

March 2005

Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of the Aimhigher South Yorkshire Newsletter. Since the last edition the Aimhigher funding for 2005-06 has been confirmed and the total amount, nationally, for 2006-08 has been announced. We will know how much of this figure has been allocated to South Yorkshire later in the year.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce) has produced a major study, entitled 'Young Participation in Higher Education', which highlights the continuing inequalities in participation especially by geographical areas. A brief summary with some local data is included in this newsletter.

If the participation rate is to increase in South Yorkshire, one factor in that growth will be the quality of information, advice and guidance which young people receive. This edition contains a focus on some of the IAG initiatives which Aimhigher is supporting.

Finally, there is some information on professional development opportunities that are available to anyone working in the education and training sectors in South Yorkshire.

Young Participation in HE in South Yorkshire

The Hefce study shows that the national participation rate in HE for young people (18 & 19 year olds) is approximately 30%. There was a major increase between the late 1980's and the early 1990's when participation almost doubled. However, from 1994 to 2000 the increase was only 2%. The gender gap has widened so that young women are 18% more likely to participate than young men. One of the most marked differences is that of neighbourhood participation, whether measured by parliamentary constituency, electoral ward or LEA area. The 20% of young people living in the most advantaged areas are 5 to 6 times more likely to enter HE than the 20% living in the least advantaged areas.

Locally, the data reflects this national picture, especially that high participation areas may be located next to very low participation ones. The parliamentary constituency data is revealing – South Yorkshire contains the third highest participation area along with the lowest one of the 641 constituencies in Great Britain. Below are the young participation rates, to the nearest 1%.

Parliamentary constituency	1998	1999	2000
Barnsley Central	15%	19%	16%
Barnsley East & Mexborough	14%	14%	16%
Barnsley West & Penistone	25%	25%	27%
Doncaster Central	21%	22%	25%
Doncaster North	15%	14%	13%
Don Valley	23%	25%	22%
Rother Valley	21%	23%	24%
Rotherham	18%	18%	18%
Sheffield, Attercliffe	15%	15%	16%
Sheffield, Brightside	8%	7%	8%
Sheffield, Central	22%	23%	23%
Sheffield Hallam	61%	63%	62%
Sheffield, Heeley	19%	21%	19%
Sheffield, Hillsborough	21%	25%	25%

The figures by LEA are as follows:

LEA	1998	1999	2000
Barnsley	17%	19%	20%
Doncaster	20%	20%	20%
Rotherham	19%	21%	21%
Sheffield	23%	25%	25%

Of the 94 electoral wards in South Yorkshire, 44 have participation rates below 16% whilst only 7 have rates above 43%. The rate for the whole of South Yorkshire is 21%. (For further details see <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/polar/>)

These figures reflect the disadvantages under which South Yorkshire labours and demonstrate the need for continuing widening participation activities and partnership working between educational sectors if the disadvantages are to be overcome.

News from the IAG Initiatives

Influencing the Influencers

Lifetime Careers and Sheffield Futures are working together, to raise the aspirations and motivation of parents and carers to the opportunities and progression routes available to young people through Higher Education.

Initially, we have been researching and reporting on best practice in engaging parents and carers in the guidance process. This has involved contact with community groups, schools, colleges, the local education authority and local universities. We are aiming to build on existing good practice and to consider a number of issues - running events at a range of different locations such as the community or retail centres as well as traditional education venues. We will also work through community education co-ordinators to reach out to parents and carers who have not previously considered the option of higher education.

Although there is much information about Higher Education available to young people, research indicated that there is a need for more information specifically targeted at parents.

We are currently considering the content and format of materials we will be producing to address this need.

We will be working with parents of young people in further education and 6th forms linked to the South Yorkshire Objective One "Careers For The Future" project. Concerns about finance have featured strongly in the research, and we will ensure that we provide information and signpost people to appropriate agencies.

We also intend to ensure parents are well informed about progression pathways in Higher Education linked to vocational and academic qualifications, and will be working with the SYFEC apprentices into HE project to achieve this aim.

Maggie Bamford, Sheffield Futures

Contacts: maggie.bamford@sheffield.org.uk
sue.holland@bdrcareers.com

Aim High with Credit Unions

Rotherham Credit Union Development Agency's Aimhigher project is exploring the role credit unions can play in removing barriers to higher education. Credit unions are savings and loans co-operatives promoting wise money management and providing access to fairly priced credit.

This pilot project is funded through the Influencing the Influencers strand of Aimhigher and aims to work with parents as well as young people through savings initiatives, the effective use of affordable credit, financial planning and active participation in managing personal finances. Whilst the work of the project will have relevance to the whole borough, most project initiatives are being developed to focus on two of the wards where participation in education is historically low. It is hoped that eventually the work of the project will extend into the rest of South Yorkshire. Work to date includes:

A Newsletter focussing on money tips for people aiming to go to university, as well as more general tips on use of credit cards and store cards. This will shortly be distributed to 2000 credit union members in the borough.

Money Management Course development with Dearne Valley College and LASER Credit Union. This four week course for parents and young people will be piloted during April/May and delivered in the community.

A training course on the Aimhigher Project for credit union workers has started. It will focus on

exploring the barriers to higher education and the potential role that credit unions can play in addressing these.

Work with local comprehensive schools. Initial conversations have highlighted the difficulties some pupils have in opening bank accounts in order to access the Education Maintenance Allowance. Project staff will be working with Rotherham credit unions to explore how credit union accounts can be made more accessible to young people.

PHSE curriculum. Starting in April, the project will be assisting Barnsley Credit Union to respond to a request for input into the curriculum in secondary schools.

Glynis Sharpe
Rotherham Credit Union Development Agency

Contact: Jane Woodford rcuda@legend.co.uk



HE Guidance Support Network

The HE Guidance Support Network has recently published the *Pathways to HE for Adult Learners* brochure, written by Dr Willy Kitchen of the Institute for Lifelong Learning at Sheffield University, with contributions from project members. The brochure is aimed at potential students in South Yorkshire aged 19+ and provides information and advice on the routes into HE available to them, where to get further guidance and some brief information on HE courses themselves. Copies of the brochure have been distributed among universities, colleges and guidance centres around South Yorkshire. The brochure launch is being advertised on 100 buses across South Yorkshire during February and March. If you would like a copy of the brochure, please contact the project at the address supplied below.

The project jointly organised a seminar on careers in social care, with the Building Pathways project. This took place on the 9th March at Ponds Forge and featured social care speakers from HE, FE, work based training providers and employment. If you would like the papers from the seminar please contact us.

Together with Lifetime Careers the project has undertaken some research on GCSE equivalence in HE admissions, with particular reference to level 2 Numeracy and Literacy tests. The aim of the research was to gain information to allow advisers to accurately advise those who had taken the tests and wanted to progress on to HE. The research concentrated on universities in and around South Yorkshire, and is now complete. The final report will shortly be written, and if you are interested in receiving a copy please contact us.

To follow up our 2004 training sessions with local IAG networks, guidance organisations and access students, the project is planning to run more HE training sessions in 2005. A further event is already planned for advisers working in the Careers for the Future project. If you or your organisation would like training on issues such as HE finance, admissions, mature access to HE or updates on individual institutions HE provision, please contact us.

Richard Kemp
HE Guidance Support Network Project Officer
The Open University in Yorkshire

0113 2086710
R.M.Kemp@open.ac.uk

Contact details for *Pathways to HE for Adult Learners* brochure:

Shaun Long
HE Guidance Support Network Project
The Open University in Yorkshire
2 Trevelyan Square
Boar Lane
Leeds LS1 6ED
0113 2086798
S.K.Long@open.ac.uk

Training in Careers Education and Guidance including Individual Learning Plans

"Visit to the Connexions facility especially useful", "Helped give me a clear focus for co-ordinating the Y9 Options Process", "Haven't been involved with careers before, I want to learn more", "Has helped me make the links with other workers in our school". These were some of the evaluation comments from the Signposting courses held over the last few months. One hundred and five participants from schools and other support agencies have attended this introductory course so far. Delivery has taken place in schools and centrally at the Connexions centre on Division Street, Sheffield. The next course will be on Tuesday 24th May.

Preparations for the more in depth 4-day OCN course in Careers Education and Guidance are well underway. The course starts on Wednesday 8th June and continues for four consecutive Wednesdays.

The Aim Higher support to the implementation of Individual Learning Plans has enabled more training events to take place. A summer training date will be announced soon for schools looking to come on board for September 2005.

The feedback from the schools involved so far has been very positive. Mo Laycock, Bill Lynn and the management team at Firth Park have seen immediate benefits. Bill said, *"Students were better prepared for their Y9 option choices. They have discussed their learning plan with their parents and have a greater understanding of the importance of the decisions they are making".*

Karen Allan, Sheffield Futures

For more information/to book a place on the Signposting Course or the OCN course in CEG - contact Karen Allen or Janet Martin, Sheffield Futures, Tel: 0114 201 2800 karen.allen@sheffieldfutures.org.uk
Lifetime contact: Jacqui Jameson jacqui.jameson@bdrcareers.com

Aimhigher Continuing Professional Development Programme

Aimhigher Associate Awards and Research Placements

Aimhigher South Yorkshire is establishing up to 4 Associate Awards throughout the period 1st January 2005 to 31st March 2006, at a maximum of £10,000 each, secondments for a minimum of 20 days. The Research Placements are worth £1,000 and are for 5 days; 25 are available until 31 March 2006. Both opportunities are available for full or part-time staff associated with widening participation into HE in South Yorkshire, and based in education institutions and related organisations. Details and forms can be viewed at <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/pathways/docs.htm>

Climbhigher residential weekend, Hollowford Centre, Castleton, 23/24 April.

Ten staff places are available on a generic management training programme. This will take place alongside the residential weekend for Y11 and Y12 students from schools and colleges in South Yorkshire which will focus on Oxbridge.

More information about the Centre is available at www.hollowford.org.uk

For further information about the Associate Awards, Research Placements, Climbhigher weekend - contact Jed O'Neill or Jean Watson, Aimhigher South Yorkshire, aimhigher.sy@shu.ac.uk Tel: 0114 224 2935.

Widening Participation - What's it all about?, 26th April, 9.00 - 3.30 p.m., Brooklands Hotel and Conference Centre, Barnsley.

For middle and senior managers in schools and colleges with a responsibility for widening participation. Programme will include a keynote address on the importance of widening participation by Dr Stuart Billingham, Director of Quality Innovation, St John's College, York and Chair of the Aimhigher Area Steering Group for North Yorkshire. Five workshops will be repeated 3 times during the day (1 to be selected for each session) covering HE Admissions and WP/Access Agreements, Lifelong Learning Networks and vocational progression in FE, Schools and WP, The Student Voice.

HE Admissions Tests and the Widening Participation Agenda, 10 May, 9.00 a.m. - 12.45 p.m., Brooklands Hotel and Conference Centre, Barnsley.

For Aimhigher Co-ordinators, G & T Co-ordinators, Sixth Form Tutors.

Contributors from Universities using the tests will be outlining what they are designed to achieve, how they operate and are used in the selection process, the costs and any fee waiver arrangements and the significance for applicants from under-represented groups.

Project Management, 24 May, full day, Brooklands Hotel and Conference Centre, Barnsley.

For Aimhigher Co-ordinators and G & T Co-ordinators. This will be very much a 'hands-on' event led by Kath Bridger and Jenny Shaw.

For further details or to book a place - contact Kim Heeramun at Diva Creative Ltd
kim@divacreative.com
Tel : 0114 221 0378

Forthcoming Events

Building Pathways Project Annual Conference, 21 April 2005, 9 am-4pm, at The Source at Meadowhall, Sheffield. This will showcase the activities of the Building Pathways partnership in providing vocational and work-based learning, including engagement with employers and the dissemination of Aimhigher activities. Further details and a booking form are available and can be downloaded from the Building Pathways Project Website: <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/pathways/events.htm>

Full day Conference on disability, last week in June.

Half day Conference on Careers Education & Guidance, second week in July. Further details available later.

Aimhigher South Yorkshire Team

Jed O'Neill, Director
Jean Watson, Administrator

48 Howard Street
City Campus
Sheffield Hallam University
Sheffield S1 2LX

For further information:
Tel: 0114 225 2935
Fax: 0114 225 4185
E-mail: aimhigher.sy@shu.ac.uk