

UNIFEST 2022

SUMMARY REPORT

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SUMMARY

The Aimhigher West Midlands partnership coordinates UniFest each year. UniFest is a programme of university summer schools which aims to give young people from less advantaged backgrounds the opportunity to explore the world of higher education by living and studying on campus for three days in July. UniFest is an important part of the wider Aimhigher programme in the West Midlands, which is funded by partner universities. UniFest students are selected by their schools because they have the potential to consider university but need additional support as they come from disadvantaged backgrounds and communities that are under-represented in higher education. As a partnership we consider the following criteria:

- Postcode indicates low rates of participation in Higher Education (POLAR 4 Q1 and Q2)
- Disadvantaged home postcode (IMD/IDACI)
- Eligible for Free School Meals / FSM6 / Pupil Premium
- No parental experience of higher education
- Young carers
- Disability and / or learning difficulty
- Children in Care

In 2020, in response to the Covid-19 restrictions, the Aimhigher partnership provided a fully online version of UniFest to ensure learners did not miss out on this vital support. In 2021, the partnership provided a UniFest offer comprised of a variety of online and on-campus events. 2022 saw the return of fully in-person events, some of which residential. Learners applied for a place at one of the six UniFest 2022 events:

- Aston University – STEM
- Birmingham City University – Fuel for Life
- Newman University – Creative Change
- University College Birmingham – Practical University Pathways
- University of Birmingham – Your Future, Your Choice
- University of Worcester – Criminals, the Law, Convictions & Psychology

This report summarises the 2022 UniFest programme.

Aimhigher would like to thank the staff and students at partner universities, schools and colleges whose hard work and dedication made delivery of this event possible.

WHO ATTENDED?

239 learners attended UniFest 2022

PARTICIPATION RATES

529 learners from 53 schools applied to UniFest 2022. Of these 320 were offered a place. 75% (239) of learners attended UniFest 2022.

Recruitment and attendance by event:

UNIFEST EVENT	CAPACITY	PLACES OFFERED	ATTENDANCE
Aston	55	55	52 (95%)
BCU	60	60	47 (78%)
Newman	50	50	29 (58%)
UCB	50	50	37 (74%)
UoB	55	55	38 (69%)
UoW	50	50	36 (72%)

ATTENDANCE BY GENDER

58% (139 learners) Female

37% (89 learners) Male

5% (11 learners) Non-Binary/Other

WIDENING PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

100% of UniFest 2022 participants met at least one of the widening participation criteria in the table below.

CRITERIA	PROPORTION
Postcode indicates low rates of participation in Higher Education (POLAR4 Q1 & Q2)	71% (169 learners) <i>POLAR4 Q1 = 108 learners</i> <i>POLAR4 Q2 = 61 learners</i>
Disadvantaged home postcode (IMD)	89% (212 learners)
Disadvantaged home postcode (IDACI)	89% (213 learners)
Eligible for free school meals / FSM6 / Pupil Premium	51% (121 learners)
Experience under local authority care as a looked after child	4% (9 learners)
No parental / guardian experience of Higher Education	77% (185 learners)
Disability and/or learning difficulties	19% (46 learners)
Young Carer	10% (23 learners)

UNI CONNECT PROGRAMME

21% (50 learners) of participants who took part in UniFest 2022 were funded via the Uni Connect Programme¹.

¹ This only includes learners who are part of the Aimhigher West Midlands UCP and does not include other regional UCP partnerships.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID IT MAKE?

The following analyses only include the responses of learners who completed both the pre and post event questionnaires.

Evaluation response rates:

TOTAL ATTENDEES	PRE-EVENT EVALUATION COMPLETED	POST-EVENT EVALUATION COMPLETED	BOTH EVALUATIONS COMPLETED
239	223 (93%)	213 (89%)	198 (83%)

The event(s) benefitted learners in a number of ways. Particularly, UniFest 2022:

INCREASED LEARNERS' KNOWLEDGE OF HE

The event led to a:

57% increase in learners that understood what courses are available at universities.

81% increase in learners that understood the different routes into higher education.

107% increase in learners that understood how to apply to HE.

43% increase in learners who felt they know enough about HE to decide whether to go.

INCREASED LEARNERS' FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE OF HE

The event led to a:

58% increase in learners that understood the costs associated with studying in HE.

104% increase in learners that understood the financial support available to study in HE.

INCREASED HE ASPIRATIONS

The event led to a:

12% increase in learners who said they will definitely or are very likely apply to HE.

18% increase in learners who felt clear on which HE course/subject to apply for.

66% increase in learners who were clear on which HE institutions they want to apply for.

WHAT LEARNERS SAY ABOUT UNIFEST

93% of learners were **satisfied** or **very satisfied** with the event.

“I was happy with the progress made socially and mentally with other students. No improvements were needed but I would say every UniFest experience should have a team like the one that led us.”

“It helped improve my confidence massively and created lasting friendships. I miss it already.”

“The team made us feel really comfortable and we got a really good feel as to what Uni could be like.”

“Everyday was different and interesting which kept me engaged the whole way through.”