

Representation of white working class boys in higher education

July 18 2016, by Loic Menzies



Credit: Juan Salmoral

A groundbreaking new report 'The underrepresentation of white working class boys in higher education: the role of widening participation' has been published today.

The [report](#) by education and youth think-and-action tank LKMco was commissioned by King's College London's Widening Participation Department, and explores why so few white working class boys progress to higher education and how this can be addressed. The report was guided and overseen by two King's academics Professor Kalwant Bhopal and Dr Mary-Claire Travers. Round table discussions were held to gather the expert opinion of widening participation practitioners, teachers and third sector leaders. The report examines root causes of under representation and what can be done to change patterns of higher education progression.

Commenting on the report's publication lead author and Director of Research at LKMco, Dr Sam Baars, said: 'Low attainment at school accounts for much of the problem of low participation in higher education by white working class boys. However it does not explain it away. Likewise, higher tuition fees appear not to have driven participation rates downward. This report therefore digs beneath these factors and asks what it means to be a white working class boy and how this can make it more difficult to progress to higher education. We find that fears about the value of higher education in the workplace and a lack of knowledge about applications and interviews are important barriers to participation.'

Director of Widening Participation at King's College London, Anne-Marie Canning, said: 'This important report is essential in helping schools and universities improve the progression rates for white working class pupils to higher education. The report recommends that working with white [working class](#) pupils from an early age and engaging parents are key in ensuring all young people have the opportunity to participate in [higher education](#).'

More information: White working class boys and Higher Education: widening participation: [www.lkmco.org/white-working-cl... ening-participation/](http://www.lkmco.org/white-working-class-boys-higher-education-participation/)

Provided by King's College London

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