

WITNESS SESSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION - BRUNEL UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Witness	Professor Geoff Rodgers Pro Vice Chancellor – Enterprise and Employment
Papers with report	None
Ward	All

HEADLINES

This paper gives a very brief overview of the partnership working of Brunel University of London in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the report

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Brunel University was founded by Royal Charter in 1966, as a contemporary of Bath, Loughborough and Warwick Universities. Its origins can be traced back to 1798 when public education innovator Joseph Lancaster opened a school in Borough Road for poor boys living in his Southwark neighbourhood. This became Borough Road College and was the beginning of Brunel's evolution, merging with a number of other institutions including the West London Institute of Higher Education in 1997.

Today, Brunel University of London is a world-class research university, combining a technical focus with research excellence that is closely aligned with the needs of equitable and inclusive, environmentally-sustainable global societies and economies. With a strong social mission, distinctive staff talent and highly employable graduates, Brunel has exceptional international reach from its London campus.

A driver of social mobility across west London, Brunel is a major provider of sandwich degrees and has an excellent graduate employment record. It has a substantial portfolio of funding from Innovate UK and excellent research links with industry, commerce and policy makers.

A broad-based faculty institution, its academic work is organised into three Colleges;

Business, Arts and Social Sciences;
Engineering, Design and Physical Sciences; and
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences,

as well as a specialist research institute, the Brunel Centre for Advanced Solidification Technologies.

Brunel became a member of the Federation of the University of London in 2023.

PERFORMANCE DATA

N/A

RESIDENT BENEFIT

A high proportion of Brunel's students are from deprived populations, with 38.5% of their undergraduate students in IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and 33.6% eligible for free school meals. Additionally, 12.7% of undergraduates report a disability and 10.8% of the undergraduate population is categorised as mature. In the 2022-23 student population (as at October 2022), 86% of Brunel's undergraduate Home/EU students met the University's definition of being from an underrepresented group. In its report Universities and Social Mobility with the Institute of Fiscal studies, the Sutton Trust ranked Brunel 6th amongst UK universities for mobility rate of disadvantaged students. Brunel is proud of this reputation as an engine of social mobility, which is central to its mission as an institution.

Brunel takes its role in the West London region seriously; in 2021 it worked with civic partners to help establish the West London Universities Partnership, which it now leads; it was a founding member of the London West Innovation Network and recently signed a Civic Partnership Agreement with the London Borough of Hillingdon. Brunel is working closely with Hillingdon across a range of areas, combining the talents of its staff, facilities and resources to improve the wellbeing and prosperity of those who live, work and study within Hillingdon.

Brunel is working with the local authorities and local business groups to drive and support increased business start-ups and success. Brunel has a strong record of supporting its entrepreneurial graduates to set up their own businesses, with an entrepreneurial hub on campus and a dedicated off-site incubator.

Brunel participates in a huge number of activities to engage the local community including

Community Conversations, a friendly, interactive discussion of the latest research taking place at Brunel University London. Started in May 2022, 16 sessions have been delivered in total at Uxbridge Library, Fasnidge Hall Uxbridge, Botwell Library Hayes and the Crown & Treaty pub in Uxbridge.

Happy to Chat, a social initiative encouraging friendly conversations between people in public spaces. By wearing the Happy to Chat badges, participants signal their availability and willingness to engage in social connections and invite others to approach them for a chat. Happy to Chat can be adopted by individuals on their own or by organisation for employees and users. Happy to Chat helps create a friendlier atmosphere in communities, increasing happiness, reducing anxiety and combating loneliness.

Happy to Chat café events started in June 2023. 7 events took place during June 23 – February 24 in the Pavilions, Uxbridge and attracting 63 attendees on average per session. Sessions are currently now running in Uxbridge Library, Fasnidge Older Persons Dining Centre and at Brunel.

Made in Brunel is a unique initiative that showcases Brunel's design talent at its finest. The programme facilitates the connection between Brunel design and the greater creative community to help promote the incredible work Brunel's students produce. Established in 2006, Made in Brunel has been running for 18 consecutive years with each year learning from the last to bring

something new and exciting to the brand. Made in Brunel 2025 will be showcasing at the Uxbridge campus in June 2025.

Brunel's Urban Scholars programme is a unique, sustained 3-year intervention programme which provides enriched learning experiences for students aged 12 -18 from inner London schools. The programme has recently been selected as the winner of the NEON Widening Access Partnership Award. Many of the students come from socially deprived areas where their talents may not lead to successful examination results or high aspirations. The scholars come from 31 schools across London. The programme addresses concern often raised over the lack of progress of students from groups underrepresented in Higher Education.

Volunteering opportunities in the local community – Building relationships with 100 local charities to provide opportunities for staff and students to volunteer. Over 18,000 hours of time was volunteered by Brunel students in 2023/24, involving 928 students and 94 charity organisations.

Brunel's **Students in Schools** is an initiative designed to offer local schools easy access to dynamic and supportive university student volunteers. Last year 80 students had a placement in a school, the majority in Hillingdon. Many members of Brunel staff also give their time to support local schools as volunteers or as members of governing bodies. Brunel's Recruitment and Widening Participation teams have relationships with hundreds of local schools and the university was a founding partner of the Heathrow UTC in Northwood and the West London Institute of Technology. The STEM and Widening Participation teams run events with over 15,000 attendees in a typical year, the majority from local schools.

Brunel hosts **Junior Citizens**, an initiative led by the London Borough of Hillingdon to promote citizenship. In 2024, 3200 children from 49 Hillingdon schools attended.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

See www.brunel.ac.uk