

Widening Participation – supporting underrepresented groups to progress to HE

Aimhigher London is a partnership of state-funded schools, colleges, local authorities, higher education providers and employers working collaboratively. We are committed to creating opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to stay in education and progress onto higher level skills (including Higher Education and apprenticeships). We work together to engage young people who have little knowledge or experience of higher level skills, in outreach activities. These activities are designed to increase aspirations, raise awareness and equip young people with the tools to make informed choices about their future. We work with young people, their families/ carers and key support personnel from Key Stage 3 to post 16.

Further reading related to the under-representation of white boys in higher education:

Office for Students (2020) White British males from low socioeconomic status backgrounds

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/white-british-males-from-low-socioeconomic-status-backgrounds/>

The Office for Students website offers a summary of the current concern over white boys' progression; it provides facts, offers advice to outreach practitioners, and gives examples of outreach projects which target white boys.

Kings College (2016) Representation of white working class boys in HE <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/archive/news/kings/newsrecords/2016/07%20july/target-parents-and-primary-school-pupils-to-get-more-white-working-class-boys-into-university>

The report by education and youth think-and-action tank LKMco was commissioned by King's College London's Widening Participation Department, and explores why so few white working class boys progress to higher education and how this can be addressed.

WONKHE article (June 2021) White working class have been let down – not just by a debate over white privilege

<https://wonkhe.com/blogs/white-working-class-students-have-been-let-down-just-not-by-a-debate-over-white-privilege/>

Alex Blower responds to the Common's Education Committee's report on white working class pupils.

Pinkett, M. and Roberts, M. (2019), Boys Don't Try? Rethinking Masculinity in Schools Routledge
'Thoughtful, balanced, thoroughly-researched, eminently sensible and practical.'

Roberts, M. (2021) The Boy Question: How To Teach Boys To Succeed In School Routledge
'A grounded and balanced exploration of how we can work to support and challenge boys to aim high and fulfil their potential.'

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Mac An Ghail, M. (1994) *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling* Open University Press

‘A penetrating analysis of...masculine socialisation within its changing context. It stands...as a turning point in understandings of gender and society.’

Further reading related to other under-represented groups:

Effective practice in access and participation

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/>

Lists issues related to target groups, what constitutes effective practice in addressing these, and some examples of projects carried out by universities in England. For example:

- HE Can, Uni Connect, South Yorkshire partnership run a project that works with male students to build confidence and develop social/teamwork skills, using positive role models to pass on reliable knowledge about HE and graduate careers.
- The University of Huddersfield supports students with disabilities by making automatic video recordings of all lectures available to all students, not just those with a disability or personal learning support plan. The university monitors usage, with the latest data showing that at least half of all students had accessed a lecture recording in the past year.
- The University of Bradford works with primary school children from refugee families, bringing them into contact with refugees who are in work or higher education. The theory is that by seeing other refugees who have gone on to higher education and excelled, primary school children will be inspired to strive to attain the GCSEs they need to reach higher education.
- The University of Surrey organises a summer school for young carers which includes subject tasters, skills training and information, advice and guidance, and is supported by student ambassadors who also have caring responsibilities.
- King’s College London Aspire programme was co-created with the university’s African and Caribbean society to boost the confidence and HE knowledge of black students in KS5 through a range of mentoring, academic, and careers-based activities.