BHASVIC

Widening Participation – Frequently Asked Questions

What is Widening Participation?

At BHASVIC, our WP scheme is based on the criteria used by most universities and external organisations. We offer access to relevant local university schemes and complement this with a package of in-house support. Our aim is to provide young people with information to help them make the right choice about their next steps; there is no pressure for a student to apply to university if it is not the correct decision for them.

Why is my young person eligible for BHASVIC's Widening Participation scheme?

We write directly to all students (and their parents/carers) who are eligible for our WP scheme. If you have received an email from us regarding WP, then your young person has been identified as meeting at least one of the following criteria:

- Are the first in the family (excluding siblings) to consider progressing to higher education
- Received Free School Meals at school
- Is care experienced this includes being foster or adopted (i.e., under the care of the local authority)
- Lives in social housing
- Is an asylum seeker or refugee
- Speaks English as a second language
- Has a learning difficulty or disability
- Is a young carer (i.e., they live with, and help care for, someone with a disability or long-term illness. They do not have to be the *main* carer to qualify under this criteria)
- Are in receipt of a college bursary
- Come from a military family
- Come from gypsy, Roma or Traveller community
- Targeted home postcode - **some postcode areas are also eligible so, if none of the above applies in your situation, then it is likely that you live in an area where there is a lower-thanaverage proportion of young people participating in higher education**.

Do BHASVIC only work with local universities?

No. We do predominantly work with the universities of Brighton and Sussex due to their proximity to us, but our WP programme has links across the national higher education network. Most recently, some of our WP students have benefitted from activities at the University of Creative Arts, University of Portsmouth, Into University and University of Leeds.

My young person does not plan to go to university, so why would this scheme help?

We hope to give all students enough information to make the right choice regarding their progression, and we certainly do not try to pressure students into going to university. Support through a WP scheme simply aims to help them base their decisions on up-to-date information and make informed choices. This scheme can really help students decide if university is for them, or if they would prefer / benefit from a different route.

No student would be asked to complete a university application whilst at BHASVIC **unless they decide that this is the right thing for them**. Students who decide not to progress to higher education may still benefit from WP activities; it can add to their network, give them insight and experience to include in CVs and job

applications, and will also mean that will have some knowledge of the HE system which could be of use to them in the future.

Is it a good thing to be included in this scheme? What do I have to do?

All the activities (see below) offered to WP students are free and will help students make an informed choice about the future. Students choose which activities to participate in and there is no minimum or regular time commitment. Students, and parents/carers, will receive email updates and termly newsletters detailing the opportunities on offer.

What types of activities will be available on the scheme?

Here are some examples of activities that may be offered:

- Subject specific taster days, master classes and intensive programmes
- University campus tours
- 1:1 support with personal statements and application forms
- Shadowing a current university student
- Summer schools
- Mentoring
- University webinars
- Support with study skills and exam revision
- Work experience
- Paid transport for Open Day visits

As well as the above, all WP students can benefit from one-to-one support from our Careers Team who are fully qualified, experienced careers advisers.

Will this help with my young person's future plans?

There are many benefits to registering for a WP scheme. Those who do decide to apply to higher education, will be able to include their WP status on the application, and most universities use this information to inform their decision-making process. Some universities lower the grade offer they make to a WP student, some offer guaranteed interviews and some have bursary funds linked to WP status. WP students who do make an application to university are advised and supported to check the WP schemes of the universities they are interested in to make sure they benefit fully from anything on offer. Those who take part but decide not to apply to HE, can be confident they have made an informed decision and are likely to have still gained insight and skills by taking part.

Any further questions a student or parent/carer has can be sent to the WP team at BHASVIC at WP@bhasvic.ac.uk