



Awards 2025

Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year

Institution Name	Liverpool John Moores University
Submission title or project name	Roma Education Aspiration Project (REAP) – a trifecta model for inclusive outreach
Nominee / key personnel	Liverpool John Moores University
URL	http://betterworldofwork.wordpress.com
Submission	The Roma Education Aspiration Project (REAP) was launched to tackle the educational marginalisation of Roma. Led by Liverpool John Moores University and supported by government funding, REAP celebrates Roma identity and raises aspirations through a community-led, university-supported model. Key achievements include signing the Gypsies, Travellers, Roma, Showmen and Boaters (GTRSB) Pledge, building a cross-sector support network, and putting GTRSB voices at the centre of decision-making. Following in the university's footsteps, several other local institutions have now signed the GTRSB Pledge. The university's proactive, community-centred model offers a blueprint for systemic change in widening participation, embedding equity, voice and partnership into outreach strategies, ensuring that no community is left behind.



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Institution Name	University of Warwick
Submission title or project name	School Tasking: empowering 5,000 young minds to see themselves in higher education
Nominee / key personnel	Dr Ali Struthers (director of widening participation, Warwick Law School)
URL	
Submission	School Tasking is a creative legal outreach programme that uses the format of Channel 4's <i>Taskmaster</i> comedy game show to inspire Year 5 pupils from widening participation backgrounds. Led by university law students, sessions introduce children to legal thinking through fun, interactive classroom tasks. Created by Ali Struthers in 2021, School Tasking has grown into one of the UK's largest widening participation collaborations. In 2024-25, more than 3,500 pupils from 31 universities took part, with a Champion of Champions final hosted by <i>Taskmaster</i> creator Alex Horne. Evaluation shows that pupils' understanding of law improved from 87 per cent to 94 per cent, with average programme ratings of 4.3 out of 5 stars. Participants also gained legal vocabulary and increased awareness of higher education. School Tasking is joyful, scalable and genuinely innovative – combining popular culture and academic outreach to widen access to law and university. It's not just memorable – it's transformational.



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Institution Name	Sheffield Hallam University
Submission title or project name	Black British Pathway Programme (BBPP)
Nominee / key personnel	The access development team
URL	https://www.shu.ac.uk/study-here/apply/shu-progress#:~:text=Our%20Black%20British%20Pathway%20Programme%20runs%20for%20students%20in%20Y12,any%20questions%20you%20may%20have
Submission	In 2023, Sheffield Hallam University achieved its objective to increase the proportion of Black British students to 6 per cent. As a regionally focused institution in a location where Black British people account for only 2.5 per cent of the population, this is a significant achievement in widening participation. The university's cohort is now 6.9 per cent Black British, an increase of 33 per cent since the development of the university's Black British Pathway Programme (BBPP). The BBPP incorporates innovative methods to support Black British student recruitment and access, prioritising feelings of belonging and mattering. Success has been achieved through co-creation with current students, who take part in interactive sessions, developing policies to encourage and support incoming cohorts. This approach is truly innovative and a model for the sector. Through this programme, Sheffield Hallam has improved access for Black British students into higher education and tangibly enriched the diversity of the university.



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Institution Name	University of Hertfordshire
Submission title or project name	Breaking barriers, building futures: the Student Opportunity Fund
Nominee / key personnel	Laide Bissessar; Rachel Hughes
URL	
Submission	The Student Opportunity Fund, developed by the University of Hertfordshire's widening access and student success team, addresses a critical gap in student support. While traditional bursaries cover living costs, the Student Opportunity Fund enables under-represented students – including care leavers, estranged students, refugees and young carers – to access enriching, high-impact experiences that build cultural and social capital. Launched in 2023-24 via the Blackbullion platform, the Student Opportunity Fund offers up to £2,000 annually, empowering students to define their own success – whether through attending international conferences, developing creative projects or launching entrepreneurial ventures. In its first year, nearly £35,000 was awarded to 28 students, with 71.43 per cent continuing their studies and 71.3 per cent of graduates achieving first-class degrees. Supported students report having increased confidence, expanded networks and higher aspirations. The Student Opportunity Fund is not just financial aid – it's a reimagining of equity in higher education. Its student-led, flexible model is distinct from sector norms and offers a scalable blueprint for institutions seeking to remove barriers and unlock potential.



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Institution Name	University of Greenwich
Submission title or project name	Greenwich Friends peer mentoring scheme
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	https://docs.gre.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/120587/d22005-20-uog-support-14102021-web.pdf
Submission	The University of Greenwich is a national leader in supporting care-experienced students, welcoming one of the highest intakes in England. Recognising the unique challenges these students face, the university created Greenwich Friends, a peer mentoring programme offering tailored, pre-arrival and ongoing support. Trained student mentors – many with lived experience – provide guidance on everything from student finance to well-being, helping new students navigate university life with confidence and connection. Students engaged in the programme had a withdrawal rate of just 2.5 per cent, compared with 11 per cent among non-participants. Mentoring begins months before enrolment and continues throughout the academic year, fostering belonging and reducing isolation. With about 200 care-experienced students in its community, Greenwich ensures that they are not only welcomed but also empowered to succeed. This high-impact, human-centred approach reflects the university's broader commitment to equity, inclusion and student success.



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Institution Name	The Open University
Submission title or project name	Inclusive science education research projects
Nominee / key personnel	Dr Patrick Murphy and undergraduate students (Annabel, Jodie, Meryem, Neel, Marcus, Emma, Jas, Mayana, Joel, Josie, Lucy and Maisie)
URL	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09500693.2024.2404161
Submission	Inclusive science education research projects focusing on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, widening participation and social justice have been co-designed with undergraduate students, working in partnership with a range of external stakeholders including schoolchildren, teachers and health professionals from local, national and international schools, charities, science, educational, community and health organisations. The project results have been published in peer-reviewed journal articles. Several learning resources have been produced for schoolteachers and schoolchildren, including a resource showcasing diverse scientists as role models. Student feedback on this mode of research project has been very positive; students particularly enjoyed working with community stakeholders and producing creative, innovative and impactful real-world outputs. Demand for this mode of research project has been high, and training has been delivered for other universities to offer this mode of project to their students. The project outputs have improved schoolchildren's sense of belonging and their aspirations to access university and to pursue a STEM career.