

NEON Awards 2024 Nominations

Category

NEON Widening Access Initiative (Outreach) Award

Name of project and institution

HealthReach - UK Recruitment and Outreach, University of Reading

Brief Description

HealthReach is an innovative outreach project designed to support access to health and life-science careers and courses. We do this by inspiring and engaging young people and raising awareness of the variety of career choices in health and the life sciences in collaboration with current health and higher education professionals. Students can immerse themselves in interactive workshops, which mirror everyday workplace experiences in the health sector. It offers an innovative and exciting way to both educate young people and inspire them to consider higher education courses and careers in health and the life sciences.

Why has this project been nominated

HealthReach was created as part of a commitment by the University of Reading and local NHS partners, to tackle widening participation issues in health careers, and to address the projected shortfall in the future healthcare workforce. HealthReach provides interactive healthcare workshops. The activities link to educational curricula and display a range of careers within healthcare. HealthReach also provides education about public health, first aid, and the importance of healthy lifestyle choices. Priority is given to students with widening participation markers and specific focus has been given to pupil referral units and community settings to engage students who do not attend traditional educational establishments. HealthReach is bringing health and education together to create a fresh environment and a different way of learning. Students can immerse themselves in interactive scenarios, which mirror everyday workplace experiences in the health sector. It offers an innovative and exciting way to both educate young people and inspire them to consider courses and careers in health and the life sciences. During the first year of the project, it became apparent the young people HealthReach worked with had difficulty finding relevant and appropriate work experience placements and didn't have the social capital to successfully access placements, so HealthReach also provides a non-traditional work experience week during the summer for year 10 and 12 students who were interested in careers in health but cannot find a traditional placement.

How long has the project been running

5 and a half years. Delivery started in September 2018.

Number of participants for each year of the project's operation

2018 – 19 151 Outreach sessions delivered to 3,885 children and young people.

2019 – 20 292 Outreach sessions delivered to 4,403 children, young people, and adults.

*The 2019-2020 delivery year was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data for delivery is for September 2019 – March 2020

2020 – 21 95 Outreach sessions delivered to 2,895 young people. *The 2020-21 delivery year was affected and limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic

2021 – 22 245 Outreach sessions delivered to 5,033 children and young people. 2022 – 23 294 Outreach sessions delivered to 4,972 children and young people.

More details

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/ready-to-study/visiting-and-open-days/activities-for-schools/healthreach>

