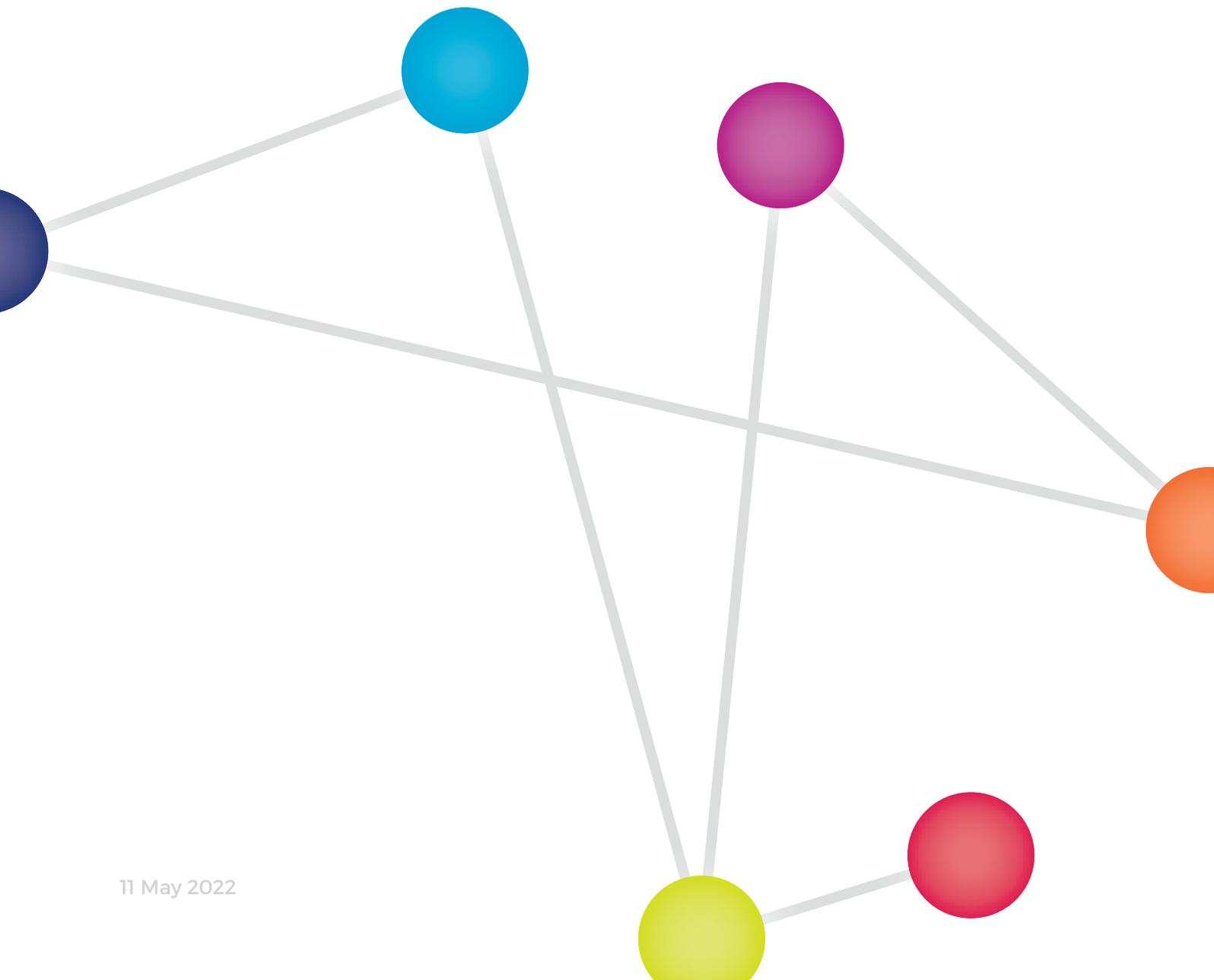
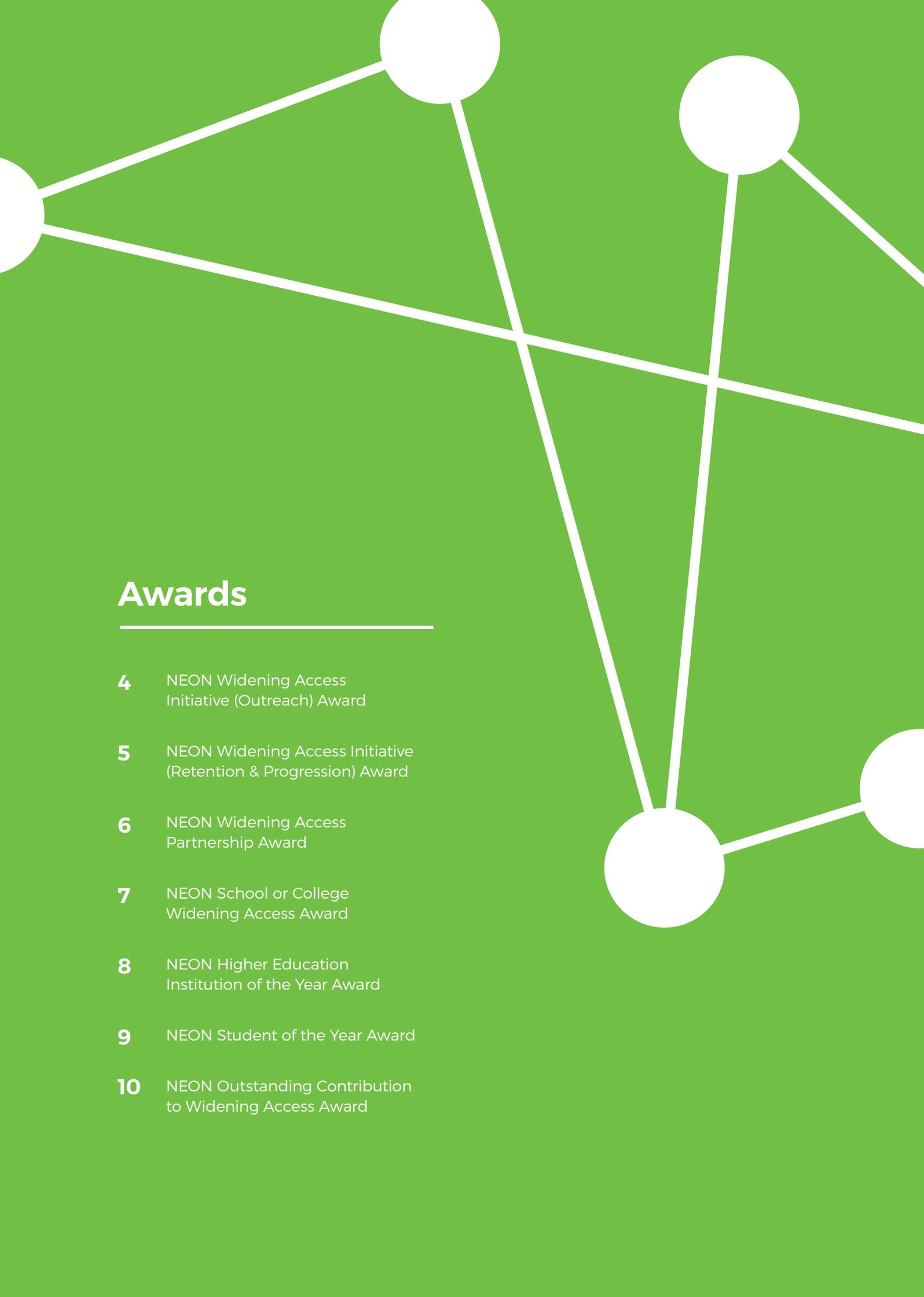


The NEON Awards 2022 Nominees





Awards

- 4** NEON Widening Access Initiative (Outreach) Award
- 5** NEON Widening Access Initiative (Retention & Progression) Award
- 6** NEON Widening Access Partnership Award
- 7** NEON School or College Widening Access Award
- 8** NEON Higher Education Institution of the Year Award
- 9** NEON Student of the Year Award
- 10** NEON Outstanding Contribution to Widening Access Award

Welcome to the NEON Awards 2022

Congratulations for being shortlisted for the ninth annual NEON Awards.

The following pages demonstrate the outstanding work carried out by the nominees. With over 90 nominations, shortlisting was a difficult process, and it has highlighted the excellent work that is being carried out by both institutions and individuals across the United Kingdom.

The NEON Awards provide a platform to celebrate the success of this work and the transformative power that higher education can have on the lives of learners. We are therefore thrilled to welcome you all to today's event.

Thank you on behalf of all the learners you have come into contact with and whom you have inspired through your dedication and hard work.

Professor Graeme Atherton
Director, NEON



NEON Widening Access Initiative (Outreach) Award

Inspiring Minds

Canterbury Christ Church University

For 60 years Canterbury Christ Church University has believed in the transformative power of education. The University's pioneering outreach programme Inspiring Minds embodies that ethos. Working with local schools with a high proportion of Uni Connect students, it delivers an inspirational experience that is having demonstrable success. Data collected shows significant shift in attitudes towards HE and STEM and increases in attendees KS4 attainment, especially in English, Maths and Science. Designed to help fill a skills and gender gap within STEM, Inspiring Minds has engaged with nearly 500 students over five years. Supporting, encouraging and motivating them to continue studying STEM subjects, and raising their aspirations. Nearly 70% of participants agreed that taking part encouraged them to explore HE.

Pathway to Bath

University of Bath

Pathway to Bath is an innovative blended programme for Year 12 students, combining subject-led academic knowledge and skills development (aligned with the OfS attainment-raising agenda), authentic student-life insight and tailored application support, with the overarching aim of developing confidence and supporting successful transition to high-tariff universities amongst under-represented groups. Students are supported by a programme team, undergraduate mentors and PhD researchers via MS teams to work on one of 16 subject-specific projects over nine fortnightly 'sessions' (some synchronous, some asynchronous). Submissions are marked, moderated and graded, with successful students receiving an alternative offer. Students then attend an immersive three day student-life experience on campus and receive personalised support with their university application throughout the autumn term of Year 13. A significant proportion of students (58% of 2020-21 cohort, and indicatively over 60% of 2021-22 cohort) apply for a place at Bath, with a consistent offer rate of over 80%.

Role Model Ambassador Programme

Lancaster University

The Role Model Ambassador programme was developed to provide young people the opportunity to engage with current students from backgrounds similar to their own about higher education and university life. Born out of a dedicated research project the programme now provides the opportunity for in-school and campus visits supported by a dedicated team of Role Model Ambassadors. The project has been highly successful, receiving positive feedback and resulting in a demonstrable impact on the participants, schools and their parents/supporters. The programme has improved practise across the University and developed a unique and impactful delivery model, planned to be rolled out across further underrepresented groups in the future.

NEON Widening Access Initiative (Retention & Progression) Award

City Cares, City

University of London

City Cares is a dedicated programme of support for care-experienced students, young adult carers, estranged students, asylum seekers and refugees committed to providing financial, educational, pastoral, and extra-curricular support to all students in the City Cares community. Students receive personalised support adapted to their individual needs from the designated member of staff dedicated to the programme. The uniqueness of City Cares is the combination of support provided, and the diversity of students it brings together. Students have testified to City Cares being a network of support that truly understands each individual situation, no matter how challenging or complex, and a community who recognises that 'your circumstances do not define you, they are just a part of your story'. Students on the programme have high continuation rates. In 2019-20, 100 percent of care-experience students on the programme continued from year one to year 2 of their studies – 9.8 percentage points higher than the institutional average. This pattern of high continuation is reflected across all student groups in the City Cares Programme.

Head Start

Kingston University

Head Start is a pre-arrival programme designed to support undergraduate students from under-represented groups to transition into life at Kingston. It runs over the summer and offers options of residential and one-day events. Heavily involving student partners to create and deliver activity and content, it focuses on helping students to: 1) understand themselves better; 2) build connections (friendships with peers, insight from current students, networks with staff); 3) understand the support services and development opportunities available; 4) get thinking about academic skills. Head Start consistently demonstrates positive impact on both progression and continuation rates for those who attend and is a key part of Kingston University's transition work.

UEL Funded Internship Scheme

University of East London

The University of East London has developed its Internship provision to support the success of under-represented student groups in accessing opportunities to positively impact on retention and progression into graduate employability. The internship focuses on providing pastoral and employability support through career coaching, mentoring, accessing quality internships, and after-care to develop confidence and competencies for the graduate market. Retention rates have risen to up to 97% for participants who have accessed the scheme and graduate employability has seen an uplift with 75% moving into highly skilled employment. The university uses robust evaluation and feedback mechanisms including employers and students to continue to tailor the provision to meet the needs of employers and ensure equality of opportunity and success to students.

NEON Widening Access Partnership Award

Ensuring Greatness

The Ensuring Greatness project is City's long-term targeted attainment and aspiration initiative in partnership with Elm Green School, since 2018. This targeted project works with students who identify as Black Caribbean in Year 10 and 11. Ensuring Greatness delivers sustained, high-impact tutoring, mentoring, and careers support embedded within the NERUPI framework. Intensive Maths and English tutoring closes the attainment and awarding gap, while on-campus revision days, the Black Professionals event and Graduation celebrations provide insight into higher education and develop career aspirations. This approach combines 'classic' tutoring, HE outreach and professional development into a unique school partnership, building a community across sectors to bolster skills, scaffold aspiration and forge belonging.

Higher Horizons

Higher Horizons is a collaborative partnership of universities and colleges working together to deliver widening access work in Staffordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire since 2005. Higher Horizons prides itself on its impartiality. They are there to help young people from widening access backgrounds make informed choices about their future options. Activity is delivered based on our Progression Framework. Most recently known for delivering the Uni Connect programme, it has delivered 3,300 activities to over 25,000 young people from low participation areas since 2017. Impact evaluation of the programme shows that those who engage with the partnership on its most intensive programmes progress to HE at twice the rate of those who do not engage. In the last five years, 4,000 young people who have engaged with the programme have progressed to HE.

Solent University and Unity 101 Community Radio Partnership

Solent University and Unity 101 Community Radio have a long-standing community partnership spanning over 15 years. During this period the two organisations have integrated and co-delivered a series of community intervention and activities that enable both the local community and Solent's student & staff community to mutually benefit. The university's partnership with Unity 101 helps to bridge the gap between the local community (comprising of many of their Widening Participation target groups) and Higher Education. The partnership has enabled them to directly communicate with underachieving learners, their parents and other key influencers who are from under-represented groups. This is all via a medium that is familiar, that is delivered in their first/home language in a way that removes the daunting aspect of the unknown and provides a very low barrier to access as all they need is a radio and the time to listen.

NEON School or College Widening Access Award

Longley Park Sixth Form College

Longley Park Sixth Form is a 16-18 academy and was established in 2004 with circa 1,200 students enrolled. Longley Park Sixth Form has high expectations for all young people and is driven by a commitment to see that all its young people to achieve, flourish and progress. They are ambitious for their students and believe that these ambitions are achievable. By raising aspirations and developing students' confidence and self-belief, they achieve and progress. In partnership with HeppSY, the college has already delivered during 2021-22 11 distinct activities and engaged with 855 unique students including 432 Uni-Connect students at least once. 672 students are already on a sustained and progressive programme, including 330 who are from Uni-Connect postcodes.

The Angmering School

The Angmering School is dedicated to the success and progression of disadvantaged students and progression to Higher Education. Their work to achieve this is supported from the top, is strategically led and supported across the school. They take a holistic approach to this work, engaging with higher education institutions and employers positively and effectively to support disadvantaged students in a range of different ways. They have planned and put into practice an effective programme of information advice and guidance, curriculum support, and transition skills development, alongside mentoring and personal support that has proven to be very successful in supporting the progression of under-represented groups to HE. During the covid pandemic the innovation support provided to the most vulnerable students were immediate in terms of school attendance and behaviour. Longer term outcomes are demonstrated by the intended progression data of the students which show intended applications in 2021/22 for Level 3 courses at 67%, and those who are pupil premium at 32%.

The James Hornsby School

The James Hornsby School works very hard to enable their students from under-represented groups enter higher education. Despite the pandemic in 2020-21 they engaged in 23 activities across the academic year and worked with 720 students. So far, this academic year, The school has participated in five activities with Make it Happen (Uni Connect) including working with 534 students with more planned for summer term. Activities have included Careers week, mock interviews, activities in apprenticeship week and science week, Make it Happen assemblies, workshops and mentoring. The school is always striving to give the best to their students and meet their core purpose of 'enhancing life chances of all our young people, enabling them to fulfil their potential and achieve the best possible outcomes'.

NEON Higher Education Institution of the Year Award

Sheffield Hallam University

As one of the largest universities in the UK and a major driver of social mobility in the North of England, Sheffield Hallam University supports students to excel in their studies, including those who have faced particularly challenging barriers as a result of the pandemic. They consistently recruit more students from underrepresented backgrounds than any other UK university. Sheffield Hallam is the top modern university in the UK for numbers of students entering highly skilled employment within 15 months of graduating. Their vision is to be the world's leading applied university; showing what a university genuinely focused on transforming lives can achieve for its students and region.

NEON Student of the Year Award

Ciara Sherlock

University of Bath

Ciara is a third-year Management student. She is a Gold Scholar, Widening Access Outreach Ambassador, and a One Young World Ambassador. Herself from a background which meets widening access criteria, Ciara offers a guiding hand to school/college students in a similar position. She delivers webinars, seminars, and workshops to raise the profile of outreach work and destigmatise disadvantage, to support as many students as possible. Ciara's most outstanding contribution to widening access is her fearless authenticity, and willingness to present in front of as many audiences as possible, raising the profile of outreach opportunities and destigmatising disadvantage, so that students who are experiencing similar situations feel more confident and empowered to access support, and are better equipped to navigate the complex system of HE application, funding and progression. A natural innovator, she's established new ways to get her message across, creating content on Tik-Tok, Instagram and LinkedIn, sharing her experiences and expertise to increase awareness of support.

Hannah Branton

Anglia Ruskin University

Hannah is a current 2nd year mature Social Work student. Before university, she attended a school in Essex which meets widening participation criteria. Alongside her role as a Student Ambassador, Hannah took on the four-month internship to provide valuable and insightful feedback on experience as a Care Leaver and Care Experienced students (CLCE) student. This paid internship supported the delivery requirements of the Access and Participation Plan and raise awareness of CLCE and how to better support them. Hannah was an integral part in putting together the content for the Anglia Ruskin University CLCE bursary and set up employability support with a dedicated page and contact for CLCE.

Toni Phillips

Newcastle College University Centre

Arriving into higher education from a widening participation background, and as a mature student, the first two years of Toni's undergraduate degree proved to be incredibly challenging as they battled poor mental health. Toni was an extraordinary peer mentor, receiving incredible feedback from both staff and students. Their talent for student support recognised, Toni has become an incredible advocate for LGBTQ+ students across Newcastle College University Centre (NCG). Toni is a founder member of the NCG inclusivity project, they have collaborated with support staff and students to design, implement and deliver sessions to teaching staff based on the lived experiences of our LGBTQ+ community, encouraging safe and authentic dialogues about how we can create an environment where we all belong. Toni has developed a groupwide pro-noun initiative which includes a poster campaign featuring the vice-principal and leadership team celebrating their pronouns alongside students. The next stage of Toni's plan includes highlighting psychologically safe staff members or locations.

NEON Outstanding Contribution to Widening Access Award

Angela O'Sullivan

De Montfort University

Angela has dedicated her career to championing widening participation. Her outstanding work which supports the whole student journey has been recognised by a De Montfort University (DMU) Teacher Fellowship, an Advance HE National Teaching Fellowship, a Principal Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy and an Advance HE Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE). The CATE award (2018) recognised her leadership of the highly acclaimed DMU CrashEd outreach activity which involves analysing a real crashed car from multi-disciplinary perspectives. Angela engages with local stakeholders to develop bespoke activities to raise aspirations for students from under-represented groups. As an East Midlands STEM ambassador for 13 years the STEM Manager describes her as an 'inspirational role model for the scheme'.

Ashleigh Hope

Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Ashleigh is a dedicated widening access professional with a real personal connection to work. She took part in the Partners Summer School at Newcastle University when she was 18. She is the first person in her family to have attended university, and that summer school was a truly transformative experience that led to her career in widening participation. Her enthusiasm and impact has been significant across the institutions she has worked for, starting at Leeds in 2013 then moving on to QMUL and currently Guildhall. Excelling in both programme delivery and design and more recently in strategy and leadership, Ashleigh's unceasing energy and commitment is evident in all the work she does. She had transformed the Access offering at Guildhall and there are currently 34 students enrolled at the school who are directly supported by Ashleigh. She is generous with colleagues across sector, chairing the London Group of HELOA and always offering to support people one on one. Her passion is matched by a real depth of knowledge that is key to her successful championing of access work across local & national forums.

Brandee Percival

University of Nottingham

Brandee has been working within widening participation at the University of Nottingham for over 20 years. She has delivered summer schools to over 2500 participants throughout this time and is one of the most committed and inspiring individuals who form our widening access community. Brandee's leadership and vision for the University of Nottingham summer schools means that they have a specific 'atmosphere'. They are welcoming, friendly and showcase the best of university life to participants. She is innovative in the delivery of activities, tailoring them to the student's needs. Brandee works tirelessly to ensure the continued success of the widening participation programmes through envisioning successful, creative and sector leading provision over a number of years.



[educationopportunities.co.uk](https://www.educationopportunities.co.uk)

Copyright The University of West London 2022

NEON is hosted by of The University of West London

Company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No. 02927256