regional patches and responsibility. Benefit of working with leads and connections at Multi Academy Trusts as this opens up large networks and great on the ground advocacy. 2. Building& Enhancing: when in a school/ have the connection, how can we make the most of them working with the brilliant club. If on a KS4 programme, what other offering may they wish to be involved in and make the most of? 3. Making the most of their healthy budget for discounts (sending mugs etc)
Case Studies/Examples:	What is working well for The Brilliant Club: Leicestershire -Leveraging relationships they have in secondary schools to build presence in primaries. (Giving teachers financial discounts/ maximising merch when they recommend working with brilliant club and show that recognition) -Emailing their old schools Hearing from alumni -Asking for introductions 'Do you know anyone else I can speak to?' 'Who is best for me to contact about this?' -Getting out in person Being out on the ground and going in person Not just going into a school for a meeting but being seen and supporting activity such as judging on a panel and supporting other in-school activity. -Celebrating their university partnerships: Example of a PhD student from DMU teaching at a Leicester Secondary School. -Sharing the good work that is going on with other schools. -Celebrating the story of the university and the amazing

	work taking place What is a challenge for The Brilliant Club: Essex The Brilliant Club wants to increase school presence across the region as it fits their targeting criteria. Struggling to get school relationships and can't seem to get enough Essex based PhD students to be local tutors to deliver their programme as well as universities to host graduation events. Tactics trialed: >offering online versions of their programmes >exploring options with university partners >keeping targets realistic > remembering that there is only limited resource >financial travel incentives for tutors >remembering that they can't do it all at once
Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:	**Table based discussed addressed:** 1.What is your approach to school prioritisation? How do you figure out what schools to work with? Discussion feedback: -Many institutions shared that they are now taking a more data driven approach moving forward and noted that this hasn't historically been the case. -Some observed the increasing need to say no and the subsequent challenges with saying no: the fall out and repercussions. -Ranking schools based on volume of applications, considering applications, conversion to registration and resource investment such as drive time. -School prioritisation reflecting institutional priorities -Manchester: consider WP data aligned with their institutional priorities -Hull: High priority and growth feeders but discussed challenges outside of the fixed boxes of data and having on-the-ground advocates for the university and how they then do work with some of these anomalies to the 'data'. -One institution shared ranking schools and colleges from the top 250 apps > bronze, platinum, gold and prioritise different offer and diary flexibility. 2. What strategies are working well for you? NTU: focusing on getting meetings in with schools and using a tote bag or notepad when they meet in person.

	UCL: Regional roadshow visiting 35 schools between October and December. When in schools asking and understanding what provisions they are getting from HE provider. To drive interest and demand within that period of time and to showcase their offering of activity and drive future interest to summer schools/ sustained programmes.
Questions and Answers:	
Summary/ Key takeaways:	Victoria.dee@thebrilliantclub.org -Mission-driven school prioritisation is grounded in robust data and sustained by strong local relationships. It is essential to scaling impact and reducing educational inequality—while remaining realistic about capacity, geography, and resources. -Utilise data resources out there to assist. -Understand institutional priorities and objectives to align prioritisation. -Knowing your value and being able to evidence and articulate that -Maximising resource through PhD students and people within the university and our network to aid limited resource/ staffing across the university