The University of Sheffield
Access and Participation Plan - 2020/21 to 2024/25

Section 1 - Assessment of current performance

Sections 1.1 to 1.7 below assess our performance in terms of access, success and progression for under-represented groups and potential intersections of disadvantage.

The data in this section are predominately drawn from the OfS dataset and complemented by other internal and external data where these allow a deeper insight to inform the development of our aims, objectives and intended outcomes. It should be assumed that the OfS dataset has been used to assess performance unless otherwise stated.

The University of Sheffield has 15,116 registered home undergraduate students.[1] The majority (95%) of the University's home undergraduate provision is full time, first degree. Unless otherwise stated, for example where other modes of study are significant for a target population, it is this mode that is being considered. The University has drawn data across the full student lifecycle from the OfS Access and Participation dataset for four of the five underrepresented groups identified. The exception is care leavers who account for a very small portion of the overall population.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access
Considerable effort has been made by the University over the past decade to close the gap at entry between students from low participation neighbourhoods, (POLAR4) quintile 1, and those from quintile 5.

As a high tariff provider, we perform well in terms of widening access among our peer group and have been on track to achieve our current Access Agreement target of 10% new students entering the University from POLAR3 Q1 areas by 2020. This is with contextual offers currently only being made to those pupils enrolled on our sustained engagement widening participation programmes. We appreciate that we now need to increase this to play our part in the national KPM and the introduction of our full contextual admissions policy for 2020/21 entry will support this. Whilst the primary aim of our sustained engagement programmes are to support progression to the University of Sheffield we see high numbers opting to study at other high tariff providers across the UK supporting this national agenda. This is common across sustained engagement programmes offered at high tariff providers, as well as something actively encouraged by the Realising Opportunities partnership that we are members of.

In terms of our location, in 2011 92.4% or 1.67m residents of the Sheffield City Region (SCR) classified themselves as White. This was above the national average of 85.4%. SCR deprivation is widespread with 16.5% of the city region's Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOA's) ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. The highest concentrations of LSOA's ranked amongst the most deprived 10% are in Sheffield (22.4% of LSOA's) and Doncaster (21.2%); there are no LSOA's ranked amongst the most deprived 10% in the Derbyshire Dales district (Sheffield City Region European Structural & Investment Funds Strategy January 2014). The recent publication by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, Closing the Regional Attainment Gap'[2] further highlights this as out of 19 Sheffield City Region wards, 14 (74%) have 'very low' or 'low' social mobility according to the Sutton Trust Mobility Map. The report shows that the gap between pupils from different social

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[1] As at 1 December 2018

[2] www.suttontrust.com/policy/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-social-mobility/

backgrounds is one of the key factors driving this divide, and highlights the power of high quality teaching for disadvantaged pupils. In England, 87% of the most deprived pupils attend good or outstanding schools, compared to 71% in Sheffield and Barnsley, and just 63% and 53% in Rotherham and Doncaster respectively. At the end of Key Stage 2, the reading pass rate in South Yorkshire is 67% compared to a national average of 72%.

As demonstrated in the two charts below, comparison of 18-year-old entrants to the University with the national population shows that for both low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4) and socioeconomic status (IMD) the gaps have been closed by 4 and 7 percentage points respectively. However there remains a significant gap in the composition of our student intake in respect of POLAR quintile 1 and IMD quintile 1 for both measures versus the composition of the population as a whole.
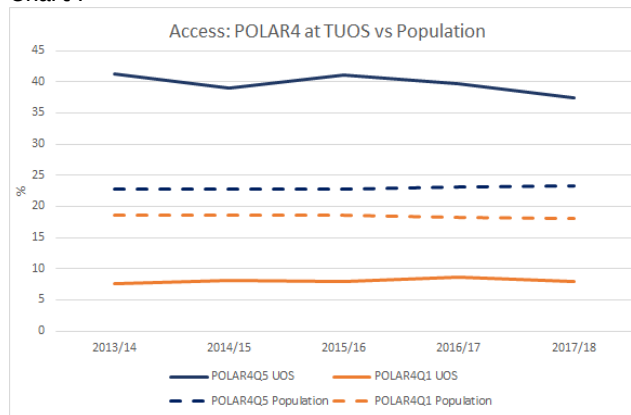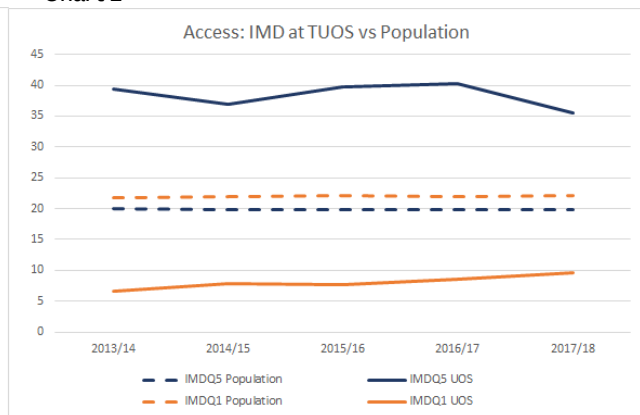
Chart 1

Chart 2

Closing this gap has been challenging for high tariff providers. The most recent HESA PIs, using 2017/18 data, show that the University of Sheffield is consistently above the benchmark for young full-time, first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1) as well as from state schools and colleges. We however recognise the importance of accelerating efforts to reduce entry barriers for underrepresented groups and our role within this to support the OfS national key performance measures.

Success - Non-continuation

Continuation rates for students flagged as IMD quintile 5 compared with quintile 1, show a statistically significant gap in continuation of 8% in 2016/17. The POLAR4 gap is 5%, although not statistically significant. As demonstrated in Charts 3 and 4 below the gap has been widening since 2013/14, and notably since the introduction of higher fees in 2012/13.
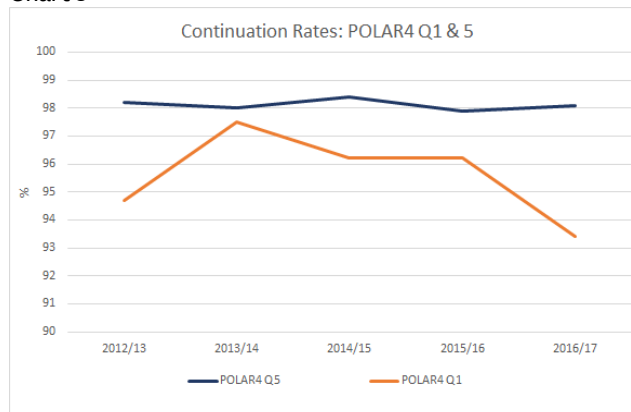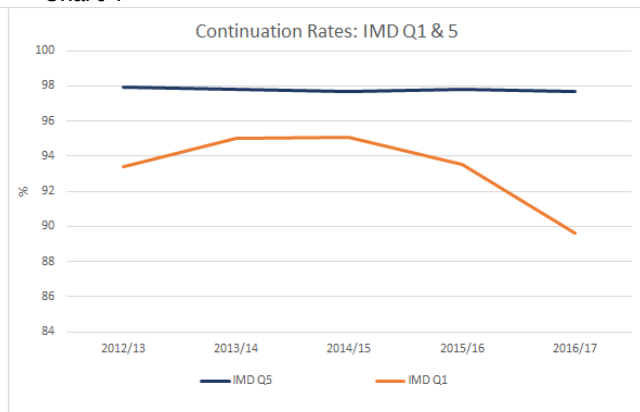
Chart 3

Chart 4

The HESA PIs (2017/18 data) show that Sheffield continues to perform well against benchmark for non-continuation of young full-time first-degree entrants with 2.7% non-continuation against a benchmark of 3.6%. However we again recognise that more can be done to reverse this trend.

For part-time students, there is some evidence that a gap is developing between IMD Q1 students and students in other quintiles, currently standing at 20 percentage points and growing over time. Because of the low numbers of students, however, this finding should be treated with a degree of caution.

Success - Attainment

Attainment rates (percentage of students achieving 1st or 2:1s) for full time, first degree students from POLAR4 Q1 and IMD Q1 show a general trend towards improvement. This is more marked for the IMD quintiles, where the gap has been reduced to 11 percentage points, however there is no statistical significance in the attainment gap for either of these groups.
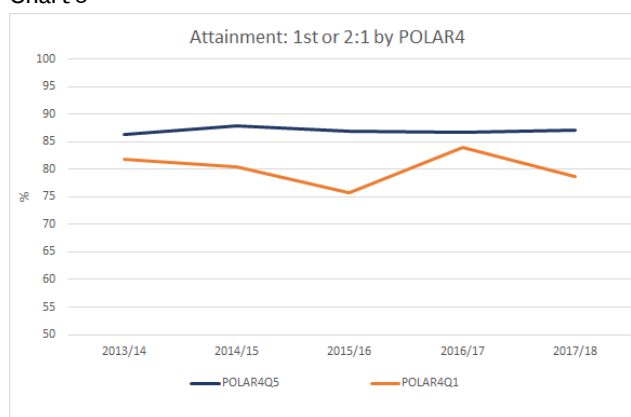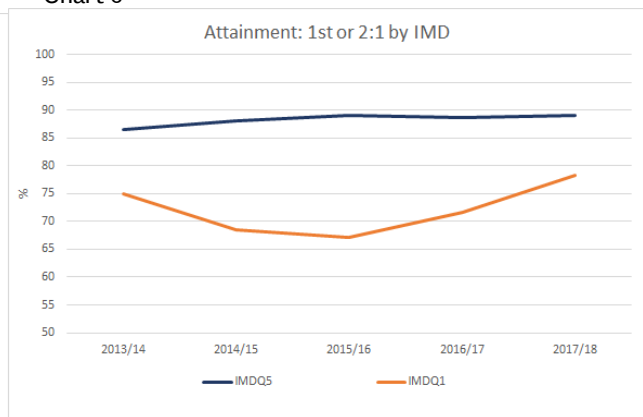
Chart 5

Attainment: 1st or 2:1 by POLAR4

Chart 6

Attainment: 1st or 2:1 by IMD

Progression to highly skilled employment or higher-level study

The progression gap for both POLAR4 and IMD quintiles 1 and 5 show a fairly erratic trend over the past five years making it difficult to draw concrete conclusions about the influencers. Neither gap passes the test for statistical significance, meaning that they should be treated with caution. Bearing this in mind, however, there is movement to suggest the gap is increasing for both measures, with them currently standing at 6% for POLAR4 and 5% for IMD.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Access

Chart 7 shows the data for 18-year-old entrants to Sheffield compared with the equivalent national population sharing the same ethnic background for i) white students and ii) students from a non-white background. Chart 8 further disaggregates this information by non-white ethnic group. Whilst data for all BAME students show that student numbers now align closely with proportions in the national population (0.6 of a percentage point), the disaggregated data shows that this masks a more notable gap for black (1.2 percentage points) and to a lesser extent mixed (0.7 percentage points) student entry.
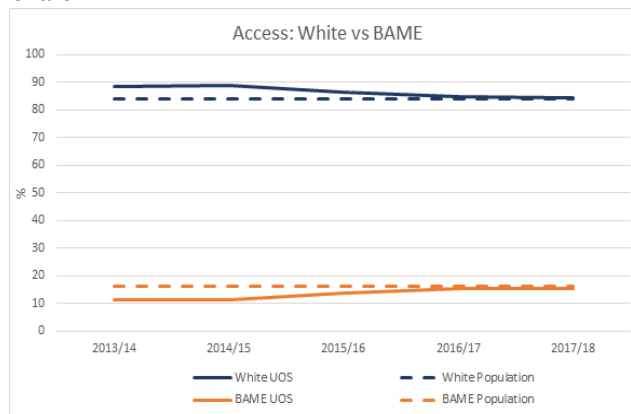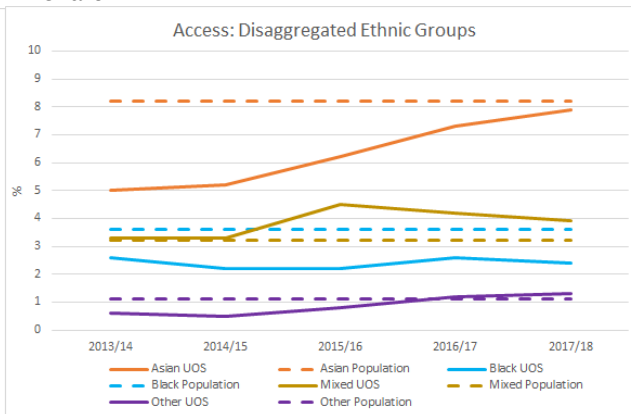
Chart 7

Access: White vs BAME

Chart 8

Access: Disaggregated Ethnic Groups

Success - Non-continuation

The gap between continuation rates for white, full time, first degree undergraduate students and those with a non-white ethnic background had been reducing over recent years, reaching zero percentage points in 2015/16. In 2016/17, this rose to one percentage point. Neither the gap nor the change over the time period are statistically significant.

Disaggregating to individual ethnic groups, although no one group has a statistically significant gap in 2016/17, the data suggest that all groups except for Asian have a lower continuation rate than White students.

Chart 9

Continuation Rates: White vs BAME

Chart 10

Continuation Rates: Disaggregated Ethnic Groups
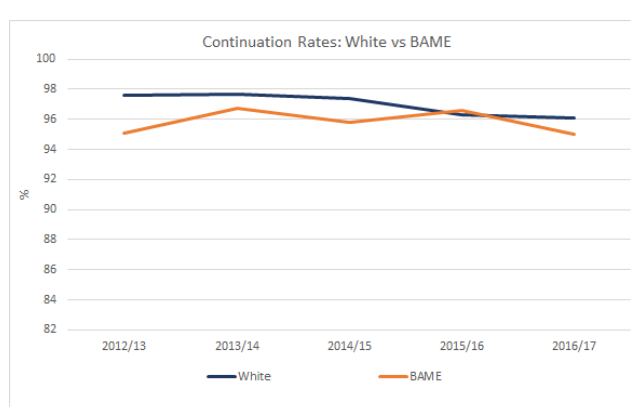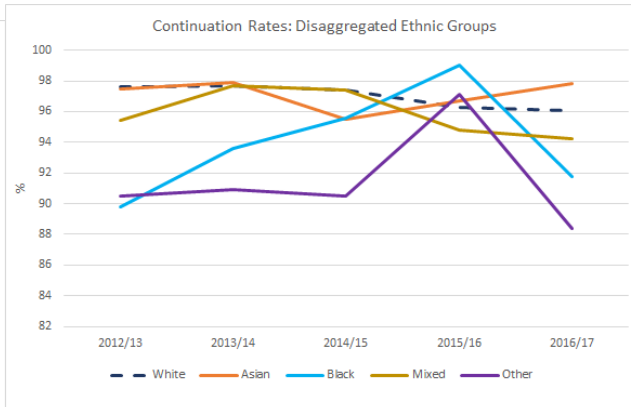
Success - Attainment

Comparison of attainment rates for full time, first degree students disaggregated by ethnicity shows that there is a sustained attainment gap between White and BAME students. The gap is particularly pronounced amongst Asian and Black students, 19% and 17% respectively. The gap is however closing (from 31% in 2013/14 to 17% in 2017/18) for Black students, whereas for Asian students the gap has remained largely unchanged at 19%. Students from Mixed backgrounds are now close to having parity in attainment outcomes. As context to these figures, total numbers of BAME students in the 2018/19 Home UG population are: Asian 1,400 (9%), Black 420 (3%), Mixed 670 (5%) and Other 190 (1%).

Chart 11

Attainment: 1st or 2:1, White vs BAME

Chart 12

Attainment: 1st or 2:1, Disaggregated Ethnic Groups
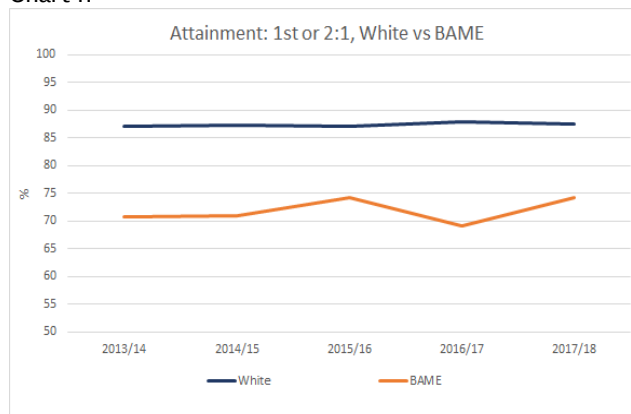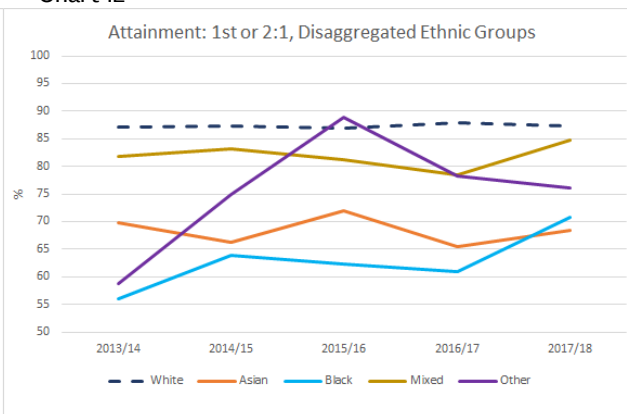
When entry tariff is taken into account, BAME students as a whole perform less well than their white counterparts with equivalent entry tariff for most tariff points, as the chart below shows. The chart also shows that where BAME students are disaggregated into their specific ethnic backgrounds, there is some variation in performance, but low numbers of students at a disaggregated level mean that these results should be treated with some caution.
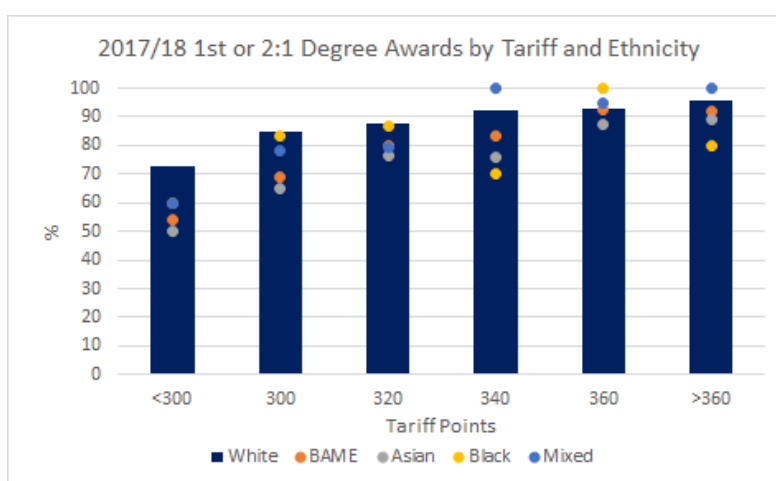
2017/18 1st or 2:1 Degree Awards by Tariff and Ethnicity

Chart 13

Progression to highly skilled employment or higher-level study

Progression rates for full time, first degree students from white and BAME ethnic backgrounds show that the progression gap is small (and not statistically significant). This has been consistent over time and indicates that opportunities for employment or further study are not informed by ethnicity. This is a measure where the University generally performs well against similar institutions (under TEF 4 the University achieved a ++flag for BME students against benchmark for *High Skilled Employment or Further Study*). As the chart demonstrates, the disaggregated data suffers from low numbers, associated erratic trends and lack of statistical significance.

Chart 14

Progression: White vs BAME

Chart 15

Progression: Disaggregated Ethnic Groups
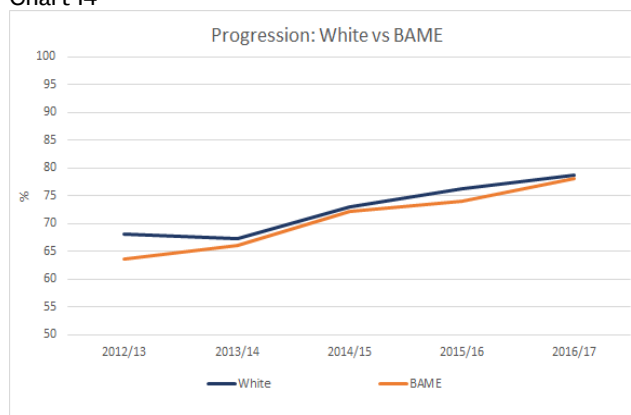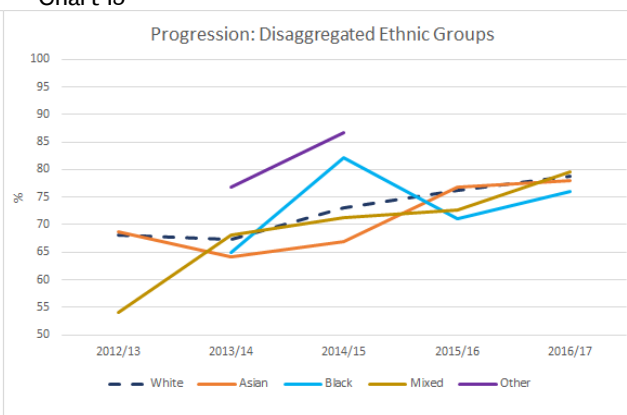
1.3 Mature students

Access

Mature students account for 9% of our overall home, full-time undergraduate population (1,480 students in 2018/19) and 98% of our undergraduate population on part-time programmes (160 students in 2018/19). In recent years we have seen an increase in the numbers of mature student applicants for full-time provision (including degrees with integrated foundation years) against a decline in part-time. Whilst overall the percentage of mature students has increased, this is in part due to a decline in Young Under 21 students as a consequence of deliberate recruitment policies relating to the profile of the overall student population.

Chart 16

Success - Non-continuation
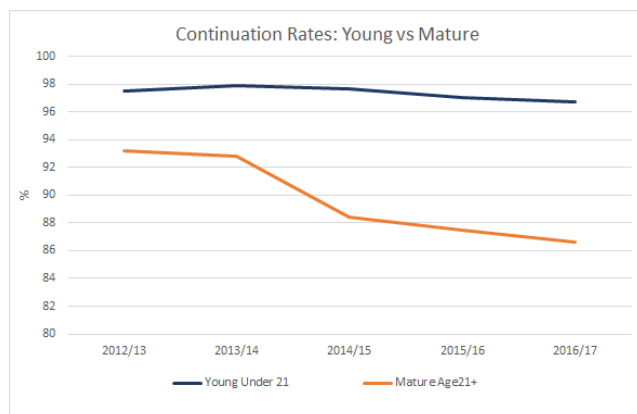
Data on continuation rates for young (under age 21) and mature (age 21+) full time, first degree students, show that a gap has been developing over a number of years. Whilst the continuation rate for young students is relatively stable, it is dropping for mature students.

Chart 17

Success – Attainment
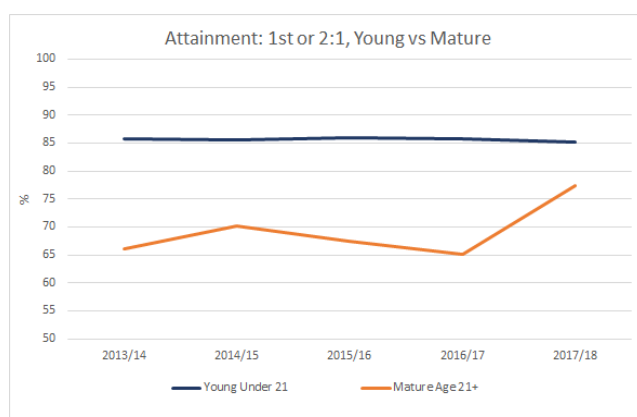
Attainment rates for young (under age 21) and mature (age 21+) full time, first degree students, show a recent improvement in attainment rates amongst mature students. However, there are relatively small numbers (not exceeding 135 in any given year) of mature students in the measured population and a lack of statistical significance in the gap, or change, which means that conclusions drawn from this should be treated with some caution.

Chart 18

Progression to highly skilled employment or higher-level study

The data show that mature students perform better for progression than their younger counterparts. This is not an area for concern for the University.

Chart 19

Progression: Young vs Mature — line chart, % axis 50–100, years 2012/13 to 2016/17. Series: Young Under 21, Mature Age 21+.
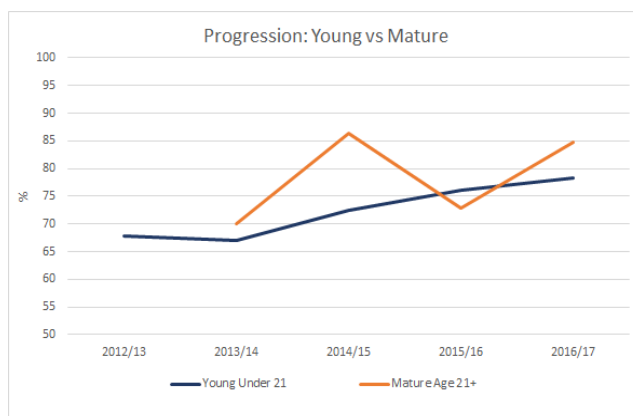
1.4 Disabled students

Access
The data for full time, first degree entrants with a disability compared to those without shows that the University is continuing to recruit increasing numbers of students with a disability. The disaggregated data show that the greatest increase in declared disability has been in the proportion of students with a mental health condition. The increase in students with known disabilities is an upward trend that may be associated with more students declaring a disability.

Chart 20
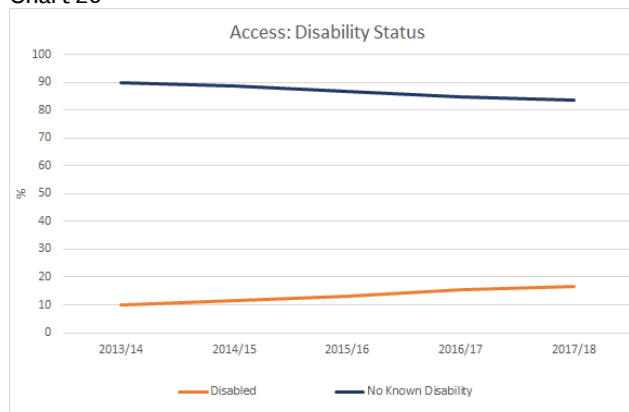
Chart 21
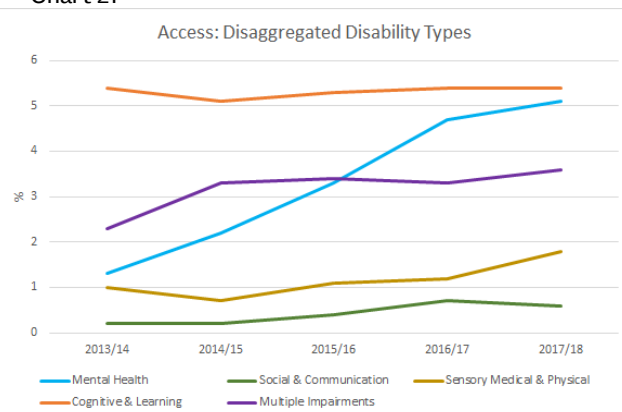
Success - Non-continuation
Continuation rates for those studying full time, first degree programmes with a disability and those without in 2016/17 showed a zero percentage point gap. Although this gap is not statistically significant, there is a general downward trend from 2014/15.
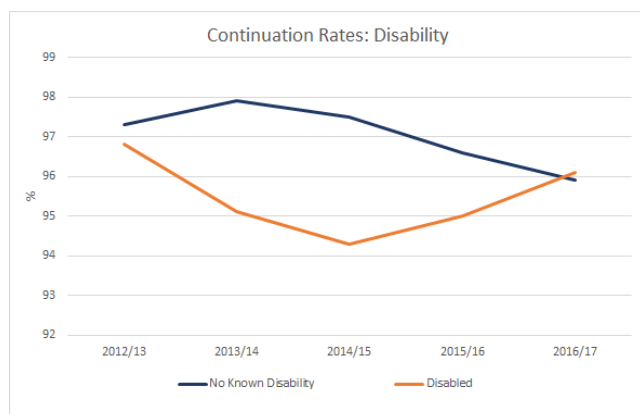
Disaggregating to particular types of disability, those with a mental health condition had a 3 percentage point lower continuation rate in 2016/17 than those with no known disability. This will be monitored. Where data exist for other conditions, there is no particular negative gap.

Chart 22

Success – Attainment

The attainment gap between students with a disability and those without currently stands at 2 percentage points with no disability type deviating significantly. The total gap is not statistically significant but demonstrates a downward trend over the past three years.

When students' tariff on entry is taken into account, for 2017/18 no gaps of above 4 percentage points exist, except at the 340 tariff point mark where a gap of 12 percentage points exists, as shown in Chart 23. There are no immediately obvious reasons for this deviation.
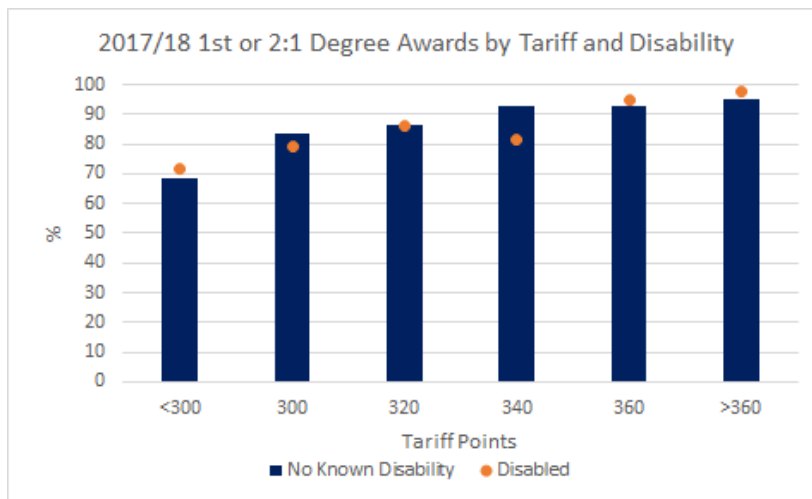
Chart 23

Limited data exists to suggest a gap between the attainment of part-time students with a disability and those without. The very limited data in this area means that it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions, but points to an area to be monitored for the development of measurable trends.

Progression to highly skilled employment or higher-level study

Progression rates for full time, first degree students with a declared disability and with no known disability shows a close correlation and no performance gap. Trends for the disaggregated disability types are fairly erratic but follow the general upward trend of students with no known disability. Low numbers mean that there is a lower degree of confidence in the findings from the disaggregated data, but a small (3 percentage point) negative gap is suggested between those with a mental health disability or multiple impairments and those with no known disability.

Chart 24
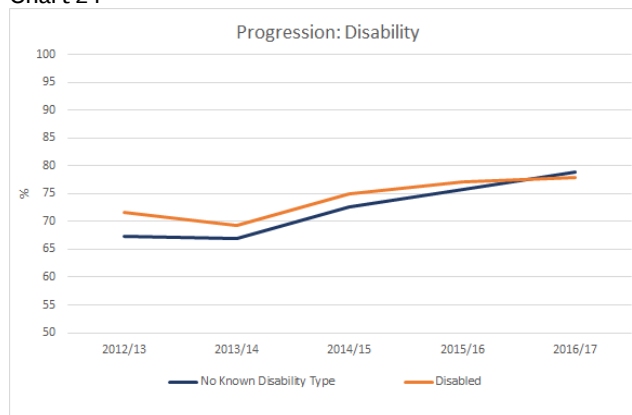
Chart 25
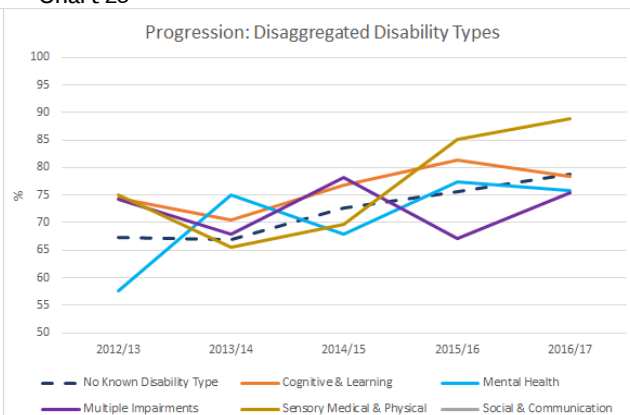
Again, this is an area where the University generally performs well against similar institutions, for example achieving a ++flag in the recent TEF 4 performance data.

1.5 Care Leavers and Estranged Students

Where student care leaver status can be established i.e. the information is not refused or unavailable, the data show that a very small proportion of entrants to full-time, first degree programmes have been in care. In absolute terms, this number of students has remained below 15 over the reporting period, meaning that the access gap exceeds 99% for this group.

The low entry rates for students with an established care leaver status translates into very low numbers in each cohort passing through the University (<15 students). This means that it is impossible to draw meaningful conclusions from the available data when comparing the performance of this group to their non-care leaver counterparts across the student lifecycle. However, we provide a range of additional interventions for care leavers and Estranged students, details of which can be found in Section 3 below.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Access - Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds, Ethnicity & Gender

The data show an access gap of 87 percentage points for white males from POLAR4 Q1 compared to the other quintiles and a gap of 81 percentage points for white females. The respective gaps for BAME students are 77 and 70 percentage points. The similar percentage point difference between male and female students here suggests access is more of an issue for males from both white and BAME disadvantaged backgrounds than it is for females, but notably the gap for white males is 10 percentage points higher than for males from BAME ethnic groups. This suggests that the combination of being white, male, and from a disadvantaged background makes access particularly difficult, although absolute numbers of male, BAME, quintile 1 students are low, so this conclusion should be treated with some degree of caution. These low numbers also prevent any further meaningful disaggregation of the BAME group.

Chart 26
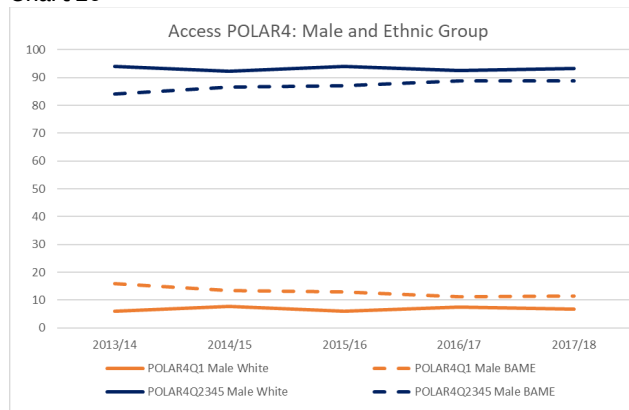
Chart 27
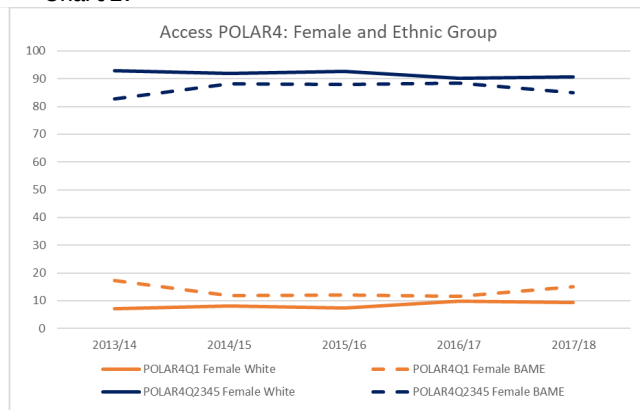
The below charts show the overall contribution of groups, split by their gender and ethnicity, to the total access numbers for the relevant POLAR 4 quintiles. These charts further demonstrate that white males from disadvantaged backgrounds experience the largest disparity in access from their female counterparts in the same POLAR 4 and ethnic groups.

Chart 28

Access POLAR4Q1: Gender and Ethnicity

Chart 29

Access POLAR4Q2345: Gender and Ethnicity
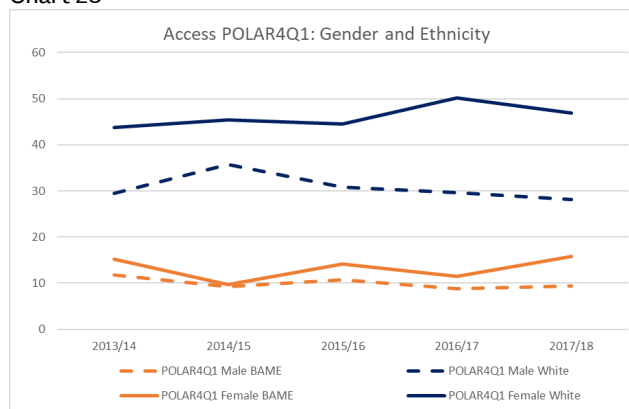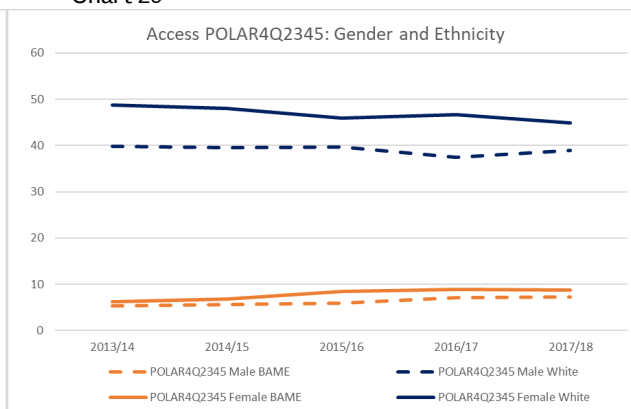
These findings are backed up when IMD is considered in place of POLAR4. Comparing the access proportions between IMD Q1 and IMD Q2345, the gap is greatest for white males (86 percentage points) and then white females (83 percentage points). The gaps are notably smaller for BAME males (52 percentage points) and females (21 percentage points).

Attainment - Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds, Ethnicity and Gender
Robust data exists to show an attainment gap for both White males (6 percentage points) and females (6 percentage points) from POLAR4 Q1 compared to other quintiles. Because of the lower numbers of BAME students, particularly in POLAR4 Q1, it is more difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from the available data. However, the charts below show the latest attainment gap to be 8 percentage points for POLAR 4 Q1, BAME males compared to those in the other POLAR4 quintiles. The trend for the past three years for this group of students is erratic, so it is difficult to comment on the direction of travel at this point. The trend for POLAR4 BAME female students is more consistent, showing an upward trend in the attainment of POLAR4 Q1 students who are currently somewhat (5 percentage points) outperforming female BAME students in the other quintiles. Both charts show that the overall lower attainment of BAME students noted in Section 1.2 is replicated across both male and female students and all POLAR4 quintiles, with white students consistently outperforming their BAME counterparts who share the same characteristics.

Chart 30

Degree Outcomes POLAR4: Male and Ethnic Group

Chart 31

Degree Outcomes POLAR4: Female and Ethnic Group
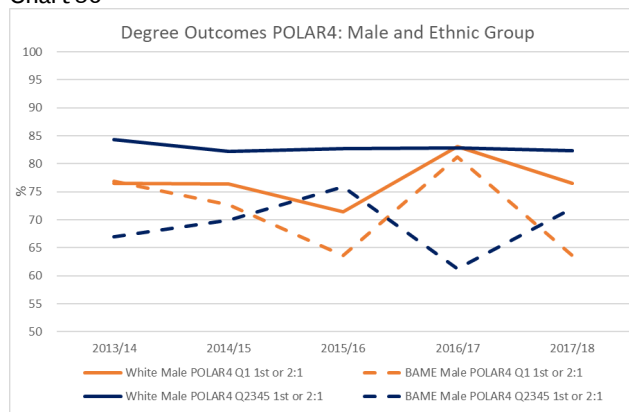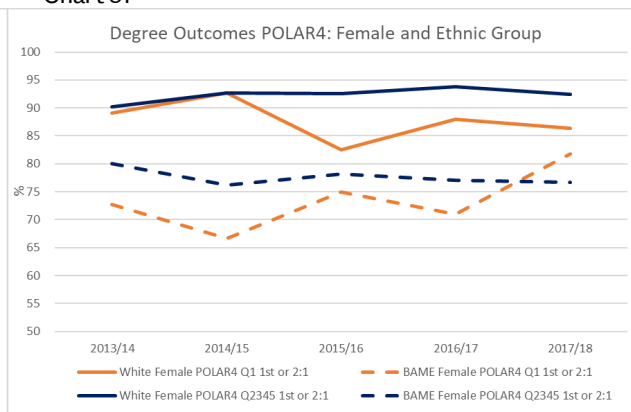
When IMD is considered instead of POLAR, there is parity, or near-parity of outcomes for students when compared to their peers of the same ethnicity and gender in IMD Q1 compared to IMD Q2345, except for white females where a gap of 7 percentage points exists. Mirroring the findings for POLAR4, white students also consistently outperform their BAME counterparts.

Continuation & Progression to highly skilled employment or higher-level study
The data shows that both the continuation rate gap and the progression gap observed between students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and other students doesn't seem to show any correlation with those students' gender or ethnic background.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

Roma, Gypsy and Traveller
Internal data show that, over the period 2014/15 to 2018/19, we have had fewer than 5 students who identify as Roma, Gypsy or Traveller on full time, first degree programmes. The access gap for these students is close to 100%. The lack of numbers makes any further quantitative life cycle analysis for this group impossible.

Young Adult Carers
Internal data shows that numbers of students indicating that they are carers is also low. Over the period 2014/15 to 2018/19, new intake varies between 10 and 20 students. The low numbers of students mean that a reliable pattern cannot be established, but the access gap exceeds 99%. Further quantitative exploration of the lifecycle is not possible here because of the low numbers of students involved.

Section 2 - Strategic aims and objectives

The University of Sheffield is a highly selective institution with a strong track record of attracting and retaining students from under-represented groups in Higher Education (HE). We have a longstanding commitment to widening participation and fair access, not only to our own programmes of study, but also to HE in general. We have worked with schools and colleges for decades, to improve achievement of young people within the region and to raise awareness of, and aspiration to, a range of educational opportunities. This strongly reflects the University's Mission, Vision and Identity and the foundation on which the University was built:

> *The University of Sheffield has roots going back to 1828 and was founded formally in 1905 via penny donations from the local citizens. The aim was to bring higher education within reach of the children of the people working in the great industries of Sheffield, to give support to those industries and to serve as a centre for the study of diseases. The University is proud of its origins and continues to value the role it has come to play in its city and region.[3]*

The University retains a strong sense of civic responsibility. This is demonstrated, amongst other ways, through the broad ranging initiatives we deliver with schools, colleges and other local HE providers in order to widen participation in higher education.

In this Access and Participation Plan, 2020/21 - 2024/25 we continue to take a whole student lifecycle approach to widening participation and aim to address the challenges that students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds continue to face when engaging with Higher Education.

Through our assessment of current performance, we have identified five priority areas for the next five years, across the student lifecycle and these are detailed in Section 2.1 below.

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[3] www.sheffield.ac.uk/ourplan/

2.1 Target groups

Access

Our Access performance in Section 1 reveals two priority areas. Firstly, **improving access to university for students from low participation backgrounds** (POLAR 4 Q1), specifically to the University of Sheffield but also via collaborative work to other higher tariff HE providers and to the HE sector as a whole. Secondly, the data reveal a gap for **Black student entry** into the University compared to the national 18 year old population. We will increase our targeted access work for both groups, and for the latter specifically in relation to entry to the University of Sheffield.

We have noted an access gap for IMD Q1 and we will keep this under review. Our decision not to set this as a priority indicator is that our activities are focused on POLAR 4 Q1 and our new contextual admissions policy for 2020/21 is based on this group. We acknowledge there is some overlap with low IMD and POLAR Q1 and will monitor the impact of the planned scheme and consider expansion to IMD once we are in a position to review and measure outcomes. We commit to reviewing our position in September 2021 which will allow us to effectively measure our progress, taking into account two admissions cycles with our contextual admissions policy being in place.

Success - Non-Continuation

Again, in relation to **POLAR 4 and IMD Quintiles 1-5,** our assessment of performance identifies that these students are more likely to struggle to remain in higher education, with higher dropout rates and a trend to suggest the situation will get worse without intervention. As above, we have established processes for attracting, retaining, and supporting students based on POLAR characteristics and have not traditionally tracked IMD quintile gaps. As noted above, both gaps have widened since 2013/14 with a more significant gap for IMD. We have not set IMD targets, but recognise the need to track IMD non-continuation and will review this decision if the current trend is not reversed though planned interventions. We commit to reviewing our position relating to IMD in September 2021. This timeframe will allow us to effectively measure our progress, taking into account data from our new student system relating specifically to IMD non-continuation as well as attainment for this group.

Continuation rates for **mature students** are below those of their younger counterparts and the gap is widening. However, the nature of the mature student cohort is changing across the sector and within the University. We need to do more to understand this context and how to respond to best serve the needs of this group.

Success – Attainment

Whilst we are committed to reducing the gap in degree outcomes for all underrepresented groups, our focus for the duration of this plan will be around addressing the gap for **Black and Asian students** specifically. We will set ambitious targets in the plan for this group. Eradicating this gap has already been set as a priority for the University and features prominently in our 2019 *Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan.*[4]

Whilst it is not our intention to specify attainment targets for students from lower POLAR 4 quintiles, mature students and students with mental health issues within this plan we will continue to monitor these groups. With the first there is a trend towards improvement, with no statistical significance. For this reason, coupled with work underway to review out curricula, assessment and inclusive practices through our programme Level Approach (see below), we have chosen not to set priority targets. Monitoring will ensure that positive trends are maintained and accelerated, or that early interventions can be made should progress slow.

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[4] www.sheffield.ac.uk/inclusion/race-equality

Progression

We have significant confidence in terms of the progress of our graduates, from across all groups into employment or further study. Whilst we will continue to work on residual gaps across underrepresented groups (varying from 6% to 0%, none show statistical significance) it is not our intention to set targets for this element of the student lifecycle within the plan. We will however continue to monitor outcomes and keep this under review. For example, we note the current, but reducing gap, in progression rates between Polar Q1 and Q5 students and will track this to ensure that progress is maintained and accelerated through planned interventions. We have set out in Section 3 some of the ways in which we are continuing to develop and support our students as they transition to employment and/or further study.

2.2 Aims and objectives

Focusing on the target groups identified in Section 2.1, we have set out below the strategic aims that will drive delivery of this Access and Participation Plan and the measurable objectives for each. Targets, broken down by year, and against which performance will be tracked, are provided in the Appendix.

2.2.1 Access

Target 1 (PTA_1)
Aim: To narrow the POLAR Q5:Q1 entry ratio at TUOS over 5 years.
Measurable objective: To increase registrations at TUOS of POLAR 4 Q1 students to achieve a 3:1 ratio to POLAR Q5 by 2024/25.

The activities below underpin delivery of Target 1, as well as supporting our ambition to widen access for all underrepresented groups. They are vehicles for us to reduce the 1.2% gap in terms of Black students entering higher education relative to the population and to *widen access to students from BAME backgrounds,* as stated within the University's Race Equality Strategy. We will:

- o Increase the number of widening participation students progressing into the University from our sustained engagement programme (Post-16 *Discover)* to 29.5% by 2024/25.
- o Increase the number of widening participation pupils progressing from the University's Pre-16 sustained engagement programme (*Discover US*) through to the University's Post 16 sustained engagement programme (*Discover*) to 24% by 2024/25.
- o Through the work of the Higher Education Progression Partnership (HEPP), ensure that every non-selective state Secondary School in the Sheffield City Region is supported with HEPP materials and/or activities to achieve Gatsby Benchmark 7 (Encounters with FE and HE) by 2024/15

Target 2 (PTA_2)
Aim: To support the OfS in eliminating the national gap in entry rates at higher-tariff providers between the most and least under-represented groups.
Measurable objective: Improvement (measured across the national partnership) in closing the gap in entry rates at higher tariff providers between the most and least underrepresented groups. Over 5 years, progression of Realising Opportunities participants to higher tariff providers to rise to 54%.

2.2.2. Success - Non-Continuation

Target 3 (PTS_1)
Aim: To narrow the non-continuation gap for POLAR Q1:Q5 full time, first degree students.

Measurable objective: To reverse the direction of travel from 2020/21 with a reduction in the current gap to 2.5% by 2024/25.

Target 4
Aim: To narrow the non-continuation gap for young (under age 21) and mature (age 21+) full-time, first degree students.
Measurable objective: To undertake extended analysis and evaluation of the current non-continuation gap and to set, by September 2020, continuation targets for relevant mature student groups, including an aggregate target for 2024/25 that reflects the nature of the overall mature population for agreement with the OfS.

2.2.3 Success - Attainment

Target 5 (PTS_4)
Aim: To reduce the gap in degree outcomes for all underrepresented groups, giving high priority to improving degree outcomes for **Black students** specifically.
Measurable objective: To reduce the gap for Black students to 10% by 2024/25.

Target 6 (PTS_5)
Aim: To reduce the gap in degree outcomes for all underrepresented groups, giving high priority to improving degree outcomes for **Asian students**.
Measurable objective: To reduce the gap for Asian students to 12% by 2024/25.

Our targets relating to Black and Asian student attainment are set such that the University tracks the OfS Key Performance Measure to reduce the unexplained gap to zero by 2024/25 with a trajectory to eliminate the absolute gap by 2030/31. As outlined in Section 3.2.2 below, the phasing of our proposed trajectory reflects the time lag from implementation of our new student system to being able to use the data this will provide in a meaningful way to make informed, targeted and effective inventions to support closing this gap. We commit to reviewing our progress in September 2021 after a year of the new system being in place, and if greater progress has been made than originally forecast, to amend our milestones accordingly.

Section 3 - Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview
The University takes a whole institution approach to supporting access, success and progression. The Student Support Strategy[5] recognises the contribution that all parts of the University play in enabling students to succeed, progress and obtain maximum value from their University experience. Academic departments, personal tutors, accommodation and student support services are all aligned in their approach to supporting students to flourish and succeed. Comprehensive student support services cover transition, financial, personal and welfare support and extensive clinical services encompassing mental health, counselling, disability support and a University Health Service, with full GP and Nursing provision, which enables us to offer bespoke student clinical services and swifter access to NHS secondary care. We ensure that all parts of the University can advise students effectively about these services via compulsory online training for all staff entitled 'Supporting Our Students'.

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[5] www.sheffield.ac.uk/sss/student-support-strategy

Alignment with other strategies

The *Our Education and Student Experience* section of the University's Strategic Plan states the University's commitment to deliver the highest quality education and student experience. This ambition is reinforced through the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy 2016-2021, which focuses around three key themes: *Excellence in Practice*; an *Outward Facing Ethos*; and *Developing a Flexible Approach*. The Strategy states clearly our *"aim to continue actively removing barriers to access and progression for those who are systematically disadvantaged, and to offer support to students to overcome the challenges they face whilst studying here."*

Our Student Recruitment Strategy 2017-2021 echoes this with our commitment to outreach and widening participation as one of our key values.

In early 2019, the University launched its Race Equality Strategy & Action Plan, developed in collaboration with the Students' Union. The Action Plan sets out the actions being taken to:

- Reduce the attainment gap between BAME and White student to zero
- Widen Access to students from BAME backgrounds and to support these students to succeed once at the University of Sheffield
- To improve graduate outcomes and progression to postgraduate education for BAME students
- To increase the diversity of the staff body and support the career progression of BAME staff
- To create an inclusive campus culture that facilitates belonging and promotes respect for BAME students and staff and the wider BAME community.

Progress against these objectives is being monitored by the University's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

Implementation of a Programme Level Approach (PLA) also demonstrates our commitment to improving inclusivity and access to programmes. PLA is one of the University's five institutional level Strategic Change Projects and is an ambitious change programme being driven out across all faculties and disciplines to realise the ambitions of our learning and teaching strategy. PLA centres everything we do around how students experience their academic study. Reinforcing the Student Voice at the heart of all learning, PLA is providing a unique opportunity take a pan-institutional approach to improving the inclusivity of our programmes in terms of their design and delivery and across every stage of the student lifecycle.

3.2 Strategic measures

3.2.1 Access strategic measures – overview

The principles that underpin our access strategy focus on two key areas: a) Widening access to the University of Sheffield specifically and b) Collaborative outreach. These are not mutually exclusive areas and our strategic vision links the two in order to enable the provision of excellent local and national HE information, advice and guidance and also to develop supported pathways into highly competitive courses. Via our collaborative outreach commitment, we work to raise aspirations and attainment across the city region but also more widely in the Yorkshire and Humber region and nationally. We work collaboratively in order to ensure that appropriate information, advice and guidance about progression opportunities is available to all with the potential to progress to Higher Education.

Access to the University of Sheffield (supporting Access Targets 1 and 2)

In our work to widen access to the University of Sheffield specifically, we are scaling up our plan to integrate and develop further a targeted and progressive programme of sustained activity (branded as "Discover")[6], with the following intensive phases: Y7 to Y8, Y9 to Y11, Y12 to Y13, and Mature. This

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[6] www.sheffield.ac.uk/outreach

offer has been developed in consultation with teachers, lecturers and learners over a number of years with the targeting criteria and the curriculum content reviewed and re-focussed over the last four years in particular. The theory of change behind the development of the sustained access to TUOS offer is grounded in academic research on belonging factors and supported transition into HE, sector best practice and institutional research[7]. The "Discover" suite of programmes are targeted at learners who meet a range of WP criteria. To recruit to these programmes, we use an institutional and learner level targeting framework which takes into account geography and school characteristics in addition to looking in more detail at individual learner circumstances. Priority is given to pupils from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1) as well as those who have a disability, are Looked After Children (LAC), estranged or Young Adult Carers (YAC). A key component of our Post-16 offering is study skills and core A-Level revision sessions provided for participants as an integral part of each pathway. The curriculum for our Post-16 programme is linked to the school curriculum to provide support to participants at key times during their studies. Successful completion of "Discover Post-16" enables participants to receive an alternative offer of up to two A level grades or equivalent below our standard offer. Over the last two years we have consolidated all of the pathways into a coherent framework with parity of alternative offers across subject areas and strengthened the connection between the Pre 16 and Post 16 offer to enable smoother pupil transitions; we have set our Targets 2 and 3 in this area to scale up this progress.

In addition, in the 2019/20 cycle we are launching a new contextual data admissions policy (Access+) which aims to increase significantly numbers of disadvantaged students from POLAR4 Q1, as well as those who are Looked After Children (LAC), estranged or Young Adult Carers (YAC) progressing to the University of Sheffield.

Collaborative outreach (supporting targets 1 and 2)
Since the demise of Aim Higher, the University of Sheffield has co-funded with Sheffield Hallam University a collaborative outreach hub, the Higher Education Progression Partnership (HEPP), which is focussed on the Sheffield City Region (SCR). In the last couple of years, we have been re-focussing its aim to provide high quality HE information advice and guidance (IAG) to targeted WP groups, now alongside its sister organisation, our National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) partnership: Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire Plus (HEPPSY+).

Our strategic vision, working with a range of sub-regional partners, is to provide an integrated framework for this IAG and outreach which will in turn support better informed HE choices and potentially increased numbers of POLAR 4 Q1 students coming into the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University and HE in general.

The recent national survey undertaken by UniTasterDays, in collaboration with the Higher Education Liaison Officers Association, indicates that Yorkshire and the Humber remains a cold spot in relation to the provision of HE related IAG, with schools and colleges in our region having the lowest self-reported rating of their university IAG provision (78.3%) and awareness of the Higher Education elements of the Gatsby benchmarks (54.1%). To address this, HEPP will support schools in the SCR to deliver IAG provision that meets Gatsby benchmark 7. HEPP's delivery model includes a 'minimum offer' of impartial information and advice for all SCR schools, alongside targeted face-to-face engagements with 11-16 learners and teacher CPD activity. This offer is complemented regionally by the wide range of specialist, subject specific HE outreach programmes provided by both local Universities and by the targeted work currently being undertaken as part of the HEPPSY+.

We are part of Realising Opportunities (RO), a collaboration of research-intensive universities working with shared objectives to support the OfS in eliminating the national gap in entry rates at higher-tariff providers between the most and least under-represented groups. RO also contributes to our own strategic aim to improve access to the University of Sheffield from Black students and

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[7] www.sheffield.ac.uk/apse/wp/wpreubook

those from low participation neighbourhoods. The programme is underpinned by robust evaluation, undertaken by independent evaluators, which is a theory of change model using narrative, empirical research and causality evaluation types to evidence impact.

We believe that the integrated approach above, creating our own bespoke sustained access programmes, informed by our own Widening Participation and Research Evaluation Unit (WPREU) research, and complemented by collaborative outreach has enabled us to make good progress against previous HESA benchmarks and other national targets (we are on course to meet our target of 10% POLAR 3 Q1 entrants by 2020). However, we fully recognise the changing context for access and the demands that OfS is making upon the sector to deliver a significant step change in outcomes. The challenging and ambitious POLAR targets we are setting in this plan, directly linked to the OfS National KPM will help us to improve access to our own institution and also to contribute to improved performance across the sector.

3.2.2 Success strategic measures - overview
Our support and guidance teams provide enhanced transition and continuation support for under-represented groups including estranged students, care-leavers, student carers, mature and disabled students. This includes pre-arrival support information, tailored orientation events, named support contacts throughout their university career, peer mentoring and specialist support with accommodation and finance. There are also community-building lunches for mature students and enhanced support for key transition stages. Welfare support is provided for students experiencing personal difficulties that significantly impact on their university experience and ability to study (e.g. crime, sexual violence, relationship abuse, forced marriage and honour violence).

Financial support specifically aimed at students from WP backgrounds has been developed through assessment of how financial support can overcome barriers to participation and/or success. Mature, full-time first-degree students on specific foundation programmes and students who meet low income and IMD or Polar 3/4 Quintile 1 are eligible for bursaries of c. £1,250 p.a. Looked after children/care leavers, carers and students estranged from their families are eligible for bursaries of £4,500 p.a. A hardship fund supports any student with significant unforeseen costs that may put them at risk of non-continuation; typically, 70% of this fund annually is awarded to students from under-represented groups. At least 150 scholarships a year are awarded as Experience Sheffield scholarships to new students from under-represented groups.

To support students who are care experienced or estranged from their families, the University offers 365-day accommodation plus an accommodation scholarship. Additionally, the University has signed up to the Stand Alone Pledge to support estranged students and is currently in the process of signing up to the Care Leaver Covenant.

Disability transition officers and trained student disability champions attend outreach events as part of widening access. A bespoke Autism transition event also takes place, and weekly Autism social groups are supported throughout each semester. The Disability service provides extensive advice to applicants, staff and students and trains staff in general and specific disability awareness. Tailored Learning Support Plans are created and promulgated via Disability Support Officers in each department. Diagnoses of specific Learning Difficulties and Autism Spectrum conditions are funded and facilitated. Support and guidance mentors, note-takers, personal assistants, exam and library support are provided for disabled students. Over 9,000 examination support adjustments are typically supported each year.

Our Student Access to Mental Health Service provides a single point of access to mental health provision for all students. Students with mental health needs are supported through Mental Health Advisers, the University Counselling Service and the University Health Service. We are the only UK university with accreditation from the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the British Psychological

Society for our Counselling Service and Mental Health Service. All students also have access to 24/7 online mental health support via our external partner, Big White Wall www.bigwhitewall.com

Success - Non-continuation (supporting targets 3 and 4)
Considerable research has been done to understand the reasons why students from underrepresented groups struggle to remain in higher education relative to the wider population. These are not simple, and mask a complex mix of challenges: cultural, financial, social, etc. Consequently, the interventions that can be made to mitigate the impact of these are equally complex and need to be adapted to individual circumstances. We continue to respond to research behind the reasons for non-continuation for both Polar Q1, mature and other student groups and to evolve the academic, social, and financial support we provide to reduce the risk of students exiting higher education unnecessarily. This includes providing targeted support via academic departments and/or the Students Union as well as via relevant University professional services.

For mature students in particular, further work is needed to understand fully the patterns of continuation across specific mature cohorts; how these contribute to the gap shown in the data set above; the differing nature of this market; and the types of interventions that have a meaningful impact on mature students' decisions to remain, or otherwise, in HE. We intend to complete this work over the next 18 months and to set targets that are relevant and proportionate given the nature of our mature cohorts, taking account of their motivations to study; their prior academic experience; their socioeconomic circumstances; and the responsibilities they carry as mature learners. Again, we will respond to the findings of this research with a view to enhancing and targeting academic, social, and financial support.

Success - Attainment (supporting targets 5 and 6)
As stated above, the University is embedding a Programme Level Approach, which provides a unique vehicle for the on-going development of inclusive programmes that by their nature do not exclude or disadvantage particular student groups. Inclusivity will be a priority theme within PLA for 2019/20, building on work that has taken place to date. This will be complemented by activities such as unconscious bias training and targeted interventions as part of the University's Race Equality Strategy Action Plan (described in more detail below), and will provide the basis for promoting, supporting and delivering our work to address the attainment gap for BAME students, and Black and Asian students in particular.

At an operational level, the University is investing in a new student record system that, from 2020, will allow greater central oversight of student performance in year and at the component level. This will support the development of improved services to academic teams and help them to identify, at an earlier stage, points at which attainment deviates (positively or negatively) from point of entry and to inform interventions. This will be used to inform course design, content, structure and assessment methods, where appropriate accelerating work that is already underway as a consequence of the University's Race Equality Strategy. Targets have been phased to align with the phasing of new capabilities.

Anti-Racism training is being introduced for all new students from 2019/20 as a strategic measure under the Race Equality Strategy. This is aimed at increasing a sense of belonging for BAME students and raising awareness amongst non-BAME students of unconscious bias and the importance of allyship. Training will begin with orientation and registration activity and be continued into the semester through peer workshops and mentoring conversations.

The Raising Awareness, Raising Aspiration (RARA) Project is due to finish shortly and the University will be considering lessons learnt from RARA in our continuing work to close attainment gaps. The Sheffield mentors programme matches new students with Year 2 and 3 students from the same academic discipline to support transition and is targeted in particular at POLAR Quintile 1 students and BAME students.

3.2.3 Progression Strategic Measures - Overview
Our graduates, from across all groups, demonstrate positive outcomes in terms of their transition into employment or further study. However, we remain committed to evolving and improving the support that we provide to underpin student success beyond graduation. This includes embedding Sheffield Graduate Attributes within our programmes and maximising the opportunities students have to gain real world experience as part of, and alongside, their studies. As committed to above, we will continue to monitor progression outcomes as part of our annual academic planning and quality assurance processes, and to track external measures of student outcomes generally. It is also our intention to track outcomes for students declaring mental health issues to understand the changing support needs for this group as they progress through education and into employment and further study. Should we need to review the decision not to set priority targets around progression within the five years of this plan we will do so in consultation with the OfS.

The three priority themes for the University's Programme Level Approach during 2019/20 are Employability, Inclusivity, and Sustainability. The last two in particular being heavily championed by the Students' Union and the progressive work they have been doing in these areas. Departments are being asked to reflect on how students identify, develop and articulate the skills they will gain throughout their time with us and how these will prepare them for life after graduation, whether in employment or further study and as citizens in the many communities they will occupy. The professional services that support both academic teams and students are being realigned to support this more integrated approach and we are reviewing how we ensure that programme are inclusive and responsive to the diversity of our student base and the ambitions articulated in this plan and more widely.

3.3 Student consultation
The Students' Union has been represented on the group overseeing the development of this plan and agreement of the priorities, activities and targets it contains. The plan, in draft form, was considered at a consultation meeting with representatives invited from the Disabled Students' Committee, Mature Students Committee, and BME Committee. An invitation to these discussions was also sent to the University's c.950 Academic Reps inviting any who self-identified into one of the key demographics to be involved. The feedback received during these consultation meetings provided valuable insight into the experiences of students from different backgrounds and these have helped shape our approach to supporting current students from under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

Through this consultation we were able build on the already strong partnership we have with our Students' Union to commit to a set of targets and measurable outcomes to reflect our strong ambitions as well as formalise the monitoring process through the newly established Access and Participation Operations Group (as detailed in section 3.4 below). Students have been involved in the development of all pan-institutional strategies and action plans that directly support our access and participation activities, including the Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan and the Student Mental Health Strategy 2016-21 and students continue to be involved in the monitoring of their impact.

Current students are key to the delivery of our widening participation priorities. Each year we involve over 650 of our undergraduate and postgraduate students in recruitment and WP activities. We positively recruit for student ambassadors who can reflect the desired diversity of our student body. On a number of WP programmes we specifically target current students who can mentor younger peers from a similar background (for example our Impact and school-based mentoring programmes). We are increasingly deploying current students who themselves came through our programmes and their insights are of significant benefit to the institution and to our shaping of future activity. We are aware that we can improve our learning from these experiences as part of our continuous improvement. We have recently created a new Student Voice post within the UK Student Recruitment and Widening Participation team in order to consolidate support for students working alongside established staff and harness this feedback more effectively.

Students are directly involved in major Learning & Teaching events, such as the University's annual Learning and Teaching Conference as both presenters and delegates, and similarly University staff support SU events, such as the Course Representatives Conference. PLA is requiring all programme teams to move engagement with students beyond the traditional staff student committees, to deepen and assure their on-going contribution to programme design, development and review. PLA places focus on the inclusivity of programmes and the employment outcomes of all student groups and allows students to inform activities and priorities. Student support services are scrutinised through the Student Support Committee with representation from the Students' Union.

We are taking steps to raise the presence of the Student Voice in our Annual Reflection processes and will be developing these plans further during 2019/20. The University is also implementing a pan-institutional platform for the management of programme and module evaluation to support departments in collecting and responding to student feedback.

The University has frequently worked with students as co-researchers. The initial phase of quantitative and qualitative analyses of BAME attainment gaps was conducted in collaboration with student interns. Paid student interns, primarily from the Sheffield Methods Institute, then conducted increasingly sophisticated statistical analyses. We have regularly employed postgraduate students to undertake qualitative research with students (particularly BAME student experiences, experiences of Mature Learners in the Department for Lifelong Learning) and to help inform the analysis. We have also acted as clients for a range of student dissertation projects that have fed into our WP activities (for example, work with Masters Students from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning to deliver geo-demographic mapping of the Sheffield City area).

3.4 Evaluation strategy

Overview

The University of Sheffield is committed to an evidence-informed approach to widening participation across the whole student lifecycle. We led the sector, when in 2012, we invested in a research and evaluation unit (WPREU), specifically designed to focus on widening participation research. Since its launch, WPREU has undertaken a range of research and evaluation projects across the whole student cycle, from homework clubs for young care experienced pupils to employability initiatives for disadvantaged students. We have also prioritised sharing our experience and learning with the wider sector; we currently host an online community of practice for WP evaluators, and communicate research and evaluation outcomes through a range of practitioner and academic publications and conferences. We believe that a cross-sector collaborative approach is the best way that we can collectively respond to the challenges we face and look forward to contributing to and benefiting from the operational impact of the new Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education.

We welcome the new Access & Participation guidance and, in particular, the challenging and wide-ranging 'standards of evidence' guidance. The self-assessment tool has been similarly useful in indicating the areas to which we should focus more evaluation over the lifecycle of this document. Our assessment suggests that although we are 'emerging' and have mixed (green and amber) profiles across all of the categories, there is a range of areas in which more development is required.

We have evaluated the impact of our financial support through a number of approaches which have included a four-year longitudinal student tracking project and an annual evaluation approach featuring a survey and qualitative research to understand the impact on recipient students, as well as the Office for Students quantitative tool. One of the key findings of this evaluation has revealed that there is significant variation in students' preferences for how they receive and use financial support which has helped us to implement a flexible provision offer. Additionally, the evaluation revealed that the majority of our students experience anxiety about financial issues which impacts

at least moderately on their studies. As student financial support is predicated on familial contribution it may not always be forthcoming because of change in familial circumstance. To support this, we have shifted some funds from our means-tested bursaries to a flexible hardship fund to be more able to respond to students' unforeseen needs.

Evaluation strategy

While we have made significant progress in evaluating our financial support provision and identified areas for further work, we are reviewing our approach to the evaluation of 'WP' outreach, student success and progression activities.

As recommended in the OfS access and participation standards of evidence guidance, we adopt appropriate evaluation methodologies according to available resources and investment. The majority of our current evaluation activity is aligned with the 'empirical enquiry' and 'narrative' approaches described in the framework; we draw on pre-post testing or data gathering, where practical, to measure and compare individual changes over time (empirical enquiry) and aim to underpin evaluation with assumed mechanisms or models (narrative). Over the last four years, we have trialled a number of quasi-scientific comparator designs (causality), but these have failed, usually because of challenges in sourcing adequate comparator data from partners. Where appropriate, we will continue to aim for effective trial designs.

Overall, we have identified four areas for improvement. Accordingly, in this new strategy we will:
1. expand our use of 'theory of change'[8] approaches to develop better causal models of what we expect to happen, why and to whom as a result of our interventions, and to develop more effectively calibrated evaluation measures;
2. introduce a more effective and systematic approach to using evaluation outcomes and feedback to inform intervention development, practice, delivery and decision-making;
3. apply a 'theory of change' approach to our own evaluation processes, to ensure that they respond to the needs of decision-makers and practitioners; and
4. expand our evaluation focus to include management and strategic decision making

Theory of Change Approach

During the last two years, the WPREU team have been developing and refining a theory-driven approach to evaluation (e.g. WPREU 2018; Brown 2017)[9]. This is founded in detailed work with practitioners to surface and document their knowledge, evidence and assumptions about how and why a particular intervention or programme works. This process enables us to develop carefully calibrated evaluation measures that have a robust causal relationship with intervention outcomes. Our approach also places evaluation stakeholder information needs at the centre, as we work backwards from considerations about how the data is to be used and what criteria and information is required for effective decision-making. This ensures that evaluation outcomes are meaningful and inform operational developments.
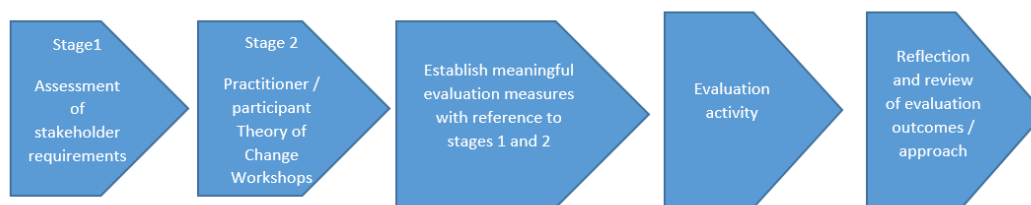
Theory of Change Process

[8] e.g. Simms, K. (2015) The Heads Up Scheme - Evaluation Outcomes, Sheffield: WPREU
[9] WPREU. (2018) Five Years of WPREU: Critical reflections on evaluation, policy and practice in widening participation and student success, Sheffield: WPREU; Brown, G. (2017) *IMPACT Outcomes Report*, Sheffield: WPREU

Implementing a continuous improvement feedback loop, and meta-evaluation theory of change approach

Under our new evaluation strategy, all evaluation projects undertaken by the WPREU team will be designed to include an integral feedback cycle. This will include outreach / access activities, student success and progression interventions, activity to address attainment gaps, and student support initiatives and services. This process will include an on-going theory of change evaluation of the evaluation process itself to ensure that evaluation is effectively delivering meaningful and impactful outcomes**.**
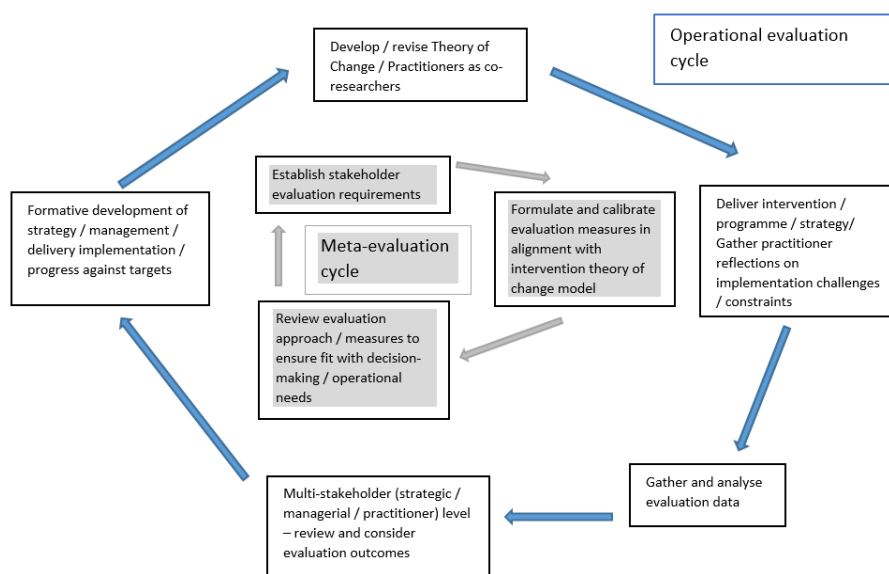
Operational Theory of Change Cycle with embedded Meta-Evaluation Cycle

Feedback cycle schedule

Our evaluation strategy includes structured feedback points, to take stock of evaluation outcomes and any implementation factors in a formative process. This takes place at different rates according to the level of decision-making.

Evaluation Level	Feedback and Review Schedule
Formative practitioner review of evaluation outcomes / implementation factors	Every three months / as required
Managerial review of progress / evaluation outcomes / implementation factors / fidelity	Every six months
Strategic annual review / progress against targets	Every twelve months

Expanding the level of evaluation

The majority of our evaluation to date has been concentrated at the implementation/delivery level. Given the emphasis in the guidance on ensuring all of our institutional widening participation and student success and progression activity is underpinned by a theory of change, we have identified two additional levels of decision-making to which we will expand our evaluation function.

Level	Theory of Change Focus Map the theories and assumptions underpinning decisions about:
Strategic	*spend, direction, objectives, priorities, implementation of a whole provider approach, response to policy and regulatory direction, resource and practical constraints*
Managerial	*translation of strategic direction into activity streams – operational and outcome priorities, response to practical constraints*
Practical	*design and implementation of interventions and programmes to deliver operational objectives, response to operational constraints*

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The Vice President for Education is responsible on behalf of the President and Vice-Chancellor for oversight of the University's widening participation commitments. This plan has been developed by a working group, led by the Executive Director of Academic Services, on behalf of the Learning and Teaching Committee (the governance body with remit for widening participation strategy). Membership of the group is formed of Faculty Directors of Learning & Teaching from each academic faculty and senior representatives of relevant professional services, together with the President of the Students' Union.

Monitoring of progress against this plan is undertaken throughout the year. As well as the formal governance mechanisms described above, we have established an Access and Participation Operations Group, which will convene for the first time in the autumn and meet regularly, to track progress in and across years. This will include student representatives and have the authority to elevate concerns regarding progress to the University Executive Board, and/or other relevant groups or committees, should it need to do so. The University's commitments feature in the institution's corporate risk register (which is monitored on an on-going basis). The University's Executive Board receives regular updates, and recommendations are sought and taken from internal audit and other review mechanisms. The Operations group is also charged with the responsibility, incumbent upon providers under HERA (2017), for updating the University's governing body, the University Council, on our performance against this plan, as approved by Council prior to submission. Students are represented on University governance committees and provide invaluable input into the development and delivery of key strategy. The Students' Union elected officers represent students from all backgrounds and consult with their members through a range of representative committees.

Alongside the funding allocated for our Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit, there are a range of colleagues across the University who work collaboratively to support and underpin monitoring and evaluation of targets and progress against the plan as part of our business as usual activity.

Section 4 - Provision of information to students

The University communicates with prospective and current students through a range of media. For prospective students, we use the University-wide prospectus, the University website, electronic newsletters, specific printed brochures (for example for financial support information) as well as face-to-face activity; targeting prospective students, their families and teachers/advisers in schools and colleges. We commit to providing accurate and timely information to prospective students, parents, teachers and other advisers, through a range of communications channels, to enable prospective students to make informed choices about what and where to study, the associated tuition fee costs, as well as details of financial support available. We also commit to providing accurate and timely information to UCAS and Student Finance England to ensure that up to date information is available at all times.

Another mechanism for communicating information to students and their families is through advisers within schools and colleges. This is achieved via consultation events, as a result of delivering presentations at gatherings of teaching staff and also through regular communication to schools and colleges through the termly e-newsletter.

We communicate with current students, primarily through web-based resources, to ensure that they are effectively supported throughout the duration of their studies, including, for example, links to money management tools to help them budget effectively.

Our Access and Participation Plan will be published on the University website to allow both prospective and current students to see our sustained commitment to widening participation and fair access.

Access and participation plan
Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: The University of Sheffield

Provider UKPRN: 10007157

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

We plan for full-time and part-time fees to increase each year for students who enter in 2020/21 within the limits of any guidance provided to us regarding fee caps by Government. Under the current arrangements, fees for new and continuing students are set at the maximum rate permitted.Should the current fee cap be removed or its application to different groups of students change then we would expect to increase fees within the limits of any new guidance provided by Government and/or fees may be subject to permitted inflationary increases, linked to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Our University publishes full information on its fees and the financial support offered on its website, through its prospectus and via individual communications to students.

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0		£9,250
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year		£1,230
Sandwich year	CHM/MBB	£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	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	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£6,935
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0		£6,935
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	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	*	*
Other	*	*

Targets and investment plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: The University of Sheffield

Provider UKPRN: 10007157

Investment summary

The OfS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

Note about the data:
The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£3,826,607.00	£3,856,109.00	£3,972,665.00	£4,088,012.00	£4,088,012.00
Access (pre-16)	£831,509.00	£849,239.00	£867,124.00	£885,166.00	£904,369.00
Access (post-16)	£2,909,796.00	£2,919,120.00	£3,015,573.00	£3,109,972.00	£3,087,761.00
Access (adults and the community)	£85,302.00	£87,750.00	£89,968.00	£92,874.00	£95,882.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£6,444,490.00	£5,734,550.00	£5,335,920.00	£5,352,760.00	£5,413,980.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£231,131.00	£238,364.00	£244,606.00	£250,541.00	£259,458.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£43,412,500.00	£43,629,811.00	£44,930,712.00	£46,235,630.00	£46,235,630.00
Access investment	8.8%	8.8%	8.8%	8.8%	8.8%
Financial support	14.8%	13.1%	11.9%	11.6%	11.7%
Research and evaluation	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Total investment (as %HFI)	24.2%	22.5%	21.3%	21.0%	21.1%

Targets and investment plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: The University of Sheffield

Provider UKPRN: 10007157

Targets

Table 2a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Ratio in entry rates for POLAR4 quintile 5: quintile 1 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	4.2:1	4:1	3.8:1	3.5:1	3.2:1	3:1	Our new contextual admissions policy will take effect for those students starting at the University in 2020/21 hence the proposed milestones for closing this access gap. We do however expect to make further progress in this area as shown in our ambition to achieve 10% of our new intake from POLAR3 Q1 as outlined in our current Access Agreement for 2018/19.
By working in collaboration, Realising Opportunities (RO) will contribute to national improvement in closing the gap in entry rates at higher tariff providers between the most and least underrepresented groups	PTA_2	Multiple	Proportion of RO students* who are tracked into HE who will access a research intensive university (RIU) within two years of becoming 'HE ready' and completing their Post-16 studies *RO uses a robust targeting criteria and all RO students are from groups underrepresented in higher education	Yes	HEAT data	2015-16	42%	50%	51%	52%	53%	54%	RO wishes to demonstrate maximum ambition for RO students and track two years of access to RIUs using HEAT data. RO will therefore only be able to report on a milestone after two years, to allow for HESA data to be gathered via HEAT. For example, data for reporting on 2020-21's milestone will be available from Spring 2023.
	PTA_3												
	PTA_4												
	PTA_5												
	PTA_6												
	PTA_7												
	PTA_8												

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the non-continuation gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Percentage difference in non-continuation rates between POLAR4 quintile 5 and quintile 1 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	5%	4.5%	4%	3.5%	3%	2.5%	
To reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_2	Ethnicity	Percentage difference in degree attainment (1st and 2:1) between white and black students.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	17%	17%	16%	15%	12%	10%	Targets align with ambition to reduce gap to zero by 2030/31. Early phasing recognises lead times for implementation of new systems to track more effectively the points at which gaps can be addressed, how programme design, assessment practices, etc influence attainment, and for changes to be effected.
To reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_3	Ethnicity	Percentage difference in degree attainment (1st and 2:1) between white and asian students.	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	19%	19%	18%	17%	14%	12%	Targets align with ambition to reduce gap to zero by 2030/31. Early phasing recognises lead times for implementation of new systems to track more effectively the points at which gaps can be addressed, how programme design, assessment practices, etc influence attainment, and for changes to be effected.
	PTS_4												
	PTS_5												
	PTS_6												
	PTS_7												
	PTS_8												

Table 2c - Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
	PTP_1												
	PTP_2												
	PTP_3												
	PTP_4												
	PTP_5												
	PTP_6												
	PTP_7												
	PTP_8												