



JANUARY 2021

Mission Statement

Our vision is to develop well rounded, confident and responsible individuals to make informed choices about Higher Education as their educational pathway. By breaking down barriers, increasing self-belief and raising aspirations we aim to enable our participants to reach and expand their potential.

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2021!

Wow what a year 2020 was! Although things came to a standstill at times, A2U refused to and this newsletter highlights the fantastic activity which continued throughout. As lockdown became a challenge (literally), outreach days and group mentoring entered the twilight zone.

We miss seeing all our young people on campus at the University and we hope they are continuing to cope with life as it is at this moment in time. A2U is a programme for our young people and we are here for anyone who needs support.

Take care till we meet again in one place. Hopefully 2021 will end up a better year for all of us.

Best wishes,
Mel

Outreach Activities

Since October 2020, four virtual outreach sessions have taken place for years 8, 9, 10 & 11.

Year 8 - Choosing options session delivered by Sandwell Connexions.

Year 9 - Introduction to the Faculty of Education Health & Wellbeing, including a 'Careers in Sport' session and an 'Understanding Autism' session.

Year 10- Business Management, Law and Policing and Criminology workshops.

Year 11- Post-16 options information session delivered by Sandwell Connexions.

Other bespoke activity has taken place for year 13 including UCAS application support, degree apprenticeship awareness and academic input.

ONLINE GROUP MENTORING SESSIONS

Online Mentoring is an essential part of the A2U Programme which runs alongside the outreach and enrichment strands. We understand this is a difficult time, but we would like all carers to encourage and support their young people to attend a group mentoring session. The group mentoring sessions are a fantastic opportunity for young people to stay connected to other young people on the project, who are from other cohorts and local authorities. The sessions are a great way to provide encouragement to young people to continue on the programme, as well as, boosting their self-confidence to achieve their chosen carer and explore the University pathway.

Between October and December 2020, 9 online mentoring sessions have taken place for A2U participants, which have included the following activities.

KS3 - Motivation, different learning styles and relaxation techniques.

KS4 - Vision boards and time management.

KS5 - Chosen career/pathways and exploring career websites.

We welcome all A2U young people to attend the below upcoming group mentoring sessions, which will be hosted on Microsoft Teams:

- * Monday 22nd February – KS3
- * Tuesday 23rd February – KS4
- * Wednesday 24th February – KS5

- * Monday 15th March – KS3
- * Tuesday 16th March – KS4
- * Wednesday 17th March – KS5

- * Monday 19th April – KS3
- * Tuesday 20th April – KS4
- * Wednesday 21st April – KS5

- * Monday 17th May – KS3
- * Tuesday 18th May – KS4
- * Wednesday 19th May - KS5

- * Monday 14th June – KS3
- * Tuesday 15th June – KS4
- * Wednesday 16th June – KS5

- * Monday 12th July - KS3
- * Tuesday 13th July - KS4
- * Wednesday 14th July - KS5

BRIGHTSIDE ONLINE MENTORING PLATFORM

We have been working with Brightside (online mentoring) a charity with over 15 years' experience to create a platform which is a safe and secure way for the mentee and

mentor to communicate online between meetings and during the holidays. The website also contains lots of resources and e-learning activities to support the mentoring relationship. The platform can be accessed via phone, lap top or tablet.

For your young person to take part in the online mentoring aspect of the A2U Programme, we will need your consent, as well as, information relating to the child. The information we require which will be used to register for Brightside is as follows:

Name, postcode and a mobile number or email address this will be used by the young person to log on and receive notifications of messages received. We will also need you to email the following: I (carers name) give consent for (young person's name) to have an online mentor and agree for the above data to be shared with Brightside.

Privacy and safeguarding is at the core of Brightside and the web link below will explain in further detail how they are committed to protecting and respecting a users' privacy.

[Brightside Privacy Policy](#)

If you have already given consent and your young person has been set up on Brightside please ensure your young person logs on when a message is received from a mentor.

Please email melanie.harris2@wlv.ac.uk for further details and consent form if required. For more information about Brightside, please click the button below.

The Brightside Trust

LOCKDOWN CHALLENGE

During the first lockdown A2U participants were encouraged to take part in the lockdown challenge with their carer and household. Activities ranged from cooking a healthy meal with 5 ingredients to create a poster for VE day. Several households took part and achieved the maximum of £70 in vouchers for their participation and fantastic efforts.

IT'S BACK!

A new 4 week lockdown challenge is currently taking place where young people can achieve a £20.00 voucher and household a £30.00 voucher. Have you taken up the challenge!

HALF-TERM ACTIVITIES

Below is a timetable of activities scheduled for A2U young people to join in with over the February half-term.

The February half-term enrichment activities will be part of the Children's University scheme. In order for your young person to take part in our yearly graduation ceremony, they would need to have undertaken 30 hours or more of extra-curricular activities. The amount of hours spent on the below half-term activities must be logged in the 'Half-term log book' and submitted to Dipisha Patel - d.patel@wlv.ac.uk by Monday 1st March 2021. More information about how you access the half-term activities will be emailed to all carers at a later date.

Monday 15th February

- Creativity + art workshop (years 8 & 9). - 2 hours

Tuesday 16th February

- Magic Maths (10am - 11am) - Join Jon Martin to learn Maths through a pack of cards and a six sided dice! (years 8 & 9). - 2 hours
- Make a pancake & send in a picture of yours (all year groups). - 1 hour

Wednesday 17th February

- Escape to different countries around the world and join tours and learn about different cultures and monuments (all year groups). - 1 hour

Thursday 18th February

- British Sign Language taster session (10am - 11am) - Join Dave Anslow to get involved in a British Sign Language taster session (all year groups + carers). - 1 hour

Friday 19th February

- Tune into Chester's virtual Zoo and enjoy watching the different enclosures (all year groups + carers). - 1 hour
- Create a vision board of all your short-term and long-term goals and use it as inspiration, as well as motivation! - 1 hour

Other

Mel will be contacting all year 12's to arrange 1 to 1's to have a catch-up to see if any further support is required.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Post 16 Transition Bursary

Years 12 & 13's will be able to make an application for resources or equipment to support their post-16 academic studies. A2U participants must be actively engaged in the programme to access the bursary.

Brightside Plus

This Brightside Plus platform is for KS5 and is a progression from the Brightside platform. The focus of Brightside Plus mentoring is to support KS5 with next steps, career choices, choosing University's and application support. The mentors who will be supporting Brightside Plus have been with the programme over a number of years and they are looking forward to supporting the continued academic journey of our A2U participants.

A2U Website

This is currently at the scoping and planning stage, which is scheduled to go live by summer 2021. The website will have generic information and resources open to the public and will also have two secure login portals; one for carers and one for young people to access. Keep an eye on the next newsletter to hear about further developments!

The A2U team have also been busy creating a webpage on the WLV website, detailing extra exposure on what the A2U programme is all about. Click on the button below to check it out:

OTHER

Mel became Postman Pat for a week in Summer and also during the Christmas period sending out packs to all our A2U participants. Each post run was a humungous task, spending two hours at a time in the post office, where she was even offered her own seat. As you can imagine she wasn't very popular with the other customers in the queue!

MEET THE TEAM

Dipisha Patel – A2U Participation Officer
Email - D.patel8@wlv.ac.uk
Tel - 01902 322349

Dipisha has been an employee of the University since 2016 and has worked in the central University's Marketing and Events team. From the age of 16, she has worked with young people throughout many voluntary work placements, as well as in her employment and enjoys making a positive impact upon young people's lives. She enjoys 'giving back' to others, whether this may take the form of sharing her positive words of wisdom to boost their self-confidence, as well as being part of their success journey. Outside of work, Dipisha loves raising money for charity and taking part in gym classes and running.

MENTORING FEEDBACK - JANUARY 2021

"I enjoyed sharing my ideas and just talking to different people"
(DW – COHORT 4 – KS 3 - YEAR 9)

"The session was creative and I like things that are creative"
(JB - COHORT 4 - KS3 - YEAR 9)

" Enjoyed creating a vision board on PowerPoint about this year"
(NK – COHORT 2 – KS4 - YEAR 11)

"Engaging when discussing new year goals"
(EC - COHORT 1 - KS 5 - YEAR 12)

