

## Access and participation plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

### Introduction and strategic aim.

Northumbria's strategic vision, since 2008, has been to transform ourselves as a higher education (HE) institution, becoming a research-intensive, modern university able to deliver internationally excellent education that is enhanced by our research to provide an enriching and empowering academic experience for our students, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds in the North East (NE) of England.

Our strategic aim is to work in partnership with our students and graduates to provide greater equity of access to and success in HE and empower them to identify and create more options and opportunities for success in their further study, career, and life ambitions. We have a strong regional presence and our mission extends to the equity of opportunity and choice for pre-HE students in the NE, and to enriching the social, economic and cultural fabric of our region.

Equity of opportunity and choice is core to our educational mission and we have a strong commitment to raising educational aspirations in the NE, which has one of the lowest rates of HE participation nationally and hosts some of the most income deprived local authority areas in the UK.

Four of the five authorities in Tyne & Wear are profiled as 'more income deprived' in the ONS 2019 data on income deprivation (based on local employment rates and earnings), and rank in the top 50 (of 316) for Income Deprivation Rate and the top 51 (of 200) of the proportion of the most deprived 10% of LSOAs (Lower Layer Super Output Areas) nationally, with South Tyneside ranking 9<sup>th</sup> overall. UCAS end of cycle data shows the NE is consistently among the regions of England with the lowest proportion of the 18-year-old population entering HE, having the lowest proportion in 2022. Of those students from the NE entering HE in 2021/22, 67% remained in the region to study, the highest proportion of any region in England, and over a third of these joined Northumbria.<sup>1</sup>

More than 62% of our UK undergraduate (UG) students are from the NE (34.8% from Tyne & Wear and 28% from the wider NE). The rest of our UK UG recruitment is predominantly from the north of England, with around 24% from Yorkshire, the Humber and the NW, and 14% from the rest of the UK. Many of these students are from low HE participation TUNDRA quintiles.

The UK domiciled proportion of our FT student cohort is 87.9%, higher than the sector average of 83.2%. Our high local recruitment rate is reflected in these data and in the ethnicity profile of our students with 89.6% of White ethnicity, similar to the NE demographic (84% of 16-64 year-olds in Newcastle and 94% of 16-64 year-olds in the wider NE identify as White; ONS, Annual Population

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<sup>1</sup> HESA Student FPE 2020/21, March 2022. Heidi Plus

Survey, 2021-2022). Between 2017/18 and 2020/21, 12.1% of our FT UG and 5.6% of PT UG populations were non-UK domiciled on average.

Between 2018/19 and 2021/22 an average of 18% of our UG recruitment was at Level 3 and 76% at Level 4 (the remaining 6% being direct entrants to levels 5 and 6).<sup>2</sup>

## Risks to equality of opportunity

<b>Risks to Equality of Opportunity</b>	<b>Assessment of Risk</b> (further detail in Annex A)	<b>Linked Objectives</b>
1: Knowledge and skills	High	1, 3
2: Information and guidance	High	1, 3
3: Perception of higher education	High	1, 3
4: Application success rates	Low	
5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode	Low	
6: Insufficient academic support	Medium	2, 3, 4, 6
7: Insufficient personal support	Medium	2, 3, 4, 5, 6
8: Mental health	High	2, 3, 4, 6
9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus	Medium	1, 2
10: Cost pressures	High	2, 3, 4, 5, 6
11: Capacity issues	Low	
12: Progression from higher education	Medium	2, 3, 4, 5, 6

There are lower proportions of students eligible for free school meals in Northumbria University, and intersecting with students in TUNDRA and IMD quintiles 1 and 2. Evidence suggests this is a function of prior knowledge and attainment gaps, partly due to the ongoing impacts of coronavirus, a lack of high quality information, advice and guidance, and students feeling like they are not able to apply to higher education, despite being qualified.

There are differential success outcomes for students eligible for free school meals, intersecting with students in TUNDRA and IMD quintiles 1 and 2, for Black students and for male students. Evidence suggests that a lack of suitable academic and pastoral support, including that which creates a sense of belonging and community may be a risk factor, which also potentially increases the risk to mental health for these students. The intersection of socioeconomic factors suggests risk of cost pressures for these groups.

Whilst Northumbria has limited data regarding outcomes for student care leavers, carers and estranged students, evidence suggests that these students may face higher risks to equality of opportunity throughout the lifecycle including reduced prior knowledge and a lack of information and guidance, significant cost pressures, increased mental health barriers and supported progression from higher education. Throughout the course of the plan, Northumbria aims to improve our data for these students to effectively monitor the associated risks within objective 3.

<sup>2</sup> Internal enrolment and retention data 2018/19 to 2021/22, December 2022. Strategic Planning and Performance

## Objectives

1. Increase the proportion of applications from students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) by 2030 through working in partnerships with schools to address prior knowledge and attainment gaps, providing high quality information, advice and guidance, and changing perceptions of HE.
2. Significantly reduce the gaps in student success (continuation, completion, and attainment) between students of low and high socioeconomic status (TUNDRA Q1 & 2, IMD Q1 & 2 and eligible for FSM) by 2030 through improving access to academic, pastoral, mental health and financial support and creating a sense of belonging and inclusion.
3. Improve outcomes for care experienced students, estranged students and student carers across the lifecycle (access, continuation, completion, attainment and progression) by 2028 through improving personal, academic support, reducing cost pressures and improving access to work experience and careers guidance.
4. Eliminate the gaps in student success (completion and attainment) and improve the on-course and progression outcomes between Black and White students by 2030 through improving personal, academic and mental health support, reducing cost pressures, creating a sense of belonging and improving access to work experience and careers guidance.
5. Eliminate the progression gap between Asian and White students by 2028 through improving access to work experience and tailored and targeted careers guidance and support.
6. Significantly reduce the gaps in student success (continuation, completion and attainment) between male and female students by 2030 through improving personal, academic and mental health support and reducing cost pressures.

## Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

All intervention strategies are underpinned by the model set out in Annex 2. The spend is based on best estimates and plans are subject to further refinement of activities and the University's annual planning process.

### Intervention Strategy 1 (IS\_1):

To increase the proportion of applications from students eligible for Free School Meals by 2030 through working in partnerships with schools to address prior knowledge and attainment gaps, providing high quality information, advice and guidance, and changing perceptions of HE. (Targets: PTA\_1). See page 2 for aligned risks.

Activity	Inputs  Total annual cost: £694.5k	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation
<p><b>1.1</b> Junior Evolve Programme: A sustained, progressive programme of activity delivered to students in Year 5 and 6, and Year 7-11 in schools with high proportions of FSM students.</p> <p>We aim to develop sustained partnerships with 3 primary schools and 3 secondary schools.</p> <p>The programme includes sessions focused on core subjects, introduction to HE, academic sessions and IAG.</p> <p><i>(New)</i> <b>Foundational Activity (FA) 4 – please refer to Annex B for further detail</b></p>	<p>Staff training and 2 FTE, plus administrative costs.</p> <p>Student rep costs.</p> <p>Transport costs.</p>	<p>Increased student knowledge and awareness of the benefits of higher education and graduate employment.</p> <p>Increased student capacity to navigate higher education and graduate employment sectors and make informed choices.</p>		<p>Pre and post questionnaires with school students used to measure progress against activity outcomes (Type 2).</p> <p>Surveys used with teachers to generate feedback (Type 1).</p> <p>HEAT Tracking for long term evaluation of enrolment to HE.</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual cost: £694.5k	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation
<p><b>1.2</b> Supported Entry Schemes: 3 schemes aimed at Year 12 students, Year 13 students and mature students who have been eligible for FSM.</p> <p>Sessions include application advice and guidance, mentoring using current UG students, introduction to support services at the university and academic sessions.</p> <p>Target number of students is 200 per year, across the schemes.</p> <p><i>(Existing with increased evaluation)</i> <b>FA2 &amp; FA5</b></p>	<p>Staff training and 1.5 FTE, plus administrative and catering costs. Transport costs. Mentoring platform cost ~£13k per year. Student rep costs.</p>	<p>Increased student capacity to navigate higher education and graduate employment sectors and make informed choices.</p> <p>Increased student confidence and resilience to negotiate the challenge of university life and graduate progression.</p>		<p>Pre and post questionnaires with students used to measure progress against activity outcomes (Type 2).</p> <p>HEAT Tracking of enrolment to HE.</p>
<p><b>1.3</b> Evolve Programme: A programme of workshops delivered to Year 12 and 13 students on topics such as Study and Life Skills, Exploring HE Options and Applying to University, and Student Life at University.</p> <p>Schools and colleges with a percentage of students eligible for FSM &lt;25% will be targeted with the aim to work with 15 schools annually.</p> <p><i>(Existing but increased targeting)</i> <b>FA3, FA4 &amp; FA5</b></p>	<p>Staff training and 3 FTE, plus administrative costs.</p>	<p>Increased student knowledge and awareness of the benefits of higher education and graduate employment.</p> <p>Increased student capacity to navigate higher education and graduate employment sectors and make informed choices.</p> <p>Increased student confidence and resilience to negotiate the challenge of university life and graduate progression.</p>		<p>Post activity questionnaires used to measure progress against activity outcomes (Type 1).</p> <p>HEAT Tracking of enrolment to HE.</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual cost: £694.5k	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation
		Improvement in students' study skills and capacity for academic attainment and successful graduate progression.		
<p><b>1.4</b> IntoUniversity Newcastle East centre delivering school focus week programmes, after school academic support and mentoring.</p> <p>Working with 5 primary schools, 3 secondary schools and target to work with 100 students for after school, academic support.</p> <p>Centre in Monkchester opened in partnership with Newcastle University.</p> <p>Plans to open new centres in 2024- 2025.</p> <p><i>(Existing but enhanced)</i> <b>FA1, FA3 &amp; FA4</b></p>	<p>£525k contribution to the centre, including donations from external donors, plus administrative costs.</p>	<p>Increased knowledge and awareness of HE.</p> <p>Increased sense of belonging.</p> <p>Increased progression rate to HE.</p> <p>Increased academic attainment.</p>		<p>Annual evaluation which includes progression rates of students involved vs local and national averages.</p> <p>External evaluation of the Academic Support programme by FFT Education Datalab, using a quasi-experimental design and data from the National Pupil Database (Type 3).</p> <p>Surveys used to gather opinions from students, parents and teachers (Type 1).</p>
<p><b>1.5</b> NUSTEM Primary Programme</p> <p>A series of workshops and assemblies focused on STEM careers and developing an increased understanding of courses at university.</p> <p>Primary schools targeted in areas of deprivation with pupils ages 3 – 11.</p>	<p>0.8 FTE Grade 5.</p> <p>0.4 FTE Grade 7.</p> <p>£30k resources and travel per year.</p>	<p>Increased understanding of (STEM) careers and university.</p> <p>Inclusive career-related learning embedded in teaching plans in primary school.</p>		<p>Theory of Change for STEM engagement (Type 1)</p> <p>Surveys of children (Type 2)</p> <p>Surveys of teachers (Type 2)</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual cost: £694.5k	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation
<p>Teacher CPD and family engagement is also offered.</p> <p>Development of existing activity</p> <p><i>(Existing)</i> <b>FA3</b></p>				
<p><b>1.6</b> Subject Experience Weeks</p> <p>Students attend university lectures, interview and academic researcher or PG student, create and showcase a research poster whilst exploring facilities and experiencing life at university. Currently in Physics, Maths and Chemistry, with the option of expansion into other subject areas.</p> <p>Pupils in year 12 from schools in areas of deprivation, or who are from Q1 or 2 IMD postcodes.</p> <p><i>(Existing)</i> <b>FA3</b></p>	<p>0.2 FTE Grade 7.</p> <p>Administrative staff support from central team.</p>	<p>Increased understanding of what studying the subject at university will entail.</p>		<p>Pre and post activity surveys (Type 2).</p>
<p><b>1.7</b> Brilliant Club Tutoring and Scholars Programme.</p> <p>Tutoring programme- trained PhD tutors in core subjects working with small groups of students (3 students to 1 tutor).</p>	<p>Trained PhD tutors, small groups of students aged 8-18 (Scholars Programme), 15 hours tutoring per student (Brilliant Tutoring Programme).</p>	<p>Increased academic achievement including subject knowledge, written communication and critical thinking.</p> <p>Increased university self-efficacy including academic skills, university knowledge and sense of belonging.</p>		<p>Type 2: Pre and post activity assignments and assessments.</p> <p>Post activity surveys conducted with tutors.</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual cost: £694.5k	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation
<p>The Scholars Programme provides pupils aged 8-18 from non-selective state schools the opportunity to work in small groups with a PhD researcher to experience university-style learning.</p> <p>Target number of students 200.</p> <p>Overall target: 680 students across the North East from non-selective schools. At least 55% of students should meet at least one of our three targeting criteria (eligible for pupil premium, no parental history of HE, or a score of 1-4 on the government's IDACI postcode measure of deprivation).</p> <p><i>(Existing)</i> <b>FA1</b></p>		<p>Increased tutor competence in teaching and pedagogy, communication and public engagement, professional and career development and knowledge of fair access.</p>		
<p><b>1.8 GCSE Science Tutoring</b></p> <p>Paired mentoring of Year 11 Pupil Premium students (age 15-16) students studying Science GCSE, with undergraduates studying Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subjects. Revision day to finish.</p> <p>This is a collaborative project, operating as a randomised control trial of the mentoring programme. The project draws together</p>	<p>The 23/24 delivery of RCT is funded by the Education Endowment Foundation.</p> <p>Payment of the student mentors, and reimbursement for travel to the partner schools. 0.5FTE project administrator.</p> <p>The project is managed by the Department of Psychology and</p>	<p>Increased attainment in mock and GCSE Science examination results.</p> <p>Increased self-efficacy and confidence in science.</p> <p>Increased science-related aspirations and aspirations to study at HE.</p> <p>The EEF are interested in seeing this as a national trial project if it</p>		<p>The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) will undertake the main data collection and analysis on the impact of the project on the stakeholders (the Y11 - age 15-16 Pupil Premium students) using a RCT (Type 3).</p>



Activity	Inputs  Total annual cost: £694.5k	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation
<p>academic colleagues from Northumbria and seven other universities. Each University has 5 – 9 partner schools within their area.</p> <p>We have a total of 922 Year 11 students recruited to the programme (age 15-16) (77 intervention and 77 control recruited by NU).</p> <p>(New) <b>FA1</b></p>	<p>relevant staff time is also costed in to the project.</p>	<p>achieves statistically significant results, which would allow a larger scale trial of the programme at a national level through which NU could become a regional 'hub'.</p>		
<p><b>1.9</b> FutureMe workshops through the North East UniConnect partnership</p> <p>Student Tutoring Programme (Uni Connect). Pilot year 2023-24.</p> <p>9 week programme working with 26 schools across the region in Key Stage 3, Year 8.</p> <p>Recruitment of 76 undergraduate tutors regionally.</p> <p>(Existing but enhanced)</p> <p>Collaborative <b>FA1 &amp; FA2</b></p>	<p>Supervision and support for UCP member of staff x 1 to support the recruitment and management of the tutoring programme at institution level.</p> <p>15 Undergraduates to be recruited and trained per institution.</p> <p>£81k from the NEUCP budget allocated to Northumbria University annually</p>	<p>Increased engagement with school (attendance and coursework submission).</p> <p>Increased academic performance.</p> <p>Increased academic self-efficacy.</p> <p>Increased motivation to achieve.</p>		<p>Pre and post self-assessment survey (pupils) to include academic self-efficacy measure (Type 2).</p> <p>Focus groups (pupils).</p> <p>Teacher interviews/questionnaires measuring impact.</p> <p>HEAT Tracking for long term evaluation of HE progression statistics for cohort of students.</p>

### Evidence base and rationale:

Intervention 1 aims to increase access rates for students who have been eligible for Free School Meals. This is particularly important given the regional picture regarding attainment and progression rates, and the high proportion of Northumbria University students who come from the North East.

In July 2022 it was found that all North East local authorities have disadvantage gaps above the average for England of 18 months<sup>3</sup>. The largest gaps are found in Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton on Tees, with Northumberland being cited in the top 10 disadvantaged in the country. In 2019 the North East had the lowest average Attainment 8 score across all English regions in 2019 with a score of 44.7, compared to an English average of 46.8<sup>4</sup>. In 2021 national average Attainment 8 score was 50.9 compared to the North East average was 49.2. The DfE published dataset on Widening Participation in HE shows that, the North East remains the region with the second lowest progression rate, with a progression rate of 40.4% compared to 44.4% in England<sup>5</sup>. The progression gap between the North East and England overall is especially large for students eligible for free school meals, with only 21.8% progressing in the North East compared to 28.1% nationwide.

**Please see full explanation in Annex B.**

### **Evaluation and publication plan**

Each activity in the intervention strategy will be reviewed annually, using the evaluation methods highlighted in the table above. The intervention strategy will be reviewed annually to determine progress against targets. Progress updates and findings will be shared on the Northumbria University APP Blog Webpage annually. Some activities may publish impact evaluation in specific annual reports, via a student-led journal and/or relevant formal publications. All publications will be available via the APP Blog webpage.

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<sup>3</sup> [Inequalities-in-Wales-and-England.pdf \(epi.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised/2020-21>

<sup>5</sup> [Widening participation in higher education, Academic year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## Intervention strategy 2 (IS\_2):

**Objective:** Significantly reduce the gaps in student success (continuation, completion, and attainment) between students of low and high socioeconomic status (TUNDRA Q1 & 2, IMD Q1 & 2 and eligible for FSM) by 2030 through improving access to academic, pastoral, mental health and financial support and creating a sense of belonging. (Targets: PTS\_2, PTS\_3, PTS\_4, PTS\_6, PTS\_7, PTS\_9, PTS\_10)

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £231,500 (exc. financial support)	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<p><b>2.1</b> To introduce a transition &amp; induction programme for students who enter Northumbria through supported progression schemes (see Intervention 1) and / or are eligible within this plan.</p> <p>Aim to continue to engage 50% of each supported entry cohort once they enrol alongside additional eligible students as referenced throughout this plan.</p> <p>This programme will include:</p> <p>Targeted Study skills sessions delivered by the library. Targeted employability support delivered by graduate futures. Targeted wellbeing sessions deliver by SLW colleagues, including mental health. Peer mentoring from previous supported entry students. Enhanced</p>	<p>Pilot running in Summer 2023 in partnership with Villers Park to inform creation of relevant programme of activity</p> <p>Staff time from relevant Professional Services teams</p> <p>Staff time from faculties</p> <p>Accommodation for residential element</p> <p>Student peer mentors pay (10</p>	<p>Improved study skills &gt; increased academic attainment and successful graduate progression</p> <p>Improve engagement in studies &gt; increased continuation</p> <p>Improve engagement with services &gt; increased continuation, attainment &amp; completion</p> <p>Improve sense of belonging &gt; increased continuation &amp; completion</p> <p>Improve career confidence</p>	All	<p>Type 2: Use of Impact (Civitas software) to measure impact on retention</p> <p>Measured by module outcomes, progression to second year of study and longitudinal graduate outcomes</p> <p>Measured through Impact</p> <p>Measured through Impact &amp; user stats</p> <p>Measured through pre &amp; post surveys &amp; focus groups</p> <p>Measured by Career Pulse survey</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £231,500 (exc. financial support)	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
induction packages targeted in faculties.  New <b>FA2, FA3, FA11</b>	students x 6 hours /wk for 30 weeks			Potential for qualitative study supported by evaluation fund (see evaluation section)
<b>2.2</b> Preparing for Northumbria online transition guide. The aim will be to develop and target content at specific student groups via a personalised 'front page'. This is being trialled in 2023/24 with International and Satellite Campus students. Existing <b>FA3, FA11</b>	Focus groups with students to target appropriate content  Development of new content where required	Improve access to relevant information, advice and guidance > increased continuation		Type 1: Measured by user engagement statistics, feedback captured by survey or poll, and tracking of enrolment and engagement data where possible
<b>2.3</b> Access to Financial Support: Financial wellbeing tools provided through Blackbullion online platform as well as regular, targeted workshops and campaigns for students in partnership with the Students' Union (SU). These will be specifically targeted to align with objectives 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.  New tailored funding pots including for travel, accommodation and study costs	Blackbullion platform for financial wellbeing and applying for relevant support  Staff time (5 FTE at various Grades)  Funding for specific financial support pots with relevant	Improve engagement in studies > increased continuation  Improve engagement with services (e.g. NU Sport) > increased continuation, attainment & completion  Improve sense of belonging and mattering > increased continuation & completion		Type 2: Use of Impact to understand impact on student retention  Measured by engagement and continuation data via Impact and Illume  Measured by surveys and user engagement data alongside tracking of student outcomes

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £231,500 (exc. financial support)	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<p>developed in line with student feedback gathered in 2022/23 will be created within the general hardship fund which will improve the understanding of the financial need of students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, Black, Asian and Male students. This will be monitored quarterly against objectives 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.</p> <p><i>(Existing but enhanced – previously was all one 'hardship fund')</i> <b>FA3, FA6</b></p>	<p>eligibility criteria. £320,000 is annually allocated for general hardship funding.</p>	<p>Reduce cost pressures &gt; increased continuation</p>		<p>Measured by surveys, focus groups and tracking outcomes</p> <p>Measured by survey and Impact</p> <p>Potential for mixed-methods study funded via evaluation aligned costs</p>
<p><b>2.4</b> PASS (Peer Assisted Study Skills) schemes implemented in 5 targeted departments where FSM/TUNDRA Q1&amp;2/IMD Q1&amp;2 attainment gaps are identified. This will offer additional, student-led and relevant academic support for students, provide additional signposting to support services, create paid work opportunities for students (aiming to</p>	<p>1 x G5 FTE to support peer support schemes centrally</p> <p>Staff time from relevant departments to help deliver (1 hour /wk /dept)</p> <p>10 x paid student PASS Leader roles</p>	<p>Improve study skills &gt; increased capacity for academic attainment and successful graduate progression</p> <p>Improve engagement in studies &gt; increased continuation</p> <p>Improve engagement with services &gt; increased continuation, attainment &amp; completion</p>	<p>4, 6</p>	<p>Type 2:</p> <p>Use of Impact to understand impact of whole foundational activity on student retention</p> <p>Tracking impact of student engagement outcomes for those involved in the individual schemes</p> <p>Tracking student outcomes for those engaged in schemes</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £231,500 (exc. financial support)	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<p>recruit FSM/TUNDRA Q1/2 students as PASS Leaders)</p> <p><i>(existing but enhanced – PASS exists in some departments but not targeted or supported centrally) FA8, FA9</i></p>	<p>(10 hours per week for 30 weeks)</p> <p>Training for staff &amp; students</p>	<p>Improved study skills &amp; knowledge &gt; increased attainment</p> <p>Improve sense of belonging &gt; increased continuation &amp; completion</p>		<p>Staff and student pre and post surveys for each scheme</p> <p>Student-led interviews with students</p>
<p><b>2.5</b> Student Inclusion Consultants (SICs) – aim to recruit at least 2 students annually through targeted marketing as SICs from FSM and 2 from TUNDRA/IMD Q1/2 to work as paid SICs with the aim of conducting 5 reviews annually</p> <p>This will offer partnership opportunities for colleagues across the university to gain the lived perspective of students and provide quality enhancement from an inclusion perspective for our FSM and TUNDRA /IMD Q1/2 students across the university whilst creating paid work opportunities for students</p>	<p>1 x G5 FTE to support SIC scheme centrally</p> <p>Staff time from relevant departments to lead reviews (10-15 hours per review, 5 reviews)</p> <p>4 x paid student SIC roles (10 hours per week for 30 weeks)</p> <p>Training for staff &amp; students</p>	<p>Reduce cost pressures &gt; increased continuation</p> <p>Improve sense of belonging and mattering by building relationships with peers &amp; staff &gt; increased continuation &amp; completion</p> <p>Improve employability skills &amp; career confidence &gt; increased graduate outcomes</p> <p>Improve engagement with services &gt; increased continuation, attainment &amp; completion</p>	3, 4, 5, 6	<p>Type 2:</p> <p>Measured by surveys and interviews with SICs</p> <p>Measured by surveys and interviews with staff and students</p> <p>Measured by career readiness survey and tracking of SIC graduate outcomes</p> <p>Measured by pre &amp; post surveys</p> <p>Measured through staff surveys and interviews. Potential for this to be supported by evaluation activity</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £231,500 (exc. financial support)	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<i>Existing but enhanced targeting FA9, FA10</i>		Improve inclusive practice across teams engaging with SIC reviews > more inclusive environment for all		
<p><b>2.6</b> Community-engaged learning and enquiry – This project will commission and co-produce four cross-disciplinary guides (involving staff and paid students engaged in community-based enquiry across Northumbria from within the relevant groups for objectives 2, 3, 4, 6) focusing on different aspects of inclusive community-engaged learning in programme design (e.g., developing sustainable learning initiatives with community partners, assessing community-engaged learning for advancing diverse learning needs)</p> <p>A cross-disciplinary online community of APP-targeted students who have been involved in community-engaged inquiry-based activities will also be established. Supervisors and</p>	<p>Staff time – central and departmental</p> <p>Payment for students 10 hours per student x 30 students</p> <p>Conference planning and delivery at end of project</p> <p>External speaker costs</p> <p>Admin &amp; support costs</p>	<p>Improve: students attitudes towards oneself</p> <p>Attitudes towards learning</p> <p>Civic engagement</p> <p>Social skills</p> <p>Academic performance</p> <p>All leading to improved success &amp; progression</p> <p>Enhance sense of belonging via engagement in community-based learning &gt; improved success outcomes</p> <p>Community involvement through academic curriculum based activities &gt; improved sense of community &amp; belonging &amp; academic identity</p> <p>Student produced guides &gt; new curricula &gt; improved future student outcomes</p>	2,3,4,6	<p>Type 1:</p> <p>Participatory evaluation through students &amp; community partners collaborating on scholarship, Publishing findings in an edited volume by 2028 and two journal articles with APP-targeted students, academics and community partners.</p> <p>Evaluating the impact of CELI guides, hub and related activities through collaborative scholarship.</p> <p>Tracking outcomes of students engaged in project</p> <p>Number of new curricula featuring community-based learning</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £231,500 (exc. financial support)	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
community partners included, culminating with a half-day conference showcasing their academic work with invited external speakers.  <i>Existing but newly targeted FA7</i>				

#### Evidence base and rationale:

Each activity is aligned to at least one foundational activity in Annex B. Please refer to the relevant section of Annex B for a full explanation and Annex A for a rationale for this objective.

#### Evaluation and publication plan

Each activity in the intervention strategy will be reviewed annually, using the evaluation methods highlighted in the table above. The intervention strategy as a whole will also be reviewed annually to determine progress against targets. Progress updates and findings as they are available will be shared on the Northumbria University APP Blog Webpage annually. Some activities may publish impact evaluation in specific annual reports, via a student-led journal and/or relevant formal publications. All publications will be available via the APP Blog webpage.



### Intervention strategy 3: (IS\_3)

Objective: Improve outcomes for care experienced students, estranged students and student carers across the lifecycle (access, continuation, completion, attainment and progression) by 2028 through improving personal, academic and mental health support, reducing cost pressures and improving access to work experience and careers guidance.

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £252,500 (exc. Financial support)	Outcomes	Cross interventio n?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<p><b>3.1</b> Choices Together Programme (NERAP)</p> <p>A sustained and progressive programme for care-experienced students and Young Carers in years 7-13. Students take part in a series of campus sessions at the five North East universities, as well as online sessions.</p> <p>Delivered by the North East Raising Aspiration Partnership of the five universities in the region.</p> <p>Engaging 100 students annually.</p> <p>(Existing) <b>FA2, FA3 &amp; FA4</b></p> <p><b>Collaborative</b></p>	<p>NERAP Delivery staff x 4FTE</p> <p>Contribution of <b>£34k annually</b> from Northumbria University</p>	<p>To improve knowledge and awareness of higher education progression routes.</p> <p>To foster a sense of community and belonging by providing an intensive progressive programme of intervention to support HE progression for underrepresented groups.</p> <p>To implement our Regional Care Leaver Covenant and promote regional good practice back into the sector through continuous improvement of services.</p>		<p>Pre and post questionnaires to measure progress against activity outcomes.</p> <p>HEAT Tracking for long term evaluation of HE progression statistics for cohort of students. (Type 2)</p>
<b>3.2</b> UNITE Foundation scholarships	The total grant from the Unite Foundation is £91,491. The Foundation pays 2/3rd of the accommodation cost, with the	Unites goal is that by the 2026/27 academic year, free accommodation for estranged and care experienced students is		<p>Type 1:</p> <p>Evaluated in line with the UNITE Foundation</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £252,500 (exc. Financial support)	Outcomes	Cross interventio n?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<p>Northumbria University has entered a new partnership with the Unite Foundation, which is a charity that funds secure homes at university for care leavers and estranged students.</p> <p>The partnership enables up to 6 Northumbria University students who are care leavers/estranged to receive free ensuite accommodation in university-owned halls for 3 years (52 weeks of the year). The opportunity is promoted to potential students through both the Foundation and the University. The students are selected by the Foundation.</p> <p><i>New for 2023/24 FA6</i></p>	<p>University contributing 1/3rd. The University receives the grant and pays this to the students.</p> <p>The cost of the accommodation has been projected as £7,400 per student in year one (23/24), with a 3% increase in years two and three.</p>	<p>provided as standard support across all UK universities.</p> <p>Improved financial support &gt; increased retention</p>		<p>requirements. Case studies from students.</p>
<p><b>3.3</b> NU Belong: Information, advice and guidance via a named contact and a £2,000 annual bursary for all students who are eligible (care leavers, estranged students and student carers). 250 students supported annually.</p>	<p>3 x G6 Practitioners from Student Inclusion as named contacts (total 2 FTE) – <i>existing</i></p> <p>NU Belong bursaries – 250 @ £2,000 annually – <i>existing</i></p> <p>4 x Paid student ambassadors – 10 hours per week for 30 weeks - <i>new</i></p>	<p>Improve engagement in studies &gt; increased continuation</p> <p>Improve engagement with services (e.g. NU Sport) &gt; increased continuation, attainment &amp; completion</p> <p>Improve sense of belonging and mattering &gt; improved mental</p>		<p>Type 2: Potential to support via evaluation activity</p> <p>Use of Impact to understand impact on student continuation</p> <p>Measured by Impact</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £252,500 (exc. Financial support)	Outcomes	Cross intervention? n?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<p>Coaching will be built into the Practitioner support available for NU Belong students aligned to Foundational Activities 3 and 10.</p> <p>Student NU Belong ambassadors – to support with transition &amp; on course, peer support &amp; content development</p> <p><i>Existing but refreshed FA2, FA3, FA6, FA9</i></p>	<p>Additional costs inc. ongoing staff training, delivery of staff CPD, student ambassador training &amp; promo and marketing materials – <i>some new</i></p> <p>Blackbullion &amp; ALF team time (See IS_2 for further details – cost included in IS_2) – <i>existing</i></p>	<p>health &gt; increased continuation &amp; completion</p> <p>Reduce cost pressures &gt; increased continuation</p>		<p>Measured by tracking student engagement data</p> <p>Measured by annual NU Belong survey (started in 2022)</p> <p>Measured by Impact and survey</p>
<p>Eligible for targeted transition and induction support – refer to Intervention activity <b>2.1</b> for detail.</p>			1, 2, 4, 6	
<p><b>3.4</b> Guarantor scheme for NU Belong students.</p> <p>An internal Guarantor scheme to reduce barriers to accessing accommodation whilst studying at Northumbria</p> <p>This will be available to a maximum of 100 students each year</p> <p><i>(new)</i> <b>FA6</b> (indirect)</p>	<p>Any defaults to come from ringfenced ALF fund for accommodation.</p> <p>Staff time for planning and implementation of scheme.</p> <p>Surrey provide existing practice of an internal scheme (<a href="https://money.surrey.ac.uk/university-guarantor-scheme">https://money.surrey.ac.uk/university-guarantor-scheme</a>)</p>	<p>Improve sense of belonging and mattering &gt; improved mental health &gt; increased continuation &amp; completion</p> <p>Reduce cost pressures &gt; increased continuation</p>		<p>Type 1:</p> <p>Survey of students engaged with the scheme to identify satisfaction with scheme (process evaluation) and impact on their experience.</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £252,500 (exc. Financial support)	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<p>Student Inclusion Consultants (SICs) – to aim to recruit at least 2 students annually as Student Inclusion Consultants from NU Belong backgrounds to work as paid SICs</p> <p><b>Please refer to intervention activity 2.5 for further detail</b></p>	<p>Student payment in addition to costs outlined in <b>2.5</b></p>			
<p><b>3.5</b> Targeted employability support &amp; careers guidance including: Specific 1-1 support via a named advisor, group peer-peer careers support and mentoring, targeted content development for online careers hub.</p> <p>NU Belong students will also be a priority target for IGNITE programme of activities which inspires and supports Northumbria undergraduates to explore, understand and develop the key skills needed to succeed in today's challenging job market through development of employability and recruitment skills.</p> <p><i>Existing but targeted</i> <b>FA3, FA8, FA2</b></p>	<p>0.5 FTE G6 Careers advisor - new</p> <p>Student / alumni mentor payment – 10 hours x 6 students for 30 weeks - new</p> <p>IGNITE programme associated costs – external speakers, staff time, promo materials, admin etc and targeted sessions for APP groups - existing</p> <p>10% costs of online platform contract to enable development of targeted content for APP target groups</p>	<p>Improved career readiness &gt; improved graduate outcomes</p> <p>Improved engagement with Graduate Futures &gt; improved graduate outcomes</p> <p>Improved accessibility of IAG &gt; more diverse service user engagement &gt; improved graduate outcomes</p>	<p>4, 5</p>	<p>Career readiness data collected via annual survey on enrolment</p> <p>Service engagement data ran through Diversity Monitoring</p> <p>Online service user data ran through diversity monitoring</p> <p>Tracking of engaged student Graduate Outcomes</p> <p>Tracking of engagement throughout registrations will inform enhanced targeting of activities</p>

Activity	Inputs  Total annual costs: £252,500 (exc. Financial support)	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<b>3.6</b> Introduce a new NU Belong Confident scheme when recruiting for student roles on campus – similar to the disability confident scheme to improve access to work experience opportunities for care leavers, carers and estranged students who wish to declare. Staff training will be developed for roll out of scheme.  <i>New</i> <b>FA9, FA14</b>	Staff time for development, implementation and training. Legal ahead of implementation.	Provide more interview experience & more work experience for successful applicants > better graduate outcomes & career confidence		Type 1: Measured by career readiness data. Focus groups will provide consultation and process evaluation.
<b>3.7</b> Staff training sessions relating to NU Belong targeted at Personal Tutors  <i>Existing</i> <b>FA14</b>	Staff time for training attendance  Staff time for development & delivery of training	Improved staff awareness and understanding > more referrals > improved student experience and outcomes		Feedback forms following training Number of referrals by Tutors (measured by NU Belong survey)

**Evidence base and rationale:** High-level overview of the evidence base used for this intervention strategy, and signpost to full explanation in Annex B if necessary.

The disadvantage gap for care-experienced students nationally is 29 months. Currently, only 13% of care-experienced students enter higher education at aged of 19 compared with 45 percent of their peers. Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, with over 27% reporting that they struggle to balance caring with school or college work (Carers Trust 2022). Research by UCL published in May 2023, by the Carers Trust, highlights that young carers are 38% less likely than their peers to get a degree.

The Leverhulme Trust's Pathways Project explored the barriers care experienced students face in accessing university, and the support that helps them succeed<sup>6</sup>. finding that embedded support significantly aided positive transitions to university life. Their 15 recommendations have been embedded into the North East Care Leaver Covenant agreement to support students from pre-enrolment to beyond graduation<sup>7</sup>.

Evidence suggests that access to HE is much lower among students who are care experienced. In 2018-19 only 13 per cent of pupils who were looked after continuously for 12 months or more entered higher education compared to 43 per cent of all other pupils.

The EORR also highlights the potential risks to equality of opportunity for estranged students, and a group not specifically recognised within the EORR but for which Northumbria and a growing research base has identified a need for enhanced support, are student carers.

Student Carers are an under-explored group in HE<sup>8</sup>, however at Northumbria we have had support in place for this group for a number of years. We therefore include them in this objective to improve our understanding of the impact of the support on the student experience of our carers, and particularly, better understand their outcomes and the impact of activities on these. This is important as research does highlight inequalities for all our NU Belong groups and that students would benefit from additional support.<sup>9</sup> It also highlights the intersectionality of these student groups<sup>10</sup> reflecting the importance of providing tailored, personalised support.

### **Evaluation and publication plan**

Each activity in the intervention strategy will be reviewed annually, using the evaluation methods highlighted in the table above. The intervention strategy will also be reviewed annually to determine progress against targets. Progress updates and findings as they are available will be shared on the Northumbria University APP Blog Webpage annually. Some activities may publish impact evaluation in specific annual reports, via a student-led journal and/or relevant formal publications. All publications will be available via the APP Blog webpage.

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<sup>6</sup> Ellis, K. & Johnston, C. (2019). Pathways to University from Care: Findings Report One. The University of Sheffield. Report. <https://doi.org/10.15131/shef.data.9578930.v3>

<sup>7</sup> Northumbria University Care Leavers Covenant <https://mycovenant.org.uk/opportunities/northumbria-university/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/invisible-minority-what-needed-support-students-caring-responsibilities>

<sup>9</sup> Student Carer Experience in Scotland Report

<sup>10</sup> Carers UK: State of Caring

#### Intervention strategy 4 (IS\_4):

Objective – Eliminate the gaps in student success (completion and attainment) and improve the on-course and progression outcomes between Black and White students by 2030 through improving personal, academic and mental health support, reducing cost pressures, creating a sense of belonging and improving access to work experience and careers guidance. **(Targets: PTS\_8, PTS\_11)**

Activity	Inputs  Annual costs - £98, 600 + £50k in 2024/25	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
Eligible for targeted transition and induction support – refer to Intervention activity <b>2.1</b> for detail			2, 3, 5, 6	
Eligible for Financial Support – refer to Intervention activity <b>2.3</b> for detail.			2, 3, 5, 6	
PASS (Peer Assisted Study Skills) schemes implemented in 3 targeted departments where Black student attainment gaps are identified. Please see Intervention activity <b>2.4</b> for further detail	6 x paid student PASS Leader roles (10 hours per week for 30 weeks)  Staff time from relevant departments to help deliver (1 hour /wk /dept)  Training for staff & students. Other inputs costed against <b>IS_2</b>		2, 6	

Activity	Inputs  Annual costs - £98, 600 + £50k in 2024/25	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<p><b>4.1</b> Inclusive design reviews in at least 3 programmes annually where data shows priority areas due to their Black student outcomes. This would involve:</p> <p>Student Inclusion Consultants working with staff and students in the department, in partnership with relevant Professional Service to take a targeted approach embedding student voice, staff CPD and partnership approaches.</p> <p>Inclusive education surgeries will also be established where academic colleagues can bring session plans or assessment briefs and receive 1:1 support to improve inclusivity.</p> <p><i>New</i> <b>FA7, FA9, FA14</b></p>	<p>Student Inclusion Consultants – 3 x SICs at 5 hours per week for 15 weeks - existing</p> <p>Staff time (2 hours per week x 1 PS and 1 x academic) - New</p> <p>Staff time for development and delivery of surgeries</p> <p>Training costs for staff and students</p>	<p>Improve rates of progression between years in priority areas &gt; improved continuation and completion</p> <p>Improve inclusive practice within course design &amp; delivery (curriculum &amp; pedagogy) &gt; improved attainment</p> <p>Disseminate good practice where positive impact identified &gt; inclusive practice implemented more widely &gt; improved attainment</p> <p>Students access paid on campus work &gt; reduced financial barriers &gt; improved outcomes</p> <p>Students access paid on campus work &gt; improved sense of belonging &gt; improved mental health &gt; improved student outcomes</p>		<p>Type 2:</p> <p>Measured by Impact data for students within target programmes or departments</p> <p>Measured by Module evaluations and NSS</p> <p>Staff case studies</p> <p>Survey of students engaged in the project/s</p>
<p><b>4.2</b> Funding for community-led provision for Mental Health support and creating communities</p> <p>This aims to seed-fund links with relevant community organisations who can deliver appropriate support for our students who have highlighted a need</p>	<p>Initial fund set up through a local Community Foundation with aim to attract collaborative funding in the longer term - new</p>	<p>Improved access to suitable Mental Health provision &gt; Improved mental health support &gt; improved continuation &amp; completion</p> <p>Greater opportunities for connecting students with local, culturally diverse, organisations &gt; enhanced sense of</p>	<b>6</b>	<p>Type 1 &amp; 2:</p> <p>Community organisations would be supported to evaluate activities effectively against intended outcomes</p>



Activity	Inputs  Annual costs - £98, 600 + £50k in 2024/25	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<p>for both targeted Mental Health support and more cultural ties to the region.</p> <p>The longer term aim is to attract funding through bids written in collaboration with the organisations we initially support</p> <p>This will also help us build sustainable relationships within the community and potentially increase access related activity</p> <p>New <b>FA13</b></p>	<p>Allocated funding for providing out of hours services through collaborative relationships across the city of Newcastle annually – new</p>	<p>belonging &gt; improved continuation and completion</p> <p>Increased funding opportunities longer term &gt; more investment in relevant WP aims &gt; improved outcomes for WP groups in the future</p>		<p>This would include tracking students engagement with their support offer where possible, process evaluation to identify satisfaction with support and perception of quality and impact on student experience</p>
<p><b>4.3</b> Amplifying Black Voices – expansion of a project running in 2022/23 which aimed to improve the visibility of Black voices in the Library by identifying Black students' use of the library making services accessible to better meet their needs. Developing student led resources that support academic staff, and students' awareness of Black voices in the library. Analysing a sample of reading lists using a Decolonising toolkit to identify improvements regarding their diversity.</p>	<p>Payment for students engaged in project</p> <p>Staff time for development and delivery</p> <p>Resource development and dissemination</p>	<p>Increased representation within learning resources &gt; improved continuation and attainment</p> <p>Increased representation within learning resources &gt; more engagement with Library and academic support &gt; improved student outcomes</p> <p>Increased opportunities for work experience &gt; improved graduate outcomes</p> <p>Increased opportunities to work in partnership and share lived experiences &gt; improved sense of belonging &gt; improved completion</p>		<p>Type 1/2: Measured by surveys and interviews with students taking part in project.</p> <p>Measured by student outcomes (completion, attainment) annually between 2024-2026.</p>

Activity	Inputs  Annual costs - £98, 600 + £50k in 2024/25	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
<i>Existing but expanded to target new priority areas <b>FA9, FA10</b></i>				
<b>4.4</b> Review of processes and opportunities to support self-referrals to language support for Home students whose first language is not English. This has been included following student and staff feedback in line with the REC.  <i>New <b>FA3</b></i>	Staff time for review and implementation of new processes where required Student incentives for focus groups to determine needs	Increase language support for those not currently eligible > improved attainment & completion  Improved access to study skills support > increased continuation and progression between years		Type 1: Student surveys and focus groups Potential to track outcomes and progression between years for engaged students Engagement statistics to inform future need

**Evidence base and rationale:** Each activity is aligned to at least one foundational activity in Annex B. Please refer to the relevant section of Annex B for a full explanation and Annex A for a rationale of the need for this objective.

**Evaluation and publication plan:** Each activity in the intervention strategy will be reviewed annually, using the evaluation methods highlighted in the table above. The intervention strategy as a whole will also be reviewed annually to determine progress against targets. Progress updates and findings as they are available will be shared on the Northumbria University APP Blog Webpage annually. Some activities may publish impact evaluation in specific annual reports, via a student-led journal and/or relevant formal publications. All publications will be available via the APP Blog webpage.

### Intervention strategy 5 (IS\_5):

Objective - Eliminate the progression gap between Asian and White students by 2028 through improving access to work experience and tailored and targeted careers guidance and support. **(Targets: PTP\_1)**

Activity	Inputs  Annual Costs - £69,200	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
Eligible for targeted transition and induction support – refer to Intervention activity <b>2.1</b> for detail.			All	
Access to Financial Support: Asian students will be eligible for financial support outlined in intervention activity <b>2.2</b> . A specific Employability Learning Fund (ELF) will be one tailored funding pot.	Annual ELF budget		2, 3, 4, 6	
Student Inclusion Consultants (SICs) – to aim to recruit at least 2 Asian students annually as Student Inclusion Consultants to work as paid SICs  <b>Please refer to intervention activity 2.5 for further detail</b>	Costs in addition to those outlined in 2.5 - 10 hours /wk for 30 weeks x 2 SICs		<b>2, 3, 4</b>	

Activity	Inputs  Annual Costs - £69,200	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation  Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
Eligible for targeted employability support & careers guidance including – please refer to intervention activity <b>3.5</b> for further detail	Costs in addition to those outlined in <b>3.5</b> - £10,000 for targeted development and delivery		<b>2, 3, 4</b>	
<b>5.1</b> Targeted work experience opportunities including internal and external internship and placements and international mobility opportunities  <i>Existing FA9, FA12</i>	Staff time, Funding for paid work experience, Costs for accessing overseas opportunities	Increased access to work experience opportunities > improved career readiness and graduate outcomes  Increased time on campus via work experience > improved sense of belonging	<b>3, 4</b>	Type 2:  Measured by career readiness surveys, feedback survey from students engaged, engagement data for those taking up opportunities and eventually graduate outcomes data

**Evidence base and rationale:** Each activity is aligned to at least one foundational activity in Annex B. Please refer to the relevant section of Annex B for a full explanation and Annex A for a rationale of the need for this objective.

**Evaluation and publication plan:** Each activity in the intervention strategy will be reviewed annually, using the evaluation methods highlighted in the table above. The intervention strategy as a whole will also be reviewed annually to determine progress against targets. Progress updates and findings as they are available will be shared on the Northumbria University APP Blog Webpage annually. Some activities may publish impact evaluation in specific annual reports, via a student-led journal and/or relevant formal publications. All publications will be available via the APP Blog webpage.

#### **Intervention strategy 6 (IS\_6):**

Objective - Significantly reduce the gaps in student success (continuation, completion and attainment) between male and female students by 2030 through improving personal, academic and mental health support and reducing cost pressures. **(Targets: PTS\_1, PTS\_5, PTS\_12)**

Activity	Inputs Annual Costs: £15,000	Outcomes	Cross intervention?	Method(s) of evaluation Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. Type 2.
Eligible for targeted transition and induction support – refer to Intervention activity <b>2.1</b> for detail.			1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
Eligible for Financial Support – refer to Intervention activity <b>2.3</b> for detail.			2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
PASS (Peer Assisted Study Skills) schemes implemented in 5 targeted departments where Male student attainment gaps are identified. Please see Intervention activity <b>2.4</b> for further detail	Costs in addition to 2.4 £15,000 (staff & student remuneration) annually (all new)		2, 4	
Community-led initiatives outlined in intervention activity <b>4.2</b> will also include young White men eligible for free school meals as a target group.			4	

**Evidence base and rationale:** Each activity is aligned to at least one foundational activity in Annex B. Please refer to the relevant section of Annex B for a full explanation and Annex A for a rationale of the need for this objective.

**Evaluation and publication plan:** Each activity in the intervention strategy will be reviewed annually, using the evaluation methods highlighted in the table above. The intervention strategy as a whole will also be reviewed annually to determine progress against targets. Progress updates and findings as they are available will be shared on the Northumbria University APP Blog Webpage annually. Some activities may publish impact evaluation in specific annual reports, via a student-led journal and/or relevant formal publications. All publications will be available via the APP Blog webpage.

## Whole provider approach

The plan has been developed by a cross-service team with a variety of consultation opportunities for colleagues and students to feed in. This included a 2-hour drop-in session open to both staff and students where the initial objectives were presented and discussed. Objectives were also presented at the Student EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) Operational Group, Board of Governors and shared with the Students' Union and Student Inclusion Consultants for feedback. Within each faculty is a Director of Access and Participation role to ensure there is collaboration between professional and academic staff. The expertise of academic colleagues will be particularly utilised in the development and implementation of evaluation across the span of the plan. The APP will become integral to the education strategy and underpin the ambitions of the University Strategy to 2030.

Following the approval of the plan, a series of implementation and evaluation workshops will be scheduled during the 2023/24 academic year to continue the momentum and collaboration opportunities established through the consultation to date. This series will map out the details for delivery of each intervention working in partnership with students to ensure they are fit-for-purpose.

We aim to link elements of the delivery of the APP and our work on the REC with the development of our new programme framework (QED) which is due to be launched in early 2024, alongside the new University strategy. We have an opportunity to consider our approach to learning and teaching in the context of some of the challenges and questions posed by the REC and APP. Particular areas of focus are inclusive and authentic assessment to enable learning at every level for all learners. Experiential learning opportunities will be embedded in all programmes, and will focus on skills, competences and behaviours. These more individualised approaches aim to better support those from backgrounds and groups where there is evidence of under-performance against benchmark. As well as the REC and the APP monitoring of degree outcomes is carried out through our annual Degree Outcomes Statement.

Another area which highlights wider collaboration and a holistic approach to addressing equality of opportunity which already exists at Northumbria is the EDI data hub established in 2022. Within the staff portal university and students' union colleagues can access a variety of data at University, Faculty and Department level highlighting outcome trends for specific student characteristics throughout their student journey. The hub also hosts a request form for requesting informative or evaluation data through our Diversity Monitoring dashboard (the data base which holds student diversity data completed in an optional part of enrolment), as well as student and staff data related to our Race Equality Charter work.

NU also utilises Learning Analytics data to support students through early, personalised and proactive interventions where a student's engagement indicates risk of progression. The system often identifies changes in student engagement behaviour indicative of set-backs. The Student Success team reach out to these students each week (micro nudges), and works with all key University Services and academic leads to ensure students are supported to continue on their studies.

Our strategy is to combine micro nudges with timed, broader messaging to students at key times (meso nudges) such as prior to assessment, offering 121 support or signposting to critical resources such as Counselling and Mental Health or Study Skills support. NU operates a consent based approach to the use of Learning Analytics. A bespoke, centralised service is provided by the Student Success team called CHOCS (Student Change of Circumstances) to students who are thinking of taking time out, leaving, or transferring programmes.

The University has also joined institutions across the UK by signing-up to a new Student Minds University Mental Health Charter Programme to improve support for staff and student mental health in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. In joining the University Mental Health Charter Programme it shows, not only our commitment to tackling issues in our own students, but it also reaffirms our focus on working with our peers to share best practice with the sector as a whole.

Advance HE's Race Equality Charter is a national scheme aimed at improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students in higher education. The University's membership of the REC demonstrates our determination to tackle racism and racial inequalities in our institution and to create an environment where individuals of all ethnicities can thrive.

The REC framework encourages a data driven approach (qualitative and quantitative) to identifying barriers and disparities which impact Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of our community. We are developing an institutional Race Equality Action Plan, informed by the REC principles, which will be embedded from July 2024. The action plan will address disparities shown by our staff data as well as capture aspects related to student access and success (aligned with the APP), in addition to actions to develop awareness of race equality in teaching, learning and assessment.

## **Student consultation**

Students contribute extensively to our access, success and progression work, promoting HE and the University in ambassador roles, and offering consultation, mentoring and peer support roles during their studies. Student engagement is embedded in our governance of the APP, with the CEO and Sabbatical Officers as members of the APP Steering Group. The Students' Union is submitting an independent student submission alongside this plan.

In 2020, a scheme was established to recruit underrepresented students into paid roles within the new Student Inclusion Team. This has grown into the Student Inclusion Consultants (SICs) scheme with 16 students recruited annually to provide lived insight into their student experiences, improving the inclusivity of their environments in partnership with professional and academic colleagues. The insight from SICs shapes the work of the wider Accessibility & Inclusion Team which has embedded student voice into its quality enhancement processes. This team has had significant input into the development of the APP, drawing on insights and work developed in partnership with students.

There is Students' Union representation on the Board of Governors, Academic Board and its University and Faculty sub-committees, including the Education Committee. Consultation with

students of different backgrounds at the University is also enabled through the Students' Union which plays a full role across the University. Close working relationships exist between the SU and the Board of Governors, the University Executive, faculties and service departments. As a result, students have numerous opportunities to contribute to the University's approach to widening access and participation.

Two of our Students' Union Sabbatical Officers are members of our Race Equality Steering Group, helping to ensure student voice is heard in this work. Our Student Race Equality Survey took place in November 2022, followed by focus groups early in 2023 to explore students' racialised experiences at Northumbria. Students have been involved, through the Decolonising Network and the Student Inclusion Consultant Scheme, at informing the language we use to discuss racialised identities, at highlighting where inequalities exist, and at exploring future opportunities for hearing student voice.

A summary of the plan has been discussed with a group of Senior Student Inclusion Consultants ahead of submission. One of the areas considered was the targeting of specific projects and how best to engage appropriate students in the activity. Requiring students to self-define as 'disadvantaged' via various labels felt less appropriate than approaches which target departments and other groupings such as those who engaged in a supported entry scheme and aligns with feedback from the Students' Union based on previous experience of running targeted schemes for low participation neighbourhood students. Their feedback is reflected throughout the plan and appendices.

This plan has also been developed through consultation with the Students' Union, engaging the President and the CEO, on behalf of their members. There has been the opportunity for SU representatives to review this plan, make suggestions, and have feedback incorporated into the final version however, there has been limited engagement with SU Representatives from underrepresented groups due to timescales.

The action taken in this plan to address the gaps in our performance was a result of consultation with students and feedback via the forums highlighted above. In particular, this includes the steps to improve access and continuation through a focus on Foundation Years, a programme of bespoke interventions in Careers and Student Support and Wellbeing to support students from underrepresented groups. In addition, feedback from the Equality and Diversity Task and Finish Groups, and the reference to the lack of diversity at the University and the sense of belonging, resulted in a focus in this plan on area/school targeting, transition support and the development of peer support.

As we deliver this plan, the SU will continue to have representatives on the APP Steering Group and engage with student representatives and SICs who will be integral to the success of the plan by being co-creators in the development of activity, its implementation and evaluation.

The University and Students' Union have undertaken a review of the representation structure this year. Once fully implemented from 2024/25 this will mean:

- a) Six Sabbatical officers elected through an annual cross-campus ballot, bringing with them the experience of students at that time. These Officers will sit on a wide range of formal



committees and working groups and use the Students' Union structures to draw on feedback from student representatives and student groups on specific issues when needed.

- b) A core group of 13 students will work at Faculty level, including one representative for each faculty on APP issues. They will work alongside the Officers on formal committees and working groups and use the Union's structures as described above to identify issues relevant to the plan at Faculty level.
- c) Views of different student groups by background will be drawn upon through
  - a. The extensive representation structure of over 1,000 student representatives mostly at programme level.
  - b. Commitment to have at least one academic society for each department, or more dependent on spread of disciplines. These will work with departmental reps and liaise with students identified in this plan such as PASS leaders to share learning and build community within disciplines for all students.
  - c. Each international and cultural society will have an academic representation committee member who will help draw on society members' lived experiences on campus and bring forward views of for example Black, LGBT, mature and disabled students.
  - d. Officers for Sport and Activities will also regularly engage the breadth of sports clubs and societies and the Union will use a data driven approach to identify gaps in inclusion within campus experience.
  - e. Working with the University the Students' Union will run focus groups with identified groups where no other structure exists to capture their views.
  - f. Student engagement forum exists to bring students together with senior University staff and SU leaders. It takes place twice a year with separate events for satellite campuses. The format varies but aims to speak to over 800 students a year, gathering their comments to inform the work of the University and is an excellent vehicle for reaching a wide range of students and measuring the wider impact of this work.
- d) The SU submits an annual quality report to the University, giving its perspective of work in the institution including against Office for Students condition for registration. This report is made formally to the Education Committee and Board of Governors alongside a formal response. Going forward the interventions of the APP will be a distinct section of the review aligned to reporting on condition A1.

## **Evaluation of the plan**

As outlined and expanded upon in Annex B, our overarching Theory of Change will introduce a sustainable, holistic model of foundational activities which will help achieve the APP objectives by being tailored and targeted at the most appropriate level and area (school, faculty, department etc.) depending on where the EORR risks are most prevalent. This takes a data-led and evidence-based approach which can be evaluated at both a holistic and local level to provide a broad and nuanced understanding of the impact of the activities. It will also enable us to be responsive to new data as it is available throughout the course of the plan.

Underpinning the Theory of Change is the ambition to significantly improve our level of evaluation and reporting on APP activities. Some activities have been incorporated specifically to ensure their evaluation is enhanced, financial support as a good example.

The intervention strategies provided a broad outline for how each activity will be evaluated. However, our evaluation audit highlights a requirement for additional evaluation expertise to effectively design and deliver these evaluations. To ensure we have a suitable level of evaluation and support in place, a series of workshops will be conducted during the 2023/24 academic year open to researchers (student and staff) to develop detailed plans for each intervention and/or activity collaboratively.

Existing systems which support our evaluation activities, such as Civitas for Learning Analytics, will be used to analyse impact of activities within the plan: Through Learning Analytics we can determine the impact of progression and retention of our nudges and campaigns (example below), through both in-year predictions and post-year analysis. Impact Analyses for most recent campaigns and activities are currently underway.

A matrix will be created to help determine which activities are a priority for higher level evaluation, and investment will enable the following to be established to ensure the delivery of this:

- Evaluation training series for colleagues delivering APP and related activity supported by coordinator roles in Access & SLAS aligned to evaluation (alongside other key WP & EDI work). (0.5 FTE G5 x 2 - £37,000 annually)
- Centralised funding pot of £40,000 annually for embedding tender process for priority evaluation, including SU-led activity. This will enable relevant colleagues to bid for time-release and additional funding to conduct the relevant evaluations. Sabbatical opportunities will be considered.

Relating to foundational activities 8.3 and 10, an internal Student-led journal will be established, recruiting students as paid research assistants to support the evaluation of the APP activities and interventions and supporting the publication of impact. (£20,000 budget per year). FA 8.4 and the relevant activities will also contribute to evaluation through collaborative scholarship.

An annual APP showcase event will be held to disseminate good practice and consider challenges, following the success of the inaugural event in June 2023 (£2,000 per year):



Opportunities to establish a research strand within CHASE relating to access & participation and equality of opportunity for students will also provide wider collaborative opportunities both internally and externally, enhancing our evaluation and publication opportunities.

The overarching aim of the activities and interventions is to reduce the gaps in outcomes for the identified student groups, which we aim to achieve through activity targeted at either specific student groups OR priority schools, departments and/or programmes. We acknowledge that by taking an approach which targets priority areas rather than groups may ultimately improve outcomes for all students and therefore have limited impact on reducing the gap. As part of our evaluation for these activities, we will review progress of the student groups to ensure the activity is having positive rather than negative outcomes, even if the gap itself is not closing.

## **Provision of information to students**

Northumbria is committed to the provision of accurate, timely and relevant information for all potential and existing students and will continue to provide this service. The University recognises this as vital to the recruitment of well-motivated students who have made informed, considered and appropriate decisions and who subsequently achieve good degree outcomes. We will therefore continue to deliver a wide range of information-giving services via:

- Published materials such as our prospectus.
- Our website.
- Personalised communications by email, telecentre and by SMS to enquirers, applicants and students.
- At events on-and off-campus, in schools, colleges, community venues and employers.
- Our Student Support & Wellbeing Service which provides support and advice for current and potential students.

We provide relevant information to UCAS, the Student Loans Company and other relevant bodies to ensure they too are able to provide all necessary information to students when it is requested.

The information we provide to students will include: tuition fees to be charged for the duration of their course; the financial support available and the relevant eligibility criteria; course entry requirements; methods of assessment for admission; course content - including placement and work experience opportunities and assessment methods; and ensuring that students are aware of the other types of academic and pastoral support that is available. In addition, the Access and Participation Plan is a public document and will be available for students and prospective students on Northumbria University's website.

# **Annex A: Assessment of performance**

## **Introduction and Approach**

In our assessment of performance, we have followed a systematic process of identifying indications of risk which in turn have led to deeper dive analysis where necessary to ensure a full understanding of what the data is telling us. In summary, we have gone through the following steps:

1. Analysis of each stage of the student lifecycle for all student groups in the OfS APP dashboard to identify priority areas of interest. This includes gap analysis and analysis of trends.
2. Creation of bespoke dashboards in Power BI for all student lifecycle stages and student groups where we agreed further analysis would be useful. These dashboards were linked to the OfS individualised data files and enabled our analysts to quickly compare performance at Northumbria with sector performance and included useful contextual data such as student populations, EORR considerations and intersectionality.
3. Gap analysis was carried out using the OfS individualised files which enabled us to look at and compare a much wider range of student groups than is readily available on the OfS dashboard. Statistical significance testing was applied to all gaps on the outcomes-based measures using Fisher's exact test (at the 5% level of significance) which is particularly useful in assessing the significance of small samples. This step provided validation for step 1 and enabled us to refine the areas we were focusing on.
4. Analysis of the data provided by OfS has then been supplemented with analysis of data held internally to provide greater insight.

This assessment of our performance includes an overview of the five key student lifecycle stages of Access, Continuation, Completion, Attainment and Progression with additional coverage across key focus areas, some of which have helped to shape our stated objectives. As 90% of Northumbria's UK UG provision is full-time, that will be the focus of the majority of this section with the last focus area looking at the smaller part-time and apprenticeship provision.

The large UG provision at Northumbria means data suppression is not a big feature of our datasets, particularly when looking at the full-time UG population. This means we have a high degree of confidence in analysing the data throughout this section. The exception to this is our smaller part-time, distance learning and apprenticeship provision where data suppression becomes more of a feature. Outcomes for these groups are generally positive as set out in Focus Area 7 but the higher degree of statistical uncertainty means we will monitor data closely over the duration of the plan for possible fluctuations and use our own internal lead indicators to identify potential issues which may impact on student outcomes

## **Student Lifecycle Stage 1 - Access**

### **Introduction and provider context**

The Access to Higher Education measure reports on the profile of entrants to higher education expressing the number of entrants with a specific attribute as a percentage of all entrants. Year 1 corresponds to entrants in 2016/17, and Year 6 to entrants in 2021/22.

More than 62% of our UK undergraduate (UG) students are from the North East (34.8% from Tyne & Wear and 28% from the wider region). The rest of our UK UG recruitment is predominantly from the north of England, with around 24% from Yorkshire, the Humber and the NW, and 14% from the rest of the UK.<sup>1</sup> Many of our students come from areas of low representation in HE with 15.6% coming from TUNDRA quintile 1 (compared to an English provider average of 12.3%) and 36.8% coming from TUNDRA quintiles 1 and 2 (compared to an English provider average of 27.8%). This is covered in more detail in the first focus area.

The proportion of young students in Northumbria's full-time UK UG population is increasing over the period growing from 79.8% to 85.8% over the six-year period. In the same period, the sector has seen a growing mature student population with only 71% of entrants in 2021/22 in the young category. Northumbria is following the same trend as the sector when we consider disability with a growing proportion of entrants having a reported disability up from 12.2% in 2016/17 to 16.7% in 2021/22.

### **Focus area 1 – Access and ABCS (Associations between characteristics of students)/TUNDRA (Tracking underrepresentation by area)/IMD (Indices of Multiple Deprivation)/Free School Meals eligibility**

ABCS is a measure that seeks a better understanding of how outcomes vary for groups of students with different sets of characteristics (for example, ethnicity, sex and background). Entrants are included in one of five quintiles which is determined by their specific set of characteristics and the access levels of students who share those characteristics across the sector. ABCS Q1 includes students who typically (according to sector data) have the lowest rates of Access to HE.

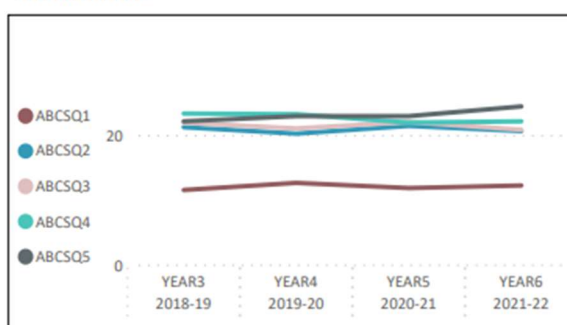
TUNDRA is an area-based measure of young participation in higher education at age 18 or 19 for state-funded mainstream school students in England. Quintile 1 represents students who come from the areas of lowest participation in higher education.

IMD is a measure of relative deprivation for small areas and is a combined measure of deprivation which reflects on different aspects of deprivation by individuals living in an area. Quintile 1 indicates the most deprived areas.

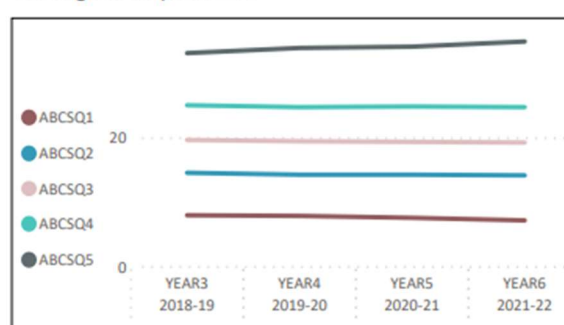
Whilst Northumbria has a higher proportion of entrants in ABCS Q1 than the English providers average, the proportion still sits 9% points below ABCS Q2 which has the second lowest proportion of entrants. The Northumbria position is shown in the graph on the left below alongside the sector position for comparison.

### Rate of Access by ABCSQuintile

Northumbria



All English HE providers

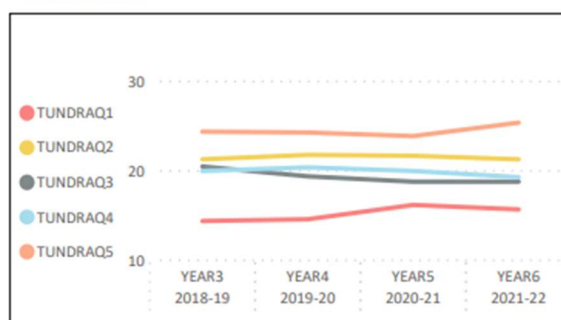


Intersectionality analysis of the ABCS Q1 data for Access at Northumbria shows there is a lot of cross over with the populations in TUNDRA quintiles 1 and 2, IMD quintiles 1 and 2 and also the population who are eligible for free school meals. 37.2% of entrants in TUNDRA Q1 are also in ABCS Q1 and almost 80% of them are in ABCS Q1 or Q2. 18.4% of entrants in IMD Q1 are also in ABCS Q1 and 69.7% of them are in ABCS Q1 or Q2. 62.7% of entrants at Northumbria who were eligible for free school meals were also in ABCS Q1 compared to only 3.4% of those who were not eligible for free school meals. This clear correlation between these measures means they are going to be considered alongside each other.

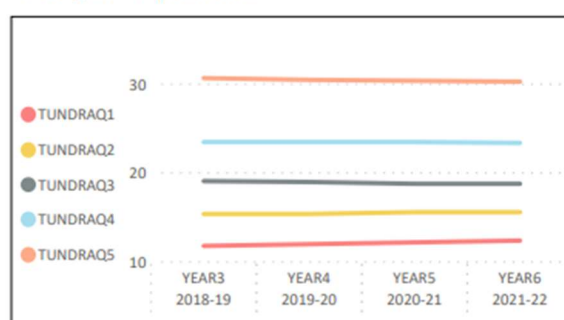
As discussed above Northumbria has a high proportion of entrants in TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 (areas with lowest rates of participation) when compared against the English provider average and Tundra Q2 is consistently the second largest group at Northumbria as shown in the graphs below. However there has been a slight drop off in the proportion of entrants from Tundra Q1 in the latest year of data falling from 16.1% to 15.6%.

### Rate of Access by TUNDRAQuintile

Northumbria



All English HE providers



UCAS application data shows us that there has been a further drop off in applications in TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 for 2023/24 entry with 14.9% of applications in TUNDRA Q1 compared to 15.4% in 2022/23 and 34.7% of applications in TUNDRA Q1 & Q2 compared to 36.1% a year earlier.

Unlike the ABCS and TUNDRA measures, Northumbria has a lower proportion of students in IMD Q1 and Q2 than the English providers average and while the sector average proportion in IMD Q1 is increasing year on year it has decreased from 23.0% in 2019/20 to 21.9% in 2021-22 at Northumbria.

The proportion of entrants at Northumbria who were eligible for free school meals has been within the range of 14.4% and 15.6% for each of the last five years which is below the English

provider average as shown in the tables below. When we consider other characteristics of the 15.4% of entrants who were eligible for free school meals in 2021/22 we can also see that 55% of them were in IMD Q1 and Q2.

#### Rate of Access by FSM Eligibility

##### Northumbria

	YEAR3	YEAR4	YEAR5	YEAR6	AGG 4YEARS	AGG 2YEARS
NotEligibleForFSM	85.3	84.7	85.6	84.6	85.0	85.1
EligibleForFSM	14.7	15.3	14.4	15.4	15.0	14.9

##### All English HE providers

	YEAR3	YEAR4	YEAR5	YEAR6	AGG 4YEARS	AGG 2YEARS
NotEligibleForFSM	80.6	80.2	80.7	81.6	80.8	81.1
EligibleForFSM	19.4	19.8	19.3	18.4	19.2	18.9

## Student Lifecycle Stage 2 - Continuation

### Introduction and provider context

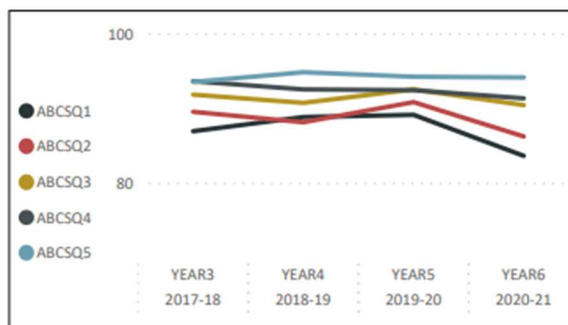
Continuation outcomes are measured by identifying a cohort of entrants to higher education at the provider and then following them through the early stages of their course to track how many continue in active study, or qualify, in subsequent years. The continuation measure tracks students from the date they enter a higher education provider to their activity on a census date which is one year and 15 days after commencement for full-time students and two years and 15 days after commencement for part time students. Due to the lag that exists with this measure, the most recent data relates to full-time students who started in 2020-21.

The sector trend for Continuation of full-time students which is evident when looking at all student groups is that following a few years of steady improvement, there was a considerable decline in continuation rates for students who started in 2020-21 due to the impact of the pandemic. The trends at Northumbria have followed a similar pattern for most student characteristics although there are some groups that have bucked the national trend.

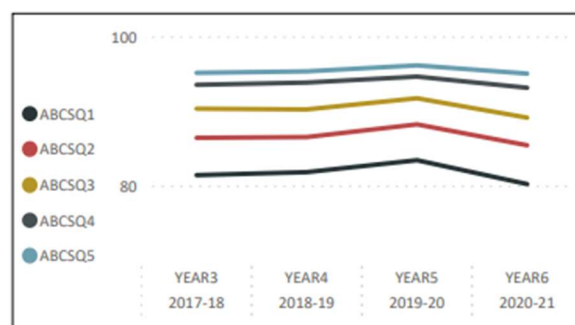
The charts below show the trend for ABCS quintiles and this is a good indication of the overall trends as many student characteristics are factored into this measure. The graph on the left shows the significant dip in continuation rates at Northumbria, particularly evident for ABCS Qs 1 and 2 with the graph on the right showing a similar trend in the sector. Although the gap in the continuation rate between students at Northumbria in ABCS Q1 and Q2 and those in ABCS Q3, Q4 and Q5 has grown in the latest year, those in ABCS Q1 and Q2 still have higher continuation rates than the English Provider average.

### Rate of Continuation by ABCSQintile

Northumbria



All English HE providers



Hidden with these aggregate views, there are however some positive stories of improved continuation rates or the closing of some gaps at Northumbria. Whilst the gap between young and mature students has increased to 9.9% for 2020/21 across English providers, it has narrowed to 1.1% at Northumbria. The continuation rate of Black students has also followed a positive trend at Northumbria increasing from 86.2% for full time starters in 2017/18 to 92.8% in 2020/21 and currently 3.2% points higher than the continuation rate for White students. This is covered in more detail in Focus Area 3 which looks at the performance of Black students across each of the on-course measures.

Internal retention data shows that a further drop off in Continuation rates for 2021/22 entrants is expected with anecdotal evidence suggesting the cost-of-living crisis has been a major factor but the early indications from the data for 2022/23 entrants is that continuation rates are now improving.

The "on-course" measures of continuation, completion and attainment for students in IMD JQ1/Q2, TUNDRA Q1/Q2 and FSM groups are covered in Focus Area 2.

## **Student Lifecycle Stage 3 - Completion**

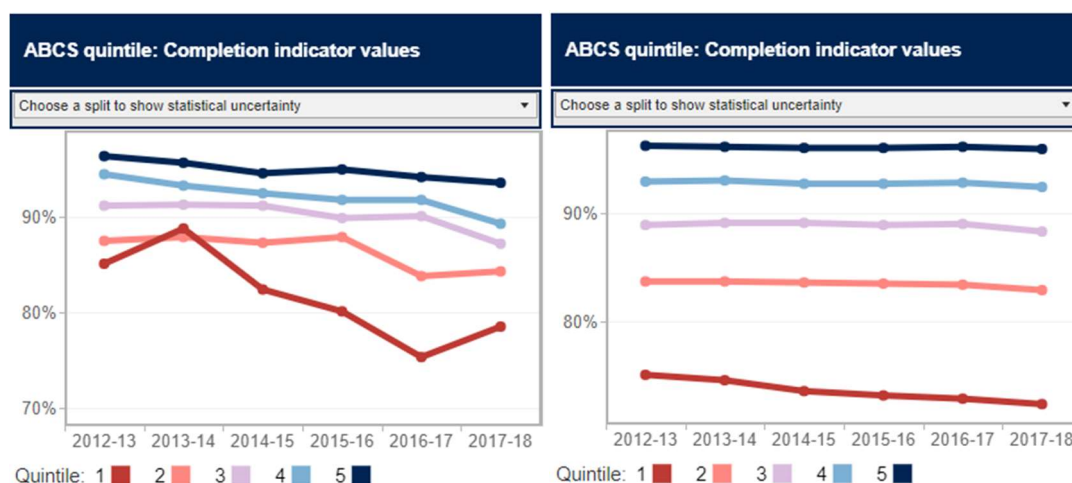
### **Introduction and Provider Context**

Completion outcomes are measured by identifying a cohort of entrants to higher education qualifications at the provider and following them through subsequent years of their course to track how many continue in active study, or qualify in subsequent years. The methodology is consistent with the definition of the continuation indicator but based on different census points. For full-time completion outcomes, and apprenticeship completion outcomes, the census date is four years and 15 days after commencement date and for part-time completion outcomes, the census date is six years and 15 days after commencement. With this significant lag the most recent data relates to full-time entrants from 2017/18.

The sector trend for completion of full-time students has been one of steady decline over the last six years but this has been most evident within more disadvantaged student groups with the gap between ABCS Q1 and Q5 growing from 21.1% points for 2012/13 entrants to 23.5% for 2017/18 entrants. This trend has also been seen at Northumbria with the gap between ABCS Q1 and Q5 growing from 11.3% (2012/13 entrants) to 15.1% (2017/18 entrants). The gap actually peaked at 18.9% for 2016/17 entrants but 2017/18 saw improved completion



outcomes for ABCS Q1 (up 3.2% points). The graphs below taken from the OfS APP dashboard show the trends for Northumbria (left) and the sector (right).



One area of particular concern is the growing gap in the completion rates for Black students versus students from other ethnic groups following a fall in the completion rate of full-time Black students from 87.5% (2016/17 entrants) to 74.0% (2017/18 entrants). The gap in completion rates between Black students and White students, Black students and Asian students and Black students and mixed ethnicity students for 2017/18 entrants were all statistically significant at the 5% level of significance using Fisher's Exact Test. This will be covered in more detail as part of Focus Area 3.

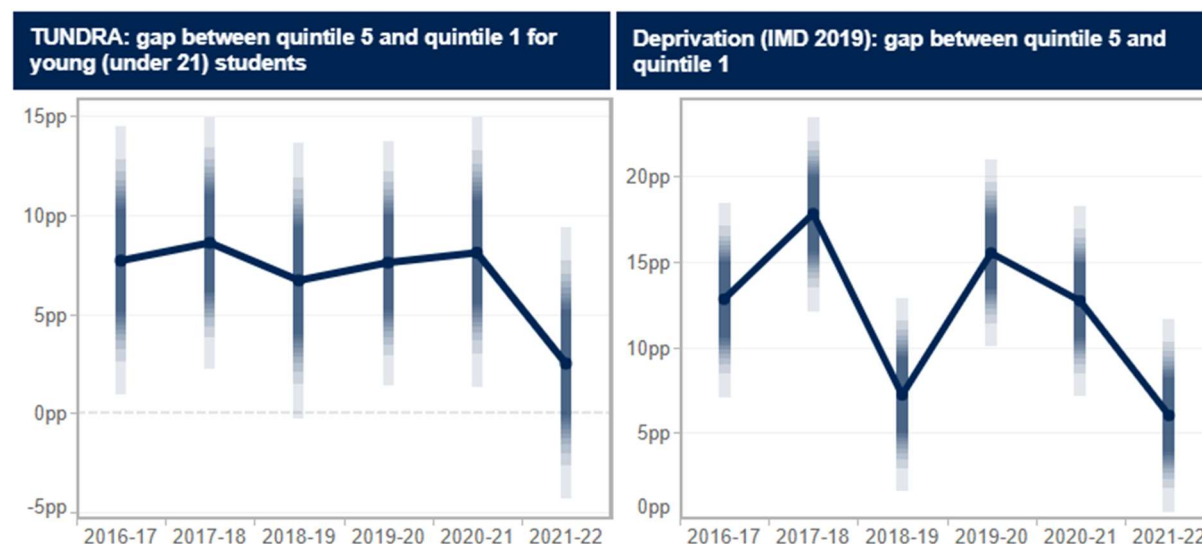
## **Student Lifecycle Stage 4 - Attainment**

### **Introduction and Provider Context**

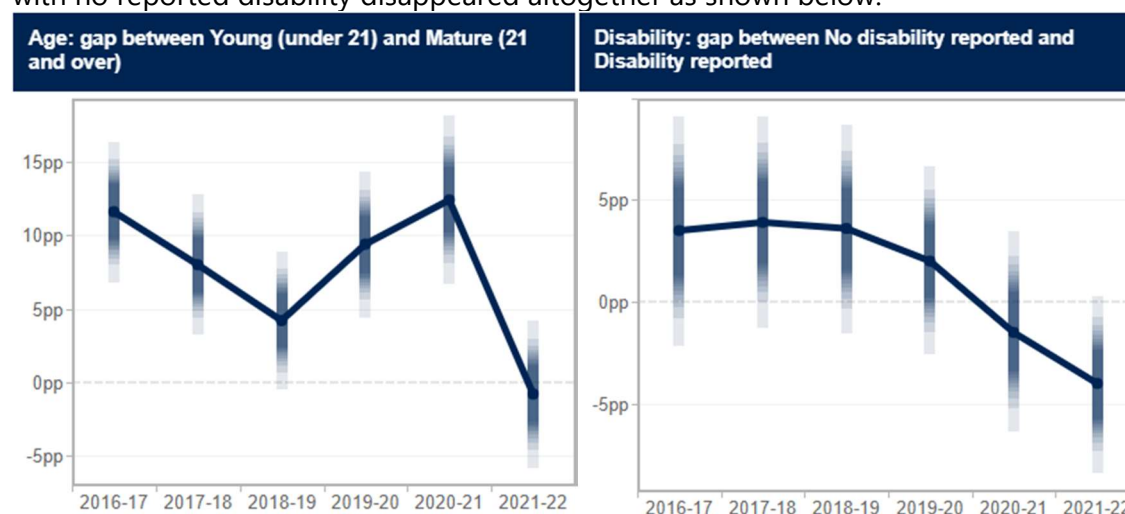
Attainment expresses the number of leavers from Level 6+ undergraduate degrees who were awarded 'first' or 'upper second' degree classifications as a percentage of all leavers from level 6+ undergraduate degrees who were awarded classified degrees. Level 6+ undergraduate degrees awarded without an honours classification are excluded from the denominator. Year 1 corresponds to qualifiers in 2016/17, and Year 6 to qualifiers in 2021/22.

The attainment trend for full-time UG students across English higher education providers over the six-year period looks fairly consistent across most student groups showing a moderate increase between 2016/17 and 2017/18, a levelling off in 2018/19 followed by significant increases in 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to the pandemic followed by a big drop in 2021/22 as attainment rates begin to fall back to pre-pandemic levels. Gap analysis shows the consistent nature of these trends with gaps in 2021/22 similar to those in 2016/17. The gap between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 moved from 5.5% points to 6.4% points, the gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 moved from 18.4% points to 17.8% points and the gap between those eligible and not eligible for free school meals moved from 12.6% points to 12.3% points. There has been progress too with attainment gaps between White students and other ethnicity groups closing over the period and the gap between students with a disability reported and those with no disability reported disappearing altogether.

The trend at Northumbria over the period looks slightly different with the inflation caused by the pandemic peaking in 2019/20 but then attainment levels falling back to pre-pandemic levels a year earlier in 2020/21 for many student groups and then a clear convergence of many attainment gaps in 2021/22 as evidenced by the graphs below taken from the OfS APP dashboard showing gaps for TUNDRA and IMD over the period.



The gap between those eligible and those not eligible for free school meals followed a similar trend and gaps between young and mature students and those reporting a disability and those with no reported disability disappeared altogether as shown below.



The most concerning attainment trend at Northumbria has been the growing gap between Black students and other ethnicity groups and will be covered in Focus Area 3.

## **Focus area 2 – Continuation/Completion/Attainment of students in ABCS Q1 & Q2/TUNDRA Q1 & Q2/IMD Q1 & Q2 and those eligible for free school meals**

The closing of the attainment gaps at Northumbria across socio-economic measures of TUNDRA, IMD and free school meal eligibility does not distract from the concerning trends evident for these groups across the continuation and completion measures, mirroring trends seen across the sector.

As was the case with the student lifecycle stage of access, we see a high degree of commonality between these groups when looking at the continuation and completion measures. For example, at Northumbria, 78% of students who are in IMD Q1 are in ABCS Q1 or Q2 on the continuation measure. On the completion measure, over three quarters of students who were eligible for free school meals are in ABCS Q1 or Q2.

Across both measures, Northumbria has seen the biggest declines for the most disadvantaged student groups. For continuation, there has been a sharp decline in the latest year of data with the gap between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 growing from 3.3% points (2019/20 entrants) to 5.9% points (2020/21 entrants), the gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 growing from 2.4% points (2019/20 entrants) to 8.0% points (2020/21 entrants) and the gaps between those not eligible for free school meals and those who are eligible growing from 1.8% points (2019/20 entrants) to 5.3% points (2020/21 entrants). In all cases, these growing gaps can be attributed to the rate of decline in the performance of the more disadvantaged group. The sharper declines in the economic deprivation measures of IMD and free school meal eligibility may be a strong indicator of the impact of the cost of living crisis on entrants in 2020/21.

The sector trend for the completion measure is slightly different and has been one of steady decline across the six-year period with the sharp declines in continuation rates for 2020-21 entrants yet to impact on this measure with the latest data relating to 2017/18 entrants. The completion gaps in the sector between TUNDRA Q1 and Q5, IMD Q1 and Q5 and those eligible for free school meals versus those who were not eligible for school meals have grown over the six-year period. Northumbria has followed a similar trend with growing gaps in completion rates but an improvement in the last year of available data with gaps closing between 2016/17 and 2017/18 on TUNDRA and IMD. Gaps do however remain significant when analysed at the 5% confidence interval.

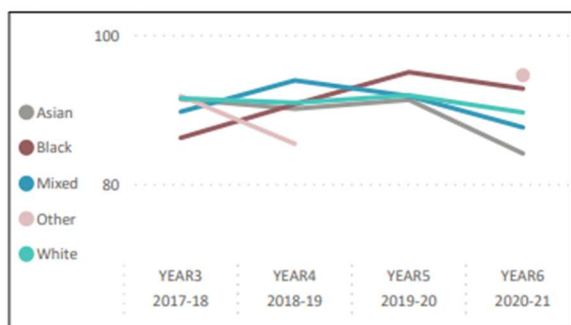
### **Focus area 3 – Continuation/Completion/Attainment of Black students**

The population of Black UK students at Northumbria is small when compared to the sector although this is due in part to the demographics of the North East region and the strong regional profile of Northumbria's UG intake. 1.4% of UK UG students joining Northumbria in 2021/22 were Black compared to an English provider average of 8.0%. Official census and labour market statistics show that only 1.5% of people aged between 16 and 64 in the North East were Black in the census period July 2021 to June 2022.<sup>2</sup> As the ethnicity mix of our intake broadly aligns to the demographics we see in the region and we are primarily a regional recruiter, our view is that Access of Black students is not a priority area for us in this plan.

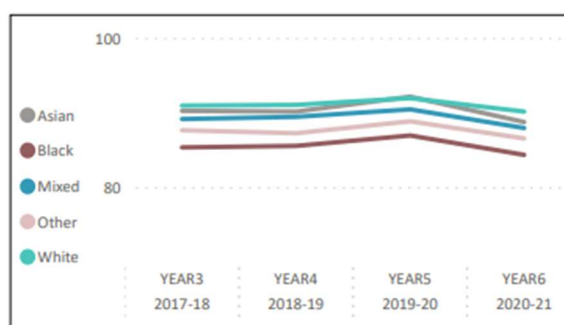
Continuation of Black students at Northumbria is positive with continuation rates higher than those for White students, mixed ethnicity students and Asian students for each of the last two years with the gap between Black students and Asian students statistically significant for 2020/21 entrants. This is different to the sector trend where continuation rates of Black students are lower than other ethnicity groups as shown below.

### Rate of Continuation by Ethnicity

Northumbria



All English HE providers



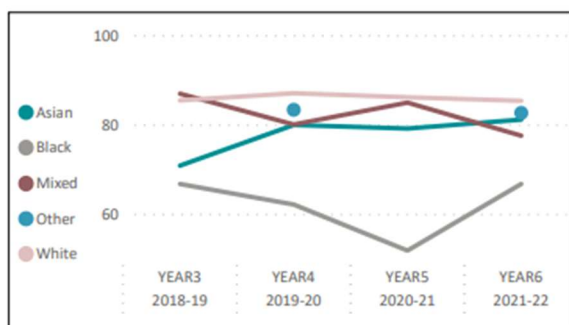
The trends at Northumbria for Black student completion and attainment show a different trend and indicate that although a large proportion of Black students do remain on their studies at Northumbria, the completion and attainment rates are below those of other ethnicity groups. The completion rate for Black students was quite consistent with other ethnicity groups up until 2017/18 when there was a sharp decline from 87.5% a year earlier to 74.0%. The gaps between Black students and White students, mixed ethnicity students and Asian students was tested using Fisher's Exact Test at a 5% level of significance and was found to be significant in each case.

Internal student record data shows that Black students were less likely to move to the next stage of their course at every UG study level in 2020/21 when compared against White students. At study level 4, 74.6% of Black students has either moved to the next level or completed their course 1 year and 15 days after their commencement date compared to 81.0% of White students. At level 5 it was 74.6% for Black students versus 89.2% of White students and at level 6 it was 83.9% of Black students versus 93.1% of White students. Our internal data also shows similar trend for students who started in 2021/22. Data for 2020/21 entrants shows that 12.9% of Black students repeated the year at study level 3 (with 9.7% doing so on a different course) compared to only 5.8% of White students. At study level 4, 14.6% of Black students repeated the year compared to 8.0% of White students and at level 5 it was 16.1% of Black students versus 6.2% of White students. At level 6, only 76.3% of Black students completed their course compared to 87.5% of White students with a high proportion again repeating the year. Withdrawal rates of Black students were actually lower than those for other ethnicity groups across all levels so it is the trend of students repeating their study year which shows positively in continuation rates (but impacts negatively on completion rates).

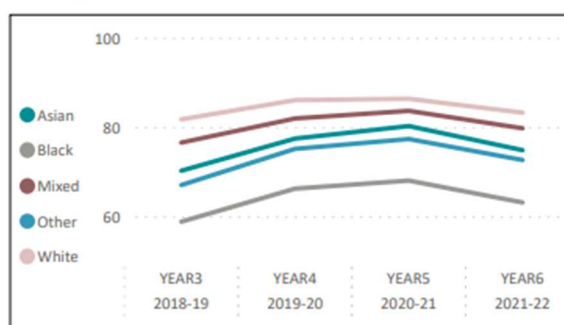
The most concerning trend in attainment at Northumbria has been the growing gap between Black students and other ethnicity groups which peaked in 2020/21 when the gap between Black students and White students was 34.3% points. Although this gap was reduced to 18.7% points in 2021/22 following an increase in Black student attainment rates, it does remain statistically significant. The gap is shown in the graph below alongside the sector position where Black attainment is now at a lower level than we see at Northumbria with a bigger gap between Black students and White students.

### Rate of Attainment by Ethnicity

Northumbria



All English HE providers



As the number of Black students is low at Northumbria, we have opted against additional analysis to look at specific Black ethnicity sub-groups. However, when considering our objectives and interventions which we hope will improve the on-course performance of our Black students and close any statistically significant gaps, we think it is also important to consider intersectionality as ethnicity is unlikely to be the only driving factor. Our internal Diversity Monitoring dataset shows us that of those UK domiciled UG students who provided data as part of their 2022/23 enrolment task, 5.8% of Black students considered themselves to be estranged from their family compared to only 2.7% of White students and 2.9% of Asian students. 27.6% of Black students said they were in receipt of free school meals compared to only 11.8% of White students and 4.3% of Black students said they were in care on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday compared to only 1.4% of White students.

### **Focus area 4 – Continuation/Completion/Attainment of male students**

The performance of male students on these on-course measures has been included as a focus area, not due to the size of the gaps that exist (which appear smaller than gaps we see for other student characteristics) but due to the statistical significance driven by the large populations in both of these groups. The gender gap for continuation has increased from 3.2% points (2017/18 entrants) to 4.9% points (2020/21 entrants). This gap has been statistically significant (at the 5% level of significance) for each of the last four years. Over this period, male students' continuation has fallen by 3.1% points compared to a drop of 1.4% points for female students. The continuation rate for male students at Northumbria is now lower than the English provider average whilst the rate for female students sits almost 1% point above the average.

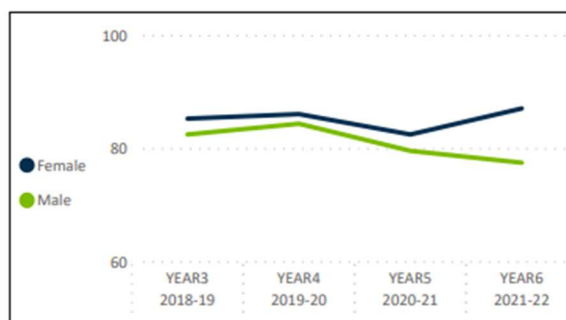
A very similar trend is seen for Completion with the gap growing from 5.6% points (2014/15 entrants) to 7.1% points (2017/18 entrants). Having previously outperformed the sector average for both male and female students, the completion rate for males fell below the English provider average for 2020/21 entrants and the gap has again been statistically significant across each of the last four years.

The latest position for attainment shows that the gap between male and female students has increased by 6.7% points in the space of one year. This has been driven in part by improved attainment levels for female students from 82.4% in 2020/21 to 87.0% in 2021/22 while in the same period male attainment fell from 79.5% to 77.4% as shown in the graph on the left below. Female student attainment at Northumbria is now above the English Provider average which fell from 84.3% in 2020/21 to 80.5% in 2021/22. This attainment gap was statistically significant

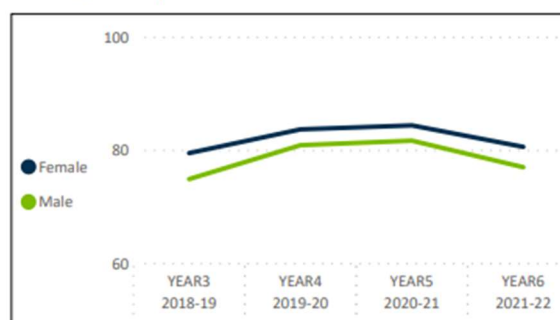
in three of the four years with 2019/20 the only exception. The graph on the right shows the sector position with little movement in the gap over a four-year period. Female attainment at Northumbria was c.6% points above the sector average at the start and end of this four-year period. Male attainment on the other hand was over 7% higher than the sector average in 2018/19 and is now only 0.5% points higher.

#### Rate of Attainment by Sex

Northumbria



All English HE providers



Intersectionality was also explored with particular emphasis on young white males who make up a big proportion of the male population at Northumbria and below benchmark metrics have previously been discussed in early iterations of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Statistical significance testing was carried out using Fisher's Exact Test looking at young white males versus all other students, young white males eligible for free school meals versus all other students, young white males in IMD Q1 & 2 versus all other students and young white males in TUNDRA Q1 & Q2 versus all other students. For Continuation, statistically significant gaps were found across all comparison groups in 2017/18, 2019/20 and 2020/21 with the young white male group underperforming in each case. These groups also underperformed at statistically significant levels across all four years of data for Completion and similar trends were also found for attainment. With socio-economic status being identified as a focus area in objective 2, a decision was made to focus on the male versus female gaps in objective 6. We will continue to monitor trends in the performance of the young white male sub-group to evaluate whether our initiatives are also impacting on this group in a positive way.

### **Student Lifecycle Stage 5 – Progression**

#### **Introduction and provider context**

The progression measure uses Graduate Outcomes data and describes the proportion of qualifiers from HE qualifications who have progressed to professional or managerial employment or any type of further study, 15 months after completing their course. The earliest data relates to 2017/18 leavers (as that was the first time the Graduate Outcomes survey took place) and the most recent year of data relates to 2019/20 leavers. Unlike the other student lifecycle stages included, this measure is based on survey respondents only so is indicative of the overall population.

The sector trend for progression over the three years of data available on the OfS APP dashboard shows a significant decline in the middle year for 2018/19 leavers who were the cohort that was most adversely impacted by the pandemic before 2019/20 progression levels

returned to levels similar to those seen for 2017/18 leavers. This trend is evident across most student groups and has been fairly consistent across the most advantaged and disadvantaged groups when looking at TUNDRA, IMD and free school meal eligibility. The data also indicates that some student groups seemed to feel the impact of the pandemic more than others – the gap between young and mature students progression rates widening from 1.1% points (2017/18 leavers) to 2.8% points (2018/19 leavers) followed by the closing of this gap entirely for 2019/20 leavers. There were also widening progression gaps in 2018/19 when looking at graduates with a reported disability and Asian students.

Northumbria's progression data shows the dip in 2018/19 across most student groups but it is interesting to note that on both the TUNDRA and IMD measures, the progression rates for Q2 have recovered to such an extent that they are now higher than those for Q3 on both measures. At Northumbria, we have not seen the closing of the progression gap between young and mature students with the most recent year of data showing the biggest gap up from 9.2% points (2018/19 leavers) to 12.5% points (2019/20 leavers). The progression rate of young students at Northumbria is higher than the sector with 74.1% of young students having positive progression compared to an English provider average of 72.3%. It should also be noted that a high proportion of mature graduates are in Nursing subjects where progression rates are very high so this is a big driver of the gap we see. Conversely, we have seen the disappearance of the progression gap (which was significant for 2017/18 and 2018/19 leavers) between students with a reported disability and those with no reported disability with the former having higher progression rates for the first time in 2019/20 (78.3% vs 75.9%).

The progression rates of Asian students is covered in Focus Area 5.

### **Focus area 5 – Progression of Asian students**

The trend for the progression rates of Asian students gives reason to analyse the data further and seek to gain further understanding. In the first three years of progression data included in the OfS APP dashboard, there is a statistically significant gap (at the 5% significance level) in the rates of progression of Asian students when compared to White students. The latest data for 2020/21 leavers shows us that the gap between Asian and White students has closed to its lowest level since the introduction of the Graduate Outcomes survey and to the point where it is no longer statistically significant. This is due to an improvement in the rate of Asian leaver's progression from 63.1% to 73.0%. However, the gap between Asian and White leavers is still almost 5% points (down from 14% points for 2019/20 leavers) and is persistent across all years of Graduate Outcomes data.

Analysis of our internal data at a more granular grouping of ethnicity shows that there is not one ethnicity sub-group that drives this gap with performance of groups such as Asian – Chinese and Asian – Indian fluctuating over the period. For example, in 2017/18 Asian – Chinese leavers had a progression rate of 81.4%, the highest rate that year of any Asian ethnicity sub-group and this dropped to 59.4% in 2018/19, the lowest rate that year of any Asian ethnicity sub-group. The population size of these sub-groups is a key factor in the fluctuations that we have seen with the largest sub-group over the period including only 35 leavers and so analysis is more meaningful when aggregated up to all Asian students.



The improved progression levels for 2020/21 leavers have been driven by improvements in subject areas where we have the largest proportion of Asian graduates. In Business and Management which has the largest number of Asian leavers in every year of Graduate outcomes data (ranging from 18 to 27), the progression rate improved from 53.5%, 51.3% and 51.9% in the first three years of Graduate Outcomes data to 72.2% for the 2020/21 leavers. There was also an increase in the number and proportion of Asian leavers into some subjects with consistently high progression rates in 2020/21 such as Nursing (increase from 5 to 8 leavers and 100% progression rate in 2020/21) and Law (increase from 7 to 10 leavers and 90% progression rate in 2020/21).

Further analysis of our Graduate Outcomes data shows that the proportion of Asian leavers who are unemployed has been consistently higher than the proportion of White students. For 2018/19 leavers, almost a quarter of Asian leavers (21/88) were unemployed at the census date compared to 7.5% of White leavers (149/1,987). The gap has narrowed in 2020/21 with 8.8% (10/113) of Asian leavers unemployed compared to 2.9% (52/1,764) of White leavers. This gap is however statistically significant (at the 5% significance level) in 2020/21. The proportion of Asian students who go into further study is broadly comparable with the proportion for White students and in 2018/19 and 2019/20 a higher proportion of Asian students reported that they were in further study indicating that the progression gap we see is driven by employment.

### **Focus area 6 – Care experienced students, estranged students and student carers**

Students within these groups have been the focus of much discussion at Northumbria in recent years as we know the challenges they can face and have sought to improve our understanding of how many students we have in each group to enable us to ensure appropriate support is available. One key development over the last two years has been the development of our Diversity Monitoring dataset. Northumbria's Diversity Monitoring Data is gathered via a voluntary survey at enrolment and used to help tailor support for our students. In 2022/23, 24,579 Level 3-6 students were surveyed with a completion rate of 79%. Of the respondents, 78.6% identified with underrepresented groups, including 43% as First Generation (first in family to attend HE), 2.0% Care Leavers, and 2.7% Estranged Students (without contact with parents/family). This data gives us new opportunities to learn more about the unique challenges that these students may face by tracking their performance through their programmes, provide targeted support where we feel it is appropriate and monitor the impact of any interventions that are put in place.

Our NU Belong survey is aimed at students who are Care Leavers, Carers, Estranged students and Sanctuary Scholars and gives us insights into how students feel they have been supported during the academic year, whether it has improved their wellbeing and also giving us insights into areas we need to improve. In the 2022/23 survey, 94% of respondents agreed that financial support has had a positive effect on their wellbeing and 85% agreed that NU Belong has had a positive effect on their general wellbeing.

The fact that care-experienced students and estranged students feature so heavily in the EORR as groups who may be at risk adds further importance to this work. Although we don't yet have enough data to look at year on year trends, our view is that the number of students we have in these groups is sufficiently high to continue developing our data and build an objective around this in our plan.



## **Focus area 7 – Part time, apprenticeship and distance learning (DL) students**

The data which is available via the OfS APP dashboard for part-time students at Northumbria is relatively sparse due to the small population of this cohort.

The Access data shows there has been a growth in the proportion of mature students on part-time UG courses now accounting for over 97% of the total and the proportion of entrants with a reported disability peaked at 8.0% in the latest year of data (2021/22) although this is still considerably below the sector average of 19.7%. Data for IMD is also available but there are a lot of fluctuations due to the low numbers which means it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions.

The sector continuation rates for part-time students are much lower than those for full-time students with ABCS Q1 and Q2 not getting above 60% in the six-year period. The overall trend for the sector looks to have been one of improvement, particularly for the dominant mature student cohort. Northumbria's data shows a similar trend with students in ABCS Q1 and Q2 now having continuation rates of 79.3% and 81.3% respectively.

The completion data for part time students at Northumbria shows a slight decline over the six-year period driven by the completion of mature students (who make up over 90% of the population in 2015/16, the latest year of data) which fell from 78.7% (2010/11 entrants) to 76.6% (2015/16 entrants). Despite this decline, the completion rate for mature students was over 20% points higher than the sector average for 2015/16 entrants.

The sector trend for attainment of part time students is similar to the trend described earlier for full time students, albeit from a lower starting point with a steep rise in 2019/20 due to the pandemic followed by a more gradual decline in the two years that followed. These trends are also evident in Northumbria's data with White student attainment increasing from 75.6% to a peak of 85.0% in 2019/20 before dropping down to 79.2% in 2021/22, 5.5% points above the sector average for that group of students.

The progression data for part time students is particularly patchy as the survey response rates mean even less data is reportable. There has been a clear trend of decline between 2017/18 and 2019/20 across the dominant student groups of White and mature although the latest progression rates still sit 3-4% points above the sector average.

Apprenticeships are a growing area of provision at Northumbria but account for fewer than 5% of students on the Continuation and Attainment measures and 0% on Completion and Progression due to the data lag. Time series data is available for Access and shows that in 2021/22, IMD Q1 was the most represented group on apprenticeships at Northumbria followed by IMD Q2 which is the reverse of the sector position where they are the two least represented groups on these programmes.

Analysis of HESA data on 22 June 2023 gave us some insights into the variety of course types on offer at Northumbria in relation to Risk 5 in the EORR. For apprenticeships, Northumbria has a broader offer in terms of subjects than the sector and also a higher proportion of UG enrolments through apprenticeships (5.2% of the total) compared with the sector average

(2.2% of the total). Compared to the sector for UG distance learning, Northumbria has DL students across a narrower range of subjects compared to the average university in 2021/22 and a smaller proportion of overall UG enrolments are through DL (0.4%) compared with the sector average (5.1%). However, we recognise that contractual agreements with external partners have limited our ability to broaden our DL offer and changes have recently been agreed which will enable us to grow our DL provision at UG level across a broader range of subjects. Northumbria's part time offer at UG level is narrower than the sector average and is concentrated into a few subjects including Business and management and Architecture, building and planning.

### **Associated Risks to Equality of Opportunity**

This assessment of our performance has led us to conclude that the risks to equality of opportunity which we think are most likely to be factors for our students in accordance with our own provider context are listed in the table below and categorized as high, medium or low risk.

<sup>1</sup> HESA Student FPE 2021/22, March 2023. Heidi Plus

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>

## Risks to Equality of Opportunity at Northumbria University

Risk	<p><b>Student groups who are likely to be affected by this risk at Northumbria (according to our data and institutional knowledge/context).</b> <u>This list is by no means exhaustive and there are likely to be individuals and smaller groups who display other characteristics described in the EORR who are impacted by the risks.</u></p>
1: Knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSM eligible – low access rates</li> <li>• Black students – low on-course success rates</li> <li>• Male students – low on-course success rates</li> <li>• Care experienced students – limited data</li> </ul> <p><b>High Risk</b> – Knowledge of our students and the type of support they are likely to engage with along with the trends which can be seen in the data as described above including the size of some of these student populations means we consider this to be a high risk at Northumbria.</p>
2: Information and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSM eligible – low access rates</li> <li>• Black students – low completion and attainment rates</li> <li>• Care experienced students – limited data</li> <li>• No parental experience of higher education – high volume of UG students in this category at Northumbria</li> </ul> <p><b>High Risk</b> – Knowledge of our students and the type of support they are likely to engage with along with the trends which can be seen in the data as described above including the size of some of these student populations means we consider this to be a high risk at Northumbria.</p>
3: Perception of higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSM eligible – low access rates</li> <li>• Mature students – low access rates compared to sector</li> <li>• Black students – low access rates (although not unrepresentative of region)</li> </ul> <p><b>High Risk</b> – The low access rates (relative to sector averages) for some of the student groups identified against this risk in the EORR means we consider this to be a high risk at Northumbria.</p>

4: Application success rates	<p><b>Low Risk</b> – Analysis of our internal application, offer and enrolment data does show some variable application to offer and application to enrolment rates (although the margins are small) with lower rates for groups such as Black and Asian students and those in POLAR Q1. However further analysis also shows that the average entry tariff for these groups is lower at each stage and is the main factor behind the variable success rates that can be seen.</p>
5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode	<p><b>Low risk</b> – HESA data shows we have a large and broad apprenticeship offer at Northumbria and our DL and blended learning offer is likely to grow in areas of higher demand.</p>
6: Insufficient academic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No parental experience of higher education – high volume of UG students in this category at Northumbria</li> <li>• Black students – low on-course success rates</li> <li>• Male students – low on-course success rates</li> <li>• Care experienced and estranged students – anecdotal evidence only at this stage</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium risk</b> – The data trends described above mean this risk requires some scrutiny and monitoring of performance but significant investment has already been put in place to ensure sufficient support and mitigate this risk. This Plan also looks to ensure support is targeted in the right areas.</p>
7: Insufficient personal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No parental experience of higher education – high volume of UG students in this category at Northumbria</li> <li>• Black students – low on-course success rates</li> <li>• Male students – low on-course success rates</li> <li>• Care experienced and estranged students – anecdotal evidence only at this stage</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium risk</b> – The data trends described above mean this risk requires some scrutiny and monitoring of performance but significant investment has already been put in place to ensure sufficient support and mitigate this risk. This Plan also looks to ensure support is targeted in the right areas.</p>

8: Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care experienced students – limited data</li> <li>• Black students – low on-course success rates</li> <li>• FSM eligible – declining continuation/completion rates</li> <li>• First generation students</li> <li>• Disabled students</li> <li>• LGBTQ+ students</li> </ul> <p><b>High Risk:</b> Internal data from our Student Success team has shown a 20% rise in the number of student withdrawal requests that reference mental health between 2020 and 2022. In addition, emotional or mental health concerns were cited as the number one reason why students were not attending classes in Programme Engagement surveys which took place in 2022/23. Our counselling and mental health team have also reported a 48% increase in registrations in 2021/22 compared to the previous two years and a high proportion of students using this service were first generation students, disabled students and LGBTQ+ students.</p>
9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSM eligible – declining continuation/completion rates</li> <li>• Special educational needs – limited data</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium risk</b> – In the report “The Impact of Covid-19 on pupil attainment” (March 2022), The National Foundation for Educational Research concluded that the disadvantage gap was wider after the pandemic with lockdown having a greater impact on disadvantaged pupils. The research also highlighted that these pupils are recovering at around the same rate as non-disadvantaged pupils. Significant investment was put in place at Northumbria to mitigate the covid impact which is also likely to reduce over time and we hope the interventions we put in place to enable progress on objectives 1 and 2 in our plan will accelerate the recovery for some of our most disadvantaged students from the pandemic. We will continue to monitor data to evaluate risk level.</p>
10: Cost pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care experienced and estranged students – limited data</li> <li>• FSM eligible – declining continuation/completion rates</li> </ul> <p><b>High Risk:</b> Internal data from our Student Success team shows that financial issues are increasingly reported in student withdrawal requests, with an increase of 50% in the number</p>

	selecting this as first reason (multiple selections are allowed) between 2020/21 and 2022/23, sometimes noting a move to full-time employment, and others advising that they were unable to afford to rent in Newcastle. Living further away led to some reporting issues balancing travel time/costs, study, and employment.
11: Capacity issues	<p><b>Low Risk:</b> A recent Student Accommodation Demand Study undertaken by an external organisation on our behalf highlighted that Newcastle as a city provides student accommodation at a much lower cost than other major cities in the UK and compares favourably to accommodation costs at universities regarded as our peers. University accommodation is also at an average lower cost than private sector accommodation in the city. In addition, the university accommodation team engages closely with students from the point of application to assess any particular special needs and determine how their accommodation can be adapted accordingly. We have previously made guarantees to students that those who apply and take up their course offer on or before 31 July will have the option of accommodation and we have fulfilled that promise each year to date.</p>
12: Progression from higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asian students – low progression rates and high unemployment rates</li> <li>• Care experienced students – limited data</li> <li>• No parental experience of higher education – high volume of UG students in this category at Northumbria</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Risk:</b> Northumbria's progression data is positive and has been on an upward trend over the last five years. However, we consider this to be a medium risk with large student populations in high risk groups such as first generation students and challenges in relation to the skilled employment opportunities available to graduates in the North East relative to some other regions of the UK.</p>

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

As previously described throughout the plan, Northumbria is proud to succeed in widening participation into HE, particularly for students from low participation neighbourhoods. The previous APP led to the introduction of a new Diversity Monitoring data capture and collation tool which provides a broader understanding of our student body via an optional part of enrolment and re-enrolment of our students. This data indicates that a much higher proportion of our student body is from an underrepresented background or hold a protected characteristic than traditional 'WP' data tells us.

This context is crucial for developing a plan which not only targets the priority areas outlined in our objectives and targets, but also enables us to continue to develop our data, enable it to inform practice and allow us to adapt and be responsive to new priorities as we identify these across the course of the plan and beyond.

The collection of new data categories since 2021 will eventually enable new and specific insight into the access, success and progression outcomes of a wider group of students than we can currently measure and improve understanding of the intersectionality of specific characteristics. This is a priority for the APP work and the approach outlined below aims to ensure effective interventions can be implemented and targeted at the students most at risk of not accessing equality of opportunity, whether they are currently a focus within the plan or not.

### **Theory of Change - A holistic, responsive approach.**

Our data and assessment of performance indicates there is not always evidence of a trend for student outcomes of underrepresented groups, and there is evidence widening participation student outcomes can vary significantly at subject levels. We believe that creating a central, sustainable offer for supporting local activities which can be targeted effectively to meet relevant objectives will provide a holistic, responsive model which can be effectively monitored, evaluated and adapted as required. Sustainability is a key principle for the plan and its evaluation as Austen et. al highlight: "work should be supported beyond quick wins to enable sustained ('sticky') practices and evidence of impact over time." (p. 4, 2021)<sup>11</sup>.

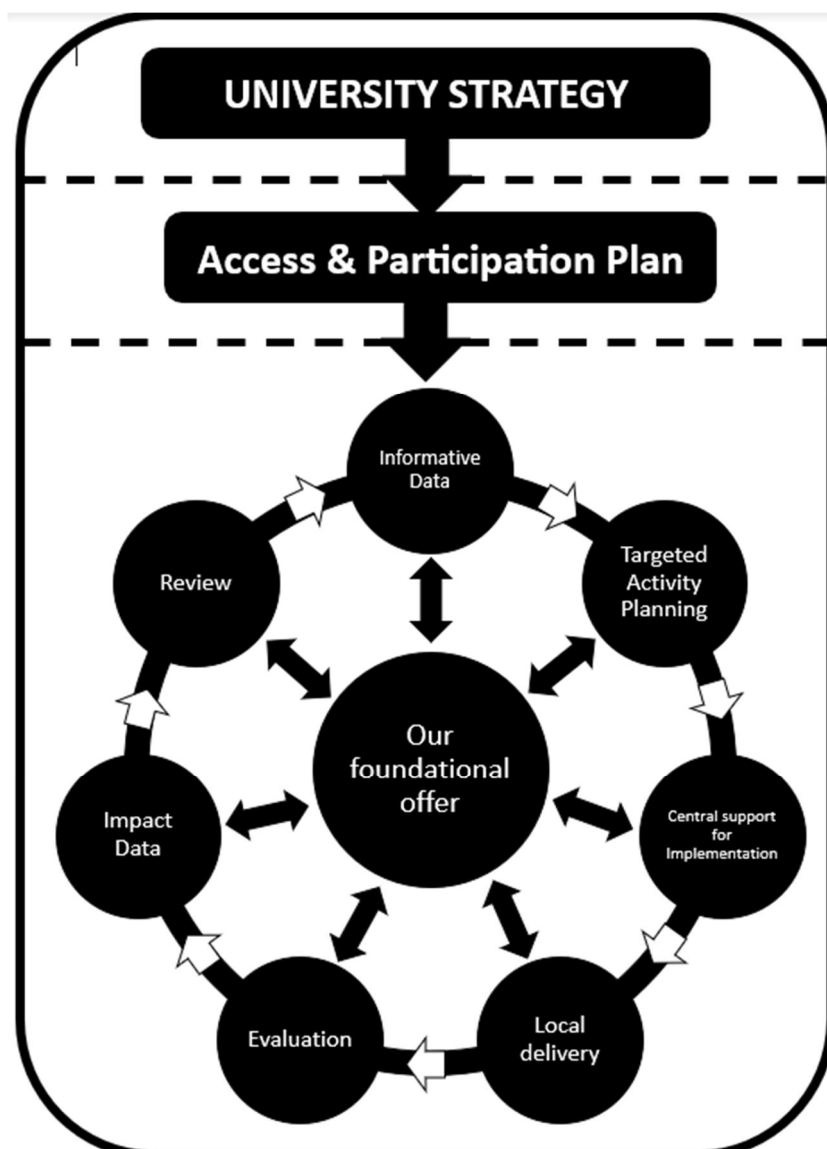
The model is centred around 'Foundational Activities' (**FAs**) which can be tailored to address specific targets and objectives, as outlined in the intervention strategies. These are all evidence-based and explored in more detail below.

Many of these activities currently exist in some format within Northumbria but may not originally have been designed to be responsive to relevant objectives or may not be being evaluated against them. It is intended that this model will enable effective evaluation at both a local and central level, offering an opportunity to embed 'faculty interaction' throughout the plan – an important factor for student success (Austen et al, 2021). This aims to provide specific contextual insight to the sector, rather than just focusing on university-level activity.

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<sup>11</sup> Austen, L. et al, 2021. Advance HE. Access, retention, attainment and progression: an integrative review

**Diagram A - A responsive, sustainable model**



Not only will this approach enable a flexible, responsive model for students within the Access & Participation Plan remit, it will also enable targeted, evidence-based approaches to be applied for wider groups, including international and postgraduate students, aligning with Northumbria's global mission.

## **Access**

### **Increasing attainment (FA1)**

A students' GCSE results are one of the strongest predictors of whether they will go on to study at university, and GCSE attainment is strongly linked to socio-economic background, with only one third of disadvantaged students achieving GCSE grades associated with higher education, compared to two thirds of their advantaged peers<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, in order to achieve fair access to higher education,

<sup>12</sup> Department for Education, 2017. *Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2015 to 2016*. [Online] Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/584473/SFR03\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584473/SFR03_2017.pdf)



schools, further education and higher education providers must work together to close attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. Research indicates that this gap opens early in life and therefore early intervention is essential in order to close it.

Evidence suggests that students who are eligible for free school meals, or who have been in care, achieve significantly worse outcomes at GCSE level than their peers in key measures, as shown in Table 1 below. The disadvantage gap index indicates that this disparity has remained relatively stable between 2013-2022<sup>13</sup>.

**Table 1 GCSE achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 by disadvantage status (free school meal eligibility and children in care), 2021-22**

	Average Attainment 8 score	Achieving English and mathematics (at grades 9-5)	EBacc average point score
Disadvantaged pupils	37.6	29.6%	3.19
Advantaged pupils	52.8	57%	4.66

Source: Department for Education, Key stage 4 performance, 2021/22<sup>14</sup>

This gap then extends to higher education participation with 27 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals going to university, compared to 46 per cent of other pupils<sup>15</sup>. GCSE attainment however is a key predictor of progression into higher education, regardless of Key Stage 2 or Post-16 attainment with the Institute for Fiscal Studies reporting that attainment at Key Stage 4 could explain almost all of the difference in higher education participation, regardless of background<sup>16</sup>. Key Stage 4 attainment has been suggested to be a key barrier to higher education for target groups such as White British students from low-socio-economic backgrounds, children in care and for some Black and minority ethnic groups. In addition to being a key indicator of higher education participation, prior attainment at Key Stage 5 also indicates the success of graduates with 98.4 per cent of students with A\*A\*A\* at A-Level gaining a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 compared to 75.4 per cent of students who entered with DDD.<sup>17</sup>

The COVID pandemic has had a detrimental effect on those pupils from a disadvantaged background, and whilst all students have suffered a loss of learning, students eligible for free school meals have suffered greater learning loss than their peers. Research in England shows that attainment

<sup>13</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised#dataBlock-1711bb84-81a6-4e96-9340-969910351d76-tables>

<sup>14</sup> Department for Education. *Key stage 4 performance. Academic Year 2021/22*. [Online] [Key stage 4 performance, Academic year 2021/22 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

<sup>15</sup> Office for Students, 2022. *Part one: Insight event - Raising attainment, improving access, securing success [Video]*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZD9Z0DY9xno>

<sup>16</sup> Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2016. *Raising GCSE attainment crucial to get more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into university, but work to promote social mobility cannot end when they arrive on campus*. [Online]

Available at: <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/8799>

<sup>17</sup> Department for Education, 2019. *Graduates continue to benefit with higher earnings*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/graduates-continue-to-benefit-with-higher-earnings>

gaps are widening as by autumn 2020, disadvantaged pupils in primary school were seven months behind their non-disadvantaged peers. The number of children living in poverty in the United Kingdom has also increased as a result, rising by 700,000 from March 2012 to March 2020. In the north-east of England, child poverty rates have risen quickly from 25 per cent to 37 per cent in five years.<sup>18</sup>

In order to be effective, universities should focus on the expansion of evidence-led local, regional and national initiatives, which are closely monitored and evaluated throughout their implementation.

### ***Brilliant Club Tutoring Programme and Scholars Programme***

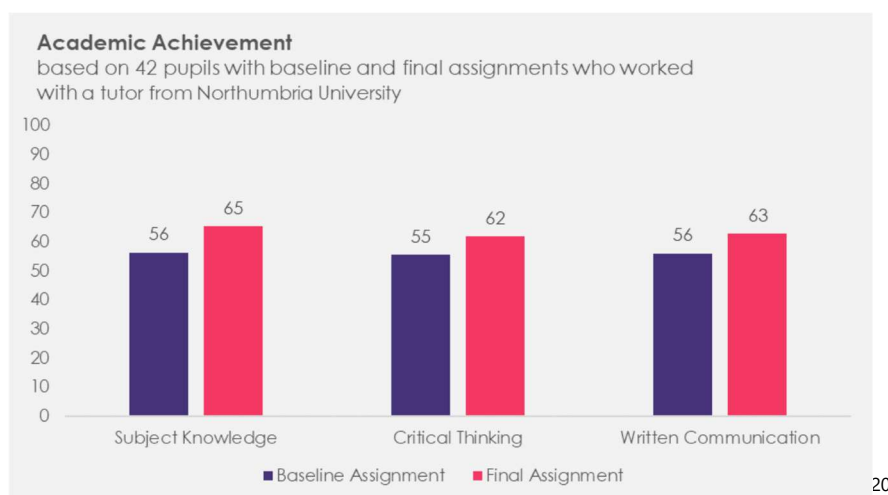
One way we will aim to raise attainment is through the Brilliant Club's Tutoring and Scholars Programmes. Through UCAS, the Brilliant Club tracked university applications of over 500 Year 12 students who took part in The Scholars Programme in 2019/20 to understand whether they were more likely to progress to a competitive university compared to students who did not take part in the programme. The students in the comparison group were matched with our Scholars Programme graduates on a number of key variables, including ethnicity, postcode and GCSE attainment. This type of evidence is considered one of the most robust evaluation methods for understanding causal impact. The Scholars Programme Independent Impact Evaluation Update 2021/22 suggests that Year 12 students who complete The Scholars Programme, targeting students eligible for Pupil Premium, are statistically significantly more likely to apply and progress to a competitive university than students from similar backgrounds<sup>19</sup>. Graduates of the programme eligible for Pupil Premium are statistically significantly more likely to apply and progress to a competitive university. This finding also holds true for our other two targeting criteria; Scholars Programme graduates who had no parental history of higher education and Scholars Programme graduates who lived in areas with high levels of deprivation (income deprivation by postcode).

Tutors assess pupils' academic achievement on the Scholars Programme through a baseline and final assignment, using The Brilliant Club's standardised mark schemes. Academic achievement is about the skills and knowledge that pupils are explicitly learning in the context of The Scholars Programme. These include written communication, subject knowledge and critical thinking. As illustrated in the graph below, students working alongside Northumbria PhD students made progress in all three of these areas.

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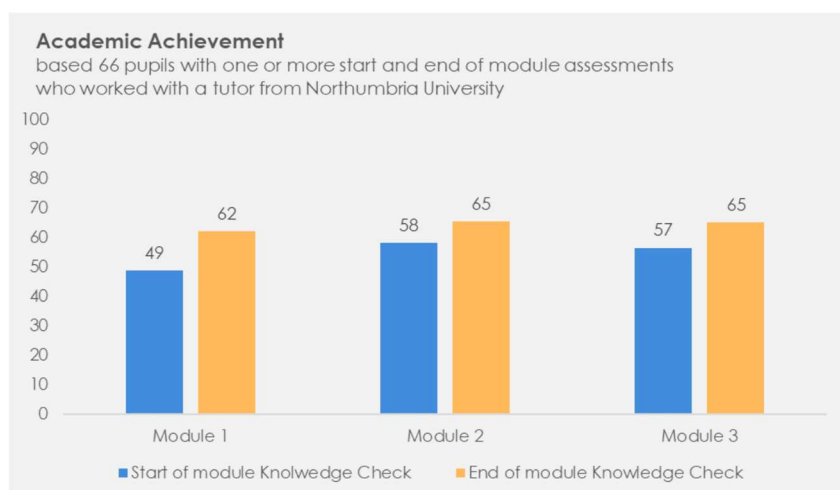
<sup>18</sup> Social Mobility Commission, 2021. *State of the nation 2021: Social mobility and the pandemic*, s.l.: Social Mobility Commission.

<sup>19</sup> The Scholars Programme: Independent Impact Evaluation Update 2021/22 <https://thebrilliantclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/UCAS-2021-22-Briefing.pdf>



The Brilliant Tutoring Programme aims to re-engage and rebuild pupils' confidence in core subjects, supported by 15 hours of tutoring delivered by one of our subject expert tutors. It is specifically designed to support, stretch and challenge mid-high attaining pupils to keep aiming high and be able to access a future they deserve.

Subject knowledge is the primary academic outcome of the Brilliant Tutoring Programme. It is assessed via regular formative assessments called Knowledge Checks. Pupils complete a Knowledge Check at the beginning and the end of each module. Tutors use the results of Knowledge Checks to inform their planning and delivery of future tutorials, so they can focus on the areas where pupils need the most support and learning can be built upon across modules. The graph below illustrates the improvement of subject knowledge across three modules for students working with Northumbria University.



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### **GCSE Science Tutoring**

Another activity discussed in Intervention 1 is a tutoring programme aimed at increasing the attainment of Pupil Premium students in GCSE Science. A previous RCT pilot study<sup>21</sup> found that

<sup>20</sup> Northumbria University Annual Impact Report 2021/22. Brilliant Club.

<sup>21</sup> Sharpe, R., Abrahams, I., & Fotou, N. (2017). Does paired mentoring work? A study of the effectiveness and affective value of academically asymmetrical peer mentoring in supporting disadvantaged students in school science. *Research in Science & Technological Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02635143.2017.1355783>

academically asymmetrical paired mentoring intervention (the one-to-one pairing of undergraduate STEM students with disadvantaged Year 11 students) had a statistically significant impact in raising the academic attainment of disadvantaged students in both their mock and actual GCSE examinations. The EEF report on mentoring<sup>22</sup> notes that "Further rigorous evaluation in the UK is needed...." which this up-scaled, five University RCT proposal, is designed to provide. Reviews and surveys on paired undergraduates with students on mentoring projects or programmes in schools which have been carried out until late 1990s have provided evidence for the effectiveness of these programmes. For example, the meta study conducted by Reisner, Petry, and Armitage (1989)<sup>23</sup> on domestic (US) tutoring and mentoring programmes in which disadvantaged primary and secondary students were paired up with college and university students indicated that these programmes were effective in terms of students' improvement in academic performance, attitudes towards education as well as self-esteem and self-confidence. There was also evidence that involvement in mentoring projects resulted in an increase in mentees' familiarity with environments other than their own disadvantaged ones (Reisner, Petry, and Armitage 1989).

### ***FutureMe and NEUCP***

The North East UniConnect Partnership (NEUCP) of the five universities in the region is long-standing (established 2011). The tutoring programme developed by NEUCP has been designed based on evaluation conducted by the Education Endowment Foundation evidence toolkit into effective strategies to support attainment and their recent report on effective tutoring strategies<sup>24</sup>. The report highlighted that research evidence demonstrates that tutoring that is aligned to high quality teaching can be very successful in accelerating progress and is one of the best evidenced interventions to support disadvantaged pupils' attainment. Specifically, effective tutoring can make up to five months additional progress with one-to-one tuition and up to four months additional progress with small group tuition (3-5 pupils). Further evidence on the impact of tutoring can be found in Major & Higgins (2019), where their research found that one-to-one and small group tutoring is one of the best ways of improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that undergraduate tutors can play a highly effective role<sup>25</sup>.

Major & Sim (2023) highlighted practical lessons to delivering an effective university-led tutoring programme to ensure quality and sustainability when delivering at scale, suggesting benefits to pupils and university students<sup>26</sup>. By adopting a university-led tutoring programme it is possible to embed tutoring in a systematic and sustainable way by forging partnerships with target schools. Longer-term, it also offers the ability to develop a credit bearing module offered to undergraduates as a study/career development option which could generate participation at scale, deliver the quality assurance needed for schools and create a valuable experience for our undergraduates.

School consultation indicated the need to provide further wraparound support to build upon the NEUCP undergraduate tutoring programme. It also highlighted the advantages of study skills and improvements to pupils' personal development on improving performance across subject areas. This is in-line with our experiences as a Uni Connect programme and supported by findings from Higgins

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<sup>22</sup> <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teachinglearning-toolkit/mentoring/>

<sup>23</sup> Reisner, E., Petry, C. A., & Armitage, M. (1989). A review of programs involving college students as tutors or mentors in grades K-12. Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates Inc.

<sup>24</sup> NEW EEF guide: Making a difference with effective tutoring | EEF.  
([educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk))

<sup>25</sup> Major, L.E. and Higgins, S (2019). What works and evidence for successful teaching

<sup>26</sup> Major, L.E. and Sim, A-M (2023). A practical guide for universities and partners for running a high quality university-led tutoring programme.

et al (2005) whose meta-review found that thinking skills programmes and approaches used in schools are effective in improving pupils' performance on a range of tested outcomes<sup>27</sup>. NEUCP is piloting a programme of on-campus study skills events (one including parents/carers) to test approaches and understand impact. Findings from evaluation of these events will inform future planning.

A regional approach to supporting careers in the curriculum will provide a strategic focus on regional skills needs for the future and bring to life for students' curriculum learning and future career ambitions. It will support recommendations from key regional stakeholders that essential success factors to any tutoring programme includes the importance of retaining a focus on aspiration and IAG particularly in understanding the next step to post-16 and to support Gatsby Careers Benchmark 4 'Careers in the Curriculum' which proves challenging for schools to fully evidence but is a key focus of Ofsted and a success factor for outstanding schools.

Also embedded into the offer is the delivery of impartial information, advice and guidance on higher education routes through to employment for our chosen attainment raising target schools, linked to foundational activity 3. The OfS, through the National Collaborative Outreach programme (Uni Connect), provided funding during 2017-2022 for this area of work as national evidence demonstrated that large portions of the student population who attain, do not progress at the levels that would be expected when compared to their more advantaged counterparts nationally. This is especially marked for students in the North East region, where we have the lowest proportion of people with level 4 or above qualifications (28.6%) and historically low HE progression for students at age 18/19. Therefore, grounding the context for students in terms of the benefits of high attainment and the education and career opportunities available in the region is important.

### ***IntoUniversity Centre***

The IntoUniversity 2022 annual impact report<sup>28</sup> indicates that 66% of IntoUniversity 2021 alumni progressed to Higher Education, compared to 27% of students from similar backgrounds nationally.

IntoUniversity commissioned FFT Education Datalab to undertake an evaluation of the impact of IntoUniversity's Academic Support programme on Key Stage 2 attainment outcomes, using the National Pupil Database (NPD)<sup>29</sup>. The evaluation used a quasi-experimental design, comparing the KS2 performance of IntoUniversity students to a matched comparison group of statistically similar students. The results showed a statistically significant improvement in KS2 maths attainment for high dosage students, equivalent to 3 months additional progress.

In 2019, Renaisi, a social enterprise focused on research, produced a qualitative research report<sup>30</sup> exploring the impact that IntoUniversity has on the attainment of the students we support. The research involved engaging with over 300 people across eight IntoUniversity centres, including

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<sup>27</sup> Higgins, S., Hall, E., Baumfield, V., and Moseley, D. (2005). A meta-analysis of the impact of the implementation of thinking skills approaches on pupils. Research Evidence in Education Library. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

<sup>28</sup> Impact Report 2022. IntoUniversity. <https://intouniversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/IntoUniversity-Impact-Report-2022.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Thomson, D. & Plaister, N. (2021) Evaluation of the impact of IntoUniversity's Academic Support on Key Stage 2 attainment. FFT Education Datalab. <https://intouniversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/IntoUniversity-evaluation-report-1.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Understanding IntoUniversity's impact on attainment: A qualitative research study (2019). Renaisi. <https://intouniversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Renaisi-report-exec-summary.pdf>

young people, parents, teachers, IntoUniversity staff and volunteers, and other local stakeholders. The research found that 'IntoUniversity delivers a holistic and supportive programme and can be confident that there are many ways in which this supports increased attainment.'

## **Multi-intervention Outreach (FA2)**

Evidence collated by TASO<sup>31</sup> suggests that multi-intervention outreach can have a small, positive impact on student's aspirations and attitudes to HE, however there is little conclusive evidence of the impact these programmes have on HE participation, particularly in the UK. There are a small number of studies that look at whether multi-intervention outreach is associated with HE participation. These involve a simple comparison of students who take part versus those who do not, and the results show a positive association. However, where methods seek to take into account selection bias (i.e. the fact that certain types of students might be more or less likely to take part in these programmes), the evidence on the efficacy of these programmes is more mixed<sup>323334</sup>. TASO suggest that these programmes are likely to have a bigger impact than other activities in isolation, however providers should ensure evaluation is embedded due to the high cost of these interventions.

A quasi-experimental evaluation of the UniConnect multi-intervention outreach programme showed that engagement with the intervention was associated with a greater likelihood of achieving a place in a HEP<sup>35</sup>. The sample size included 1,386 18-19-year-old learners completing Level 3 qualifications selected from the Uni Connect West Midlands database. Yet, the study also states that the type of engagement, the extent of engagement and the combination of engagement were mediating factors. For instance, the individual marginal benefit of additional engagements appeared to decrease after five or six engagements. The study also found that summer schools and combinations of information, campus visits and master classes were most effective for progression to HE. Despite its quasi-experimental design, the study does not provide causal claims because the learners' degree of engagement with UniConnect was not random but determined by a combination of the learners' and the schools' choices.

## **NU Supported Entry Schemes**

Our supported entry schemes are multi-intervention outreach programmes that offer a range of support and opportunities, to help students throughout their journey to Northumbria University. Students are supported through one or two years prior to enrolment at the university through a combination of application advice and support, online webinars to provide IAG, e-mentoring with current students and academic skills sessions. In addition to the information and support provided through the scheme, successful completion of one of the supported entry schemes enables students to earn supported entry scheme points, equivalent to UCAS tariff points, when applying to Northumbria University which is also relevant to FA5. Students on Evaluation of our supported entry schemes 2022-23, indicated that participants greatly increased their understanding in areas such as

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<sup>31</sup> <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/multi-intervention-outreach/>

<sup>32</sup> Bergin, D., Cooks, H., & Bergin, C. (2007). Effects of a college access program for youth underrepresented in higher education: A randomized experiment. *Research In Higher Education*, 48(6), 727-750. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-006-9049-9>

<sup>33</sup> Bowman, N., Kim, S., Ingleby, L., Ford, D., & Sibaouih, C. (2018). Improving College Access at Low-Income High Schools? The Impact of GEAR UP Iowa on Postsecondary Enrollment and Persistence. *Educational Evaluation And Policy Analysis*, 40(3), 399-419. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373718778133>

<sup>34</sup> Page, L., Kehoe, S., Castleman, B., & Sahadewo, G. (2017). More than Dollars for Scholars. *Journal Of Human Resources*, 54(3), 683-725. <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.54.3.0516.7935r1>

<sup>35</sup> Burgess, A. P., Horton, M. S., & Moores, E. (2021). Optimising the impact of a multi-intervention outreach programme on progression to higher education: recommendations for future practice and research. *Heliyon*, 7(7), e07518. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07518>

what it's like to be a university student, what student life would be like and awareness of personal and academic support available<sup>36</sup>.

### **Information, advice and guidance (IAG) (FA3)**

The existing evidence suggests that light-touch IAG can have a small positive impact on students' aspirations, attitudes, and sometimes on HE participation<sup>373839</sup>. As some UK-based studies on the provision of financial information show a negative or no effect on aspirations/attitudes relating to higher education, we have incorporated this into other activities in order to be most effective<sup>40</sup>.

The most successful IAG interventions for students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups appear to be those that are tailored to individual students, start early, and are integrated into other forms of support such as career advice and guidance. However, as IAG is a low-cost approach, there is a trade-off between the cost and benefit of integrating it into more intensive outreach. Well-designed light-touch IAG interventions could be a cost-effective supplement to more intensive programmes of activity.

As there are only a small number of studies to inform this advice, and an even smaller number which take place in a UK context, it is difficult to make strong claims about the most effective forms of IAG. Similarly, it is not possible to make claims about the efficacy of different approaches for students from specific disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.

TASO's evidence toolkit also suggests IAG can have a positive impact on student progression<sup>41</sup>, however there does not seem to be enough research relating to other types of IAG and on-course student outcomes. This is an area of presumed importance within the intervention strategies and therefore will be a focus of the evaluations.

### ***Evolve Programme***

Our 'Evolve' programme is aimed at students aged 16-18 and aims to provide interactive and 'hands-on' learning, supporting students through their sixth form/college studies and their journey to Higher Education. Sessions include workshops around study and life skills, exploring HE options, applying to university and student life at university. Sessions are mapped against Gatsby benchmarks to be able to support schools and colleges in their careers provision.

### ***NU STEM Experience Weeks***

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<sup>36</sup> Internal data- Destination Northumbria Evaluation Analysis, 2022-23

<sup>37</sup> Carrell, S., & Sacerdote, B. (2017). Why Do College-Going Interventions Work?. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 9(3), 124-151. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20150530>

<sup>38</sup> Peter, F., Spiess, C., & Zambre, V. (2018). Informing Students about College: An Efficient Way to Decrease the Socio-Economic Gap in Enrollment: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3287800>

<sup>39</sup> Sanders, M., Burgess, S., Chande, R., Dilnot, C., Kozman, E., & Macmillan, L. (2018). Role models, mentoring and university applications – evidence from a crossover randomised controlled trial in the United Kingdom. *Widening Participation And Lifelong Learning*, 20(4), 57-80. <https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.20.4.57>

<sup>40</sup> Silva, A. S., Sanders, M., & Chonaire, A. N. (2016). Does the heart rule the head? Economic and emotional incentives for university attendance. London: Behavioural Insight Team.

<sup>41</sup> <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/information-advice-and-guidance-for-employment-and-employability-post-he/>

NUSTEM Experience Weeks offer a taster experience in subjects students are considering studying at university. Most pupils start Experience Week with a firm idea of what they would like to study at University, though some are still making up their minds between subjects. It is unsurprising therefore that in post Experience Week study aspirations surveys remain largely unchanged from baseline surveys. For pupils who were in two minds of what to study, existing evidence suggests the programme supported pupils assessment of whether this route was for them or not.

As part of Physics Experience Weeks, pupils were asked whether 'taking part in the experience week changed their mind about study/work plans?'. Across the 4 years of the programme, 29% said yes, 38% said no, and 33% it has reaffirmed existing study plans. Considering pupils comments Experience Week has been shown to influence study plans in a number of ways: reaffirming their study choice as the right one; building confidence in applying for and attending University; choosing which University to attend; identifying interesting pathways beyond Undergraduate (i.e research, PhD); identifying particular interests within the field of Physics; building understanding of what they can do with Physics.

It has been found that Experience Week pupils have limited understanding of what it might be like to study Physics at University. In their pre-surveys of 4 years data, 31% agreed with 'I know what it would be like to study Physics at University'. However, in the post Experience Week surveys it was found that 83% of pupils agree that they know what it would be like to study Physics at University, an increase of 58%. Increasing knowledge about what life at University will be like builds pupils confidence in applying for and attending University.

Comments from pupils have identified they valued being offered the unique opportunity to take part in the real-life activities of students, attending lectures, discuss research with researchers and create new pieces of work such as research posters. A common benefit of Experience Week prevalent in the annual evaluations, has been that of it building a supportive community of like-minded people who share similar study interests. Students commonly report the value of meeting like-minded people. Finding a friendly and supportive community of people prior to starting University, allows students to feel more confident with their study plans.

### **Enhancing motivation for HE study/ outreach activities (FA4)**

Research suggests that the role of aspirations and expectations in HE entry is not straightforward<sup>42</sup>. Some studies have found that young people's aspirations for HE are high, regardless of their background<sup>43</sup>, and some have suggested that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often have aspiration levels that exceed their actual HE participation and their expectations of progression to HE<sup>44</sup>. It is therefore suggested that improving students' expectations of progressing to HE, may be a more effective approach and there is some evidence that superficially supports this approach.

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<sup>42</sup> <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/aspiration-raising-interventions-pre-entry/>

<sup>43</sup> Baker, W., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E.C. and Taggart, B., 2014. Aspirations, education and inequality in England: insights from the Effective Provision of Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education Project. Oxford review of education, 40(5), pp.525-542.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03054985.2014.953921?journalCode=core20>

<sup>44</sup> Boxer, P., Goldstein, S.E., DeLorenzo, T., Savoy, S. and Mercado, I., 2011. Educational aspiration–expectation discrepancies: Relation to socioeconomic and academic risk-related factors. Journal of adolescence, 34(4), pp.609-617. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1016/j.adolescence.2010.10.002>



For example, pupils' expectations about the future correlate with attainment at age 16<sup>45</sup> and HE entry<sup>46</sup>.

There is currently insufficient evidence to make statements about which features are important in aspiring raising interventions. The mechanisms that sit between aspiration and attainment-raising (student motivation for example) are not rigorously explored in the existing literature, so exactly what might drive change in student outcomes remains unclear.

### ***Junior Evolve Programme***

The Junior Evolve Programme focuses on raising students' awareness of Higher Education (HE) and expectation of attending HE through a progressive and sustained programme, incorporating a number of interactive events and activities. However, it is important to note that prior attainment is the dominant factor which determines whether and where a person studies, and aspirations appear to largely reflect this prior attainment<sup>47</sup>. It is therefore important that the Junior Evolve programme supports attainment raising within schools.

Student representatives will be paid within the programme to provide information, guidance and support to pre-entry pupils as this has been found to have a positive effect on expectations<sup>48</sup>, with university students acting as 'role models' for school pupils<sup>49,50</sup>.

### ***NUSTEM Primary Outreach***

The NUSTEM Primary Outreach programme is based on a theory of change which provides the theoretical underpinnings and context for the complex mix of interventions necessary to lead to a significant change in the number and diversity of those choosing STEM careers<sup>51</sup>.

The activities delivered are determined by the age of the child. For those aged 2 to 5 years old, activities include workshops encouraging children to ask scientific questions and opportunities for role play based on different employment sectors. Older primary school children (6-11 years old) will be introduced to a range of STEM careers and secondary school children will focus on careers advice and guidance through assemblies and workshops, using classroom-based resources to support. CPD sessions are also offered to teachers about science topics, careers support and unconscious bias. Families are engaged through after-school workshops, holiday pop-up STEM shops and online materials.

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<sup>45</sup> Chowdry, H., Crawford, C., Goodman, A., 2011. The role of attitudes and behaviours in explaining socio-economic differences in attainment at age 16 (No. 10/15), IFS Working Paper. Institute for Fiscal Studies. <http://lcsjournal.org/index.php/lcs/article/view/141>

<sup>46</sup> Anders, J. and Micklewright, J., 2015. Teenagers' expectations of applying to university: how do they change?. *Education sciences*, 5(4), pp.281-305. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/5/4/281>

<sup>47</sup> Chowdry, H., Crawford, C., Dearden, L., Goodman, A., Vignoles, A., 2013. Widening participation in higher education: analysis using linked administrative data. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)* 176, 431–457. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-985X.2012.01043.x>

<sup>48</sup> Passy, R. and Morris, M., 2009. Evaluation of Aimhigher: learner attainment and progression. Final Report. Slough: NFER. <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/1578/aim01.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> Sanders, J. and Higham, L., 2012. The role of higher education students in widening access, retention and success. A Literature Synthesis of the Widening Access, Student Retention and Success. National Programmes Archive. York: Higher Education Academy. [https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/wasrs\\_sanders\\_1568036879.pdf](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/wasrs_sanders_1568036879.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Gartland, C., 2013. Marketing participation? Student ambassadors' contribution to widening participation schemes in engineering and medicine at two contrasting universities. *Journal of widening participation and lifelong learning*, 14(3), pp.102-119. <https://oars.uos.ac.uk/104/>

<sup>51</sup> Davenport, C., Dele-Ajayi, O., Emembolu, I. et al. A Theory of Change for Improving Children's Perceptions, Aspirations and Uptake of STEM Careers. *Res Sci Educ* 51, 997–1011 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-019-09909-6>

## Admissions and application processes (FA5)

An integrative review suggested that adaptations in admissions processes, such as contextual and holistic decision-making, provided mixed results, and did not benefit all groups of students equally. The evidence relating to supporting students with application processes, for example the completion of personal statements, is generally positive<sup>52</sup>.

Boliver et al (2021)<sup>53</sup>, argue that a contextualised approach to admissions is essential if the ambitious widening access targets set by the Office for Students are to be achieved. They recommend that, to eliminate the socioeconomic gap in access, particularly to higher tariff higher education providers in England, entry requirements need to be reduced for some learners, in recognition of the fact that their full potential is not necessarily reflected in their grades. While the use of contextualised admission is increasing in the UK, there is limited Type 3 evidence showing a causal impact on access and beyond.

Some studies have suggested that the application process itself is partially responsible for the lower access rates of disadvantaged students in higher education. Personal statements are used as part of the UK university admissions process, but these have been shown to advantage some applicants over others, especially those from privately funded schools<sup>54</sup>. However, an evaluation of the Academic Apprenticeship programme, which took a new approach to personal statements through structured activities that enabled participants to showcase their "academic suitability for a course, particularly by offering detailed analysis of a topic that went beyond the A-level syllabus"<sup>54</sup>, showed that all Academic Apprenticeship participants received at least one offer from a Russell Group university compared to 73% in the control group, and 60% went on to be accepted by a Russell Group university compared to 40% in the control group. Other research has found that additional and personal assistance with the applications process could have a positive impact<sup>55</sup>. Three workshops were run with students at Ontario high schools where fewer than half of their graduates progressed to post-secondary education. The interventions resulted in a 5% increase in college enrolments overall, and a 9% increase among students who were not taking any other additional HE preparation courses.

Activities discussed previously, the Evolve Programme and Supported Entry Schemes, support students throughout the application process, providing course specific advice for interviews and portfolios where applicable. As discussed the Supported Entry Schemes also provide students with supported entry scheme points, equivalent to UCAS points, that can be used at Northumbria and effectively receive a reduced offer.

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<sup>52</sup> Austen, L. et al, 2021. Advance HE. Access, retention, attainment and progression: an integrative review

<sup>53</sup> Boliver, V, Gorard, S and Siddiqui, N (2021) 'Using contextual data to widen access to higher education', *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 25 (1): 7-13. Available at: [doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2019.1678076](https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2019.1678076)

<sup>54</sup> Jones, S (2016) 'Making a Statement'. London: The Sutton Trust. Available at: [www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Making-a-Statement-FINAL.pdf](http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Making-a-Statement-FINAL.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Oreopoulos, P and Ford, R (2019) 'Keeping College Options Open: A Field Experiment to Help All High School Seniors through the College Application Process', *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 38 (2): 426-454.

## Success (Continuation, Attainment & Completion) & Progression.

For students to be successful once they reach Higher Education, literature suggests that interventions and activities which cultivate community and belonging can have a positive impact on student success (Austen et al, 2021). Thomas' research "discovered that improving student continuation can be achieved through interventions that improve student engagement and belonging. To be effective, interventions needed to: enable students to develop supportive peer relations; allow meaningful interactions between staff and students; develop students' capacity, confidence and identity as successful HE learners; and offer an HE experience that was relevant to students' current interests and future (career) goals." (2020, p. 71<sup>56</sup>). The foundational activities outlined in this section all therefore aim to contribute to those aims, whilst addressing key EORR risks. Some of this community and belonging will be initiated through access interventions, for example outreach and foundation years (Austen et al, 2021) and so it is important to ensure the remainder of the student journey continues to include and not exclude our widening participation students.

### Financial support (FA6)

Financial support is included in success as "The evidence ... suggested that bursaries are more likely to impact on student participation than on student access" (Austen et al, 2021, p.18)<sup>57</sup>. Austen et al's literature review reflect on the potential importance of financial support for students to feel valued and like they matter to the institution, therefore having a positive impact on continuation (2021)<sup>58</sup>. This positive impact is not restricted to direct financial support can include 'in kind' support such as transport or food, which is reflected in the interventions through the review of our existing, singular hardship funding into potentially split pots which are more targeted based on feedback received through student focus groups.

From an attainment perspective, Austen et al (2021) found that financial aid is most effective when incorporated with other pastoral support, and that this can also have a positive impact on completion rates (Miller et al, 2020)<sup>59</sup>. This reinforces the evidence for activities within Intervention Strategy 3.3 (NU Belong), as well as not relying solely on financial support for achieving the other objectives.

TASO's literature review<sup>60</sup> suggests that 'needs-based support' is important for students from low-income backgrounds as evidence shows considerable and increasing financial stress for this group of students (Halliday-Wynes & Nguyen, 2014)<sup>61</sup>, which can ultimately have a negative impact on their mental wellbeing. We therefore see financial support as one key aspect of addressing the EORR mental health risk. TASO's review highlights that some studies have shown financial support can have

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas, L. (2020). Using logic chain and theory of change tools to evaluate widening participation: Learning from the What works? Student Retention & Success programme. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 22(2) pp 67-82

<sup>57</sup> Austen, L. et al, 2021. Advance HE. Access, retention, attainment and progression: an integrative review

<sup>58</sup> Austen, L. et al, 2021. Advance HE. Access, retention, attainment and progression: an integrative review

<sup>59</sup> Miller, C, Headlam, C, Manno, M and Cullinan, D (2020) 'Increasing Community College Graduation Rates with a Proven Model: Three-Year Results from the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) Ohio Demonstration'. New York, NY: MDRC. Available at: [www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/ASAP\\_OH\\_3yr\\_Impact\\_Report\\_1.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/ASAP_OH_3yr_Impact_Report_1.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/financial-support-post-entry/>

<sup>61</sup> Halliday-Wynes, S., & Nguyen, N. (2014). Does financial stress impact on young people in tertiary study?. National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

positive impact on continuation, completion (Bettinger, 2015<sup>62</sup>; Castleman & Long, 2016<sup>63</sup>; Denning et al., 2019<sup>64</sup>; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2016<sup>65</sup>) and attainment (Bettinger, 2015; Castleman & Long, 2016), and potentially when accompanied with wider, non-financial support (Clotfelter et. al, 2018)<sup>66</sup>.

## **Pedagogical Initiatives (FA7)**

TASO's "What works to tackle mental health inequalities in HE" report highlights the importance of reviewing 'setting-based interventions' which include teaching and assessment practices (2023, pg 22)<sup>67</sup>. The curriculum-related activities outlined within the intervention strategies are underpinned by this foundational activity and aim to create opportunities to review pedagogical practice to better understand what works for our students.

Whilst reviews of practice are embedded in quality assurance processes, the APP aims to create more opportunities for 'deeply felt' barriers to success and progression to be raised via the activities outlined in the interventions. Self-selection may be an influencing factor in which students benefit from this type of activity. This may particularly impact widening participation students as they may be more likely to 'opt-out' for a variety of reasons. Weller and Mahbubul (2018)<sup>68</sup> suggest the extra-curricular nature of many partnership approaches to quality assurance can, intentionally or unintentionally, reinforce mechanisms of working with students that 'fail to acknowledge difference', by for example, excluding already marginalised or time-poor, students through the expectation of them being able to volunteer for opportunities. Other elements which may impact the diversity of students engaging include student self-efficacy, selection practices, physical location of students and Faculty assumptions about students (Felten et. al, 2013)<sup>69</sup>. This highlights the importance of the additional support measures being in place to ensure all students can benefit from these pedagogical activities, and where possible ensuring initiatives are timetabled and embedded in the curriculum or offered as paid on-campus work experience opportunities (see FA9).

## **Active and experiential learning**

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<sup>62</sup> Bettinger, E. (2015). Need-Based Aid and College Persistence: The Effects of the Ohio College Opportunity Grant. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 37(1\_suppl), 102S-119S.

<sup>63</sup> Castleman, B. L., & Long, B. T. (2016). Looking Beyond Enrollment: The Causal Effect of Need-Based grants on College Access, Persistence, and Graduation. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 34(4), 1023-1073. doi: **10.1086/686643**

<sup>64</sup> Denning, J. T., Marx, B. M., & Turner, L. J. (2019). ProPelled: The Effects of Grants on Graduation, Earnings, and Welfare. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 11(3), 193-224. doi: **10.1257/app.20180100**

<sup>65</sup> Goldrick-Rab, S., Kelchen, R., Harris, D. N., & Benson, J. (2016). Reducing Income Inequality in Educational Attainment: Experimental Evidence on the Impact of Financial Aid on College completion. *American Journal of Sociology*, 121(6), 1762-1817. doi: **10.1086/685442**

<sup>66</sup> Clotfelter, C. T., Hemelt, S. W., & Ladd, H. F. (2018). Multifaceted Aid for Low-Income Students and College Outcomes: Evidence from North Carolina. *Economic Inquiry*, 56(1), 278-303. doi: **10.1111/ecin.12486**

<sup>67</sup> [https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Report\\_What-works-to-tackle-mental-health-inequalities-in-higher-education\\_AW-Secured-1.pdf](https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Report_What-works-to-tackle-mental-health-inequalities-in-higher-education_AW-Secured-1.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> Weller, A and Mahbubul, A. (2018). The student role in quality. Ellis, R. and Hogard, E. eds., 2018. *Handbook of quality assurance for University teaching*. Routledge.

<sup>69</sup> Felten, P., Bagg, J., Bumbry, M., Hill, J., Hornsby, K., Pratt, M., & Weller, S. (2013). A call for expanding inclusive student engagement in SoTL. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry: The ISSOTL Journal*, 1(2), 63–74.

Austen et al's (2021) literature review highlight various research indicating a positive association between active and experiential learning and attainment. Elements such as student learning attitudes, student satisfaction and creation of learning communities contributed to this.

Experiential learning is recognised as a strength of many programmes at Northumbria, and is an area that see significant growth and investment over the course of this APP. It will be important to track the impact on specific student groups and understand the potential benefits for reducing inequalities in student outcomes for our underrepresented students.

### Inclusive design

Inclusive learning communities and pedagogical strategies which enable these are highlighted in the literature as important to student success, as they create empowering spaces for students to persist (Austen et al., 2021), particularly when these are related to the faculty.

Place-based learning communities are also reference within Austen et al's literature review (2021) as being positive for continuation. Their review also highlights the importance of interventions which create communities within predominantly White institutions.

### Undergraduate research

One area which research is beginning to show a positive impact on student outcomes is the embedding of opportunities for undergraduate students to undertake research. This 'high-impact pedagogy' has been proven to have a positive impact on mid and end point attainment outcomes, as summarised in Austen et al's literature review (2021). This FA is threaded throughout the activities within the plan and within the evaluation of the activities and interventions. Mariani et al (2013)<sup>70</sup> provide an early overview of the benefits of promoting scholarship through undergraduate research journals. Little (2020)<sup>71</sup> highlights the potential benefits of undergraduate students taking part in research conferences,

Engaging widening participation student within the evaluation of the activities aiming to improve student outcomes aligns with multiple FAs, with the aim of producing a student-led journal to publish outcomes of our APP work.

### Community-based learning

Learning through engaging with communities is an effective way to improve students' attitudes towards oneself and towards learning, civic engagement, social skills as well as academic performance, according to a highly cited and influential meta-analysis of 62 studies involving more than 11,000 students (Celio et al., 2011). All five areas are central to student success and progression. In addition, community-engaged research has significantly helped undergraduate students develop their sense of belonging (Beckett et al., 2022), which is a key indicator of academic achievement and retention (Ahn and Davis, 2020). Empirical evidence shows that learning through engaging with communities is particularly effective if it is linked to curriculum, voice, community involvement and

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<sup>70</sup> Mariani, M., Buckley, F., Reidy, T. and Witmer, R., 2013. Promoting student learning and scholarship through undergraduate research journals. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 46(4), pp.830-835.

<sup>71</sup> Little, C., 2020. Undergraduate research as a student engagement springboard: Exploring the longer-term reported benefits of participation in a research conference. *Educational Research*, 62(2), pp.229-245.

reflection (Celio et al., 2011). Our proposed community-engaged learning and inquiry (CELI) initiative will address these four dimensions through the following targeted activities:

1. Commissioning and co-producing inclusive practice guides on community-engaged learning in the curriculum across subject boundaries,
2. Creating a cross-disciplinary hub for students, staff and external partners to promote and celebrate their community-engaged inquiry-based activities, and
3. Evaluating the impact of community-engaged learning and inquiry through collaborative scholarship outputs.

Northumbria's Centre for Health and Social Equity (CHASE) will enable Northumbria to assert itself as an anchor institution that has a purposeful and explicit impact on inequalities. CHASE will house a flagship interdisciplinary centre which will undertake research, education and knowledge exchange activities to promote health and social equity in the region and beyond. It will foster the use of equity frameworks in all its support functions in order to make an explicit statement of integrity and authenticity in relation to its social mission. The project will involve continuous evaluation, through the establishment of an equity footprint dataset, which will establish the baseline of our impacts, and enable us to set targets in this area. An essential element of CHASE will be the creation of the Community Engagement Laboratory. It will help to cement relationships with our communities and partners and be a focal point to engage with members of local communities. The aim of the CE Lab will be to inform systematically our research questions and methods, dissemination and fostering impact. Students are both some of our most important stakeholders, and members of often marginalised communities and will therefore be at the heart of CHASE's mission.

Northumbria University's Healthy Living Lab is one of the leading research groups in the UK focusing on issues relating to social justice and food insecurity in disadvantaged social groups and under-represented individuals and communities. Areas of focus include school and community breakfast clubs, school meals, holiday activity and food programmes, and student food insecurity.

The lab brings together over twenty academic colleagues that collaborate, develop, inform and evaluate community and school-based interventions through delivery of participatory action research, and knowledge exchange.

Expertise is drawn from across disciplines including psychology, sociology, nutritional science, education, public health, design, human geography, community wellbeing, and sport to research and address public health issues in a holistic way.

The Healthy Living Lab is situated within the Department of Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing at Northumbria University. Through collaborating with a range of partners and key stakeholders the Lab bridges the gap between scientific research findings, policy and practice. These include government departments, local authorities, schools, charities, and businesses.

The Lab specialises in co-designing research projects with stakeholders and user groups, especially children and young people, and uses a variety of methods to capture the voices of children and young people. Importantly, the Lab ensures that not only are children's and young people's voices heard but that they are also included in the design or programmes, and the dissemination of the research findings through various media forms and publications.

Research from the Healthy Living Lab has led to a national shift in school breakfast programmes and has directly influenced the development and expansion of the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food programme in England.

We are delighted to be a founding member of the Holiday Activities and Food Alliance, a coalition of charities and not-for-profit organisations working with communities to research and address inequalities, food poverty and inactivity, and a member of the School Meals Coalition, a coalition that involves over 80 countries.

## **Peer Support (FA8)**

Peer support is acknowledged widely as a route to support students at various stages of their student journey. Depending on the type of peer support implemented, the impact can be positive for a variety of outcomes. For example, 'positive peer interactions' is indicated as having a positive impact on continuation in Austen et al's literature review (2021), peer-peer success coaching can have a positive impact on self-efficacy, belonging and persistence (Simmons and Smith, 2020)<sup>72</sup>.

There is some evidence that the use of supplemental instruction has more of an impact on grades than tutoring (Balzer Carr and London, 2019), TASO's evidence toolkit also highlights the potential positive impact of activities such as peer support on students<sup>73</sup> but recommends that HE providers seek to measure the effect of these programmes, and identify the most effective features, at a local level – an approach embedded throughout the relevant intervention strategies. They highlight the positive impact of peer mentoring and support on student mental health and post-secondary educational outcomes in their "What works to tackle mental health inequalities in HE" report (2023, p. 28<sup>74</sup>).

Whilst a number of existing peer support schemes exist across Northumbria, these are not always sustainable. The creation of a centrally managed but locally owned peer support scheme can enable targeted activity to be implemented for with specific objectives, whilst ensuring there is a sustainable approach which can flex as needs potentially change across the course of the plan and beyond. This approach is similar to De Montfort's 'mixed economy' approach to peer-led learning which is "scalable, sustainable and sensitive to the needs of students, disciplines and institutions alike." (2015:4)<sup>75</sup>.

The creation of a central model could also link to deliverable 6 with ringfenced funding to pay student mentors/leaders for the relevant schemes. If a scheme is proven to be effective, it could then become business as usual for the local owners and central funding reinvested in a new targeted scheme in an area deemed relevant by the most up-to-date data.

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<sup>72</sup> Simmons, R and Smith, K S (2020) 'Success Central: Addressing the Persistence of AfricanAmerican and Latinx College Students Using a Peer Success Coaching Intervention', *Innovative Higher Education*, 45: 419-434.

<sup>73</sup> <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/mentoring-counselling-role-models-post-entry/>

<sup>74</sup> [https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Report\\_What-works-to-tackle-mental-health-inequalities-in-higher-education\\_AW-Secured-1.pdf](https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Report_What-works-to-tackle-mental-health-inequalities-in-higher-education_AW-Secured-1.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> Eyre, J. (2015) Institutional management of peer-led learning: a framework for holistic integration. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education Special Edition: Academic Peer Learning*. Available at: <https://journal.aldinhe.ac.uk/index.php/jldhe/article/view/357/pdf>

Each type of peer support will enhance students' sense of belonging which reduces the risk to mental health (EORR8) through addressing the 'barriers to belonging' as identified in the WONKHE and Pearson research<sup>76</sup>.

### **Paid on campus work experience (FA9)**

Off-campus part-time work has been shown to have negative impact on student attainment (Zhang and Yang, 2020)<sup>77</sup>, however given the rising cost pressures (EORR10) more students are taking up part-time jobs<sup>78</sup>. A key activity which may have a positive impact on multiple outcomes and reduce a number of risks is to create opportunities for widening participation students to undertake paid work experience on campus. This can help create a sense of value and belonging and develop further learning communities<sup>79</sup> whilst also reducing financial barriers.

Alongside learning communities, student self-efficacy has been found to be an important factor in students' intention to persist (Baier et al, 2016)<sup>80</sup>. The opportunities created by paid on-campus work set out within this plan such as Student Inclusion Consultants (IS\_2.5) aim to enable positive engagement and achievement which Austen et al state can develop a sense of self-efficacy (2021), also highlighting Kezar et al study (2020)<sup>81</sup> who found that targeted interventions intended to promote career self-efficacy can have a positive impact on student retention.

### **Co-creation (FA10)**

Students as partners, producers and co-creators is a growing area of research. It is argued that staff-student partnerships can have a positive impact on student success (Healey et. al, 2014, Holen et. al, 2020), and therefore, engaging underrepresented students in partnership approaches to enhance student success could have both a collective and individual benefit on student outcomes.

A recent report into male students' mental health<sup>82</sup> has inspired recommendations to co-create initiatives with male students, with good practice highlighted in a HE Professional blog<sup>83</sup>.

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<sup>76</sup> <https://wonkhe.com/wp-content/wonkhe-uploads/2022/10/Building-Belonging-October-2022.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> Zhang, X., & Yang, L. (2020, March). The effects of employment on undergraduate student academic performance. In 2020 ASEE North Central Section conference.

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/6981/insight-brief-17-studying-during-rises-in-the-cost-of-living.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> Millard, L., 2020. Students as colleagues: The impact of working on campus on students and their attitudes towards the university experience. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, 11(1), pp.37-49.

<sup>80</sup> Baier, S T, Markman, B S and Pernice-Duca, F (2016) 'Intent to Persist in College Freshmen: The Role of Self-Efficacy and Mentorship', *Journal of College Student Development*, 57 (5): 614-619. Available at: [doi.org/10.1353/csd.2016.0056](https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2016.0056)

<sup>81</sup> Kezar, A, Kitchen, J A and Hypolite, L (2020) 'Career Self-Efficacy: A Mixed-Methods Study of an Underexplored Research Area for First-Generation, Low-Income and Underrepresented College Students in a Comprehensive College Transition Program', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 64 (3): 298-324. Available at: [doi.org/10.1177/0002764219869409](https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219869409)

<sup>82</sup> Sagar-Ouriaghli, I., Brown, J.S.L., Tailor, V. et al. Engaging male students with mental health support: a qualitative focus group study. *BMC Public Health* 20, 1159 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-09269-1>

<sup>83</sup> [https://blog.heprofessional.co.uk/edition/how-to-support-mens-mental-health-3-action-points-for-universities?utm\\_campaign=I23HEPS0001%20-%20HE%20Professional%20Marketing&utm\\_medium=email&\\_hsmt=265701913&\\_hsenc=p2ANqtz-DVjGoK6w35sz3wJHzbGm0fxmvufUin7leblzZKwXRwo6ckeBQ0kwFVRSmCtoWsO\\_3AN2DsZ9Le-Buixw0WctPwr2FziqtfqnIKVt2e7FWMEoCnac&utm\\_content=265701913&utm\\_source=hs\\_automation](https://blog.heprofessional.co.uk/edition/how-to-support-mens-mental-health-3-action-points-for-universities?utm_campaign=I23HEPS0001%20-%20HE%20Professional%20Marketing&utm_medium=email&_hsmt=265701913&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-DVjGoK6w35sz3wJHzbGm0fxmvufUin7leblzZKwXRwo6ckeBQ0kwFVRSmCtoWsO_3AN2DsZ9Le-Buixw0WctPwr2FziqtfqnIKVt2e7FWMEoCnac&utm_content=265701913&utm_source=hs_automation)



Austen et al (2021) highlight the positive impact extra-curricular activity can have on student outcomes, particularly attainment which in turn has an impact on progression – showing the importance of a holistic approach to creating equality in student outcomes. An example of an extra-curricular scheme which embeds co-creation and provides paid on-campus work experience (FA9) is our Student Inclusion Consultant scheme.

Initially piloted in April 2020, a team of SICs is now recruited on a cyclical basis from our student body and informs a wide range of university policies and initiatives. To date, over 50 SIC review projects have been undertaken with staff across both academic and professional service departments. These have explored a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular topics which have included identifying the barriers that student carers might have in accessing course-related field trips and reviewing the accessibility of online Library platforms for international students.

The impact has been wide ranging, including improving the confidence and employability skills of the SICs, enhancing the inclusivity of the student experience, and providing paid work experience which has a positive impact on the cost of living. Engaging students in enhancement activities can have the dual benefit of increasing the sense of belonging of those in paid and voluntary roles (Cook-Sather & Felten, 2017)<sup>84</sup>, but also have wider impact on belonging through co-creating inclusive environments for all students. This is underpinned by the development of new communities of practice.

The SIC scheme has demonstrated its sustainability through senior staff support which has seen it develop into a business-as-usual practice, suggesting the beginning of a 'culture shift' in the way Northumbria works with students on strategic priorities.

This is supported by the increasing numbers of staff and students engaging across the breadth and depth of the University, highlighting how positively this has been received by stakeholders.

### **Early interventions (pre-HE, Years 1 & 2): Targeted transition and induction & skills development (FA11)**

Aligned to the access foundational activities, research highlights the importance of early interventions for student success and progression through it's potential to address the risks to equality of opportunity. TASOs's "what works to tackle mental health inequalities in HE" report<sup>85</sup> provides a useful summary of research, including Alharbi & Smith's research (2019)<sup>86</sup> into the impact of 'pre-departure strategies' in impacting student mental health. This aligns with IS\_2.1 where wellbeing support will be tailored for students engaging in a new transition and induction programme.

Austen et al (2021) also highlight the importance of early feeling of mattering and being valued by the HEI. Links to early career planning, transition & induction activities, early assessments and socio academic experiences (peer & staff community building).

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<sup>84</sup> Cook-Sather, A. and Felten, P. (2017). Where student engagement meets faculty development: How student-faculty pedagogical partnership fosters a sense of belonging. *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal*, 1(2), pp.3-3

<sup>85</sup> [https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Report\\_What-works-to-tackle-mental-health-inequalities-in-higher-education\\_AW-Secured-1.pdf](https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Report_What-works-to-tackle-mental-health-inequalities-in-higher-education_AW-Secured-1.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> [https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Report\\_What-works-to-tackle-mental-health-inequalities-in-higher-education\\_AW-Secured-1.pdf](https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Report_What-works-to-tackle-mental-health-inequalities-in-higher-education_AW-Secured-1.pdf)

Northumbria University Library already offers study skills support which can be linked to Knowledge and Skills and Lack of academic support in terms of risk. The plan will build on existing practice and target the support as set out in IS\_2.1. Further work will be conducted to understand the students' perceived and real need for study skills support, particularly focusing on which skills are most required as well as ensuring underrepresented students are accessing the general support available to them.

## **Placements, internships and international mobility (FA12)**

Austen et. al provide a summary of evidence which "shows that work placements, sandwich placements and internships can have a positive experience on student progression outcomes" (Austen et. al, p. 65). Whilst the main focus of this plan is to enable more students to access paid on-campus work experience (FA9), research shows clear benefits of students engaging in experiences relevant to their future career plans<sup>87</sup>. TASO's evidence toolkit reinforces this stating work experience is the most well evidenced employability intervention<sup>88</sup>.

According to recent studies, global skills development and employability skills are at the forefront of internationalisation activities in Higher Education. The impact of internationalising higher education is key to students' success, which is even more prominent in students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Freeman et al. (2009) describe intercultural competence as 'a dynamic, ongoing, interactive self-reflective learning process that transforms attitudes, skills and knowledge for effective and appropriate communication and interaction across cultures'. However, Inter-'cultural', does not simply mean inter- 'national', and there is an increasing body of literature linking internationalization with multiculturalism, equity and diversity (Killick, 2006).

Universities UK International's report Gone International: Mobility Works<sup>89</sup> found a correlation between outward mobility and improved academic and employment outcomes: "Graduates who were mobile during their degree were less likely to be unemployed (3.7% compared to 4.9%), and more likely to have earned a first class or upper second-class degree (80.1% compared to 73.6%) and be in further study (15% compared to 14%). The same report found that the benefits for students undertaking mobility are even more prominent for students from underrepresented groups. "On average, graduates from more disadvantaged backgrounds who were mobile during their degree earned 6.1% more, and those in work were more likely to be in a graduate level job (80.2% compared to 74.7%) than their non-mobile peers" (UUKi, 2016).

The benefits of international mobility activity are demonstrated in our Graduate Outcomes (GO) data. Aggregated over three years of data, students in Polar Quintiles 1&2 who undertake an exchange are the highest performing, at 78.4% in a positive graduate destination. This compares favourably to PQ 1&2 students who undertook a sandwich placement (70.6%) or did not undertake any form of study abroad or placement (76.5%). With these data sets in mind, Northumbria University's international mobility plan will focus on supporting students from disadvantaged background to have access to the same opportunities all students have, breach gaps in outcomes and help develop global skills regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/604170/Graduates\\_career\\_planning\\_and\\_its\\_effect\\_on\\_their\\_outcomes.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/604170/Graduates_career_planning_and_its_effect_on_their_outcomes.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> <https://taso.org.uk/intervention/work-experience-post-he/>

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/UUKi%20reports/gone-international-mobile-students-and-their-outcomes.pdf>

Post-graduation employability support is also a key factor in improving student progression outcomes (Austen et. al, 2021). Northumbria has existing activity in place which supports this for example our ongoing externally funded projects focusing on providing funded internships for local SMEs (i.e. where most of our under/unemployed graduates live) shows consistently that approx. 70% are kept on after the funding, with the vast majority in permanent full time positions.

### **Community-led initiatives (FA13)**

Formby et al's article highlights the importance of community based widening participation practices for improving outreach and access outcomes, suggesting that spatial inequality is an important consideration of this work. "Spatial inequality refers to disparities in social resources between groups that can be observed at local or community level" (Levin and Pryce, 2010 in Formby et al, 2020, p. 186<sup>90</sup>).

The high number of Northumbria students who are from the North East region leads to a large number of commuter students who remain in their communities whilst studying in HE. 43% of students who completed Northumbria's Diversity Monitoring upon enrolment during the 2022/23 academic year indicated they were commuters (completion N=30,550). This suggests that a focus on spatial inequality may continue to be important for students upon beginning their courses with us, as well as the need for providing contextual support within our local, diverse communities which can help students access and succeed in HE.

One area student feedback has highlighted as in need of review is the diversity of our student support staff, particularly around mental health. Whilst measures have been put in place to address this and this is an area of focus within our REC work these have all focused internally. By introducing community-led initiatives, seed-funded by Northumbria, the opportunity to provide contextually relevant support expands past the walls of the institution and may offer impact on a broader level whilst providing specific, tailored support directly to our students.

### **Staff IAG & CPD (FA14)**

Although the intention of the objectives is to ensure targeted supported is available for the students identified within our objectives, it is important to acknowledge that investing solely in the students may not achieve our goals. A deficit approach would imply we expect to be able to address inequalities in outcomes by placing the focus and expectations on students to change or conform to structural and societal 'norms', rather than on tackling embedded and unchallenged assumptions shaping the structure and cultures of HE. Therefore, including Staff Continual Professional Development (CPD) and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) as a foundational activity that we continue to invest in is crucial to our reflective and responsive approach to addressing risks to equality of opportunity for our underrepresented students.

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<sup>90</sup> Formby, A., Woodhouse, A. and Basham, J., 2020. Reframing widening participation towards the community: a realist evaluation. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 22(2), pp.184-204.

Literature including Burke and Hayton highlights the importance of providing Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) for staff enacting WP policy (2012)<sup>91</sup>, as well as the importance of embedding opportunities for staff to critically reflect on their practice and its impact on WP (Rainford, 2021<sup>92</sup>).

This is discussed in more detail in the whole provider approach, but evidence suggests that where institutions are relatively successful in their access aims, the wider focus can be diluted:

“For these HEIs, the external policy pressure to meet APP access targets is reduced as a factor shaping the enactment of policy. As one WP Manager noted, their institution had already earned ‘a reputation of being a very WP university’ through accessible entry requirements, further shaped by their geographic context” (Benson-Egglenton, 2022, p. 7)<sup>93</sup>

Ensuring we have a structured and sustainable model of supporting staff is therefore key to achieving our success and progression objectives and targets so reducing risks to equality of opportunity continues to be a priority for all.

An example of a specific activity referred to in IS\_3 is improving Staff IAG for our NU Belong students. An element of the Theory of Change that will be evaluated is that by making carers more visible it would:

- Encourage more carers to engage with NU belong.
- Encourage wider student body to think about how they could help e.g., group work.
- Improve/increase referral route for staff.

Student Library and Academic Services have established an Enhancing Student Inclusion staff engagement package which includes a variety of CPD, practice sharing and networking opportunities which complements the more tailored L&T CPD offer led by QTE. This aims to raise awareness of risks to equality of opportunities and the students who may be most impacted by these risks. Over 100 members of staff have engaged in the first year and this will continue to across the course of the plan in line with FA14 and the drive to embed APP into strategy.

## Summary

The aim of the approach to Northumbria’s 2024-2028 Access & Participation Plan is to reduce inequalities in underrepresented student outcomes by committing to foundational activities which address the risks to equality of opportunity but implementing them via a targeted, data-led approach. The foundational activities outlined in Annex B provide an effective, evidence-based toolkit for this approach, but will be consistently monitored and evaluated both overall and in line with each objective to ensure their collective potential to address risks is being fulfilled. Overall, the approach sets out to provide; support students are aware of and that they can access that ultimately helps create autonomy in our students, an enriching educational experience which is inclusive by design and provide paid opportunities which empower students. All of which feeds into improving the sense of belonging, which we will also build through creating connections with the Northumbria and regional community.

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<sup>91</sup> Burke, P. & Hayton, A., 2012. Is widening participation still ethical?. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 13(1), pp. 8-26.

<sup>92</sup> Rainford, J., 2021. Working with/in institutions: how policy enactment in widening participation is shaped through practitioners’ experience. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 42(2), pp. 287-303.

<sup>93</sup> Benson-Egglenton, J., 2022. Whose target group is it anyway? The messy business of enacting widening participation policy. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, pp. 1-14.

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: University of Northumbria at Newcastle

Provider UKPRN: 10001282

### Summary of 2024-25 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

#### Inflation statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using RPI-X

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	All	N/A	9250
First degree	Arts Design and Social Sciences, Fashion	N/A	5550
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0		N/A	9250
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE		N/A	9250
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	1385
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	QAHE (NU) Limited	10066760	9250
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 Northumbria at Newcastle

Provider UKPRN: 10001282

### 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 OFS 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	£3,500,000	£3,500,000	£3,500,000	£3,500,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£3,150,000	£3,150,000	£3,150,000	£3,150,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£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 (£)	£1,050,000	£1,050,000	£1,050,000	£1,050,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£2,250,000	£2,250,000	£2,250,000	£2,250,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (£)</b>	<b>£3,500,000</b>	<b>£3,500,000</b>	<b>£3,500,000</b>	<b>£3,500,000</b>
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</i>	7.6%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</i>	£3,500,000	£3,500,000	£3,500,000	£3,500,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</i>	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£3,000,000	£3,000,000	£3,000,000	£3,000,000
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>	<b>£3,150,000</b>	<b>£3,150,000</b>	<b>£3,150,000</b>	<b>£3,150,000</b>
Financial support investment	<i>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</i>	6.9%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Research and evaluation investment	<i>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</i>	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: University of Northumbria at Newcastle

Provider UKPRN: 10001282

### 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
Improve the access proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals by bringing in line with the region by 2030	PTA_1	Access	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible			No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage	15.36	16.70	18.04	19.38	20.72
	PTA_2														
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success 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
Narrow the continuation gap between male and female students so that it is no longer significant by 2030.	PTS_1	Continuation	Other	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	The target group is Male students and the Female students are the comparator.	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	4.9	4.3	3.8	3.2	2.6
Remove the continuation gap between those who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not by 2030.	PTS_2	Continuation	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible		No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	5.3	4.4	3.5	2.6	1.8
Narrow the continuation gap between IMD quintile 1&2 students and 3,4,&5 students so it is no longer significant, by 2030.	PTS_3	Continuation	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1 and 2	IMD quintile 3, 4 and 5		No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	4.2	3.7	3.3	2.9	2.5
Narrow the continuation gap between TUNDRA quintiles 1&2 and 3,4&5 so that it is no longer significant, by 2030.	PTS_4	Continuation	Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA)	TUNDRA quintile 1 and 2	TUNDRA quintile 3, 4 and 5		No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	4.7	4.2	3.7	3.2	2.8
Narrow the completion gap between male and female students so that it is no longer significant, by 2030.	PTS_5	Completion	Other	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	The target group is Male students and the Female students are the comparator.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage points	7.1	6.2	5.3	4.4	3.5
Narrow the completion gap between IMD quintile 1&2 students and 3,4&5 students so it is not significant, by 2030.	PTS_6	Completion	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1 and 2	IMD quintile 3, 4 and 5		No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage points	5.9	5.2	4.5	3.8	3.2
Remove the completion gap between those eligible for free school meals and those who are not by 2030.	PTS_7	Completion	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible		No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage points	9.8	8.2	6.6	4.9	3.3
Remove the completion gap between black and white students by 2030.	PTS_8	Completion	Ethnicity	Black	White		No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage points	13.6	11.3	9.0	6.8	4.5
Narrow the completion gap between TUNDRA quintiles 1&2 and quintiles 3,4&5 so that it is no longer significant, by 2030.	PTS_9	Completion	Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA)	TUNDRA quintile 1 and 2	TUNDRA quintile 3, 4 and 5		No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage points	3.5	3.3	3.0	2.8	2.6
Narrow the attainment gap between IMD quintile 1&2 students and 3,4&5 students so that it is no longer significant, by 2028.	PTS_10	Attainment	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1 and 2	IMD quintile 3, 4 and 5		No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	4.6	4.1	3.5	3.0	2.4

