

Building Pathways

March 2005



Building Pathways is a widening participation partnership project which includes all the Further Education Colleges and Higher Education Institutions in South Yorkshire plus some colleges located in neighbouring areas. Sheffield Hallam University is the lead institution for the Project. Building Pathways has secured funding from the South Yorkshire Aimhigher strategy.

Building Pathways / Aimhigher strategy update

Building Pathways is funded through South Yorkshire Aimhigher– P4P strategy and the Integrated Aimhigher strategy and supports two strands of work: enhanced progression and transition activities for 16-19 yrs and 19yrs+. The project is working towards the following targets:

1. Production of a database of all the HE in local FECs with a focus on progression to HE through vocational learning
2. Support transparent routes from FEC Level 3 vocational programmes, develop progression entitlements and joint transition support systems with HE partners
3. Development of progression routes into Higher Education for Advanced Apprentices
4. Create new and/or enhanced vocational Access to HE programmes
5. Support staff working groups in identified curriculum areas to provide staff development, shared understanding of widening participation issues and to support Project activities
6. Work with Guidance partners to develop updating for Information, Advice and Guidance staff on progression routes to HE within the sub-region

The Building Pathways Project Partnership

- › Barnsley College
- › Chesterfield College
- › Dearne Valley College
- › Doncaster College
- › Grimsby College
- › North Nottinghamshire College
- › Northern College
- › Rotherham College of Arts and Technology
- › Sheffield Hallam University
- › South Yorkshire Open College Network
- › The Sheffield College
- › The Open University
- › Thomas Rotherham College
- › University of Sheffield
- › Wakefield College
- › West Nottinghamshire College

A range of projects have been developed that support these main aims, read on overleaf for project updates: U

Project Aims and Objectives

The Project's main aim is to create '*a framework and infrastructure that allows the learner to embark on an educational programme with the confidence that irrespective of where the learning takes place there are clear and accessible pathways and opportunities in front of them*'.

The principles underpinning all our activity are to:

- simplify and encourage progression
- widen participation in HE through partnership planning and co-ordination
- develop where possible the use of credit as a common currency across the partnership
- enable learners to move easily within and between institutions with clearly mapped routes and pathways
- maximize access and retention through information, guidance and support

Developing a database of HE in FE (with progression routes to Sheffield Hallam University)

This project has built on work developing articulated pathways from HNC/D programmes in Early Years and Social Work to degrees in SHU. Initial work to develop a database of all HE programmes in partner FE colleges and the mapping of how these articulate with other degrees in Sheffield Hallam University has been completed. The project is looking towards the production of an electronic database of all the HE in FE with articulated routes and admission conditions to top up degrees in SHU. Emphasis will be to promote the range of vocational pathways to HE from FE level 3 vocational programmes and WBL. On completion the database will be available to guidance staff across the partnership.

Raising aspirations and supporting learners from vocational Level 3 programmes to progress to HE

Through the integrated Aimhigher strategy, BP obtained funding for the appointment of 'Advocates' to work in South Yorkshire colleges to support BP objectives. The Colleges have an opportunity to appoint a member of staff with a commitment to widening participation to work directly with learners promoting progression routes to HE. The BP Advocates will focus on vocational learners and liaise with other Aimhigher activities in the college to raise aspirations, achievement and increase progression from FE vocational programmes to HE. Each partner will develop an individual College Activity Plan which will complement BP objectives but will be able to develop specific activities to address individual college concerns. The partnership have agreed a menu of activities each can choose from. The BP team will coordinate the overall activities and provide a communication forum for all the Advocates.

Developing Progression Routes to Higher Education for Advanced Apprentices

Building Pathways' P4P strand of activities continues to focus on developing progression routes to HE for Advanced Apprentices. The project has funded two

pieces of research finding out apprentices' and their employers perceptions of HE, and the outcome of the work is informing further developments in raising apprentices aspirations to progress. To support the work BP is funding the production of a multi-media CDROM promoting progression and employment opportunities across the sub-region. Copies of the CDROM will be available from April and will be launched at our annual conference.

Creation of new Access to HE programmes

Two new Access initiatives were developed during the last year. Implementation of these is currently underway. The **Valuing Learning** project is a new process to formalise the opportunity for learners achieving OCN level 2/level 3 credits to transfer their credit into an Access to HE programme as part of a planned programme of study. Learners achieving on adult and community learning programmes will be encouraged to consider extending their learning to achieve an Access to HE certificate. **Fast Forward** is a short learning programme for learners who may already have some Level 3 credit but cannot demonstrate yet that they are ready to cope with HE learning. The programme provides up to 8 credits of learning with the core of this in study skills supported by some curriculum units. to provide a bridge to HE. Learners targeted are NVQ 3 learners, those with a mixed portfolio of evidence, learners with older qualifications and those with significant work experience. The programme is validated through the OCN.

Through the Integrated Aimhigher strategy a project to develop a framework of **vocational Access to HE** programmes is under development. The aim is to develop new pathways in curriculum / occupational areas, such as engineering , hospitality and catering, business and health and social care.

The **Building Pathways** team are interested in engaging with other Aimhigher projects to share information and disseminate experiences. In addition training providers and employers are invited to contact the Project to see how we can work together to progress learners on work-based training routes into Higher Education. Contact details can be found below...

Student enthusiasm and energy has been harnessed for two BP projects this year. In the first of these twelve "**student ambassadors**" from the Organisation and Management Faculty in Sheffield Hallam University have been engaging in a programme of awareness raising activities at Chesterfield, Rotherham and Sheffield Colleges with level 3 students on **Business** programmes.

Students who may not initially be considering HE as a serious option for progression are being encouraged to "think again". Ambassadors have designed and presented initial awareness raising sessions covering key topics such as the benefits of HE, informing decision making choice about where to study and popular conceptions/misconceptions about university life. A second area of activity has been concerned with motivating Level 3 **Computing** students to consider progressing to Higher Education. The technical expertise of Hallam Volunteering (SHU) students has been harnessed to introduce young people to basic 3D digital animation skills and to support them with the development of some short animated films. The project is being run this year on a pilot basis with L3 students at RCAT. The films will be premiered in April.

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