

brain in hand

Evidence of the impact of Brain in Hand

This short report summarises some of the major areas of impact of Brain in Hand, the evidence supporting these changes, and feedback from our users. This report has a specific focus on Brain in Hand users in education. Impact reports will be published every quarter.

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Our impact in numbers

We have been consolidating user feedback into a single survey that is sent to each users every three months of their license.

Between February 2024-January 2025, 774 unique users (997 total) responded to the survey. All figures below are based on unique responses, with the most recent response taken from repeat respondents. We have used the data from this survey to theme using four areas of impact.

Impact theme	Percentage of users reporting Brain in Hand helped with a specific area of life (n=774)
<p>Mental health and emotional and physical wellbeing</p> <p>Health and happiness of users and tangible clinical symptoms, such as anxiety, as well as behaviours that lead to positive health outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59% with stress and/or anxiety • 42% with overwhelm and/or burnout • 36% with self-care • 69% with at least one of the above
<p>Daily life skills</p> <p>The skills that enable someone to navigate through daily challenges and needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% with organisation • 32% with problem solving or decision making • 20% with life skills • 59% with at least one of the above
<p>Communication and interaction</p> <p>Having the confidence and skills to communicate and interact well with friends and in new social situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% with confidence • 13% with participating with meaningful social interactions • 9% with relationships • 30% with at least one of the above
<p>Personal growth and development</p> <p>Life successes and achievements, and being where you want to be and doing what you want to be doing.</p>	<p>For those in work (n= 312)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are retained: 31% more likely to stay in their role • Performance improved: 33% are performing better in their role • Absenteeism is reduced: 15% had less days off work <p>For those in education (n= 409)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved time management: 55% manage their time better • Attendance going up: 24% attend more classes/lectures/seminars • Making progress: 31% feel they are succeeding in their studies

How Brain in Hand supports students in Higher Education

Motivation	Anxiety and overwhelm	Managing time and organising work	Travel and access to the HE environment	Social interaction and communication
<p>28% of students said Brain in Hand has helped them with motivation [115 of 409 students]</p>	<p>64% of students said Brain in Hand has helped them with stress and/or anxiety [261 of 409]</p> <p>41% of students said Brain in Hand has helped them with overwhelm and/or burnout [169 of 409]</p> <p>67% of students reported that Brain in Hand has helped them with at least one of the above.</p>	<p>50% of students said Brain in Hand has helped them with organisation [203 of 409]</p> <p>55% of students said Brain in Hand has helped them to manage their time better [226 of 409]</p> <p>61% of students reported that Brain in Hand helped them with at least one of the above.</p>	<p>24% of students said Brain in Hand has helped them attend more classes [97 of 409]</p> <p>33% of students said Brain in Hand has helped them with problem-solving or decision-making [134 of 409]</p>	<p>19% of students said Brain in Hand has helped them to socialise more [79 of 409]</p>
<p><i>I struggled trying to remember and stay motivated to pack my bag and prepare for the following day especially during burnout. BiH's traffic system helps me process my emotions and remind myself to take time out. In addition, I have set reminders on the app to give myself time to pack and prepare.</i></p> <p><i>Female user, student and a volunteer</i></p>	<p><i>When I got overwhelmed by my university work and I used the traffic light and then that pointed me to the unplanned ideas, and I used those and managed to not get very upset so I could take a break and then do some more work when I was okay.</i></p> <p><i>Non-binary user, student</i></p>	<p><i>Brain in hand has helped me to organise revision throughout the term and still incorporate social activities to avoid burnout. I use the colour coding to know which life domain my activities in (to see my work-life balance) and the mobile app has been really useful for reminders.</i></p> <p><i>Female user, student</i></p>	<p><i>Brain in hand helped me managed my university lectures, part time work shifts and family activities. Using the brain in hand calendar/diary helped me better plan on when the events are, what I can do within those times and help me keep track of the events so I can delegate time.</i></p> <p><i>Male user, employed and student</i></p>	<p><i>I was really worried about socialising and the anxiety surrounding it but I really wanted to socialise more. I spoke to my mentor about this and we adapted the Feeling Overwhelmed option on the app. From this I have been able to navigate socialising better.</i></p> <p><i>Female user, student</i></p>



DSA case study

Annie is a 51-year-old PhD student who experiences anxiety and self-identifies as autistic and ADHD. She received Brain in Hand through DSA and started using it mid-way through her studies. Brain in Hand has empowered Annie to manage overwhelm and anxiety, supporting her to return to her PhD studies.

Support without a formal diagnosis

Annie found that a formal diagnosis is often the only way to access support. Using Brain in Hand, she has been able to access expert support for reducing anxiety, managing overwhelm, and moments of crisis, and understanding her ADHD. She shared that she might have given up her PhD without the support.

Feeling motivated and hopeful

Brain in Hand is a regulator and motivator for Annie during her studies. She feels hopeful about finishing her PhD and is supported to juggle her studies and challenges in other areas of life.

Overcoming anxiety and overwhelm

Pursuing a PhD gave Annie a sense of purpose again, but also raised anxiety around the work day-to-day and not feeling good enough as a student. Brain in Hand has empowered her to work through overwhelm and anxiety with the traffic light system for mood tracking. Her coach helped her identify new coping strategies and she finds reassurance in knowing 24/7 support is available.

Building essential self-care habits

Annie shares how Brain in Hand has helped her recognise the value of self-care and make time for it. By scheduling time for yoga, meditation, and breathwork, she hopes to build habits that will better prepare her to manage crises when they arise.

The value of completing a PhD

If Annie doesn't complete her PhD, the university loses £4,500 per year in fees, and she misses out on an estimated £5,500 in annual earnings. Research shows that PhD holders boost business productivity, increasing competitiveness (81%) and R&D investment potential (76%). They also enhance the productivity of those they work with and teach the next generation, contributing to the public good and benefiting society as a whole (Read et al., 2024).

[Read J., Pugh A, Bramley G and Riley R \(2024\). A review of the economic and social value produced through funding PhD students. national Civic Impact Accelerator. Research England.](#)

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Without BiH, I would have spent a lot more time in crisis, but actually not had any support. I think my mental state would have been a lot worse. I probably would have given up the PhD by now because I have had some real challenges with it which has been a bit as a result of the ADHD.

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There are still a lot of challenges on the life side of things, and I definitely think Brain in Hand is a regulator for that. Without that, I don't think I would still be studying or doing as well as I am doing. It gives me that motivation to keep going, knowing it's there, knowing I've got support. It's just given me that sense of hope that I can actually finish my PhD.

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I still get massively overwhelmed and really anxious, but it helps me to track that. For me, the actual pressing of a light and writing in and tagging stuff, that action in itself is beneficial to me because it's out of my head. In that sense, I'm writing it down, I'm documenting it, and it's something I can go back to.

Economic benefits

In October 2024 we added the option ‘I feel more likely to finish my course’ in the multiple-choice question we ask users on ‘how has Brain in Hand helped with education’. This allowed us to consider how Brain in Hand may impact retention for users in Higher Education and consider the economic benefits of Brain in Hand for students.

Of 122 student respondents, 34 (28%) said they are **more likely to finish their course**.

Below are some economic benefits of people who graduate from university:

- **Not becoming unemployed in the future:** state support as an unemployed person could save the exchequer more than £12,000pp alone ([Mallender et al., 2017](#))
- **Staying at university and continuing with studies:** For most universities, the cost of a full-time 3-year honours degree course equates to £28,605 (2025/26 academic year). If a student stays at university for the three years, the university will not lose out on the fees.
- **£26,000** was the **median real terms salary** for working age (16-64 years old) graduates in 2023 (base year 2007), compared to £29,000 for postgraduates and £19,000 for non-graduates (to the nearest £500) ([Graduate Labour Market Statistics, 2024](#))
- After 6 years of work experience, incomes are on average 19% higher for men and 24% higher for women who went to university ([Social Mobility Commission, 2024](#)).
- **67%** of working age (16-64 years old) graduates were in **high-skilled employment** in 2023, compared to 78.9% of postgraduates and 23.7% of non-graduates. ([Graduate Labour Market Statistics, 2024](#))

In the broader student sample, 31% [125 of 409] of students shared they **feel they are succeeding in their studies**.

The implication of a student graduating can have positive outcomes for individuals:

- Getting a 1st can increase earnings by about **4%** for women and **7%** for men compared to getting a 2:1 ([Social Mobility Commission, 2024](#)).
- Getting a 2:2 can lead to about **7%** lower earnings for women and **11%** lower earnings for men compared to having a 2:1 degree ([Social Mobility Commission, 2024](#)).