



# **Northumbria University 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan**

## 1. Assessment of current performance

The data below assesses the current performance of Northumbria University in attracting students from specific under-represented groups, ensuring a successful outcome whilst they are here, and then the extent to which they go on to further study or employment.

### 1.1 - Access

Our performance overall for 2016/17 entry (Table 1) shows progress towards the HESA benchmarks in the majority of areas. In particular, the percentage of students from State Schools has exceeded our milestones as set out in previous Access Agreements, alongside out-performing the sector average. The percentage of our students from minority ethnic groups, and in receipt of DSA has also steadily climbed within the last 3 years. The positive performance in these areas indicate that our targeted, long-term outreach is having a positive impact on access. The University continues to ensure that future targets remain ambitious and stretching.

*Table 1 (Young, full time, undergraduates)*

Year	HESA Benchmark	State schools and colleges	HESA Benchmark	Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA Benchmark	Students from minority ethnic groups	HESA Benchmark	Students in receipt of DSA
2014/15	94.8%	94.2%	19.3%	16.2%	N/A	7.3%	7.2%	5.3%
2015/16	95.2%	94.4%	21.0%	19%	N/A	8.4%	7.0%	5.5%
2016/17	95.4%	94.8%	21.2%	18.2%	N/A	9.3%	6.8%	5.8%

At Northumbria, over 16% of the UK domiciled full time undergraduate first-degree entrants are mature students. Table 2 below demonstrates our progress in recruiting mature students; an increase of almost 4% since 14/15, which is positive given the decline nationally in mature student progression to Higher Education. We have exceeded the 2016/17 milestone for this indicator as set out in previous iterations of the Access Agreement which is reflective of the progress we are making towards the HESA benchmark. Given the University's positive performance in this area, our target has been re-profiled to ensure that our targets remain ambitious and stretching.

*Table 2 (Mature students, full time, UK Domiciled undergraduate entrants)*

Year	HESA location adjusted benchmark (target)	Mature, FT, first degree students
2014/15	14.0%	12.3%
2015/16	17.4%	15.7%
2016/17	17.7%	16.1%

Table 3 demonstrates progress made in attracting Care Leavers to Northumbria University, with a 26% increase in the two years between 2015 entry and 2017 entry. This also represents an increase in the last 12 months for both male and female care leavers. This continues to be an area of focus for the University, which is reflected by our stretching targets. Due to the relatively small numbers, the table below includes absolute figures rather than percentages.

Table 3 (Care Leavers, full time, undergraduates)

Gender	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8
Female	23	22	25
Male	11	16	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>43</b>

## 1.2 - Success

Northumbria has exceeded its benchmarks and is performing well, particularly when analysed in its context as a university with a significant proportion of its intake originating from under-represented and lower socio-economic groups. Where internal data exists, we have used 2016/17 data. However, in the most recent HESA data (2015/16) Northumbria was shown to retain:

- 93.2% of full time (FT) young entrants (benchmark 92.2%);
- 90.5% of FT young entrants from LPNs (benchmark 90.2%);
- 90.4% of FT mature entrants (benchmark 89.4%);
- 93% of FT mature entrants with no experience of Higher Education (benchmark 89.7%);

Whilst good honours awards by LPN students aren't routinely captured, the closest proxy we have available is to use Socio Economic Class (SEC). Using a simple split of Professional/Managerial/Intermediate codes (A) V Non Professional/Managerial/intermediate codes (B), we can see that in both cases the number of students gaining good honours has increased, although the gap has widened within the five years:

	2012/13	2016/17
A	71%	82%
B	68%	77%

In addition, in the period 2012/13 to 2016/17, the proportion of mature students gaining good honours increased from 64% to 77%.

When analysing the Stage 1 retention of students by ethnicity, there has been a slight decline overall. However, within that there are differing patterns emerging. For example, amongst our Asian students, retention has improved for the last 3 years. However, despite an improvement last year, retention amongst black students has seen a slight decrease from 2015/16 to 2016/17.

Table 4 – Stage 1 retention by Ethnicity, Full Time Undergraduate, Home Students

Ethnicity	2014/5	2015/6	2016/7
White	88.5%	88.8%	86.8%
Asian	86.5%	90.8%	91.9%
Black	82.6%	85.7%	85.3%
Mixed	88.2%	92.0%	89.7%
Other	83.0%	85.1%	84.2%
Not given	86.7%	93.3%	85.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88.3%</b>	<b>88.8%</b>	<b>87.1%</b>

In the period 2012/13 to 2016/17, the proportion of white students achieving good honours has increased from 70% to 81%. During the same period Black students achieving good honours increased by 16% to 62%. Asian students saw an increase of 11% to 69%. Finally, students classed as “Other (inc Mixed)” increased by 8% to 71%.

There has been good progress between 2014/5 and 2016/17 in regards to the retention of students that are Care Leavers. There has been a 4.1% improvement in that time, although it is recognised that the gap needs to be closed further when compared with students who are not Care Leavers, who are still more likely to progress beyond Stage 1.

*Table 5 - Stage 1 Retention by Care Leaver status - Full Time, Undergraduate, Home students*

	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		
	Care leaver	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
N		88.4%	11.6%	88.8%	11.2%	87.7%	12.3%
Y		78.4%	21.6%	78.4%	21.6%	82.5%	17.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>88.3%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>88.7%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>87.7%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>

There is a negative trend over the last 3 years for the retention of those students with a disability, which is a focus that the University will seek to address.

*Table 6 – Stage 1 Retention by DSA status – Full Time, Undergraduate, Home students*

Year	DSA, FT, first degree students
2014/15	92.7%
2015/16	90.5%
2016/17	85.5%

Despite a negative trend in retention, there has been a positive trend in terms of those students who achieve good honours. In the period 2012/13 to 2016/17, the proportion of students with a specified learning disability achieving good honours increased from 68% to 79%. Those classed as having any other disability achieving good honours increased from 66% to 78%.

### **1.3 - Progress**

Northumbria’s destination data has been analysed by looking in particular at outcomes for under-represented groups – including students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods, students of particular ethnicities, mature students, disabled students and care leavers.

The University Key Performance Indicator in relation to graduate outcomes uses the Graduate Prospects score as the metric. This is the proportion of full-time, first degree, UK graduates who are in professional level employment or graduate level further study approximately six months after graduation, based on the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey data. This analysis, and a new Key Performance Indicator, will be repeated, and agreed, once the Graduate Outcomes survey data becomes available in early 2020.

The figures in Table 7 show the Graduate Prospects score, for young undergraduates, from Quintiles 1 and 2, as one of the indicators of widening participation. As can be seen from Table 7, the progression of students from Quintiles 1 and 2 has increased by over 7% points since 2013/14. In comparison to the overall student body, the gap has reduced, but this positive trend plateaued in 2015/16. Once the 2016/17 DLHE figures are released these will be analysed alongside the previous years' data to identify if this appears to be a consistent positive trend.

*Table 7 (Young, full time, undergraduates)*

Year	Q1 & Q2	Northumbria Total
2013/14	60.9%	66.3%
2014/15	68.1%	71.9%
2015/16	68.6%	72.5%

The mature student progression figures (Table 8) relate to a smaller number of students but the progression percentages are still positive, and these students achieve better outcomes than the overall University averages. Again, once 2016/17 data is available, these figures will be analysed alongside those for young students, to identify trends.

*Table 8 (Mature students, Adult FE HE Qualification quintiles 1 and 2)*

Year	Q1 & Q2
2013/14	76.8%
2014/15	78.7%
2015/16	83.8%

For both young and mature students, the unemployed percentage for the 2015/16 DLHE data for Quintile 1 graduates was the lowest of all 5 groups at 4.4% and 3.6% respectively, lower than the University totals (of 5.2% and 5.1%). Tables 9 and 10 below provide information on the progression of students into postgraduate study. The outcomes are showing positive trends for all groups but of most significance is the progression of students from Quintiles 1 and 2 for both young and mature students – though for graduates from particular Quintiles the trend is not uniformly positive. In 2015/16 this figure increased for those young students from Quintile 1, with a higher proportion of graduates from this group progressing to postgraduate study than from each of the other groups. Once the 2016/17 DLHE data is available, the figures will be analysed to identify the impact of the introduction of postgraduate loans in 2016/17.

*Table 9 (young students into PGT study (UK, full time, first-degree))*

Young FT Participation	% into PGT study			Leavers		
	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6
1 - Lowest Participation	8.1%	11.9%	13.5%	310	320	385
2 - Low-mid Participation	7.1%	13.7%	11.7%	423	430	469
3 - Mid Participation	7.4%	8.1%	12.5%	502	459	510
4 - Mid-high Participation	6.3%	8.7%	12.6%	622	538	641
5 - Highest Participation	8.6%	8.6%	13.3%	829	767	768
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>2,686</b>	<b>2,514</b>	<b>2,773</b>

Table 10 (mature students into PGT study (UK, full time, first-degree))

Adult FT HE Qualification	% into PGT study			Leavers		
	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6
1 - Lowest proportion	4.7%	9.4%	6.8%	149	149	222
2 - Low-mid proportion	3.8%	10.6%	11.5%	133	142	174
3 - Mid proportion	7.7%	4.5%	11.4%	78	111	123
4 - Mid-high proportion	2.1%	6.3%	11.5%	97	96	122
5 - Highest proportion	7.4%	5.9%	12.0%	68	102	117
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>758</b>

When analysing success and progression to employment or further study in relation to ethnicity some disparities arise. The figures should be considered with care due to the small number of students these relate to, but the last three years of DLHE data, up to the 2015/16 cohort, have shown significantly higher percentages of Asian and Black students – compared to white students, and the University totals – unemployed at the DLHE census points.

The data for care leavers is based on even smaller numbers and whilst the 2015/16 DLHE data showed that higher proportions of care leavers were in both professional level employment and graduate level study – compared with non-care leavers and the University totals – this is another area we will look to complete further analysis and identify targeted interventions.

There has been a positive year on year trend of Students with DSA status progressing into further study, with a 3.4% improvement from 2014/15 to 2015/16. However, there has been a 3.9% decrease in the proportion that progress into employment upon completing their first degree. We intend to focus on addressing these disparities moving forward through looking further into the retention and progression data, alongside our intake for these groups in the corresponding year of entry. Further analysis at subject level will be carried out to establish if any patterns emerge, and an action plan developed as appropriate.

#### 1.4 - TEF Metrics

Table 11 (Northumbria's year three Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) metric scores relevant to the A&P Plan)

TEF - Year Three Metrics (released by HEFCE 20/10/17)				
		Access	Success	Progression
LPNs (POLAR)	Full-Time	n/a	-	-
	Part Time	n/a	+	-
BME	Full-Time	n/a	-	-
	Part Time	n/a	-	-
Mature	Full-Time	n/a	+	-
	Part Time	n/a	++	+
DSA	Full-Time	n/a	+	-
	Part Time	n/a	+	+
Care leavers	Full-Time	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Part Time	n/a	n/a	n/a

+

Indicator significantly above benchmark +/- 2 % points

++

Indicator significantly above benchmark +/- 3 % points

The TEF Metrics relevant to the A&P plan show a positive story for all areas where outcomes exist, particularly within the 'success' stage of the student lifecycle.

## 2. **Ambition and strategy**

In this plan, we have maintained our focus on the whole student lifecycle, from access through success and retention to progression. We have focussed on smarter, more evidence based spend and on long-term outreach and collaboration. We have integrated our strategies and activities across the whole institution. We feel that this results in a more effective Access and Participation Plan, which reflects the need for the University to be agile and respond to the needs of our widening participation students, and is mindful of the differences in outcomes for different groups of students.

Each strand of activity in this Access and Participation Plan will be monitored and evaluated, the details of which are provided throughout this section.

An Access and Participation Steering Group will be established, and will meet regularly to consider progress against the plan and ensure any issues are addressed. The Steering Group will report periodically to the University Executive. Annually the Group will submit a report to the Board of Governors about progress and performance and appropriate actions being taken where any areas of activity are at risk of not being delivered.

### **2.1 - Access**

Widening participation and fair access is a high priority at Northumbria and is an integral part of our approach to student recruitment and instrumental in driving our journey to attract high quality students regardless of background. This approach ensures significant, wide-ranging and highly valued outreach activities, consistency of delivery of recruitment and admissions services, and a seamless pre-entry journey for all potential students.

Within this framework, we aim to attract the best and brightest students to Northumbria, regardless of background, and to facilitate university access to those students who are 'most able yet least likely' to progress to Higher Education.

The trends in young participation report published by HEFCE in January 2015, states that the North East is the region where young people are least likely to access higher education. The latest Higher Education Statistics Agency's (HESA) data published February 2018, confirms that the North East Region also has the highest proportion of entrants from low participation neighbourhoods with a percentage of 23.4% compared to a national average of 11.4%, a 12.0% difference.

The University's objective is to attract the best students from low participation backgrounds and underrepresented groups to consider and enrol at university, and Northumbria specifically. The University itself continues to evolve and in recent years has raised its academic profile, particularly the entry standards which applicants must achieve in order to gain admission. It is recognised that in some instances this has added to the ongoing challenge to widen access to the University for students from a wide range of backgrounds.

In line with national research into the impact of institutional financial support on access to Higher Education and the experience of students on course, Northumbria has changed its approach from a focus on financial incentives such as bursaries and scholarships to more emphasis on longer term outreach and support activities, where there is potentially an opportunity for more demonstrable impact. Additionally, we will utilise the OFFA developed statistical model and recently provided HESA datasets to further evaluate the impact of financial support provided in prior years.

Northumbria University is fully committed to fair access and outreach which is an integral part of the “one university” approach to awareness raising, recruitment and admissions. Due to the geographical location of the university, the diversity of our programmes and the social demographics of our region we have historically been a highly successful widening participation university. In addition, the introduction of Foundation Years in recent years has proven a popular option for those from LPN’s, with 38% of Foundation Year students from ‘Low’ and ‘Low-Mid’ participation neighbourhoods. As a result, and using the University’s research into the experience of current Foundation Year students, the promotion of Foundation Years will be a key element of the Northumbria offer which will be integrated into the University’s Widening Participation outreach.

Although we are performing well compared to previous years in the majority of our target segments, our intention is to continue to work on all of the five key underrepresented groups as noted below. As has been evidenced in the assessment of our current performance (Table 1), we are currently improving our performance year on year in our recruitment of Black and Minority Ethnic students and Disabled students. Our recruitment of students from low participation neighbourhoods has declined from last year (Table 1) but we will continue to work on this group to attain the benchmark. Table 2 shows that our recruitment of mature students has significantly increased, although below the benchmark, and Table 3 highlights that our care leaver numbers are also increasing. In summary, whilst our performance is improving year on year in four of the five key segments, we are still short of our benchmarks. Our strategic approach therefore is to target activity on all five of these key segments.

Our Access objectives are to:

- Attract the best students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and underrepresented groups to consider and enrol at university – and Northumbria specifically
- Improve the participation of students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, Disabled students, Care leavers and Mature Students
- Ensure investment is allocated to the most effective interventions to maximise the numbers reached
- Develop and work on projects and partnerships to raise school attainment
- Continue to collaborate with the North East Raising Aspiration Partnership and the North East Collaborative Outreach Programme (NE COP) as part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)
- Work with the Students’ Union as a delivery partner as a key strand of the University’s outreach activity
- Support the Government’s Social Mobility goals by reviewing the impact of bursary support and ensuring that investments in widening participation have maximum impact

Historically the University has achieved particular success in recruiting students from under-represented groups but we recognise that there are ongoing challenges in the area of access, particularly in the North East region: the introduction of Degree Apprenticeships and supporting pathways to HE, changes to the national curriculum and potential impact on attainment and the



potential increase of fees. Therefore, it remains a key focus of the University to continue to invest in activity to support aspirations and progression to HE.

The University's outreach activity in 2019/20 will seek to:

- Build upon current activities that have proven impact, can be expanded and have clear routes for evaluation, as well as developing new approaches
- Support fair access to the professions, through the provision of information and awareness-raising activities in relevant disciplines pre-application to university
- Deliver activities that are presented in a persuasive, coherent way to schools and colleges
- Complement activity undertaken by the North East Raising Aspirations Programme (NERAP) and the North East Collaborative Outreach Programme (NECOP) and ensure that our schools targeting approach includes schools otherwise excluded by the NCOP scheme
- Promote the full Northumbria University UG Offer to all students, with a particular focus on our foundation years as an opportunity for access to the university for students with lower entry points

### **2.1.1 - Collaborative Initiatives**

#### **NERAP**

The North East Raising Aspiration Partnership (NERAP) is a collaboration of the five universities in the region (Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside) working together to support higher education progression, specifically for key vulnerable groups. The Partnership has been in place since 2015 and is fully funded by each Partner to ensure that high quality, collaborative provision is developed and delivered to improve targeted pupils' confidence and aspiration to consider higher education progression through in-depth and progressive programmes of outreach.

The partnership works specifically with Young Carers, Looked after Young People, Parents and Carers, Advisers and Teachers. In addition, all five universities are represented collaboratively at key events in both primary and secondary schools and at regional events.

#### **NECOP**

The North East Collaborative Outreach Programme (NECOP) is delivered by a partnership of Colleges and Universities (Durham University, Newcastle University, Northumbria University, University of Sunderland, Teesside University) in the region working together to create a step change in the progression to higher education of young people from target under-represented backgrounds. The consortia, led by Newcastle University, is working across 92 ward areas with 108 schools, 17 colleges and 5 universities to deliver an intensive, progressive programme of higher education interventions aligned to a newly developed Regional Progression Framework. The Regional Progression Framework has been specially designed to enable Consortia members to plan the NCOP offer to ensure that all existing outreach activity complements rather than duplicates effort. Learning outcomes have been developed and mapped to the Careers Development Institute Framework and Gatsby Benchmark to demonstrate how all activities support specific higher education-focused outcomes.

Through its FutureMe programme, the North East Collaborative Outreach Programme (NECOP) is supporting higher education progression by delivering a programme of activity specifically developed to meet the needs of schools/colleges and their cohorts with available support including undergraduate mentoring, online tutoring, Higher Education Ambassador sessions, masterclasses, specialist programmes for white working class boys and BME and self-confidence/resilience.

workshops. Alongside the main programme of FutureMe activity, NECOP is also working to make an improvement in progression rates through regional marketing, Teacher CPD, and sub-regional projects to address key issues influencing higher education progression.

## **QA**

Northumbria University partner with QA to deliver programmes at the London based Campus. These four Undergraduate Top up programmes are specifically designed to meet the needs of the London HND market who are seeking to complete a degree and progress into employment. These programmes recognise the specific context of the London based learner and enhance access to under represented groups through the way in which the courses are delivered, in three intakes and in block mode. This allows learners to fit part time work and other family commitments around their study and access programmes at more convenient times of the year such as summer when arranging childcare commitments, for example, can be less problematic. It is important to note that students enrolled at London Campus are still Northumbria University students and as such are subject to the same policies and regulations as students based in Newcastle Campus and are afforded the same support and opportunities outlined in this Access & Participation Plan.

### **2.1.2 - Access Monitoring and Evaluation**

A key aspect of Northumbria's outreach activity is the monitoring and evaluation of its activity, to support a culture of continuous improvement. Our approach comprises four main sections:

- Detailed evaluation, by beneficiaries and stakeholders, of all outreach and student recruitment activity
- Analysis of enquiry, application and enrolment data, including HESA performance indicators and the use of socio-demographic and geographic mapping
- The adoption of a strategic, analytical model which draws together analysis and outcomes and which is used to inform subsequent operational planning and delivery
- Formal reporting of objectives and progress to senior groups across the University

#### **Beneficiary evaluation**

The University has always sought beneficiary evaluation of its outreach activity via a combination of 'on-the-day' and online questionnaires. Feedback indicated that for many events the questionnaire approach was successful; 'Mood cards' based on the Likert Scale are used for the majority of younger age group events and have proven successful.

We aim to engage with academics at the University with expertise in evaluation to strengthen our approach, particularly in relation to our long-term programmes such as NU Entry, to ensure that we are using the most current methods to try to demonstrate the impact of our outreach activity.

#### **Data analysis**

The University monitors enquiries, applications, and enrolments against the following characteristics: age; gender; school-type; location; disability. Our analysis clearly indicates that the University attracts and admits students fairly with no bias either in favour or against any socio-economic group - each applicant is assessed on their: academic ability and potential; and, where necessary, the specific skills and aptitudes required by the course.

Data analysis is further supported by the use of socio-demographic mapping to enable the identification of enquiry/application/enrolment trends and in particular to pinpoint geographic areas of strength or weakness. The outcomes of this analysis will be used to determine successful interventions and the sharing of effective practice across the breadth of our activity.

### **Higher Education Access Tracker**

Northumbria University is a member of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) membership service which assists Higher Education Institutions in England to target, monitor, and evaluate their outreach activity. Northumbria records data about its outreach and participants on the HEAT database. This is entered into the HEAT longitudinal tracking system, which matches records on individual outreach participants to administrative datasets spanning Key Stage 2 data through to postgraduate study and employment.

When HEAT data has matured it will allow the University to understand the relationship between outreach participation and Higher Education enrolment, retention, and success. The University will be able to see if and when its outreach participants enrol in Higher Education. By subscribing to HEAT, we can take an evidence-based approach to planning outreach delivery so that we can continue to invest in outreach activities that optimise progression with disadvantaged cohorts.

### **2.2 - Success**

Northumbria has developed a framework of professional student support which supports learning, teaching, and assessment across the University by providing 24/7 library study space, and professional advice, information and guidance both face-to-face and online. With an emphasis on digital first and a commitment to service excellence, Student & Library Services are shaped by student feedback and academic engagement.

Since January 2017, students have been using Student Central to access most of their support needs. Students can now hand-in and collect their assessments, get careers help or funding advice, initiate international enquiries, discuss applications for personal extenuating circumstances, use the University Library and more – all from a single professional point of contact on each campus. New Advice and Support Zones at each Student Central location provide a range of custom-designed one to one spaces where students can meet professional advisors for all Student and Library Services support, and in addition, these high quality spaces are available for independent learning activity outside core hours. As well as having face-to-face access to these services, students can choose to find support and guidance 24/7 via the new student portal, which introduces self-service for more routine transactions. Students are able to raise their own enquiries across a range of topics, and those using the portal can rate and provide feedback on knowledge base articles. This feedback will be used to continuously improve the quality and coverage of our online help.

Whilst Northumbria has exceeded its benchmarks and is performing well in terms of success, continuing commitment to widening participation is embodied in our award winning Student Support and Wellbeing team, part of Student & Library Services. SSW supports around 16,000 students per annum across our key services, which includes; Welfare, Immigration and Funding Support, Counselling and Mental Health Support, Disability and Dyslexia Support, support for students whose circumstances change and the University's Multi-Faith Chaplaincy.

### **The University's Success objectives in 19/20 will seek to:**

- Continue to develop inclusive learning teach and assessment for all students but in particular to ensure that students from underrepresented groups are able to access holistic academic and personal support easily
- Develop further the range of interventions to Improve success for disabled students, foundation degree students, mature students and Care leavers, through targeted interventions and support, and manage those students who may be at risk of withdrawal
- Ensure that discretionary University funding is allocated in a fair and equitable way to those most in need

### **We will evaluate and monitor the activity set out in this plan by:**

- Increasing the number of training sessions for academic staff on issues around, dealing with students in distress, understanding specific learning disabilities, awareness raising around student carers, to ensure early referrals for students in need
- Publish a dashboard on delivery of Student Support services, which will include how and where they are delivered inform and improve future service delivery

#### **2.2.1 - Inclusive Practice**

A strategic approach to learning, teaching, and assessment is an ambition of the University Strategy. Northumbria has been responding to the recent modernisation of the Disabled Students Allowance and has considered both new ways of working and allocating monies to provide dedicated support to disabled students and help with diagnostic testing costs. For 2019/20, this amounts to a budgetary commitment of £300,000.

A dedicated Disability and Dyslexia support team ensures that disabled students receive the adjustments they require to have the best possible student experience whilst at Northumbria. We intend to support over 2000 students in 19/20 through our Disability and Dyslexia support team.

Our multi-disciplinary Counselling and Mental Health Support Team offers a range of support modalities for students with mental health or emotional difficulties. Students are able to register with the team at any time 24/7 using our online registration form and receive an offer of support within two working days. Through this support, which ranges from self-help, guided self-help and workshops through to 1:1 session with an accredited counsellor or mental health practitioner, in 19/20 we will deliver support to over 1600 students.

Our most recent satisfaction survey showed that over 90% of students described the support they received from our advisers, counsellors and practitioners as either "good" or "very good". In 19/20 we aim for a satisfaction rating of over 93%.

#### **2.2.2 - Interventions**

In 2019/20 we will embed student culture from pre-entry that promotes positive behaviours around antisocial behaviour, drugs and alcohol, 'lad culture' and the use of social media. We will deliver a range of professional support services that respond to the University's duty of care around managing personal and academic risk. This will also include the management of student (and parent) expectations on the clarity of the University professional support offer.

We will scope and plan how the University manages its duty of care including how the University responds to specific groups (eg. carers, disabled students and mature students) and clarify the University offer (managing staff, student and partner expectations). We will develop a range of

training materials and interventions for staff, students, and partners. We will also develop and deliver a refreshed SSW service structure to align roles and responsibilities clearly to the Northumbria Student Support Framework (NSSF). This will include developing a range of activities targeted to develop students and ensure we can measure the success of students in these groups.

We will develop a strategy that keeps students on track - to deliver a range of professional support services that enable all students to achieve their academic and personal potential and prepare for life beyond the University.

Working holistically across Northumbria we will be developing a targeted training programme that develops a toolkit for academic staff working in a personal tutoring role. This has been identified through recent research by [Student Resilience: Exploring the positive case for resilience](#) report by Unite Students (May 2017).

### **2.3 - Progress**

Our Progress objectives are to:

- Improve the employment and further study outcomes for all students by providing work-related learning and career development learning opportunities for all students, building on recent investment and strategic initiatives.
- Improve the outcomes for students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods – particularly young students, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, Disabled students, and Care leavers, through targeted interventions and support.
- Focus, based on the latest TEF split metrics data highlighted in section 1.4, analysis on the support and opportunities provided to white, young, male, full-time students.
- Continue to analyse outcomes data, identifying trends and issues and targeting support based on this analysis, combined with a proactive use of programme data to target courses with higher numbers and proportions of underrepresented groups.
- Build on the successful initiatives and activities which have been developed over recent years, including the support activities to be funded and supported by the 2018/19 Access Agreement.
- Continue to work in partnership with the Northumbria Students' Union to ensure that underrepresented groups have equitable access to Students' Union development opportunities, and to test interventions which could target and help students from those groups.

A University Employability Plan has been agreed and is being implemented. This aims to improve professional level employment and/or graduate level further study outcomes for all students. The Plan highlights an ambition to ensure all students are provided with the opportunity to complete work-related learning activity, and all are provided with career development learning support. The Employability Framework has been embedded within the Programme Framework for Northumbria Awards (PFNA). PFNA is a new design framework for all programmes run by Northumbria University. The framework sets out clear and consistent criteria for all programmes, which will ensure that all Northumbria graduates are fully prepared for employment or future study at their point of graduation through the development and demonstration of Northumbria Graduate Attributes. Through this review of our programme curricula, we are seeking to ensure that employability is a central message for all of our students.

This strategic approach which embraces ensuring earlier engagement with students and encouragement for them to develop career plans, providing the opportunity for students to better

understand the labour market, and which is focussed work on helping students who are reaching the end of their programme, has been informed by evidence from national surveys and data sets, and a recent Department for Education research report. The “Planning for success: Graduates’ career planning and its effect on graduate outcomes” research [report](#) published in March 2017 identified the three factors which were most important in guiding graduates to a positive outcome, that is employment or further study rather than unemployment. These factors were:

1. *Undertaking paid work while at university or in the six months immediately after*
2. *Focusing job searches exclusively on graduate level jobs and making most applications while still studying*
3. *Having a career plan upon leaving university*

Early engagement in all three is a positive indicator for future success. These factors are particularly relevant in relation to Northumbria’s widening participation students, and our approach is designed to target and help those students and graduates in particular to help them make successful transitions into positive destinations after their courses.

As part of the Employability Plan, Northumbria introduced in 2017/18 the Careers Registration Survey methodology. This involves gathering data from all students during enrolment through a simple questionnaire to determine their career ‘readiness’. The benchmark data has been set for this first year – and will be analysed against various criteria, including for the different under-represented groups.

The survey will be repeated for returning students at each stage of study. It will be through this ‘in course’ data, as well as through the Graduate Outcomes survey data, which we will evaluate the impact of our activity to improve the outcomes for under-represented groups, and by gender.

In November 2017 the Careers and Employment Service delivered its largest ever on-campus [Placements and Careers Fair](#). This multi-sector fair, with a broad mix of regional, national and international employers, took place over two days. 226 exhibitors presented their placement, work experience internship, and graduate opportunities, and 2,592 students attended – with representation from all four faculties. Based on the feedback from employers we estimate in excess of 15,000 careers and employability conversations took place at the event.

The 2019/20 activity will build on these successful initiatives, and those planned for delivery in 2018/19 where analysis of interactions and measures of impact will be undertaken to ensure we continually improve and develop the services and support offered. An example of how we will do this is provided in relation to work with disabled students.

Targeted work over the past three years aimed at improving the knowledge and confidence of disabled students to apply for graduate opportunities has been undertaken. The sessions have been attended by students from all levels and feedback has been very positive. In terms of impact the students who attended these sessions averaged scores of 2/10 for knowledge and 3/10 for confidence prior to the session, and after the event this rose to 9/10 knowledge and 8/10 confidence.

Disability Confident Workshops were delivered at the November 2017 Northumbria Placements and Careers Fair with employers including EY, Accenture, Civil Service Fast Stream, Change 100 and FDM contributing to the sessions. Whilst only a small number of disabled students attended, their feedback was extremely positive, and the impact of this activity on their confidence was significant.

In addition, in February 2018 the Careers and Employment Service worked collaboratively with Northumbria's Students' Union to stage an event themed around Careers and Mental Health including a panel discussion involving local employers. This received very positive feedback from student attendees expressing their increased confidence in raising and discussing mental health issues. Both these initiatives will be developed further in 2018/19 where we will work hard to ensure more students attend, and we would expect them to be part of the range of support offered to disabled students in 2019/20 under this Access and Participation Plan.

The University's progress activity in 2019/20 will therefore seek to:

- Build upon current activities, and those planned for 2018/19, that have proven impact, can be expanded and have clear routes for evaluation.
- Develop new approaches for working with under-represented groups of students, focussing on helping them achieve positive post-study outcomes.
- Based on research and experience over recent years, activity will focus on 4 key areas:
  - providing effective careers guidance from pre-entry all the way through the student journey to graduation and beyond;
  - developing the numbers and quality of internship and work experience opportunities;
  - supporting students to develop their enterprise skills and support those considering self-employment as a positive outcome;
  - developing the confidence and aspirations of widening participation students by delivering assessment centre simulations at scale to large numbers of students

#### **2.4 - Equality and Diversity**

The University's Equality & Diversity Policy states that it:

*"is committed to providing an environment in which diversity is valued and encouraged, where there is equal access to opportunities and services and in which all prospective and existing staff and students are treated fairly, with equity, dignity and mutual respect. We acknowledge the unique contribution that all individuals can make and it is the responsibility of the University to ensure that no one individual or group is treated less favourably in terms of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other inappropriate or irrelevant criteria or distinction."*

It further adds that it will:

*"Ensure equality of access for all potential staff and students, including the employment of staff, consultants and contractors, the admission of students, the provision of educational and training opportunities, and the provision of services to individuals and organisations; Promote the spirit of equal opportunity and to ensure that members of the University community act respectfully towards each individual and group; Comply with the terms of all equality legislation; Ensure that effective systems for the monitoring and evaluation of equality diversity are in place."*

Northumbria's Access & Participation Plan has been developed in accordance with the above policy commitment, and in line with our responsibilities under, and commitment to, the Equality Act 2010. In developing this Plan, we have considered the diverse needs and characteristics of students, and ensured that our proposed activity is accessible, appropriate and inclusive. This policy is a key mainstay of the work that we will undertake in this Access and Participation plan, as the ethos of the university is supported by this approach, meaning that staff and students across the institution are

supportive of the work that we do to enable access to students from all backgrounds, support success on programme to all students regardless of individual circumstances, and support progression into employment or further study for all. Adherence to this policy is a critical success factor for the Access and Participation plan.

## **2.5 - Student Consultation**

Students contribute extensively in our access work, promoting higher education and the University in ambassador roles, and offering mentoring and buddy opportunities to help students from underrepresented groups to consider university as a viable option for them.

The University is committed to engaging with students about this Plan, noting that it outperformed the sector average in 2017 on new NSS category for student voice - 71% (compared to 69% for the sector).

In 2015, the University launched a Student Engagement Plan, which developed our commitments to student representation, engagement and consultation in order to secure student voice and feedback capture on our learning offer and our approach to a high quality student experience. The University will engage students from a range of backgrounds about the Access and Participation Plan in accordance with the Student Engagement Plan. Channels include programme representatives, student experience surveys, Go Out And Listen (GOAL) events and other face-to-face engagements. 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 (SU) 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, it has numerous opportunities to contribute to the University's approach to widening access.

This plan has been developed through consultation with the Students' Union, engaging the President and the Director of Membership Services, 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.

Looking forward, the University and the Students' Union have a range of structures through which consultation with students of different backgrounds will take place in reference to this plan. The five Sabbatical officers are elected through an annual cross-campus ballot, bringing with them the experience of students at that time. Officers sit on a wide range of formal committees and working groups and use the Students' Union structures to seek ad hoc input from student groups on specific issues when needed. The Union also submits an annual quality report to the University, giving its perspective of work in the institution. This includes issues of access and participation. This report is made formally to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Academic Registrar and a formal response is given.

In addition, the SU has a council of student representatives, each elected to represent the views of a different student group by background, where Open place representatives bring forward the views of other students and set policy for the Students' Union. These groups are Black and Ethnic Minority, International, LGBT+, Trans, Mature, Disabled and Women.

In 2017/18, the SU Council and the Vice President Welfare became members of a University Task and Finish group to look at the attainment gap. As well as the input of elected representatives the SU



Council will run a series of focus groups to gather views of students of different backgrounds within those groups. The Students' Union has recommended that this group be included as part of the consultative process for the Access and Participation Plan.

As well as elected representatives, the Students' Union supports the network of over 1,000 student representatives, most working at programme level. Although these are not recruited specifically in relation to their background, they do provide a strong network of students to be consulted on different issues. At the level of the department, the Students' Union actively ensures representatives reflect a range of backgrounds and has specific representatives for departments where the perspective of a particular type of student is seen to be most needed; for example women students in STEM subjects and international students in Business. These representatives meet every 6 weeks with the deputy vice chancellor, academic registrar and other senior staff to discuss issues they face including access and participation. The Union's Student Council also attends these scheduled meetings.

The Students' Union and University work jointly on the Student Engagement Forum, which feeds into the Education Committee. This forum exists to bring students together with senior University staff and Union 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.

As we deliver this plan in 2019/20 our student body and SU representatives will be integral to the success of the plan.

### **3. Access, student success and progression measures**

#### **3.1 - Access**

##### **3.1.1 - Outreach activity**

The University's outreach activity will remain wide-ranging and comprehensive, working with pupils as young as 10 through to mature / adult learners focusing on awareness raising and aspirations. The content of sessions will be reviewed and refined following an analysis of activity evaluations and feedback from schools.

- Primary: awareness and aspiration raising activities targeted at pupils in Year 6. Activities and workshops delivered on and off campus with specific learner outcomes
- Secondary: Activities range from awareness raising in Year 7 and introducing pupils to aspects of university life to transition activity in Year 11
- Post 16: Our Evolve programme continues to offer schools the opportunity to choose from a range of workshops to develop a bespoke programme for their pupils. The content of the workshops and types of workshops offered are reviewed regularly.

In addition, some outreach events and targeted support have been planned with a specific focus on key target groups. For example:

- The 'Choices Together' programme is provided for Looked After Young People (LAYP), for which the University holds the Buttle UK Quality Mark, and is delivered as part of the North East Raising Aspirations Partnership (NERAP) (see Collaborative Initiatives). It gives LAYP the opportunity to experience several aspects of 'real' university life.

- We will work closely with local community groups and schools to develop a programme of activities targeted at young, white, males from Low Participation Neighbourhoods which aims to engage with them in less formal settings to raise awareness and encourage them to consider Higher Education as an option. In terms of targeting this group, through NERAP, 'Kick off HE' was a pilot project to test ways of engaging Y9 boys in subject areas which supported progression to HE. To target we utilised HEFCE 'cold spot' data to identify schools with high proportions of white boys residing in Polar 1 areas.
- In conjunction with Team Northumbria, the University will continue to seek to work with BME communities in the North East, using established relationships in sport. The aim will be to raise awareness of the opportunities available in Higher Education, deliver skills workshops and offer support on progression to Higher Education.
- The University will continue to work to understand the support required pre-entry and on course for groups such as Estranged students and Young Carers. We have close links with local Carer Support Networks and attend regular meetings to understand the key issues facing this particular group of students. Training has been delivered to staff involved in on course support for students and we will continue to invest in keeping our staff informed. Estranged students remain a focus and we continue to work to try to identify and support this group of students.
- Continue to work with local colleges offering Access courses to offer a comprehensive pre-entry programme of support for mature students. A review of the information available on the University's website will be undertaken to ensure it is accessible and relevant for mature students. Consideration will be given to how NU Entry can be adapted to meet the needs of mature students to support their progression to Northumbria.

### **Outreach and Pre-entry activity**

Our overall aim is to meet the benchmarks as outlined in the Access and Participation Plan and increase the number of able students benefiting from Higher Education. Outreach begins in Year 5 (Key Stage 2, ages 9-10). This activity is built upon year on year in order to strengthen relationships with schools and colleges and to ensure pupils have a sustained interaction with the University so as to gain maximum impact of interventions. In 16/17, our pre-16 programme reached 10,416 beneficiaries, across a range of on and off campus activities from Year 5 – Year 11. We subsequently set a target of a 40% increase for 2017/18, which equated to 14,550 beneficiaries. To date, we have reached 16,998 students and so have comfortably achieved this target.

The pre-16 programme involves a series of Higher Education awareness raising sessions, interaction with current students and activities to support them at key points in their educational journey.

Our Post 16 programme involves working with schools to create a bespoke programme for their pupils that support the development of 'soft' skills but also prepares them for the application and progression to Higher Education. In 2016/17, the University delivered interventions in 422 schools and colleges, which represented a 50% increase on 2015/16. Furthermore, evaluations of our activity in schools and colleges showed that 75% of respondents felt more confident about applying to university after participating in the activity, which is an 8% increase year on year. In addition, 86% stated they felt the activity had been useful in informing them about HE, a 5% improvement.

During 2016/17, 109 schools/colleges engaged with our NU Entry supported entry scheme, with 1203 applications received. This is an increase of 6 schools and an increase in applications by 13% from the previous year, due to the further geographical expansion and integration of the scheme into our extensive post-16 activity. NU Entry selects eligible students to participate based on widening participation criteria including, low participation neighbourhood and Care Leaver. Successful students earn NU Entry points through participation in activity and assessment and Northumbria University accept these as equivalent to UCAS tariff points.

### **3.1.2 - School partnerships to improve attainment of underrepresented groups**

The University does not intend to formally sponsor a school, as defined by the Office for Students. The North East region has the lowest progression to Higher Education, for this reason the University believes that, we could have more impact in supporting attainment-raising in the North East region at KS4, and subsequent progression to Higher Education, if we work with several schools rather than just focusing our resource on one. The University believes this approach would result in better value for money, reduce the impact on the University and the potential for focus and resource to shift from other key priorities and would be welcomed by the schools in the region.

The University will develop partnerships with a minimum of eight schools in 2019/20 to offer intensive support, which will include a range of opportunities for the staff and students at the partner schools. This support will revolve around four key pillars with the intention of improving the attainment of students at KS4. Firstly, an online mentoring scheme using Northumbria University students to support KS4 students in the partner schools. This would be complimented by sessions delivered by these students within the schools. Secondly, CPD for teachers within the schools, delivered by Northumbria's Education academics to support teachers in delivering the KS4 curriculum. Thirdly, a study skills package delivered in schools by Northumbria's Student Recruitment team. Finally, supporting the schools with relevant resources to aid revision for KS4 exams.

Baseline data will be gathered in conjunction with the schools on the current performance of pupils at KS4 and progression to Higher Education. Following the development of the partnership between the University and the schools, this data will be gathered again at the end of Year 11 to assess their performance at KS4. Longer term, the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) will be used to monitor subsequent progression to Higher Education.

It is intended that initially in 2018/19 the University will work with 4 partner secondary schools, increasing to 8 schools in 2019/20. Following the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the partnerships, the University will consider how to increase this support in subsequent years.

In addition, as a partner in the North East Collaborative Outreach Programme (NECOP), a key aspect of the NECOP Delivery Model is a flexible in-school aspiration-raising mentoring and online academic tutoring programme for years 9 and 10, which will also support attainment raising in local schools. The outcomes of this programme will also guide the University's approach to supporting attainment raising in future years.

### **3.1.3 - Literacy attainment**

The University also plan to continue an existing project, Boosting Reading at Primary, delivered by the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, into secondary schools. High-level reading skills and reading for pleasure are one of the key barriers to wider educational engagement and attainment.

The project would target areas of greatest 'literacy need'. According to data produced by the National Literacy Trust, 11% of parliamentary constituencies of the greatest literacy need in the UK are in the North East of England, with Middlesbrough being the most deprived constituency in the country in terms of literacy need.

### **3.1.4 - Supporting aspirations and progression to Higher Education**

We will also continue to deliver the Graduate Ambassador Scheme. Graduate Ambassadors deliver presentations, events and activities and act as role models in schools and colleges in target areas across the UK, to support progression into Higher Education. Part of this is focussed on continuing to expand our geographical reach, impact and targets to facilitate the addition of more activities in schools and colleges and engagement with school/college students.

We will also continue to develop a range of initiatives with the Faculty Directors of Recruitment, Widening Participation and Outreach, which support the development of subject specific activity, particularly those from under-represented groups.

### **3.1.4– Northumbria Sport**

Northumbria is proud to be a leading Sports university in the UK, and we have a range of access activities which are led by our Northumbria Sport team. The following activities and initiatives will be extended in the 2019/20 year.

#### **Northumbria Sport Foundation**

The Northumbria Sport Foundation is Northumbria University's partner charity that engages students, staff, alumni and the community in fundraising and invests the funds into community projects and grants. The projects are delivered by students in order to enhance their employability and leadership skills. The Northumbria Sport Foundation aims to make a lasting contribution to people's lives by raising the aspirations and achievement of members of the community, particularly amongst hard to reach groups. It enables the community and students to enhance their potential through sport in line with Northumbria Sport's themes of 'Engage, Inspire and Achieve'. The Northumbria Sport Foundation supports a number of projects that involve engaging with the community across the region and will continue with these projects in 2019-20.

In addition to delivering these projects in 2019-20, the Foundation will develop new projects that benefit hard-to-reach groups. Such groups include young and older people, people with long-term ill health, people from low-socio economic groups, current and ex-offenders. Another key priority for the Foundation will be to develop its relationship with the University's Alumni Office in order to encourage an increased number of former students to donate to and support the Foundation's work.

#### **Northumbria Sport Academy**

The Northumbria Sport Academy is Northumbria's sporting offer for young people aged under 18. The Academy has three strands:

- Engaging Young People – This involves the delivery of holiday sports camps, children's parties, bespoke sport experience and training days, youth sport competitions/festivals and sport sessions. These activities are open to all individuals and groups, with a fee charged for each activity.
- Supporting University Student Recruitment – This involves working with the University's Marketing and Recruitment Department to organise bespoke sport experience events and sport sessions for specific schools and groups across the North East. These events are aimed at supporting the University's overall student recruitment activities and targets.
- Recruiting Student Athletes – This involves working with targeted schools, colleges, clubs and National Governing Bodies to attract talented young athletes to the University. Activities include talent development sessions/squads, high performance training camps, youth sport festivals/competitions and bespoke sport experience and training days.

### **3.2 - Success**

#### **3.2.1 - Strategic relationship with schools**

In order to support transition to University, our Student & Library Services team will develop a programme in 2019/20 to work with partners (the Students' Union, National Citizen Service) and targeted schools at KS2, 3, 4 and 5 to build confidence and resilience, delivered by experienced practitioners in these areas. A range of workshops will be offered including:

- Preparing for higher education

- Mental health support
- Disability Support
- Careers advice and guidance
- Study skills and how to study in a higher education environment

### **3.2.2 - Inclusive Practice**

The service operates in a range of ways including significant amounts of face-to-face support and advice, a range of on-line and printed guidance materials, as well as a range of projects and activities coordinated through the delivery teams. Increasingly students are able to access elements of SSW services 24/7 through such developments as our website, our unified front-line service, Ask4Help, and our close working with the University's Security service. 1 Times Higher Leadership and Management Award (THELMA) 2015 Outstanding Student Services Team.

We will scope and plan the priorities for a cross university Student Culture Initiative to include Antisocial Behaviour, Lad Culture, Sexual Violence, neighbours and communities. We will undertake data analysis to inform priorities, produce a 5-year action plan including requirements for a policy review and development and training interventions for staff, students and partners to ensure that student cultures enhance the overall student experience and are positively embedded in University activity.

We have introduced a new approach to support students with caring responsibilities and have a strong approach to supporting estranged students. All student carers are offered the opportunity to meet with a welfare adviser who helps them to balance their caring responsibilities with their studies whilst also ensuring they still enjoy an excellent student experience. We have built a strong partnership with a local carer's charity offering in turn a wider range of support services and activities for student carers. In 2019/20 we will see a range of additional support for student carers, including improved support around late approvals, and personal extenuating circumstances as well as additional targeted financial support for carers.

A comprehensive new approach to supporting pregnant students and student parents of young children offers a range of flexible support options, ensuring that students in these groups are able to access, stay and succeed on their programmes. In 19/20 we will see an improved student pregnancy protocol with improves services to pregnant students, and nursing mothers, including improved facilities across all of our campuses.

A new religious adjustments protocol responds to the changing calendar of religious festivals. In 19/20 we will see improvements for all students who celebrate religious festivals during the academic year. This will include improved academic support during exam and assessment periods.

We acknowledge in the assessment of our current performance that there is a gap in the attainment of a good degree for BME students. This will be addressed in the following ways:

- The University will embed Inclusivity within the curriculum and assessments by adopting a practice of Inclusivity by Design and ensure that this is part of the Education Strategic Plan. This will ensure that something which would have previously been considered a 'reasonable adjustment' is now standard practice as part of the design for all programmes at Northumbria.
- New programme approval (University Approval Panel) will include consideration of Equality & Diversity impact and Inclusive Learning, referred to above.
- Using a range of data, attainment issues will be identified, and further analysis undertaken to help develop the action plan activity for 2019/20. This will be targeted by group and disciplines, which will be defined as part of the analysis.

- Periodic Review will be revised to include an impact assessment for Equality & Diversity factors.

### **3.2.3 - Impact and Outcomes**

The impact of this will be seen through:

- An increase in academic success (progression between years) in the targeted groups identified i.e. carer's, mature students, disabled students
- An increase in early engagement from student carers and other at underrepresented groups in particular who we have struggled to identify early
- Early referrals from academic colleagues to our professional services for students at risk academically and personally

This will be monitored and evaluated through both qualitative and quantitative methods, including:

- Dashboard data on students who attend professional support sessions
- Descriptive data and inferential statistics will capture trends, significance and effect sizes
- Financial data on distribution of discretionary funding.

We have a range of activities aimed at supporting the most vulnerable students from non-traditional groups. For example, we have a dedicated support package in place for care leavers which includes a £2,000 bursary, a fast track arrangement for ALF applications and the provision of University accommodation on a 52-week basis at the same cost as for the normal letting period for that residence, therefore ensuring care leavers have a secure and safe place to stay during vacations. In our 2019/20 plan – we will have improved dashboard and financial data which will show retention progression of these student groups and others such as foundation year students.

We have considered the impact of our activities and support measures on students with protected characteristics, and as a result the following will be implemented:

- With support from the SU, focus groups will be run in October 2018 – to review activity i.e. with students who are 'Other Disabled', Black, Mature and also LGBT+ – and submit a report to University Executive. This report will include any additional findings including those arising from the BAME Officer's survey of students. This will inform and help plan future delivery/strategy in 19/20
- University to consider annual student Equality & Diversity dashboards and an annual update on the University's Access and Participation Agreement and associated actions/activity. Future iterations of the dashboard will be developed to incorporate more detailed Equality & Diversity data where possible.
- Impact assessment will be carried out across Access, Success and Progression activity for Equality & Diversity factors to assist in future delivery and measure quality and impact

### **3.3 - Progress**

As outlined in the Ambition and Strategy section of this Plan Northumbria's approach in relation to progress is to develop inclusive activities available to all students, through an emphasis on increasing confidence and ambition as well as providing opportunities to understand the graduate labour market and gain work experience. It is expected that these activities will particularly benefit students from under-represented groups, though monitoring will be undertaken to ensure those student groups are taking advantage of the support and help available.

In order to support the retention and progression of students on course and into graduate employment, the Careers and Employment Service will also seek to develop an employability achievement strategy and programme for students from under-represented and disadvantaged groups, which will have sustainable outcomes.

Regular and detailed monitoring and review of outcomes will continue – for instance the latest Equality and Diversity Monitoring Dashboard, reviewing 2016/17 DLHE data, showed improvements for some BME groups since the 2016-17 Access Agreement monitoring process was completed. This analysis is being undertaken down to a faculty level to allow for targeted support and interventions. From 2017/18 we have also been able to use career registration survey data to identify differences in career readiness by ethnicity – which will be tracked by level and faculty. We will learn from good practice in the sector – including work with employers and organisations with particular initiatives related to generating opportunities for BME students.

Based on the latest TEF split metric data targeting will be considered for all underrepresented groups, but with particular attention to be given to white, young, male students.

Research taken from High Fliers, the Graduate Labour Market 2016, outlined the disadvantage these groups face in the graduate recruitment process if they do not engage with work experience during the first year of their studies.

The programme will therefore aim to:

- Improve retention rates of students from low participation groups, with employability progression at each level of study tracked against those from non-low participation groups.
- Analyse, in particular, Foundation year student progression and retention, attainment, and then positive outcomes.
- Ensure that low participation pre-entry and levels 3 and 4 students have equal access to labour market information and are provided with interventions which address barriers to them successfully competing for professional work experience during their studies.
- Create tailored Northumbria Graduate Attribute activities for pre-entry and levels 3 and 4 stages to ensure that students become enterprising and employable to compete for professional work experience in their first year of study.

Planned activities for 2018/19, which will be developed further in 2019/20 include enhancing the high quality, professional Careers Guidance support already provided to students from all levels. The emphasis of this activity is on targeted, 1-1 support helping individuals generate a career plan and make successful transitions into employment or further study.

Funding will be allocated for internship activity in the form of grants to employers, to help them provide student internships in regional businesses, and posts to coordinate and generate the internships. We are aware that a large number of students wish to progress within the North East region and this activity will help to boost not only opportunities for students in the area but also employer engagement with HE, exposing a wider group of employers to the benefits of employing HE students and raising awareness of what local graduates could offer their businesses.

We plan to pilot in 2018/19 delivery of an assessment centre simulation with input from external assessors and employers designed to build confidence in students to 'compete' effectively for graduate level roles – to also encourage more students to consider and take up year out placement opportunities. We expect widening participation students to benefit 'disproportionately' from this activity, and will monitor and evaluate this. The pilot delivery will be with a programme or subject area (or a number) which have high proportions of WP students in their cohort, and have identified challenges in relation to positive employment outcomes. We anticipate scaling up this activity for

2019/20 to a larger number of programme areas, similarly identifying those which have higher proportions of widening participation students in their cohorts and have identified challenges in relation to positive outcomes.

Successful outcome measures from undertaking this strategic approach will include:

- Increased participation and engagement from the targeted groups of students
- Enhanced confidence and career readiness
- Increased numbers and proportions of widening participation students securing paid placements or internships during their course
- Greater numbers and percentages of widening participation students from the targeted groups progressing to positive outcomes on graduation.

### **3.4 - Financial Support**

The University offers a Care Leavers Bursary of £2000 per year to students meeting the eligibility criteria and studying on a full-time undergraduate course.

The above model applies to students joining the University in 2019/20. Students who joined prior to 2019/20 will remain on schemes in place at the time of intake.

In addition, we anticipate, based upon historic trend analysis, that a proportion of students who are eligible for an UG Entry Academic Scholarship will be from underrepresented groups.

Financial support provision is informed by internal analysis of the impact upon application rates, enrolments, retention augmented by the Financial support toolkit which has been used in conjunction with the 2014/15 datasets provided by OFFA/HESA. Further analysis will be undertaken for subsequent academic years as data becomes available.

### **3.5 - Additional support**

Northumbria has been developing (by using the statistical tool from OFFA evaluation toolkit) its approach to supporting students from non-traditional backgrounds and invested in increasing activities to target support and recruitment at students from these groups. In addition to this, we have continued with our commitment to alleviating hardship amongst our existing student body and have identified a continuing budget to provide a UK/Home Student Hardship support fund. This fund, which will be disbursed and managed in accordance with the NASMA Higher Education Hardship Funding Guidance, will ensure that students in hardship can continue to receive the financial support that can often be the difference between staying at, or leaving University. In addition, we have also identified funds to help support the reasonable adjustments required to support our disabled students. Brought together and known as our Access to Learning Fund, these funds total £1.4million in 2019/20 and demonstrate both our financial and operational commitment to supporting access.

## **4. Investment**

### **4.1 – Expenditure on Access & Participation Plan activity**

The University estimates that in 2019/20 its annual APP Countable expenditure on Access Agreement activity will be at least £9.670m, which equates to 20.1% of fee income above the basic fee.

<b>APP Countable expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Access</b>	<b>3,550,000</b>



<b>Success</b>	<b>1,650,000</b>
<b>Progression</b>	<b>980,000</b>
<b>Financial Support</b>	<b>3,490,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,670,000</b>

In addition, the University will utilise OfS recurrent grant funding for widening access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, improving retention and improving provision for disabled students. Based upon 2018/19 levels this is £3.3M.

The University will also use funding allocated via the National Collaborative Outcome Programme to support activities as part of the NECOP partnership. In 2017/18 this was c£250k.

## 5. 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 will also use the services of UCAS and the Student Loans Company to ensure they too are able to provide all necessary information to students when it is requested.

Information provided will include: tuition fees; 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; all other types of academic and pastoral support.

In addition the Access & Participation Plan is a public document and will be available for students and prospective students on Northumbria University's website.

\* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

The University reserves the right to amend fees for subsequent years in line with any permitted increase as advised by the Government.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
First degree	Arts, Design and Social Sciences, Fashion courses with split sandwich year	£5,550
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		£9,250
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		£9,250
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	QAHE (NU) Limited 10066760	£9,250
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£5,000
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

**Table 8a** - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	State school	<b>HESA T1a</b> - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA Table 1a - % of young FT 1st degree students recruited from state schools/colleges	No	2014-15	94.2	94.8	95	95.1			The current proportion of students recruited from state schools is above the sector average and is already relatively high. We have therefore reset the targets to increase the level of ambition moving closer to location adjusted benchmark.
T16a_02	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	<b>HESA T1a</b> - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA Table 1a - % of young FT 1st degree students recruited from LPNs	No	2014-15	16.2	19.5	19.7	19.8			Recruitment from LPNs is progressing well. New targets and milestones have therefore been set to continue to work towards improving this figure towards the current location adjusted benchmark.
T16a_03	Access	Mature	<b>HESA T2a</b> - (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA Table 2a - % of FT 1st degree students recruited who are mature, from LPNs and with no previous experience of H	No	2014-15	12.3	16	16.1	16.2			Recent improvement in this measure has led to a recalibration of future year targets, increasing the level of ambition and moving closer to current location adjusted benchmark.
T16a_04	Access	Ethnicity	<b>Other statistic</b> - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	% of FT 1st degree students recruited from minority ethnic groups	No	2014-15	6.9	8.1	8.2	8.3			Performance increased in 2014/15 and we will seek to maintain this improvement. This is a stretching target as the North East of England is relatively mono-cultural.

T16a_05	Access	Disabled	<b>HESA T7</b> - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA Table 7 - % of FT 1st degree students recruited who are eligible to receive Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)	No	2014-15	5.3	6.6	7	7			Recruitment of students eligible to receive DSA has increased and we will continue to work towards our 2020/21 target.
T16a_06	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	<b>HESA T3a</b> - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA Table 3 - % of young FT 1st degree students not continuing with their course after 1 year.	No	2013-14	5.6	5.2	5.1	5			Current retention performance has deteriorated but is still better than sector benchmark.. We will continue to work to reduce this figure, and the milestones have been retained to reflect this.
T16a_07	Progression	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	<b>Other statistic</b> - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Proportion of full time, first degree, young UK graduates from LPN Q1&Q2 (POLAR3) who are in professional level employment or graduate level further study approx 6 months after graduation	No	2013-14	60.9	69.1	69.6	70			2014/15 DLHE statistics show 68.1% of UK graduates from LPNs in Q1&2 are in further study or graduate level employment 6 months after graduating from Northumbria. We will continue to work towards raising this further by 2020/21.
T16a_08	Progression	Mature	<b>Other statistic</b> - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Proportion of full time, first degree, mature UK graduates from LPN Q1&Q2 (POLAR3) who are in professional level employment or graduate level further study approx 6 months after graduation	No	2013-14	76.8	79.3	79.7	80			2014/15 DLHE statistics show 78.7% of mature UK graduates from LPNs in Q1&2 are in further study or graduate level employment 6 months after graduating from Northumbria. We will continue to work towards raising this further by 2020/21.

**Notes**

Alongside applicant and entrant targets, we encourage you to provide targets around outreach and success work (including collaborative work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access, success and progression. These should be measurable outcomes-based targets and should focus on the number of beneficiaries reached by a particular activity/programme or the number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the nature/number of activities.

**Table 8b** - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Pre - 16 outreach activity	No	2014-15	11507	13000	13000	14000			Our pre 16 programme includes a range of targeted activities
T16b_02	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	16-18 outreach activity	No	2014-15	46423	51000	53000	54000			Our 16-18 programme includes a range of targeted activities. Targets provide a realistic view of numbers reached and also reflect the expansion of the NU Entry scheme.
T16b_03	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Mature Students	No	2014-15	2000	2900	3100	3200			Our mature students outreach programme will be reviewed and targets reflect the national situation and progression of mature students.
T16b_04	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Development of Compact scheme - number of participating schools	No	2014-15	52	210	220	230			We will continue to seek to expand our 'Compact' agreement although later year targets may be challenging given gains in earlier years/ changes to the scheme.

T16b_05	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Development of Compact scheme - number of pupil beneficiaries	No	2014-15	5226	16000	17000	18000			Although the scheme has undergone significant expansion and development, we continue to aim to increase the beneficiaries we engage. Later year target may be challenging.
T16b_06	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Collaborative target for NE Raising Aspirations Partnership (NNCO/SPoC)	Yes	2013-14	8623	21000	TBC	TBC			From 2015/16 the NNCO operating as a Single Point of Contact for the 5 NE HEI's. Existing targets for 2016/17 and 2017/18 have been increased to take into account the growth of the network, and the additional pump prime funding. The five universities have committed funding to sustain collaborative activity to July 2019.
T16b_07	Access	Attainment raising	Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	School Partnership - number of participating schools. The focus will be on supporting KS4 attainment in the identified schools. Baseline data will be gathered in conjunction with the schools on the current performance of pupils at KS4 and progression to Higher Education. Following the development of the partnership between the University and the schools, this data will be gathered again at the end of Year 11 to assess their performance at KS4. Longer term, the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) will be used to monitor subsequent progression to Higher Education.	No	2015-16	0	4	8	10			To support attainment raising in schools, we will seek to work with local Secondary feeder schools to offer a package of support to teachers and their pupils e.g. CPD opportunities, revision workshops.