



Looking ahead!

Towards the end of the year Aimhigher submitted a successful bid to the new National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). This government-funded initiative aims to double the number of disadvantaged students entering university from communities where young participation in higher education is low despite relatively strong GCSE attainment.



Part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme

Our successful bid will attract over £8 million, enabling 6 of our university partners and a consortia of 13 colleges to deliver a 4 year programme

supporting thousands of young people living in 25 wards across the West Midlands. Work commences in January 2017, so watch this space for more details!



Annual Review 2015 / 2016

Reaching out... making a difference



Are you looking for activities to inspire and motivate your students?

Is your advice on higher education up to date?

A single call or email to Aimhigher West Midlands links you to the region's leading universities and colleges. We can help you plan an exciting programme of higher education-related activities to give your students the knowledge and confidence to Aimhigher.

Let us help! Email your enquiry to: aimhigher@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Go to www.aimhigherwm.ac.uk and use our searchable database of outreach activities

[@AimhigherWM](https://twitter.com/AimhigherWM)
[aimhigherwm](https://www.facebook.com/aimhigherwm)



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Welcome to the Aimhigher West Midlands Annual Review 2015 / 2016

We are a partnership of universities, schools and colleges who work together to improve social mobility by widening participation in higher education. We help young people to:

- become motivated and confident about their learning and career progression
- explore the world of higher education and what it might mean for them
- make informed decisions about their future.

Higher education changes the lives of individuals, strengthens the economy and enriches society. We want to ensure that everyone with the potential to benefit from higher education has the opportunity to do so.

Aimhigher West Midlands went from strength to strength in 2015 / 2016. The 12 universities and colleges in our partnership worked together to increase the scope, scale and diversity of regional higher education outreach, providing a rich menu of aspiration and attainment raising activities to hundreds of schools and colleges, and reaffirming our role as one of the country's leading social mobility partnerships.

This Annual Review celebrates the achievements of the people we supported during the year, and the commitment of our many partners who, by working together, make Aimhigher in the West Midlands possible.



A university masterclass brings Shakespeare to life

Our partners provide a vast range of activities to help learners of all ages discover, explore and understand higher education and the part it might play in fulfilling their career ambitions. Every week hundreds of young people and adults benefit from outreach activities, exploring our campuses, working with our

academics and meeting our staff and current students. Aimhigher acts as a single point of contact for schools and colleges, enabling them to make the most of this rich source of curriculum and careers enrichment activity.

And our partners are constantly developing new forms of outreach,

sharing good practice and expertise to reach out and inspire future generations. This vital work will help ensure the UK economy remains competitive, and has the highly skilled workforce needed to meet growing demand for graduates in all sectors of the world of work.

These opportunities fall into 4 broad strands of activity.



Introducing the concepts of careers, progression and higher education to Primary pupils as they prepare for transition to secondary school.



Giving students aged 11 to 16 a chance to taste, test and try different learning and career pathways as they face the critical decisions that will underpin their future careers.



Providing post-16 and adult learners with opportunities to develop higher level study skills and make an informed and successful transition to higher education.



Working with schools, colleges and guidance agencies to help them meet the challenge of providing up-to-date advice and guidance on higher education.



Aimhigher works
 Our research, which includes tracking the young people we work with, suggests the GCSE attainment of Aimhigher Pupil Premium students is double

that of those we have not supported. By the age of 18 the students we work with are four times more likely to enter higher education than young people from similarly disadvantaged backgrounds.

Bigger, better, faster, more!



Our activities with Primary schools grew dramatically during 2015/2016, engaging nearly 6,000 pupils from 50 schools. Early interventions like these are vitally important in addressing subsequent inequalities in secondary, further and higher education.



Post-16 students juggle demanding study commitments whilst researching next steps and gaining wider experiences to support university or employment applications. Aimhigher helps them explore all options, fulfil their potential and prepare for a transition.

STEM inspiration

STEM subjects provide great opportunities for collaboration, and all 12 of our NNCO partner institutions contributed new provision in this area. Events this year included a "Beat the Robots" coding and robotics day for Year 6 pupils at Aston University and University College Birmingham's Healthy Eating and Food Safety days to develop independent living skills.



Big school here we come!

In April 2016 we launched a suite of online games (pictured above) to address the main concerns pupils experience as they prepare for transition to secondary school. Introducing the challenges of getting ready for the subject-based secondary curriculum, navigating a large school and making the most of extra-curricular opportunities, these fun games are free to access and have been played by over 1,000 young people, often as a follow-up activity after attending a Move on Up event.

Seeing is believing

Events for Year 6 students included an award winning interactive theatre-in-education piece devised and performed by University of Worcester Drama students that toured partner universities and schools, augmented with hands-on workshops, tasters and campus tours.



"The children thoroughly enjoyed their experience. It opened their mind to the decisions they will have to make at secondary school"

Year 6 teacher, Greysbrooke Primary School.

In March 2016 over 260 Year 12 students from 11 regional schools and colleges attended our Make Your Move conference, giving them the opportunity to work with academics and outreach staff from all 12 Aimhigher partners.

"It opened my mind and helped me make decisions"



My Future My Birmingham gives students the opportunity to explore a wide range of careers in the city's high growth industries and sectors, meet today's professionals, work with leading academics and gain valuable careers advice. The programme was delivered in a range of working environments including Jaguar Land Rover, Price Waterhouse Cooper and Deutsch Bank, with input from Aimhigher partner universities. 350 students, ranging from Years 6 to 13 took part in the programme this year, and we plan to develop more events in 2016-17.



Activities for Key Stage 3 and 4 are critically important, inspiring and informing students as they select and progress through their GCSE studies and begin to consider their longer-term career plans.



Our work with teachers and careers practitioners developed during 2015-2016, attracting delegates from across the West Midlands and beyond. As well as our annual conference in July, which was assessed as excellent or good by all who attended, we launched a series of twilight CPD sessions to provide more opportunities for busy colleagues to update their knowledge of higher attracted education-related information, advice and guidance.



In March and April 190 Year 8 students from 7 schools spent a day at 2 universities exploring careers in STEM, Creative Industries, Health, Social Care and Hospitality sectors.

"I'm glad we have experiences like this to see what it's like and explore. It helped me think about my future"

"Summer school has inspired me to try my best and do things I never thought about before"

In June and July 2016 over 300 Year 10 students from 49 regional schools took part in our UniFest summer school programme, spending 3 days living and working as a university student. For many this was a life-changing experience that challenged them academically and socially. 93% told us they felt more confident as a result, and 85.5% felt they now know enough about university to make better decisions about their future.

In June 2016 72 Year 8 girls explored careers in Engineering and The Built Environment as part of our NNCO programme. The event was hosted by Birmingham City University with support from Aston University, the University of Wolverhampton and over 20 female academics and engineers.

"A great experience to learn, be inspired and enjoy"

We also provided regular news, views and comments on careers guidance, widening participation and social mobility to the 1,000 practitioners who subscribe to our monthly e-bulletins or follow us on Twitter.

"The best CPD conference I've ever been to"



A single point of contact

Our single point of contact and brokerage service for schools and colleges seeking higher education outreach activities supported 175 schools and colleges during the year. Over 290 requests for support were received, 97.5% of which resulted in a positive outcome. Feedback suggests that time-poor teachers and careers advisers really value this aspect of our work.

We continued to develop our role as an information hub for the regional widening participation community.

Our website attracted nearly 10,000 visitors, many of whom used our on-line activity search engine to discover and secure places at our partners' outreach events and activities. Our new Twitter account grew rapidly and now has over 400 followers.

"A very efficient and effective way to engage with the University outreach. We have certainly had more engagement with different universities over the last 12 months as a result"

Mentoring for success

Over 100 undergraduates from 4 Aimhigher universities worked as mentors during the year, supporting 490 students from 25 regional schools and colleges. Providing weekly face-to-face and remote e-mentoring the scheme provides intensive support to the young people it engages. Working with our mentors makes young people more confident and effective in their learning, and more aspirant and informed in the career and progression planning. As a result 91% feel more motivated to work hard in order to achieve the goals they have explored with their mentor.

"An eye-opening experience that has given me an extensive amount of knowledge for my future"

The year in numbers

During 2015 / 2016 our 12 partner universities and colleges...

