



Access and Participation Plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

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University of Winchester

Access and participation plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

Introduction and strategic aim

Transformational education

We are a thriving university with a deep commitment to transformational education. We have seen this transformation for over 180 years in our own University and continue to see it every day in our students, the partners we work with and in the communities we serve. Located in Winchester, the county town of Hampshire, we have around 8,000 students (88% full-time, 6% international and 18% post-graduate) and 900 staff.

As the world around us changes, we have accepted the challenge to change with it and move forward with confidence.

In the year we developed this plan we also launched our new University of Winchester Strategic Plan: *Our Vision for Transformational Education (2023-2028)*, both plans are deeply rooted in our original mission and purpose '**To educate, serve the common good and advance knowledge**', guided by our reimagined values '*love of learning, individual and shared endeavour, and making a difference*', and driven by the importance of *people, place and partnerships*.



Figure 1: University of Winchester Strategic Plan (2023-2028) Diagram

Championing widening access and participation locally, nationally and globally

We are proud to consider ourselves a widening participation university. It is part of our DNA, stemming from our origins training teachers to educate poor children in the local region. In more recent years, we have been recognised for our sector leading work to support the access and participation of emerging under-represented student groups, in particular Care Leavers, Young Adult Carers, Service Children, and Asylum Seekers.

Expanding on our existing expertise and partnerships, this plan seeks to continue our commitment to advancing innovative research, policy and practice in widening access and participation, locally, nationally and globally.

We will continue to enhance our activities, develop our understanding through research, share best practice and encourage collaboration through networks, and promote transformational education, not just at Winchester but across the many communities we serve.

Adopting a holistic student-centred whole-lifecycle strategic approach to improving access, success and progression

At Winchester, we recognise that many of our students may come from backgrounds that make them more likely to be at risk of equality of opportunity. For example:

- 40+ % of our students are the first-in-family to attend higher education and may be more likely to face imposter syndrome and less likely to access networks to support them into graduate employment.
- 30+ % of our students eligible for student finance come from low-income households (under £25k) making them more likely to face financial hardship during their studies.
- 26+ % of our students have a declared disability, with over 8% declaring a mental health condition, making them less likely to earn as much as their peers in their lifetime.

We also understand that no single student has the same experience, often with intersecting characteristics and backgrounds defining their access and participation that can impact at any stage of their journey. As such, we have developed this plan with that in mind.

We have identified a series of commitments under our Access and Participation Strategic Aims (figure 2) that seek to address areas of risk to equality of opportunity for any student that could be impacted, acknowledging more explicitly under our Strategic Interventions how these may directly address specific risks for certain groups.

Figure 2: University of Winchester Access & Participation Strategic Aims (June 2023)



Risks to equality of opportunity

We have identified the following institutional risks based on our assessment of performance and mapping exercise. Further details can be found in our Assessment of Performance (Annex A).

Risk 1 – ACCESS (Pre-16 Attainment): Locally, and nationally, disadvantaged children have been less likely to achieve grade 5 or above in GCSE English or Maths, with gaps in school attainment reaching their highest in ten years after widening throughout the pandemic. Evidence suggests that pre-16 attainment has been inextricably linked to access to higher education. Further evidence indicates that young people from backgrounds with disrupted education (i.e., care-experienced, service children, refugees, asylum seekers, and gypsy, traveller, Roma, showman, boater (GTRSB) communities), English as an additional language (EAL) and disadvantaged boys are also more at risk of attainment gaps due to limited knowledge and skills, a lack of information and guidance, and limited perceptions of higher education.

Risk 2 – ACCESS (Post 16 Applications / entry rates): There are lower rates of application and entry for those from the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) quintiles 1 and 2) or with prior eligibility for free school meals (FSM) at the University of Winchester even when compared to similar universities. The evidence suggests that this is a function of gaps in prior knowledge and skills, limited information and guidance, and limited perceptions of higher education.

Risk 3 – ACCESS (Post-16 Offer rates): Data shows that black mature students are less likely to be offered a place, particularly on Nursing, Social Work and other allied health courses at the University. Initial analysis of rejected applications suggested that there are entry requirements and processes that may be disadvantaging these students. Further evidence suggests that applicants may also be less likely to have the necessary information, advice and guidance through support networks to help them prepare their applications.

Risk 4 – SUCCESS (Continuation rates): Historically we have observed generally good continuation rates for all students, regardless of background. However, recently we have begun to observe emerging gaps in continuation amongst disabled students particularly those with a declared mental health condition, LGBT+ students, male students, and some of our most disadvantaged students (IMD Q1, TUNDRA (Tracking Underrepresentation by Area) Q1 and students previously eligible for FSM (Free School Meals)). We have also identified increased rates of students declaring a mental health condition, particularly LGBT+ students, and increased numbers of students presenting concerns regarding mental health and financial support impacting their ability to study. The evidence suggests that the most disadvantaged students and those with mental health conditions are most at risk of the impacts of the pandemic and rising cost of living.

Risk 5 – SUCCESS (Awarding gaps): We continue to observe large awarding gaps for UK-domicile black students and disadvantaged males when compared to their peers. We recognise that the factors determining gaps in attainment are complex, however we determined to address the factors over which we have some control, either directly or through partnerships with others. A growing body of evidence across the sector suggests that risks to on-course attainment could include, independently or a combination of poor prior attainment at school/college, lower sense of belonging or community due to lack of representation on-campus or in the curriculum, insufficient academic and personal support, financial pressures, and ongoing impacts of coronavirus.

Risk 6 – PROGRESSION: There are gaps in progression for graduate employment and graduate salaries for students from some backgrounds. At the University of Winchester typically students with a declared disability have had better graduate outcomes than their peers however this has shifted in recent years and varies widely by disability type - we have observed students with a social or communication impairment are particularly at risk. Even so, disabled graduates (whatever their disability type) remain less likely to enter full-time jobs, earn as much, or enter roles with supervisory responsibility. Similarly, rates of graduate employment and further study fluctuate greatly by ethnicity. Our TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) data dashboard analysis identified that UK-Asian rates of

graduate employment were below benchmark but more recent data from the Graduate Outcomes Survey has shown Black students are less likely to progress onto graduate employment or further study (in-line with the sector). Lastly, gaps in progression for our disadvantaged males have grown in the last 3-years. We understand that gaps in progression can be due to a number of compounding factors including, but not limited to, gaps in knowledge and skills; insufficient academic and personal support; lack of role models and representation; and lack of financial support impacting ability to access activities that can enhance employability (i.e., interviews, work experience/placements, extra-curricular activities and study-abroad).

Objectives

We will address the six objectives, and associated targets, identified below under our planned strategic interventions.

Objective 1: We will improve the rates of KS2 and KS4 attainment for learners less likely to access higher education engaging in our targeted activities across the length of the plan.

Targets:

- PTA_1 - 50% of First Star Scholars pass 5+ GCSE subjects including English and Maths
- PTA_2 - At least 80% of KS2 learners engaged in our academic coaching programmes demonstrate improved confidence in learning (each year – reaching 300+ learners in total across the length of the plan)
- PTA_3 - At least 65+% of practitioners engaged in our network and access activities demonstrate improved confidence in supporting students from under-represented backgrounds to access HE (each year – reaching 500+ practitioners in total across the length of the plan)

Objective 2: We will increase the proportion of entry rates from the most disadvantaged students (eligible for FSM and IMD Q1 or 2) across the length of the plan.

Targets:

- PTA_4 - Increase the entry rates of FSM eligible full-time all undergraduate degree entrants at Winchester to 18% by 2028.
- PTA_5 - Increase the entry rates of IMD Q 1 and 2 full-time first-degree entrants at Winchester to 28% by 2028.

Objective 3: We will close the gap between offer rate and average offer rate for black students by 2030 and be in line with our tariff group by the end of the plan.

Targets:

- PTA_6 - Reduce the gap between the offer rate and average offer rate for black students (all ages) to 0.09 (gpp), by 2028.

Objective 4: We will address the impacts of the pandemic and rising cost of living on students, closing the emerging gaps in continuation rates by the end of the plan.

Targets:

- PTS 1 - To close the continuation gaps for students from the most disadvantaged background (All other quintiles except 1 compared with 1) to opp by end of the plan.
- PTS 2 - To close the continuation gaps for students with a declared mental health condition compared to no disability declared to opp by end of the plan.

Objective 5: We will make significant progress in closing the awarding gaps for disadvantaged males and black students within the length of the plan.

Targets:

- PTS_3 – To close the awarding gaps for Black UK-domicile full-time first-degree students (All ethnicities except black compared with black) from 21.6pp in 2021/22 to 10.8pp in 2027/28.
- PTS_4 – To close the awarding gap for full-time first-degree disadvantaged males (Q 3, 4, 5 males compared with Q 1 and 2 males) from 15.3pp in 2021/22 to 7.5pp in 2027/28.

Objective 6: We will improve the progression rates for non-white students, disadvantaged males and disabled students (particularly those with social or communication impairments) by the end of the plan.

Targets:

- PTP_1 – To half the progression gaps for full-time first-degree non-white students (all ethnicities except white compare with white) by the end of the plan
- PTP_2 - To half gaps in progression for full-time first-degree disadvantaged males (for males' quintiles 3, 4 5 compared with quintiles 1 or 2) by the end of the plan.
- PTP_3 – To half the progression gaps for full-time first-degree students with a declared social or communication impairment (no disability compared with social or communication impairment, 2-year aggregate) by the end of the plan.

Strategic Intervention 1:

ACCESS - Pre-16 Attainment

Objectives and targets:	<p><i>We will improve the rates of KS2 and KS4 attainment for learners less likely to access higher education engaging in our targeted activities across the length of the plan.</i></p> <p>Target(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTA_1 - 50% of First Star Scholars pass 5+ GCSE subjects including English and Maths • PTA_2 - At least 80+% of KS2 learners engaged in our academic coaching programmes demonstrate improved confidence in learning (each year – 300+ learners total across the length of the plan) • PTA_3 - At least 65+% of practitioners engaged in our network and access activities demonstrate improved confidence in supporting students from under-represented backgrounds to access HE (each year – reaching 500+ practitioners in total across the length of the plan) <p><i>(NB. Further SUN collaborative targets are being refined under the Uni Connect attainment-raising plans and SCiP Alliance targets are being established under the new strategic plan currently under development)</i></p>
Risks to Equality of Opportunity (EORR):	<p>Risk 1. Knowledge and skills</p> <p>Risk 2. Information and guidance</p> <p>Risk 3. Perception of HE</p>
Total investment across the length of the plan:	Approx. £2,131,542 (of which £1,753,000 is externally funded activity under SCiP and First Star Scholars Scheme)
Institutional Lead(s):	Head of Participation and Success (SSaS) Head of UK Recruitment (CER)

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention?
<p>Enhanced practitioner engagement: Establish and convene a new online stakeholder partnership of schools and colleges in the region. Developing resources, CPD opportunities and bespoke events to support practitioners working with targeted learners inc. care-experienced, GTRSB, refugees and asylum seekers, EAL, free-school meals, service children and disadvantaged boys.</p>	<p>Secure and accessible online platform for practitioners (circa £11k pa).</p> <p>Staffing for administration and coordination of the network and events (circa G6 0.6fte WP Transition Coordinator for SI 1 approx. £135,000 across the lengthFirst Star Scholar of the plan).</p> <p>Project pot for event coordination inc. venue, transport and conferencing support for on-campus events (circa £10k pa).</p> <p>Total across plan - £219k</p>	<p>500+ practitioners engaged via the network.</p> <p>At least 1 annual on-campus themed CPD event each academic year (50+ practitioners attending each year).</p> <p>At least 3x online CPD events delivered each year (75+ attendees each year).</p> <p>Improved confidence levels in subject delivery, subject knowledge, classroom management, understanding and supporting target cohort</p>	<p>Y – linked to post-16 outreach (SI2 & SI3) and closing HE awarding gaps (SI5).</p>
<p>First Star Scholars Scheme: 4-year intensive attainment raising and access programme for care-experienced young people, via monthly Saturday Schools and annual Spring and Summer Schools.</p> <p>Continuation and completion of Cohort 1 by September 2025.</p> <p>Launch Cohort 2 in August 2024.</p>	<p>Partnership agreements (MoA) with First Star Scholars UK (FSSUK).</p> <p>Cohort 1, 30 care-experienced young people in further education (2024/25 - £230k).</p> <p>Cohort 2, 30 care-experienced young people completing GCSE's and into FE (2024/25 – 2027/28 - £710k).</p> <p>Full-time Programme Director, student staffing including Lead Coaches, Youth Mentors, English/Maths Buddies, English and Maths GCSE teacher/tutors.</p> <p>Total across plan - £940k</p>	<p>Delivery of programme to care-experienced young people – up to 30 per cohort (60 total).</p> <p>Improved confidence of learners in both skills and knowledge</p> <p>Improved GCSE grades</p> <p>Progression to Further and Higher Education</p> <p>Increased engagement, and understanding of progression routes, of carers/social workers/virtual school and college staff.</p>	<p>Y – potential link to post-16 outreach (SI2 & SI3)</p>
<p>Key Stage 2 Academic Coaching and Transition Programme Commission a third sector organisation with experience in delivering KS2</p>	<p>Staffing admin to recruit student volunteers, liaise with partners and organise on-campus activity. (inc. in activity 1)</p>	<p>Delivery of programme to 3 schools each academic year reaching approx. 90 KS2 pupils</p>	<p>Y - linked to post-16 outreach (SI2 & SI3) and closing</p>

<p>academic coaching and transition to recruit and train university students to deliver sustained projects of in-school academic support, including an end of project celebration event on-campus.</p>	<p>Project Pot inc. third-sector organisation to train and celebration events. (circa £30k pa)</p> <p>Total across plan - £120k</p>	<p>Improved confidence of learners in both skills and knowledge</p> <p>Improved KS2 outcomes</p>	<p>HE awarding gaps (SI5).</p>
<p>SUN Collaborative KS4 Activity Actively support the development, delivery and evaluation of Action Tutoring, Marginal Gains programme for disadvantaged boys, Teacher CPD and Twenty Twenty GCSE revision events.</p>	<p>ACTION TUTORING - Promote and recruit student volunteers for SUN regional GCSE e-tutoring.</p> <p>TWENTY TWENTY - Seed-funding GCSE revision days and bootcamps (£2,500 in 2023 – not inc. in plan est.).</p> <p>MARGINAL GAINS (DISADVANTAGED BOYS) – working 5+ schools with 20 under-performing (3/4 borderline), disengaged male students per school. At Winchester 2+ male students recruited and trained to deliver 3x 2hour sessions in-schools, COSMOS licences, travel costs and resources. (Circa £10k pa)</p> <p>Teacher CPD – School of Education partnership established to deliver CPD activity (staffing input to be 'in kind').</p> <p>Total across plan - £40k</p>	<p>Across SUN Uni-Connect:</p> <p>Twenty student volunteers for one-cycle of tutoring (30-week programme), increasing within 2024-25 with the ambition of developing a face-to-face hub with two local schools from 2025-26 onwards.</p> <p>SUN target approx. 10 schools. Activity underpinned by learner progression framework that captures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved GCSE attainment • Development of metacognition to enhance learning • Increased confidence in learners' academic abilities • Increased engagement of teaching and support staff. • Increased confidence and skills levels in subject knowledge, delivery and classroom management. 	<p>Y - linked to post-16 outreach (SI2 & SI3) and closing HE awarding gaps (SI5).</p>
<p>Development of Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance Develop and grow engagement in a new national, online community platform to increase the scale and quality of collaboration, co-investment and delivery for Service children.</p> <p>Establish and grow engagement in effective practice toolkits (including evidence-base self-assessment frameworks, training and case studies) for early years, schools, colleges and universities to enhance the quality of support for Service children throughout the education life-course.</p> <p>Commission, support, disseminate and apply novel research improving understanding of the attainment and progression of Service children.</p>	<p>Secure an accessible online platform for diverse sector stakeholders in practice, research and policy –development, maintenance and continuous improvement (c. £40k one-off – inc. below)</p> <p>Staffing to support core network operation, engagement growth and projects management (c. £523k across the length of the plan)</p> <p>University of Winchester academic staff time providing research development and deployment advice.</p> <p>Commissioned external research and evaluation expertise (c. £290k across the length of the plan)</p> <p>Total across plan - £813k</p>	<p>1,000+ practice, research and policy stakeholders engaged in the network.</p> <p>£1 million+ investment in collaboration support, research and tools/resources for effective practice.</p> <p>Improved understanding of Service children's experiences and outcomes through the life-course, through rigorous research, published widely.</p> <p>Improved scale and quality of support for Service children and education and other professionals with a stake in their educational success and progression.</p>	<p>Y – potential link to post-16 access (SI1)</p>

Evidence base & Rationale

Pre-16 attainment has been inextricably linked to access to higher education. Locally, and nationally, disadvantaged children have been less likely to achieve grade 5 or above in GCSE English or Maths, attainment gap in Hampshire rose to 34.7pp in 2022 compared to 2018/19 (pre-covid) gap of 31.5pp and the national disadvantage gap index at both Key stages 2 (commonly known as SATs) and 4 – a broader measure of child performance at school – reached their largest point in 10 years after widening throughout the pandemic.

Particular groups of children and young people also remain less likely to achieve as well as their peers including care-experienced young people, service children, disadvantaged males, those with English as an additional language (EAL), refugees and asylum seekers, and those from gypsy, Roma or traveller communities.

Drawing upon our expertise in teacher training and development (Ofsted rated Outstanding), widening participation of target cohorts (i.e., care-experienced young people, sanctuary students and service children) and partnerships with nationally recognised third-sector organizations' we will develop a portfolio of sustained and tailored widening participation interventions for young people and practitioner-focused CPD activity for schools teaching staff.

The selected activities identified under the strategic intervention aim to predominantly address the *knowledge and skills gaps (EORR1)* via a variety of evidence-based interventions.

In addition, for the most part, the activities also intend to provide *information and guidance* surrounding routes to higher education (*EORR 2*) and opportunities to shift *perceptions of HE* (EORR 3) through campus visits and engagements with relatable students.

Further evidence base and rationale for each individual activity is available in *annex B*.

Evaluation

The strategic intervention is underpinned by a '*theory of change*' logic model (*type 1*), all activities are informed by evidence that similar or previous activities had an impact on pre-16 attainment (as outlined in annex B). The strategic intervention will be monitored and evaluated annually, reported to our *Student Experience Committee (SEC)*, *Student Advisory Council (SAC)* and *Board of Governors (BoG)*.

All activities will have evaluation embedded from the outset adopting empirical enquiry (*type 2*), primarily utilising pre- and post- surveys of skills, knowledge, behavioural or attitudinal changes (including KS2 and KS4 teacher assessments and final grades, where available). In addition to the questions used to assess and inform the delivery of interventions, we will also employ validated survey designs (such as the *TASO validated widening participation questionnaire*) to establish associated outcomes. Sustained activities, such as the SUN collaborative KS4 activities and First Star Scholars Scheme, are evaluated against a learner progression framework and provide multiple points of evaluation including focus groups and interviews to enhance survey and outcome data.

Most activities within the Strategic Intervention do not provide the opportunity for (*type 3*) causal evaluation due to the cohort size or type of delivery. However, some activities and workshops that are delivered via our Uni-Connect and other third-party organisations utilise external evaluation across much larger cohorts providing opportunities for randomised control trials or quasi-experimental design.

Further details outlining the evaluation method and publication plan for each individual activity is available in *Annex B*.

Strategic Intervention 2: ACCESS - Post-16 Applications

Objectives and targets:	<p>We will increase the entry rates of students from the most disadvantaged student groups (eligible for FSM and IMD Q1 or 2), across the length of the plan.</p> <p>Target(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PTA_4 - Increase the entry rates of FSM eligible full-time all undergraduate degree entrants at Winchester to 18% by 2028.</i> • <i>PTA_5 - Increase the entry rates of IMD Q 1 and 2 full-time first-degree entrants at Winchester to 28% by 2028</i>
Risks to Equality of Opportunity (EORR):	<p>Risk 1. Knowledge and skills</p> <p>Risk 2. Information and guidance</p> <p>Risk 3. Perception of HE</p>
Total investment across the length of the plan:	<p>Approx. £299,542</p> <p>(NB. This does not include staffing and resource across CER and Faculties that are budgeted as part of 'business as usual' that will include elements of activity against this Strategic Intervention.)</p>
Institutional Lead(s):	<p>Head of Participation and Success (SSaS)</p> <p>Head of UK Recruitment (CER)</p>

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention?
<p>Enhanced compact scheme: Development of the compact scheme to include 'Prepare to Study' transition event, communications plan under the practitioner network and alumni engagement within outreach activity.</p>	<p>Coordination of the compact scheme and outreach officer for activity across SI 2 approx. 0.6fte - £135,000 across the plan.</p> <p>Compact Scheme Bursary Budget (£65,000) 2024/25 - 100x £100 (£10,000) 2025/26 - 150x £100 (£15,000) 2026/27 - 200x £100 (£20,000) 2027/28 - 200x £100 (£20,000)</p> <p>Transition events and activities (approx. £5,000 pa)</p> <p>Total across plan - £220k</p>	<p>Increased number of applicants via the Compact Scheme</p> <p>Increased number of Compact Scheme (schools and colleges) partners</p> <p>Increased awareness of, and engagement in the Compact Scheme by practitioners/supporters</p> <p>Annual 1 day Transition/Familiarisation event</p> <p>50+ Compact offer holders engaged in pre-entry activity each year</p>	<p>Y - linked to Practitioner Network (SI 1) and reversing continuation gaps (SI 4)</p>
<p>Targeted marketing campaign: Using regional data to identify and benchmark 5-10 most attractive subjects for prospective disadvantaged students locally and developing a targeted marketing campaign for related Winchester courses.</p>	<p>Data analysis/research - needed by March 2024</p> <p>Commission marketing agency to develop campaign materials (circa £10k pa)</p> <p>Directing marketing spend to deliver marketing - 2025 campaign to launch 1st March 2024 (not inc. in costings)</p> <p>Total across plan - £40k</p>	<p>Engagements with marketing materials (social media/website interactions).</p> <p>Increased applications from disadvantaged applicants onto courses targeted within the campaign.</p>	<p>Y - potential link to closing offer gaps (SI3)</p>
<p>New contextualised admissions policy and processes Develop and adopt a new contextualised admissions policy providing lower tariff entry for applicants from targeted backgrounds and prior experience of engaging in outreach/access activity.</p> <p>Include in communications and promotion beyond Compact Scheme.</p>	<p>Contextualised Admissions Working Group</p> <p>Systems/processes for identification of applicants</p> <p>Training/development of current admissions staff</p> <p>Passport to Winchester Programme (coordination within Faculty recruitment and outreach budgets not inc.)</p>	<p>New contextualised admissions policy complete, approved and in-place.</p> <p>Processes established for identifying eligible applicants and implementing contextualised admissions offers.</p> <p>Increased number of offers made to applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>	<p>N</p>

<p>Provision and promotion of flexible study routes Informed continuous improvement across our portfolio of flexible study routes, development of a new foundation year model and improved marketing and promotion.</p>	<p>Annual monitoring and analysis</p> <p>Programme development and leadership (inc. within staff budgets for programmes)</p> <p>Programme validation process</p> <p>Targeted marketing and promotion (inc. within wider recruitment and marketing budget)</p>	<p>Increased numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds applying to and entering onto Apprenticeships, Foundation Year, Short Courses and Distance Learning routes.</p> <p>Development of new flexible study route programmes meeting local skills need.</p>	<p>Y – linked to reversing continuation gaps (SI 4) and potential link to closing offer gaps (SI 3)</p>
<p>Increasing access to applicant activities Identifying and establishing mechanisms to increase the accessibility of engaging in pre- and post-applicant activities, either via removing financial barriers to attending in-person activities on-campus through access to the travel support fund or through online provision.</p>	<p>Hybrid events for Health and Wellbeing Applicant Days</p> <p>Campus-connect social connection platform</p> <p>£10k applicant events travel funding pot, established administration process and promotional activities</p> <p>Online content including campus tours, talking heads, talk to staff/students.</p> <p>Total across plan - £40k</p>	<p>Increased number of students accessing financial support funds to attend applicant events, and subsequent application/entry rates.</p> <p>Engagement numbers on campus-connect platforms.</p> <p>Increased online content available and accessed.</p>	<p>Y – SI 3</p>

Evidence base & Rationale

We have employed the use of contextualised admissions for many years as a valuable tool for identifying applicants who may have had disrupted education, which means that we assess their prior educational attainment and their potential in the context of their individual circumstances.

The current system for contextualised admissions is reserved to those who identify as a care leaver, young adult carer or estranged student in their UCAS application or are provided a supporting tutor statement via our Compact Scheme. However, we recognise the opportunities to adopt a more strategic approach based on the recommendations for effective practice as outlined by the [Office for Students in the Contextual Admissions Topic Briefing](#). Under the four recommendations, we intend to ensure that information about contextual admissions is accessible by publishing clear standard and contextualised entry requirements, enhance our use of individualised data to better identify applicants eligible for lower tariff entry, adopt a whole institutional approach by establishing a new policy and practice, and ensure continued evaluation to track the contextual route and evaluate the impact on access, continuation and attainment.

We also intend to develop processes that recognise and reward applicants who have already engaged in our outreach activities, developing relationships to support their applications and transition.

The University has an established [Compact Scheme](#) with 39+ Compact Partners (local schools and colleges) enabling Compact applicants from widening participation backgrounds a guaranteed offer or invitation to interview (dependent on admissions procedure for chosen course), a place in student housing, support with transition, £100 cash bursary upon entry and, in some instances, a lower tariff offer. In the last four years, 2018 – 2022 UCAS cycles, we received over 1557 Compact applications from 1355 applicants, of the 659 who enrolled (42.3% conversion rate) 21.3% were from disadvantaged backgrounds (IMD Q 1 or 2 postcodes). In September 2023 we will be piloting a 'Prepare to study' transition day for all Compact entrants building on the familiarisation events we host for other target groups including students with an autistic spectrum condition and mature learner. The Compact entrants will also be allocated a SMART student buddy upon enrolment to better support them transition into and through the first year, [TASO](#) have found some evidence to suggest peer- mentoring and coaching can be linked to improved student outcomes particularly amongst first-year students. Internally, when degree outcomes of mentees were mapped and aggregated against the wider University of Winchester UG cohort, there was a +6.9 percentage point difference between those who completed their studies and achieved a 1st or 2.1 in the 2018/2019-2021/22 period compared to the wider cohort (mentees n=134/162; all UG students n=12036/15879), suggesting that students who engage in the scheme are more likely to complete their degrees with better outcomes. In feedback for the 2021-22 academic year, mentees (19 responses) indicated that peer mentoring had helped them transition from A level (or equivalent) to Higher Education (n=17), encouraged them to take responsibility for their own learning (n=17) and helped them to develop key skills for academic study (n=17).

We recognise the government's concern regarding providers [prioritising "marketing activities which serve to benefit the institution and not students"](#). However, we must also ensure that alongside our wider access and outreach activity we are directly reaching the students from disadvantaged backgrounds that we want to welcome onto our campus and have thus ringfenced resource to identify and effectively market courses to this demographic.

We also know that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may be less likely to attend in-person events due to financial constraints so we will develop, and actively promote, our financial support provision for applicants to be reimbursed travel expenses for applicant days, open days and interviews. For those still unable to attend due to other barriers, such as caring and work commitments, we have committed to enhancing our online materials and develop more digital opportunities for applicants to meet with staff, students and each other to gain advice and guidance and build a sense of community through the [CampusConnect platform](#).

We already have a good track-record in developing flexible study routes which attract larger proportions of students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds – in 2021/22 we had 155 foundation year students enrolled across thirty-six foundation year routes (35.3% of entrants came from IMD Q 1 or 2 compared to 21.2% across all undergraduates) and 124-degree apprentices across twelve-degree apprenticeship routes (24.59% from IMD Q 1 or 2). We also led a HEFCE-2017 Degree Apprenticeships Development Fund phase 2 (DADF2) project - '[Establishing a social mobility pipeline to degree apprenticeships](#)'. *The project enabled the enhancement of outreach, partnerships and a social media campaign, reaching over 137,000 impressions across YouTube and Instagram, to demystify degree. We will continue to explore opportunities for new flexible and distance learning provision through enhanced partnerships and outreach.*

Evaluation

The strategic intervention is underpinned by a 'theory of change' logic model (type 1), all activities are informed by evidence that similar or previous activities had an impact on post-16 access. The strategic intervention will be monitored and evaluated annually, reported to our Student Experience Committee, Student Advisory Council and Board of Governors.

Given the type of activities identified, the majority of which are difficult to evaluate impact on an individualised basis we will be enhancing our monitoring and analysis to establish, where possible, any correlations between marketing and offer making for the target cohorts.

In regard to the Compact Scheme activity, we will be conducting Pre/Post surveys and focus groups with applicants, students and practitioners to inform our theory of change and identify where the interventions can be associated with improved application and entry rates (type 2 evaluation).

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. CRM/Tracking of prospective applicants through to enrolment (under development)
2. Engagement figures on events and activities.
3. Pre/post-evaluative surveys measuring intention to, and confidence in applying.
4. Pre/post-evaluative surveys measuring practitioners'/supporters' awareness of, and promotion of, COMPACT scheme, contextualised offer making and alternative pathways.
5. Focus groups of applicants and current students on their experiences of the COMPACT Scheme.

Summary of publication plan:

1. COMPACT Scheme reporting to new practitioner network.
2. All other areas to be reported internally under CER – Admissions and Recruitment reporting structures (to be established)

Strategic Intervention 3: ACCESS – Post-16 Offer Rates

Objectives and targets:	<p>We will close the gap between offer rate and average offer rate for black students by 2030 and be in line with our tariff group by the end of the plan.</p> <p>Target(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PTA_6 - Reduce the gap between the offer rate and average offer rate for black students (all ages) to 0.09 (gpp) by end of plan.
Risks to Equality of Opportunity (EORR):	<p>Risk 1. Knowledge and skills</p> <p>Risk 2. Information and guidance</p> <p>Risk 3. Perception of HE</p>
Total investment across the length of the plan:	<p>Approx. £ 14,000</p> <p>(NB. This does not include the majority of activity which is to be aligned to academic staff workloading and already accounted for under other project areas)</p>
Institutional Lead(s):	<p>Head of Participation and Success (SSaS)</p> <p>Head of UK Recruitment (CER)</p>

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention?
<p>Enhancements of the application and interview process:</p> <p>Continued developments under task and finish group, consulted with via Global Majority Student Steering Group, inc. annual review of application requirements and interview process (via matrix scoring) across all HWB courses to improve equity in admissions.</p> <p>Programme of training and implementation into processes, allowing for healthy challenge.</p>	<p>Faculty HWB Admissions Review Task and Finish Group (inc. colleagues from WP and Admissions) and Student Steering Group</p> <p>Interview scoring matrix</p> <p>Training programme (circa £4,000 across the plan)</p> <p>Total across plan - £4k</p>	<p>Staff attendance and engagement with unconscious bias training and check-in meetings.</p> <p>Staff increased awareness of unconscious bias and equitable admissions practice.</p> <p>Improved Black applicant experience (as measured via feedback and focus groups)</p> <p>Increased offers and acceptances</p>	<p>Y – potentially linked to increasing application and entrant rates (SI 2)</p>
<p>Health and Wellbeing Faculty Post-16 outreach:</p> <p>Partnerships with NHS trusts and developing opportunities to support Hampshire and IoW 350+ NHS careers and other local health-based outreach programmes.</p> <p>Targeted experience days using simulation of allied-health settings.</p> <p>Launch of Applicant events for those not applying via an FE college which include application advice sessions.</p>	<p>(Circa £2,500 pa delivery costs)</p> <p>Partnership agreements</p> <p>Scoping post-16 outreach activity and establishing HWB post-16 outreach and evaluation plan (to be developed in 2023/24)</p> <p>Staffing time and coordination (to be included within academic work loading)</p> <p>Student Course Ambassadors</p> <p>On-campus facilities and in the community venues for events and activities</p> <p>Communications via partners and new schools and colleges practitioner network</p> <p>Total across plan - £10k</p>	<p>Operational plan of outreach activities and evaluation framework established.</p> <p>Increased number of outreach engagements delivered, and learners reached each year via colleges/NHS trust.</p> <p>1+ experience day per academic year (by recruitment cycle).</p> <p>1+ applicant event per academic year (by recruitment cycle).</p> <p>Increased number of applications from target cohorts.</p> <p>Increased intentions to apply onto a HWB course or confidence in applying.</p>	<p>Y – linked to increasing application and entrant rates (SI 2)</p>
<p>Promotion and enhancement of the BECOME Scholarship</p>	<p>(NB. scholarship award and activity costs £10k pa, also included under SI 5)</p>	<p>Increased number of enquiries from non-white applicants (measured via CRM)</p>	<p>Y – linked to closing awarding gaps (SI 5)</p>

<p>Communication plan developed and initiated to actively promote BECOME Scholarships to prospective applicants.</p> <p>Utilise case studies and testimonials of BECOME Scholars to promote the scholarship.</p> <p>Continued enhancement of the scheme based on feedback from prospective applicants and current scholars.</p>	<p>Planned and targeted communications to prospective applicants via open days, experience days, applicant events and social media,</p> <p>BECOME Scholars to provide feedback and testimonials.</p> <p>Focus groups with prospective applicants, current applicants and current BECOME Scholars.</p> <p>BECOME Scholarship promotional webpage.</p>	<p>Increased number of non-white attendees at open days, applicant days and experience days</p> <p>Increased awareness of the BECOME Scholarship across partners and members of practitioner network.</p> <p>Increased number of eligible BECOME Scholar applicants.</p>	
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<h2 style="margin: 0;">Evidence base & Rationale</h2>	<p>In 2022/23 a task and finish group was established to address a concerning large offer gap for UK-domicile Black students (all ages). Further analysis of the large offer gap (23 pp in 2021/22 UCAS PERS end of cycle data), identified the gap was most prominent for mature black applicants applying to Nursing and Social Work. The gap did not appear to be dependent on entry-tariff and the majority of applicants were rejected pre-interview although some were also rejected post-interview (data not provided due to small numbers and potential of identifying individual applicants). To ensure students from the global majority were consulted on the issue and action plan a student steering group was convened to address the concerns regarding black application success rates on HWB courses (EORR 4).</p> <p>In a previous attempt to explore 'minimising the risks of unconscious bias in university admissions' under the UCAS 2017 name-blind admissions decision-making pilot on Health and Social Care Studies and Primary Education, we found that masking names decreased offer rates for mature and male applicants. Similarly, another provider found they were no longer able to identify if the applicant had come from a widening participation background in order to make contextualised considerations for offer-making. Thus, we believe as stated by the report 'there is value in a provider having access to an applicant's name to allow for internal and external data linkage, and to allow for the development of a relationship with the applicant to aid transition' (also a priority area of activity for us under Strategic Intervention 4). However, the report did identify the value in unconscious bias training and development of related processes, regular monitoring and reviewing of admissions data including the review of applications marked for rejection. These elements will be central to the work of the Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>A review of the previously rejected applications from Black UK applicants also identified that our local competitors had made offers to some of the applicants we had rejected, after further review it was acknowledged that unlike our competitors we had included the need for relevant prior work experience as a pre-requisite which had disadvantaged some applicants. Unnecessary requirements were then removed across all HWB courses for the 2023 admission cycle – evidence of impact is yet to be made available. The faculty also piloted an online applicant event, although numbers were small, where feedback was overwhelmingly positive regarding the opportunity to discuss making an application with the programme staff.</p> <p>In addition, programme leads piloted targeted interventions to improve the equity of the interview process. Social Work adopted a new 'objective-based' interview scoring matrix and Nursing utilised an 'Unconscious Bias' check-in process for panel members. Under the plan we intend to share experiences of these interventions across the faculty and further embed these processes for future admission cycles.</p> <p>We also recognise that many of our HWB black UK-domicile applicants are also mature (83% of UK-domicile black nursing and social work applicants in 2021/22), first-generation (46%) and do not apply directly via a school or college (63% in 2021/22) and as such are less likely to have the support and networks to help them produce their application and personal statement. As such, we intend to develop outreach activity to support these prospective applicants enhance their knowledge and skills (EORR 1), by providing relevant information and guidance (EORR 2) and improve their confidence in applying for a Nursing, Social Work or applied health course at Winchester (EORR3).</p>
<h2 style="margin: 0;">Evaluation</h2>	<p>The strategic intervention is underpinned by a '<i>theory of change</i>' logic model (<i>type 1</i>), based on the recommendation under the Minimising Risk of Unconscious Bias in University Admissions UCAS (2017) Report. The strategic intervention will be monitored and evaluated annually, reported to our Student Experience Committee, Student Advisory Council and Board of Governors.</p> <p>At present, having only just begun piloting some of the intervention strategies this year, we are still in the early stages of developing and honing our evaluation plan, some areas will need to be further refined in the coming year as we advance our planned activities beyond their initial pilots. However, under the Race Equality Action Group and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee we have already committed to closing the large offer gaps and providing progress reports to both on a regular basis.</p> <p>Method(s) of evaluation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement figures on events and activities. 2. Pre/post-evaluative surveys measuring attendees' intentions and confidence in applying for HWB-related course. 3. Pre/post-evaluative surveys measuring staff awareness of unconscious bias and confidence in applying practices to address unconscious bias in admissions. 4. Focus groups of applicants and current students on their experiences of the application process. 5. Focus groups of HWB admissions staff and panels. <p>Summary of publication plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular reporting (at least twice a year) to Race Equality Action Group. 2. Included in Race Equality Action Plan and annual reporting to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, 3. Case study to be produced and shared across internal Learning and Teaching events/conferences. <p>Explore the potential of publishing case study by the end of the plan with Office for Students, UCAS and/or professional accrediting bodies (i.e. Nursing and Midwifery Council).</p>

Strategic Intervention 4: SUCCESS – Continuation rates

Objectives and targets:	<p>We will address the impacts of the pandemic and rising cost of living on students, closing the emerging gaps in continuation rates by the end of the plan.</p> <p>Target(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PTS 1 - To close the continuation gaps for students from the most disadvantaged background (IMD All other quintiles except 1 compared with 1) to opp by end of the plan. PTS 2 - To close the continuation gaps for students with a declared mental health condition compared to no disability declared to opp by end of the plan. <p><i>NB. We recognise that students with low household income and eligibility for free-school meals, amongst other under-represented groups (inc. care leavers, estranged students, LGBT* students and parents/carers) are also impacted by the above and we will continue to monitor internally their continuation rates and engagements with the activities below.</i></p>	
Risks to Equality of Opportunity (EORR):	<p>Risk 6: Insufficient academic support</p> <p>Risk 7: Insufficient personal support</p> <p>Risk 8: Mental Health</p>	<p>Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus</p> <p>Risk 10: Cost pressures</p>
Total investment across the length of the plan:	<p>Estimated circa. £303,000</p> <p>(NB. Only includes new and target activity does not include over £2.8million in financial support packages and SSaS staffing roles)</p>	
Institutional Lead(s):	<p>Head of Participation and Success Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing Head of Student Finance</p>	

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention?
<p>Enhanced 'Welcome to Winchester (and beyond)' Transition Programme:</p> <p>In September 2024, following feedback from students, we will be launching a new transition programme for all students including an online orientation and 6-week thematic induction programme – we will continue to develop and enhance this throughout the plan.</p> <p>To also include development of targeted pre-arrival familiarisation activity for COMPACT Scheme applicants, mature students, deferred students, Foundation Years, Degree Apprentices and students with an Autistic Spectrum Condition.</p>	<p>Staffing for administration and coordination of the network and events (circa G6 0.6fte WP Transition Coordinator for SI 1 approx. £135,00 across the length of the plan).</p> <p>Pool of Student Community Ambassadors/ Student Buddies (circa £3k pa)</p> <p>Online orientation modules</p> <p>Pre-arrival communications plan</p> <p>Coordination, venues and resources for delivery of familiarisation and transition events (circa £10k pa)</p> <p>Total across plan - £187k</p>	<p>Improved transition experience reported year-on-year (transition survey)</p> <p>Improved HE preparedness and confidence prior to enrolling.</p> <p>Improved engagements with Student Support and Success in Semester 1</p> <p>Improved academic engagement (learner analytics)</p> <p>Reduced number of enquiries to withdraw or interrupt studies</p>	<p>Y – linked to post-16 access (SI 1), closing awarding gaps (SI 5) and closing progression gaps (SI 6)</p>
<p>Enhanced Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Initiatives:</p> <p>Further developments and enhancements under the Mental Health Strategy and Operational Plan to develop a whole-university holistic student experience.</p> <p>Establishment and delivery of a Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB) Communications and Campaigns Plan – inc. targeted messaging/campaigns for</p>	<p>5x Faculty-based Student Support and Success Advisors (SSSA's) (5x 1.0fte Grade 5 not included within est.)</p> <p>Programme-based Personal Academic Tutors (under workload model)</p> <p>UniWellBeing app (circa £10k pa)</p> <p>Staff CPD training and development: ongoing in-house WP training, <u>Look After Your Mate - Student Minds</u> train the</p>	<p>University Mental Health Charter Award Status (by end of 2025)</p> <p>Improved student satisfaction with student support (Student Support and Success Services Annual Feedback, Student Voice Forum and new NSS survey question responses)</p> <p>Students improved engagement with Personal Academic Tutors</p>	<p>Y – linked to closing awarding gaps (SI 5) and closing progression gaps (SI 6)</p>

<p>specific cohorts e.g. Non-white and LGBT*</p> <p>Launch and development of the <u>UniWellBeing</u> student mental health app</p> <p>Enhancement of the Wellbeing Café and peer-support schemes (Student Listeners)</p> <p>Conduct further research to better understand the student experiences of LGBT* students.</p> <p>Provide additional training and support for MHWB staff to better understand and support student groups e.g., LGBT* students.</p>	<p>trainer training and LGBT* students training session (circa £2k pa)</p> <p>MHWB Communications and Campaigns Plan Working Group</p> <p>Communications and campaigns budget (circa £1k pa)</p> <p>Café venue and refreshments</p> <p>Recruitment, training and coordination of student peer-support (Student Listeners) paid roles (circa £10k pa)</p> <p>Mental Health Advisors (circa 2.4fte – not included in est.)</p> <p>Alterline LGBTQ+ Student Experience qualitative research (2023/24 – cost of £3,675+ VAT) to inform training and development.</p> <p>University Mental Health Charter Membership and Award Fee (circa £24k across the plan)</p> <p>Total across plan - £116k</p>	<p>Booking and appointments with Student Support and Success Advisors and Mental Health and Wellbeing team</p> <p>Improved academic engagement (learner analytics)</p> <p>Improved accessibility to extenuating circumstances and Support to Study Route</p> <p>Reduced number of appointments to discuss withdrawal or interruption to study.</p> <p>MHWB/SSaS staff have improved understanding of, and confidence in, supporting students from LGBT and other backgrounds identified by research.</p>	
<p>Enhanced provision of Financial Support:</p> <p>Establish system to improve faster payments and enable monitoring of spend by intended use to inform budgeting resources.</p> <p>WP-based bursaries to support students most in-need (details under whole institutional approach page 29)</p> <p>Continue to work on initiatives that support students facing financial difficulties and enhancing provision of 'In kind' support. Including budget food bowls in our catering outlets, events with free food and partnerships with local foodbanks and supermarkets to provide access to essential groceries.</p> <p>In 2023/24 explore piloting a bridging loan for Nursing students to cover up-front placement expenses</p> <p>Embed budgeting Information, Advice and Guidance within induction for study and preparation for placements/work-experience/study abroad.</p>	<p>AspireCash Aspire Cash - JS Group (johnsmithgroup.co.uk) processes for administering, monitoring and evaluating financial support provision.</p> <p>£2.8million invested into financial support packages across the plan (not included above).</p> <p>Partnership agreements with food banks and supermarkets</p> <p>Budget menu options in catering outlets</p> <p>FREE4ALLUOW – surplus food fridges across campus containing food still suitable for human consumption but maybe damaged or short dated.</p> <p>Support and promote initiatives led by the Student Union including SU Bookshelf and tackling period poverty campaign.</p> <p>Mandatory online budgeting module as part of online orientation (UG and PG version) – students to action under My Record</p> <p>Budgeting sessions prepared and delivered via Students and Money within timetabled sessions to help Nursing students ahead of placements, with the intention to explore support for other placement students.</p>	<p>Aspire University Portal tracking bursary spend by amount and intended use.</p> <p>Engagement in budgeting sessions</p> <p>Allocation of financial support funds by application and demographic (i.e., learning support and hardship funding)</p> <p>Improved student satisfaction and reduced anxiety regarding cost of living via NSS/ financial support survey/Being Well Doing Well survey</p>	<p>Y – linked to closing awarding gaps (SI 5) and closing progression gaps (SI 6)</p>

<p>Evidence base & Rationale</p>	<p>Upon initial consultation, supported by internal and external evidence, the greatest concerns regarding equality of opportunity to our students were mental health (EORR 8), ongoing impacts of the pandemic (EORR 9) and financial pressures exasperated by the cost-of-living crisis (EORR 10). The targeted activities under this initiative seek to address these concerns and ensure we also address the potential of insufficient academic (EORR 6) and personal support (EORR 7).</p> <p>Under our new enabling '<u>Education and Student Experience Strategy</u>', currently being finalised, we have committed to further embed a student-centred whole-lifecycle approach that integrates faculty and student support services to ensure students are able to develop their curiosity, confidence and competencies throughout their Winchester experience.</p> <p>The activities under this intervention are all institution-wide interventions that are informed by sector-recognised frameworks of best practice including '<u>an exceptional transition to higher education: induction of new and returning</u></p>
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students during the new normal report' (Advance HE, 2020); 'A student Futures Manifesto' (UPP Foundation, 2022); *What works? Facilitating an effective transition into higher education* report (Liz Thomas, Higher Education Academy); the University Mental Health Charter framework and the value of financial support via bursaries and in-kind support as highlighted in the Office for students brief on 'studying during rises in the cost of living'.

Further evidence base and rationale for each individual activity is available in *Annex B*.

Evaluation

The strategic intervention is underpinned by a 'theory of change' logic model (*type 1*), all activities are informed by evidence that similar or previous activities had an impact on student progression (as outlined in annex B).

The strategic intervention will be monitored and evaluated annually, reported to our Student Experience Committee, Student Advisory Council and Board of Governors.

Where possible, all activities will have evaluation embedded from the outset adopting empirical enquiry (*type 2*), primarily utilising pre- and post- surveys of skills, knowledge, behavioural or attitudinal changes.

The academic engagement dashboard (learner analytics) provides the opportunity to link consider engagement metrics against interventions. Further monitoring and data analysis of interventions is achieved through drawing upon engagements with our Student Support and Success department and identifying correlations with continuation, withdrawal and completion rates.

We also annually conduct student feedback surveys and intend to employ both the Aspire Cash portal that provides an independently administered survey and the Alterline 'Being Well, Doing Well' Survey to compare our students' attitudes and behaviour against sector benchmarks.

Further details outlining the evaluation method and publication plan for each individual activity is available in *Annex B*.

Strategic Intervention 5: SUCCESS – Closing awarding gaps

Objectives and targets:	<p>We will make significant progress in closing the awarding gaps for disadvantaged males and black students within the length of the plan.</p> <p>Target(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PTS_3 – To close the awarding gaps for Black UK-domicile full-time first-degree students (All ethnicities except black compared with black) from 21.6pp in 2021/22 to 10.8pp in 2027/28 PTS_4 – To close the awarding gap for full-time first-degree disadvantaged males (Q 3, 4, 5 males compared with Q 1 and 2 males) from 15.3pp in 2021/22 to 7.5pp in 2027/28 	
Risks to Equality of Opportunity (EORR):	<p>Risk 1. Knowledge and skills</p> <p>Risk 2. Information and guidance</p> <p>Risk 3. Perception of HE</p> <p>Risk 6: Insufficient academic support</p>	<p>Risk 7: Insufficient personal support</p> <p>Risk 8: Mental Health</p> <p>Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus</p> <p>Risk 10: Cost pressures</p>
Total investment across the length of the plan:	<p>Estimated circa. £366,000</p> <p>(NB. Not including staffing allocated elsewhere and embedding inclusivity which is part of 'business as usual')</p>	
Institutional Lead(s):	<p>Head of Participation and Success</p> <p>Head of Quality</p> <p>Head of Student Academic Support</p>	

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention?
<p>BECOME Scholarship and Academic Coaching Programme</p> <p>£500pa cash bursary and academic coaching programme for non-white UK-domicile (first-degree) students studying on an Education, Nursing, Social Work or Allied Health Programme – pilot in 2022/23 roll out from 2023/24.</p> <p>Access onto and continuation within the scheme dependent on academic performance.</p> <p>2024/25 enhancements to inc. tailored sessions based on feedback and utilising peer-support between continuing and new scholars.</p>	<p>Project coordination (under Transition Coordinator accounted for elsewhere)</p> <p>Academic coaching programme (circa £10,000 pa, financial support package circa £15,000 pa)</p> <p>Identification of eligibility via admissions post-enrolment</p> <p>Total across plan - £100k</p>	<p>Up to 15x first-degree scholars and up to 5x PGCE Scholars per year receiving the scholarship and engaged in academic coaching programme.</p> <p>Improved academic confidence and skills</p> <p>Increasing number of scholars retained on programme</p> <p>Improved GPA and degree outcomes</p> <p>Engagement of continued scholars in peer-support activity</p>	<p>Y –reversing continuation gaps (SI 4) and closing progression gaps (SI 6)</p>
<p>Development and enhancement of Peer Learning Support Schemes</p> <p>Level 3/4 (Year 0/1) target learners identified upon entry via Compact Scheme/ WP bursary and Foundation Year entry. Contacted directly and offered a SMART Buddy (Level 5/6 student) to support academic transition and study.</p> <p>Peer-Assisted-Learning Scheme to be delivered in 2+ programmes identified with large proportions of target group.</p>	<p>Staffing: project coordination at 0.4FTE (circa £17,000 pa) + wages for SMART Buddies (average 35, circa £30,000 total pa)/PAL Leaders (average 10, circa £8,000 total pa).</p> <p>Promotion of sign-up to SMART Buddy academic mentoring at Compact Scheme transition day, with aim for further specific identification of target learners pre- and post-enrolment.</p> <p>Using data-driven approach to select targeted programmes for Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) sessions. Extra-curricular PAL sessions timetabled and promoted to students for targeted programmes.</p> <p>Total across plan - £220k</p>	<p>Increased proportion of students engaging with peer learning support from target learner demographics.</p> <p>Improved academic confidence and skills.</p> <p>Higher GPA/academic results</p> <p>For Peer Assisted Learning (PAL), improved confidence in subject knowledge and course-specific skills.</p> <p>Reduction in withdrawals and interruption to study</p>	<p>Y –reversing continuation gaps (SI 4) and closing progression gaps (SI 6)</p>

<p>New Level 5 Academic Coaching Programme (to be delivered by external provider)</p> <p>Identification of Level 5 students from target backgrounds achieving below threshold academic engagement.</p> <p>Targeted communications to invite onto scheme and of other available support.</p> <p>20+ students on a sustained academic coaching programme, that is delivered by a reputable external provider with an established evidence base of impact.</p>	<p>Student records platform and academic engagement dashboard utilised to identify target cohorts.</p> <p>Communication calling/texting campaign</p> <p>Procurement of academic coaching service provider (to take place with pilot in 2023/24)</p> <p>Academic Coaching programme coordination and delivery (circa £10,000 pa)</p> <p>Total across plan - £40k</p>	<p>Increased engagement of Level 5 WP cohorts in Academic Skills Support Sessions and One-to-Ones</p> <p>Engagement of up to 20 target Level 5 students on Academic Coaching programme per year</p> <p>Improved academic engagement (as measured via learner analytics dashboard)</p> <p>Improved academic confidence and skills</p>	<p>Y –reversing continuation gaps (SI 4) and closing progression gaps (SI 6)</p>
<p>New bespoke communications and activity for Repeating and Returning to Study students</p> <p>Targeted communications with students identified as repeating or returning inc. invitation to events and support available (inc. peer-support and tailored workshops).</p> <p>Repeating students' academic skills sessions (piloted in 2022/23) under development for pilot year 2 to begin in 2023/24.</p> <p>Returning to Study support events, all students returning to study after a period of interruption are invited to an event before returning on-course and provided with a series of follow-up engagements (piloting in 2023/24 to be rolled out in 2024/25).</p>	<p>Calling/texting campaign</p> <p>Repeating Students academic skills sessions developed and delivered by Transition Coordinator and Academic Skills Staff (within current budgets)</p> <p>Return to Study support events to be coordinated by MHWB team, supported by SLA and Academic Skills (Circa £1,500 pa funding)</p> <p>Total across plan - £6k</p>	<p>Increased targeted communications sent to cohort</p> <p>Repeating students and Returning students demonstrate increased academic confidence, academic engagement and wellbeing</p> <p>Reduction in withdrawals and interruption to study</p> <p>Improved GPA/ academic results</p>	<p>Y –reversing continuation gaps (SI 4) and closing progression gaps (SI 6)</p>
<p>Embedding Inclusivity in the Curriculum</p> <p>Faculties to establish staff-student teams to support the work to embed inclusivity in the curriculum.</p> <p>Re-establish the Race Equality Action Group with faculty staff and student representation and reporting structures.</p> <p>Advance the work of Learning and Teaching to embed inclusivity in the curriculum including via toolkits, validation processes and seminars to decolonise the curriculum.</p> <p>Data-informed Programme Improvement Plans (PiPs) – new processes under programmes annual evaluation to enable Programme Leaders to identify data concerning their awarding gaps and provide actions for accountability.</p> <p>Identify and promote opportunities for programme-based inclusivity and belonging curriculum development via L&T or RKI funding.</p>	<p>Where necessary, discrete workload allocation for staff to develop and maintain faculty-based race-equality networks.</p> <p>Race Equality Action Group, including terms of reference with established mechanisms for engagement and reporting.</p> <p>Data analysis resource to provide internal data on awarding gaps.</p> <p>Programme Improvement Plan advice workshops and resources (to be developed and delivered by Quality with input from WP and L&T).</p> <p>Decolonising the Curriculum seminar series.</p> <p>Resource to develop and publish case studies of good practice for inclusion in toolkits on DELTA (Developing & Enhancing Learning Teaching & Assessment) canvas page.</p>	<p>Staff and student representation from each faculty present on REAG.</p> <p>Head of Departments/Programme Leaders confidently able to identify areas of risks to equality of opportunity within their cohorts.</p> <p>Increased awareness of institutional awarding gaps.</p> <p>Programme level commitments to address awarding gaps via Programme Improvement Plans.</p> <p>Staff increased knowledge and confidence on embedding inclusivity in the curriculum.</p> <p>Increased student satisfaction and sense of belonging.</p> <p>Attendance/engagement in Decolonising the Curriculum seminar series.</p>	<p>Y – linked to reversing continuation gaps (SI 4) and closing progression gaps (SI 6)</p>

Evidence base & Rationale

The TASO 'Approaches to addressing the ethnicity degree awarding gap' Report (June 2023) identified a series of recommendations for providers seeking to address ethnicity degree awarding gaps including "developing Theories of Change (ToCs) and associated evaluation plans which make clear links between activities and desired outcomes".

This strategic intervention seeks to advance progress already made by the University of Winchester to address ethnicity and deprivation-based degree awarding gaps under the 'Flourishing Students' strategic framework in our 2020-2025 APP. Where previously attention was focussed on increasing our understanding of the gaps, engaging with students and embedding a holistic whole-institutional approach. Considering the recommendations of the TASO report, under the new plan we will direct greater focus on the implantation and evaluation of specific-targeted activities, alongside adopting new mechanisms for accountability.

Our previous plan outlined a new targeted approach that sought to establish closing awarding gaps as an institutional priority. We developed and embedded a holistic student-centred and evidence-based strategic approach to closing awarding gaps that has been showcased as effective practice by the Office for Students as a published case study ([Degree-awarding gaps: a targeted approach](#)) and has been further disseminated across multiple national networks, conferences and seminars. The resulting activity observed progress in narrowing the awarding gaps for non-white students, most significantly the Asian degree-awarding gap closed from a 2-year statistically significant gap above thirty percentage points (2016/17 – 2017/18) to a 4-year aggregate gap of under 10 percentage points.

In addition, we recognise the complex structural and systemic issues that can influence gaps in attainment including prior attainment, impacts of the pandemic and cost of living. As such we will contribute to addressing these risks to equality of opportunity that can exacerbate the gaps in outcomes between students from Black and other disadvantaged backgrounds through activities identified in Strategic Interventions 1 (pre-16 attainment) and 4 (continuation).

Further evidence base and rationale for each individual activity is available in *Annex B*.

Evaluation

The strategic intervention is underpinned by a '*theory of change*' logic model (*type 1*), all activities are informed by evidence that similar or previous activities had an impact on student progression (as outlined in annex B).

The strategic intervention will be monitored and evaluated annually, reported to our Student Experience Committee, Student Advisory Council and Board of Governors.

Where possible, all activities will have evaluation embedded from the outset adopting empirical enquiry (*type 2*), primarily utilising pre- and post- surveys of skills, knowledge, behavioural or attitudinal changes.

Following the pilot of an academic coaching programme for non-white students in 2022/23 in In September 2023 the University intends to go to tender to contract a third-sector organisation to deliver multiple academic coaching programmes to targeted cohorts in 2023/24 to 2027/28 – a condition of this contract will be embedded robust methods of evaluation drawing upon independent evaluation where possible.

Most activities within the Strategic Intervention do not provide the opportunity for (*type 3*) causal evaluation due to the cohort size or type of delivery.

Further details outlining the evaluation method and publication plan for each individual activity is available in *Annex B*.

Strategic Intervention 6: Progression – Employability

Objectives and targets:	<p>We will improve the progression rates for non-white students, disadvantaged males and disabled students (particularly those with social or communication impairments) by the end of the plan.</p> <p>Target(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTP_1 – To half the progression gaps for full-time first-degree non-white students (all ethnicities except white compare with white) by the end of the plan • PTP_2 – To half gaps in progression for full-time first-degree disadvantaged males (for males quintiles 3, 4 5 compared with quintiles 1 or 2) by the end of the plan. • PTP_3 – To half the progression gaps for full-time first-degree students with a declared social or communication impairment (no disability compared with social or communication impairment, 2-year aggregate) by the end of the plan. 	
Risks to Equality of Opportunity (EORR):	<p>Risk 1. Knowledge and skills</p> <p>Risk 6: Insufficient academic support</p> <p>Risk 7: Insufficient personal support study</p> <p>Risk 8: Mental Health</p>	<p>Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus</p> <p>Risk 10: Cost pressures</p> <p>Risk 12. Progression to graduate employment or further study</p>
Total investment across the length of the plan:	<p>Estimated circa. £196,800 (NB. Does not include academic staff time and general activity across the Careers and Opportunities Hub, only staffing and activity specific to target cohorts identified)</p>	
Institutional Lead(s):	<p>Head of Graduate Success Head of Participation and Success</p>	

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention?
<p>Contact support campaign for level 4 students in the target progression areas who have scored low on the career registration enrolment questions and are in the target progression groups. Aim of signposting them to resources and explain how the central careers team can support them throughout their degree.</p> <p>Year 1: November – December 2024 Year 2: November – December 2025 Year 3 November – December 2026 Year 4 November – December 2027</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis of career registration data • Careers staff time to set up, co-ordinate and review impact • Budget to hire student callers • Targeted communication based on career registration analysis • Recruitment and training of student callers <p>Budget Per year cost: £1,500 for student callers (est.) Total: £1,500</p> <p>2025/26: As above plus annual increase 2026/27: As above plus annual increase 2027/28 As above plus annual increase</p> <p>Consider using SMS messaging to contact students.</p> <p>Total across plan: £6k</p>	<p>Level 4 students from target groups to be informed of support available to them to improve their employability and career planning from the start of their student journey.</p> <p>Improved career registration outcomes the following year.</p> <p>Increased engagement from targeted students with career activities in Level 4.</p>	<p>Y – link to continuation gaps (SI4)</p>
<p>A bespoke professional mentoring programme for Level 6 across all target groups where students are matched to professionals to help improve students' employability and career readiness.</p> <p>This intervention could lead on from Continuation intervention offered in Level 5 targeted at students from priority groups.</p> <p>Initiative for Level 6 students who may feel at a disadvantage when entering the labour market for a range of reasons (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age, lack of confidence, lack of connections or disability etc.). Programme aims to improve career prospects, confidence and eventual graduate outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers staff time to set up, co-ordinate and review impact • Marketing, training and case studies to be produced to encourage greater take-up. £1,000 <p>Funding per year: Careers staff time (tbc) Events (Networking / induction / celebration event) £1,000 Feedback incentives £200 Case studies (filming / editing / marketing) £1,000</p> <p>Total: £2.2k</p> <p>2024/25: As above plus annual increase 2025/26: As above plus annual increase 2026/27: As above plus annual increase 2027/28 As above plus annual increase</p>	<p>Students demonstrate improved employability confidence levels from start and end of programme.</p> <p>Focus group session mid-programme analysis used to shape and inform subsequent programmes.</p> <p>Students demonstrate improved awareness of connections to improve career prospects.</p> <p>Number of students completing strengths profile CappFinity) as part of the mentoring programme.</p> <p>Students demonstrate improved positive Graduate Outcomes when compared to similar students who have not been involved in Professional Mentoring.</p>	<p>Y – linked to pre-16 attainment (SI 1), reversing continuation gaps (SI 4) and closing progression gaps (SI 6)</p>

<p>Pilot bespoke scheme in 2023/24 academic year: 50 students, increasing to 200 students in 2027/28.</p>	<p>Total across plan: £8.8k</p>		
<p>Enhanced financial support for students for employability-based activities to improve their career prospects.</p> <p>Adopt a targeted approach to the provision and uptake of our current Winchester Employability Fund (WEF), Study Abroad and Placement-based support funds to enhance our packages of financial support from September 2024 to meet the needs of widening participation students most in need.</p> <p>The fund is relevant for all levels of study. And will have targeted promotion to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-white students • Disadvantaged males • Disabled students (declared social or communication impairment) 	<p>2023/24 Establishment of an Employability Financial Support Review Task and Finish Group</p> <p>Development of a marketing plan and resources to link to interventions where financial support could support activities (part of existing careers staff role).</p> <p>Coordination of the WEF promotion, organisation, management, and reporting of the funding. This is currently within the job profile of a staff member in the Careers team.</p> <p>WEF funding £30,000 pa</p> <p>Coordination of the Study Abroad packages and allocated funding (circa £5,000 annually)</p> <p>Coordination of Placement financial support packages for Nursing students and allocated funding (TBC in 2023/24)</p> <p>Total across plan: £140k (plus nursing student money)</p>	<p>Clear understanding of the impact and use of financial support for widening participation students. Track take-up of funding and review engagement across courses and levels of study and feedback from participants as to the impact of the funding on their ability to undertake an activity to improve their employability and career readiness.</p> <p>More students engage with the funding available, and impact of the funding is measured.</p> <p>Increase of target student group undertaking volunteering, placements and gaining employment.</p> <p>Impact of the funding on students and spread of funding allocated across course areas.</p> <p>Monitor the impact of the funding on students through a self-reflection form pre and post funding.</p> <p>Increase in the number of students from the targeted student groups participating in study abroad.</p> <p>Increase in the number of students from the targeted student groups taking up placements.</p>	<p>Y – linked to reversing continuation gaps (SI 4) and closing awarding gaps (SI 5)</p>
<p>Careers activities to support networking skills, confidence building and to increase number and take-up of positive action opportunities advertised in partnership with employers and alumni.</p> <p>Partnership working with employers and central University Alumni team to provide networking opportunities and internships, placements, graduate schemes for students in the target groups.</p> <p>Exploring relationship with <u>Sanctuary Graduates</u> to promote diversity opportunities for students with large graduate recruiters.</p> <p>Explore the offer from <u>MyPlus Universities Club</u> (Disabled Students Job Club). Aim of supporting disabled students and specifically focused on students with declared social or communication impairment)</p>	<p><i>Existing staff time to advertise and promote opportunities. We would potentially generate income which would be put into WP support initiatives. Trial in 2023/24.</i></p> <p><i>Existing careers staff time to advertise and promote the initiative.</i></p> <p><i>Awaiting feedback on costs from MyPlus. Cost tbc. Likely £2,000 per year for bespoke sessions.</i></p> <p>Potential sessions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building disability confidence on campus • Openness: enabling students to be open about their disability with employers • Navigating job descriptions and applications <p>Total across plan: Est. £8k</p>	<p>We would expect to see improvements YOY for career registration (career readiness) from students involved in measurable activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved confidence levels • Improved awareness of how to use networks to find opportunities • Discover connections between degree skills and potential opportunities <p>An increase the number of positive action schemes on the University's Career Job Board.</p> <p>Increase in the number of employers the Careers service engages with from the Social Mobility Index.</p> <p>Increase the number of applications from student groups to employer opportunities promoted via Sanctuary Graduates.</p> <p>Take-up of confidence sessions delivered by Sanctuary Graduates.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Graduate support 'Beyond Winchester' initiative:</p> <p>Contact campaign targeted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-white students • Disadvantaged males • Disabled students (declared social or communication impairment) <p>Pastoral call for students to raise awareness of the support available to them from careers. The call includes an invitation to graduate support workshops, One-on-one careers guidance / coaching to help final year students with their next steps.</p> <p>Pilot ran in 2023 (June). Results are being analysed.</p>	<p>2024/25: £1,500 for student callers £7,000 Employability Development Programme (estimate.) Total: £8,500</p> <p>2025/26: As above plus annual increase 2026/27: As above plus annual increase 2027/28 As above plus annual increase</p> <p>Total across plan: £34k</p>	<p>Students aware of the support available to them from the Careers Service to support them with their next steps. Early intervention post course completion to support students.</p> <p>Student's aware of the options and support for further study and start-up.</p> <p>Number of final year students from the contact campaign booking in a one-to-one Careers Guidance Appointment.</p> <p>Students connected to Careers Service resources and job board to support career direction and ambitions of each student.</p> <p>Number of students invited and who attend a 'Beyond Winchester' final year</p>	<p>N</p>

<p>2023/24: Build on the pilot sessions run by the Careers Team. (18 students) and become an annual programme as of 24/25.</p>		<p>employability course for students who are unsure of their next steps following the completion of their degree.</p> <p>Number of students attending Careers Guidance appointments and tracked development post programme.</p> <p>Improved learning gain from students attending the Beyond Winchester course.</p> <p>Improved graduate outcomes for students contacted through the campaign.</p>	
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<h2>Evidence base & Rationale</h2>	<p>The University prioritises the development of each student as a 'whole person', recognising the importance of developing our students' academic skills, preparing them well for employment, but also supporting each individual student to make a significant contribution to the worlds around them.</p> <p>The selected activities identified under the strategic intervention aim to predominantly address the <i>Progression to graduate employment or further study (EORR 12)</i> via a variety of evidence-based interventions.</p> <p>In 2023/24 we will use a targeted marketing approach to raise awareness of the offer from the Careers Service for disabled students, males from disadvantaged backgrounds and non-white students. The contact campaign activities proposed for this plan will utilise students to make the calls and we will look to hire a graduate to work on an internship to support this work, thus giving real-world learning experience to our students.</p> <p>We will continue to review the Access & Participation dashboard targets throughout the duration of the plan, alongside the Graduate Outcome results. We will work closely with the Employability Financial Support Review Task and Finish Group to review the impact of our initiatives and ensure we are on track with our targets.</p> <p>The University of Winchester has committed to measuring student career readiness and its development over the years that a student studies at the University. To develop career readiness over time studied, it aims to work with students during their time at university, offering a range of employability interventions and opportunities that respond to the careers and employability development needs of students gained from analysing their responses to the questions asked during the annual enrolment process. Currently, we have one year of data and will be conducting further analysis of the data to inform and target our work with Progression, and to support the analysis of whether we are making progress with the impact of our activities.</p> <p>Students are asked to choose a response that most closely matches their current position. Generally, the following areas are identified as gaps for students at the University of Winchester:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having professional connections • Having general experience of the work place • Job search skills • Application skills. <p>A key recommendation is to provide more support to enable all students to develop in these areas., and for the Progression plans to support these identified gaps to impact on all students.</p> <p>In addition to the planned activities, we will explore a pilot Winchester Research Apprenticeship Placement (WRAP) initiative which will fund UG students to work with academics on their research. This will be a revised scheme to provide students from the progression target areas an opportunity for undergraduate students to work alongside members of staff on a research project, in order to gain first-hand experience of research, develop transferable skills, and encourage the consideration of continuing into postgraduate education at the University. We will run a pilot year 23/24 Programme, employing a student to co-ordinate and trial with 2 students undertaking a WRAP from the target student groups. We will explore staffing and funding associated with this initiative in 2023/24 academic year.</p> <p>We will develop and embed learning gain measures wherever possible to support the evaluation of our progression activities in recognition of the delay with graduate outcome data linked to activities and interventions.</p> <p>Further evidence base and rationale for each individual activity is available in <i>Annex B</i>.</p>
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<h2>Evaluation</h2>	<p>The strategic intervention is underpinned by a '<i>theory of change</i>' logic model (<i>type 1</i>), all activities are informed by evidence that similar or previous activities had an impact on student progression (as outlined in annex B). The strategic intervention will be monitored and evaluated annually, reported to our Student Experience Committee, Student Advisory Council and Board of Governors.</p> <p>Where possible, all activities will have evaluation embedded from the outset adopting empirical enquiry (<i>type 2</i>), primarily utilising pre- and post- surveys of skills, knowledge, behavioural or attitudinal changes. We will use focus groups to support the Professional Mentoring Programme evaluation.</p> <p>Most activities within the Strategic Intervention do not provide the opportunity for (<i>type 3</i>) causal evaluation due to the cohort size or type of delivery.</p> <p>Further details outlining the evaluation method and publication plan for each individual activity is available in <i>Annex B</i>.</p>
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Whole provider approach

Strategies and Policies

The University is committed to 'Our Vision for Transformational Education' as outlined in our new Strategic Plan (2023-2028).

The Access and Participation Plan is fundamentally guided by our strategic vision, deeply rooted in our original mission and purpose '**To educate, serve the common good and advance knowledge**', guided by our reimagined values '*love of learning, individual and shared endeavour, and making a difference*', and driven by the importance of *people, place and partnerships*.

Our strategic approach to access and participation, as outlined in the Introduction and Strategic Aim section (page 2) directly relates to one of our six new enabling strategies - the '**Education and Student Experience Strategy**' (currently under development) that seeks to champion and embed a holistic student experience across the whole student lifecycle.

In addition, the following key strategies, policies and procedures were considered when developing the Access and Participation Plan:

- **Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy** - articulates the University's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity of learning and teaching for all students by mainstreaming several adjustments. It is supported through the dissemination of good practice and the professional advice of Student Support and Success and the Learning and Teaching Development Unit (LTDU).
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** - defines the equality, diversity and inclusion duties of the University towards its staff and students.
- **Graduate Employability and Higher Study Strategy** (currently being reviewed in line with the new University strategy). Guided by the Education Committee, the Careers and Opportunities Hub recommends that students build their employability throughout their whole university experience, within their course and through extracurricular activity.
- **Mental Health Strategy: Partnership working for better Staff and Student Mental Health** – underpinned by the University Mental Health Charter framework established by Student Minds and endorsed by The British Psychological Society.
- **Supporting Students to Succeed: Extenuating Circumstances and Support to Study Procedures (UG and PG taught only)** – details the processes through which the University will support students to succeed academically at Winchester (and via collaborative partners). There are two 'routes' to the University's Support Framework. The first route is known as Extenuating Circumstances and is instigated by students, with the support and involvement of the Faculty and Student Support and Success. The second route is known as Support to Study and is driven by the University and its staff in response to more enduring extenuating circumstances.

ACCESS

OUTREACH: To work with local communities to increase the low rates of pre-16 attainment and access into Higher Education

Strategic Intervention 1 outlines our commitments to addressing pre-16 attainment and access, however our activity in widening access through collaboration and targeted outreach extends beyond this work, including:

- ***Children in Care, Care Leavers and Care-Experienced*** – as one of the first universities to provide bespoke support packages and outreach for care-experienced young people we are proud

members of the [National Network for the Education of Care Leavers \(NNECL\)](#), we also contribute to local virtual school and college networks of practice and host the [First Star Scholars Scheme](#).

- **Estranged students** – recognising the additional challenges facing students estranged from their families, without the support or approval of a family network, we have signed up to the [Stand Alone Pledge](#) and offer a support package and designated student advisor.
- **Young Carers and Young Adult Carers (YACs)** – in 2016 we received a *Times Higher Education Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative Award* for championing young carers access and participation in higher education, we remain committed to this work as members of the [Young Carers Alliance](#) hosted by the Carers Trust and leading academic research to enhance young carers educational outcomes.
- **Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman and Boaters (GTRSB)** – we were one of the first five universities to sign the [GTRSB into HE Pledge](#). We have since hosted a national conference, developed a support package and begun working with [Hampshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service \(EMTAS\)](#) to deliver bespoke 'Intro to HE' sessions for young people in schools.
- **Service Children, military spouses, veterans and ex-serving personnel** – we are committed to supporting armed forces communities and to upholding the [Armed Forces Covenant](#). We have led Ministry of Defence (MoD) funded research to identify children and young people from military families were less likely to enter HE we developed the [Service Children Progression Alliance](#) to drive policy, practice and research developments across the UK to support the educational progression of Service Children. Since 2022 we have also been working closely with [The Forces Employment Charity](#) on the European Social Fund (ESF) EM3 Veterans and Families Programme, conducting research and developing evidence-informed interventions to increase the numbers of post-16 Service Children, spouses and veterans entering HE.
- **Asylum Seekers and Refugees** – we are proud to be the South's first University of Sanctuary, having been awarded sanctuary status in 2018 and re-accredited in 2022. Since introducing Sanctuary awards to asylum seekers and refugees in 2010, we have supported over 56 students with a Sanctuary scholarship to enable them to access university study at Winchester. In June 2023, as part of Refugee Week, we hosted an Education Conference for local schools, colleges and universities attended by over 50 staff and learners. Next year, we will also be one of two universities working with [Refugee Education UK](#) to pilot a new Displaced Students Initiative offering a student displaced outside of the UK offered a place on one of our courses with financial support and accommodation.

We are also an active participant in the collaborative award-winning **[Southern Universities Network \(SUN\)](#)** which comprises five other universities in the region (Dorset, Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight). [University name] hosts and supports SUN staff members to deliver the Uni Connect programme.

With oversight from representatives of the University of Winchester, the SUN delivers pre-16 and post-16 outreach activity where economies of scale and added value are leveraged through a collaborative approach. Strategic outreach collaboration is a key priority of the SUN's work, ensuring that students from underrepresented backgrounds have access to the information, advice and guidance they need to make informed choices about their futures. The SUN's wide range of activities encompasses classroom-based sessions, university-hosted events such as the 'Festivals of Industries'; accredited teacher CPD programmes designed to support HE progression of underrepresented groups, and the well-established SUN FE programme within the colleges, promoting cohesive engagement between college and HEIs.

Specific goals and success criteria include increasing: progression levels and applications from students domiciled in target areas; the attainment of learners; the successful progression of Young

Carers, Estranged Students, Care-Experienced Students, and Students from Military Families; and the number of young males participating in higher education from targeted wards.

Throughout 2023-25 academic years, the SUN and the University of Winchester will work together to deliver a range of attainment-raising interventions focusing on cross-partnership work with local authorities, third-party providers, and the Careers Enterprise Company to improve attainment for under-represented learners in HE.

RECRUITMENT: to improve our recruitment and admissions activity to ensure equity onto our courses

Under Strategic Interventions 2 and 3, we have outlined how we will continue to review and develop our recruitment and admissions activity, including through:

- Delivery of tailored post-16 outreach in schools and colleges, via CPD and the establishment of a new online practitioners' network.
- Enhancing our COMPACT Scheme to recognise applicants with disrupted education and support their access and transition into HE at Winchester,
- Convening a new Contextualised Admissions Working Group to establish a new policy that recognises students' backgrounds and previous engagement with us.
- Continuous review of application and offer rates for different student demographics to address areas of concern.
- Further training, development and enhancements to address 'unconscious bias' in university admissions, particularly for UK-domicile black mature applicant onto Nursing, social work and other allied health programmes.

DIVERSITY OF PATHWAYS: To provide flexible and alternative pathways for progression to higher education that support the local skills gaps.

Under Strategic Intervention 2 we have outlined that we will continue to have informed continuous improvement across our portfolio of flexible study routes, alongside improved marketing and promotion.

We currently have 218 Foundation Year students studying across 24 programmes. Since its inception in 2018, the number of Foundation Year programmes has grown considerably in ways which challenge our commitment to coherence and quality of the Foundation Year experience. Following an internal review, in the context of the Ofqs Quality and Standards framework, a Sprint Curriculum Enhancement Process has been in-place to develop a Foundation Year which is coherent, subject relevant and can be successfully implemented across all subjects and faculties. In September 2023 we will be introducing the new revised threefold model for our foundation years that seeks to enhance student engagement, experience and outcomes by aligning and integrating the development of academic skills with broader foundational and subject-specific knowledge (skills, breadth and depth).

ON-COURSE / SUCCESS

INCLUSION & BELONGING: To create an inclusive learning and teaching environment that enhances transition, provides a sense of belonging and enables students to reach their potential.

As acknowledged under Strategic Interventions 4 and 5, under our new 'Education and Student Experience Strategy', we will seek to embed a student-centred holistic whole-lifecycle approach through our faculty working closely with the Student Support and Success department.

To date, our Learning and Teaching Development Unit (LTDU) have developed a series of resources, case studies and validation/revalidation toolkits designed to support academic teaching staff developing and enhancing their programmes and modules, including via validation processes. The Developing and Enhancing Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) module includes modules on:

- Assessment and Feedback
- Inclusive Learning and Teaching
- Technology Enhanced Learning
- Employability in the Curriculum
- Student Voice: Working in Partnership

The Quality Office have also begun exploring ways to incorporate data and plans regarding awarding gaps into the Programme Improvement Plans (PIPs) that will be supported by LTDU and the Head of Participation and Success with a series of roadshows planned to support programme leaders identify and embed inclusive practice under the PIPs.

In September 2023, we will also be launching our new *Transition Programme* designed to set clearer expectations, support the shift to, through and beyond HE-level study and build a sense of belonging and community. The programme will include an online orientation module for all students including units on 'Dignity and Diversity' and 'Budgeting for Study'; a series of pre-arrival familiarisation days for students from specific backgrounds; a revised welcome week and enrolment process; and thematic weeks covering employability, student engagement, budgeting, academic skills and wellbeing in weeks 1 to 5 for all students.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING: To ensure the university environment and experience supports the maintenance of good mental health and wellbeing for students to actively engage in their studies.

In April 2022 we launched the 2022-25 Mental Health Strategy: Partnership working for better Staff and Student Mental Health. The strategy, underpinned by the evidence-based University Mental Health Charter established by ***Student Minds*** and endorsed by ***The British Psychological Society***, takes a whole-university approach towards a vision for embedding a culture of promoting and supporting positive mental health and wellbeing. The Mental Health Strategy will also feature under our new (currently under development) enabling strategy 'Education and Student Experience Strategy' that champions embedding holistic student experience within programs and across faculties through faculty-based Student Support and Success Advisors and Personal Academic Tutors under our **Supporting Students to Succeed: Extenuating Circumstances and Support to Study Procedures**.

Recognising an increased need to ***support students with faculty-based pastoral needs*** to improve their academic engagement, the University has introduced a number of measures. These have included the establishment of specific student facing roles within the faculties, firstly under the Faculty Wellbeing and Employability Tutors (FWETs) in 2019/20 for two academic years which, following feedback from staff and students, moved to centralised roles as ***Student Support and Success Advisors (SSSAs)***, effectively operating as a point of contact between Student Support and Success and the faculties. The SSSAs created strong relationships and worked closely with academic and programme administration colleagues to support retention, progression and student success utilising an academic engagement dashboard and Support to Study Procedure to initiate interventions. In 2021/22 SSSAs received bookings from over 1200 students, thus reaching nearly 15% of our students. They also led and/or attended over 500 Support to Study meetings, providing guidance and supporting retention of students in most need of help. SSSAs have also been integral to the Student Support and Success extenuating circumstances process, for which we received just over 600 applications from September to June. Academic and administrative staff have noted the "very positive impact" that the SSSAs have had on students. SSSAs have received feedback from students, stating sessions have "helped clarify the way forward" and have "greatly appreciated extra support via STS when things have been particularly difficult" (examples of

2021/22 qualitative student feedback received via email). The SSSAs and **Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)**, informed by learner analytics, work together to ensure students are supported throughout their academic studies.

FINANCE: To provide support to students impacted by increased cost pressures that affect their ability to complete their course or obtain a good degree.

We aim to maintain our good record of retention of students at the University of Winchester with the following schemes.

- **Potential students:** Financial support will be made available to potential undergraduate students to eliminate financial barriers to attending interviews and open days.
- **Undergraduate students:** We recognise that the cost-of-living crisis is impacting our students in many different ways and have spent the last two years working with our Students' Union to enhance our provision of financial support through a variety of bursaries, scholarships and 'in kind' provision.
- **Postgraduate students:** We have set-up the *Postgraduate Access Scholarship Scheme (PASS)*, providing a fee discount to students from specific under-represented backgrounds wishing to pursue a taught masters (eligible courses are reviewed each academic year).

Bursaries and Scholarships:

The following applies to full-time UK/EU undergraduate students and undergraduate ITE students:

- We will offer a **Household Income-based Bursary** to Students with a household income under £25,000 (as assessed by Student Finance) who will receive £200 in each year of study, a total of £600.
- We will offer a **King Alfred Bursary for care leavers** and a **Stand Alone Bursary for Estranged students** both consisting of a £75 catering card on arrival for those in University Halls of Residence, as well as a cash bursary of £2,000 per year, plus an additional £1,000 cash bursary on completion of their course in the final year of study.
- We will also offer a **Lady Mary Bursary for Young Adult Carers** and a **GTRSB into HE Bursary** for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman and Boaters (GTRSB). Both awards will include a cash bursary of £500 for each year of study, paid in two equal instalments, and £500 upon graduation.
- We will continue to **enhance the application process for the Student Support Fund**. The funds will be allocated to students in need of additional financial support, as assessed by the Student Support and Success department.
- **Disability funding** will be allocated to help meet the shortfall left because of the changes made to the Disabled Students' Allowance.
- We will provide a **Study-Abroad Bursary** and **Employability Fund** to eligible students with financial barriers to accessing these opportunities.
- We will enhance the **BECOME Scholarship award for students from ethnic minority backgrounds** entering courses in Education, Health and Wellbeing. Twenty awards of £500 per year will be made available to eligible first-degree undergraduate students and five awards of £1,000 for students on a PGCE.
- We will explore '**Bridging Loans**' to support Nursing students with up-front costs for their placements.

CLOSE AWARDING GAPS: To address gaps in degree outcomes via targeted academic and pastoral support interventions.

We have made addressing awarding gaps an institutional priority, advancing our knowledge and understanding of the gaps and developing an inclusive curriculum framework and toolkits to support this. However, whilst a cultural shift and targeted approach has seen some progress, large awarding gaps remain particularly for black students and males from the most-disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Under this plan, we will seek to advance this work through a series of evidence-based academic coaching and peer-assisted learning interventions. Alongside these activities we will also develop and establish mechanisms for programme leaders to identify and address programme-based awarding gaps supported via our Learning and Teaching Development Unit (LTDU), Widening Participation team and Quality Office.

For further details please see [Strategic Intervention 5: Closing awarding gaps](#).

PROGRESSION (FURTHER STUDY & GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT)

EMPLOYABILITY: To embed employability within the curriculum and provide targeted initiatives to support students less likely to progress to further study or graduate employment.

The University prioritises the development of each student as a 'whole person', recognising the importance of developing our students' academic skills, preparing them well for employment, but also supporting each individual student to make a significant contribution to the worlds around them.

The Careers Service has provided a wide range of activities to support student employability to date, and we are in the process of reviewing these to monitor the impact on all students, but in particular to improve the progression rates for non-white students, disadvantaged males and disabled students (particularly those with social or communication impairments). The activities outlined in the plan are designed to support students from the target groups as they progress through their student journey.

We have devoted considerable strategic attention to our students' progression over the last four years. At the heart of this work is ensuring that employability is woven into every curriculum in tailored ways. We have made a significant investment in our Careers department, including a dedicated modern space and Faculty Employability Advisers (Careers Advisers) allocated to each Faculty to support students and graduates with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed following course completion. We offer a full menu of services but based on a theoretical model of guidance and programme employability aims to include:

- Self-awareness, self-development, and self-promotion.
- Opportunity awareness and where their course can lead them.
- Making decisions; matching interests, values and motivations to strengths and experience.
- Transition skills; where to look and how to make a successful application.

Employability is seen as everyone's responsibility at Winchester, with a framework that reflects both the wider Strategy and Employability definition. The Careers and Opportunities Hub recommends that students build their employability throughout their whole university experience, within their course and through extracurricular activity.

We recognise that to make the most impact with students' employability must be embedded within the curriculum. This approach embraces modules focused on career skills, in-session lectures from Faculty Employability Advisers, modules on volunteering or placements, authentic assessments, tailored careers events, guest lecturers from professionals and alumni visitors, toolkits on employability to support courses going through approval, and workshops facilitated by Careers staff to develop course teams.

Recognising that some students will still need support following the completion of their degree, we offer 'Careers Advice for Life' to all graduates and provide a rich range of resources, accessible online

and on campus to suit graduate needs. Offering a range of volunteering, placements, internships and graduate opportunities suited to our course portfolio are all a key part of the offer.

Student consultation

The University of Winchester is proud to work in partnership with students, and with the Winchester Student Union, to create new opportunities to facilitate student engagement in the 'gaps' of participation, design and initiate change, tackle the barriers to higher education and champion student involvement.

Student consultation on the development of this Access and Participation Plan has been achieved through a number of mechanisms, including:

- **Student Access and Participation Consultants:** In February 2023 we recruited a small pool of students, all of whom had a variety of different lived experiences of risks to equality of opportunity, to act as Access and Participation Consultants to support the development of our plan and ensure considered student voice and representation. The students met regularly to discuss components of the APP, including our assessment of performance, planned areas of activity, strategic interventions, and investment. They were also invited to join our APP Action Groups and APP thematic workshops (see below).
- **Student Union (SU) Executive Committee engagement:** The SU President, Vice President Education and Welfare, and Deputy CEO were all invited members of the universities APP Action Groups where they could review our assessment of performance against our current plan and engage in discussion items regarding the development of the new plan. The officers met with the Head of Participation and Success on several occasions to consider developments of the plan and indicated their primary concerns of the cost-of-living crisis and students' mental wellbeing, particularly isolation following the impacts of the pandemic. All of which were considered and addressed under the thematic working groups and subsequent strategic interventions. Additionally, the Head of Participation and Success annually supports the data analysis of widening participation characteristics for the SU's *Student Engagement Demographics Report*. Lastly, the SU President sits on the Board of Governors who approve the draft APP prior to submission.
- **APP thematic workshops:** Following the initial assessment of performance and consultations at APP Action Groups and with the SU Executive, the Head of Participation and Success held 6x open thematic workshops for staff and students (SU Executive and SAP Consultants). The 'theory of change' based workshops informed the development of the Strategic Interventions and addressed the following themes: strategic relationships with schools and pre-16 attainment; recruitment and admissions of students from under-represented backgrounds; mental health and the impact of covid; cost of living crisis and financial support; continuation, student satisfaction and degree outcomes; graduate employment.
- **Student groups and committees:** Drafted strategic intervention outlines were presented and discussed with the *SU Equality and Diversity Forum* and *Student Advisory Council*, feedback was considered and featured within the final versions.
- **Wider student feedback/consultation:** It was not possible to host wider-student consultations on the APP as a whole due to time constraints. However, the assessment of performance and development of the plan was informed by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Student Voice Forum, the 2022 Student Transitions Survey and the '*Being Well, Doing Well*' May 2023 survey conducted by the external research organisation *Alterline* compiling responses student insights on mental health and wellbeing from over 10% of our UG student population (n=843) and comparing these to the national benchmark.

Evaluation of the plan

Evaluation self-assessment

In February 2023, the Head of Participation and Success conducted the ***OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment Tool***, identifying that the University was currently positioned as 'Emerging' across all five dimensions (strategic context; programme design; evaluation design; evaluation implementation; learning from evaluation). However, the most recent assessment prior to this, May 2019, indicated advanced evaluative practice under the first two categories (strategic context and programme design).

At the time of the February 2023 assessment, the scorings were reflective of the current position of the University having been through a significant period of instability due to the implications of the COVID19 pandemic and several internal restructures. Further reflection suggested that previously advanced evaluative practice was predominantly isolated within targeted initiatives conducted by the widening participation team staff and not widespread across the University. The current scoring of 'Emerging' also demonstrated a shift in activity within widening participation and a loss of monitoring and evaluation processes more broadly. Most notably, the assessment further evidenced a need for enhancing monitoring and evaluation more broadly across the University concerning interventions directly impacting access and participation.

Following the approval of the evidence-based strategic interventions and accompanying evaluation plans, in 2023/24 the new Strategic Intervention (SI) leads will conduct the optional 'Evaluation of Activities' self-assessment template under the tool for their respective interventions. A full re-assessment will then be conducted based on the new plans that will be presented to the Student Experience Committee (SEC) outlining recommendations and actions to improve each of the five dimensions. Thereafter, the ***OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment Tool*** will then be conducted and reported upon on an annual basis.

Embedding and enhancing evaluation

We have drawn on a range of resources and evidence to inform our evaluation strategy. This includes publications and resources produced by [TASO \(Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education\)](#) 'What Works' Centre for improving equality in higher education.

As outlined within our six strategic interventions, all activity is considered evidence-based and underpinned by a 'theory of change' or logic model (*type 1* evaluation). As such, we intend to ensure evaluation is embedded from the outset. In the majority of instances, this will involve adopting empirical enquiry (*type 2*), primarily utilising pre- and post- surveys of skills, knowledge, behavioural or attitudinal changes to identify correlations between the intervention and outcomes. In addition to the questions used to assess and inform the delivery of our interventions, we will also seek to employ validated survey designs such as the *TASO* validated *widening participation questionnaire* to establish associated outcomes.

Most activities do not provide the opportunity for (*type 3*) causal evaluation due to the cohort size or type of delivery. However, some activities and workshops that are delivered via our Uni-Connect, and other third-party organisations, utilise external evaluation across much larger cohorts providing opportunities for randomised control trials or quasi-experimental design.

We also recognise that the evaluation of activities may also provide evidence that new or well-established initiatives are not showing impact. In these instances, we will first review the methods used to ensure that the results are not reflective of how the evaluation was administered or the lack of reliability of the measure. Assuming these factors have been accounted for, where necessary we would either change the intervention or remove it completely.

Research, collaboration and advancing knowledge

We are proud to work collaboratively with colleagues from other universities and third-sector organisations to enhance the knowledgebase of the risks to equality of opportunity in HE and 'what works' to address these risks.

We are partnering with other institutions on an **ANTF funded project**, led by the University of Portsmouth, to allow us insight into our student body's perceptions of Being, Belonging and Becoming. We will run a survey of our level 0 and level 4 students which is intended to encompass:

- First impressions of staff (Belonging)
- First impressions of study (Being, Belonging)
- Peer relationships (Belonging)
- Perceptions about own experience (Being, Belonging)
- Relationships with university academic staff (Belonging)
- Personal tutoring experience (Being, Belonging, Becoming)
- Access to technology (Belonging)
- Overall student experience and satisfaction.

The new measures will inform the impact evaluation of our Strategic Interventions 4 and 5.

The Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance 2019-2022 Impact Report, produced by external evaluators Tiller Research, demonstrated the contribution the SCiP Alliance has made in the last three years to commissioning and leading rigorous research, the development of an online repository and dissemination of research at multiple stakeholder events. As the lead institution for the SCiP Alliance we have budgeted £290k across the length of the plan towards continued dissemination of high-quality research and evidence to inform policy and practice developments to improve the educational outcomes of Service Children.

The University of Winchester is also a member of the Southern Universities Network (SUN) Monitoring and Evaluation Group and the National Educational Opportunities Network (NEON), often making the most of opportunities to access professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their evaluation skills and engage in peer-reviews. Under our new plan, we also plan to work with partner organisations renowned for utilising external evaluation to inform programme delivery and impact.

In addition to the publication and dissemination plans identified under our Strategic Interventions, where we have outlined intentions to produce case studies and conference papers against some elements of our planned activities, we will also continue to respond to national calls for evidence and seek opportunities to contribute to new areas of research and evaluation.

Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The University's Access and Participation Plan is approved by the Board of Governors (BoG). The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Engagement) has overall responsibility for its design and delivery.

As of September 2023, we will establish a new monitoring and reporting structure to ensure accountability under each Strategic Intervention. Each of the six interventions has at least two staff roles designated as institutional leads who will meet routinely to review plans and progress against each activity outlined in the APP. Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating reports against each intervention will be produced by the designated leads and presented to the APP Action Group, consisting of staff and student APP champions from academic faculties, professional services departments, the students union and Student Access and Participation Consultants whom meet at least twice a year to enable progress is made against the six strategic intervention work plans.

The Head of Participation and Success (Operational Lead) will report on the development of the Access and Participation Plan to the Student Experience Committee (SEC) and an annual monitoring and performance report on progress against the APP is provided to the Board of Governors (BoG) for review. In addition, routine reporting lines and discussion papers are produced to Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the University Leadership Team (ULT) and the Student

Advisory Council (SAC) to ensure continued leadership engagement and student consultation.

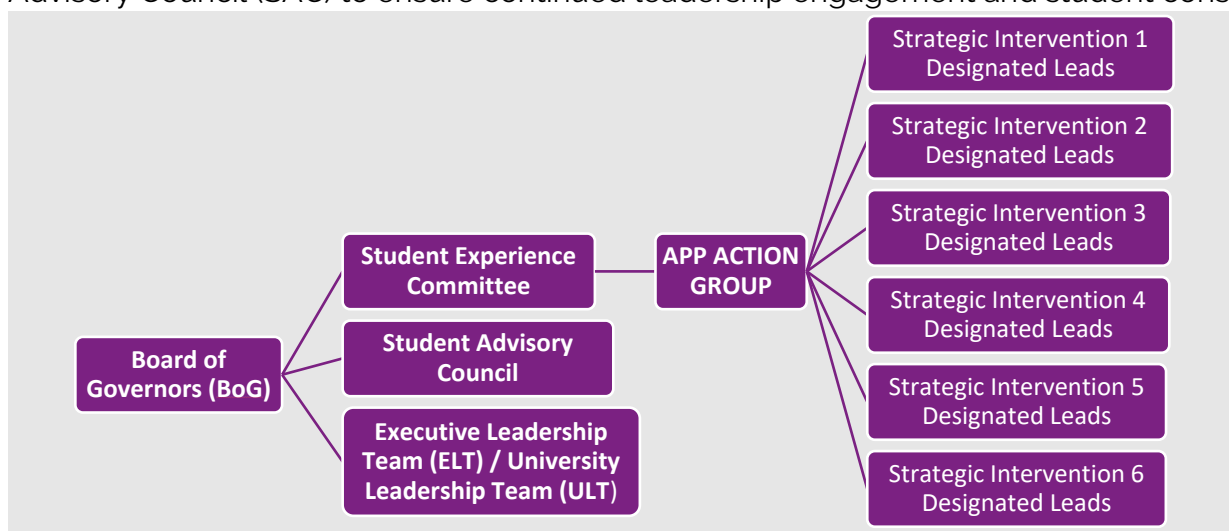


Figure 3 – Monitoring and reporting structure for Access and Participation Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28

Provision of information to students

The University will communicate information about fees, financial support and activities available through a range of different channels to ensure the maximum exposure for the support on offer. This includes:

- Detailed information on the University website (external and internal) including sub-sites for incoming students.
- Presentations at pre- and post- application Open Days/Recruitment Events.
- Focussed advice sessions given to Advisors from Compact Partner colleges and schools.
- Tailored advice sessions for applicants and prospective applicants via in-reach and out-reach.
- Use of the University Twitter and Facebook pages.
- Targeted emails and SMS messaging to eligible students.
- CampusConnect platform
- University of Winchester app
- 'New web-based Practitioner Network (to be established by 2024)

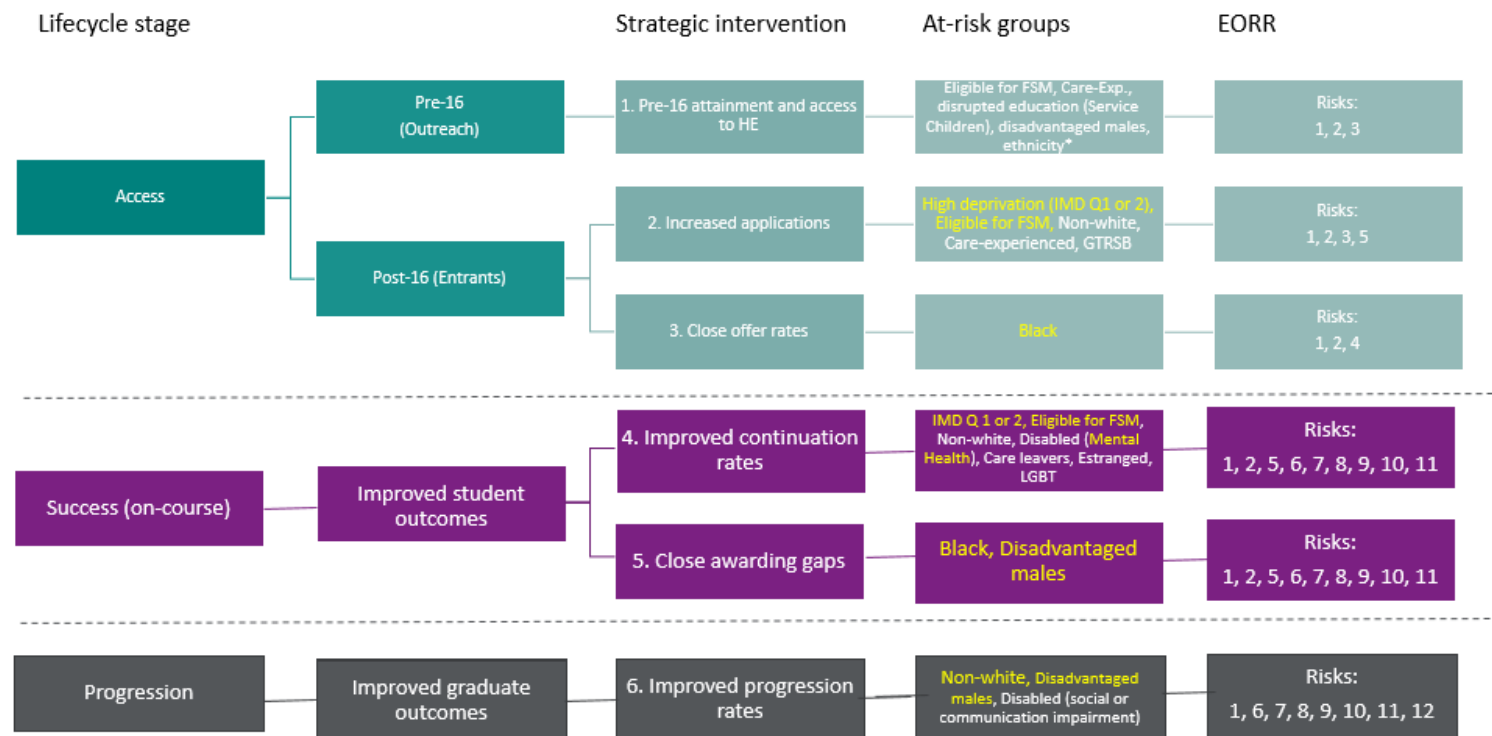
These various forms of communication will ensure that both prospective and current students are informed of the different funding available to them. Students who defer entry will be able to access the financial support available on year of entry. Continuing students will be eligible for the financial support advertised to them when they applied, subject to any inflationary increases or decisions to increase the support offered. Unless otherwise stated, support outlined in this agreement applies to full-time UK and EU undergraduate, undergraduate ITT and PGCE students only. In addition, to be eligible for the support outlined, students must be personally liable for 100% of the tuition fee in a given academic year. The University does not have any sub contractual arrangements and there will be no impact on validation arrangements. All figures given are correct at time of writing. Changes may be made subject to any government announcements regarding changes to the fee structure or provision of financial support.

Annex A: Assessment of performance

We have identified the following six areas of risk to equality of opportunity that we intend to address under this plan. Figure 3 outlines how we have mapped the relevant EORR (Equality of Opportunity Risk Register) categories outlined by the Office for Students to at-risk cohorts under each area of the student-lifecycle and our six strategic interventions.

We also recognise the complexity of data, objectives and targets pertaining to a set of individual characteristics that fail to acknowledge the intersection of different characteristics on the risks to equality of opportunity in higher education. As such, when compiling this data, where possible we have acknowledged and explored the intersectionality of multiple characteristics. Of particular note, we identified some gaps under the Office for Students measures of 'Associations between characteristics of students' (ABCs) under access and progression which we intend to review and address under our planned interventions.

Figure 4: Mapping cohorts and risks to lifecycle stage and strategic intervention



Risk 1 – ACCESS (Pre-16 Attainment):

Pre-16 attainment has been inextricably linked to access to higher education (Office for Students 'Insight brief: Schools, attainment and the role of higher education' (April, 2022)). Further evidence indicates that these gaps begin to emerge at foundation stages, in early years, and become more prevalent for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (see [Education Data Lab analysis of National Pupil Database](#), 2019).

Locally, and nationally, **disadvantaged children have been less likely to achieve grade 5 or above in GCSE English or Maths**, the attainment gap in Hampshire rose to 34.7pp in 2022 compared to the 2018/19 (pre-covid) gap of 31.5pp and the national disadvantage gap index – a broader measure of child performance at school – reached its largest point in 10 years after widening throughout the pandemic.

Extracts from the Hampshire County Council [Attainment of Children and Young People in Hampshire Schools Report](#) (March 2022):

*"Pre-pandemic, trend data shows **outcomes for children and young people experiencing vulnerability were proving stubborn to shift**. Data for 2022 confirms that, nationally and locally, the impact of the pandemic is significant, with a widening of educational inequalities for children and young people experiencing vulnerability."*

For some cohorts there is further evidence of poor attainment being linked to their circumstances:

- **Care-experienced young people** – According to the most recent [government widening participation data](#) only "14% of pupils who were looked after continuously for 12 months or more at 31st March 2018 progressed to HE by age 19 by 2021/22, compared to 47% of all other pupils" (HM Government, July 2023). And nationally only 17.5% of young people in care obtain a basic pass at GCSE in English and Maths compared to 59% of their peers, according to [First Star Scholars UK](#) these figures that have not changed notably for over a decade.
- **Service Children (children from forces families)** – The majority of evidence on the educational attainment of children from Armed forces Families (Service Children, hereafter) suggests similar outcomes to their peers. However, further analysis of the literature by the [Armed Forces Foundation and York St John University](#) suggests that the "while the research literature is lacking and currently presents inconsistent evidence on the educational attainment and experiences, an emerging body of policy documentation is highlighting the need to support Service Pupils". McCulloch and Hall (2016) found that fewer Service Children progress onto higher education, participation rate was estimated to be 24% compared to the national average of 43%. Further still, the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance, acknowledge that "Moving between schools can impact on students' academic outcomes. This can occur because of delays, poor communication between schools, inadequate transition arrangements (particularly for those with additional learning needs and those sitting examinations) and differences in curriculum provision. Mobility can also impact on students' emotional wellbeing, for example through disrupted friendships and an increased potential for bullying". [McCulloch et al., \(2018\)](#) also provided further evidence that the distinct experiences of Service Children, including frequent mobility and family separation, can lead "the erosion of ambition to remain in education" (EORR 3 – perceptions of HE). According to the [SCiP Alliance targeting tool](#), Hampshire has one of the highest proportions of Service Children – 7215 service children, an average of 15 per school. At the University, we typically attract higher proportions of students from armed forces families (6.6% of our 2023 January deadline applications self-declared that they had one or both parents in the armed forces compared to 3.8% nationally and 4.8% across our competitor group).

- **Disadvantaged males** – The [2016 Sutton Trust 'Class Differences'](#) research brief acknowledged that “White British FSM (Free School Meals) boys achieve the lowest grades at GCSE of any main ethnic group, with just 24% achieving 5 A*-C grades at GCSE, inc. English and maths”. Similarly, in the 2019 the [Education Data Lab analysis of National Pupil Database](#), consistently the lowest attaining group were boys classified as coming from the most disadvantaged backgrounds (*high impact, long-term disadvantage*) who attained around one GCSE grade lower than would be expected if they made average progress based on their Foundation Stage score.
- **Children with English as an additional language (EAL)** – The Government report '[English proficiency of pupils with English as an additional language](#)' (2020) reads “that there is a strong relationship between a pupil's English proficiency level as recorded in year 6 and their likelihood of reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of key stage 2. There is (also) a strong relationship between a pupil's English proficiency level as recorded in year 11 and their attainment 8 score at the end of key stage 4. The average attainment 8 score of those pupils who were recorded as being new to English was 14.2 compared to 53.5 for those who were recorded as fluent in English. Pupils assessed as fluent in English have a higher average attainment 8 score than pupils whose first language was English (46.5)”. In Hampshire, the 2022 school census data reported that 13,472 (7.4 per cent) children were recorded as having English as a second or additional language (EAL). This figure represents an increase of 0.77 per cent from the 2021 figure (12,509), while numbers have risen yearly for the last three years.
- **Refugees and asylum seekers** - Research on '[the educational outcomes of refugee and asylum-seeking children in England](#)' from the Education Policy Institute, supported by Unbound Philanthropy, found that unaccompanied asylum-seekers are on average over three years behind non-migrant children at school by the time they take their GCSEs. The 2021 gap in attainment between unaccompanied asylum-seeking pupils and non-migrant children of 37.4 months is to be similar in size to the gap for pupils with special needs and disabilities who have the most severe needs. In contrast to unaccompanied children, resettled refugee children and asylum-seeking children living with family members in receipt of financial support from the government, are estimated to experience a much smaller school attainment gap on average, but one that is still substantial – trailing their non-migrant peers by around a year and a half (17.3 months) at GCSE. In the 2021-22 academic year, the Hampshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) received 330 referrals for children identified as refugees – suggesting an increased need for educational outreach.
- **Pupils from gypsy, Roma or traveler (GRT) communities** – In [2021 the Education Committee flagged concerns regarding the educational outcomes of GRT children and young people](#), citing “*at GCSE level, FSM-eligible children from Gypsy/Roma (16.9) and Irish Traveller (22.2) backgrounds had the lowest Attainment 8 scores of all comparable ethnic groups and below the average of 34.9. In 2019/20, just 8.1% of Gypsy/Roma and 20% of Irish Traveller pupils achieved a grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE, compared with a figure of 49.9% for all pupils... (And) When it comes to accessing higher education by the age of 19, young people from the Gypsy/Roma (5.2%) and Irish Traveller (7.6%) communities again come at the bottom of the table.*”

In addition to pre-16 attainment many of these cohorts also face additional risks, as identified under the EORR, particularly lack of support networks, knowledge about routes into HE and imposter syndrome, also limit their access to higher education. As such, interventions seeking to address pre-16 attainment should, where possible, aim to also address these associated risks.

Risk 2 – ACCESS (Post 16 Applications / entry rates):

When observing the [Office for Students Access and Participation Data Dashboard](#), the most notable consistent gaps in entry for students are between students from the most and least deprived neighbourhoods (IMD 2019 Q5:Q1) – sitting above 28 percentage points for the last 6-years of available data (figure 5). Similarly, when comparing proportions of both IMD quintiles 1 and 2 to the sector

average we can see that we continue to recruit much lower proportions (21.3% 4-year aggregate compared to 42.7%, gap of -21.4pp).

Access gap: Deprivation quintile (IMD 2019) – Quintile 5 compared with 1

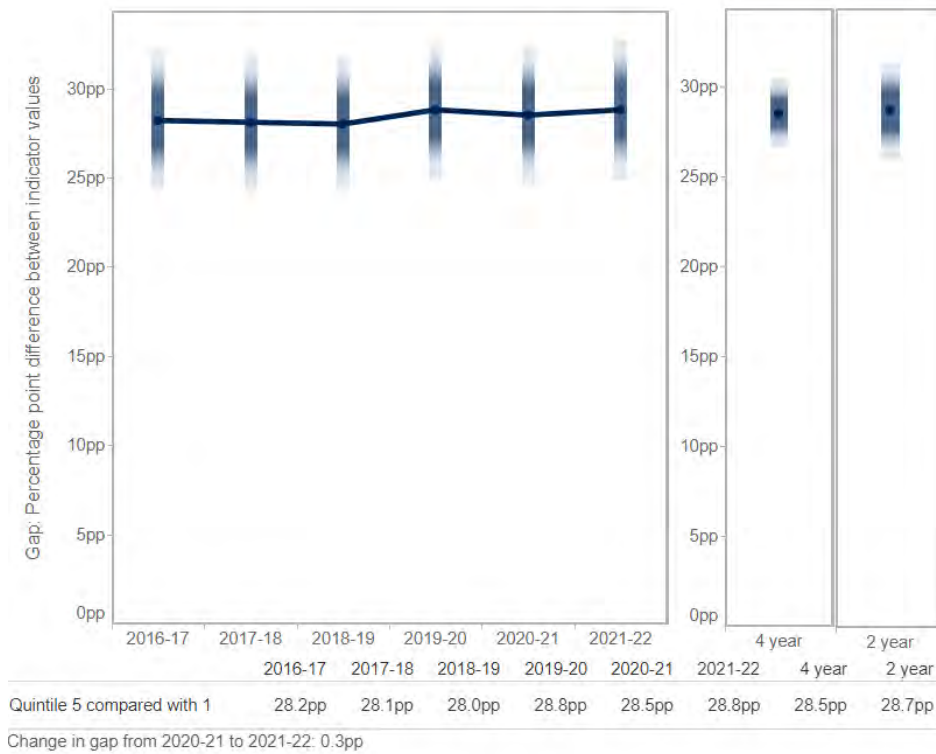
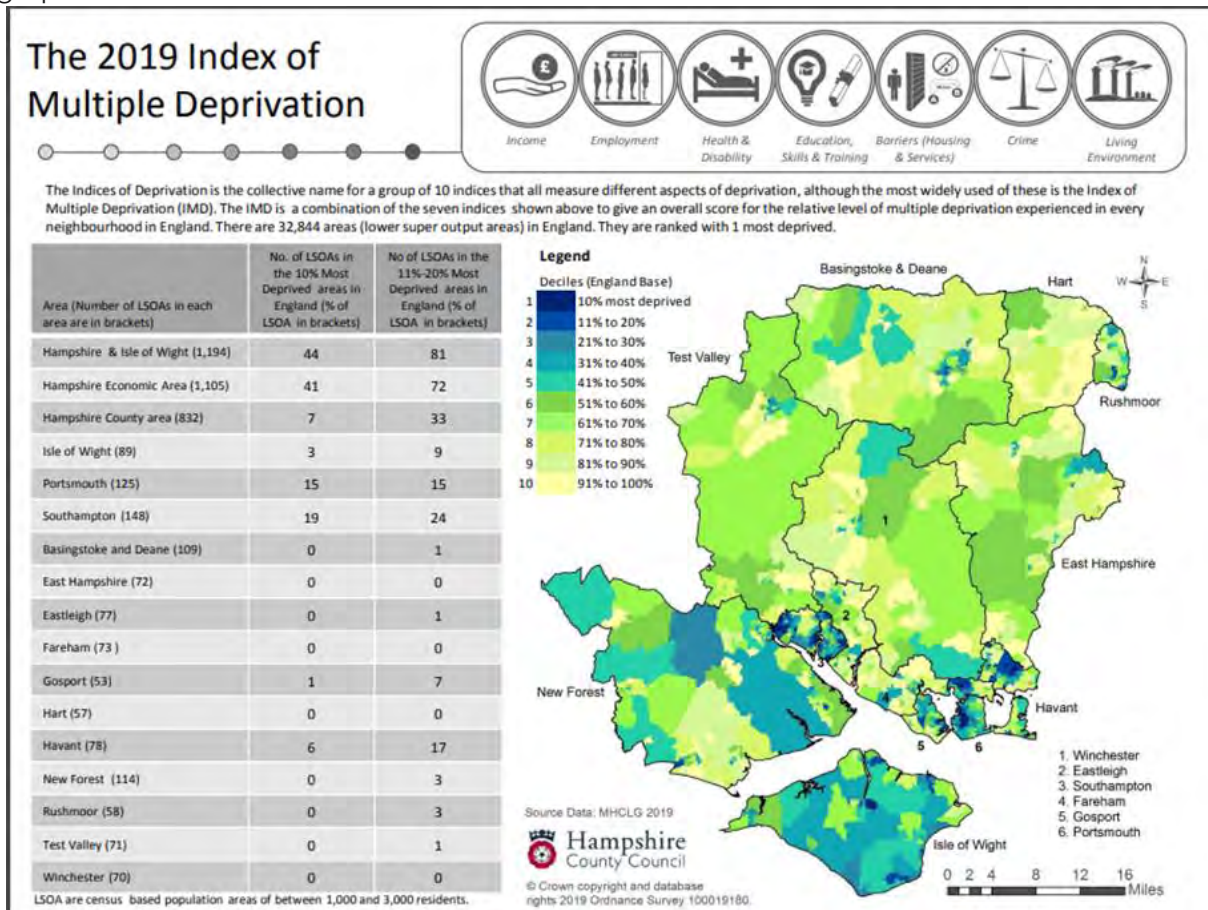


Figure 5: Access gap - Deprivation quintiles (IMD 2019) - Quintile 5 compared with 1 (University of Winchester (SOURCE: Office for Students dashboard))

We also note that Male students remain less likely to enter the University of Winchester, particularly those from the most deprived backgrounds – only approximately 7% of entrants are males from IMD (2019) Q 1 or 2 compared to 18% nationally (OfS access and participation dashboard, 4-year aggregate date 2016/17-2021/22). However, when considering our geographical context, we must acknowledge that our semi-rural location (Winchester District and Hampshire Local Authority) has one of the lowest rates of deprivation in the UK – although the latest deprivation data (IMD 2019) does show that place-based deprivation has increased across Hampshire this is most prominent in districts with urban populations including Southampton, Portsmouth and Havant (figure 6). Similarly, students from the most deprived or disadvantaged backgrounds from rural neighbourhoods have been found to be less likely to enter higher education than those from urban neighbourhoods creating an 'urban escalator effect' (Davies, et al., 2021). Further still, a study by Gibbons and Vignoles (2012) propose that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds may be more likely to choose an institution close to them, even if it is of lower status – suggesting students from the urban deprived neighbourhood who choose to go to University tend to attend their own city University. As such, we further explored our entry rates compared to our UCAS competitor group (figure 7 and table 1), although entry rates of students from deprived neighbourhoods (IMD2019 Q1 or 2) fluctuated year-on-year we found that our entry rates were consistently lower than the competitor group (-9.8pp across the four years). Thus, we will seek to address the gaps in access for students from the most deprived backgrounds but take into account

our geographical



context.

Figure 6: 2019 IMD Data Hampshire (SOURCE: Hampshire County Council Demography 2016-2019)

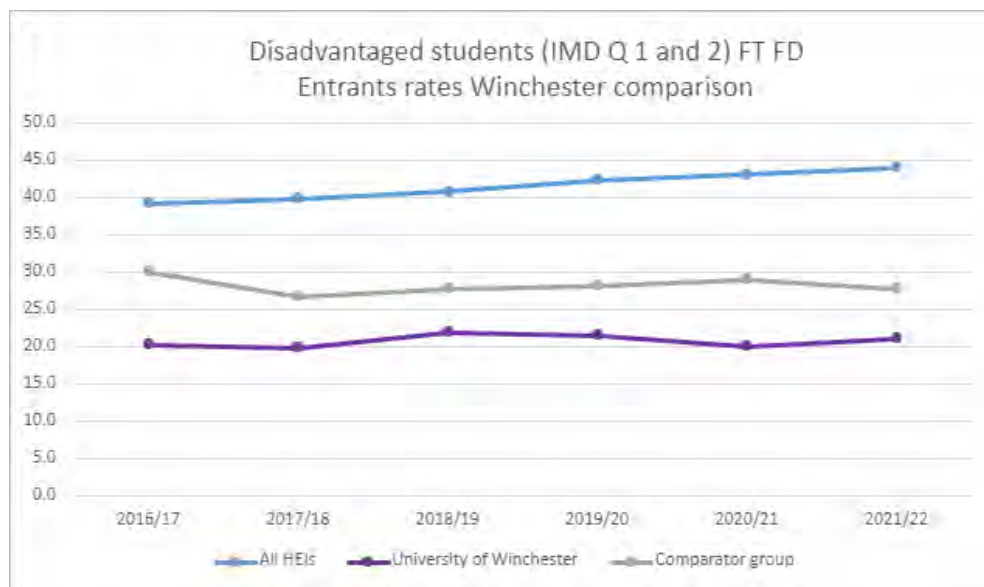


Figure 7: IMD 2019 Q1 and Q2 entry rates University of Winchester comparison graph (SOURCE DATA: OfS access and participation dashboard)

Table 1: IMD 2019 Q1 and Q2 full-time first-degree entrant rates - University of Winchester and comparators (SOURCE DATA: OfS access and participation dashboard)

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	4 year	2 Year
All HEIs	39.2	39.9	40.8	42.4	43.1	44.1	42.7	43.6

University of Winchester	20.3	19.9	22.0	21.6	20.1	21.2	21.3	20.7
	-18.9	-20.0	-18.8	-20.8	-23.0	-22.9	-21.4	-22.9
University A	23.5	24.0	24.6	23.8	22.7	23.3	23.5	23.0
University B	29.9	30.0	30.6	30.4	30.6	29.5	30.3	30.1
University C	34.2	25.9	24.3	26.0	24.6	24.7	25.0	24.7
University D	42.6	30.6	30.8	30.8	32.9	31.9	31.6	44.6
University E	30.4	29.3	30.9	37.1	41.9	38.2	37.2	40.3
University F	20.2	20.5	25.1	21.4	21.8	19.3	20.2	20.4
Comparator group	30.1	26.7	27.7	28.3	29.1	27.8	28.0	30.5
	-9.8	-6.8	-5.7	-6.7	-9.0	-6.6	-6.7	-9.8

We also recognise that nationally there has been a slight increase in the proportion of pupils eligible for free-school-meals (FSM) at age 15 entering into HE - the HE progression rate by age 19 increased to 29.2% in 2021/22, the highest recorded level. However, the gap between FSM eligible students and non-FSM eligible students also increased to the highest recorded level at 20.2 percentage points, up from 18.7 percentage points last year (Government Widening Participation Education Statistics, July 2023). Early indications from the new UCAS self-declaration measure for FSM eligibility suggest that we receive far lower applications from FSM-eligible applicants (10.3% compared to 14.2% nationally, 14.6% equivalent tariff group and 11.5% competitor group – table 2). Similarly, despite some progress in narrowing our FSM-eligible entry rates to align with our competitor group, we still remain at a consistent entry rate of circa 13% over the past 4 years (12.9% FT UG 4-year average) – far lower the national average (19.2%).

Table 2: FSM Indicator - UCAS 2023 January Deadline Widening Participation Report

FSM indicator

Self-declared variable that indicates if an applicant is or has been eligible for free school meals. The IQR for your equivalent tariff group lies between 11.4% and 16.0%.

Comparison group	Yes	No	Don't know	Proportion 'Yes'
Sector	67,460	388,915	19,550	14.2%
Equivalent tariff group	48,575	270,810	13,735	14.6%
Competitor group	11,230	82,670	3,585	11.5%
W76	831	6,965	273	10.3%

To note, we also acknowledge that access indicators remain below the sector for mature students and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Significant progress has been made for the entry rates of mature students – reaching and maintaining our previous APP target of over 20% - almost doubling in the past 5 years (10.9% in 2016/17 increased to 20.6% in 2021/22). Whereas the entry rate for students from non-white backgrounds, although considerably lower than the sector, remains in line with the local Census population (see Assessment of Performance: Risk 3 below).

Risk 3 – ACCESS (Post-16 Offer rates):

The University continues to recruit **lower proportions of non-white students (12.5%)** compared to the sector, although this is **in line with the local context**, 92.6% of the population in Hampshire identified as white in the 2021 census for Winchester and District. 2 year aggregated access indicators on the OfS data dashboard suggests that the University has circa. 3.4% of UK-domicile undergraduates identify as Asian and 3.7% as Black. We have seen a small increase in the proportion of UK-Black students since

2017/18 which can be attributed to portfolio changes and the introduction of Nursing and Allied Health programs which are considered more attractive to Black applicants.

The most recent **UCAS PERS end of cycle data demonstrates we have lower application rates than the sector, our equivalent tariff group and competitor group for both Black (4.1%) and Asian students (5.4%)** see figure 8. We continue to develop our portfolio and marketing materials to attract non-white applicants. However, we must be mindful of the geographical context of the University which sits in a predominantly white city and region compared to other universities whom attract larger proportions of non-white applicants in much more diverse multi-cultural cities. Of greater concern, **the UCAS PERS end of cycle data demonstrated a large gap between offer rate and average offer rate for our Black applicants** (all ages – the majority of whom identified as Black African), (-0.23) see Table 3.

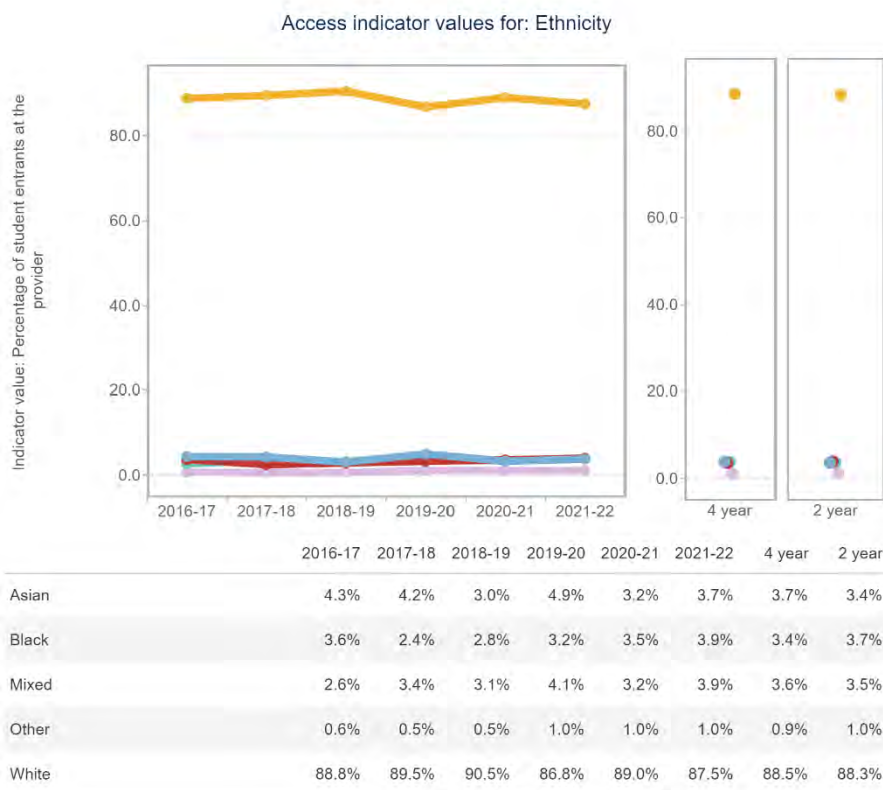


Figure 8: Ethnicity access indicator values for University of Winchester (SOURCE OfS Data Dashboard)

Further analysis (figure 9) indicated that this was **predominantly within large courses of Social Work and Nursing within our Health and Wellbeing Faculty**, that it was not dependent on entry-tariff and that the majority of applicants were rejected pre-interview although some were also rejected post-interview (data not provided due to small numbers and potential of identifying individual applicants). It is also worth noting that applicants with Mixed and, to a lesser extent, Asian ethnicities also had an offer gap in Nursing. In 2022/23 the Health and Wellbeing Faculty, Widening Participation Team and Admissions Team identified the Black offer rate gaps and developed an action plan to address it (as outlined under Strategic Intervention 3 under the new plan).

Table 3: Offer rates for Black and Asian students (all ages) comparison table

BLACK (all ages)			Gap between offer rate and average offer rate	
Comparison group	Applications	Offer rate		
Sector		10.0%	0.56	0.07
Equivalent tariff group		8.4%	0.62	0.09
Competitor group		6.6%	0.62	0.13
W76		4.1%	0.63	0.23

<i>ASIAN (all ages)</i>			
Comparison group	Applications	Offer rate	Gap between offer rate and average offer rate
Sector		16.2%	0.63
Equivalent tariff group		13.7%	0.69
Competitor group		6.6%	0.74
W76		5.4%	0.82

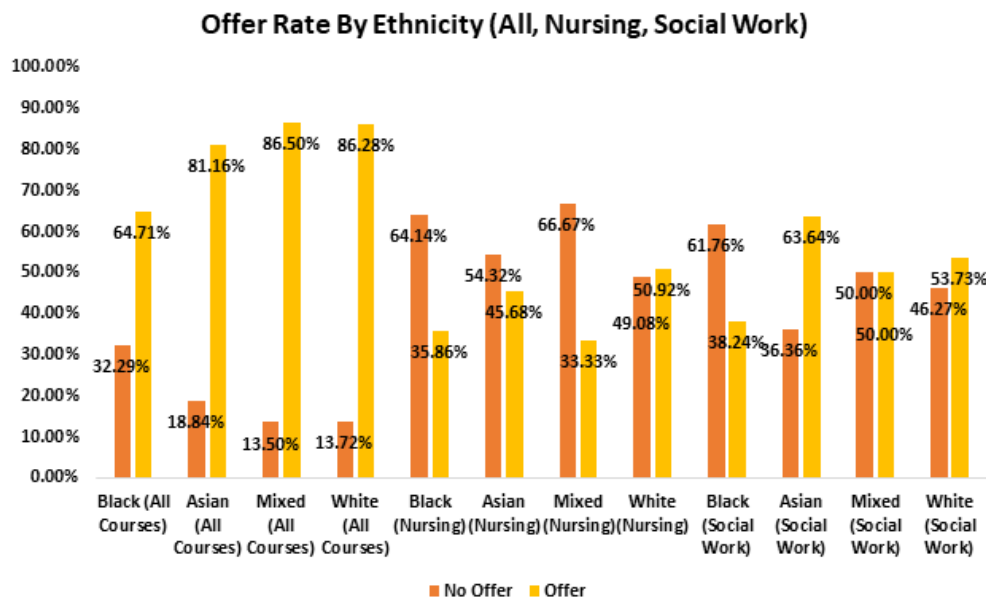


Figure 9: Offer rate by ethnicity (ALL COURSES, NURSING and SOCIAL WORK)

Risk 4 – SUCCESS (Continuation rates):

Emerging gaps in Continuation

Historically we have observed generally good continuation rates for all students, regardless of background. However, recently we have begun to observe emerging gaps in continuation amongst disabled students particularly those with a declared mental health condition, LGBT+ students, male students, and some of our most disadvantaged students (IMD Q1), and students previously eligible for FSM (Free School Meals).

We also recognise that we have consistent gaps in completion, consistent with the sector, for TUNDRA Q1, black students, mature students and those previously eligible for FSM. We are confident that our holistic approach under strategic intervention 4, to address transitions, financial barriers and mental health concerns will also support improved progression rates. As such, we will continue to monitor and review completion rates across the length of the plan.

We have also identified increased rates of students declaring a mental health condition, particularly LGBT+ students, and increased numbers of students presenting concerns regarding mental health and financial support impacting their ability to study. The evidence suggests that the most disadvantaged students and those with mental health conditions are most at risk of the impacts of the pandemic and rising cost of living.

Students with a declared disability: Until the most recent year of data the rates of Continuation for students with a declared disability were broadly in line with those without. However, a Continuation gap of 4.0 percentage points emerged in 2020/21 (figure 10). The extent of the gap is dependent on

type of disability, we have observed that in the last two years students with a social or communication impairment have been the least likely to continue their studies (86.3% 2-year aggregate). We have also found that the Continuation gap for students with a mental health condition has re-emerged, with a gap of 5.2 percentage points between students with a declared mental health condition and those with no disability reported.

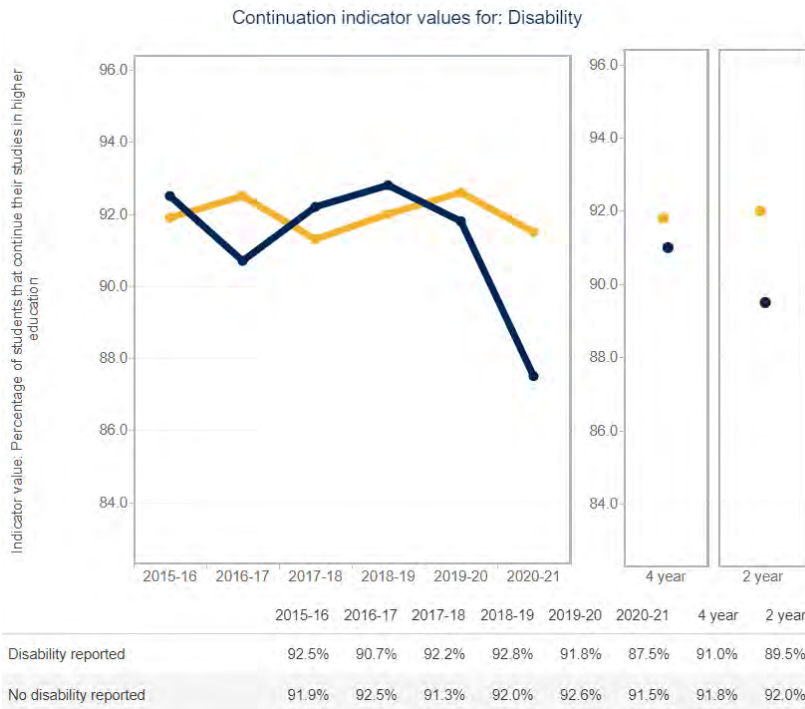


Figure 10: Continuation rates for students with a declared disability (SOURCE: Ofs access and participation dashboard)

Male students: Traditionally male students have been less likely to continue their studies beyond their first year than their female peers, however we have found that this gap has more than doubled in the last year from 3.6 percentage points in 2019/20 to 7.0 percentage points in 2020/21 (figure 11). We do not intend to focus primarily on male students under this risk but will continue to monitor the situation to see if the whole-institution activities under Strategic Intervention 4 and targeted activities under Strategic Intervention 5 for disadvantaged males also see improved continuation rates for our male students.

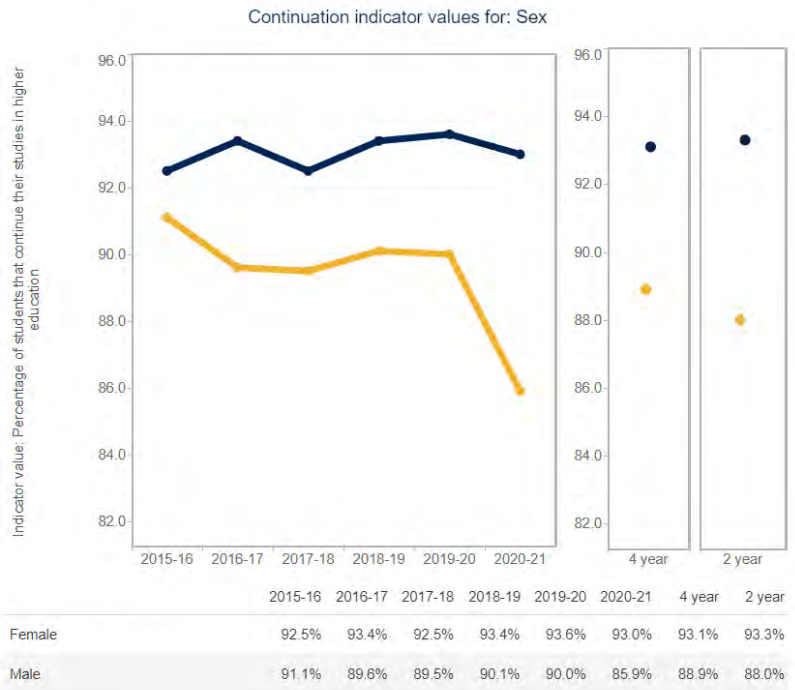


Figure 11: Continuation rates by sex (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)

Students from high deprivation neighbourhoods: We have observed that students from the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD Q 1) have been less likely to continue their studies in the past two years (figure 12). Continuation rates have dropped from 93.1% in 2018/19 (prior to the pandemic) to 84.2% in 2020/21 – resulting in a gap of 6.8 percentage points when compared to all other students.

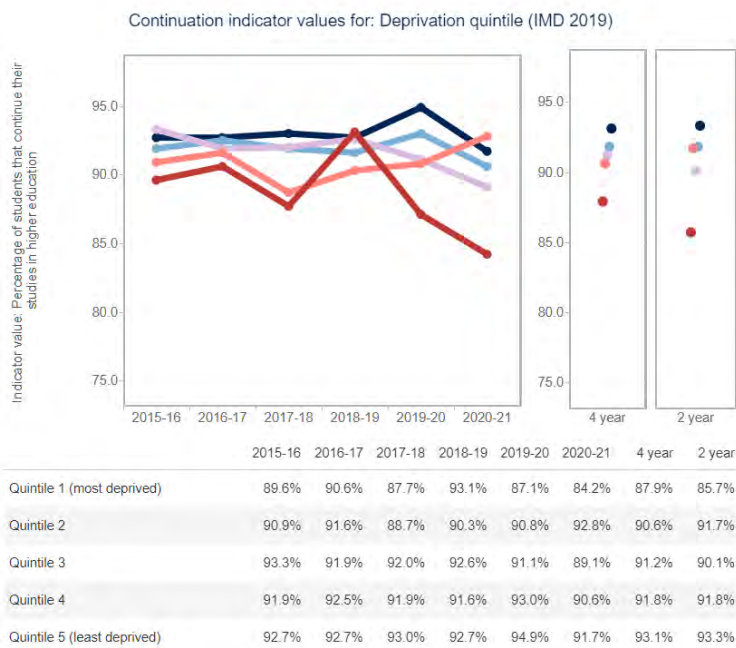


Figure 12: Continuation rates by deprivation quintile (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)

Students previously eligible for free school meals (FSM): In the past year the Continuation gap between those eligible for free school meals and those not eligible has grown from 5.4 percentage points (2019/20) to 8.1 percentage points (2020/21) (figure 13). However, as we have limited internal

data on students eligible for free school meals we have decided not to prioritise this but intend to keep monitoring to see if the University-wide interventions also support these students.

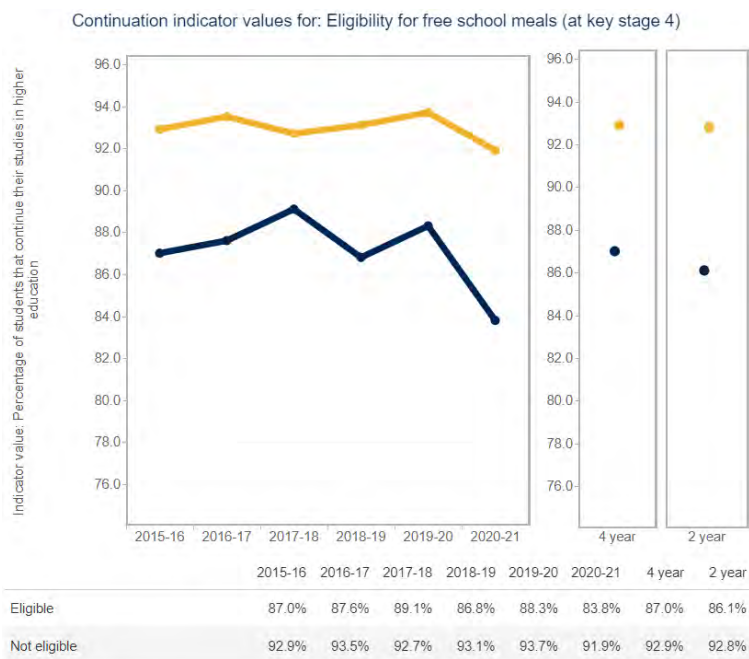


Figure 13: Continuation rates by eligibility for free school meals (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)

Increased access to Mental Health and Wellbeing services

Student mental health and wellbeing is a key priority for the University of Winchester, the university has continued to increase investment and resource in this area and in the 2021/22 academic year launched a 3-year Mental Health Strategy, laying out our key strategic objectives and working with stakeholders and students to ensure a whole university approach to mental fitness and wellbeing. Notwithstanding the growing proportions of students facing mental health difficulties, according to the most recent OfS entrants' data for 2020/21, 180 students (7.8% of full-time undergraduate UK students) declared a mental health difficulty. When exploring our internal student data, we observed that students who identified as not heterosexual (Gay man 11.7%, Bisexual 20.8%, Gay woman/Lesbian 23.4%, Other 20.9%), gender identity not the same as at birth (17.5%) or Mixed ethnicity (10.8%) as more likely to declare a mental health condition (table 4).

Table 4: Proportion of students declaring a mental health condition by characteristic (SOURCE: internal SITs student records data)

Declaring a mental health condition (2018/19-2022/23)		
Bisexual	193	20.8%
Gay Man	22	11.7%
Gay Woman	52	23.4%
Heterosexual	694	5.9%
Other	54	20.9%
Prefer not to say	126	12.0%
Gender identity the same as at birth	1105	7.8%
Gender identity not the same as at birth	20	17.5%
Asian	19	3.7%
Black	7	2.2%
Mixed	50	10.8%
White	1052	8.1%

Due to changes in data collection across the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team (MWT) services, it is difficult to compare engagement across the TEF years. However, our most recent data (2021/22) indicates that we received 1133 requests for appointments from students compared to 856 the previous year (2020/21). This suggests a 32% increase in demand. In 2021/22 a total of 550 individual students accessed MWT, with some doing so on multiple occasions. Where students were offered a follow up session/ further appointment following an initial Screening Session, 56% were seen within 4 weeks. A further 27% were seen within 4-8 weeks. Of the support available, 'in house' specialist mentoring proves to be highly valued by students as demonstrated by the low non-attendance rate for this service, in 2021/22 994 sessions booked with 932 attended.

Demographic groups with low life satisfaction

5 demographic groups who have the highest proportion of students with low life satisfaction

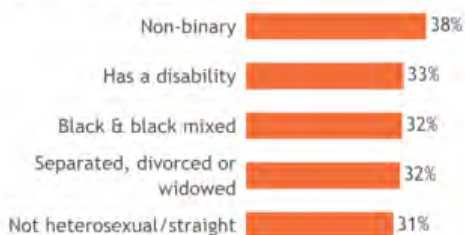


Figure 14: Demographic groups with highest rates of low life satisfaction (SOURCE: Being well, Doing well survey - Alterline May 2023)

The University commissioned Alterline Research agency to conduct the 'Being well, Doing well' survey in May 2023 to better understand the concerns regarding mental health and wellbeing at Winchester and how this compared to the sector. The survey was completed by over 10% of our student population (843 responses) and found that non-binary students; students with a disability; black or black mixed; separated, divorced or widowed and not heterosexual had the lowest overall life-satisfaction (figure 14).

We also observed that our students appeared more likely to state that they are currently or have previously experienced anxiety (69% of respondents compared to 64% nationally). Our students also seem more likely to consider that their mental health has had a negative impact on their attendance and ability to participate in class (figure 15).

To what extent has your mental health had a negative impact on the following:

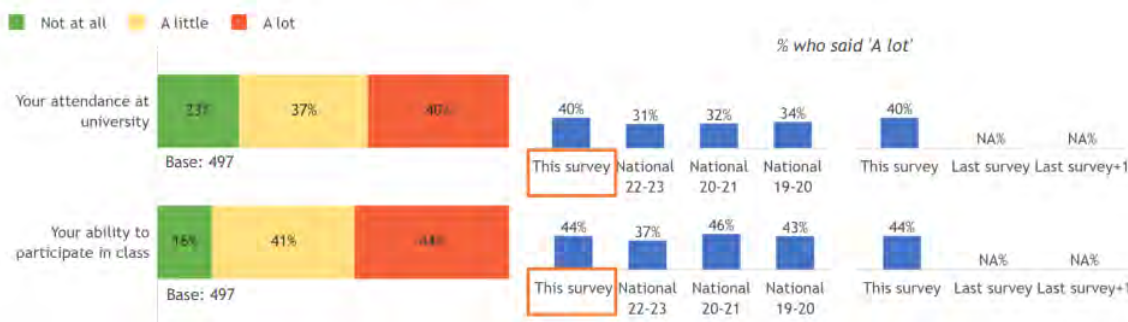


Figure 15: Impact of mental health on attendance and engagement (SOURCE: Being well, Doing well survey - Alterline May 2023)

Increased cost of living and financial concerns

Nationally, the cost-of-living crisis has been well documented as having a significant impact on students. Over 4,000 students responded to an online poll commissioned by the Office for Students (OfS) and found that almost one in five respondents said that they had considered dropping out of university or college because of such increases. The Studying during rises in the cost of living - Office

for Students brief provides evidence of further research that has also found that students are more concerned about their finances, with many cutting back on food and non-essential purchases or taking on more part-time work. At Winchester, our students have also seen the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on students – both anecdotally and via our data.

The Alterline 'Being Well, Doing Well' survey completed in May 2023 by over 10% of our student population (843 responses) found that 77% of students were concerned about the current cost of living situation, with 57% saying it negatively affected their wellbeing. We have also observed growth in the number of students seeking to access student support or hardship funding, rising from 142 enquiries and 99 applications in 2021/22 to 158 enquiries and 108 applications by end of June 2023 (with more expected by the end of the summer). This year (2022/23) we have also provided a total of £96,526 to 242 students under the 'Cost of Living Support Fund' – 91 of these students were parents or carers (38%).

Risk 5 –SUCCESS (Awarding gaps):

Ethnicity awarding gaps

We have prioritised *research-led initiatives to address the student experience of Black and Asian students*, recognising the small yet diverse population of non-white students at the University reflecting the local population (12.5% non-white undergraduate entrants in 2021/22, of which 3.7% identified as Asian, 4.0% as black, 3.8% as Mixed and 1.0% as Other).

In 2019 we joined two other universities in a collaborative research study into the lived experience of black students conducted by Alterline research agency. The study found that many black students experienced systemic and implicit racism throughout their formal education, and that a complex series of factors shaped individual experiences and outcomes.

'The basic fact of being a black minority in a white space, being taught by white tutors and surrounded by white peers has the capacity to reduce the academic performance of black students, because of the unconscious expectations based on societal stereotypes, their internalisation by black students and the way these play out in the learning environment.'
(Alterline, March 2019)

We also conducted our own qualitative research study into 'Disaggregating the BAME Degree-Awarding Gap' (Islam, 2021) to better understand the student experiences of UK Asian students. The research consisted of an online interview completed by 25 students and follow-up focus groups attended by 12 students. The resulting report recognised the importance of intersectional identities and implied that many UK Asian students experienced 'satisfied settling' (Islam et al., 2017) - where minority students are unconsciously 'settling for less' in terms of their university experience (Islam and Mercer-Mapstone, 2021). Following the implementation of a series of recommendations from the report, we have seen **significant progress in closing the Asian awarding gap** (UK-Asian students' attainment of a 1st or 2:1 compared to UK-White students), decreasing from 34.0pp in 2016-17 to 3.3pp in 2021/22 (figure 16). However, the **Black awarding gap remains stubbornly large** in comparison. Although mindful of the small numbers of Black UK-domicile students, the OfS Data Dashboard demonstrates a four-year **23.7 pp gap between Black students and all other ethnicities** attaining a 1st or 2:1 (figure 17). This compares to a four-year gap of 18.5pp nationally. Unfortunately, despite efforts to address the awarding gap via whole-institutional holistic interventions under our *Flourishing Students Framework*, the analysis indicates that more targeted interventions are required to address the Black awarding gap under the new plan (as indicated under Strategic Intervention 5).

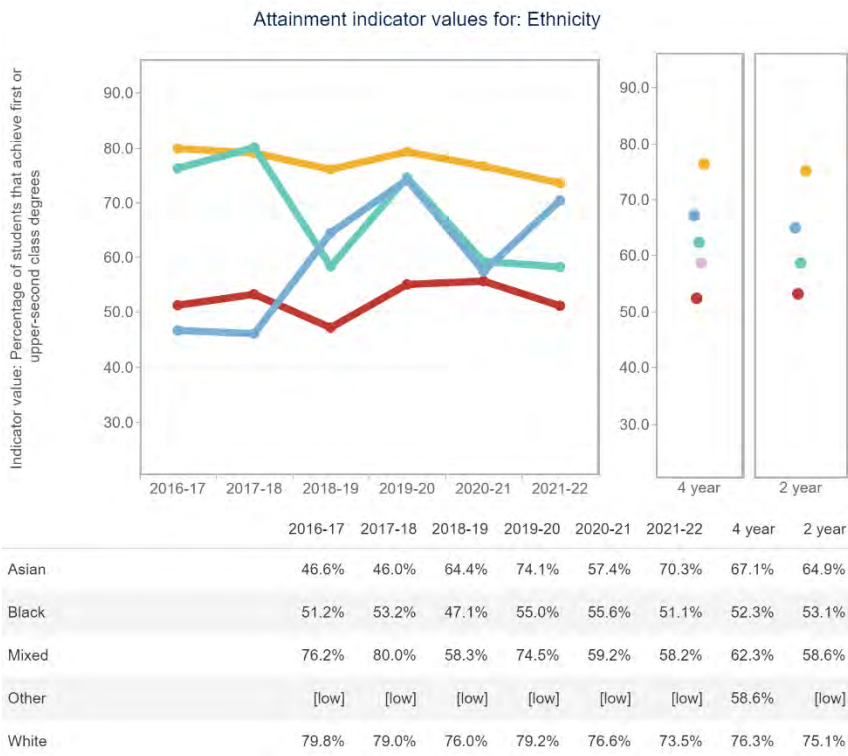


Figure 16: Ethnicity degree awarding gaps (SOURCE OfS access and participation data dashboard)

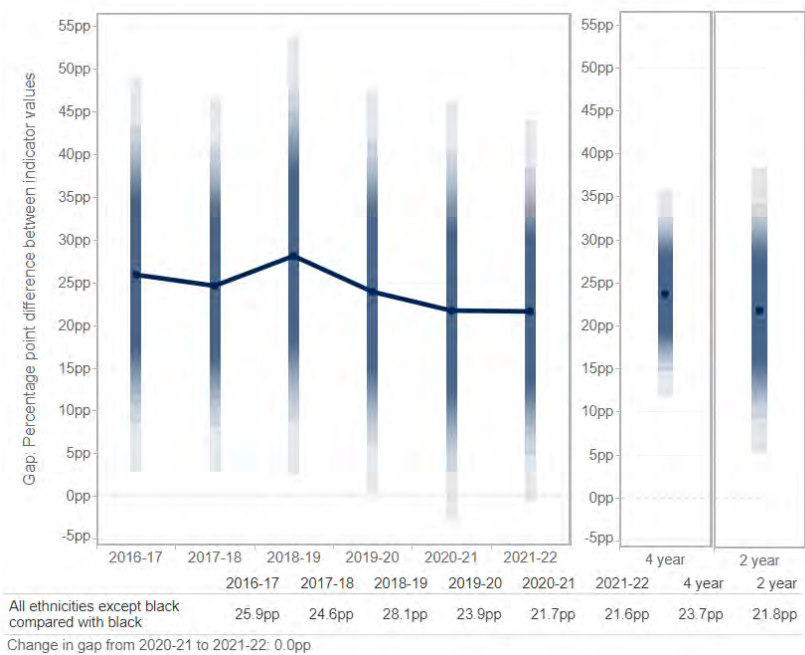
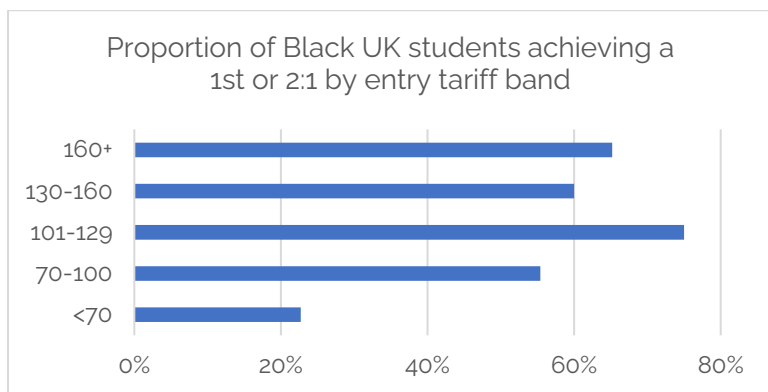


Figure 17: Black awarding gap (All ethnicity except black compared with black achieving a 1st or 2:1 (SOURCE OfS data dashboard)

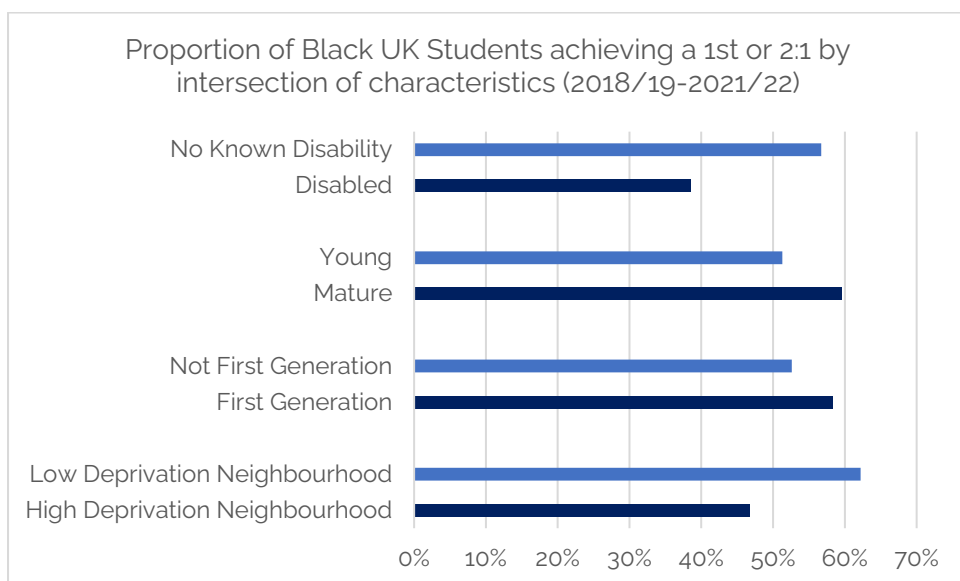
We conducted further internal analysis of the Black awarding gap, drawing upon our WP data dashboard that inputs data directly from SITs our student records platform. Due to the small numbers, all data was aggregated across the four most recent years of data (2018/19 – 2021/22). When accounting for entry tariff, **Black UK students entering on lower tariffs (below 100 UCAS tariff points) appeared to be less likely to attain a 1st or 2:1**, but thereafter the entry tariff did not appear to predict the likelihood of achieving a 1st or 2:1 (figure 18). However, when accounting for intersectionality of other characteristics **Black UK students appeared less likely to attain a 1st or 2:1 if they were from a high deprivation neighbourhood (IMD 2019 Q1 or 2) or had a declared disability** (figure 19).

Figure 18: Black awarding gap by tariff bands (SOURCE: Internal SITs student record data)



Tariff Band	n	%
<70	12	22.70%
70-100	46	55.40%
101-129	51	75.00%
130-160	15	60.00%
160+	15	65.20%

Figure 19: Black awarding gap by intersection of characteristics (SOURCE: Internal SITs student record data)



	n	%
High Deprivation Neighbourhood	65	46.80%
Low Deprivation Neighbourhood	120	62.20%
First Generation	81	58.30%
Not First Generation	82	52.60%
Mature	106	59.60%
Young	79	51.30%
No Known Disability	144	56.70%
Disabled	41	38.50%

We are also mindful that the B3 student outcomes dashboard also indicates that **67.9% of Other students are below numerical threshold for Continuation** (n=60) and that under the TEF dashboard student experience is materially below benchmark for Mixed students on all 5 measures. However, Mixed students Continuation and Completion is broadly in line with benchmark. Similarly, student experience measures for UK Asian students are broadly in line with benchmark and we have excellent student experience measures for Black students, particularly for 'teaching on my course', 'academic support' and 'student voice' (all 95% in line with or materially above benchmark). It is our aim that any university-wide activity, under Strategic Intervention 4 and 5, that we introduce that seeks to support the inclusivity and student experience of Black students will also continue to support other non-white students. However, these groups are not explicitly acknowledged as targets under the plan. Nevertheless, we intend to continue increasing our knowledge and understanding regarding the student experiences and outcomes of our Non-white students and plan to conduct similar qualitative research into our Mixed and Non-White students to inform our ongoing work in this area.

Disadvantage awarding gap

We acknowledge that the attainment gaps seen amongst the most disadvantaged, as considered under risk 1 (pre-attainment), continue through to higher education.

Nationally, there is a stubborn awarding gap based on deprivation i.e. students from deprived backgrounds are less likely to obtain a 1st or 2:1, otherwise considered a 'good' degree. At the University of Winchester, we have observed less consistent trends across the five IMD (2019) quintiles but have observed that over the past six years students from IMD (2019) Quintile 1 have remained less likely to obtain a 'good' degree – a 4-year gap between Q1 students and all other students of 10.9pp compared to 12.0pp nationally. That said, the most recent data suggests a nose-dive in the performance of students from IMD (2019) Q2 – dropping from 73.8% achieving a 1st or 2:1 in 2020/21 to 58.5%, placing them marginally below Q1 students with 59.6% achieving a 1st or 2:1 in the same year (figure 20).

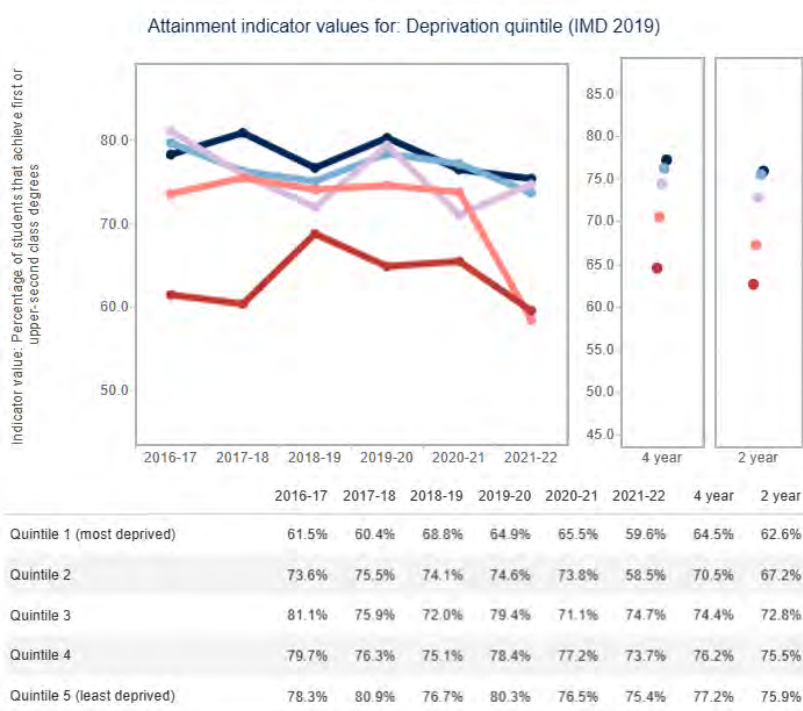


Figure 20: Deprivation awarding gaps (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)

Further analysis of the intersection of sex and deprivation suggests that the concern lies predominantly in the attainment of disadvantaged males (figure 21). Where, the attainment of males from IMD Q 1 or 2 has dropped considerably in the past three years from 70.1% achieving a 1st or 2:1 in 2018/19 dropping to 49.4% in 2021/22 – compared to 69.3% nationally. When observing the awarding gap between males from IMD Q 1 or 2 and IMD Q3,4 or 5, the most recent gap is 15.3 percentage points. Hence, we intend to focus some of our activity under Strategic Intervention 1 to address attainment raising of disadvantaged males much earlier in their educational journey and target initiatives under Strategic Intervention 5 at males from the most deprived neighbourhoods with low rates of academic engagement on our courses.

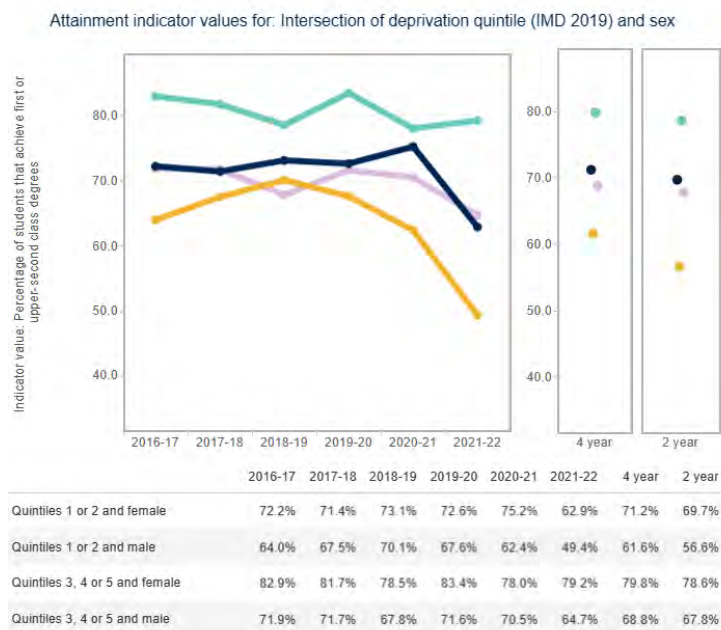


Figure 21: Intersection of deprivation and sex awarding gaps (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)

Also to note, where the national awarding gap for students previously eligible for free-school meals (FSM) (at key stage 4) has been relatively consistent - sitting between sitting between 10.1 and 13.0pp over the past four years (11.6pp 4-year aggregate 2016/17 to 2021/22). We have observed the gap has steadily grown having risen by 8.1pp in the last 6 years (5.1pp in 2016/17 to 13.2pp). However, as we have only just begun to consider FSM eligibility as a measure, and as such have no internal data to further explore this, we have not considered including a target on FSM-eligibility under Strategic Intervention 5 (Closing awarding gaps) at this time. Instead, we will continue to monitor the OfS data dashboard and will work towards including FSM-eligibility into our internal SITs student records data base and WP data dashboard.

Value-added measure

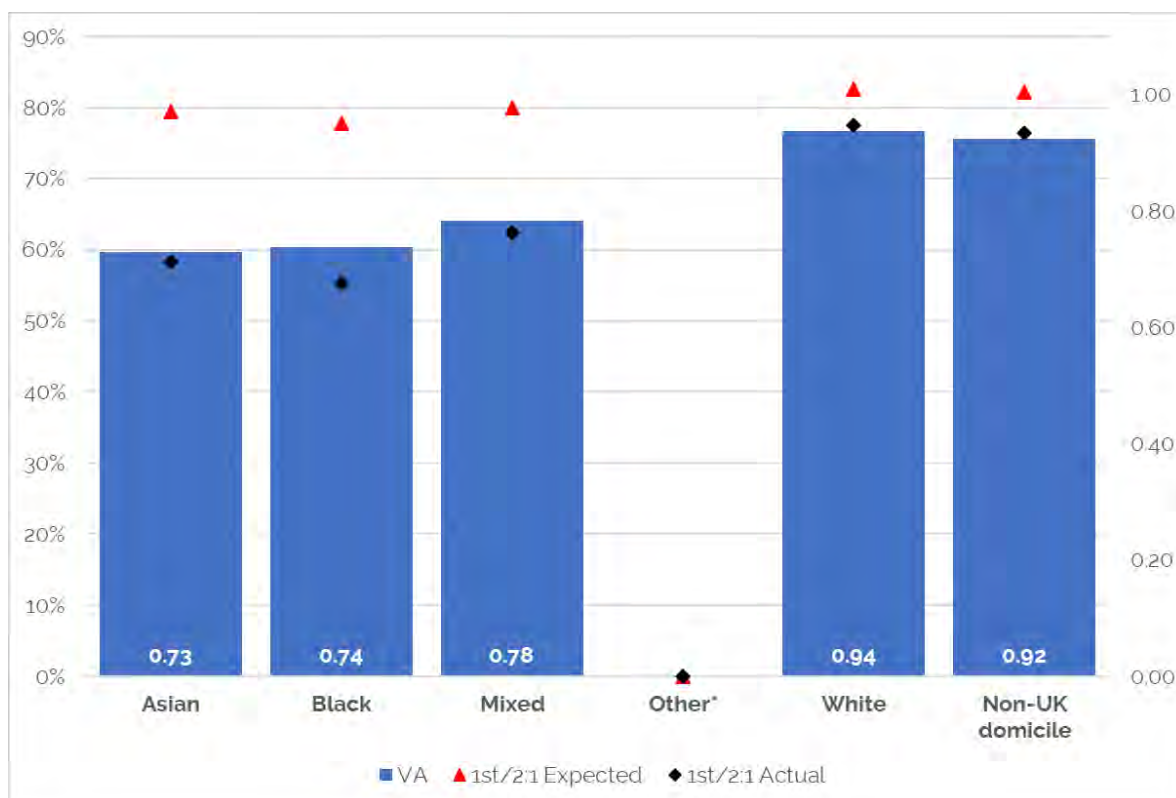
Research indicates that student degree attainment is closely related to a student's entry qualifications. By controlling for this factor, the VA metric can show unexplained gaps in degree attainment. The VA scores are calculated by first creating a Probability Index that a given student in an entry qualification band (162 bands) will achieve a 1st/2:1 degree i.e., adding value. The probability values range from a low of 72.3% to a high of 98.5%. Aggregating these probabilities produces an 'expected' percentage for any given cohort of students who should achieve a 1st/2:1 degree. If the cohort achieves this percentage, the VA score is 1.0. VA scores can also be used to demonstrate attainment gaps for student characteristics such as sex, age group, disability, ethnicity, socio economic group or

commuting students. Due to the significant modifications to the 2020/2021 VA methodology, it cannot be compared to previous VA scores.

Just over three-quarters (76%) of Winchester's 2020/2021 leavers gained a Good Honours award in that year. However, when using a sector derived Probability Index the 'expected' Good Honours indicates 82% Good Honours, suggesting an attainment gap of 6%. Further analysis by student characteristics shows the largest attainment gaps are with IMD Q1 (21%), Bisexual (10%), Gay woman/Lesbian (10%), Male (10%), Social communication/Autistic spectrum disorder (10%), Mental health condition (10%), Asian (21%), Black (23%) and Mixed ethnicity (18%) students at Winchester. There appeared to be no significant gaps for mature students, commuting students or those with no parental experience of higher education.

Ethnicity – Figure 22 shows a wide attainment gap exists for all three minority groups, Asian (21%), Black (23%) and Mixed (18%), compared to just a 5% attainment gap for White students.

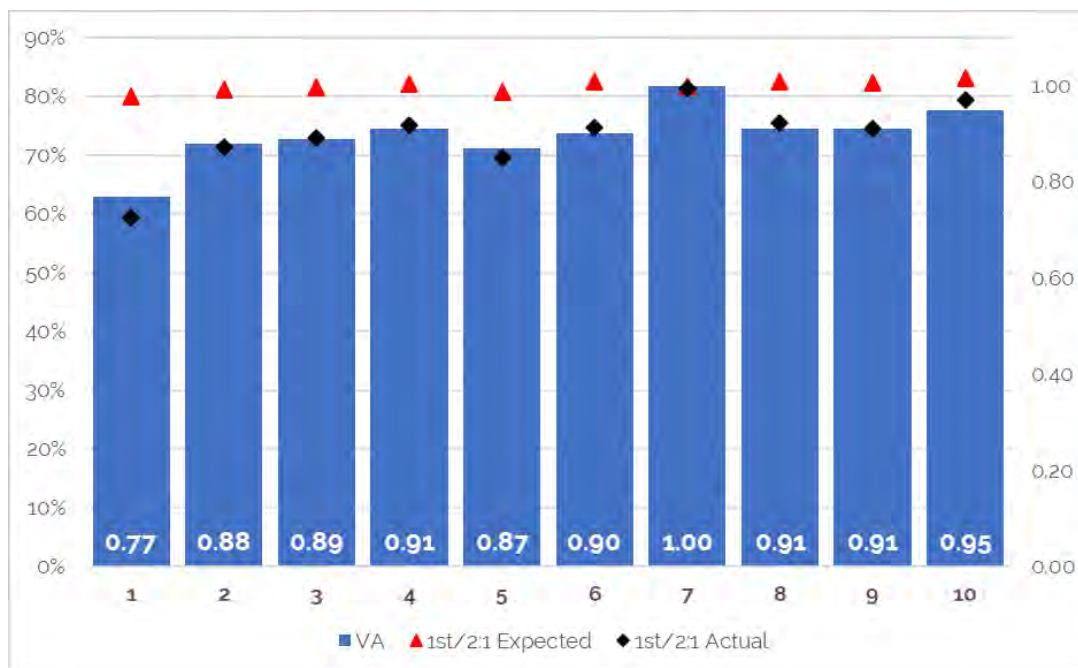
Figure 22: Value-added measure by ethnicity (SOURCE: internal HESA data)



Ethnic Group	Population	1 st /2:1 Expected	1 st /2:1 Actual	VA
Asian	48	79%	58%	0.73
Black	38	78%	55%	0.74
Mixed	48	80%	63%	0.78
Other*	5	LOW	LOW	LOW
White	1,582	83%	77%	0.94
Non-UK domicile	1,806	82%	0%	0.92

Index of multiple deprivation – Figure 23 shows the largest attainment gap was 21% for Q1 students compared to an attainment gap of just 4% for Q10 students.

Figure 23: Value-added measure by deprivation deciles (SOURCE: internal HESA data)

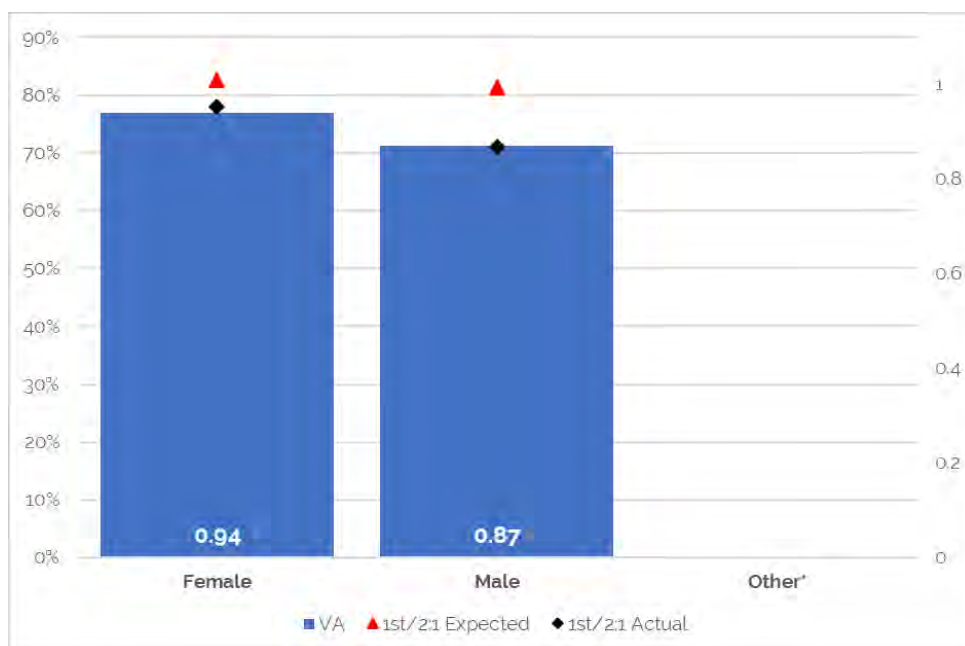


IMD decile	Population	1 st /2:1 Expected	1 st /2:1 Actual	VA
1	37	80%	59%	0.77
2	70	81%	71%	0.88
3	96	82%	73%	0.89
4	160	82%	75%	0.91
5	135	81%	70%	0.87
6	166	83%	75%	0.90
7	172	82%	81%	1.00
8	220	83%	75%	0.91
9	244	82%	75%	0.91
10	387	83%	79%	0.95

Sex – Figure 24 shows the attainment gap to be much larger for Winchester's male students, 10% compared to 5% for female students.

Recognising that there are multiple gaps of concern when looking at degree attainment we will prioritise where we observe the largest awarding gaps under the plan, namely for Black students and disadvantaged males, but will continue to monitor and review other gaps during this period.

Figure 24: Value-added measure by sex (SOURCE: internal HESA data)



Sex	Population	1 st /2:1 Expected	1 st /2:1 Actual	VA
Female	1,215	83%	78%	0.94
Male	607	81%	71%	0.87
Other	5	LOW	LOW	LOW

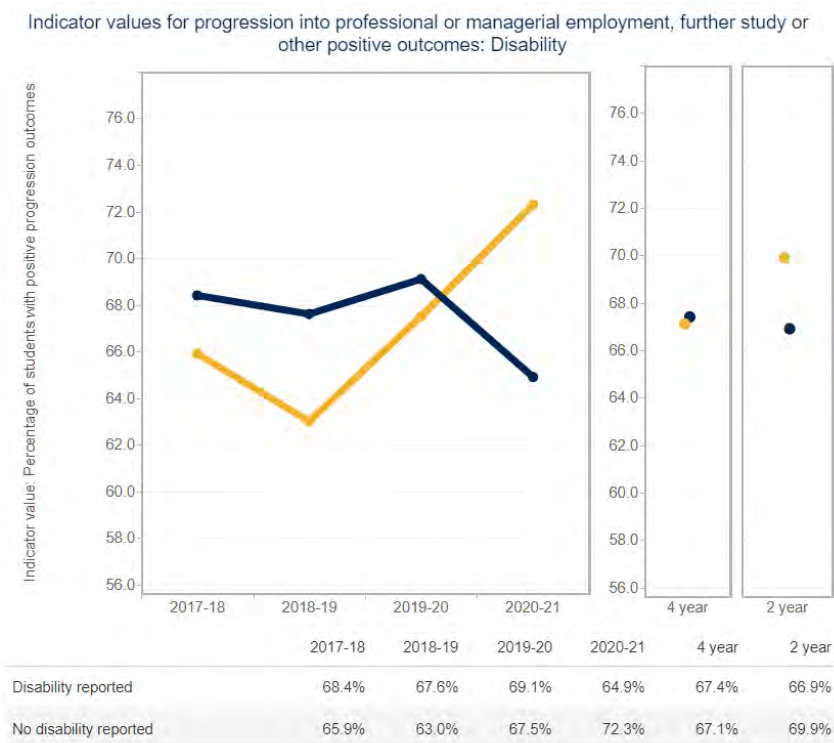
*LOW – fewer than 10 in the population so the data was suppressed.

Risk 6 – PROGRESSION:

DISABLED

Typically, students with a declared disability have better rates of Progression than Non-Disabled students at the University of Winchester. That said, the most recent data suggests a shift in this trend with **only 64.9% of students with a declared disability progressing to further study or graduate employment within 15 months of graduation** compared to 72.3% of those without a declared disability in 2020/21 (figure 25). However, **the rate of progression varies widely by disability type**. Although the data is limited due to small cohort size, those with a social or communication impairment are particularly at risk (4-year aggregate data - 54.2% vs. 67.1% for no-disability reported).

Figure 25: Progression rates – disabled vs. non-disabled (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)



Furthermore, we recognise that although disabled graduates are less likely to be in full-time work and graduates with autism least likely to be employed on any basis or have supervisory responsibility in their role (AGCAS, 2021). The Higher Education Statistics Agency HE Graduate Outcomes Statistics 2018-19 also show that Disabled graduates are more likely to be earning below £27k than Non-Disabled graduates. Suggesting that students with a disclosed disability remain less likely to enter full-time graduate employment or earn as much as their peers.

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds

At the point of developing our targets and strategic interventions (Spring 2023) we consulted upon the OfS access and participation dashboard which provided progression data up to 2019/20 graduates. However, since preparing our plan the dashboards have been updated with 2020/21 graduate outcomes. As such, we have provided an updated Assessment of Performance (below), but our planned activity was based on the graduate outcomes data available to us from 2019/20. Hence, we have not (at this time) considered including targets for improving the progression rates of IMD Q1 students as at the time it appeared to be more pressing to address the gaps for disadvantaged males.

Initial analysis of the OfS access and participation dashboards suggested that there was a **growing gap in progression rates for students from the most deprived neighbourhoods** (IMD Q1) when compared to their peers (figure 26 and 27) – the gap emerged in 2018/19 as 7.6 percentage points and has increased to 20.9 percentage points, in the last two years. When exploring this further we observed a large gap between disadvantaged males progression rates and their peers emerge between 2017/18 and 2019/20 (figure 28) suggesting at the time that **low progression rates amongst those from the most deprived backgrounds was influenced by sex**. However, in the most recent data for 2020/21 graduates, we have also observed female students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds rates of progression have also begun to close suggesting that coming from a deprived neighbourhood has had a greater influence than the intersection of deprivation and sex. At the same time, the gap between students from the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD Q1) and their peers has grown further

still to 20.9 percentage points. That said, as we consider disadvantaged males a priority target group under other areas of the plan, we intend to keep our targets focused on the progression of disadvantaged males under this plan but will continue to monitor the graduate outcomes of disadvantaged females and include them under activities that can support their employability.

Figure 26: Progression gap IMD Q1 compared to all other students (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)

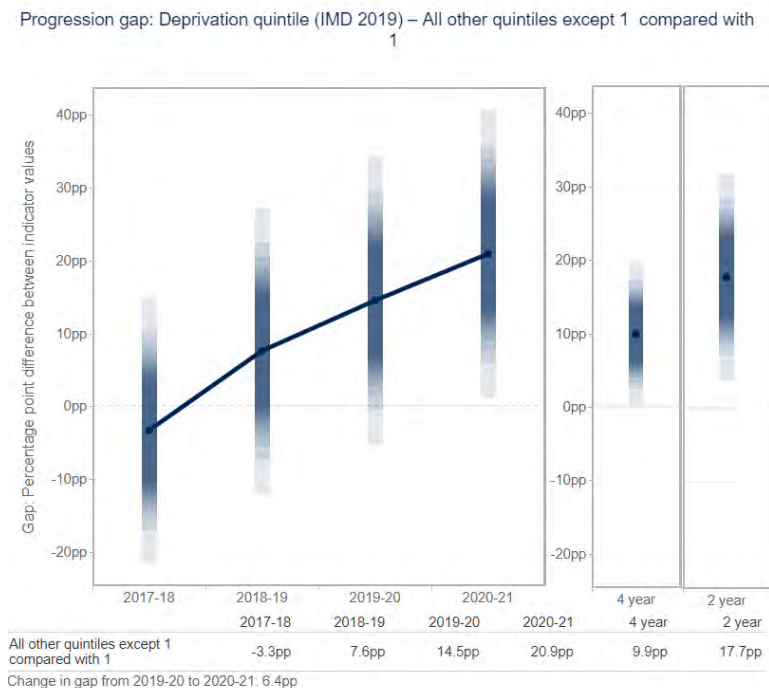


Figure 27: Progression rates by deprivation quintile (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)

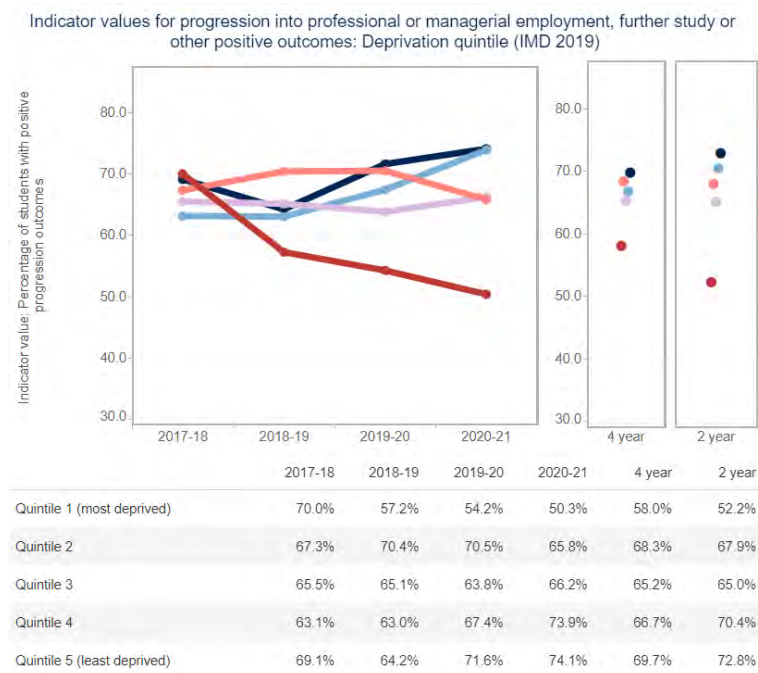
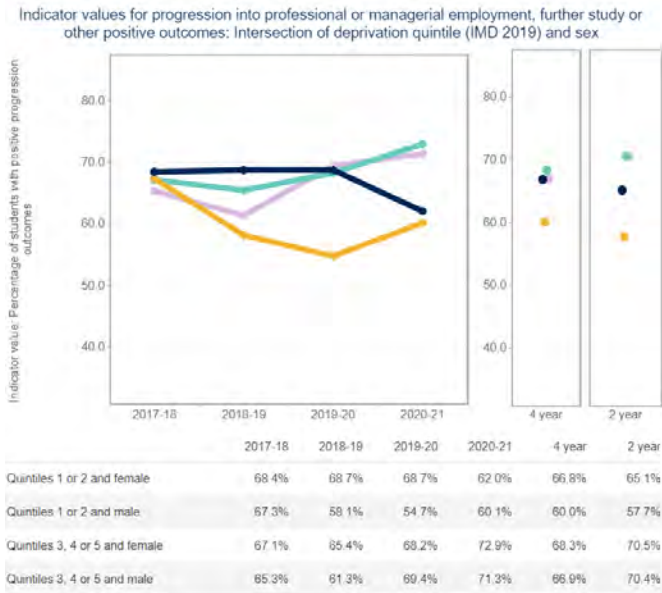


Figure 28: Progression rates by deprivation and sex (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)



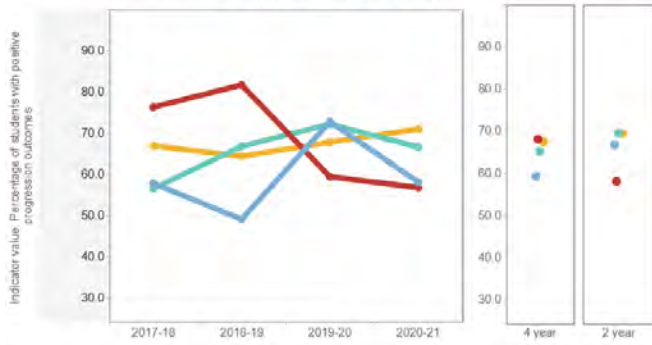
Ethnicity

Historically, UK Asian students have been a priority target group for progression at the University (a target under our previous 2020/21-2024/25 plan). At the time of conducting our TEF data analysis (January 2023, OfS Student Outcomes Data Dashboard) indicated that **53.1% of Asian students are below numerical threshold for progression**. However, more recent analysis of the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard indicates that trends in graduate outcomes has fluctuated across different ethnic groups in the past 4 years (figure 29).

The most recent data for 2020/21 graduates suggests that both **UK Black (56.7%) and Asian (58.0%) students are less likely to progress to further study or graduate employment than their peers**, with White students (70.9%) the most likely to progress followed closely by Mixed students (66.5%). However, according to [Destinations and earnings of graduates after higher education - GOV.UK](#) Non-white graduates are less likely to be in sustained employment, further study or both 1 year after graduating. Due to the small numbers of ethnic minority students, the lag in graduate outcomes data and the national data indicating equality risks of opportunity in progression across all non-white ethnic groups. **The University will continue to prioritise all non-white ethnic groups graduate employability and progression, introducing targeted interventions including mentoring schemes under the new plan (see Strategic Intervention 6).**

Figure 29: Progression rates by ethnicity (SOURCE: OfS access and participation dashboard)

Indicator values for progression into professional or managerial employment, further study or other positive outcomes: Ethnicity



	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	4 year	2 year
Asian	57.7%	49.0%	72.7%	58.0%	59.2%	66.8%
Black	76.2%	81.6%	59.3%	56.7%	68.0%	58.0%
Mixed	56.4%	66.7%	72.1%	66.5%	65.1%	69.5%
Other	[low]	[low]	[low]	[low]	[low]	[low]
White	66.8%	64.3%	67.7%	70.9%	67.4%	69.3%

Annex B: Evidence base and rationale for intervention strategies (further detail)

Detailed below is further information regarding the evidence base, rationale and evaluation of Intervention Strategies 1, 4, 5 and 6. No further information is provided for Strategic Interventions 2 and 3 at this time as the evidence base is limited and the evaluation has been outlined within the template provided – further work to develop the theory of change and evaluation plan for these interventions will take place in 2023/24 ahead of delivery in 2024/25.

1 – ACCESS (Pre-16): Attainment raising

Enhanced practitioner engagement

Evidence base and rationale: *'The effects of high-quality professional development on teachers and students'* (2020) report from the *Education Policy Unit (EPI)*, commissioned by *Wellcome* and including analysis from the *Ambition Institute*, provided evidence to suggest that high-quality CPD has the potential to improve pupils' attainment and that it may be more impactful than other school interventions. Within the report, high-quality CPD was recommended as a cost-effective intervention for improving pupil outcomes that tended to be more positively received than larger structural interventions. As such, by creating an easily accessible network of resources and online activities through sustained partnerships with targeted schools we hope to best support teaching staff to increase their subject knowledge and delivery, confidence and ability in classroom management and to support specific cohorts (inc. disadvantaged pupils, care leavers, service children, EAL and GTRSB learners).

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Engagement figures of the network and online platform monitoring by term.
2. Attendance of CPD events and workshops.
3. Pre/post-evaluative surveys measuring improved confidence levels in subject delivery, subject knowledge, classroom management, understanding and supporting target cohort (as appropriate).
4. Annual surveys of network members (as above) and to inform delivery areas.
5. Mid-point and end-point focus groups to gather greater qualitative insights into the value and potential developments of the network and CPD activities.

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual report to network members.
2. Insights/mini reports of individual events and activities to network members.

First Star Scholars Scheme

Evidence base and rationale: We partnered with the national charity ***First Star Scholars UK (FSSUK)*** in 2018/19 to become the second university in the UK to establish the First Star Scholar Scheme, a long-term (4-year) university preparatory programme for looked-after children that supports their transition through GCSE and post-16 education – offering a pathway to university and careers through academic support, life skills development and carer engagement.

First Star Scholars supports the *Centre for Social Justice '12 by 24' pledge* to double the number of care leavers entering university at ages 19-21 (from 6% to 12%) by 2024. First Star Scholars was established in 2017 with its first pilot programme at St Mary's University, Twickenham, and is based on the US model launched by Peter Samuelson in 2011. In 2018 it also won the *'WhatUni Award for Best Prospective Student Engagement initiative'*.

There are now 12 First Star Academies in the US and data indicates positive outcomes for participants: 100% of scholars completing the First Star programme graduated from high school, compared to 50% of looked-after youth nationally; and 91% of First Star graduates have progressed to further or higher education compared to less than 10% of looked-after youth nationally. In 2021, First Star Scholars' GCSE outcomes exceeded expectations, even overcoming the disadvantages of Covid. 58% of scholars passed GCSE English and maths (grade 4 or above) compared to 17.5% of looked after children nationally (DfE, 2018). 32% of First Star Scholars passed GCSE English and Maths at grade 5 or above compared to 10% of looked after children nationally. Similarly, First Star Attainment 8 score (47.10) compares well with national data (50.20) and is more than double the score for looked after young people (21.40).

Currently (June 2023), we have 23 scholars at Winchester engaged in cohort 1 currently sitting their GCSEs, we have already observed improved rates of confidence in academic abilities and intend to expand to a second cohort in September 2024.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Attainment outcomes against national data and predicted grades from schools and mock exams conducted by English and Math's teachers in test conditions on-campus.
2. Pre/post surveys (residential and via external workshop delivery organisations) to identify increase in academic confidence and life skills.
3. Tracking progression to FE and HE
4. Focus groups with scholars, school staff, FSS staff and carers.

Summary of publication plan:

1. Reports provided to external funders under grant conditions.
2. Regular individualized/cohort feedback to carers/school staff/local authorities.
3. Publish GCSE outcomes and progression to HE outcomes via FSSUK (website, reports and conferences).
4. National FSSUK commissioned research reports and policy briefings.

Key Stage 2 Academic Coaching and Transition Programme

Evidence base and rationale: We know that locally there is already a significant amount of attainment raising activity taking place across secondary schools in the region via the Southern Universities Network (SUN) Uni Connect partnership (see below). However, as the gaps in development and attainment are evident from early years particularly at Key Stage 2 (KS2), we intend to focus our efforts on addressing attainment gaps much earlier through a new targeted and sustained programme of KS2 academic coaching and transitional support in local primary schools.

The **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)** suggests the use of '*metacognition strategies*' – which can get pupils to think about their learning - as one of the most impactful interventions for disadvantaged pupils, with an average impact of a 7+ months progress. EEF also suggest that metacognitive strategies, where possible, should be taught in conjunction with specific subject content as learners find it hard to transfer generic tips to specific tasks. As such, in summer 2023, in partnership with a local inner-city junior school based in Southampton and the CoachBright social mobility charity, we developed and piloted an academic coaching programme to support a cohort of thirty Year 5 pupils. We employed student volunteers, trained by CoachBright to deliver a series of Maths and Literacy face-to-face workshops culminating in an on-campus celebration event at the University. Previous independent evaluation of CoachBright programs conducted in 2022 by ImpactEd indicated "*positive changes were observed across all social and emotional skills for CoachBright pupils. The increase was highest for metacognition and deemed statistically significant.*" The impact report of the project found that the number of pupils who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'When I feel like giving up, I know how to keep myself going' increased from a total of 68% pre intervention to 81.4% post intervention. The cohort was split, with approximately half being supported with Maths coaching and the other half Literacy (reading). The report also found that enjoyment with both Maths and Literacy

increased during the course of the programme. Pre- programme 63.3% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed Maths, but this increased to 87.5% at the end of the programme. Similarly, pre-programme 56.3% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed reading this increased to 78.9% at the end of the programme.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Engagement of learners and university students
2. Pre/post-evaluative surveys measuring development of metacognition skills, confidence in academic abilities and subject knowledge (as appropriate).
3. Mock assessments/ predicted grades/ teacher assessments
4. Key Stage 2 (SATs) outcomes
5. Feedback from teaching staff

Summary of publication plan:

1. School Impact Reports
2. Contribute to Annual Report produced by the third-party provider (provider TBC September 2023)
3. Develop a case study for publication.

SUN Collaborative KS4 activity

Evidence base and rationale: The **Southern Universities Network (SUN)** has a strong reputation as an impartial provider of pre-16 outreach across the local region, with excellent existing partnerships already established with local authorities and partner schools. The Uni-Connect partnership has already engaged in activities that aim to raise attainment levels, work includes interventions with *Twenty Twenty Learning*, *Marginal Gains*, and *Participation People*, and has begun developing activity with *Action Tutoring*.

We have identified key areas of the planned SUN attainment-raising programmes we can actively support via student volunteers, expertise in staff CPD, evaluation and funding. Under the current funding model, it is anticipated that this work will begin in 2023/24 and continue (where possible) into 2024/25 and beyond.

Drawing upon our prior contributions to the SUN accredited teacher CPD programme, which is unique to the SUN Uni Connect, and the identified interest of local authorities for enhanced CPD provision, we will continue to provide our expertise in this work - aligning with our own planned CPD activity under this strategic intervention. The SUN CPD programme will have a thematic approach based on the six areas identified within the Causeway Attainment Raising Toolkit to develop themes for the CPD programme *What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research. Sutton Trust (October 2014)*. The SUN will also deliver its accredited CPD session, in partnership with Parentkind, to enhance liaising and communicating with parents. Further evidence suggests the importance of school, University and community partnerships (see *Improving the impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK – interim findings - Sutton Trust* and *Strengthening Community Schools Through University Partnerships | PJE Vol. 88 - Issue 5 - 2013 | Peabody Journal of Education | Peabody College of Education and Human Development | Vanderbilt University*).

A growing body of evidence has also demonstrated the potential impact of metacognition or self-regulated learning on attainment (see *Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning - Education Endowment Foundation* and *Thinking skills meta-analysis - Evidence for Policy and Practice Information Centre, IoE*). The Marginal Gains session, developed and accredited by COSMOS, has been developed to address the gap in attainment between males and females by targeting disadvantaged males that are less likely to apply to HE. The 3x2 hour interactive workshops with small cohorts of male KS4 students focus on learner making small improvements to make large long-lasting changes, through developing strategies such as building resilience, motivation strengths awareness and growth mindsets. Learner data has shown significant positive impacts. Given our attention on disadvantaged males attainment later in the lifecycle (Strategic Intervention 5: Closing Awarding Gaps), we will be

supporting the enhanced provision of the programme by recruiting and training 2+ male student ambassadors to deliver sessions in schools to expand provision of the wider SUN programme.

Method(s) of evaluation:

SUN has been recognised for its evaluation activity as a Uni Connect partnership employing multiple methods of evaluation providing narrative, empirical enquiry and causal evidence (*types 1, 2 and 3 of the OfS Standards of evidence and evaluation*). The Uni Connect has established the *SUN Evaluation Project Hub* to develop and champion evaluation across the SUN partnership.

1. Pre/post-evaluative surveys measuring development of metacognition skills, confidence in academic abilities and subject knowledge (as appropriate).
2. Baseline assessment of knowledge/ skills
3. Mock assessments/ predicted grades/ teacher assessments
4. Comparator groups for marginal gains within the same year group/school

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual impact reports provided to partner schools, local authorities, and the SUN Management Group.
2. Programme reports provided to the Office for Students, as per conditions of the UniConnect funding.
3. SUN Practitioner Conference
4. SUN Research and Evaluation Hub
5. SUN regularly contributes to national calls for evidence and will identify opportunities under the raising attainment planned programme.

Development of the SCiP Alliance

Evidence base and rationale: Service children can experience complex, highly individualised barriers to education, including mobility (characterised by short-notice, mid-year, low-choice moves between different education systems), stressful separation from a serving parent and wider family support structures, and unsettling family transition out of the military (MoD, 2020, McCullough et al., 2018). Education providers (including, primary secondary and tertiary providers) face difficulties identifying, understanding and supporting Service children citing systemic issues like data and resources alongside professional/organisational barriers like low awareness and confidence as limiting improvements in the scale and quality of support for Service children (Granada and Mulcahy, 2022, Burke et al., 2019, Rose and Rose, 2018).

Establishing the SCiP Alliance has enabled significant improvements in collaboration, increased the scale and quality of support, and grown research in the field (SCiP Alliance, 2023). Consultation with the sector and collaborative leadership through the diverse stakeholders in the community has highlighted the need to enhance collaboration, advance research and build engagement with evidence-based support further (Rose and Rose, 2022).

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Online platform registrations and usage data indicating scale and nature of community engagement.
2. Independent stakeholder research (akin to 2018 and 2022 reports) will assess the performance of the Alliance, including against metrics across its impact evaluation framework (as per the 2019-22 impact report).
3. Impact evaluation of the impact of the Thriving Lives Toolkit on practice and outcomes for Service children (akin to iCeGS, 2022).

Summary of publication plan:

1. The SCiP Alliance publishes regular newsletters to the 800+ members in the network and to the sector at-large through large-scale public channels, but all publications are made freely available on the website.

2. As appropriate, publications are supported through launch events, which always engage key stakeholders in applying learning to improved practice as well as disseminating findings.

4 - SUCCESS – Continuation rates

Addressing the impacts of the pandemic and cost of living crisis on students on emerging gaps in continuation rates.

Enhanced 'Welcome to Winchester (and beyond)' Transition Programme

Evidence base and rationale: For many students the impact of the pandemic has exasperated the gaps between those coming into university with capital and those without. Elements such as digital poverty, difficult home study environments, lack of access to support networks and reduced experience of class-based and exam study have all played their part. Anecdotally, we have seen amongst the new and returning student cohorts a change in their expectations that often fail to meet with those of our staff or institutional structures. This is not unique to Winchester, but across the sector, students' concepts of acceptable behaviour, levels of engagement, teaching and digital support have shifted. However, there is work needed on setting and managing these expectations as acknowledged by '[An exceptional transition to higher education: induction of new and returning students during the new normal report](#)' produced by Advance HE in 2020 exploring the role of transitions during Covid. Under this 'new normal' the sector has begun to recognise transitions as more than just the importance of a successful move into higher education, where traditionally this centred around pre-arrival and early post-arrival activity such as induction and welcome weeks. Instead, seeing transitions in much the same way as employability, as an essential component of student support and success embedded across the student journey.

In response to the evolving, HE landscape amidst the impact of the pandemic, and growing concerns that 'without specific action, the next generation of students could leave education feeling further disenfranchised by their experience at university and with the education they receive.' The UPP established and launched the Student Futures Commission in May 2021, with three key objectives:

- To ensure students are best supported after the pandemic by contributing to a generous and collaborative effort in the sector to ensure their successful futures.
- To make practical recommendations to universities, government and others for the academic year 2021-2022 and onwards.
- To curate ideas, insights and learnings from all stakeholders in higher education that can be widely disseminated and used to enhance the post-pandemic student experience.

The resulting report '[A student Futures Manifesto](#)' was released in February 2022, which took a fresh perspective on the future of learning and teaching in HE, emphasising the importance of 'helping students regain their sense of 'belonging' to their university, and provide clearer pathways to graduate outcomes. It set out six key themes for universities to respond to, that recognised the value of the student experience and transitions into, through and beyond HE. As part of a poll taken for the Student Futures Manifesto, over 2000 students across the UK were asked 'Which of the following, if any, make you feel most connected to the University Community? The highest ranked activity from the selection, selected by 58% of the students was 'taking part in academic activities' – closely followed by taking part in social/informal activities with other students. Suggesting the importance students place on developing community amongst the staff and students on their programmes and the value of embedding this within transition programmes.

Furthermore, belonging has been widely linked with developing relationships with academic staff, as seen in a recent study taken at the University of Portsmouth. In 2018 and 2019 Meehan and Howells evaluated first-year students' transition into university (Portsmouth) and found that the values of 'being, belonging and becoming' were particularly important. Through their findings they noted that specifically, three things matter to students: the academic staff they work with; the nature of their academic study; and the feeling of belonging. At Portsmouth they have embedded the three Bs (Being, Belonging and Becoming) across their new approach to blended learning entitled 'Blended and Connected' acknowledging the importance of developing those connections both within the classroom and through online activities.

In October 2022, we conducted an internal research project to explore the value of the transition programme of activities we provided. The results from the survey and focus groups asked new students to reflect upon how useful they found arrivals and welcome week in helping them feel prepared for their first month of study. 53% of respondents said they felt 'somewhat prepared', whereas only 15% felt 'very prepared'.

Drawing upon best practice in the sector – utilizing personal tutoring, developing peer relations and cohort identity, and building a sense of belonging to a particular place (campus, departmental building or halls of residence' as recommended under the *What works? Facilitating an effective transition into higher education*' report by Professor Liz Thomas on behalf of the Higher Education Academy. In September 2023 we will be launching our new 'Welcome to Winchester' transition programme that seeks to support successful transitions via an online orientation, new website with clear step-by-step actions, an enhanced programme inductions and enrichment programme and a series of thematic weeks for both new and returning students to receive staggered advice and guidance. This work also features under our Mental Health Strategy Operational Plan which seeks to embed the four principles of good practice under the *Transition into University theme of the University Mental Health Charter*.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Annual institutional transition survey assessing student satisfaction with the transition process (piloted in Autumn 2023) to be rolled out annually to establish progress made against benchmark indicators.
2. Student body's perceptions of Being, Belonging and Becoming (ANTF funded collaborative project led by University of Portsmouth).
3. Focus groups to accompany the annual survey to provide further qualitative feedback on student experiences of the transition activities.
4. Pre- and post- survey feedback of selected pre-familiarisation activities and events to assess HE-preparedness and sense of belonging, where possible drawing upon validated survey designs.
5. Comparison of student retention and academic engagement figures for students from similar demographics who engaged in pre-familiarisation activities and events, against those who didn't.
6. Focus groups to accompany the pre-familiarisation surveys to provide further qualitative insight into impact of activities.
7. Monitoring engagements with SSaS in Semester 1 for cohorts engaged in pre-familiarisation targeted activities.

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual SSaS Evaluation Report published internally.
2. "You said... We did..." feedback reporting to students from annual surveys and forums via intranet and student communications
3. Student Mental Health Charter Award
4. Explore opportunities to engage in national research and conferences to share experiences on embedding transition programmes to support continuation.

Enhanced Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Initiatives

Evidence base and rationale: The *Mental Health Strategy Operational Plan* is based on the evidence-based *Student Minds* University Mental Health Charter framework, endorsed by the *British Psychological Society*, and identifies activity and milestones under each of the 18 identified themes, adopting the principles of practice against the 4 domains (Learn, Support, Work and Live) and enabling themes of the UUK mentally Healthy Universities model – the revised model of *StepChange*.

We intend to join the University Mental Health Charter (UMHC) Programme as members, benefitting from a community of practice and annual progress review, with plans to complete the University Mental Health Charter Award Assessment by the end of the plan. The Charter Programme and Award Process will enable us to receive external appraisals and evaluations of our activity under the Mental Health Charter to assess our progress and identify areas of strength and development to inform ongoing improvements we can make.

In March 2022, the Mental health and Wellbeing Team held a *Student Voices Forum* identifying the *need for more quiet spaces on campus; for students on all courses to have an academic tutor; more short-notice appointments or access to immediate alternative support (triaging services); improved promotion and communications of services and events*. These areas have been, and continue to be, priorities for the development of our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Operational Plan. We have now established new quiet spaces on campus and ensured that every student is provided access to a **Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)**, in addition to a faculty designated **Student Support and Success Advisor (SSSA)**. Every student will be offered an initial meeting with their PAT in the first three weeks of Semester 1.

We also plan to launch a new mental wellbeing app - the UniWellBeing app provides a strategic digital platform that makes building health habits and looking after wellbeing fun, stimulating and interactive. The app is already well recognised by other universities in the UK, North America and Australia for providing prevention and early intervention using evidence-based methods including mindfulness and CBT. It also provides the platform to engage larger, more diverse student populations through a new targeted **Mental Health and Wellbeing Communication and Campaigns Plan** that will drive improved promotion and communications of mental wellbeing services – particularly amongst groups less likely to engage in traditional one-to-one counselling, such as the University of Bradford digital innovation initiative that encouraged South Asian students to engage in mental health provision – Asian students are amongst those least likely to know where to go for help and support at Winchester (Being Well, Doing Well Survey, May 2023).

The activity under this strategic intervention will also include enhancements of our Wellbeing Café and Student Peer Support (Student Listeners), first launched in September 2021. An initiative co-run by the Mental Wellbeing Team and Student Union takes place weekly during term-time. The café, staff and student peers provide a friendly informal space, with free refreshments, whereby students can drop in for a chat, coffee, mindfulness exercises or themed talks. Engagement with the café has grown from 120 attendees across twenty-one sessions in 2021/22 to 384 attendees across fifty sessions in 2022/23.

Internal data demonstrates a growing number of students now identify as LGBT+ (over 16% in 202/23). The 'Being Well, Doing Well' Alterline Survey (May 2023) demonstrated that non-binary and not heterosexual students were amongst the most likely to have a current mental health issue (82% of not heterosexual students, 100% non-binary students) or low-life satisfaction (45% not Heterosexual and 35% Non-binary). Further evidence in the Alterline LGBT Student Experience Pulse Survey (May 2023) also indicated that 'students from the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to feel isolated and unwelcomed in the student community, which is having an impact on retention', and 'mental wellbeing is an important factor in retention of students from the LGBTQ+ community', yet 'wellbeing interventions are more likely to be used by students from the LGBTQ+ community, however they are less likely to think counselling had a positive impact'. As such we have identified the need to enhance

our knowledge and understanding of LGBT* students, amongst other groups, and will be joining the Alterline 'Understanding the experience of students from the LGBTQ+ community' insight collaboration project in September 2023 and conducting CPD with student-facing staff following the findings and recommendations of the project.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. MHWB feedback forms
2. SSAS Annual Student feedback
3. Monitoring of service usage by demographics
4. Annual Student Voices Forum
5. Learner Analytics Engagement Dashboard (identifying engagement by demographic against our CRM system)
6. Alterline – 'Being Well: Doing Well' survey (intention to re-survey at least once to see progress)

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual SSaS Evaluation Report published internally.
2. "You said... We did..." feedback reporting to students from annual surveys and forums via intranet and student communications
3. Student Mental Health Charter Award
4. Explore opportunities to engage in national research and conferences to share experiences on embedding Mental Health Charter Framework and developing Support to Study processes and peer-support initiatives.

Enhanced provision of Financial Support

Evidence base and rationale: Nationally, the cost-of-living crisis has been well documented as having a significant impact on students. Over 4,000 students responded to an online poll commissioned by the Office for Students (OfS) and found that almost one in five respondents said that they had considered dropping out of university or college because of such increases. The Studying during rises in the cost of living - Office for Students brief provides evidence of further research that has also found that students are more concerned about their finances, with many cutting back on food and non-essential purchases or taking on more part-time work. At Winchester, our students have also seen the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on students – both anecdotally and via our data.

Where previously there had been concern in the value of financial support in improving access rates there is a growing body evidence, that mirrors our own internal research, demonstrating positive correlations between 'needs based' bursaries and Continuation (TASO). Our entrants who received a Household-income (HHI) bursary in either 2018/19 or 2019/20 were identified and matched to the TEF outcomes data to indicate if a bursary has an effect on the individuals Continuation compared to the full-time first-degree population. The data in table 5 shows that in both years, those who received financial support showed higher levels of Continuation, a difference of between 5% to 10%.

Year of entry	Population	Total entrants	% Continuation
2018	Entrant financial support - YES	1,140	97.3
	Entrant financial support - NO	1,163	86.8
Difference:			10.5
2019	Entrant financial support - YES	801	95.3

Entrant financial support - NO	1,581	90.3
Difference:		5.0

Table 5:
Continuation
comparison of
Full-time first-
degree entrant's

vs entrants in receipt of a financial bursary

The University provides *financial support* to students from low household income, over half of whom come from the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD Q1 or 2). In a survey sent to 2019/20 bursary recipients, of which 408 responded, 72% felt they were able to participate in university activities, 76% felt less anxious and 71% felt they were able to concentrate on their studies, whilst 71% felt having the bursary was either 'important' or 'extremely important' for them to be able to continue with their studies. At the time, a further analysis of those receiving financial support in 2019/20 suggested a positive relationship between being in receipt of an income-based bursary with significantly lower rates of withdrawal (0.9% n 757) compared to students not receiving a bursary (12.6%, n 1,710). Similarly, an analysis against the TEF data for 2018/19 (n 1,140) and 2019/20 (n 801) recipients demonstrated that in both years those who received financial support showed higher levels of Continuation than first-time first-degree entrants not receiving the award, a difference of between 5-10%. Thus, suggesting that financial support packages provided to students contributed to excellent continuation rates, particularly across students from the most deprived backgrounds.

In 2021/22 we began a review of our APP-countable bursaries, as such we revised some of our bursary awards for target groups (see below), with the inclusion of new awards. In 2022/23, following student consultation to improve the provision of our income-based bursaries to make them more attractive and accessible to prospective students, we conducted a second-stage review of our bursary offer in consultation with the Student Union Executive. The University acknowledged that approximately 30% of our home-domicile undergraduate students come from a household with an assessed income of under £25,000. In order to ensure an equitable package is available and support a greater number of students we have revised the eligibility criteria removing the additional requirements of coming from either a low participation neighbourhood or BAME background. Under this plan we intend to continue providing the financial support packages identified under our variation for September 2023 entry. Further details of the packages available to students can be found under our Whole Institutional Approach (page 29).

In addition, we are currently exploring opportunities to pilot and roll-out the Aspire Cash system. Using *NatWest's Payit* open banking technology and JS Group's Aspire platform, awards can be made available to students within 30 minutes, with no collecting or storing of bank details involved in the process. Current processes for hardship support follow the payment run dates and emergency financial support can only be processed within one working day, we cannot currently offer same day payments. The system also enables improved insight as students can choose to withdraw in instalments and select what they are withdrawing their funds for. This alongside financial support surveys administered by the JS Group via the Aspire Cash platform can provide reporting against UK-wide benchmarks.

In the '*Being Well, Doing Well*' Survey (Alterline, May 2023), when asked "Please tell us what support, help or advice you would like to see your university/students' union offer to support students who need help with their financial situation'. Qualitative responses indicated that students would like to see advice and support with budgeting, either as a one-to-one advice session or training. More signposting on where to go or who to consult when it came to financial struggles would also be beneficial as some students didn't know where to turn for help. As such, under the plan we will also be introducing online budgeting modules for undergraduate and postgraduate students as part of our new online orientation module. We will also be hosting a themed 'Budgeting for Study' week of activities and advice early in semester 1 for all students to support them to consider how to budget their student loans and other finances for the year ahead.

In 2022/23 we also introduced a '*Placement Support Fund*' for direct entry nursing students to support them with the rising cost of living, recognising that practice learning adds additional financial burden to students – following feedback from the cohort. A limited amount of money was available to utilise for the fund. Students could ask for £100 or £150 to help support with costs associated with placements. The fund was opened before each placement period. A total of 98 students applied. Seven applied for £100, and 91 applied for £150. Fourteen students submitted multiple applications associated with different placements. All students were asked to give a brief reason for applying to the fund. The two most cited reasons given were fuel costs (43 mentions) and public transport costs (25 mentions) the third most commonly given reason was the inability to work due to placements. Ten of the applications stated that the applicant was a single mother, therefore reliant on only one source of income to support the family. The plan was to keep the fund open and available across the whole academic year, however due to the high demand, it closed early in May. Under this Strategic Intervention, in addition to [Strategic Intervention 6](#), we intend to enhance placement financial support and develop tailored budgeting sessions to support students entering placements – particularly for nursing students.

Furthermore, over the past two years we have developed a number of 'in-kind' provisions including introducing warm spaces with free hot drinks, providing subsidised meals and Fee4All fridges where we leave surplus food still fit for human consumption. The Students' Union also set up a well utilised community 'take what you need' food cupboard, sell discounted 'too good to go' food and run regular clothes swaps on-campus. In fact, responses from the 'Being Well, Doing Well' survey suggest that students are more likely to access support with free or discounted food than applying for funds so we intend to develop more activities to meet food-needs and will explore ways to partner with local supermarkets to decrease the cost of purchasing food off-campus.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Monitoring engagement levels in budgeting sessions
2. Aspire University Portal tracking bursary spend by amount and intended use.
3. SSAS Annual Student feedback
4. Monitoring of service usage by demographics
5. Annual student finance survey to bursary holders
6. Correlating retention rates with bursary holders
7. Alterline – 'Being Well: Doing Well' survey (intention to re-survey at least once to see progress)

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual SSaS Evaluation Report published internally.
2. Aspire cash reporting.
3. "You said... We did..." feedback reporting to students from annual surveys and forums via intranet and student communications.
4. Explore opportunities to contribute to sector-wide research and evaluation projects into the impact of student financial support on continuation.

5 - SUCCESS – Closing awarding gaps

Targeted activities and embedding accountability to address awarding gaps.

BECOME Scholarship and Academic Coaching Programme

Evidence base and rationale: In 2022/23, recognising the additional challenges facing non-white students and graduates in education, social care and allied health, we piloted the new BECOME Scholarship. The scheme invited up to twenty new students demonstrating prior academic excellence access to a cash bursary and academic coaching programme with external provider CoachBright.

Fourteen students participated in the pilot programme and engaged in a series of group workshops and 5x 1:1 online coaching sessions. Each student completed a pre- and post- survey questionnaire, made up of a combination of academically validated scales, in order to measure progress overtime. Coachbright also conducted two focus groups to gather qualitative impact data and produced an end of project report. The report identified that whilst students found it challenging to schedule the opportunity around work and study commitments, including the demands of placements, engagement was very good and consistent throughout the intervention with the programme evaluation indicating notable improvements in academic and personal development across the cohort. Students demonstrated increases in skills such as confidence, independence, self-efficacy, and motivation. Confidence in their ability to succeed at university increased and, in some cases, this was directly reflected in their academic results. However, initial evidence also suggested that the intervention did not positively impact student wellbeing or sense of belonging however this could have been influenced by the timing of the end of programme survey which took place during assessment period.

Under the plan, we intend to further enhance and develop the scheme contracting a third-sector partner to deliver the scheme for 2-4 years to ensure sustained practice and evaluation.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Pre- and post- surveys assessing academic confidence and skills using academically validated scales.
2. Focus groups and interviews to provide further qualitative impact data.
3. Longitudinal tracking of continuation and attainment data.
4. Student body's perceptions of Being, Belonging and Becoming (ANTF funded collaborative project led by University of Portsmouth)

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual Impact Report produced by the project partner.
2. Intention to disseminate case study of the scheme following 2+years evidence of impact at a national conference.

Development and enhancement of Peer Learning Support Schemes

Evidence base and rationale: The Higher Education Academy [Mapping student-led peer learning in the UK](#) (2015) Report demonstrated the growing, albeit diverse, prevalence of peer-assisted learning (PAL) and peer-assisted study sessions (PASS) across the UK. Whilst schemes differ greatly by context common themes emerged "*such as students working in partnership with the institution, the employability of leaders, and improved student satisfaction through development of learning communities*".

Peer-learning programmes have been linked to supporting positive transitions whereby senior students help new students to navigate their first-years (Nelson et al., 2015), with evidence suggesting it can help improve engagement, satisfaction and grades ([Gamlagh, 2020](#), [DeMarinis et al., 2017](#); [Hryciw et al., 2013](#); [Rodger & Tremblay, 2003](#)). Some evidence also suggests that PAL schemes can directly impact the attainment of BAME students ([Northcliffe et al., 2017](#)) and via online or distance-learning ([Hargreaves, 2021](#)).

The Academic Skills team have historically coordinated two peer-led learning initiatives to support student transition, attainment and belonging; Academic Skills Student Mentoring (SMART Buddies) and Peer Assisted Learning (PAL).

- ***Academic Skills Student Mentoring (SMART Buddies)***

In the 2018/19-2021/22 period, 412 UG students signed for a SMART Buddy (2018-19 n=104, 2019/20 n=114, 2020-21 n=79, 2021/22 n=115), sessions were delivered face-to-face prior to the pandemic but have been delivered by hybrid delivery thereafter. The reduction in students in 2020-21 could be explained by the pandemic (either a reduced visibility of the scheme or students seeking support elsewhere), but numbers increased again in 2021/22, indicating the ongoing value of and appetite for peer one-to-one support at Winchester. When degree outcomes of mentees were mapped and aggregated against the wider University of Winchester UG cohort, there was a +6.9 percentage point difference between those who completed their studies and achieved a 1st or 2.1 in the 2018/2019-2021/22 period compared to the wider cohort (mentees n=134/162; all UG students n=12036/15879), suggesting that students who engage in the scheme are more likely to complete their degrees with better outcomes. In feedback for the 2021-22 academic year, mentees (19 responses) indicated that peer mentoring had helped them transition from A level (or equivalent) to Higher Education (n=17), encouraged them to take responsibility for their own learning (n=17) and helped them to develop key skills for academic study (n=17).

- **Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)**

PAL is a nationally and internationally recognised peer-led learning scheme. At Winchester, PAL sessions take place once a week or fortnightly in selected programmes (ten subjects in 2018/19 through to 2020/21, then reduced to four for a pilot of new structures in 2021-22). PAL brings together groups of first year students with a second- or third-year PAL Leader from the same programme, providing a supportive environment in which to explore course content, engage in deeper learning and build academic skills.

A total of 931 students have attended at least one PAL session in the 2018/19-2021/22 period (2018/19 n=372, 2019/20 n=355, 2020/21 n=119, 2021/22 n=85), engaging in peer-to-peer discussion and activities to strengthen their understanding of module content and academic skills. When degree outcomes of these PAL attendees were mapped and aggregated against the wider University of Winchester UG cohort, there was a +5.9 percentage point difference between students who completed their studies and achieved a 1st or 2.1 in the 2018/19-2021/22 period compared to the wider cohort (attendees n=432/529; all UG students n=12036/15879). Feedback from PAL attendees (163 responses across the TEF period) have consistently indicated benefits of PAL, including assistance in preparation for assignments (n=140), developing understanding of how to succeed academically (n=126), and improved understanding of course content (n=124).

Under this strategic intervention we intend to further enhance the impact of the above schemes by directly targeting students from the target groups to increase engagement and impact of the activities on closing the degree-awarding gaps.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Pre/post-evaluative surveys measuring development of metacognition skills, confidence in academic abilities and subject knowledge (as appropriate).
2. Comparison of student outcomes against the cohort (inc. withdrawal rates and academic fails).
3. Student feedback captures via the annual SSaS student survey.
4. Focus groups with leaders and learners.

Summary of publication plan:

1. Semester reporting for the SSaS department.
2. Annual reporting to the SEC.
3. Intention to contribute to sector PAL/PASS calls for evidence.

New Level 5 Academic Coaching Programme (to be delivered by external provider)

Evidence base and rationale: The Universities [#CLOSINGTHEGAP \(2019\) Report](#) challenged the sector on targeting interventions exclusively at BAME students as this could demotivate students and takes a

deficit understanding of the issue. Instead, they suggest considering other student characteristics and delivering more inclusive interventions, such as the University of Kent interventions aimed at first-generation students or those entering with a non-A-Level qualification. As such, given the evidence that academic engagement is inextricably linked to student attainment ([Schnitzler et al., 2021](#)), we will be developing a new academic coaching programme for students identified as below threshold for academic engagement as identified via our academic engagement dashboard.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Pre- and post- surveys assessing academic confidence and skills using academically validated scales.
2. Focus groups and interviews to provide further qualitative impact data.
3. Longitudinal tracking of continuation and attainment data.

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual Impact Report produced by the project partner.
2. Intention to disseminate case study of the scheme following 2+years evidence of impact at a national conference.

New bespoke communications and activity for Repeating and Returning to Study students

Evidence base and rationale: Internal data suggests that students who have repeated elements of their course are less likely to achieve a 1st or 2:1, over the past four years (2017/18 – 2021/22) only 33.3% of students who repeated after an academic fail but subsequently graduated achieved a 1st of 2:1 compared to 76.3% of all students. Whilst there is limited evidence, anecdotally students who return to study after a period of interruption face additional challenges to completing their course and achieving a 'good' degree outcome.

In 2022/23 we piloted some targeted interventions for repeating study students and although engagement was low feedback indicated some positive improvements in academic confidence and resilience. In 2023/24 we will directly contact repeating and returning students with bespoke offers of support, evaluating and review the offer year-on-year.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Pre/post-evaluative surveys measuring development of metacognition skills, confidence in academic abilities and subject knowledge (as appropriate).
2. Comparison of student outcomes against the cohort (inc. withdrawal rates and academic fails).
3. Student feedback captured via the annual SSaS student survey.

Summary of publication plan:

4. Semester reporting for the SSaS department.
5. Annual reporting to the SEC.

Enhancing and further embedding Inclusivity in the Curriculum

Evidence base and rationale: The OfS catalyst-funded Addressing Barriers to Student Success collaborative project to address the [BME Attainment Gap](#) led by Kingston University demonstrated the importance of developing an inclusive curriculum in addressing ethnicity awarding gaps.

Inclusive learning and teaching "recognises that students in Higher Education come from a range of different backgrounds, and differ by age, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and

faith"; that students learn in different ways and will bring with them "different educational experiences and cultural capital, as well as varying levels of confidence and self-esteem" (Office for Students). As such, inclusive learning and teaching is about providing all students with equal opportunities to learn and achieve their potential irrespective of their situation or background. Inclusive learning is "meaningful, relevant and accessible to all" (Hockings, 2010) and embraces the benefits of diversity in the co-construction of knowledge in higher education.

This involves interrogating traditional 'one-size-fits-all' teaching and assessment methods and applying the concept of neuro-variability in learning; the idea that there is no 'average brain' or homogenous learner. It is about anticipating barriers to learning rather than planning for a mythical 'norm' and expecting students to conform. This will involve flexibility, and programmes that are responsive to changes in student population or circumstances; accountability to equality objectives; collaboration between students, colleagues and other stakeholders (including professional bodies and employers) to enrich curricula; transparency; equity (Higher Education Academy, 2011). An inclusive curriculum is universal and intended to improve the experience, skills and attainment of all students including those in protected characteristic groups. It aims to ensure that the principles of inclusivity are embedded within all aspects of the academic cycle.

To date, our Learning and Teaching Development Unit (LTDU) has developed a series of resources, case studies and validation/revalidation toolkits designed to support academic teaching staff developing and enhancing their programmes and modules, including via validation processes. The Quality Office have also begun exploring ways to incorporate data and plans regarding awarding gaps into the Programme Improvement Plans (PIPs) that will be supported by LTDU and the Head of Participation and Success with a series of roadshows planned to support programme leaders identify and embed inclusive practice under the PIPs.

However, the TASO 'Approaches to addressing the ethnicity degree awarding gap' Report (June 2023) recommended that providers needed to 'consider mechanisms for change' and 'be clear on accountability and responsibility'. As such we intend to take the next-step in developing and embedding inclusive-curriculum developments through our Programme Improvement Plans so that programme leaders are accountable with the responsibility to interrogate their own degree-awarding gaps and identify contextually appropriate developments – supported by the Learning and Teaching Development Unit, Widening Participation team and Quality Office.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Analysis of Programme Improvement Plans (PIPs) - mentions of targeted interventions, inclusive curriculum developments, professional development.
2. Staff feedback from inclusive curriculum development workshops and PIP workshops – employing pre- and post- evaluation questionnaires to identify staff awareness and confidence of embedding inclusive curriculum design.
3. Case study templates provided to academic colleagues.

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual reporting against the Programme Improvement Plans (PIPs).
2. Case studies produced and disseminated on the *Developing and Enhancing Learning, Teaching and Assessment CANVAS* module.

6 - PROGRESSION - Improving graduate outcomes

Targeted approaches to ensure positive graduate outcomes for those from under-represented groups.

Contact support campaign for level 4 students in the target progression areas

Evidence base and rationale: Aim of signposting them to resources and explain how the central careers team can support them throughout their degree. Students will be targeted both by widening participation characteristics and by their responses to the career registration questions they are asked during enrolment. The Careers Group, University of London presented a 3-year HEFCE funded learning gain project to investigate the value of Careers Registration: Where are you right now? Using careers registration to support employability in higher education - HEA Surveys Conference 2017 | Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk) This approach of using career registration data to target activities is being widely used across the sector to address career readiness and employability gaps with students. An internal report looking at student and graduate central (outside of the curriculum) Interactions with the Careers Service (June 2020- May 2021) broke down the engagement of students (for one-to-one appointments) with the career hub according to their year, the nature of query and interactions according to characteristics and nature of query by course for Asian and Disadvantaged Males to identify if the target student groups were engaging with the Careers Service where we measured one-to-one interactions:

- A total of 1,814 students engaged with Careers Service between June 2020- May 2021.
- Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic students made up 11.9% of students who engaged with the Careers team, with 5.31% being Asian and 2.78% being Black.
- 20.4% were from high deprived neighbourhoods and 38.6% identify as disabled.

The data demonstrates that the proportion of disadvantaged males using the service (20.1%) was broadly in line with student population (23.7%). In looking at the data, activities are suggested to support non-white students, specifically Asian and Disadvantaged males. For nature of enquiry, exploring options is quite high for every widening participation group. The introduction of the contact campaign in Level 4 is designed to provide support for these students and increase their awareness and engagement with the Careers Service.

Research has been conducted into other universities conducting similar campaigns, such as the University of Kent's 'Opportunity Matching Initiative' where students were contacted based on their responses to their occupational interest on the student booking system were further triaged and provided with support materials. All students who were approached were tagged in their student booking system so that numbers of appointments and talks booked onto by these students since the project began were monitored. The University of Reading undertook a calling campaign to promote internships and work experience in March 2022. 442 calls were made with 106 students booking careers appointments, with 100% having at least one widening participation marker, and 89% having never had a careers appointment. Although there is no published research on these approaches, we will liaise with these institutions to inform our approach to this activity to ensure we learn from their experiences of the impact of this work to support students.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Learning gain pre and post phone call / email / SMS
2. Number of students in the target group called.
3. Number of follow up emails sent / opened.
4. Registration and engagement with career online job platform
5. Number attending follow up support sessions and learning gain.
6. Improved career readiness results from L4 to L5 for students called.
7. Track students throughout degree via CRM / engagement with careers and curriculum initiatives.

Summary of publication plan:

1. Case study and report shared with the Student Experience Committee at the University of Winchester.
2. Case study shared with the AGCAS network (Association of Careers Advisory Services)
3. Case study / report shared with HEIs with similar progression targets via TASO.

A bespoke professional mentoring programme for Level 6 across all target groups

Evidence base and rationale: The Careers Service launched a professional mentoring programme in 2021. Mentoring in the context of this programme is about one person/professional assisting another with their career plans and helping them to achieve a future goal. The current programme assists final year students to develop the understanding and skills required to enter the graduate labour market, through the opportunity to work with a professional, who will enable them to gain an insight into the world of work. The programme matches final year students with professionals, who are their Mentor, and act as "a professional friend" to share their experiences, success and lessons learned. This is an existing programme, but it has previously not been tailored to our progression targets and robust evaluation measures have not been in place. Various research highlights the benefits of mentoring for disadvantaged groups, The programme will include development sessions from the careers service to include the use of strengths-based evaluation CappFinity. Sector research suggests this has positive impacts when used as part of a widening participation programme. Advancing your Strengths Mentoring Programme (warwick.ac.uk. The current programme will be targeted in 2023/24 to encourage students from the target groups apply and are matched with mentors to improve their progression outcomes.

Mentoring programmes are being used across the University sector by Careers Services to support students' employability. Kingston University's Beyond Barriers Student Mentoring Scheme is a six-month programme designed to help students from traditionally under-represented groups achieve their full potential. Mentors support the students by offering impartial guidance, encouraging new experiences, positive choices and helping to inspire self-confidence. Mentee case studies about the impact of the scheme can be found here.

We have reviewed the *OfS case study: Improving graduate level employment rates for underrepresented students by scaling up existing employability interventions* which looked at 5 interventions including Professional Mentoring (Aston University). The project measured student interaction and engagement with each activity and used a survey to determine the confidence and resilience of students pre- and post-intervention. It also looked at career readiness data and student placement and work experience uptake. Evaluation measures at all providers showed significant positive impact on placement uptake and career readiness. Those taking part in the interventions also showed increased levels of confidence and resilience. We will utilise the mentoring toolkit created through this work in our programme at Winchester as well as the evaluation methods to measure impact.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. 2023 analyse data from 3 years of general mentoring programme as a baseline for the institution
2. Career readiness questions year on year at enrolment
3. Self-reflection at beginning and end of Mentoring Programme
4. Students who drop out of the programme contact and evaluation of 'why'
5. Mid-point focus group
6. Career enrolment data year on year
7. Post programme report and adjust year on year
8. Review graduation booking form data captured at the end of the degree course, indicating employment status
9. Call graduates involved in the mentoring programme post programme, 6 months then 12 months later
10. Review mentee LinkedIn profiles for employment status
11. Analyse Graduate Outcome results including Graduate Reflection questions
12. Review of mentee LinkedIn profiles pre and post intervention to track career progression ahead of Graduate Outcome results.

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual internal professional mentoring report, reviewed by Student Experience Committee

2. Insight reports to Faculties detailing the impact of mentoring
3. Case study and report shared with the Student Experience Committee at the University of Winchester.
4. Case study shared with the AGCAS network (Association of Careers Advisory Services)
5. Case study / report shared with HEIs with similar progression targets via TASO.

Enhanced financial support for employability-based activity

Evidence base and rationale: The Winchester Employability Fund (WEF) is an existing offers financial support for students from under-represented backgrounds to undertake employability enhancing activities. However, to date the WEF has not been strategically promoted to students who would benefit the most from the scheme. In 2023/24 plans are in place to refine the marketing strategy and evaluate the impact of the fund on the students and to increase uptake and awareness. Under WEF, the University has a limited number of monetary grants which it allocates to eligible undergraduate students in the progression target areas to support them to secure volunteering or unpaid work experience/internships within voluntary organisations or companies This case study presents an example of engaging Widening Participation students in employability related activity, namely work experience, placements and graduate job searching, through multiple streams of financial incentives and bursaries.

Further activity has been identified to support students engage in 'study abroad' opportunities – following the establishment of our new International Student Support Centre. We know that although students from widening participation backgrounds may be less likely to engage in study or volunteer opportunities – those who do can enhance their future employability prospects - [The Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility \(Universities UK International, 2015\)](#). We have secured funding under the [UK Government's Turing Scheme](#) to support study and volunteer abroad opportunities targeted at students from under-represented backgrounds. We intend to evaluate the engagement and impact of the scheme as we continue to develop future opportunities informed by the recommendations of the report.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Analyse the use of the WEF over the last 2 academic years as a baseline of the percentage of students receiving funding from eligibility criteria, study level, course type, how the funding is used, review of feedback forms
2. Self-reflection at the point of funding allocation
3. Self-reflection post-experience
4. Focus group in year 1 for those requesting funding from the target groups and those who do not request funding
5. Analyse Graduate Outcome results for students who received funding

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual report for Student Support & Success (University of Winchester) and the Student Experience Committee
2. Case study / report shared with HEIs with similar progression targets via TASO.

Careers activities to support networking skills, confidence building and to increase number and take-up of positive action opportunities advertised in partnership with employers and alumni

Evidence base and rationale: Partnership working with employers and central University Alumni team to provide networking opportunities for students in the target groups: Non-white students, Disadvantaged males, Disabled students (declared social or communication impairment). Partnership working with employers and central University Alumni team to provide networking opportunities for

students in the target groups. Although activities have been in place over the last couple of years, no analysis has been undertaken as to the impact. There will be some initial work in 2023/24 to review the baseline for activities to ensure realistic and ambitious targets are set. Although activities have been in place over the last couple of years, no analysis has been undertaken as to the impact. There will be some initial work in 2023/24 to review the baseline for activities to ensure realistic and ambitious targets are set. We will explore and identify Faculty specific initiatives, e.g. Cultural Health Club | About where Physiotherapy (Health & Wellbeing Faculty) has a partnership with the organisation, and they promote diversity into the profession. We will connect work with the curriculum to evidence good practice case studies for other course areas.

We will build on existing relationships, such as the Graduate Aspiration Programme (GAP) managed and delivered by the Ministry of Justice Social Mobility Team, with the aim of supporting graduates from less privileged backgrounds to build their confidence and aspiration through a mentoring relationship with a Civil Servant. The six-month programme provides students with access to a professional Civil Servant for 1 hour per month to support them with their decision making for their future careers. We will aim to increase YOY to the number of students applying and staying on the mentoring programme (in 2022/23 27 University of Winchester students applied to GAP with 22 completing the programme.) The programme ran from November 2022 – April 2023. We would expect to see an annual increase in the confidence levels of students involved. Further investigation is needed to look at the impact measures used by the organisation to measure this.

We will continue to build relationships with specialist organisations who offer multiple opportunities for disabled students and graduates, such as Leonard Cheshire and their Change 100 programme and Creative Access. We will connect with and investigate relationships with employers such as JP Morgan Chase with their initiative to drive inclusion and the advancement of people with disabilities, such as their Autism at Work initiative and link our disabled students to these opportunities.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Improved career readiness results from the career registration enrolment data
2. Number of positive action schemes advertised on the University's Career Job Board.
3. Number of disability confident employers working with and advertising opportunities with the Careers Service
4. Number of employers on the Social Mobility Index working with and advertising opportunities with the Careers Service
5. Application and progression onto positive action schemes (where possible to find information)
6. For careers service/employer activities on campus (e.g., networking events) number of students attending the session and learning gain measures pre and post session.
7. Eventual Graduate Outcome results of students who have been involved in these activities.
8. Production of good practice case studies to reflect the course portfolio at the University of Winchester.

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual internal report, reviewed by Student Experience Committee
2. Case study and report shared with the Student Experience Committee at the University of Winchester.
3. Case study shared with the AGCAS network (Association of Careers Advisory Services)
4. Case study/report shared with HEIs with similar progression targets via TASO.

Graduate support 'Beyond Winchester' initiative: Contact campaign

Evidence base and rationale: Pastoral call for students to raise awareness of the support available to them from careers. The call includes an invitation to graduate support workshops, One-on-one careers guidance/coaching to help final year students with their next steps. This case study from Kingston University is an example of utilising external professional coaches to work intensively with widening

participation students who have are significantly lacking in confidence or aspiration, with the aim of supporting their career planning and personal development.

Method(s) of evaluation:

1. Learning gain pre and post phone call / email / SMS
2. Number of students in the target group called.
3. Number of follow up emails sent / opened
4. Number attending follow up support sessions and learning gain
5. Follow up calls 6 months and 12 months after attendance at Beyond Winchester programme
6. LinkedIn profile reviews
7. Graduate Outcome results

Summary of publication plan:

1. Annual internal report, reviewed by Student Experience Committee at the University of Winchester.
2. Case study shared with the AGCAS network (Association of Careers Advisory Services)
3. Case study shared with OfS
4. Case study/report shared with HEIs with similar progression targets via TASO.

Fees, investments and targets

2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: University of Winchester

Provider UKPRN: 10003614

Summary of 2024-25 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

We will not raise fees annually for 2024-25 new entrants

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2024-25 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9250
Foundation degree		N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT		N/A	9250
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year		N/A	1850
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2024-25

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2024-25 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	6935
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2024-25

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Fees, investments and targets

2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: University of Winchester

Provider UKPRN: 10003614

Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

Notes about the data:

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OIS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£819,000	£764,000	£802,000	£810,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£675,000	£706,000	£726,000	£745,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£110,000	£70,000	£85,000	£100,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£518,000	£433,000	£443,000	£447,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£198,000	£226,000	£252,000	£253,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£103,000	£105,000	£107,000	£110,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£819,000	£764,000	£802,000	£810,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (as % of HFI)	4.6%	4.0%	4.0%	3.9%
Access activity investment	Total access investment funded from HFI (£)	£283,000	£293,000	£303,000	£308,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)	£530,000	£465,000	£493,000	£496,000
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£525,000	£556,000	£576,000	£595,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£675,000	£706,000	£726,000	£745,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)	3.8%	3.7%	3.6%	3.6%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£110,000	£70,000	£85,000	£100,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%

Fees, investments and targets 2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: University of Winchester

Provider UKPRN: 10003614

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
50% of First Star Scholars pass 5+ GCSE subjects including English and Maths	PTA_1	Raising attainment	Care leavers	Other (please specify in description)		Care experienced young people participating on the First Star Scholars Scheme at the University of Winchester. Data collated via DfE and First Star Scholars UK. First cohort due to complete scheme in August 2025. Second cohort planned to commence in 2024 and complete in August 2028.	Yes	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Percentage	0	50	50	50	50
At least 80% of KS2 learners engaged in our academic coaching programmes demonstrate improved confidence in learning (each year - reaching 300+ learners in total across the length of the plan)	PTA_2	Raising attainment	Other	Other (please specify in description)		Following a pilot in June/July 2023, we will work with a third party organisation to deliver an academic programme to Year 5 and Year 6 learners, from a variety of target WP characteristics with expected lower rates of pre-16 attainment, to support KS2 attainment. (Baseline based on small pilot cohort) Data collated via third party organisation and schools.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2021-22	Percentage	100	80	80	80	80
At least 65+% of practitioners engaged in our network and access activities demonstrate improved confidence in supporting students from under-represented backgrounds to access HE (each year - reaching 500+ practitioners in total across the length of the plan)	PTA_3	Raising attainment	Other	Other (please specify in description)		We will establish evidence-based staff CPD and network, to establish a baseline for measuring confidence in supporting students from under-represented backgrounds to access HE	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2021-22	Percentage	0	65	65	65	65
Increase the entry rates of FSM eligible full-time all undergraduate degree entrants at Winchester to 18% by 2028.	PTA_4	Access	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible		We will address gaps in entry at Winchester for students eligible for FSM, with a 5-year target to improve inline with 21/22 sector average and continued improvement beyond the length of the plan.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	13.2	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0
Increase the entry rates of IMD Q 1 and 2 full-time first-degree entrants at Winchester to 28% by 2028.	PTA_5	Access	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations (IMD))	IMD quintile 1 and 2	Other (please specify in description)	We will address gaps in entry at Winchester for students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMD Q 1 and 2), with a 5-year target to improve inline with 21/22 competitor group average and continued improvement beyond the length of the plan.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	21.2	22.0	24.0	26.0	28.0
Reduce the gap between the offer rate and average offer rate for black students (all ages) to 0.09 (9pp), by 2027/28.	PTA_6	Access	Ethnicity	Black		We have identified a gap in black offer (all ages) rates compared to average offer rates, particularly in Nursing and Social Work, that we will address through improving the application and admissions process to be more equitable for black applicants.	No	UCAS data (please include details in commentary)	2021-22	Percentage points	23	19	15	12	9
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

