

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTER SHOWS SUPPORT FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES

Two initiatives helping local people access higher education will receive a boost today with a visit from a Government Minister.

David Lammy, the Minister for Higher Education and Intellectual Property, will visit Aimhigher South Yorkshire and Higher Futures Lifelong Learning Network to discuss how their working in partnership is benefiting local learners.



Jed O'Neill, Director of Aimhigher South Yorkshire, said:

"From his first few months in office, David Lammy has already shown that he feels strongly about widening participation to higher education, which our two initiatives work hard to achieve."

Aimhigher works with schools and colleges in South Yorkshire to raise the awareness, aspirations and attainment of people from under-represented groups. Higher Futures is a partnership of 12 colleges and universities in the area, working to improve opportunities for vocational and work-based learners to progress to higher education.

Rob Harrison, Director of Higher Futures, said:

"Aimhigher and Higher Futures have already achieved so much individually. The two initiatives complement each other and our strength lies in the ability to collaborate and forge strong links with other organisations."

Sue Webb, Director of the Institute for Lifelong Learning at the University of Sheffield, is chair of the operational groups for both projects. She said:

"Both Aimhigher and Higher Futures have a vital role to play in widening participation to higher education and raising the level of skills and achievement across the region. We are delighted that the Minister has chosen to visit us to see what great progress we are making."

Participation in higher education by 18-30 year olds in South Yorkshire is significantly lower than the national average. The Sheffield Brightside constituency has the lowest participation rate in higher education in England. Nearly 36 per cent of adults in the sub-region have no qualifications, seven per cent higher than the average across England and Wales.

David Lammy said:

"It's been great to see at first hand the work that Aimhigher South Yorkshire and Higher Futures Lifelong Learning Network are doing to help young people, regardless of their background, get the chance to fulfil their potential through higher education."

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- The Rt Hon David Lammy MP is currently Minister of State for Higher Education and Intellectual Property at the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. He was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills from July 2007 until his promotion in September 2008. David Lammy studied Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in the University of London and was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 1995. He achieved a Masters degree in Law at the Harvard Law School in 1997. He has practised in both England and the USA.
- Aimhigher is a national programme, which aims to widen participation in Higher Education (HE) by raising the awareness, aspirations and attainment of people from under-represented groups. For more information please visit www.aimhigher.ac.uk/syorks
- Higher Futures is the Lifelong Learning Network for South Yorkshire, North Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire, representing 12 Further and Higher Education Institutions across the sub-region. It is currently one of 30 Lifelong Learning Networks across the country. For more information, please visit www.higherfutures.org