

Building Pathways Project

Newsletter No. 5 December 2004



Aimhigher resource enhances Project

Welcome to our first newsletter of this academic year. It comes at an exciting point for the Building Pathways (BP) Project following a successful bid for additional resources from the South Yorkshire Integrated Aimhigher strategy and the active implementation of the BP Partnerships for Progression (P4P) Action Plan. The Integrated Aimhigher funding will provide two new strands of activity. Firstly to appoint Building Pathways Advocates to work in partner colleges to implement activities which meet the aims and objectives of the P4P plan and secondly to develop in partnership with the South Yorkshire OCN, new Vocational Access to Higher Education progression opportunities for local adult learners. Implementation activities for the P4P action plan continue with fruitful and innovative work promoting progression routes to HE for Engineering and Construction Apprentices, the setting up of a **'Student Ambassador'** scheme linking students from Sheffield Hallam University with Level 3 FE college students and two new progression opportunities for adult learners through the **'Valuing Learning'** process and the newly validated **'Fast Forward'** programme. Summaries of all these projects are highlighted below.

BP, Partnerships for Progression and the Integrated Aimhigher strategy for South Yorkshire

BP aims to secure smooth progression opportunities for learners between FE and HE partners in South Yorkshire. The Objectives of the Project through P4P and Integrated Aimhigher are to work within the partnership on six strands of activity:

- ♦ to identify all the FE in HE provision in the partnership and where possible identify progression opportunities to top-up degrees in local HEIs through the publication of a directory for learners and IAG partners
- ♦ to enhance progression from Level 3 vocational programmes in FE to local HE provision
- ♦ to identify smooth progression pathways for Apprentices to HE
- ♦ to develop new Access to HE offers
- ♦ to further support groups to enhance communication between HE and FE staff
- ♦ to work with Guidance partners enhancing information to learners on progression opportunities

BP has an annual action plan which identifies detailed activity to address the main objectives.

Further details from: Judy Smith email: j.a.smith@shu.ac.uk or telephone: 0114 225 3736

Building Pathways Advocates offer chance for sustainability

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 communication facilities for all the Advocates.



Judy Smith, David Berry & Marianne Ross: Building Pathways Team

The Fast Forward Programme

Building Pathways and the South Yorkshire OCN are committed to opening up access to Higher Education for learners who may not have previously considered this as an option, but who have the potential for progression. Over the last year partners have developed a short programme which is designed to bridge the gap for learners with significant work-based learning or some Level 3 academic qualifications to progress into negotiated HE programmes.

The programme uses existing BP/OCN Access to HE units as the vehicle for learning and is a flexible programme which provides learners with study skills, research skills and underpinning theory to support learning in HE.

We are anticipating that although modes of delivery may differ between providers, the programme will be delivered over a shorter period of time, e.g. a summer school or part time evening provision.

Progression opportunities have been negotiated to HE programmes in partner colleges, the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University. BP is currently working to find partners to deliver the programme. We believe it has great potential in supporting the area Aimhigher strategy to promote progression to HE for learners on work-based learning routes.



Further details, please contact: Caroline West: email:-mail@caroline-west.fsnet.co.uk

New Access Initiative: Valuing Learning Project

Valuing Learning is a Building Pathways Widening Participation Project, in liaison with the Open College Network South Yorkshire and Humberside.

The project aim is to encourage learners with appropriate existing OCN credits at Level Two and Level Three, achieved on non Access programmes, to apply for transfer of credit onto Access to HE Programmes.

In providing clarity for the requirements, process and procedures for the transfer of existing credit onto Access programmes, *Valuing Learning* seeks to:

- ◆ strengthen existing OCN guidelines for the transfer of credit onto Access programmes
- ◆ broaden the groups which may wish to use the Access route
- ◆ support Access providers in enhancing flexibility whilst retaining rigour in the award of the Certificate of Access to Higher Education

Quality advice and guidance is central to the initiative and learners will be supported in developing personal learning plans which place value on their previous achievement in the context of their planned Access to HE achievement.

Andrée Eaves has worked with partner colleges and OCN to agree the processes and the pilot, involving Doncaster College, Grimsby Institute and Rotherham College, is now under way. Colleges have identified a number of adult and community education programmes with potential for progression and Access coordinators are currently working to develop strategic links with learners, including information sessions and Access

Tasters, to encourage progression to Access in September 2005.

For further information contact Andrée Eaves on 01302 782640 / email: a.eaves@tiscali.co.uk or Marianne Ross at Building Pathways

Residential Summer Schools

A four day residential summer school hosted by the Institute for Lifelong Learning was held at Stephenson Hall, University of Sheffield in early July. The summer school aimed to raise aspirations among non-traditionally qualified learners aged 21 and over considering Access to HE courses within the region. We also sought to raise awareness by providing direct experience of study in an HE institutional setting and offering guidance in planning appropriate access routes.

Sessions involved a mixture of study skills, numerical skills and subject specific group work, including taster sessions in the arts, social and natural sciences. We also visited the University's library and IT facilities, had an evening "field trip" to Endcliffe Park, and an evening "research quiz". All sessions were delivered by tutors associated with the Mature Access (Foundation) Programme. We are grateful to Becky Ellis from Sheffield Hallam University who assisted with the general HE and access advice session.

Participants from Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Leeds represented a wide variety of backgrounds. Feedback has been extremely positive and we hope to host a similar event next summer.

An overnight residential was also held in early September for learners going directly into the second year of the MA(F) Programme.

Further details from Willy Kitchen, Sheffield University, e-mail w.kitchen@sheffield.ac.uk (phone 0114 2227021)

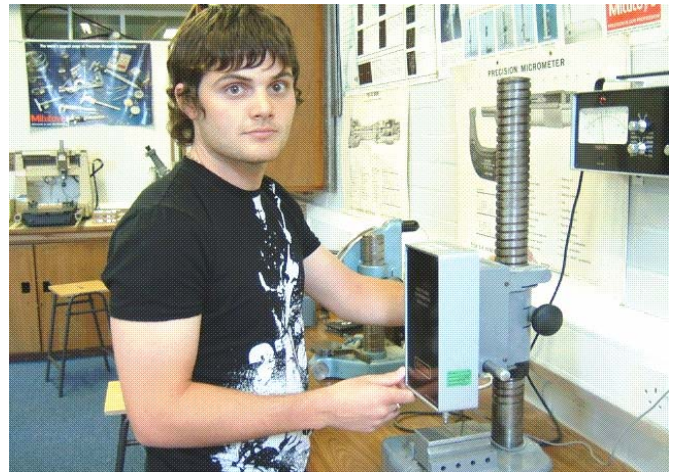
Developing progression routes to HE for Modern Apprentices

Building Pathways' P4P strand of activities continues to focus on developing progression routes to HE for Advanced Apprentices. As part of the BP Action Plan, Apprentices have been interviewed at colleges across South Yorkshire and in North East Derbyshire with the intention of identifying the numbers ready to progress to HE. In surveying their opinions, understanding and knowledge of Higher Education they have also been quizzed as to whether they considered progression to HE to be a viable option. Consideration was also given to the identification of barriers as the apprentices' perceive them and also the type of HE they would be interested in e.g. form, mode of study and level of study.

The research has yielded several interesting outcomes. A report has been produced detailing the results of interviews conducted with apprentices nearing completion of the apprenticeship schemes. The conclusions provide some interesting points e.g. that the majority of those who were planning on progressing immediately were going to do so part-time with obvious implications for HE course design in terms of attendance and accessibility patterns. Responses varied greatly as to understanding and aspiration, and it became clear that there was a wide variation in the amount of information provided by the apprentices employers in terms of future progression. Other conclusions and recommendations of the report will be available from the website early in the new year. Please note the website address:- (<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/pathways/>)

Other apprentice interviews were conducted in order to engage with those who were progressing from Level 3 to college HE programmes. Colleges were asked to nominate students who were in this category with a view to their profiles being used in a multimedia CD Rom to be brokered by Building Pathways. The main theme of the CD is aimed at promoting apprentice progression to HE. Work on the CD Rom is now moving forward with a production company now in harness. It is hoped that the final product will be ready by April 2005. This will then be available for distribution to apprentices, employers, training providers and colleges.

Further details from David Berry at Building Pathways



Barnsley College progressing engineering student Paul McLaughlin

Diary Date:

Building Pathways Annual Conference

Thursday 21st April 2005

The focus of the conference will again be on progression to HE through vocational learning, and will consider the role of CoVEs and HE in FE provision in supporting the widening participation agenda. BP welcomes innovative ideas and potential participants should contact Judy Smith

Enhancing Progression through Vocational Access to HE routes

BP has worked closely with South Yorkshire OCN for the last five years developing and enhancing Access to HE offers for learners across the BP partnership. The Access to Nursing, Health and Biological Sciences framework which BP/OCN developed between 1999-2002 and which may partners use as the basis for their Access to HE programmes is a good illustration of how fruitful working in partnership can be for colleges and their learners.

Building on this experience BP and OCN have secured funding from the Integrated Aimhigher strategy to further develop this model to broaden the vocational offer in a variety of other occupational areas for example in construction, hospitality and catering, travel and tourism, etc. A project worker has been appointed to develop the strand of activity which will involve undertaking a feasibility study on the best areas for development. The activity will be launched in January when partners will be invited to inform the direction of the development.

Further details can be obtained from: Val Regan, OCN Accreditation Adviser, e-mail: v.regan@shu.ac.uk or telephone: 0114 225 2495

Enthusiasm of Volunteers and Ambassadors takes project forward

In business 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.

Raising aspirations has been a central theme but the sessions are designed to be used for relationship and familiarity building between the ambassadors and the partner college students, who will also be invited to attend a University based “pre-induction” event in the spring term. A follow up from this will be further motivational activities centred on ‘vocational master classes’ designed with Business Education—South Yorkshire and BP Partners.



David Smith of Chesterfield College, with Alex Dougall, student recruitment co-ordinator, Faculty of O&M at SHU and student ambassadors at Infirmary Road.

In computing 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 a short animated film. The project is being run this year on a pilot basis and participants will be L3 students at RCAT. The project aims to develop the skills of the students using the “Blender” animation and rendering package, as well as introducing them to and enthusing them with University life and activities. It is hoped that the resultant short animated films will then be premiered at the “Lovebytes” International Digital Arts Festival in April 2005. Did somebody say “Isn’t that where Nick Park started?”



Hallam Volunteers outside RCAT prior to outlining project possibilities to Computing students

Building Pathways Project

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