



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

## Access Agreement 2017/18

## **Section 1: The current context**

### **Introduction**

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). The University has a long-standing commitment to widening participation and fair access, not only to its own programmes of study, but also to HE in general. The University has worked altruistically 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.<sup>1</sup>*

The University continues to play a key role within the city and the region and has a strong sense of civic responsibility. This is demonstrated, amongst other things, through the broad ranging initiatives we deliver collaboratively with schools, colleges and other local HE providers in order to widen participation to higher education.

### **1.2 A changing environment**

In developing this Access Agreement for 2017/18, the University has built on the analysis and commitments within previous agreements, taking into account how the considerable changes that have taken place within the sector in recent months and years have, and will continue to, impact on our ability to deliver our proposed widening participation strategy. This includes consideration of the following:

#### **1.2.1 Governance and regulatory changes**

The release of the Higher Education green paper 'Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice' in November 2015 and subsequent guidance letter from the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and Minister of State for Universities and Science, has further re-enforced the national agenda for fair access and the need to adopt a whole student life cycle approach to widening participation. Building on previous guidance from the OFFA strategic plan 2015-20 and the need for institutions to make 'further, faster progress', the Prime Minister has set ambitious targets to 1) double the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds entering HE by 2020, from 2009 levels and 2) increase by 20 per cent the number of students from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities studying in HE by 2020, from 2014 levels. Additionally HE participation of young white males from disadvantaged

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<sup>1</sup> See full Mission, Vision and Identity at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ourplan>

backgrounds and the outcomes of HE study for BME students have also been flagged as priority areas of focus.

Taking a whole student life cycle approach is a key part of the ethos of the University of Sheffield and has been evident in our commitment to access, student success and progression in previous Access Agreements. Significant investment has been made in these three areas and the effects of this are reflected in our low non-continuation rates and excellent progression statistics. Further investment will be made by the University during 2017/18 to ensure that these areas continue to succeed and that students from widening participation backgrounds are fully supported during their time at Sheffield.

### **1.2.2 External changes**

The University of Sheffield has continued ambitions to increase its intake of academically able home undergraduate students, regardless of background, in the unrestricted undergraduate recruitment environment created by the end of the student number control policy from 2015. However, the opportunities presented by the policy change are likely to be limited by a number of wider factors including: the impact of the on-going steep demographic decline in 18-21 year olds who form the majority of our undergraduate student population; an increase in the numbers of students with alternative qualifications and combinations of different qualification and a move away from standard A-Level programmes of study, and a clear Government policy steer towards increasing vocational education and apprenticeships.

Public debate about A-Level reforms continues to take place and this has again led to a level of confusion and uncertainty for staff, students and parents regarding GCSES, post-16 qualifications and preparation for HE level study: the piecemeal nature of the changes, which have seen the first teaching of a number of new A-level syllabuses in 2017 but which will not see applicants in England with fully-reformed GCSEs and A-Levels applying to university until 2021, poses an on-going challenge to the perception of fair and equitable admissions. We also note that there has been a trend toward greater take-up of vocational qualifications in recent years, although the most recent cycle saw a small dip in entrants with alternative qualifications.

Reduction or withdrawal from funding streams that had previously been used to support students who were struggling financially or were in financial hardship, e.g. the National Scholarships Programme funding (which were used for first year fee waivers at the University of Sheffield), Access to Learning funds (some of which was directed towards disabled students), Disabled Students' Allowances and Student Opportunity funding, (much of this being used to support the infrastructure for supporting current students within faculties and departments). The continued impact of this is that there is increasing pressure on funding committed through our Access Agreement, which in turn has led to a necessary rebalancing of funds in relation to the four key areas of financial support, outreach, student success and progression activity.

Additionally, in the 2015 comprehensive spending review, the government announced the cessation of bursaries and paid tuition fees for students on allied health programmes from 2017. For the University of Sheffield this relates to Orthoptics, Nursing, Speech Therapy and Dental Hygiene and Therapy students. This is a major change affecting a population of around 400 students. These programmes typically attract mature students and students from low-income

backgrounds and therefore many already benefit from additional financial support provided by the University. The effects of these changes will be monitored by the University to ensure that support continues to be available to those students who are eligible.

We continue to consult with a range of stakeholders to share information about the changes within Post-16 education and within the HE sector. These discussions have shown that there is still some degree of confusion and misunderstanding about how the HE fees and funding systems work, amongst staff, students and their parents, especially relating to part-time study, echoing the dramatic decrease in part-time study across the sector.

## **Section 2: Fee levels**

### **2.1 Full-time programmes**

Following the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in 2017/18 and an assumption that the University of Sheffield will achieve a rating of 'Meets expectations', we propose that all new UK and European Union students starting their studies in September 2017 will be charged £9,250 per year in tuition fees. This is applicable to all full-time undergraduate programmes apart from our foundation programmes, as well as being applicable to students entering the PGDE. As noted in previous Access Agreements, and following guidance from OFFA, the University is confident that it is fully compliant with consumer law and therefore continuing students who entered in previous years will also be charged £9,250.

Fees for students entering via a foundation route are as follows for 2017/18 entry:

- Our Science and Engineering foundation programmes are for students who have not studied maths and sciences to Advanced Level. Successful completion of the programme leads to an offer for first year entry of a number of mainstream degree courses. The fee for these programmes in 2017/18 will be £9,250.
- Our FT foundation programme, delivered by the Department for Lifelong Learning, will charge £9,250.
- Our new Foundation Degree in Mechanical Engineering, delivered by the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) will charge £9,250.

We plan for full-time fees to increase each year for all students in line with inflation or within the limits of any guidance provided to us.

### **2.2 Part-time programmes**

The University intends to charge £4,625 per 60 credits (£9,250 full-time equivalent) for students starting in 2017/18. No part-time student will be charged over £6,935 in any one year.

We plan for part-time fees to increase each year for all students in line with inflation or within the limits of any guidance provided to us.

### **2.3 Sandwich years and study abroad**

Students taking a full year abroad in 2017/18 will be charged the maximum fee permitted by the regulations which is currently £1,385.

Students on a year in industry or a year in employment will be charged at a rate of either £1,230 or £1,850 which is the maximum fee permitted by the regulations.

## Section 3: Assessment of overall position

In order to reach an appropriate spend for this agreement, the University has evaluated its performance in widening participation against a range of measures, including:

- Official recruitment and retention figures as published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
- Performance against our widening participation benchmarks
- Performance against our peers
- Absolute performance in relation to the diversity of our intake
- Internal applications and registrations statistics

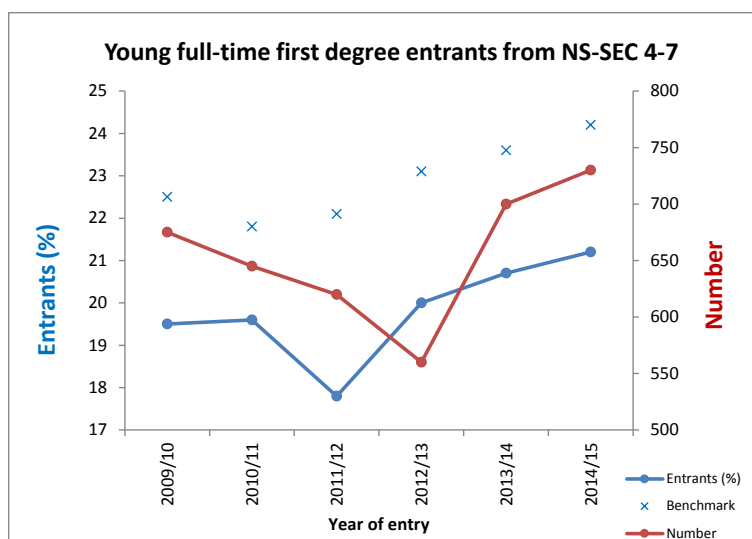
### 3.1 Performance relative to the rest of the sector – HESA benchmarks

Many of the University’s Access Agreement targets are based on measures from the HESA Performance Indicators which look at entrants from under-represented groups, and non-continuation rates. Further analysis of our performance against our peer institutions (the Russell Group) and our own trends over time against the benchmark is shown below for a selection of the HESA PIs.

#### Young full-time first degree entrants from under-represented groups

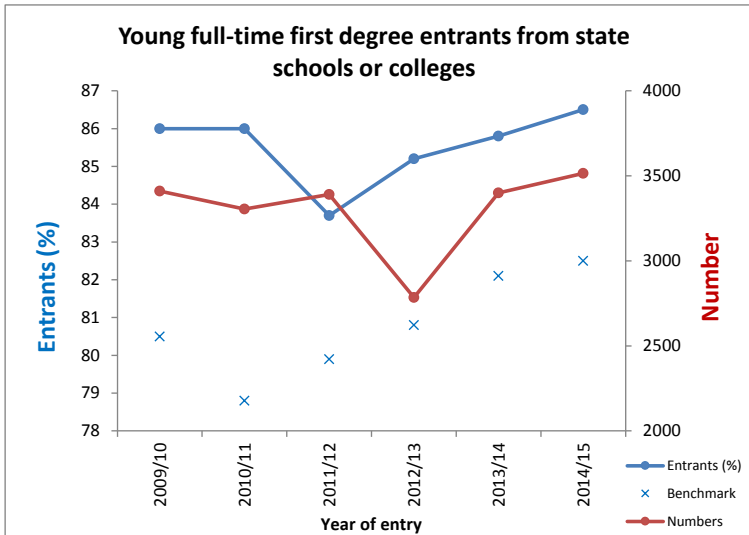
The University has a broad range of widening participation activities and schemes, many of which are targeted towards learners who meet a number of widening participation and academic criteria. These criteria may be in addition to, as well as overlap with the WP categories below.

The charts below show continuing recovery in the proportion of entrants from under-represented groups since 2011/12 (when demand was high and due to the quota system, some borderline students were unable to be placed which may have had a disproportionate effect on under-represented groups).



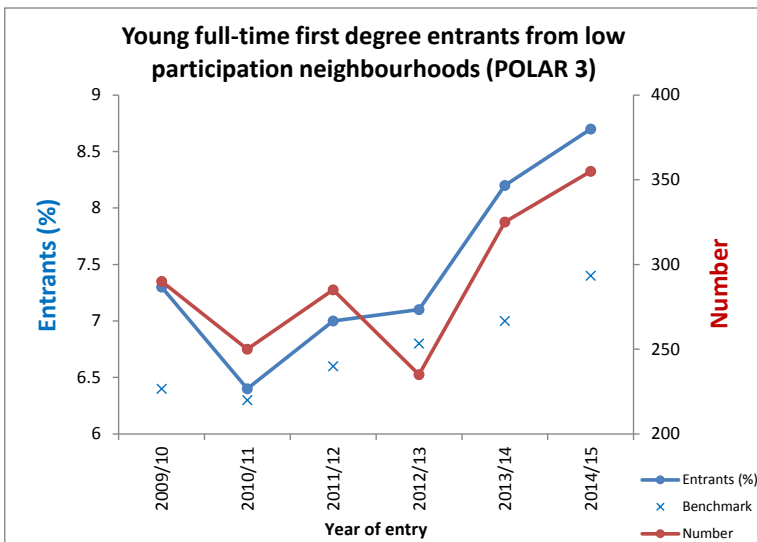
#### NS-SEC 4-7

- Sheffield has tended to be below the benchmark for young, full-time first degree entrants from specified socio-economic classes. In the past this has been flagged as statistically significant by HESA, however for entrants in 2014/15, HESA have no longer flagged the difference as statistically significant, indicating that Sheffield is moving more into line with the benchmark.
- While the University currently has a range of outreach activities aimed at learners who meet WP criteria, this category of students is particularly difficult to target.



State schools and colleges

- Sheffield is consistently above the benchmark for entrants from young, full-time first degree entrants from state schools and colleges and this is flagged as statistically significant by HESA.



Low participation neighbourhoods

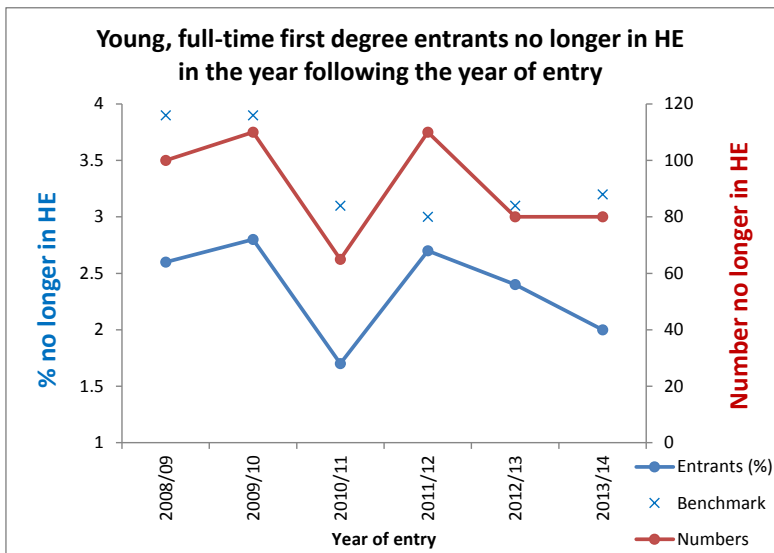
- Sheffield is just above the benchmark for entrants from low participation neighbourhoods, however HESA do not flag this as statistically significant.
- The target has been set to achieve 10.4% by 2020-21 and assumes a proportion of the population used by OFFA to measure performance against the metric rather than the total student population.

Non-continuation rates<sup>2</sup>

We aim to maintain, rather than drive down the non-continuation rate further, as students will have varying reasons for not continuing with their studies.

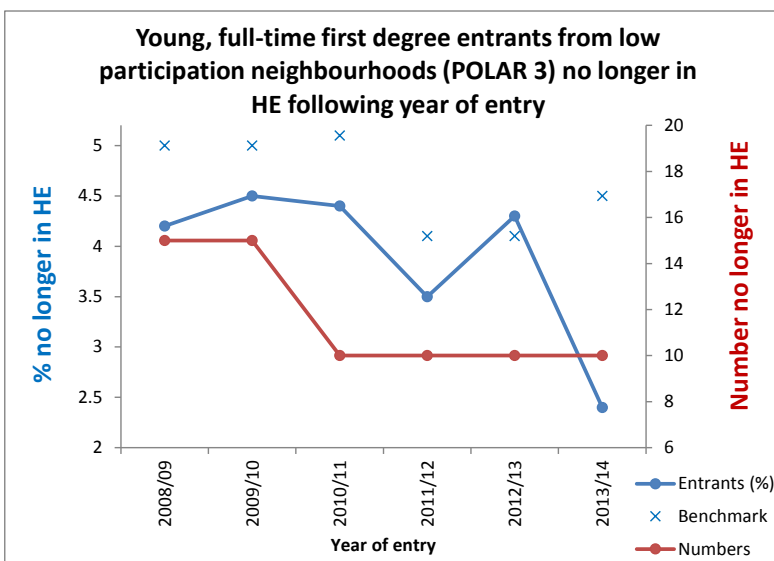
The charts show non-continuation in the year following the year of entry to the institution. The latest data available relates to non-continuation in 2014/15 following entry in 2013/14.

<sup>2</sup> Note that as this is a non-continuation rate, a lower score which is below the benchmark is positive for this indicator.



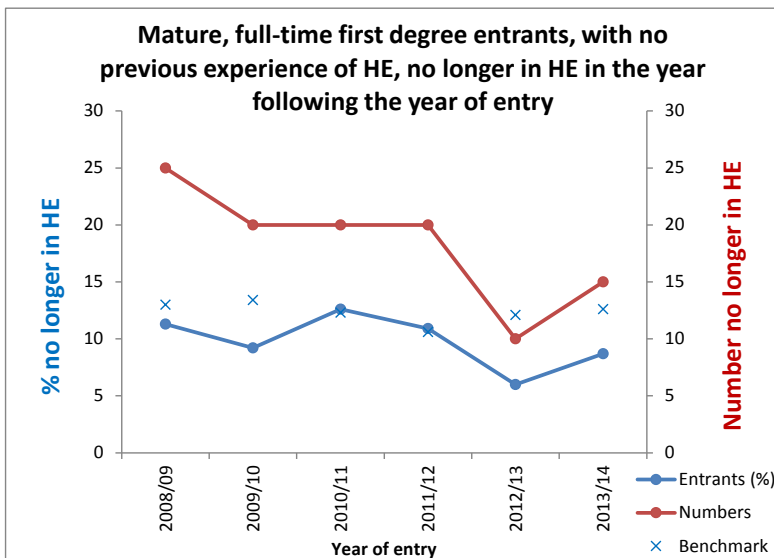
Young, full-time first degree entrants

- Non-continuation for young, full-time first degree entrants remains below the benchmark which is positive for this indicator.



Young, full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods

- The % of entrants no longer in HE in the year following the year of entry has decreased (positive for this indicator) since the previous year.
- The numbers of students no longer in HE is small and HESA have not flagged the difference from the benchmark as statistically significant.



Mature full-time first degree entrants with no previous experience of HE

- The % of entrants no longer in HE remains below the benchmark, although numbers are small so HESA have not flagged this as statistically significant.



### 3.2 Analysis of internal 2014/15 registration data

Based on UK domiciled students in the 1 December HESES population:

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Young, full-time first degree entrants from state schools	85.58%	86.78%	86.84%
Young, full-time first degree entrants in receipt of the Disabled Student's allowance (see note below)	7.10%	5.15%	3.46%
Full-time first degree BME entrants	13.21%	13.22%	15.56%
Young, full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods	8.17%	8.82%	8.12%
Young, full-time first degree entrants from NS-SEC 4-7	17.22%	17.65%	17.99%
Full-time first degree entrants who are mature (aged 21 and over)	6.74%	7.29%	7.78%
Mature full-time first degree entrants who are from low participation neighbourhoods	21.51%	19.79%	19.50%

The internal data uses a different student population from that used to calculate the HESA PIs so the performance is not directly comparable. However, the trends for the two populations suggest that for most indicators our performance is broadly in line with previous intakes. Since the last Access Agreement was submitted the University has undertaken a review of the populations used for internal reporting purposes to ensure that definitions are relevant and robust. The data provided in the table are therefore not comparable with the data previously provided and some figures are different from those previously provided due to changes in the reporting population used.

The internal data indicates that at the point of registration, numbers of Young, full-time first degree entrants in receipt of the Disabled Student's allowance have declined from 7.10% in 2013/14 to 3.46% in 2015/16. However, as noted in the previous Access Agreement the HESA data (based on a 31 July snapshot) suggests that an increasing number are in receipt of DSA by the end of their first academic year. This reflects the time it can take for a DSA application to be approved due to funding bodies (primarily SFE) querying or rejecting initial applications on the grounds of, for instance, medical evidence that does not meet their precise criteria, as well as administration delays. The HESA data showing increasing number of DSA recipients by the end of the year reflects the amount of support the University provides during the application process. It should also be noted that the University provides a significant amount of

underwritten 'interim support' whilst students apply for DSA as we are aware of the value of having support in place as soon as possible.

### **3.3 Financial commitment to additional access and support measures**

In line with the commitments made in previous Access Agreements, for 2017/18 we have forecasted to spend £14.3 million on measures to further improve access, student success and progression of students from WP target groups. This equates to 28.7% of projected additional fees income above the standard fee for the currently predicted undergraduate student intake and includes 10% of fees associated with the PGDE intake at the University.

As noted in previous sections of this agreement, we feel that we have a strong record of retention of our students. Having considered the research published by OFFA relating to the impact that bursaries and financial support have on retention of students, but also considering our own institutional research on this matter, we propose to allocate funds across the strands of activity as follows:

- Outreach: £4 million
- Student success and progression support: £2 million
- Financial support to students: £8.3 million

Having evaluated the effectiveness of our spend on financial support to students (see section 6.5) we have maintained, but not increased our commitment to bursary provision. With forecasted growth in our student numbers and related Access Agreement spending, the University will be committing a lower proportion of its additional fees income to financial support (16.8%), while maintaining the schemes, in order to provide the capacity needed to address identified outreach, student success and progression priorities (see below).

## Section 4: Future plans

During 2015 the University of Sheffield developed its Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2021. As part of this process, following a University wide consultation, a set of widening participation principles were developed to drive our strategy in this area. These principles balance the needs of both the sector and the institution, taking into account the need to engage with both our local community as well as learners from further afield if we are to make further, faster progress to support progression to highly selective institutions such as Sheffield.

As a result of these principles and taking into account the guidance provided by both OFFA and HEFCE, our targets were reviewed and recalibrated in our 2016/17 Access Agreement, refocusing them to enable us to deliver our strategic objectives for widening participation as well as contribute to the national agenda. Within this Access Agreement for 2017/18 we aim to build on this by introducing specific targets focusing on recruitment to, and progression from, our sustained engagement programmes, entry to the University by students from specific target groups, as well as students from disadvantaged backgrounds progressing to postgraduate study.

The principles that underpin our widening participation strategy focus on two key and distinctive areas:

- **Outreach and Civic engagement**

Building on the foundations of the University and our lasting commitment to support the people of Sheffield we will work to raise aspirations and attainment across Sheffield and the wider South Yorkshire region. We will work collaboratively to ensure that appropriate information, advice and guidance about progression opportunities is available to all with the potential to progress to Higher Education, not just to highly selective institutions such as the University of Sheffield.

- **Widening Participation to the University of Sheffield**

Many students from widening participation backgrounds have the academic potential to progress to, and succeed at selective institutions such as the University of Sheffield but choose not to apply. Through targeted sustained engagement with individual high achievers from WP backgrounds, we will support these learners to make informed decisions throughout their education to give them the confidence and skills to succeed.

Within this access agreement for 2017/18 we have identified the following priority areas of focus (as outlined in section 4.2 below):

- Increasing participation from white males from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Addressing the BME attainment gap
- Supporting progression to postgraduate study by undergraduates with WP characteristics
- Supporting access to Higher Education with alternative qualifications
- Developing vocational routes into Higher Education
- Increasing participation from mature entrants
- Addressing participation of under-represented genders by disciplinary area

## 4.1 Evidence-based approach

### 4.1.1 The Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit

The University's commitment to developing and refining evidence-based practice is demonstrated by the resource and investment it dedicates to a Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit (WPREU), which collaborates closely with institutional practitioners and academics working across the whole student journey. The Unit continues to develop its remit for delivering and supporting quantitative and qualitative research into the long-term impact of our widening participation initiatives.

### 4.1.2 Developing an evidence base

Part of WPREU's role is to compile a summarised and institution-focussed evidence base, comprising external evidence and our own data, which can be easily accessed and used by time-pressured practitioners and decision makers enabling them to make decisions about the University's activities in this area that are informed by the best available evidence and proven good practice. Where possible, these materials are also made available to external audiences via the WPREU website. A recent example of this work is a comprehensive and detailed outline of resources, research and evidence about the ethnicity attainment gap, which enables institutional discussions about this issue to begin from a shared and more advanced point of reference than might otherwise have been possible.

Through this work, it is becoming clear that the evidence base for "what works" in widening participation is growing and becoming increasingly varied and diverse. Our future plans take account of the evidence provided by organisations such as the Sutton Trust<sup>3</sup>, HEFCE and OFFA,<sup>4</sup> material available in the Higher Education Academy hosted WASRS archive,<sup>5</sup> available research about the ethnicity attainment gap, and other relevant academic research, as well as our own internal evidence of what has worked within the institution (for example, data relating to the Year 13 outcomes of former outreach participants).

The University shares with both OFFA and the Sutton Trust the view that long term intensive programmes encourage a higher rate of progression of students from under-represented groups into HE. As a result we have significantly increased our provision in this area over the last three years, with all faculties now supporting a targeted 'Discover' programme aimed at students in years 12 and 13.<sup>6</sup> Our qualitative and quantitative evidence about the subsequent pathways taken by some of our year 9 to 11 participants suggests that they benefit from a much more open and flexible approach, prior to the selection of their Level 3 qualification options. We have therefore introduced a new generic programme for students at this stage, which encourages them to investigate all available subject options and opportunities, rather than streaming them into a specific subject focus at this early stage.

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<sup>3</sup> Sutton Trust Submission to Sir Martin Harris: Widening Access to Selective Universities, 2010

<sup>4</sup> What more can be done to widen participation to selective universities", OFFA, 2010/03

<sup>5</sup> [www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstreams-research/themes/retention-and-success/widening-access-programmes-archive](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstreams-research/themes/retention-and-success/widening-access-programmes-archive)

<sup>6</sup> The exception is the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health, which offers specific programmes supporting access to Dentistry and Medicine programmes, but is currently expanding the latter to include access to allied' subjects.

### **4.1.3 Developing innovative interventions**

We are also developing a more experimental approach to outreach development in which we have made space to build a number of new intervention activities from the ground up. We are using the NERUPI (Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participation Intervention) framework, developed by the Widening Participation Office at the University of Bath, to inform discussions about detailed objective setting for a number of new interventions focusing on specific areas of participant development. These objectives will then be work-shopped with expert practitioners and academic advisors and informed by current academic research and our own data. The aim is to develop a detailed evidence-informed methodology for each intervention and carefully calibrated evaluation or diagnostic measures, designed to isolate the specific outcomes of that intervention and increase the robustness of causal claims we might make about its impacts. We will then be in a position to measure the correlation between these impacts and HE progression and attainment outcomes. The first set of new interventions will be introduced from September 2016.

### **4.1.4 Relevant Research**

The Sheffield Student 2013 project, which employs a post-doctoral researcher to track an initial sample of 40 students across three years of study, is now in its third year. The fieldwork undertaken by the researcher, who works in collaboration with staff from the departments of Sociology and Geography, and Student Support and Guidance, has already provided detailed information about the transition process into and through the University, the financial aspects of student life and, more broadly, a range of student experiences. Research outcome reports are prepared for both academic and practitioner audiences.

In addition to the projects discussed above, WPREU works with academic staff, who have a research interest in access issues, to deliver a range of institution-specific projects. We intend that outcomes of these projects, where appropriate, will be disseminated across the sector. Current examples include:

- A qualitative project exploring the impact of our sustained WP programmes on students and alumni, focusing on our intensive programmes in Medicine (SOAMS);
- A quantitative analysis of the academic outcomes of WP students and former SOAMS participants in our MBChB programme in the context of both their prior attainment and socio-demographic factors;
- An investigation of the attainment gap for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students at the University. A pilot project employing two graduate interns consists of a multivariate analysis of student outcomes in the context of both prior attainment and socio-demographic factors and detailed qualitative research of the academic and HE experience of both BME and non-BME students.

Further details of our current and future evaluation activity can be found in Section 6.

## **4.2 Addressing our identified priority areas**

### **4.2.1 Increasing participation from white males from disadvantaged backgrounds**

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<sup>7</sup>.

White males from disadvantaged backgrounds are well represented in our access work across the University and currently make up over 20% of pupils taking part in our sustained outreach programmes. This measure is based on a combination of ethnicity, gender and meeting one or more proxies for disadvantage (POLAR3 Quintile 1, low IMD and eligibility for free school meals). We have set targets within this Access Agreement to increase this to 26% by 2020/21.

Currently our sustained outreach activity starts with pupils at Y9. There is an identifiable gap in the provision of Widening Participation sustained activity for early secondary schools years (Y7 and Y8) within the Sheffield City Region. Key influencers at this age are parents, teachers and to some extent their peer group. At this stage pupils begin to form preferences for subjects and potential careers; often in the form of those they see at school or within the immediate home and environment. During 2016/17 we will be developing a new area of outreach work with Y7 and Y8 in the form of 'shared parent and child learning experiences' to support the current challenges of the progression of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to both FE and HE. Through this sustained activity we will expose children and their parents to wider opportunities, within Higher Education and alternative routes, at the beginning of their secondary school journey.

Due to the recent consultation in 2015 by HEFCE on future changes to the UK Performance Indicators<sup>8</sup> and the removal of the National Statistics Social Economic Classifications from HESA performance indicators from 2016, we have not set formal intake targets for white males from disadvantaged backgrounds. We will, however, continue to internally monitor progression rates to ensure that this group is progressing into HE at the same rate as their peers, and once robust data is available in the form of new HESA performance indicators, review our intake targets if necessary.

### **4.2.2 Addressing the BME attainment gap**

Our current research into ethnicity and student degree outcomes is detailed in section 4.1. To date it has identified that, as per the wider sector, there is an attainment gap between BME students and their peers. We are looking at this in more detail, including taking into account

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<sup>7</sup> Sheffield City Region European Structural & Investment Funds Strategy January 2014

<sup>8</sup> HEFCE Circular letter 17/2015

prior attainment, POLAR/IMD, parental education, and any differences within the sub categories encompassed within the broader BME category.

Our research is being informed by the literature and practice available pertaining to the wider sector. This underlines the need to take a holistic view given the range of factors which can have an effect on student development and outcomes, including curriculum content and modes of assessment, personal and academic support, communities and role models and unconscious bias. This point is also being reinforced through the outcomes of the qualitative research with BME. The research is identifying a complex range of factors that influence student engagement and experience, and in turn their academic success. There are synergies with known concerns for student body as a whole e.g.: transitions, managing expectations, finance, wellbeing and integrated relationships, which reinforces the case for taking a holistic approach to learning and teaching enhancement, but with an understanding of specific concerns or considerations for an under-represented group.

The work is being disseminated to staff and students to ensure that the next stage of the work is informed by and influences communities across the University, including through a Widening Participation Forum event and the Students' Union Education Conference. The final report of the current project will be considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee, with the intention of agreeing a shared approach to addressing the implications for policy, interventions and targets. This will include consideration of potential benchmarks and standards to support progress and evaluation (such as the Race Equality Charter Mark).

#### **4.2.3 Supporting progression to postgraduate study by undergraduates with WP characteristics**

The University continues to be committed to increasing progression to PGT study from under-represented groups.

Following the recommendations in the Programme Analysis of HEFCE's Postgraduate Support Scheme (PSS), the University has established a Sub-group for PGT study to review the support provided for PGT students and how relevant services to meet PGT needs are organised.

In 2015/16, as part of the PSS project the University was able to offer over 200 scholarships to students studying a PGT course, each scholarship was worth £10,000 and were given to students who met a variety of WP criteria. For 2016/17, since the cessation of the HEFCE PGT scholarship, the University of Sheffield will offer 100 scholarships, again worth £10,000 to students who meet WP or also academic-merit criteria. The funding has been made available from University funds and from money raised through donor contributions.

The University is well underway on developing the concept of 'The Sheffield Postgraduate', a definition of specific postgraduate attributes which can be used to enhance our postgraduate provision, e.g. information for potential and current students, programme development and programme enhancement.

#### **4.2.4 Supporting access to Higher Education with alternative qualifications**

The University is investigating a collaboration which would allow us to engage with reforms taking place to alternative qualifications to A Levels and to consider our response. We intend to form a partnership with regional educational providers and awarding bodies to evaluate what is required to enable the best students with vocational or alternative qualifications to successfully transition to a leading selective institution into traditional degrees or to Degree Apprenticeships.

#### **4.2.5 Developing vocational routes into Higher Education**

We are working within the institution to offer sub-degree level options to young people that may subsequently open up opportunities for progression to higher level skills and higher level qualifications through to PhD level. An example being the continued growth at our Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre (AMRC) which offers advanced and higher level apprenticeships to 600 non-traditional local students. In September 2016 the AMRC will welcome our first cohort of Degree Apprenticeship Students to study our new employer-led (local SMEs to global corporations) two year Foundation Degree in Manufacturing Technology. This new foundation degree will be part of our growing apprentice family which has achieved BIS's Trailblazer Standard status and leads to a University of Sheffield Degree in Engineering. On completion of the FD students will be provided with opportunities for progression to higher level skills and higher level qualifications up to Masters level, as well as professional accreditation, whilst in employment on a flexible, 'step-on, step-off' basis. Each qualification stage would also be available to other suitably qualified new entrants.

The Training Centre works with local industry partners to widen participation to degree apprenticeships through sustained engagement with year 10 and 11 in four local schools. Activity includes; supporting the curriculum delivery of the BTEC level 2 in Engineering to raise attainment and uptake of the BTEC, providing specific skills training – eg CAD, developing employability skills with the students on this and related courses, and providing careers advice to students who may be considering a range of engineering options.

The AMRC is considering the development of further degree apprenticeships over the coming twelve months.

#### **4.2.5 Increasing participation from mature entrants**

As reported in previous Access Agreements, the University has devoted a significant amount of time and resource in recent years to re-structuring its provision for mature and part-time students.

The Department for Lifelong Learning (DLL), working in partnership with academic departments across four faculties in the University, now offers a wide and expanding range of full- and part-time degrees with foundation year which are carefully designed for and directly address the needs of mature students returning to HE level study who do not possess standard entry qualifications.



Recruitment and progression of full-time mature students in the first two years of operation has been strong, resulting in a very significant increase in the numbers of mature students with non-standard entry qualifications entering the University by this route. In line with OFFA guidance, the University plans to further increase the numbers of mature students entering by degree with foundation year pathways in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Very positive progress in this aspect of mature student recruitment and retention is tempered by a continuing decline in the recruitment of part-time students, mirroring national trends. The University has significantly increased the availability and range of its part-time offer by opening up a number of existing degrees to part-time students for the first time. Nevertheless, this has resulted in mature applicants overwhelmingly opting for the new full-time rather than part-time routes wherever these are available.

Notwithstanding this difficult context for part-time recruitment, the University remains committed to developing appropriate flexible access pathways for mature students, including part-time options. In line with OFFA guidance, and noting the proposal to introduce maintenance grants for part-time students in 2018/19, the University will carefully review its approach to the recruitment of part-time and mature students across its whole offer as part of its continuing commitment to this cohort. In particular, DLL will be looking at online and face-to-face provision of advice and guidance to potential applicants in relation to fees, funding, entry requirements, on-course support and the potential benefits of both part-time and full-time modes of study.

#### **4.2.6 Increasing participation of under-represented genders by disciplinary area**

There are a range of disciplines where either men or women are significantly under-represented. At the University of Sheffield women are under-represented (less than 10% of cohort) in the Department of Economics and in the Faculty of Engineering; Men are under-represented in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the Department of Human Communication Sciences, the Department of Psychology, and the Department of Sociological Studies. While there is some overlap here with the focus on white males from disadvantaged backgrounds, in this priority area it is the gender mix in the discipline not the student background that is the focus. Specific outreach work in faculties seeks to address this under-representation.

A major focus for the Faculty of Engineering is to address the under-representation of women. A range of activity includes, a science and engineering week activity where 400 year 9-11 girls and 40 teachers attend an annual Explore STEM day, role model profiles on our Wall of Women website and an annual Women in Engineering day event in the city centre. Our very active Women in Engineering student society have written a book for junior school pupils about engineering and they use this in activities in local schools.

### **4.3 Additional access and retention measures supporting widening participation aims and objectives**

Our plans for access, student success and progression build on our successes over recent years. They can be split into four broad categories:

- Outreach and widening participation programmes, including collaborative outreach
- Contextual data
- Student retention, progression and success
- Financial aid

#### **4.3.1 Outreach and widening participation programmes**

Our outreach and widening participation work spans a considerable age group, from Year 2 primary through to Year 13 students and prospective mature learners as they prepare for entry to HE. The activities range from large scale events that aim to raise awareness of and aspiration to Higher Education, to smaller more targeted events that include attainment raising, confidence building, team work, and familiarisation with the University and/or with specific disciplines, professions and careers.

During 2015/16 we developed and enhanced our three year Pre-16 'Discover US' sustained engagement programme. The programme supports a selected cohort of high-achieving Year 9 to Year 11 students from widening participation backgrounds, and provides an interdisciplinary experience to allow them to sample a range of taster events which, coupled with information, advice and guidance around key decision points in their education, such as GCSE and A-Level choices, helps to prepare them for success at a selective institution.

We now have six Post-16 sustained engagement programmes covering Medicine, Dentistry, Law, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), Social Sciences, and Arts and Humanities. These programmes work with selected cohorts of high-achieving students and will typically focus on particular professions and 'allied' professions, or specific subject disciplines.

Students on our Post-16 schemes are flagged within the admissions process; those commencing Post-16 outreach schemes in 2017 will be offered alternative entry requirements conditional on meeting certain criteria. We believe that the overall package of participating in a sustained programme, with the offer of adjusted entry requirements and the possibility of a financial support package will be attractive to students from currently under-represented groups. The whole package is intended to support recruitment of students from the target groups, but perhaps more importantly, we feel that it supports retention and progression of students, by improving their preparedness for HE level study and by providing financial support so that students do not need to spend a disproportionate amount of time working to earn money (with a possible detrimental impact on their studies).

The development of MOOCs is already starting to improve access to University activities for a significant cohort of students we otherwise would not have been able to engage with. The Discover Dentistry MOOC, for example, which is primarily targeted at 16-18 year old students, has received excellent feedback from participants. Through this one MOOC alone we have extended our reach to over 1,200 students, over 500 of these being educated to secondary

school level or below. Some of these students may already be involved in our face to face outreach programmes, but using technology in this way provides the University a mechanism through which to engage with people who are not able to join such targeted programmes. The idea of moving from informal to formal learning is one we will be looking at and evaluating over time.

### **Targeting of our outreach programmes**

Participants of outreach programmes are targeted and selected in line with HEFCE targeting guidelines<sup>9</sup>, at both area level and learner level. We adapt our approach according to the nature of the initiative, with broader targeting for primary activity than for our intensive, sustained programmes, which are targeted at individual students who meet a number of widening participation and academic criteria. The WP criteria focus on Low Participation Neighbourhood (POLAR3) data, parental occupation, school type, eligibility for free school meals, whether the pupil would be the first generation to enter HE, and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (“IMD” - based on the individual’s postcode) alongside specific criteria such as being from an under-represented ethnic or gender group, in local authority care, being disabled or having a specific learning difficulty (SpLD). In addition to official data available about an area, a school or an individual we also use our local knowledge and information provided by school and college staff to pragmatically identify suitable participants for programmes.

### **Faculty developments**

In line with our previous Access Agreement commitments, we have developed and implemented faculty-based widening participation plans across the University. A key feature of these plans has been the continuing development of our Post-16 sustained engagement programmes targeting individuals from under-represented groups in HE. As our Pre-16 sustained engagement work continues to expand, faculties will be key to providing subject based sessions to enrich the interdisciplinary offering for the pupils taking part.

### **Links with Schools and Colleges**

The University has developed strong links with schools and colleges over a number of years. In addition to the operational links in place as a result of our outreach programmes, we have developed more strategic alliances with schools and colleges in the region, facilitating more effective two-way communication. For example:

- We currently have approximately 100 University staff acting as school governors, and have been working with the School Governor’s One Stop Shop and local governor support teams in recent months to explore how our participation in governing bodies can be expanded over time.

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<sup>9</sup> Higher Education outreach: targeting disadvantaged learners. HEFCE, 2007/12

- Our annual Schools and Colleges conference provides an opportunity for teaching and guidance staff to be updated on developments both at the University of Sheffield and in the wider sector.
- “REACH”, our e-newsletter is available to all staff in schools and colleges across the UK.
- Further development of our consultation programme for heads and principals of local schools and colleges has resulted in the development of an advisory group, which can be a helpful source of information about the pre-HE sector as well as acting as a sounding board for any developments we would like to ‘test’ with schools and colleges.
- We also contribute to regional activity targeting schools and colleges in collaboration with HEPP, from a CPD perspective for teachers as well as with activities targeting pupils.

## **Geographical focus**

The University has a longstanding commitment to working with schools and colleges in the Sheffield City Region (SCR), which encompasses South Yorkshire and neighbouring areas (Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales and NE Derbyshire). Following the release of the HEFCE data maps of higher education provision in late 2014 and the recent refresh of our widening participation strategy, it has become apparent that whilst we must continue to work closely with our immediate local area, we also need to expand our geographical reach beyond the confines of the SCR. In order to meet our ambitious Access Agreement targets and help to influence the national picture we have expanded the reach of the areas that we are working in, and the number of schools and colleges we engage with. During 2015/16 a full review of the schools and colleges we engage with was completed ensuring that we are reaching as many learners from under-represented groups with the potential to progress to the University of Sheffield and other selective institutions as possible.

This new focus expands our geographical reach, building on our existing collaborations with other selective HEIs, e.g. in the Yorkshire and Humber region (through our Excellence Hubs partnership with the universities of Leeds and York) and nationally through our active role in the Russell Group as well as through participation in the Realising Opportunities Programme.

From a national perspective, we continue to use a more systematic approach to the use of contextual data in the admissions process. By highlighting students from disadvantaged backgrounds from across the UK, we can reach under-represented groups of students on a national basis and consider such applications in a holistic way as part of the admissions process (see 4.2.2). Since 2014/15 we have developed ‘Destination: Sheffield’, a series of regionally based transition support events aimed to provide information, advice and guidance to offer holders from widening participation backgrounds about their firm university choice and their transition to HE. These events form part of our post-application activity to ensure WP offer holders are able to make informed decisions about studying at selective institutions such as the University of Sheffield.

Our financial support for students also applies to students nationally and to enable applicants from widening participation backgrounds to visit the University a travel bursary fund of £5,000 is available to support this.

## **Collaborative outreach**

The University continues to work collaboratively with other HEIs and other stakeholders to maintain and further develop our successful regional and national partnerships. These include:

### **Higher Education Progression Partnership (HEPP)**

The Higher Education progression Partnership (HEPP) is a collaborative partnership funded jointly by the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University and operating since 2012. With the assistance of local authority partners, improvements to schools' data and year groups by sub-region has enabled sharper targeting, with Pre-16 widening participation cohorts targeted by area and within schools.

In 2014/15 an independent review of the HEPP partnership was undertaken, confirming that the partnership is welcomed by schools and colleges for its impartiality and breadth, enabling the funding partners to confirm their financial support for ongoing collaboration.

HEPP generic activity continues to increase. In 2014/15 the total number of students and influencers reached was 10,568, a 12% increase on 2013/14 and a 47% increase on 2012/13. This year further activity is under development to include higher and graduate apprenticeship routes to university to complement the HEPP led work based learning pathways website<sup>10</sup>.

Following evaluation of the 'Heads Up' intensive outreach project (undertaken by the Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit at the University of Sheffield in 2015), it was decided not to repeat the initiative on grounds of cost per student, but to refocus the resource to reach a larger number. A new initiative, 'Raising Aspirations', is currently being piloted with seven schools, with annual interventions agreed from Year 7 to Year 13 for over 200 targeted students.

The provision of impartial information and advice for teachers/advisers remains an increasingly important strand of work, given the changing delivery of CEIAG away from teachers to hourly paid non-teaching support staff. In 2014/15 HEPP conferences were attended by 127 teachers/advisers, and five schools and colleges were provided with bespoke training on their premises for a further 28 teachers, an overall increase of 15% on the previous year.

In 2014/15 HEPP began working with a primary school teacher focus group to devise and implement a new strategy for Year 5 and Year 6. Early implementation has been with feeder schools to one challenging secondary school in North Sheffield in order to pilot, evaluate and refine the activity, with the intention of following the students through to Year 7 and beyond.

A successful bid for HEFCE funding for the National Networks for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO) has been a useful addition to HEPP, enabling additional projects to take place in 2014/15 with a focus on apprenticeships, care leavers, and students with disabilities. Collaborative work with Further Education Colleges has enabled a wider range of students to participate and the clarification of a wider range of HE options across the city-region.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.apprentice-forward.org.uk/>

## **Excellence Hub partnership**

Excellence Hub is a partnership between the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York which targets high achieving students from currently under-represented groups from across the region to encourage and facilitate progression of the 'most able, least likely' group of students to selective HEIs through subject specific taster events and IAG events, workshops and conferences.

The collaboration continues to focus on raising aspirations and encouraging applications to research intensive universities.

The Excellence Hub partners are developing an evaluation and monitoring plan for implementation from September 2016 onwards. This will include long term tracking of school level data for Pre-16 students and individual level data of Post-16 students through the HEAT database.

## **Advancing Access**

The University of Sheffield is a partner in Advancing Access, a national collaboration of 24 selective universities. We are working together with schools and colleges to develop and deliver continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers and advisors that supports student progression to selective universities and courses. Advancing Access has a particular focus on schools with low levels of progression to such universities. We are delivering the majority of CPD events and resources online to allow easy access for all schools, regardless of their location.

Advancing Access complements the excellent work already carried out at the University of Sheffield and other partner institutions by engaging those areas that have historically been hard to reach and may be in geographic 'cold spots'. It is a cost-effective approach to equipping teachers and advisors with the information they need to advise students with confidence. Initially funded through HEFCE's collaborative outreach network scheme, further funding options are currently being explored.

## **Realising Opportunities**

The University of Sheffield is a member of Realising Opportunities (RO), a unique collaborative partnership of research intensive universities developing and delivering a national fair access scheme which promotes social and geographic mobility for students from under-represented groups. RO has a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the longitudinal tracking of students through the HEAT database and UCAS.

The award-winning Realising Opportunities programme, developed through shared best practice, provides support for students through interventions designed to raise aspirations, develop skills and enable them to demonstrate their potential to succeed at a research intensive university. These interventions are offered locally and nationally and include a national student conference, ongoing support and encouragement from a trained student e-mentor and an

assessed academic element. Successful completion of RO will result in additional consideration given to applications through UCAS from all partner universities, and the potential for an alternative offer worth up to 40 UCAS points.

Each participating institution has committed future funds to ensure the on-going delivery of RO to 31 July 2019. For 2017 – 2018 this will be a maximum of **£37,000** per partner.

In October 2015, UCAS undertook analysis of applicant data for RO students. The results demonstrated that RO is robust in its dual targeting of high attaining students from disadvantaged backgrounds; provided evidence of elevated application, offer and entry rates for RO students applying to HE against a UCAS-identified control group; highlighted that RO seems to 'neutralise' background differences across the different measures of disadvantage, and suggests that RO participants are more successful at getting offers from research intensive universities.

### **Higher Education Access Tracker**

The University of Sheffield is a new member of the collaborative Higher Education Access Tracker Service (HEAT) which assists members in the targeting, monitoring and evaluation of both their individual and their collaborative fair access activities. It allows member universities to demonstrate outreach participation in relation to success at key transition points, collectively explore best practice in combining qualitative and quantitative research on outreach and in the future, perhaps, facilitate the development of collaborative targets.

Membership of the HEAT service will assist the University of Sheffield in fully understanding patterns of participation in outreach and the effectiveness of different types and combinations of outreach, something which is made possible by the collaborative nature of the service. Individual members use the HEAT database to record outreach activity and can see where individuals have engaged in activities with more than one HEAT university. Collectively this allows the central HEAT service to analyse the timing and combinations of activities that show most impact on enrolment in HE.

It can take some time for data about young participants in outreach to mature to the point of understanding their patterns of enrolment in HE as well as their retention and success rates. In the meantime the HEAT service has developed a model of matching a number of different administrative datasets to the HEAT database which will afford the University of Sheffield a better understanding of the relationship between outreach and key educational outcomes at both Pre and Post-16, before any enrolment takes place. The collective size and diversity of the database will mean this relationship can be explored against multiple participant characteristics, contributing to the University of Sheffield's and the sector's understanding of outcomes for different under-represented groups and recognising that widening participation students are not a homogenous group.

Where HEAT data has matured it allows the University of Sheffield to understand the relationship between outreach participation and HE enrolment, retention and success. The University of Sheffield will be able to see if and when its outreach participants enrol in HE. Crucially this data will show enrolment not only to the University of Sheffield but to all other

HEIs. This will allow the University of Sheffield to demonstrate its contribution to the sector as a whole. Furthermore, as data further matures, the University of Sheffield will be able to build a picture of the retention and degree classification of its outreach participants, as well as seeing destination and postgraduate enrolment data.

### **National Educational Opportunities Network (NEON)**

The University is a member of and contributes to the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON), which is the professional organisation for access to HE in England with over 60 Higher Education Institution (HEI) members. It represents the only member-based national vehicle developing collaborative relationships through professional development specifically focused on widening access to HE. In 2017-18 NEON will be providing opportunities for professional development and collaboration in the Government's key priority areas of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) learners, supporting those with disabilities, enabling greater progression for white disadvantaged males, as well as ensuring improvements in the evaluation of access to higher education work. Membership of NEON allows the University of Sheffield to improve the quality and range of its access and evaluation work by being part of a collaborative national community of practice. NEON will be extending its work through to 2017-18 providing its members the opportunity to draw on the strength of collaborative working to strengthen their work across the student lifecycle encompassing success, retention and progression work as well as outreach.

### **Equality Challenge Unit**

Between April 2016 and December 2018, the University will be working with the Equality Challenge Unit on two separate projects focusing on underrepresented equality groups. The first project will address the current under-representation of BME students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities by taking an action research approach to investigate and develop new outreach approaches and interventions. The second project will investigate the barriers and enablers experienced by potential HE students with Specific Learning Difficulties, mental health and autistic spectrum conditions and to develop evidence-based practice and targeted outreach and student support activities. In both cases, the objectives are to develop practical resources that will help address these areas of under-representation across the HE sector.

### **4.3.2 Contextual Data**

Contextual information sets an application in its educational and/or socio-economic context, allowing admissions selectors to take into account challenges an applicant has faced in their education and the effect of such challenges on their performance in qualifications.

After the completion of a significant research project in 2011, the University has implemented a contextual data scheme designed to: 1) effectively highlight students from disadvantaged



backgrounds, and 2) enable admissions selectors to make informed holistic decisions which take into account the challenges an applicant has faced.

As part of the above the University is using a broad range of data which includes residence in an area with low participation rates in Higher Education (POLAR3), residence in a deprived neighbourhood (Indices of Multiple Deprivation rankings) and participation in the University's sustained engagement Post-16 outreach programmes.

In addition, the University has an established 'Disrupted Studies' process which allows applicants to let us know if they have experienced issues of a personal, social or domestic nature that have affected their Post-16 studies. This information is then used alongside other contextual data in the selection process.

### **4.3.3 Student Retention, Progression and Success**

We have committed to specific activities to support the retention, progression and success of widening participation students, as described below. However, it is important to note that these are situated within our broader framework for learning and teaching enhancement and development, which is defined in our Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan. This ensures that we have clarity about the learning experiences and opportunities we want to provide to all of our taught students (UG and PGT), and in turn can focus on identifying where additional support or emphasis is needed to ensure that these can be fully realised.

The strategic priorities are currently under review and will be approved by our Senate in June 2016. Staff and students have contributed to the consultation to shape the direction and confirmed the following themes, each of which has relevance for our access priorities:

- Excellence in practice - Developing high quality teaching to ensure students are actively engaged in an *inclusive*, research intensive environment. Includes: research-led teaching, student research, communities of learning, students as co-producers, *student and staff engagement and development, inclusive environment*
- Outward-facing curricula - Preparing students for the world beyond the university through authentic learning which forges connections with communities and business. Includes: engaged learning, education and work, internationalisation, citizenship and sustainability, *widening participation, diversity and inclusivity*
- Developing a flexible approach - Exploring opportunities within the ways teaching can be delivered, the spaces in which learning takes place, and the technology we employ in order to support innovation. Includes: interdisciplinarity, collaboration, *new routes to HE, programme structures*, physical and virtual spaces, digital innovation, *modes of delivery*, support for staff

Overall the University has a strong track record on student retention and progression, as evidenced by the relevant HESA data. On this basis, with reference to widening participation our

revised strategic plan will focus on sustaining and building on existing good practices. As noted in previous agreements, enhancement and good practice in learning and teaching methods and associated support are relevant to all students, so in many instances will not be restricted to targeted groups/individuals. The following areas of support are available across the student life cycle:

*Orientation and transition support (getting established, sense of community)*

- We continue to offer a range of targeted activities to support orientation and transition, including: individual telephone contact at pre-arrival to students entering through clearing and adjustment routes; providing a contact point for information and guidance on issues such as accommodation, finance and welfare; a tailored orientation programme for students, with particular emphasis on local students, commuter students, mature students and students with a disability; and peer mentoring for a range of target groups including mature students, disabled students and local students.
- Additional support available to care leavers includes a named contact who can offer tailored and sustained support throughout the student's journey; bursaries; scholarships; and a priority in obtaining University owned accommodation.
- Students with caring responsibilities have a named contact, a bursary and a dedicated webpage including advice and support linked to external organisations such as Sheffield Young Carers.
- Students who are estranged from their families have a named contact, a bursary and dedicated webpage including advice and support linked to external organisations such as Stand Alone.
- The Disability Champions scheme supports disabled students through the recruitment phase and at induction and orientation through participation in Open Days, information stalls in the Union and also contributing to outreach visits to schools and colleges.
- It has been identified that students on a period of leave of absence can find it difficult to reintegrate and adjust when they return to the University. The returner project provides a named contact, support information, and referrals to assist them during their transition back into their studies.
- Students facing financial difficulties have access to financial support, money advice and specialist one to one advice.
- Autism Pre-arrival events: annual 1 or 2 day summer events to prepare applicants on the autism spectrum for university life.

*Academic and Personal Development (broadening horizons, creation of communities of learning, provision of consistent and effective academic and personal support, developing cultural agility and flexibility)*

- 301 (Student Skills and Development Centre) provides academic support to students, with some activity targeting students specific WP groups. This targeted activity includes: in curricular skills sessions to Department for Lifelong students (mature and part time), higher apprentices based at the AMRC-TC (alternative pathways) and BMedSci students (high proportion of WP students); Maths and Statistics Help (MASH); transition workshops for first year students; weekly Asperger Social Group; and dyslexia support.
- 301 is working on an online course to support transitions into HE, developed through a collaboration with Epigeum. It will be piloted in 2016-17 with a focus on integrating the course with subject/department based transition activities. Confirmed pilot cohorts include Department for Lifelong Learning, the AMRC Degree apprentices, Foundation Engineering and Dental Hygiene and Therapy. An evaluation will help us to understand if this holds true in practice.
- A Peer Assisted Support Scheme (PASS) is running with the Department for Lifelong Learning and Foundation Engineering, plus Biomedical Sciences, Hispanic Studies and two first year Engineering modules. Not all participants are WP but the very essence of peer-led learning is known to help with retention, sense of belonging and academic attainment. The intention is to grow this area into less formal schemes looking at how we can use peer learning to support the development of study skills (not just module-specific content) to help with academic transitions. The learning from the Engineering based PASS has also contributed to the qualitative strand of the BME Attainment Gap project.
- MASH have providing more activity on Maths Anxiety, aiming to help students recognise if they are suffering from it and giving techniques and strategies to overcome it. In addition, pilot work is underway to provide Maths For All sessions, teaching the basics to students who might have avoided maths and using everyday activities, such as decorating to teach about area/volume.
- Our Sheffield Undergraduate Research Experience scheme (SURE) includes a bursary to support participation in a research project with academic staff outside of the academic year, funding circa 80 bursaries per year. Whilst this was designed to facilitate access for any student who successfully applies to the scheme, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities is trialing ring fenced bursaries for WP students this year (5 in total). An analysis is also being undertaken of who takes up SURE opportunities, with WP indicators being one of the factors which will be considered. There is anecdotal evidence that the scheme is beneficial to participants if they apply for finding for postgraduate study, and available destination data for SURE participants will also be reviewed. If the evidence shows that participation in the scheme is not reflective of the diversity of the student body, further consideration will be given as to how this might be supported
- Internationalisation of the student learning experience continues to be a priority for the University. The global opportunities scheme is intended to widen access to opportunities

which we know have the potential to significantly enhance students' academic development and future employability prospects. Our widening participation students have the chance to apply for one of two global opportunities; the Study abroad scholarship worth £3000 to support their costs during their year abroad (15 available); a place at a summer school at one of our overseas partner institutions, this award covers the cost of tuition fee, travel to and from the summer school and accommodation (20 available).

- The Participation Grants scheme is a joint initiative with our Students' Union. The scheme provides our widening participation students with grants of between £100- £250 to help with the costs of taking part in societies and other SU-led activities.

#### *Health and wellbeing (retention and progression)*

- The University Health Service is one of the few remaining 'in-house' services of its kind in the sector. This model ensures that services are targeted to students' needs, maximising the opportunities for retention and progression through its work with patients, other support services and academic departments.
- The Counselling Service provides specialist support for students with mental ill health, including one-to-one , group work and on-line counselling and psychological wellbeing support including interactive university web sites and external 24/7 online monitored provision.
- The Disability and Dyslexia Support Service includes two Mental Health Advisers, plus one-to-one Support and Guidance mentors, who provide support for students with long-term mental ill health. This support is mainly academic-related but the Mental Health Advisers can also liaise with external services (NHS etc) to support transition, retention and progression.
- Targeted psychological wellbeing/mental health campaigns will continue to be provided at strategic points, such as Intro Week, study abroad preparation period, post-exams, mental health week.

#### *Employability (Learning through experiences outside of the University, Developing cultural agility and flexibility, Graduate careers including access to the professions)*

- The Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to students from WP backgrounds at the pre-entry stage, including work with the University's Department for Lifelong Learning to support potential mature entrants.
- In order to enhance the knowledge and awareness of current students from widening participation backgrounds of the need to gain relevant skills and experience for entry into specific professions, the Careers Service delivers a programme of support during their time at the University to assist their transition into the graduate labour market. This included tailored workshops are delivered for specific target groups and students also

have access to additional individual guidance sessions, support with job applications and targeted promotion of other Careers Service provision.

- Volunteering and work experience grants are available to our widening participation students to enable them to engage in unpaid work experience during the vacation periods.
- The Careers Service has developed the 'Experience Sheffield' web pages as a resource targeted at encouraging students to make the most of the developmental opportunities available to them whilst studying at the university. This resource is particularly targeted at students from a WP background.
- The City Connections initiative is being sustained and is informing more broadly. City Connections brings alumni and students together and provides the opportunity to develop skills, build confidence and gain insights into different business sectors and organisations. As well as taking part in practical workshops in innovation, application skills, business structures and case study exercises, students attend an evening networking event hosted by a major graduate recruiter.
- In addition, all of our graduates have continued access to the Careers Service for a period of three years after graduation.
- Originally established as part of our involvement in the Postgraduate Support Scheme (PSS) PGT project, the Careers Service continues to develop and operate 'AskaMasters', an e-buddying programme wherein our final year UG students from a WP background are targeted to pair up with a postgraduate student (preferably from a WP background) to support progression to PGT.
- For 2017/18 we plan to further enhance the advice and guidance provided to widening participation students with respect to further study options. The emphasis will remain on ensuring that the range of opportunities is transparent, so encompassing professional practice courses and access to disciplines beyond the core subject(s) studied at undergraduate level, in addition to subject based progression to Masters or PhD.
- The Career Service has developed a Postgraduate Advantage Scheme (PAS) wherein PG students in the Faculty of Social Sciences from a WP background are targeted and supported to undertake paid employment opportunities of 100 hours with a range of employers.

### *Staff Engagement and Development*

- The Widening Participation Forum, managed by WPREU, has been introduced to provide a regular space for sharing developments, insights and practice and this will continue in 2017/18. Recent events have focused on the BME attainment gap and the financial implications of HE study for widening participation students.

- With respect to staff development for learning and teaching, we will continue to use the SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) programme to work with staff delivering or supporting learning and teaching. The programme combines personal development with collaborative project work, and aims to equip staff with support to implement change in their workplace, practices and institutional culture. It can touch on all aspects of inclusive curriculum, including content, programme and module design and assessment, unconscious bias and assumptions about the purpose and value of education.
- In addition, the initial professional development provided for all new staff who teach (Certificate in Learning and Teaching) and our framework for professional recognition embed inclusivity as an essential dimension of good practice in learning and teaching.
- The Toolkit for PGT Programme Innovation was developed as part of the PSS project and is being utilised by faculties and departments across the University to identify best practice and provide guidance to academics to help develop programmes that attract a range of students, including those students from WP backgrounds, international students and students in employment.

#### **4.3.4 Financial Support**

Our proposals for financial support are specifically aimed at widening participation students and are the same as those proposed in our 2016/17 Access Agreement, which were developed by assessing to what extent financial support can overcome barriers to participation for under-represented groups, primarily for:

- Students from less advantaged and low income backgrounds.
- Looked after children/care leavers
- Young carers
- Estranged students

We estimate that approximately 35% of our full-time, Home/EU undergraduate intake will receive some form of financial support from the University each year.

#### **Full-time students**

Our financial support scheme for new home and EU students commencing full time programmes of study will be a bursary for each year of study. Students will have a choice of taking their bursary as a direct payment or a fee waiver. There is no limit on the number of bursaries we will award.

Students must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Come from a household with an assessed income of £40,000 pa or less and they may be eligible for an enhanced bursary if they meet one or more other criteria:
- Home postcode is in a disadvantaged area as measured against the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

- High achieving students from low participation areas in the Sheffield City region, as measured by Polar 3 Quintile 1.

Students who meet low income and IMD or Polar 3 Quintile 1 will be awarded the maximum bursary of £2000 per year with a minimum bursary of £500 for students who only meet the upper household income threshold.

<b>Household income</b>	<b>£0- £25,000</b>	<b>£25,001 - £30,000</b>	<b>£30,001- £40,000</b>
<b>Household income award</b>	£1,500	£1000	£500
<b>Low IMD award OR</b>	£500	£0	£0
<b>Polar 3 Quintile 1 (local only) ABB+</b>	£500	£500	£500
<b>Max possible bursary</b>	£2000	£1500	£1000

#### **Exceptions:**

Care leavers, young carers and students estranged from their families will be eligible for a bursary of £4,500 each year of study rather than being assessed against the criteria above.

Students with assessed household incomes of £25,000 or less and registered on specific foundation programmes entering higher education with non-traditional qualifications will be eligible for a bursary of £2000 each year of study.

#### **Externally branded scholarships**

**HSBC** - The University has entered an agreement with HSBC to provide 5 high-achieving care leavers with a fee free course commencing in 2017/18. This award will replace the University care leaver bursary (£4,500). HSBC will provide a contribution of £5000 for each student each year and the University will match fund this amount. Each student will benefit from not being charged any tuition fees and they will receive a HSBC bursary of £1000 each year of study; this is in addition to other income based bursaries they are eligible for (£1,500).

**Lloyds** - Lloyds Scholars is a unique social mobility programme run by Lloyds Banking Group in partnership with the University; offering students from low income households (£25,000 or lower) a Lloyds bursary, paid internships, a business mentor and the opportunity to develop their employability skills.

**Part-time students**

Home and EU students from assessed household incomes of £25,000 pa or lower; studying at least 60 credits on a part time programme of study and who do not already hold an equivalent level qualification will be eligible for a bursary of £1500 each year of study. Part time students from assessed household incomes greater than £25,000 but less than or equal to £40,000, will be eligible for a bursary for each year of study as shown below. Eligible programmes include our part- time foundation programme, part time certificates and part time degrees. Eligible students can take a fee loan and maintenance loan from Student Finance.

Students will have a choice of taking their bursary as a direct payment to them or a fee waiver. There is no limit on the number of bursaries we will award.

<b>Household income</b>	<b>£0- £25,000</b>	<b>£25,001 - £30,000</b>	<b>£30,001- £40,000</b>
<b>Bursary</b>	£1,500	£500	£250

NB: Students who progress from part time foundation programmes onto full time degree programmes will be eligible for a full time bursary as illustrated in the previous table; a reassessment of eligibility will not be necessary.

**Unforeseeable costs**

The University is committed to provide a hardship fund of £200,000 to support our students with costs they could not have foreseen or budgeted for; to help students at risk of leaving their studies remain on course and successfully complete.



## Section 5: Targets and Milestones

### 5.1 Targets

The University of Sheffield fully revised its targets based on HESA PIs in the previous version of our Access Agreement. For 2017/18 we have discontinued the measures based on NS-SEC data and included new indicators and targets to measure progression of WP students at Sheffield to postgraduate taught study at Sheffield as well as the recruitment of white males from disadvantaged backgrounds to our outreach schemes.

Our key aims in relation to widening participation, as stated in previous agreements, continue to be to:

- Increase our recruitment of academically capable students from the lowest socio-economic groups
- Grow the number of students with disabilities entering the University
- Maintain our strong performance in recruitment of students from low participation neighbourhoods
- Maintain our mature student intake
- Maintain our intake of students from black and other minority ethnic groups
- Grow the number of part-time students entering the University and improve their success and progression rates.

We have extended our targets to continue to 2021 on the same trajectory as last year which reflects our aspiration to maintain our strong position with regard to HESA benchmarks and other institutionally driven targets. The targets set for the new measures also reflect our aspiration:

- Our measure of WP progression from UG to PGT uses internal data and uses students who choose to continue their studies at Sheffield as a proxy for the wider WP cohort. Our current performance is that 11.2% of our WP students progress to PGT study at Sheffield compared with 7.9% of the non WP student population. This level of recruitment to PGT will have been supported by our successful PSS scheme which is noted elsewhere in this Access Agreement. While the continuation of this funding is not yet confirmed, the University remains committed to supporting progression for WP students to PGT study and our targets for this measure reflect this aspiration.
- Our measure of white males from disadvantaged backgrounds registering on our sustained engagement Outreach schemes uses a basket of WP indicators to more accurately reflect these students. Our current performance is 21.7% of the total scheme intake and we will seek to improve this over the target period.

Please see Table 7a for full details of our quantitative targets.

## **5.2 Milestones**

We continue to be committed to expanding our outreach provision across all sectors (primary school activity through to Post-16 activity), expanding our retention, support and progression activity for post-entry students and undertaking research into the impact of our activity to inform future policy and practice. Our milestones set out how we will deliver on the proposals for growth and development in these areas.

Please see Table 7b for details of our milestones.

## **Section 6: Monitoring and evaluation arrangements**

### **6.1 Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit**

We believe that the University of Sheffield is still fairly unusual in having dedicated substantial resource (currently 3 x FTE) to the research and evaluation of its widening participation, student success and progression activities. The University's Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit (WPREU) was created in May 2012 to i) establish a consistent approach to the monitoring and evaluation of WP activities across the University ii) to support and deliver institution-specific WP related research and iii) to foster links between researchers and practitioners with an interest in widening participation and fair access both within and beyond the University.

The Unit and its work is now embedded in institutional practice across the whole student lifecycle. We are currently developing research projects in inclusive learning and teaching issues, student progression and reviewing and revising our outreach evaluation methodology.

### **6.2 Evaluation of WP Outreach Interventions**

The University is continuing to expand its mixed methods evaluation toolkit. Currently our approach includes the analysis of institutional participant, applicant and student data, the use of semi-flexible outreach evaluation questionnaires, and qualitative methods such as focus groups, interviews, case studies, longitudinal student tracking and interviews. We evaluate activities to understand how successfully they are in i) changing participant attitudes to HE and their current studies, ii) helping them develop self-confidence and a sense of 'fit' with HE, iii) supporting participants with the development of relevant skills and knowledge and iv) achieving activity-specific objectives.

Evaluation outcomes are used at a local and global level to a) provide 'instant' formative feedback to practitioners about their activities, b) to monitor the effective targeting and take up of activities and c) provide an evidence base of effectiveness and impact across the whole range of the University's WP outreach activities. Outcomes from qualitative research are used to extend the evidence base of what works best in our outreach and student success activities and to identify any unanticipated consequences.

We take a longitudinal approach by tracking outreach participants up to the end of Year 13. We are now using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) to record and track the demographic profiles of our participants. In the future, we hope this will provide us with robust data about participant outcomes. Until this data matures, we will continue to run a Year 13 outcomes survey to capture data about the level 3 attainment and HE progression outcomes of former programme participants.

### **Targeting of interventions**

Outcomes from our own outreach evaluations continue to indicate that, although the targeting of our activities is a complex issue, the programmes we evaluated were generally effectively targeted, with a significant proportion of activities reaching students in the intended cohorts. We found that in some cases, the selection processes within schools had resulted in variable interpretation of the selection criteria. As a result, we have revised our targeting methodology at school level and at the same time revised selection guidance to schools. There has not yet been sufficient time to determine the impact of these changes.

### **Impact of activities on participants**

Activities were widely seen by participants as successful in achieving their skills and knowledge development objectives. In addition, evaluation has indicated that:

- Our outreach activities provide participants with peer groups that share their HE aspirations. This often contrasted with their school or college peer group. Participants often viewed this peer group as being invaluable in helping them maintain their focus and HE aspiration;
- The social and peer-networking opportunities provided by activities (in particular our sustained programmes) were seen by participants as significantly supporting their journeys into HE;
- Student ambassadors, including Disability Champions, play an important role in providing advice and information and are viewed by participants as being trustworthy and authoritative;
- What most concerned participants was their ability to achieve the grades required to progress into HE. Many of our programmes and activities include an academic component and participants frequently report that these increase their confidence in their own ability to achieve the grades they need;
- Participants appear to respond particularly strongly to activities with a practical 'hands-on' component.

## **Evidence-based changes to interventions**

On the basis of evaluation outcomes, we have continued to make changes to our activities and programmes by:

- Increasing the proportion of 'hands on' activities and interactive content;
- Providing more targeted and/or refocused support and IAG in some areas, including additional academic support and revision sessions;
- Making more taster sessions available;
- Increasing the number of places available on some programmes and activities;
- Expanding the role of student ambassadors in some activities;
- Reviewing programme contents to make them more coherent and a better fit with school curriculum requirements;
- Providing a detailed overview of individual departments, the types of degrees they offer and graduate employment prospects, in response to feedback indicating that many participants lacked this necessary context;
- Reviewing and slightly increasing GCSE and other entry requirements for our sustained programmes, following an analysis of progression rates.

### **6.3 Student Success Evaluation**

We carried out a mapping exercise to understand the range of student support services available to WP students across the University and are working with student support and guidance colleagues to understand more about service usage and student retention patterns. The range and diversity of student support activities, and the nature of open access provision, means that it has not been possible to develop a consistent and comprehensive evaluation framework to monitor the impact of these activities. Instead, we have adopted a 'patchwork' approach in which activities, services and provision are evaluated on their own terms. As such, we undertake a number of targeted student success evaluation projects each year. To date, these have included impact evaluations of academic support activities targeted at WP students, such as a peer-assisted learning programme and employability-focused interventions.

In terms of student academic progression, we work closely with colleagues in Learning and Teaching Services (LETS) and Academic and Learning Services Projects and Developments Team to investigate relevant aspects of learning and teaching. As such we are nearing the conclusion of qualitative and quantitative research into the ethnicity attainment gap at Sheffield. We are also preparing a paper for the 2016 British Educational Research Association (BERA) conference, looking at differential attainment across core modules within a large academic department and investigating the relationship between institutional policy, philosophy and practice around inclusive learning. We hope that this work will provide a foundation for further research and increasing evaluation of learning and teaching interventions targeted at disadvantaged or under-represented students.

## 6.4 Student Progression Evaluation

WPREU staff work closely with colleagues in the Careers Service to evaluate activities designed to specifically support students from disadvantaged backgrounds with developing employability skills and opportunities. These include the provision of work experience bursaries and a targeted careers support programme.

## 6.5 Evaluation of Financial Support

In considering our financial support provision, we have drawn on previous research in this area that has illuminated the complex relationship between financial issues, part-time work and the student experience.<sup>11</sup> On an annual basis, we also carry out an annual survey into the impact of the University's financial support package across a number of areas, including student HE and academic experiences. Our three year longitudinal student tracking project, *Sheffield Student 2013*, is also providing very valuable data about the relationship between financial issues and the student experience.<sup>12</sup>

### The impact of financial support on decision-making

We have surveyed current first year students who received fee waivers from the University about the impact of financial support on their HE decision-making<sup>13</sup> and carried out some pilot fieldwork with Year 13 students from a range of local schools and colleges. The outcomes of this research concurs with the outcomes of CFE and Edge Hill University's Year 4 report on the *Evaluation of the National Scholarship Programme*<sup>14</sup> and tends to reinforce the conclusions of earlier research<sup>15</sup> that the financial support packages offered by different institutions have had only a limited impact on applicant decision-making.

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<sup>11</sup> For example: Burns, N., and Mercer, P., 2012. *Mapping the Evidence: A Review of the Literature: Student Financial Support in Further and Higher Education*. London: NUS; Burns, N. and Mercer, P., 2012. *The Pound In Your Pocket*. London: NUS; Brennan, J., Duaso, A., Callendar, C. and Van Dyke, R. 2005. *Survey of Higher Education Students' Attitudes to Debt and Term-Time Working and Their Impact on Attainment*. London: Universities UK and HEFCE; Brooks, R. 2012. *What Have We Learned to Date to Inform Access, Retention and Success Under the New Funding Regime in England? A Literature Synthesis of the Widening Access Student Retention and Success National Programmes Archive*. [online]. York: Higher Education Academy.

<sup>12</sup> [www.sheffield.ac.uk/als/wp/stp2013](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/als/wp/stp2013)

<sup>13</sup> Response rate in 2012 = 64% (115 individual responses).

<sup>14</sup> CFE Research and Edge Hill University. 2016. *Evaluation of the National Scholarship Programme: Year 4 Report to HEFCE*, Bristol: HEFCE

<sup>15</sup> Corver, M. 2010. *Have Bursaries Influenced Choices Between Universities?* Bristol: Office for Fair Access

## The impact of financial support on the student experience

Along with external research<sup>16</sup>, our own research suggests, however, that our financial support provision is impacting on the quality of recipients' university and academic experiences by a) removing or reducing a potential source of worry and/or reliance on term-time working<sup>17</sup>, which can negatively impact on the time available for self-directed study and reading, and b) by making it possible for students to take up additional experiences or opportunities that may not otherwise have been available to them.

The outcomes from the *Sheffield Student 2013* longitudinal qualitative project, which follows 40 students through their student journey and oversamples the poorest 10% of undergraduate entrants, have also provided a range of insights about the impact of financial support on the student and applicant experience. Students from the poorest households have indicated that they were often unable to rely on financial support from their families and had to budget on the basis of the statutory financial package. Therefore, the additional support they received from the University was extremely useful to them.

This combined evidence helps confirm a clear correlation between wellbeing, money and the academic experience and have helped to inform both the content and provision of our financial support packages; for example, in previous years we have moved to a more flexible student choice model, and spread provision across all years of study. On the basis of this evidence, we continue to invest significantly in financial support for the poorest students. We believe that this support enables recipients to have a fuller student experience and supports them in achieving the academic success of which they are capable. Where possible, therefore, we will maintain current financial support arrangements at a steady state. The University's Financial Support Team continues to work closely with WPREU researchers and also draws on existing research to better understand the impact of the financial support we offer.

## 6.6 Collaborative Evaluation

We have recently concluded a collaborative evaluation with colleagues from the Higher Education Progression Partnership (HEPP), a network which includes Sheffield Hallam University, to evaluate 'Heads Up', a sustained outreach programme, which works with 50 young people from local schools. We closely evaluated the individual activities making up the programme, but also took a longitudinal view of the overall impact of the scheme on participants. HEPP continues to represent an excellent opportunity for the two institutions to share evaluation tools, data and expertise and, potentially, to undertake additional collaborative research in the future.

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<sup>16</sup> E.g. Brennan, J., Duaso, A., Little, B., Callendar, C. and Van Dyke, R. 2005. *Survey of higher education students' attitudes to debt and term-time working and their impact on attainment*. London: Universities UK; Lindsay, R. and Paton-Saltzberg, R. 1996. *The Effects of Paid Employment on the Academic Performance of Full-Time Students in a British 'New' University*. Oxford: Oxford Brookes University.

<sup>17</sup> Crockford, Julian; Hordósy, Rita; Simms, Kimberley S. (2015) 'I really needed a job, like, for money and stuff': Student finance, part-time work and the student experience at a northern red-brick university. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, Volume 17, Number 3, October 2015, pp. 89-109(21) DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.17.3.89>

## **NERUPI: Network for Evaluation and Research of University Participation Interventions**

The University of Sheffield is a member of the NERUPI consortium which employs a common evaluation Framework to assess the impact of widening participation interventions across the student lifecycle. The NERUPI Framework, based on aims informed by academic research and best practice in the field, provides a common set of criteria for assessing impact while allowing use of flexible methods reflecting context. NERUPI's collaborative approach and focus on innovation and dissemination strengthens local evaluation and contributes to the sector's understanding of effective practice.

## **NEON: Impact and Evaluation Working Group**

We continue to support and contribute to NEON's Impact and Evaluation Working Group, which provides a valuable cross-sector opportunity to discuss and develop evaluation approaches.

## **6.7 Encouraging dialogue and collaboration**

WPREU also co-ordinate a series of researcher-practitioner forums, which bring together researchers and practitioners with an interest in widening participation and access issues to ensure that a broad range of voices and perspectives help steer the University's practice in this area. We are also convening a series of 'think tanks', round table events which bring together academics with expertise in this area with Senior Managers. We hope that this will help ensure that our strategy and practice continue to be informed by the latest academic research, debates and thinking about widening participation.

WPREU also publishes a quarterly bulletin, which goes to all staff with an interest in widening participation, student success and inclusive learning and teaching issues. Each issue provides an update on WPREU projects, WP developments across the institution, and highlights key policy, academic and media publications. Where possible we also include articles from external stakeholders to broaden the range of discussion.

WPREU staff continue to build links with institutionally-based researchers (particularly those in the School of Education and the Department of Sociological Studies) and external colleagues (for example, researchers based in the Centre for Education and Inclusion Research at Sheffield Hallam University), which are beginning to lead to the delivery of a collaborative research project exploring WP student decision making.

## **6.8 Further evaluation development**

The diversity of both the student cohorts we work with and the activities we offer continues to represent a significant challenge to our efforts to maintain a consistent and coherent approach to evaluation. We will continue, therefore, to adopt a broad spectrum approach by i) expanding the range of activities that we evaluate and continuing to develop specialised evaluation toolkits (e.g. for activities involving primary school pupils, or student support services) and ii) evaluating as full a range of activities as is practically possible. At the same time, we are also attempting to

reflect the diversity of activities, objectives and outcomes by developing a rolling programme of more focused evaluation projects which examine specific programmes or activities in detail.

To date we do not feel we have adequately exploited external datasets such as DfE schools data to explore the impact of our work and benchmark against external contexts. To address this, we will recruit an additional WPREU researcher with expertise in exploiting big datasets, statistical analysis and data visualisation.

## **Section 7: Provision of information to prospective 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.

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 (e.g. Secondary Heads' Association) and also through regular communication to schools and colleges through the termly "REACH" 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.

## **Section 8: Consultation with the student body**

The University benefits from very strong relationships with our student body and has consulted with the Students' Union throughout the process of developing the 2017/18 Access Agreement. The Women's Officer of the Students' Union has been involved in our Access Agreement working group to represent the views of our student body and to recommend changes to our approach for the benefit of our students.

The University values student representation on major University level committees, including the Learning and Teaching Committee and its associated sub-groups and working groups, which is involved in signing off and approving the University's Access Agreement commitments. This ensures that the needs and wishes of current students are taken account of through discussions



that contribute to the setting of targets, milestones, financial support for students, as well as other key issues.

## **Section 9: Additional Equality and Diversity Commitments**

The University of Sheffield is fully committed to eliminating all forms of unfair discrimination in all of its activities, and in respect of all students, staff, visitors, contractors, members of Council and other committees, and its governance arrangements and relationships with the wider community. The University is committed to treating all people with dignity and respect equally, irrespective of any of the 'Protected Characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Each academic faculty has an Equality and Diversity Committee with clear links to their own faculty executive boards, and to the University's Equality and Diversity Board. One of the responsibilities of these committees is to review relevant data with the aim of identifying areas of good practice and where more work needs to be done. This includes looking at student data for different protected characteristics and considering it in relation to the Widening Participation strategy of the University.

The University's department of Human Resources is leading on a number of equality and diversity related initiatives, including the 'Excellence Through Inclusion' Strategy, which is intended to help build an institutional culture of inclusion, the 'Equality Objectives' project, which aims to create a vision where diversity and inclusion are valued by all and 'Talent First', a strategy to attract, grow and engage talented staff from diverse backgrounds.

Overall, the University is successfully delivering equality and diversity across a number of areas and has been rewarded by external recognition; the University itself and 16 individual departments, for example, have achieved Athena Swan awards, including 4 silver. We have also been acknowledged by Stonewall as both a Diversity Champion and a Top 100 employer for creating an inclusive culture for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

During 2012/13, the University worked with AMOSSHE, The Student Services Organisation and ECU (the Equality Challenge Unit) on a project focusing on attracting and retaining BME students. Three of the objectives of this project were i) to consider the collection of data on access and support referrals ii) to consider the collection and retrieval of data on protected characteristics, particularly BME, and how this is used institutionally, and iii) to review student-focused equality and diversity information on University webpages. This work coincided with the re-launch of the Black and Minority Ethnic Students' Committee, who helped to inform this work.

We are currently working on two intersecting projects on differential outcomes between BME and non-BME students. The first is faculty based, and being undertaken by a task and finish group to explore and respond to the ethnicity attainment gap in the Faculty of Engineering. A number of recommendations will be put to the Faculty board. At the same time, we have employed two graduate interns to carry out quantitative and qualitative work exploring the ethnicity attainment gap at an institutional level. The project is expected to report in May 2016.

During 2015-16 we worked with an inclusion expert on a project, “The Big Message”, to develop a clear rationale for diversity that speaks to the educational needs of the University. One of our key aims was to understand how diversity and inclusion can help us to work together to enhance the student experience. We aim to highlight the beneficial impact of diversity on the student experience and to inspire staff and students to reflect on their own behaviours, and on the role they can play in influencing culture and making inclusive decisions to help create a remarkable place to work and study.

We are also undertaking a range of specifically student and applicant focused initiatives, including a project to attach more equality data (such as religion and sexuality) to student records; this will enable us to track student progression by factors such as attainment and drop-out rates, and to develop targeted actions benefiting specific equality groups.

At a more operational level, through our outreach and retention programmes, we have already implemented a number of specific actions to encourage and support progression of students from diverse groups. For example, we are:

- delivering pre-entry activities targeting female students for Science and Engineering degrees and careers. Although this may not be a key target group for general WP activity, our analysis shows an under-representation of female students and staff within the Engineering Faculty; we have therefore taken steps to redress the balance, including the provision of “Discover STEM for girls” activities, the creation of a Women in Engineering Student Society (which already has over 100 members) and delivering events promoting university options for Y12 girls in science, maths and engineering;
- employing a disability transitions officer to support prospective and new students, work with individuals, schools and colleges to minimise difficulties at the most vulnerable stage of the student journey, and provide information and advice to prospective students and their families. We also have a Disability Liaison Officer within each academic department;
- providing a comprehensive support programme (“Supporting the Supporters”) which offers staff training in the support of diverse student groups (e.g. those on the Autistic spectrum, with dyslexia, dyspraxia or mental health difficulties);
- providing a multi-faith chaplaincy (which includes a Muslim chaplain);
- offering a specialist service and support package, which is co-ordinated by mental health professionals who work with staff from academic departments, support and wellbeing teams, and accommodation and faculty administration staff to ensure that support for students with the most complex mental health needs is effectively joined up.

All of this work feeds into our impact assessment, which will enable us to consider all protected characteristics and widening participation groups in a holistic manner, to inform future actions and targets.

**Table 7 - Targets and milestones**

Institution name: The University of Sheffield  
 Institution UKPRN: 10007157

**Table 7a** - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (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)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16a_01	Access	HESA T1a - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Proposed to remove target as data not available from 2016/17	No	2013-14	20.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Proposed to remove target as data not available from 2016/17
T16a_02	Access	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Young FT first degree entrants: from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	No	2013-14	8.2%	8.8%	9.2%	9.6%	10%	10.4%	Target set to achieve benchmark by 2019-20 and assumes a proportion of the population used by OFFA to measure performance against the metric rather than the total student population.
T16a_03	Access	HESA T2a - (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	UK domiciled mature full-time undergraduate entrants, Percentage with no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhood (POLAR3)	No	2013-14	16.2%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%	Target set to achieve benchmark by 2019-20 and assumes a proportion of the population used by OFFA to measure performance against the metric rather than the total student population.
T16a_04	Access	HESA T7 - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, first degree entrants)	FT first degree new entrants who have declared a disability	No	2013-14	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	Consolidating as already performing above benchmark
T16a_05	Access	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Young FT first degree entrants: non continuation following year of entry to institution	No	2013-14	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	Consolidating as already performing above benchmark
T16a_06	Student success	HESA T3b - No longer in HE after 1 year & in low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Young FT first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods: non continuation following year of entry to institution	No	2013-14	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	Consolidating as already performing above benchmark
T16a_07	Student success	HESA T3c - No longer in HE after 1 year & no previous HE qualification (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	Mature FT first degree entrants with no previous HE qualification: non continuation following year of entry to institution	No	2013-14	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	Consolidating as already performing above benchmark
T16a_08	Access	Other statistic - Postgraduate (please give details in the next column)	PGDE Targets - low IMD (based on number of UoS UG progressing to PGCE)	No	2013-14	10	13	13	13	13	13	Seeking to consolidate performance.
T16a_09	Access	Other statistic - Postgraduate (please give details in the next column)	PGDE Targets - Ethnicity (number)	No	2011-12	10	13	13	13	13	13	Seeking to consolidate performance.
T16a_10	Access	Other statistic - Mature (please give details in the next column)	Mature PT Undergraduate entrants	No	2011-12	85	99	99	99	99	99	Challenging target set over the target period.
T16a_11	Access	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Year One, first degree Full Person Equivalents: from minority ethnic backgrounds (Black, Asian, Other (including mixed))	No	2013-14	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	Consolidating as already performing above benchmark
T16a_12	Progression	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Progression of WP students from UG to PGT study at Sheffield.	No	2015-16	11.2%	12%	13%	14%	15%	16%	New measure based on internal data.
T16a_13	Access	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of 'Discover' Post-16 Outreach scheme participants progressing to the University of Sheffield	No	2015-16	19.2%	20%	21%	22%	23%	24%	New measure based on internal data.
T16a_14	Access	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of 'Discover' Post-16 Outreach scheme participants progressing to the Higher Education	No	2015-16	71%	71%	72%	73%	74%	75%	New measure based on internal data.
T16a_15	Access	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of white males from disadvantaged backgrounds registering on sustained Outreach schemes	No	2015-16	21.7%	22%	23%	24%	25%	26%	New measure based on internal data.

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Please select target type from the 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)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16b_01	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Continue to develop the HEPP partnership. Develop a project to test the effectiveness of longitudinal engagement with schools.	Yes	2014-15	Develop a strategy to engage with a number of schools in one sub-region on a collective project.	Pilot the project with two schools and all year groups	Evaluate, and assess the feasibility of working with more schools, depending on future funding	Consider rolling out to other schools in the sub-region, depending on future funding	Consider rolling out to other schools in the sub-region, depending on future funding	Consider rolling out to other schools in the sub-region, depending on future funding	At the request of the local authority, this project is designed to encourage schools to plan ahead for the engagement with university of each year group, with the aim of improving ambition and attainment in target schools
T16b_02	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Continue to develop the HEPP partnership. Develop a project to test the effectiveness of longitudinal engagement with schools.	Yes	2014-15	Develop an appropriate strategy to engage with primary schools	Carry out activity with selected primary schools and evaluate the	Further develop the project to include sustained work with target schools	Evaluate engagement and activity with target schools, and consider extending the activity, depending on future funding	Consider involving other primary schools, depending on future funding	Consider involving other primary schools, depending on future funding	The aim of this project is to engage and influence younger children and their parents to consider university as an option at an early stage. Feeder schools of a HEPP target school will be chosen, so that activity pre- and post- Y7 can link.
T16b_03	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	TUOS has committed to continued regional collaboration to maintain/develop our successful Excellence Hubs partnership (Universities of Leeds, York and TUOS). This partnership will continue to target high achieving students from currently under-represented groups from across the region to encourage and facilitate progression of the "most able, least likely" group of students to selective HEIs	Yes	2011-12	800	2050	2100	2150	2200	2225	We will continue to work with our partners in the Excellence Hub network to engage with large numbers of students from widening participation backgrounds across the Yorkshire and Humber region.
T16b_04	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Realising Opportunities Targets for progression of RO participants to a research intensive university	Yes	Other (please give details in Description column)	N/A	36%	37%	38%	39%	N/A	Shows the target for the percentage of RO participants entering a research intensive university
T16b_05	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Realising Opportunities Targets for progression of RO participants to an RO Partner university	Yes	Other (please give details in Description column)	N/A	25%	25%	25%	25%	N/A	Shows the target for the percentage of RO participants entering an RO Partner university
T16b_06	Access	Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	We will develop more formal partnership arrangements with schools and colleges as well as with Local Authority and other external agencies.	No	2013-14	1 HE/Schools partnership conference and 2 senior manager networking opportunities.	1 HE/Schools partnership conference and 2 senior manager networking opportunities.	1 HE/Schools partnership conference and 2 senior manager networking opportunities.	1 HE/Schools partnership conference and 2 senior manager networking opportunities.	1 HE/Schools partnership conference and 2 senior manager networking opportunities.	1 HE/Schools partnership conference and 2 senior manager networking opportunities.	Through the partnerships we will clarify our 'offer' to students from widening participation backgrounds & ensure that activities are effectively targeted. We will also deliver 'consultation/networking' events targeting senior managers.
T16b_07	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	We will expand the number of participants on our successful post-16 sustained engagement programmes. These are intensive programmes that target WP students who have the academic potential to progress to and succeed at research intensive HEIs. These programmes include academic skills development activities to improve attainment at post-16 and to improve preparedness for degree level study in research intensive institutions. Successful completion leads to an alternative offer for admission to the University of Sheffield.	No	2013-14	500	540	560	580	600	600	Each scheme will seek to increase their total cohort (Y12 & Y13) by 4 students per year until 2019/20.
T16b_08	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	From 2015/16 we will introduce a pre-16 interdisciplinary intensive programme targeting higher achieving WP students from Y9 to Y11, providing academic skills, development opportunities and confidence building activities alongside a range of subject based optional sessions, to give students a greater understanding of what subjects are available at HE level.	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	N/A	250	300	350	400	400	The scheme will seek to recruit an initial 200 participants into the Y9 cohort in 2015/16 with annual increases of 50 each year until 2019/20.

T16b_09	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	We will expand our delivery of activities targeting primary school pupils, including 'self-access' web based programmes plus face to face interactive sessions on and off campus. Work in collaboration with the Students' Union and SheffieldVolunteering. Provide trained volunteer classroom mentors in Sheffield primary schools.	No	2012-13	Web based resources available. Working with 14 schools in Sheffield City Region	Work with 16 schools in Sheffield City Region	Work with 17 schools in Sheffield City Region	Work with 18 schools in Sheffield City Region	Work with 20 schools in Sheffield City Region	Work with 20 schools in Sheffield City Region	
T16b_10	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	We will continue to offer a general programme of HE support for schools and colleges across the Sheffield City region. This programme of support will work with schools and colleges locally to provide IAG to post-16 students, their parents/advisers and teachers, in order that students can make informed choices about whether, and if so where and what to study.	No	2012-13	Over 100 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 15000 participants	Over 100 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 15000 participants	Over 100 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 15000 participants	Over 100 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 15000 participants	Over 100 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 15000 participants	Over 100 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 15000 participants	
T16b_11	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	We will expand our successful US in Schools Mentoring programme to schools and colleges using current University of Sheffield Students.	No	2014-15	70 mentors delivering support to 350 mentees across 12 schools in the Sheffield City region.	Expand scheme to work with 14 schools	Expand scheme to work with 16 schools	Expand scheme to work with 18 schools	Expand scheme to work with 20 schools	Maintain scheme to work with 20 schools	The scheme seeks to increase the number of schools we provide mentoring support to by 2019/20.
T16b_12	Access	Contextual data	We will continue to use a systematic approach to the use of contextual data in the admissions process, based on good practice within the sector and based on the evidence generated internally at the University of Sheffield with regard to progression and success of students on our degree programmes who were previously admitted on the basis of contextual data being taken into account.	No	2011-12	Cont Data used in holistic way on university wide basis as an indicator, providing additional background information to applicants	Continue to use contextual data in holistic way on a university wide basis as an indicator, providing additional background information to applicants during selection, and adapt the policy accordingly.	Continue to use contextual data in holistic way on a university wide basis as an indicator, providing additional background information to applicants during selection, and adapt the policy accordingly.	Continue to use contextual data in holistic way on a university wide basis as an indicator, providing additional background information to applicants during selection, and adapt the policy accordingly.	Continue to use contextual data in holistic way on a university wide basis as an indicator, providing additional background information to applicants during selection, and adapt the policy accordingly.	Continue to use contextual data in holistic way on a university wide basis as an indicator, providing additional background information to applicants during selection, and adapt the policy accordingly.	
T16b_13	Other/Multiple stages	Management targets	We will continue to develop faculty-led WP strategies, linked to L&T strategies, to ensure that pockets of under-representation are identified at department/faculty level, and programmes of activities are developed to redress those issues. Through central teams working collaboratively with academic departments and faculties, we will be able to ensure that activities delivered are appropriately targeted at the most under-represented groups, leading to more effective use of resource, and more effective evaluation of impact.	Yes	2012-13	All faculties have developed and embedded WP Plans. Budget allocations c £750k in place to support the delivery.	Continue to develop Faculty plans to underpin the University's widening participation strategy with specific focus on under-represented groups within subject disciplines.	Continue to develop Faculty plans to underpin the University's widening participation strategy with specific focus on under-represented groups within subject disciplines.	Continue to develop Faculty plans to underpin the University's widening participation strategy with specific focus on under-represented groups within subject disciplines.	Continue to develop Faculty plans to underpin the University's widening participation strategy with specific focus on under-represented groups within subject disciplines.	Continue to develop Faculty plans to underpin the University's widening participation strategy with specific focus on under-represented groups within subject disciplines.	
T16b_14	Student success	Management targets	(WPREU) WP Research and Evaluation Unit - Evaluate and research student support and progression activities	No	2012-13	N/A	Continue to develop and implement an evaluation framework and toolkit for monitoring and evaluating student support and progression activities (academic, financial, and pastoral) for key WP groups.	Continue to develop and implement an evaluation framework and toolkit for monitoring and evaluating student support and progression activities (academic, financial, and pastoral) for key WP groups.	Continue to develop and implement an evaluation framework and toolkit for monitoring and evaluating student support and progression activities (academic, financial, and pastoral) for key WP groups.	Continue to develop and implement an evaluation framework and toolkit for monitoring and evaluating student support and progression activities (academic, financial, and pastoral) for key WP groups.	Continue to develop and implement an evaluation framework and toolkit for monitoring and evaluating student support and progression activities (academic, financial, and pastoral) for key WP groups.	

T16b_15	Access	Management targets	(WPREU) WP Research and Evaluation Unit - Continue to develop the evaluation and research of the University's WP outreach activities.	No	2012-13	N/A	Continue to develop a toolkit and framework to support the consistent evaluation of, and research into, the University's WP outreach activities. Continue to develop and implement effective mechanisms for the review and response to research and evaluation outcomes and for the sharing of good practice both internally and externally.	Continue to develop a toolkit and framework to support the consistent evaluation of, and research into, the University's WP outreach activities. Continue to develop and implement effective mechanisms for the review and response to research and evaluation outcomes and for the sharing of good practice both internally and externally.	Continue to develop a toolkit and framework to support the consistent evaluation of, and research into, the University's WP outreach activities. Continue to develop and implement effective mechanisms for the review and response to research and evaluation outcomes and for the sharing of good practice both internally and externally.	Continue to develop a toolkit and framework to support the consistent evaluation of, and research into, the University's WP outreach activities. Continue to develop and implement effective mechanisms for the review and response to research and evaluation outcomes and for the sharing of good practice both internally and externally.	Continue to develop a toolkit and framework to support the consistent evaluation of, and research into, the University's WP outreach activities. Continue to develop and implement effective mechanisms for the review and response to research and evaluation outcomes and for the sharing of good practice both internally and externally.	
T16b_16	Other/Multiple stages	Management targets	(WPREU) WP Research and Evaluation Unit - continue to annually review the impact of the University's financial support package on the student experience.	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	N/A	Continue to develop research and evaluation activities exploring the impact of the University's financial support package with the aim of developing further understanding of how financial issues impact on the student experience.	Continue to develop research and evaluation activities exploring the impact of the University's financial support package with the aim of developing further understanding of how financial issues impact on the student experience.	Continue to develop research and evaluation activities exploring the impact of the University's financial support package with the aim of developing further understanding of how financial issues impact on the student experience.	Continue to develop research and evaluation activities exploring the impact of the University's financial support package with the aim of developing further understanding of how financial issues impact on the student experience.	Continue to develop research and evaluation activities exploring the impact of the University's financial support package with the aim of developing further understanding of how financial issues impact on the student experience.	
T16b_17	Other/Multiple stages	Management targets	(WPREU) WP Research and Evaluation Unit - Support and deliver the Sheffield Student 2013 tracking project.	No	2012-13	N/A	Carry out qualitative research with the sample 2013 student cohort. Explore the student experience and provide outcomes for both an internal practitioner audience and an external academic audience.	Project extended by 18 months to include an investigation of the graduate progression outcomes and experience. Carry out qualitative research with the sample 2013 student cohort. Explore the student experience and provide outcomes for both an internal practitioner audience and an external academic audience.	End of research project. Produce monograph for external publication.			

T16b_18	Other/Multiple stages	Management targets	(WPREU) WP Research and Evaluation Unit - Deliver institution specific research to support the development of a solid evidence base to underpin strategic, policy and practice decision making.	No	2012-13	N/A	Continue to develop and deliver a wide range of long and short term insitution focussed research projects covering all stages of the student journey from outreach to progression. Outcomes will support strategic, policy and practice decision-making. Some outcomes, where relevant, should be disseminated externally.	Continue to develop and deliver a wide range of long and short term insitution focussed research projects covering all stages of the student journey from outreach to progression. Outcomes will support strategic, policy and practice decision-making. Some outcomes, where relevant, should be disseminated externally.	Continue to develop and deliver a wide range of long and short term insitution focussed research projects covering all stages of the student journey from outreach to progression. Outcomes will support strategic, policy and practice decision-making. Some outcomes, where relevant, should be disseminated externally.	Continue to develop and deliver a wide range of long and short term insitution focussed research projects covering all stages of the student journey from outreach to progression. Outcomes will support strategic, policy and practice decision-making. Some outcomes, where relevant, should be disseminated externally.	Continue to develop and deliver a wide range of long and short term insitution focussed research projects covering all stages of the student journey from outreach to progression. Outcomes will support strategic, policy and practice decision-making. Some outcomes, where relevant, should be disseminated externally.	
T16b_19	Other/Multiple stages	Management targets	(WPREU) WP Research and Evaluation Unit - Continue to foster links between academic, managerial and practitioner staff to ensure that both the University's WP practice and academic research have the opportunity to inform each other.	No	2015-16	N/A	Provide a range of opportunities (e.g. forums, seminars, round-tables and other activities) for academic researchers and WP practitioners to engage with each other to share ideas and the latest thinking. This should enable to University's practice to be informed by the latest research and thinking and research to engage more with practitioners.	Provide a range of opportunities (e.g. forums, seminars, round-tables and other activities) for academic researchers and WP practitioners to engage with each other to share ideas and the latest thinking. This should enable to University's practice to be informed by the latest research and thinking and research to engage more with practitioners.	Provide a range of opportunities (e.g. forums, seminars, round-tables and other activities) for academic researchers and WP practitioners to engage with each other to share ideas and the latest thinking. This should enable to University's practice to be informed by the latest research and thinking and research to engage more with practitioners.	Provide a range of opportunities (e.g. forums, seminars, round-tables and other activities) for academic researchers and WP practitioners to engage with each other to share ideas and the latest thinking. This should enable to University's practice to be informed by the latest research and thinking and research to engage more with practitioners.	Provide a range of opportunities (e.g. forums, seminars, round-tables and other activities) for academic researchers and WP practitioners to engage with each other to share ideas and the latest thinking. This should enable to University's practice to be informed by the latest research and thinking and research to engage more with practitioners.	
T16b_20	Student success	Student support services	Enhanced support for commuter students	No	2011-12	Support already in place but we envisage higher numbers of students choosing to commute, in order to overcome some financial hurdles.	A minimum of three events targeting commuter students. Activities to include peer mentoring.	A minimum of three events targeting commuter students. Activities to include peer mentoring.	A minimum of three events targeting commuter students. Activities to include peer mentoring.	A minimum of three events targeting commuter students. Activities to include peer mentoring.	A minimum of three events targeting commuter students. Activities to include peer mentoring.	Numbers of commuter students are expected to rise over time. Our provision of support will reflect this increase and will need to develop further to provide a more tailored pastoral role for students who do not live on campus. Additional activity will be provided to ensure that commuter students can effectively integrate into the wider student body, and take advantage of opportunities to experience extra-curricular activities that help students to build social capital.
T16b_21	Student success	Student support services	Care Leaver support	No	2011-12	Priority in obtaining year round University owned accommodation.	Ongoing monitoring in order to ensure best practice.	Ongoing monitoring in order to ensure best practice.	Ongoing monitoring in order to ensure best practice.	Ongoing monitoring in order to ensure best practice.	Ongoing monitoring in order to ensure best practice.	We already provide a dedicated role to support care leavers as they enter the University but more staff resource will be available to further support this area of work and to provide additional support throughout the year. We also priority in obtaining University owned accommodation for students from a care background and our financial support package can assist by being used as a discount against accommodation fees.

T16b_22	Student success	Student support services	Additional support for students facing difficulties	No	2011-12	N/A	Targeted awareness raising towards WP groups at two key transition points: Intro Week and exam periods. Use of printed material, social media and face to face contact to raise awareness of availability of academic, social and well-being support	Targeted awareness raising towards WP groups at two key transition points: Intro Week and exam periods. Use of printed material, social media and face to face contact to raise awareness of availability of academic, social and well-being support	Targeted awareness raising towards WP groups at two key transition points: Intro Week and exam periods. Use of printed material, social media and face to face contact to raise awareness of availability of academic, social and well-being support	Targeted awareness raising towards WP groups at two key transition points: Intro Week and exam periods. Use of printed material, social media and face to face contact to raise awareness of availability of academic, social and well-being support	Targeted awareness raising towards WP groups at two key transition points: Intro Week and exam periods. Use of printed material, social media and face to face contact to raise awareness of availability of academic, social and well-being support.	This resource will be made available to all students who are managing challenging circumstances, but will have a particular focus towards WP students.
T16b_23	Student success	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Expand our activity for prospective students with disabilities to ensure they are aware of support available, & provide: a peer mentoring scheme; IAG workshops targeting students and families; DSA guidance sessions collaboratively with other HEIs	No	2011-12	N/A	30 events providing pre-entry and transitions support to groups of between 10 and 100 participants. 1:1 appointments for students with specific learning difficulties on entry to the University.	30 events providing pre-entry and transitions support to groups of between 10 and 100 participants. 1:1 appointments for students with specific learning difficulties on entry to the University.	30 events providing pre-entry and transitions support to groups of between 10 and 100 participants. 1:1 appointments for students with specific learning difficulties on entry to the University.	30 events providing pre-entry and transitions support to groups of between 10 and 100 participants. 1:1 appointments for students with specific learning difficulties on entry to the University.	30 events providing pre-entry and transitions support to groups of between 10 and 100 participants. 1:1 appointments for students with specific learning difficulties on entry to the University.	The way we have delivered pre-entry and transitional support to disabled learners has changed from what we initially anticipated. Our work has been more responsive and has taken account more of what prospective students and their families have required from us.
T16b_24	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	We will introduce pre-entry careers activity delivered by careers specialists, primarily targeting post-16 students and their advisers/families, but also working in some cases with pre-16 students. This will include, for example, workshops and talks.	No	2011-12	Limited activity, mainly targeted at mature learners through Higher Futures activity. Not significant provision due to cessation of funds.	Deliver 15 pre entry outreach workshops/talks targeting 300 students.	Deliver 15 pre entry outreach workshops/talks targeting 300 students.	Deliver 15 pre entry outreach workshops/talks targeting 300 students.	Deliver 15 pre entry outreach workshops/talks targeting 300 students.	Deliver 15 pre entry outreach workshops/talks targeting 300 students.	
T16b_25	Progression	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	We will introduce targeted careers related workshops and talks, as well as targeted individual careers advice sessions for students from under-represented groups to support their progression to graduate level employment.	No	2011-12	Limited targeted activity for WP students, mainly focusing on mature learners through the Higher Futures LLLN.	Deliver 20 careers workshops/talks targeting 150 current students. Deliver 100 individual careers advice sessions.	Deliver 20 careers workshops/talks targeting 150 current students. Deliver 100 individual careers advice sessions.	Deliver 20 careers workshops/talks targeting 150 current students. Deliver 100 individual careers advice sessions.	Deliver 20 careers workshops/talks targeting 150 current students. Deliver 100 individual careers advice sessions.	Deliver 20 careers workshops/talks targeting 150 current students. Deliver 100 individual careers advice sessions.	
T16b_26	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Continue to develop the new HEPP partnership and ensure that activities delivered through this network support the progression of young people and adults from the Sheffield City Region to HE.	Yes	2011-12	HEPP partnership established jointly with University of Sheffield	Continue to develop the HEPP partnership.	Continue to develop the HEPP partnership.	Continue to develop the HEPP partnership.	Continue to develop the HEPP partnership.	Continue to develop the HEPP partnership.	The two universities have each committed to support the HEPP partnership over the medium term, with sufficient financial resources to help maintain a small core team and some development funding. This team coordinates centralised and collaborative activity across the Sheffield City Region for young people and adults, working closely with their respective Outreach teams. Development of the partnership may be adjusted subject to review outcomes.



T16b_27	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Continue to develop the new HEPP partnership and ensure that activities delivered through this network support the progression of young people and adults from the Sheffield City Region to HE.	Yes	2011-12	Activity strands and resources developed for young people, adults, teachers and advisers	Develop and maintain activity levels. Sustain some of the activity carried out by the Network for Collaborative Outreach	Develop and maintain activity levels.	Develop and maintain activity levels.	Develop and maintain activity levels.	Develop and maintain activity levels.	Generic, impartial activity strands complement those of the funding universities and include Student Finance, Understanding the Value of University, an interactive website for adult learners, CPD for teachers and advisers, and a partnership website including resources. Activity may be adjusted or re-prioritised over time, subject to review outcomes and prevailing national and regional policy.
T16b_28	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Continue to develop the HEPP partnership. Identify and develop an appropriate strategy for targeting young people in the Sheffield City-Region and tracking their progress.	Yes	2012-13	Preliminary discussions with local authorities to determine the type of information and data that might be shared in order to monitor the participation of target groups in WP activity	Develop and maintain tracking and monitoring systems. Co-ordinate these with the tracking undertaken by both universities.	Develop and maintain tracking and monitoring systems	Develop and maintain tracking and monitoring systems	Develop and maintain tracking and monitoring systems	Develop and maintain tracking and monitoring systems	Regional data on participation, achievement and progression at school and college level and the socio-economic status of young people is provided and analysed by local authority partners. HEPP is working with the local authorities in the Sheffield City Region to provide data sets which will allow effective targeting for WP activity and the tracking of young people from pre-16 into post-16 education, employment and training, and on to higher education.
T16b_29	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Continue to develop the HEPP partnership. Develop a project to test the effectiveness of longitudinal engagement with schools.	Yes	2013-14	Pilot a new project with intensive engagement of 50 learners from Y10, including a summer school.	Consider recruitment of further cohort, depending on the outcomes of evaluation and future funding	Consider recruitment of further cohort, depending on the outcomes of evaluation and future funding	Consider recruitment of further cohort, depending on the outcomes of evaluation and future funding	Consider recruitment of further cohort, depending on the outcomes of evaluation and future funding	Consider recruitment of further cohort, depending on the outcomes of evaluation and future funding	50 young people (10 from each of 5 schools) are participating in this 2 year project, which involves long term, intensive engagement in WP activity, compared with a matched cohort not participating. The process and outcomes will be evaluated by research teams at the universities.
T16b_30	Access	Management targets	(WPREU) WP Research and Evaluation Unit - Collaborate with practitioners to develop new outreach interventions from ground up which are informed by academic and practitioner expertise and latest research evidence.	No	2016-17	N/A	Develop 2 new intervention activities in collaboration with practitioners employing workshop development process. Ensure interventions are underpinned by detailed and appropriate objectives and calibrated evaluation measures. Evaluate outcomes and correlate with attainment and HE progression outcomes.	Develop 1 new intervention activity in collaboration with practitioners following workshop development process. Ensure interventions are underpinned by detailed and appropriate objectives and calibrated evaluation measures. Evaluate outcomes and correlate with attainment and HE progression outcomes. Continue to evaluate and assess previous interventions.	Develop 1 new intervention activity in collaboration with practitioners following workshop development process. Ensure interventions are underpinned by detailed and appropriate objectives and calibrated evaluation measures. Evaluate outcomes and correlate with attainment and HE progression outcomes. Continue to evaluate and assess previous interventions.	Develop 1 new intervention activity in collaboration with practitioners following workshop development process. Ensure interventions are underpinned by detailed and appropriate objectives and calibrated evaluation measures. Evaluate outcomes and correlate with attainment and HE progression outcomes. Continue to evaluate and assess previous interventions.	Develop 1 new intervention activity in collaboration with practitioners following workshop development process. Ensure interventions are underpinned by detailed and appropriate objectives and calibrated evaluation measures. Evaluate outcomes and correlate with attainment and HE progression outcomes. Continue to evaluate and assess previous interventions.	