

## Outreach Hub Partnership Match-Funding Proposal Guidance 2022

This guidance document is here to support you in your application for Aspire to HE Outreach Hub partnership funding, providing you with all the necessary information regarding how to make the most informed proposal, including a steer on our agreed priorities.

### Outreach Hub Guidance – Recommendations and FAQ's

- 1) What is Uni Connect/Aspire to HE/Outreach Hub?
- 2) Project Outcomes and Areas of priority
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#### 1) What is Uni Connect/Aspire to HE/Outreach Hub?

[Uni Connect](#) brings together 29 partnerships of universities, colleges and other local partners to deliver outreach programmes to young people aged 13 – 19 and support mature learners into higher education pathways.

[Aspire to HE](#) is a Uni Connect consortium based at The University of Wolverhampton, in partnership with 6 local Further Education Colleges across the Black Country and Telford & Wrekin.

Partnerships are focussed on improving the progression rates into Higher education for underrepresented groups.

The programme started in January 2017 and initially aimed to support the government's goals to:

- Double the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education by 2020
- Increase by 20 per cent the number of students in higher education from ethnic minority groups
- Address the under-representation of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education.

## What is the Outreach Hub?

The Aspire to HE Outreach Hub programme is an initiative which aims to widen the scope of HE access and participation across the Black Country and Telford and Wrekin. Through expanding the number of schools we support and providing a platform for local collaborative activity, we hope to add value to the regional HE access and participation offer.

Through the Aspire to HE Outreach Hub programme we have developed our website to function as a signposting mechanism for schools and colleges in the Black Country and Telford regions which helps them to find out about local HE access outreach provision. This will be supported through a single point of contact which will signpost local and national outreach activity to teachers and advisors.

Via the mapping of the regional offer and an assessment of the needs of local schools, we will have greater understanding of where the gaps in provision are. Once we have collated information we will be better placed to facilitate access to existing provision and where there is evidence of lack of provision, work collaboratively and strategically with local schools / colleges / Universities and across other sectors to either fund new collaborative initiatives, or act as a facilitator for new programmes.

Finally, the Hub will act as a Platform to bring together wider stakeholders- CEC, Chamber of Commerce/ Business, LAs, LEAs, Careers Hub, NCS- to focus our efforts on agreed goals related to HE progression; where we will make greater impact through focus and collaboration. On the back of this we will fund existing, new and locally tailored approaches, which address the challenges outlined in our strategic objectives.

Following the success of the Uni Connect Programme nationally in phases one and two, the [OfS](#) (Office for Students) has agreed in principle funding for phase three to continue up until July 2025 – subject to annual consultation and confirmation.

## 2) Areas of Priority and Outreach Hub Outcomes:

### Areas of Priority

The **OfS** have proposed to continue the Outreach Hub funding for phase three of the programme and have allocated each Uni Connect partnership a minimum amount to be used for this work. In phase two, the OfS identified the following areas of priority for the Outreach Hub work. We are therefore asking organisations to again try and address at least one of the following partnership match-funding priority areas;

1. Young people in school / FE transition phases and mature learners affected by Covid-19 (Y11, 12 & 13)
2. HE access and progression of communities with lower HE participation including; (Projects should focus on at least one of the following communities)
  - Areas of lower HE participation or lower socioeconomic status
  - BAME
  - Mature learners
  - Disabled
  - Care leavers
  - Carers
  - Estranged from their families
  - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
  - Refugees
  - Children of military families
  - White working class

### **Outreach Hub Outcomes**

The OfS outlined the following outcomes as part of the phase three work. We are therefore asking that when considering your proposal for match funding that you consider how you will contribute to at least one of the following outcome(s) and explain how you will do this;

- Reduce the gap in higher education participation between the most and least represented groups.
- Support young people and mature learners to make well-informed decisions about their future education.
- Support effective and impactful local collaboration by higher education providers working together with schools, colleges, employers and other partners.
- Contribute to a stronger evidence base around 'what works' in higher education outreach and strengthen evaluation practice in the sector.

### **3) Recommendations when creating a bid:**

- **Schedule time to speak with Aspire to HE team:** We recommend that you arrange to speak with a member of the Aspire to HE team before you submit your application, so that we are able to support you in submitting the most effective application and answer any questions you might have.

- **Who is the target audience?** Using the areas of priority to guide you think carefully about who you aim to reach through your project, how many people you aim to reach and how you will reach them. Again please contact us if you are unsure on this and need some further guidance.
- **When would the activity/project happen?**
  - Delivery covered by the Outreach Hub match funding has to happen **by July 2022**.
  - Your project may have already started so you need to show how the funding will add value to your existing project during this period. You must also include the source of your existing funding.
- **Objectives/Content of project to consider:**

The purpose of all Aspire to HE programmes is to help young people and communities make ambitious decisions about their futures. As such, as mentioned above in the 'outcomes' section, all proposals should be focused on how to address them, which means a focus on shifting their aspirations for the future and their attitude towards HE.
- **Scalable projects:**

It is advantageous to make proposals 'tiered' or scalable. Aspire to HE would like to support and fund as many innovative projects as possible that will support our overall objectives (of supporting rapid progression to Higher education) However, Aspire to HE does not have unlimited resources, so opportunities to fund projects at a range of levels is desirable.
- **Be realistic:**

Give careful consideration to whether you have capacity to run the activity being proposed particular given the limitation and effect of Covid-19.
- **Multiple project ideas/bids:** You are welcome to submit multiple bids, but please only include one proposal per form. If you are planning a big project, please bear in mind that we will only be funding up to £25,000 per proposal.

## 4) Funding FAQ

### Match Funding

The project proposal must show how you will match the funding you are asking for from Aspire to HE. The project must be 100% matched but this doesn't have to be full cash match and could be a combination of the following;

- Staff time (please include detail of how that staff time is allocated and proportion of salary)
- Resources and materials
- Venue hire costs

- Marketing and promotion
- Other partnership funding

Your project may have already started so you need to show how the funding will add value to your existing project during this period. You must also include the source of your existing funding to ensure there are no double funding implications.

### **How much funding can I bid for?**

In order to attempt to support a wide-range of projects, and due to limited funding, we are asking for match-funded projects bids not to exceed £25,000 per proposal.

### **What can the funding be used for?**

The funding can be used to cover all aspects for running new or adding value to existing activities/ interventions to support the priority areas. This includes:

- New or existing projects initiatives supporting HE progression and access
- Materials to support the running of the project or initiative
- Bringing in external organisations to run sessions as part of a wider programme
- Staff & personnel costs in the delivery and administration of an event

### **What can the funding not be used for?**

- The fund isn't intended to support individual applications from those who are looking to support their own HE progression or progression into specified institutions. We are looking for applications from organisations or self-employed freelancers who are able to demonstrate multiple impact to a group or community of people focussed around the priority areas.
- The Uni Connect Guidance from the Office for Students is clear that funding **cannot** be used to purchase branded 'freebies' for students, or purchase unnecessary hardware/materials i.e. we cannot fund tech/laptops etc. for learners. If in doubt please contact [t.nicholls2@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:t.nicholls2@wlv.ac.uk) for more guidance.
- The funding is only eligible to fund activity in the Black Country and Telford and Wrekin area. However if your project also covers activity in a bordering Uni Connect area we can consider a joint initiative so please contact us for more guidance.
- International Travel.

## 5) Monitoring and Evaluation Responsibility:

As part of our reporting to the OFS we will need to monitor the impact of the partnership funding and will work with you to ensure that all relevant data is captured and shared accordingly.

If you are successful we will ask you to keep accurate records of evidence of interventions made with young people or communities, this might include registers, evaluations, evidence of 1-1 interventions, which will then be recorded on our data tracking system HEAT. We will work with you to ensure that all data sharing follows appropriate GDPR protocols.

Aspire to HE has a robust evaluation framework, and looks to work with young people and adults to develop in 5 core areas – knowledge of HE, attitudes, aspiration, soft skills and attainment. Unless a partner has their own evidence based evaluations, we will look for any joint funded project to be mapped against at least one of these core areas.

When developing your application please consider ways in which you intend to record, monitor and evaluate your project. If you wish to know more about our evaluation and outcomes framework or require support with this then please discuss this in your initial conversation with the Tom Nicholls [t.nicholls2@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:t.nicholls2@wlv.ac.uk).

## 6) Time Frames & Next Steps

- **Ask any questions** you may have to either Gemma Kay, Acting Director Aspire to HE, [gemma.kay@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:gemma.kay@wlv.ac.uk) or Tom Nicholls, Progression Officer Aspire to HE, [t.nicholls2@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:t.nicholls2@wlv.ac.uk), in advance of submitting your application, to enable you to submit the most effective application and provide further context and understanding to the Aspire to HE team on potential projects we could work together on.
- **Attend an optional drop-in session/workshop** to talk through your ideas with Helen Morgan, Project Consultant Aspire to HE and Tom Nicholls, Progression Officer Aspire to HE. We will be holding virtual drop-ins on both Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022, with meeting slots available throughout both of these days. Whilst we also have made time between 1-3pm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 if you would prefer to meet us in-person (The Gateway at The George, Stafford Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1LY) to discuss your proposals Please do request a meeting if you feel it is necessary.
- **Complete and submit a Proposal Form** as soon as possible by sending them to Tom Nicholls [t.nicholls2@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:t.nicholls2@wlv.ac.uk). The bidding window will be open until **31st March 2022** or until all funds are fully allocated. You may want to check funds remain available if you are submitting a proposal close to the closing date.
- **Review of projects/bids:**  
Made by the Aspire to HE Discretionary Funding Sub Group.
- **Outcome communicated:**



Feedback will be provided to all project leads with next steps – informing you if you have been allocated funding, how much and for what project(s) and subsequently sign an agreement which reflects this.

- If for any reason you are unable to meet the following deadlines but feel you have a strong proposal please contact us to discuss your individual requirements.