

Aim higher...

Northamptonshire



Students at the Vocational and Workbased Learning Conference held on the 23rd February 2005 at Rushden and Diamonds

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Changes to the Aimhigher Staff Team

New County Manager Philip Burch

Philip joined the Aimhigher team in February 2005. He previously worked with the team in a consultancy capacity establishing the co-ordinator network for the county. Formerly a senior manager in Further Education, Philip has experience of inclusion projects and disadvantaged groups, Increased Flexibility Programmes (IFP), and raising standards projects. He managed a number of vocational areas including Art, Design Media and Performance, Catering Hair and Beauty, Leisure and Tourism.

Philip is responsible for managing the day-to-day operation of the project team, for the implementation of the integrated action plan and monitoring progress against targets. A key function of his role is developing the partnership activities and promoting strong links with stakeholder organisations. Philip will also oversee the development of key initiatives advocating raising aspirations, attainment, and progression to Higher Education (e.g. summer schools, masterclasses, student shadowing, mentoring, and motivational events). In addition Philip will be taking forward the regional Aimhigher priority for Information Advice and Guidance (IAG), firstly by initiating and piloting materials within the county for wider dissemination across the East Midlands.

Development Officer (Schools and Young People) Natasha Mycawka

Natasha joined the team in February 2005.

I graduated from the University of Sunderland in 2001 with a degree in Media Production. Like most Media graduates, I struggled to find paid work in the media industry and as a result I started working for UCN as a 'temp' in the School of Education. I soon spotted the role of Schools Liaison Officer in the marketing team and decided to stick with work in higher education! Over the past couple of years that role progressed into a senior position, while the Schools and Colleges Liaison team grew. My interest with working with young people developed during this role, but there was only so far I could develop this in a marketing environment. I'm looking forward to the challenges my new role as Development Officer in Aimhigher will bring - in particular, the running of year 10 and 11 residential Summer Schools. I'm preparing for a few sleepless nights during this time...!

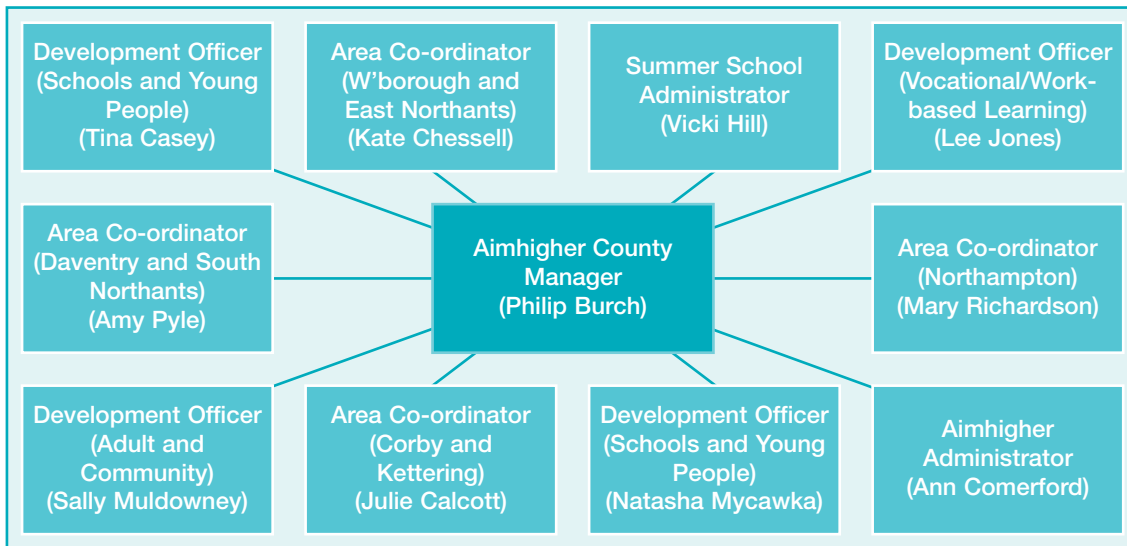
Staff covering for maternity leave positions Tina Casey (Schools and Young People)

I passed the access course, passed my degree in English with History and then decided that I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I thought I would get a job as a teaching assistant to help me make up my mind. However, while studying for my Degree I worked as a mentor and ambassador for Aimhigher eventually running Summer School 2003 with Sarah Lord and Jennie Sanders. I loved doing this and felt that the ethos of Aimhigher was something that I could relate to. When I heard that Jennie was going on maternity leave and someone was needed to cover it came at exactly the right time for me. I am settling in nicely, all the rest of the team are great and it is giving me the opportunity to look at the direction I want to take.

Vikki Hill (Summer School Administrator)

I graduated from Leeds University in 2001 with a degree in History. Despite numerous declarations that I would never come back to Northamptonshire, I think it was therefore inevitable that I would return upon graduating. Having reluctantly left student life and having to come to terms with the fact that I could not be a student forever I figured that the next best thing would be to work in Higher Education. I have worked in administrative roles at Oxford Brookes University and UCN, and like Natasha I started as a temp. I have just joined Aimhigher as the Summer School Administrator and for the first time since graduating I have realised that having to grow up isn't actually that bad when you find an enjoyable job!!!!

Congratulations go to Nicola who had a daughter, Hannah in December 2004 and Jennie who had a daughter Holly on the 17th April 2005. All are doing well.



Working with Partners

Aimhigher working together with Paul Stinchcombe

Aimhigher is pleased to announce that it is now working in close collaboration with the local MP for Wellingborough and East Northants. The purpose of the partnership is to raise the profile of Aimhigher with local people. An article about Aimhigher has been written and will be distributed to the constituents through various leaflets and flyers. This will raise the profile of Higher Education and will seek to guide local people who may have never considered H.E. as a route to improve their quality of life and career prospects.

Paul said that "Any awareness raising initiative that goes towards the Government's target of 50% of people to enter Higher Education by 2010 has to be worth doing!".

Nene Valley News - the local paper of East Northants will also be running an article on the recent, highly successful Work-based Learning Conference held at Rushden and Diamonds. Over 150 6th form pupils from the Wellingborough and East Northants secondary schools took part.

Working with Schools and Colleges - How are we doing?

A quote from Weavers Ofsted report about Aimhigher. School inspected in Nov 2004

The sixth form

" They speak positively about the links which have been developed with Aimhigher, based at the University College Northampton; for example, a workshop on UCAS applications.

Kate

Thanks so much for helping us to organise such a terrific event on Wednesday. I did kick myself afterwards (several times) for not acknowledging Aimhigher partnership and support but particularly you for your determination to get things up and running.

The energy and delivery from Roy with David & Jo was fabulous. I've certainly not stopped singing their praises since the evening. However, the best part came from the feedback we had from parents and students in their enjoyment of the event - all they need to do is apply it!!

Regarding the Work-Based Learning Conference. I thought this too was great. My tutees have really started to open their minds to what they could do in the future, so well done again for your part in this!!

Rick White (Weavers School)

Workshops for Schools and Colleges - working with students and parents

'Exam Busting'

150 Year 11 students at Mereway Community College spent a morning with Michael Tipper from Positively MAD, using different strategies to remember accumulated facts for their GCSE examinations this summer. During the mornings' presentation, Michael used mind maps and developed the technique of thinking in pictures to help the students remember some 130 facts. When tested on what they had learnt, the results were impressive and the youngsters were amazed at their ability to recall information which had been delivered at a very fast pace.

Feedback from the students indicated that the session was a great success! Here are some of the comments:

"It taught me easy methods of revising which could be useful"

"Memory techniques actually work!"

"I learnt about auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning"

"I learnt how to count up to ten in Japanese"

"It was very good, I enjoyed the jokes! It was interesting"

"I know how to change words to pictures to remember more easily. I managed to remember all the planets"

Weavers Parents Evenings

After a difficult OFSTED report during the 2004 Autumn term, Aimhigher Northamptonshire is currently working in close collaboration with Weavers school in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire to deliver a series of Parents' workshops.

The purpose of the workshops are to offer practical guidance and support to Year 10 students and their families. (Year 10 is being used as a first trial, with the intention of replicating the workshops with other year groups at a later time). The workshops will enable parents and students to have a greater understanding and working knowledge of how to achieve their full potential, and how they can be supported during the final two years of compulsory education. Finally, to heighten awareness of the opportunities at University and other means of progressing educationally by following a traditional academic or a vocational route.

Weavers - "Food to Feed the Brain" - March 2005

Outline of Evening

The purpose of this evening was to promote healthy eating and provide a tasting session to include foods they may not have eaten before. The group was a mixture of Year 10 parents, staff and pupil. The evening began with a "Who wants to be a millionaire?" style quiz using Powerpoint. (Approx 10 questions to get parents thinking about "healthy eating"). A bonus question sheet was then handed out for completion and an Easter prize was awarded for the best response! Parents then took part in a "Fruit Tasting Session" to sample a selection of fruits - some of which, they had never tried! The final session summed up the main points covered, nutritional values, differences between tinned items and fresh items etc. Nutritional leaflets were provided for parents to take away with them at the end.

Feedback about the evening

The audience gained information about healthy foods, one person commented that it was good getting the pupils to try different fruits!

Parents commented that they learnt how to keep calm, reduce stress and to relax more.

How many different types of fruit there actually were, how to recognise fruits, to make an effort to eat lunch and to think more carefully about children's diets.

Northampton Aimhigher Consultative Group

The Northampton Consultative Group (NACG) was formed in March 2005 and comprises representatives from all schools and colleges in the town including both FE colleges. Other members include reps from the LSC, Excellence Cluster, Connexions and NCC. The group has just met for the second time. Both meetings have been extremely valuable, involving lively discussion about current and proposed Aimhigher activities in the town. Meeting together in this way gives representatives from the schools and colleges the opportunity to exchange ideas and report back about activities which have worked well in their own institutions. We are also planning some joint activities for students including Science Masterclasses at Birmingham university and residentials at Longtown for Aimhigher Gifted and Talented students.

Science Masterclass event at Birmingham University

On the morning of Wednesday March 16th, 40 year 11 students from various secondary schools in Northampton went by coach to a Science Masterclass event at The University of Birmingham. The visit was requested by a Science teacher at one of the schools, who wanted to encourage her students, not only to work hard for their impending GCSE examinations, but to aspire to taking Science subjects in the sixth form and at university.

I contacted the university and they put together an extremely interesting and rewarding day for the students. It started at 10.00am and finished at 3.15pm and consisted of a lecture on space physics followed by a number of workshops which were very 'hands on' including:

- **building remote controlled cars**
- **medical activity using various pieces of equipment to measure peak flow, blood pressure etc**
- **Sports fitness session using fitness testing machines**

The day finished with a balloon race, which was just a fun event where the students all let off a balloon with a message and there were book tokens for the owner of the balloon which went the furthest & was returned to the university.

All the students received free drinks & food during the activities and were given vouchers to spend at lunch time in the student's refectory.

On the way home in the coach all students completed an evaluation. Every evaluation was very positive, giving a clear indication that the day was a complete success.

Some student quotes:

'A wide range of sessions with lots of 'hands on' activities. The helpers were really pleasant too.'

'I learnt a lot about working as a team when building something or solving a problem. It was also great to have firsthand experience of a university lecture'

'The main thing I learnt from today is how important it is to choose the best university for me'
Mary Richardson - Co-ordinator for Northampton

News from Daventry and South Northants

Danetre year 11 students "Get on the right track"!!

On the 16th March the whole of year 11 took part in an assembly, which informed students about Aimhigher Northamptonshire. Students also took part in a Higher Education quiz and looked at the benefits of continuing in learning. Following this student's took part in an interactive careers game- "get on the right track". This allowed students to explore different career areas e.g health care, engineering, business etc and the jobs within these areas. They then worked in groups to match the jobs to the right qualifications and salaries.

Many students were surprised and enthused about the variety and amount of jobs there are in the different career areas. Students also realised that the higher salaries were often connected to jobs that required Further and Higher Education qualifications.

Daventry William Parker and Roade school students get inspired through theatre!!!

After a highly successful 2004 run, Wolverhampton's Zip Theatre are back with the production- "The Promise"! This "first rate piece of musical theatre" came to Daventry William Parker School and Roade School on the 11th March 05. Aimhigher Northamptonshire and Zip Theatre teamed up to put on the performance for approximately 250 year 9 and 10 students across the two schools. This aspirational, energetic and thought provoking performance is commissioned by Wolverhampton's Education Authority and is designed to encourage students to think about the different options available to them and to consider Higher Education after leaving School/College. The intention is that young people watching the performance will be encouraged to think about their future, to stay in learning and to consider university after leaving School or College.



Northampton College -Daventry Open Evening

Aimhigher were present at the Northampton College open evening on the 18th of January. Prospective students and their parents/carers were able to tour the facilities and speak to departmental staff. Aimhigher had lots of useful information to give out and were on hand to answer questions and queries about Higher Education. Aimhigher also went into the College on March 10th and spoke to 2nd year students about finance and Higher Education. Students were able to obtain information on tuition fees, grants, student loans and budgeting.

Daventry William Parker Careers Information Evening

There was an excellent turn out by parents/carers and students at the Careers information evening on the 10th February. Everyone present had an opportunity to speak to Teachers, Connexions PAs, Aimhigher and the Northampton Training and Development Partnership representatives. There were also presentations on the Daventry Learning Partnership, Work based learning and Higher Education & Finance.

Sponne School- Year 12 and 13 students find out what is next?.....Vocational Progression Routes

Approximately 20 students attended this session on the 2nd of March. Students discussed what they were interested in undertaking after year 12 or 13. They then explored the benefits on continuing in learning and the various vocational routes available- e.g Apprenticeships, Advanced Apprenticeships and Foundation Degrees. Students then began a "skills audit" of themselves to see what "they had to offer" employers, training providers and universities. This was a well received session, with students discussing and asking questions about their options and futures choices.

Caroline Chisholm Year 9 students enjoy a morning of discovery!!!.....

On the 15th of March Caroline Chisholm year 9 students spent a morning "working it out"!!.....Students worked in groups to discover five different career areas- Health & Caring professions, Construction & Engineering, Arts and Media, Business and IT and Retail and Customer service. Each group had to make two posters representing the different jobs and the skills, qualities and qualifications needed for their career area. Students researched, asked questions and stuck and pasted until the task was complete!! Five industry professionals kindly took part in the morning; this gave students a first hand insight into the different career areas and allowed them to get answers to specific questions. At the end of the morning each group presented their work to the rest year group. Both the school and Aimhigher feel the morning was a real success!



Some student's comments

"The whole morning was fun, especially speaking to the experts"
"The sessions got me thinking about what I might be good at"
"I have learnt about what qualifications are needed for different jobs"
"I've learnt that with hard work I can be what I want to be"
"I learnt about the kind of qualifications and skills I need for my future career"

Year 10 and 11 summer school recruitment

Thank you to the four Schools who had summer school places, your hard work and effort is much appreciated - **all application forms are now in and being processed!!!!** Students will now have either heard, or will shortly hear about their places. So keep watching this space!!

Some other activities that took place last term

- Roade school year 9 taster day at UCN
- Moulton school year 12 introduction to Aimhigher
- Roade school year 10 & 11 parents evenings
- Danetre school year 9 options evening for students & parents/carers
- Roade school year 11 revision skills session

Up and coming activities!!!

- Moulton school - Year 9 Careers morning 9th May
- Daventry William Parker school - Year 9 University taster day 11th May
- Northampton College, Daventry - HE evening for students and parents 17th May
- Danetre School - Year 9 Engineering taster day at Coventry University

Vocational & Workbased Learning Routes Event is a great opportunity for student to see what is on offer.

WBL Convention 23rd February

The first targeted Work Based Learning Convention for East Northants took place on Wednesday 23rd February, 2005 at the Rushden & Diamonds Football Ground. The convention focused on the Apprenticeship provision offered by the 25 plus Training Providers and colleges within Northamptonshire. The event was funded by EBLO (Employment Business Link Organisation). Aimhigher Northamptonshire and Northamptonshire Training & Development Partnership assisted with the day.

All year 12 learners from the eight Schools within East Northants were invited and over 150 learners attended the event. The attending schools included Christopher Hatton, Weavers, Wrenn, Ferrers, Rushden, Huxlow, Manor and Prince William. The aim of the day was for learners to gain an understanding of the apprenticeship provision available to them and to engage work based learning providers. The itinerary for the day included an introduction to work based learning, a motivational workshop, a 'market place' where the learners had an opportunity to see what training providers offered with an opportunity to talk and discuss NVQ and Apprenticeship provision. The afternoon was dedicated to workshops and the learners had the opportunity to attend two sessions where a more detailed and interactive presentation of apprenticeship provision was given.

The convention covered apprenticeship provision for all of the main 11 areas of learning including: Science and Maths, Land-based, Construction, Engineering, Retail, Customer Service and Transportation, Business Administration, Information Communication Technology, Hospitality, Sports Leisure and Travel, Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy, English, Languages and Communications, Health, Social Care and Public Services and Visual and Performing Arts and Media.

There was a real buzz to the day and all of the young participants took away some really positive outcomes from the event.



Higher Education Fair at University College Northampton



On Wednesday the 6th April 2005 UCN Park Campus played host to the Northamptonshire Higher Education Convention. The event was organised by Connexions Northamptonshire with support from UCN and Aimhigher Northamptonshire.

More than 100 Higher Education Institutes from around the country attended the event which attracted around 3000 pupils from schools and colleges in Northamptonshire including Aimhigher schools and colleges. Ann Botham, an exhibitor from the University of Newcastle commented "It was a very well organized event and I spoke to lots of well prepared students."

With the introduction of top up fees more and more students are opting to stay locally and this event was a fantastic opportunity for pupils in the local area to get that crucial first impression of a higher education campus. Ria Mahady, a student from Northampton School for Boys said, "I am really glad I got the opportunity to see UCN, I hadn't realised how impressive it was!"

Deborah Davis
UCN Corporate Communications and Development

Working in the Community - Womens Event in Kingsheath Northampton.

Aimhigher Northamptonshire took part in an exciting and vibrant event in the heart of Kingsheath, Northampton. Kingsheath is considered to be one of the more deprived wards in Northampton and the primary schools in the area are part of the Extended Schools Pilot in Northampton.

This event for women was held in the Kingsheath Community Centre and brought together many partners who are seeking to assist members of this community to achieve a better lifestyle. The women who attended were from a variety of differing cultures and who enjoyed the opportunity of sharing in activities to improve their self esteem. They were shown ways of improving their lifestyle by adopting different strategies which could involve participating in learning or finding out more about healthy eating.

Attendees were encouraged to take part in a quiz about Higher Education and one lucky person went away with an Easter Egg as a prize for participating. There was an interest in learning, but often a lack of confidence in feeling able to move away from their current comfortable environment to take up the challenge that learning presents.

There were however some enquiries about study for further and higher education opportunities and information and advice was given to encourage these women to pursue their interest and develop themselves.

Aimhigher Summer Schools at University College Northampton

UCN will again be playing host to three Summer Schools in July 2005. Organised by Aimhigher the Summer Schools are aimed at promoting higher and further education to young people who come from families with no tradition of higher education. The first residential Summer School, Summer Expo 05, is aimed at year 11 students across the region and takes place over six days. The 60 students will have to do project work in a subject taught by UCN lecturers. The subjects on offer are Psychology, Business Studies, Performance Studies and Law. As well as their project work, students will have a range of social activities to take part in, such as circus skills, a visit to an outdoor activity centre and an end of week fancy dress party!

The following two Summer Schools will both run for two nights each, and are both aimed at year 10 students from Northamptonshire (45 students at each). The first of these summer schools will involve subjects that can be studied traditionally in higher education called 'Bodies, Beats, Buildings and Business'.



Activities at Summer School are fun and involve students learning to work together.

The subjects on offer through UCN are: Business Studies, Heritage Management, Occupational Therapy and Performance Studies. The second Year 10 Summer School will look at more vocational subjects on offer in further and higher education called 'Engines, Energy and the Environment'. All of the students will have to undertake project work and the subjects will all be based off campus. The subjects are: Animal Welfare at Moulton College, Childcare at Northampton College, through Tresham College, Motorsport at Silverstone.

The recruitment for both Summer Schools has almost come to an end, but if you have any queries please contact Vikki Hill or Natasha Mycawka on 01604 893316 or email summerschool@northampton.ac.uk.

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