



# Outreach @Warwick

WARWICK  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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Welcome back to the Widening Participation and Outreach Team Newsletter!  
We're excited to show you what we've been up to over the past few months...

## Easter Residential for Autistic Young

**Moving to University is life changing for everyone, but being autistic can make this transition even more challenging. Autistic people are neuro-diverse people living in a world created for (and broadly, by) neuro-typical people.**

Autism is often characterised by a wide spectrum of attributes, these can include social and communication difficulties, insistence on sameness, hyper or hypo-reactivity to sensory input and poor executive functioning skills.

To support young people with autism the University of Warwick ran a three-day, two-night residential experience. The programme students was aimed at Year 12 students who are considering going to University. **It sought to build confidence and enable students, and their parents, to see what opportunities and challenges they may face.** Autistic people can have difficulties in unfamiliar environments and situations, which can be challenging and result in strong feelings of anxiety.

The design of the programme had support from the University's Disability Services, the Students Union Autism Group and the local CAMHS team. Many students, moving away from home for the first time, find themselves having to

cook, clean and shop for themselves, in addition to being responsible for their own time management. Poor executive functioning is a very common autistic trait, so these self-initiated, self-motivated tasks are even harder still.

The programme was designed to offer a range of activities such as living in halls of residence, academic taster sessions, shopping, cooking, and group social activities such as esports, a climbing wall and film night. In the evaluative phase of this residential the young people spoke **about how the experience had made them feel more confident about applying to University.** Also, how the supportive environment enabled them understand more about University life, within the confines of short residential experience. Unfamiliar environments and situations can be challenging for autistic young people and result in strong feelings of anxiety. This programme worked towards supporting these students to consider how they may make informed choices about their futures, whilst **building confidence and resilience.**

This academic year we have worked with **91 schools, colleges and sixth forms,** engaging in over **200 events and programmes** with over **5,230 students!**

## Social inclusion Staff Award 2022 Winners

A huge congratulations to our team members, **Claire Edden and Damien Homer, for winning the Social Inclusion Staff Award of 2022** for their work on the Easter residential for Autistic Young People! This award recognises the dual benefits this initiative had on the young people who attended the residential as well as the commitment of both Claire and Damien in the time they gave to the residential.

Claire Edden and Damien Homer, Widening Participation Faculty Co-ordinators

*"The Easter school allowed the autistic young people to experience university life with the security of a team of ambassadors and staff to help them...This directly encourages autistic youngsters to come to university, to feel that it is a safe place for them and that they will be listened to, understood, and welcomed and that their needs will be supported." - Claire and Damien*



### Inside this issue:

- ▶ Easter School for Autistic Young People
- ▶ Slice of Science
- ▶ Bootcamps
- ▶ National Student Conference
- ▶ National Student Conference
- ▶ University Explorers
- ▶ Pathways to Engineering National Conference
- ▶ Warwick Bright Stars Sustainability Trail
- ▶ Warwick Scholars



# a slice of SCIENCE



The Slice of Science Family Day took place on Sunday 13 March and was attended by **350 people**. The Oculus rooms were **full of volunteers from a variety of different disciplines**, and the talks also had everyone engaged and learning about everything from phages to eSports. Attendees engaged with **interactive sessions** and talks involving slime, coding, making bacteria, dry ice and many more! Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive:

“The Slice of Science event was brilliant! My children (9, 7 & 4 years old) loved it and were completely inspired. All three joined in with the interactive activities with favourites including steering the mini robot and the dry ice bubbles. My 9-year-old daughter announced on the way home that she wants to study chemistry at university!” - Mother of attendees

## Bootcamps!

For our GCSE bootcamp we welcomed 30 Year 11 students from underrepresented backgrounds in Higher Education for a **two-day exam revision bootcamp** in Westwood campus. The participants worked with our teachers and Warwick students to practice past exam papers and to acquire new study skills. We are very **proud of their achievements** in such a short space of time and were amazed with how proactive and engaged they all were.

During the Easter vacation period in April this year, **over 100 Year 13 students joined us** on campus for 3 days of **intensive A-Level revision bootcamp**. Students were supported in Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Maths, and worked with teachers and Warwick students to prepare for their upcoming Summer exams. In addition to their subject support, the Study Happy team from the University of Warwick introduced students to a variety of techniques to support and look after their wellbeing.



The Slice of Science Schools Day on Wednesday 16 March was attended by **45 young women** from three schools from the region to **celebrate Amazing Women week for the City of Culture**. Attendees reported enjoying activities involving making slime, marble art, coding, the ‘How to Freeze a Human’ talk and much more!

“One thing that fascinated me was how many women there are in every field. One thing I’ve learned was that you should not give up on something just because someone says you should – especially if their reason is gender.” - Parent of attendee

## National Student Conference Realising Opportunities

**900+ students** on the Realising Opportunities programme attended the **Virtual National Student Conference** on Saturday 12th March. They took part in workshops and met with all the partner universities to discuss courses and contextual offers available to them. The event was really successful with a great attendance rate.

“I found the whole event really useful. It was good to meet the university staff and they answered my questions about entry requirements for the course I am interested in. I also visited the virtual social space and spoke with current students about University life and what to prep for.”

## UNIVERSITY EXPLORERS

Throughout January, February and March, the Widening Participation team had a lot of fun on our University Explorers programme! University Explorers is run in collaboration with Coventry and Warwickshire Virtual Schools. Over 4 Saturdays, around **15 Year 6 children in Local Authority Care visited campus** to work with university students and staff. The project aims to give participants an insight into university life, such as the range of subjects students can study and the types of clubs and societies that they can get involved with. It also aims to support the Year 6's to **develop their confidence and have a positive experience** in a higher education setting.

University Explorers were introduced to a range of different subjects, starting off with becoming engineers with WMG and building some fantastic light towers using circuits. They also put their **communication** skills to the test **debating** the qualities that make a great leader with the PAIS department and taking part in some philosophy pirate thought experiments. They were able to demonstrate their **creativity** with the Theatre Studies department through a range of exciting drama activities. Many **thanks** to colleagues across the University of Warwick for supporting with fantastic sessions.

Afternoons were spent with student ambassadors and participants loved adventuring around the University of Warwick campus. We challenged participants with a **scavenger hunt** around the university sculpture trail as inspiration for creating their own University Explorers Lego sculpture. Explorers also embraced their creativity through arts and crafts whilst also learning all of the great opportunities available at university.

Our final week was spent at Rough Close Scout Centre where participants explored the outdoors and celebrate their amazing achievements with parents and carers. We received some fantastic comments at the end of the programme, with many families noting that the project has **boosted confidence** particularly when meeting new people.



“My main highlights were seeing the progress of the students week by week. They clearly took a lot from the project in terms of building friendships and starting to think about the possibility of university in the future and this was very lovely to see!” - Student Ambassador

## Warwick Bright Starts Sustainability Trail

The Warwick Bright Stars programme ambassadors and WMG paired up to design a **sustainability trail activity** for young pupils, which was launched at the Resonate Festival 19th-21st April. Parents, children and their families from our partner schools were invited on our campus to walk the trail and explore themes such as **recycling, biodiversity, sustainable architecture and energy production**.



## Say hello to our new Warwick Scholars!

Applications for current Year 12 students to join our next cohort of the Warwick Scholars Access programme closed in June with **over 400 applicants**! The team has been busy processing submissions to find 200 young people who will join us at our on-campus launch residential event at the end of August, which comes with a guaranteed, reduced offer to study at Warwick, 1-2-1 tutoring, mentoring from a Warwick student, as well as financial support during undergraduate studies including a 50% tuition fee discount. A **huge thank you** to all teachers who promoted the programme and supported students' applications!

## Warwick Scholars and WP Student Network summer BBQ

To celebrate the end of the academic year, Warwick Scholars and members of the WP Student Network joined the WP team for a BBQ on campus. Students mingled and made new friends over hotdogs and donuts, before finishing off the evening with a huge game of rounders. We look forward to welcoming the students back with another social event after their Summer break.



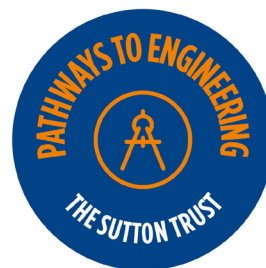


# Taking a look at...

## Pathways to Engineering National Conference

The University of Warwick hosted the Pathways to Engineering national conference on Monday 11th – 13th April 2022. The conference, which was organised by the Sutton Trust, invited students from the Warwick and Liverpool Pathways to Engineering cohorts onto campus for a **3-day residential**. In total there were **39 students who took part in a jam-packed schedule** which included an inspirational talk from Kamal Hyman, academic lectures, a public speaking workshop, degree apprenticeship talks and project work. Alongside the daytime sessions there were social activities in the evening to give the students a university experience, these included a quiz and free time in the student's union.

For the project work, students were asked to work in groups and were given a brief by Ramboll to design a school, using a map of land. Each group were then asked to present their project back to Ramboll. Ramboll said they were **really impressed by all the presentations**, and that students had addressed the brief brilliantly. The student also heard from professionals at Mercedes, Thought Machine, Boeing and Jacobs and about their career journey. Overall, the conference was a huge success, and one that both staff and students really enjoyed.



“ Before coming I thought I wanted to do a degree apprenticeship, after hearing the talks it's confirmed it is something I really want to do!”

## Academic Support Mentoring Pilot



In Term 2 we launched our Academic Support Mentoring pilot programme! We partnered with **5 local schools** to run weekly mentoring in 9 different subjects, including Languages, Maths, Chemistry, Sociology, History and more. **33 University of Warwick students mentored over 115 local mentees** to run group academic sessions. The programme aimed to increase year 10 and 12 mentees confidence, aspirations and attainment. The programme was finalised by inviting mentees to the University for a **campus visit**, where they had a tour, academic session and lunch. The pilot programme was a great success, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from mentees, mentors and teachers! **Thank you** to all of those involved.

“ I liked learning about Philosophy, I haven't heard of it before this. It was an eye opener for my future options.” - Religious Education Mentee

“ I can see their enthusiasm for Chemistry grow, they now aspire to excel and more of my students now want to study Chemistry at university.” - Chemistry teacher, Barrs Hill



## Keeping up to date

Visit our webpage <https://warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach> for upcoming events and news!

Teachers, subscribe here <https://warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/news/newsletter/> to be added to our bi-monthly events email bulletin to be the first to hear about our upcoming face to face and virtual events, programmes and activities!



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