Access Agreement 2018/19
Section 1: The current context

1.1 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.¹

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 2018/19, 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

¹ See full Mission, Vision and Identity at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ourplan
proposed widening participation strategy. This includes consideration of the following:

1.2.1 Governance and regulatory changes
The release of the white paper ‘Higher education: success as a knowledge economy’ in May 2016 further re-enforced the national agenda for widening access and success by reiterating the government’s 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. HE participation of young white males from disadvantaged backgrounds and the outcomes of HE study for BME students are also a continued priority areas of focus.

In her first speech as Prime Minister in July 2016, Theresa May re-iterated the government’s commitment to social mobility, highlighting the challenges facing families from disadvantaged and under-represented groups, specifically when accessing selective universities and securing jobs in the top professions.

The Higher Education green paper ‘Schools that work for everyone’, released in September 2016 directly asks universities to sponsor schools as well as work to raise attainment. Whilst not currently formally sponsoring a school, the University of Sheffield is a main supporter of the bid for a new University Technical College in Doncaster, one of the recently identified opportunity areas.

The University of Sheffield believes that attainment raising and aspiration raising are intrinsically linked and therefore study skills support and subject revision are core components of our pre-entry sustained outreach work. Successful progression to Sheffield and other selective HEIs by outreach participants is testament to this approach. As part of our whole student life-cycle approach to Widening Participation, this support is available throughout their university study and beyond.
This 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 2018/19 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 diverse qualifications and combinations of different qualifications 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 variable picture in the take-up of vocational qualifications in recent years, with significant increases in 2014 and 2015 being reversed in 2016, but the recent announcement of the 'T-level' may once again shift the national focus onto vocational qualifications and increase their take-up.
Continued reduction or withdrawal of 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) has led to increasing pressure on funding committed through our Access Agreement.

At the time of writing our 2018/19 Access Agreement the impact of the cessation of bursaries and paid tuition fees for students on allied health programmes from 2017 has not yet been realised. For the University of Sheffield this relates to Orthoptics, Nursing, Speech Therapy and Dental Hygiene and Therapy 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 continue to 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. The University’s Department for Lifelong Learning is currently exploring the potential opportunities presented by the introduction of part-time maintenance loans in 2018/19 to arrest the decline in numbers.
Section 2: Fee levels

2.1 Full-time programmes
Under the Government’s Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), introduced in 2016/17, the University was defined as an eligible provider. This meant that the University was able to revise its fee for 2017/18 to the new higher fee cap. The University has participated in Year 2 of the TEF and outcomes of the assessment are expected in May 2017 and may qualify the University to increase fees by inflation, within any revision to the fee cap agreed by Parliament. Up until the University knows its TEF outcome and the new fee cap it is not in a position to state what its fee for 2018/19 will be. In the interest of transparency our intention, if we are eligible to do so and subject to a future decision, is that all new UK and European Union students starting their studies in September 2018
will be charged £9,250 plus inflation for 2018/19 in tuition fees. This intention is applicable to all full-time undergraduate and foundation programmes, as well as being applicable to students entering the PGDE. We plan for full-time fees to increase each year for students who enter in 2018/19 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 plus inflation per 60 credits (£9,250 full-time equivalent) for students starting in 2018/19 if we are eligible to do so and subject to a future decision, i.e to charge 50% of the full-time fee.

We plan for part-time fees to increase each year for students who enter in 2018/19 in line with inflation or within the limits of any guidance provided to us. No part-time student will be charged over £6,935 plus inflation as permitted.

2.3 Sandwich years and study abroad
Students commencing study in 2018/19 who are taking a full year abroad, will be charged the maximum fee permitted by the regulations when they go on their year abroad, which is currently £1,385.

Students commencing study in 2018/19 who take a year in industry or a year in employment will be charged at a rate of either £1,230 or £1,850 (the maximum fee permitted by the regulations) when they go on their placement.
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.
Young full-time first degree entrants from state schools or colleges

Sheffield is consistently above the benchmark for young, full-time first degree entrants from state schools and colleges.
Young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods

The data shows that the University has a low non-continuation rate compared with the benchmark and we aim to maintain this level of non-continuation. The University has a good understanding of the varying reasons why students may choose not to continue their studies and suitable student support is available. 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 2015/16 following entry in 2014/15.

Non-continuation rates

Sheffield remains above the benchmark for entrants from low participation neighbourhoods, however this difference is not 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.

Young full-time first degree entrants no longer in HE

Note that as this is a non-continuation rate, a lower score which is below the benchmark is positive for this indicator.
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 no longer in HE

The proportion of entrants no longer in HE in the year following the year of entry has remained at the same level as the previous year (positive for this indicator). However, given the low numbers involved this outcome is not statistically significant.

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

The proportion of entrants no longer in HE has risen since 2014/15 but remains below the benchmark. However, given the low numbers involved this outcome is not statistically significant.
3.2 Analysis of internal 2016/17 registration data

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young, full-time first degree entrants from state schools</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young, full-time first degree entrants in receipt of the Disabled Student’s allowance</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time first degree BME entrants</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young, full-time first degree entrants from low participation</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time first degree entrants who are mature (aged 21 and over)</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature full-time first degree entrants who are from low</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
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</tbody>
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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 has improved since 2014/15.

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 5.0% in 2014/15 to 2.9% in 2016/17. 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 Analysis of internal progression to postgraduate taught programmes data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Year</th>
<th>Progression to PGT study at The University of Sheffield within 2 years of graduation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (POLAR3 Quintile 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>14%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Our choice to support progression to PGT study for students from under-represented groups is delivering well. Our progression figures shown above are positive with a consistently higher proportion of final year undergraduate students from low participation neighbourhoods progressing to PGT at the University of Sheffield than the home undergraduate final year population as a whole. We seek to make further progress following the success of HEFCE’s
Postgraduate Support Scheme (PSS) and our own Sheffield Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme (SPS) as detailed in section 4.2.3

3.4 Financial commitment to additional access and support measures
In line with the commitments made in previous Access Agreements, for 2018/19 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 (Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit), we propose to allocate funds across the strands of activity as follows:

- Outreach: £3.9 million
- Student success and progression support: £1.9 million
- Financial support to students: £8.5 million

Section 4: Future plans

As part of The University of Sheffield Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2021 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. In our Access Agreement for 2017/18 we built 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 University of Sheffield’s continued commitment to the widening access agenda has led us to participate in a number of HEFCE Catalyst funded projects to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups. The outcomes of these projects may help to inform future practice in this area.

In this Access Agreement for 2018/19 we continue to take a whole lifecycle approach to widening participation and aim to address the challenges that students from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds continue to face when engaging with Higher Education.

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 2018/19 we have continued to build on 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
- Enhancing support for 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 across the whole student lifecycle.

4.1.2 Developing an evidence base
One of WPREU’s functions is to compile a summarised and institution-focussed evidence base, comprising external research outcomes and our own data and research. We endeavour to ensure these resources can be easily accessed and used by time-pressured practitioners and decision-makers enabling them to make decisions about the University’s activities 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. This document is intended to provide a baseline level reference point to allow discussions within the institution to start from a more advanced point than might otherwise have been possible.

http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/als/wp/resources

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, HEFCE and OFFA, material available in the Higher Education Academy hosted WASRS archive, 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), our own financial support evaluations and outcomes from the Sheffield Student 2013 longitudinal research project.

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

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3 Sutton Trust Submission to Sir Martin Harris: Widening Access to Selective Universities, 2010
4 “What more can be done to widen participation to selective universities”, OFFA, 2010/03
5 www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstreams-research/themes/retention-and-success/widening-access-programmes-archive
12 and 13. 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 (Discover US) 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.

4.1.3 Relevant Research
Our approach to financial support and student success and progression is informed by outcomes from The Sheffield Student 2013 project, which employs a post-doctoral researcher to track a sample of 40 students through their degree study. 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. We have secured additional funding to extend this project beyond its initial three-year duration to capture additional data about what happens to the sample students as they progress into employment or postgraduate study. Research outcome reports are being 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);

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6 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.
• 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. This included a pilot project undertaken by two graduate interns to analyse student outcomes in the context of both prior attainment and socio-demographic factors and undertake 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\(^7\).

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

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\(^7\) Sheffield City Region European Structural & Investment Funds Strategy January 2014
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.

Work has begun to develop our Y7 and Y8 ‘shared parent and child learning experiences’ to support the challenges of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds progressing to both FE and HE. Initial research has been conducted and pilot schools identified across the Sheffield City Region. Activities will begin in September 2017 to engage pupils and their parents/guardians through sustained activity to expose them to wider opportunities, within Higher Education and alternative routes. OFFA have highlighted this work as an example of best practice in the 2017 topic briefing on White British males from low SES backgrounds.

Due to the removal of the National Statistics Social Economic Classifications from HESA performance indicators in 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
A research project focusing on the relationship between ethnicity and student degree outcomes has identified that, as per the wider sector, there is an attainment gap between BME students and their white peers across the institution. We undertook further analysis to explore variations of this gap at Faculty and Department level, the detailed outcomes of which are being used to inform responses and actions at Departmental and Faculty levels.

For our qualitative research, eighteen students participated in semi-structured interviews. Participants included graduates and current students and both BME and white students. The research highlighted a range of factors identified by the sample students as impacting on their academic outcomes; these included issues about access to financial support, relationships and belonging, approaches to

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8 HEFCE Circular letter 17/2015
learning and teaching, help-seeking behaviours and diversity and role models. The outcomes of this work are currently being prepared for external publication.

Outcomes from this work were widely disseminated through institutional and Faculty-specific workshops, a Widening Participation Forum event and a Students’ Union Education Conference. The final report of the current project was considered by both the University’s Learning and Teaching Committee, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board, with both bodies taking institutional responsibility for progressing agendas around outcome differentials.

We are currently bringing together the work of different Faculty and Department teams into a Community of Practice to support the development of wide-ranging, strategic and contextually-relevant responses.

4.2.3 Supporting progression to postgraduate study by undergraduates with WP characteristics

The University is committed to increasing progression to PGT study from students from under-represented groups.

Following the recommendations in the Programme Analysis of HEFCE’s Postgraduate Support Scheme (PSS), the University has reviewed the support provided for PGT students, developed the concept of ‘The Sheffield Postgraduate’ and considered how relevant services meet PGT needs.

As part of this support, following the cessation of the HEFCE PSS, the University of Sheffield established a PGT scholarships scheme. Each scholarship awarded is worth £10,000 to students who met WP and/or academic-merit criteria. The funding is made available from University funds and from money raised through donor contributions. In 2016/17, 154 awards were made to new PGT students.

The University will continue to offer Sheffield Postgraduate Scholarships based on similar criteria and in 2017/18 will offer at least 100 scholarships, again each worth £10,000.
As part of our work to support progression to postgraduate study, the University will also reflect on the integrated Masters route and how best this can support students from widening participation backgrounds to gain higher levels skills.

4.2.4 Supporting access to Higher Education with equivalent qualifications
The University has embarked on a collaborative project involving local schools and FE colleges, the Higher Education Progression Partnership (HEPP) and an awarding body. The project will 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 alternative options to young people that open up opportunities for progression to higher level skills and higher level qualifications through to PhD level. An example of this is the continued growth at our Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre (AMRC-TC) which offers advanced and higher level apprenticeships to 600 non-traditional local students. In September 2017 the AMRC-TC will see the first cohort commence the top up degree for Mechanical Manufacture. Currently students are studying the Foundation Degree in Mechanical Manufacture, Manufacturing Technology and in September 2017 Maintenance Engineering will be added to this portfolio. Students not only complete apprenticeships but FEng or BEng through the University of Sheffield. All these programmes fit within the Engineering Apprenticeship Standards that have been developed through the trailblazer groups. The programmes are all studied whilst in employment with 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, 11, 12 and
13 in a number of local schools including the Sheffield UTC. 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-TC is considering the development of further degree apprenticeships over the coming twelve months.

The scope of our apprenticeship education across the University is extending, for example by 2018/19 there will be provision for health professionals and the Advanced Management Learning Centre should be up and running - The AMLC will complement the AMRC-TC by equipping the next generation of advanced manufacturing employees with broader management skills and deepening their understanding of leadership and management as their careers progress.

4.2.6 Enhancing support for mature entrants
The University continues to expand its range of full- and part-time degrees with foundation year, all of 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. In 2017/18 the University will be offering 23 full-time and seven part-time pathways, with plans for further pathways to be added to our portfolio in 2018/19.

Strong recruitment and progression of full-time mature students in the first three years of operation has resulted in a four-fold increase in the numbers of mature full-time students with non-standard entry qualifications entering the University by these new pathways. We are closely monitoring the success of students who progress from their foundation year within the Department for Lifelong Learning to higher levels of study in academic departments across the University. Initial findings of a longitudinal tracking project suggest that students are performing very well at levels one and two, and we are using the findings of this ongoing work to inform further enhancement of our programmes, including in relation to
our dedicated outreach and recruitment activities targeted at mature students delivered by staff within the Department for Lifelong Learning.

The year-on-year decline in the recruitment of part-time students reported in each of our monitoring returns and access agreements since 2012/13 continues. This is in line with national trends and notwithstanding the University’s continued investment in part-time provision which includes an increased part-time offer. We are currently reviewing the University’s restructured CertHE and degree provision for mature learners, with a particular focus upon opportunities to develop new and more flexible forms of delivery which may prove more accessible to part-time students and more attractive to employers.

Recent policy announcements, particularly with respect to arrangements for part-time maintenance loans, may provide new opportunities, as will an increasing emphasis at institutional level upon the use of digital technologies to support more flexible, blended and distance learning approaches to programme delivery.

### 4.2.7 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 25% of cohort) in the Departments of Chemistry, Maths and Physics and in the Faculty of Engineering; Men are under-represented in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the Departments Human Communication Sciences, Psychology, Journalism, English and 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, Physical Sciences and the AMRC-TC is to address the under-representation of women. A range of activity includes, a science and engineering week activity where 500 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 support

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, teamwork, 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.

A key component of our Post-16 offering is study skills and core A-Level revision sessions provided for participants as an integral part of each scheme. The curriculum for our Post-16 schemes is linked to school provision to provide support to participants at key times in their studies. An online platform to facilitate further engagement in study skills and revision sessions is currently being developed.

The AMRC Training Centre has developed a vocational pathway that allows an individual to progress from an Advanced Apprenticeship through to and including a Post Graduate Engineer Apprenticeship level 7). This provides an opportunity for learners who have entered the world of work at 16 to still enter higher education through this alternative pathway we are offering.

Students on our Post-16 schemes are flagged within the admissions process; those commencing Post-16 outreach schemes in 2018/19 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 supports 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 guidelines⁹, 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

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⁹ Higher Education outreach: targeting disadvantaged learners. HEFCE, 2007/12
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 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.
- 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.

Whilst not currently sponsoring an individual school, the University of Sheffield is a main supporter of the bid for a newly created University Technical College in Doncaster which, if successful, will focus on Advanced Engineering and Digital Design.

The University of Sheffield was founded to create opportunity for “the child of the working man” and it has a long track record of working closely with local schools, colleges and industrial partners to make good that promise. We have taken a national lead in new approaches to engineering education through our AMRC apprenticeship programme, working with companies to offer new routes onto degrees. The local industrial base requires suitably qualified people at all levels and therefore the University of Sheffield sees the development of an industrially focussed University Technical College in Doncaster as providing an important additional educational route.

Through our global research in relevant areas including aerospace, rail and advanced manufacturing, we know Doncaster's focus on raising aspiration and opportunity is vital for the future of its young people and the economy.

The bid is currently being considered by the Department for Education with a decision expected by late 2017.

**Attainment Raising Focus**

The government Higher Education green paper ‘Schools that work for everyone’ encourages universities to work with schools and colleges to raise attainment. This principle is already well established at the University of Sheffield.
As a highly selective institution, we are aware that low attainment presents a barrier to accessing Higher Education. However, as outlined in the Russell Group publication ‘Opening Doors: the root causes of under-representation’, we are very aware of other barriers such as poor advice and misconceptions, low aspirations or low confidence which prevent students from under-represented or disadvantaged groups accessing Higher Education.

Through our outreach and widening participation work with schools and colleges we aim to develop students’ confidence through a series of interventions focused equally on raising aspirations and attainment as we believe the two are intrinsically linked. We have therefore set our attainment raising focused targets and milestones in tables 7a and 7b as improving participation rates in Higher Education.

Our Post-16 sustained engagement outreach schemes aim to support progression to the University of Sheffield and other HEIs, working with over 500 pupils each year. During 2016/17, we have strengthened the provision of study skills and extended our subject-specific revision sessions offered to participants, re-enforcing them as a integral part of our Post-16 sustained engagement schemes.

Our Pre-16 ‘US in Schools Mentoring’ (USiSM) scheme works with over 300 Y9, Y10 and Y11 pupils each year by current University of Sheffield students providing one-to-one support and guidance. Mentees benefit from study and revision skills, learning support, future career/education pathways, HE IAG, and personal skill development.

Recent changes to school performance data and a lack of access to the National Pupil Database make it increasingly difficult to measure the direct impact of attainment raising activity delivered by universities. Due to the limited time we are able to work directly with pupils, compared to time spent with their teachers and peers, creating a causal link between University-led activity and raising attainment is increasingly difficult.
As a result, we plan to engage with local school teachers and Higher Education advisers, together with academics from our School of Education and our Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit to investigate the most effective way for the University of Sheffield to add value to attainment and identify a set of measures so that we will have a more robust measure of specific pedagogic outcomes in the future. These findings will inform our approach to target setting in our Access Agreement for 2019/20 and underpin the setting of an outcomes-focused target relating to raising attainment.

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). The publication of the recent SCR vision, ‘A Better Future Together’, highlights the importance of addressing education needs, attainment, aspirations and skills for everyone, whether from early years to further and higher education, or life-long learning in educational institutions, the workplace or in the community, which echoes the University of Sheffield’s approach to outreach and widening participation.

Following the release of the HEFCE data maps of higher education provision in late 2014 and the development of our widening participation strategy, it became apparent that whilst we must continue to work closely with our immediate local area, we also needed 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 focus expanded 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 which aim 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 since 2011. In 2014/15 an independent review of HEPP confirmed that the partnership is welcomed by schools and colleges for its impartiality and breadth, enabling the funding partners to agree their ongoing financial support for the collaboration for the foreseeable future.

The involvement of HEPP with a broad range of partners offers good opportunities for research into collaborative activity. The University of Sheffield research team findings from the 'Heads Up' project in 2015 proved so useful that further detailed research is planned.

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. HEPP generic activity continues to increase. In 2015/16 the total number of students and influencers reached was 11,514, a 9% increase on 2014/15 and a 21% increase on 2013/14. Activity now includes higher and graduate apprenticeship routes to university to complement the HEPP-led work based learning pathways website.¹⁰ A web based resource¹¹ to enable young people to identify pathways through to higher education within subject and career sectors has also been developed; the use of technology having the potential to reach a wider audience.

Developing work: An initiative piloted in 2014/15, 'Raising Aspirations in N. E. Derbyshire', is now operating in seven schools, with annual interventions for all

¹⁰ www.apprentice-forward.org.uk
¹¹ http://level-up.org.uk
year groups for over 200 targeted students. Work with primary schools has also been further developed over the past year in the feeder schools for target secondary schools, providing activities for Y5 and Y6 and support for transition. In a parallel initiative, HEPP is training Y12 students in targeted secondary schools to act as transition and progression mentors for Y6 students. A suite of support for Pupil Premium students to thrive within non-target schools (PPP) is being piloted this year, recognising that there are some students who could benefit in all schools.

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 145 teachers/advisers, and bespoke training on school/college premises for a further 48, a significant increase on the previous year.

**National Collaborative Outreach Programme**

A successful bid for HEFCE funding for the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) will enable significant additional projects to take place, including additional collaborative work with Further Education Colleges across the city-region. However, the different funding streams will be closely monitored to ensure the complementarity of core HEPP activity within target schools rather than duplication; the specialist areas of HEPP work lie outside the scope of NCOP, with the potential to expand by diverting funding to them.

**Excellence Hub partnership**

Excellence Hub: 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 implemented an Evaluation and Monitoring plan in September 2016. This includes 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 CPD for teachers and advisers 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’. Advancing Access also aims to complement the work of national collaborative outreach programmes. It is a cost-effective approach to equipping teachers and advisers with the information they need to advise students with confidence. Initially funded through HEFCE’s collaborative outreach network scheme, Advancing Access is now funded through financial contributions from each of its partner universities.

**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 able students from under-represented groups.
The award-winning RO 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 where successful completion of RO is worth two A Level grades or equivalent.

Each participating institution has committed future funds to ensure the on-going delivery of RO to 31 July 2019. For 2018 - 2019 this will be a maximum of £38,000 per Partner.

RO has a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the longitudinal tracking of students through the HEAT database and UCAS. Evaluation work has indicated the impact of RO on a number of levels. UCAS analysis has shown RO is robust in its dual targeting of high attaining students from disadvantaged backgrounds – 100% of students meet this criteria. White males are well represented and there is a higher proportion of Black and Asian students taking part in RO when compared to the population as a whole.

UCAS analysis continues to show evidence of elevated application and offer rates for RO students. HEAT analysis for students entering HE between 2011 – 2014 and UCAS analysis for those entering in 2015 shows that higher numbers of RO students are entering both HE generally and research intensive universities (RIUs) than comparator groups. RO increases the number of students it works with annually and since 2014 has seen the number of students progressing to RIUs increasing both as a percentage of the cohorts and as a real number of students (74 more students progressed to RIUs in 2015 than 2014 and 65 more in 2016.
than 2015. In 2016 162 more students entered RIUs than the 2011 baseline group).

The RO Programme aims to prepare student for successful transition to higher education. HEAT provision of HESA data has highlighted RO student’s success in higher education and beyond graduation. 83% of students received a 1st or 2:1 compared to 66% of all students nationally, including those from the most advantaged backgrounds. 93% of RO students who graduated in 2013/2014 were in work or study six months after graduation, compared to 89% for all leavers from all UK HEIs.

**The Brilliant Club**
The Brilliant Club exists to increase the number of pupils from under-represented backgrounds that progress to highly-selective universities.

The University of Sheffield supports The Brilliant Club through its Scholars Programme, which recruits and trains doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to work in non-selective state schools and sixth form colleges as university access professionals. Researchers work part-time to deliver six academically rigorous tutorials to small groups of high-potential pupils in key stages 2-5. The programme also includes two trips to highly-selective universities, where they receive targeted access information, advice and guidance.

The University of Sheffield contributes financially to The Brilliant Club to run The Scholars Programme with schools across the North West region. The university also supports by recruiting researchers from their faculties, and hosting trips that include tailored Information, Advice and Guidance for pupils.

As part of the programme, pupils study rigorous academic subjects, which are ‘supra-curricular’, and complete weekly homework assignments. The Scholars Programmes leads to a final assignment between 1,000 and 2,500 words long which is pitched above the pupils expected level of attainment and is marked in the style of university grading.
The Brilliant Club is committed to the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of its programmes to ensure that we deliver consistent outcomes for the pupils we work with.

The Brilliant Club’s programmes provide Termly Impact Reports to both their school and university partners, which incorporates contextual data, final assignment marks, pupil self-evaluations, and feedback from parents. The longitudinal tracking of pupils from The Scholars Programme can be tracked through the Universities and Colleges Application Service (UCAS) and the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT).

Over the past year, the charity has worked with 407 non-selective schools and sixth-form colleges across England, Scotland and Wales, placing over 350 PhD tutors to work with 8,713 pupils. It would be expected that the University of Sheffield will work with over 800 Scholars Programme pupils in the 2017-18 academic year. This consists of both pupils who will attend university visits at the University of Sheffield and those who will work with a University of Sheffield researcher.

The charity commissioned the Universities and Colleges Application Service (UCAS) to evaluate the impact of The Scholars Programme on progression to highly-selective universities. Data from the most recent cohort of pupils shows that 58% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (Ever6FSM) secured a place at a highly-selective university compared to a national average of 11%. This means that pupils eligible for Ever6FSM slightly outperformed the cohort overall.

Further, when compared to a control group with matched characteristics including gender, ethnicity, and GCSE attainment, UCAS reported that pupils who completed the programme were ‘significantly more likely to secure a place at a highly-selective university.’ The UCAS findings coincide with the launch of The Brilliant
Club’s new five-year strategy, The Path to Outcomes. This strategy sets out a plan, with the support of partner universities, to support 6,500 pupils from under-represented backgrounds to progress to highly-selective universities by 2021.

**Higher Education Access Tracker**

The University of Sheffield is a member of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) membership service which assists Higher Education Institutions in England to target, monitor and evaluate their outreach activity.

The University of Sheffield records data about its outreach and participants on the HEAT database. This is entered into the HEAT longitudinal tracking system which matches records on individual outreach participants to administrative datasets spanning Key Stage 2 data through to postgraduate study and employment. Tracking reports received from HEAT help the University to better understand the relationship between our outreach provision and the attainment and progression of disadvantaged young people. We are able to track student progression to any HEI, including this institution, so that we can assess the extent to which we are contributing to the increased participation rates of disadvantaged young people as a whole.

Being part of the HEAT service also enables the University to engage with collective WP sector research. By using data from all members as an aggregate, the HEAT service is now able to explore new multi-dimensional ways of defining under-representation, disadvantage and differential outcomes and the effect that outreach can have on different groups of participants.

By subscribing to HEAT we can take an evidence based approach to planning outreach delivery so that we can continue to invest in outreach activities that optimise progression with disadvantaged cohorts.

HEAT HESA track findings tells us that outreach participants who engage in a
sustained programme of activities, including a campus visit, have higher rates of progression. Similarly, students who engage in outreach early in KS4 in a sustained programme are more likely to attain good GCSE results, evidence that outreach contributes to raising attainment.

Sector research tells us that achieving good results at Key Stage 4 is the key determinant in progression to Higher Education and our programme of outreach addresses and responds to the challenges posed in helping to improve the academic attainment of our target schools and their disadvantaged students.

HEAT track findings also show that amongst outreach participants who have already completed degrees at their chosen Universities, 62% achieved a 1st class or Upper Second degree, in line with a figure of 61% nationally.

**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, widening the participation of mature learners, 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 is working with the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) on two separate projects focusing on under-represented equality groups. The first project is attempting to address the current under-representation of BME students in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities by adopting an action-research approach to investigate and develop new outreach approaches and interventions. The second project, employing a participatory approach, involves working with students as co-researchers and co-creators and is investigating the barriers and enablers experienced by potential HE students with Specific Learning Difficulties, mental health and autistic spectrum conditions. The objective is to work with students to review elements of current provision and co-develop, where needed, targeted outreach and student support activities. In both cases, the projects are intended to result in the rolling out of practical resources that will help address these areas of under-representation across the HE sector.

MSC Selection Alliance
The University of Sheffield is represented on the Medical Schools Council Selection Alliance, a national group taking forward the recommendations of the Selecting for Excellence final report. The Alliance is furthering ground-breaking work in widening participation into medicine and works on a range of projects to facilitate access to medicine from under-represented groups. It also highlights the work being undertaken by the MSC in regards to outreach, data collection and selection.

An example of current work is the recent publication of practical guides for teachers and careers advisers entitled "A journey to medicine" and the associated regional conferences for those staff in schools and colleges who are supporting applicants to medical school: www.medschools.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/A-journey-to-medicine-series.aspx
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 A Whole Institution Approach to 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, development and practice which is informed by our long-standing commitment to inclusive learning and teaching. The associated Learning and Teaching Strategy provides direction for current
activities, and ensures clarity about the learning experiences and opportunities to be provided to all taught students (UG and PGT), with the implementation identifying where additional support or emphasis is needed to ensure that these can be fully realised. The current priorities include:

- **excellence in practice** - sustaining high quality teaching that inspires and actively engages students in an *inclusive* research intensive environment, and taking a programme level view with the aim of enabling a more nuanced and targeted approach to development and support. This has implications for continued development of teaching methods, sharing practice, associated staff support and development and recognition for teaching excellence.

- **outward facing ethos** - preparing students for the world beyond the University through authentic learning which forges connections with communities and external partners. This has implications for how we develop curricula which ensure all students have access to learning and development activities which broaden their skills, knowledge and experience including our major interdisciplinary curriculum initiative - Achieve More;

- **developing a flexible approach** - supporting innovation by exploring new ways of teaching; the range of provision for example *broadening access* through the use of foundation pathways and apprenticeship education (see also 4.2.5); the spaces in which learning takes place, with considerations for effective and *accessible learning*; and the technologies we employ from effective use of the Virtual Learning Environment (policy and expectations defined with reference to student and staff feedback and perspectives), to the use of audio visual materials which staff can share,
search and retrieve through our media hosting and storage system, to our approach to MOOCs and closed short course provision (see also 4.3.1).

Widening participation and the implications for inclusive practices in learning and teaching and student support are supported through our structures and practice at university, faculty and department level.

The governance and reporting structures for learning and teaching provide opportunities to promote and review progress against the strategic priorities and KPIs at University, Faculty and Department levels. The Quality Management Framework and associated cyclical activities are undertaken with reference to data about student recruitment, retention and outcomes, including analysis of differential retention and outcomes e.g. gender, age/mature, BME, as well as looking for alignment with learning and teaching priorities and policies. We are making a significant investment in a new student system and are taking a Student Lifecycle approach to managing the design and implementation. During the period covered by this Access Agreement we should start to see the benefits afforded, and will be in the process of enhancing how we use student data and learner analytics to enhance how support can be more targeted and tailored, as well as enabling new approaches to monitoring progress against key priorities with respect to access and inclusivity.

Our approach to student engagement - including students as participants in educational development and research in addition to module, programme, department and university mechanisms for student feedback and representation - is predicated on taking an inclusive and holistic approach and has been recognised as exemplifying good practice in the sector.

Staff Engagement and Development is critical in taking a whole institution approach. Our framework for staff development and recognition in learning and teaching (LTPRS) is mapped to the UK Professional Standards Framework, encompassing relevant approaches, knowledge and values for providing inclusive environments for learning and teaching. This is supported through the
work of our academy for learning and teaching which oversees strategies and associated activities for individual and team development, including initial and continuing development, peer observation, networks for sharing practice and leadership development. In terms of activities specifically focused on widening participation, we can highlight the following:

- In 2017 we established a Special Interest Group to provide a dedicated forum for devising, sharing and reviewing approaches with a feed through to our Learning and Teaching Committee.
- We 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. Previous cohorts have access to tailored continuing development activities, supported by the academic lead.
- 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.
- Our web based resources and guidance for staff on all aspects of learning and teaching, and include material to support inclusive practice.

Following a comprehensive review our Personal and Academic Tutoring System was re-launched in 2016-17, providing clear guidelines and expectations for staff and students, and including an online system for recording and sharing information. Implementation is being evaluated through our cyclical quality management activities. This initiative has formed the basis of a successful collaborative HEFCE Catalyst bid to explore how personal and academic support
can provide a mechanism for addressing differential attainment, particularly for BME students. We should have outputs from the latter during 2017-18 which could inform priorities for further action.

The effective use of learning technologies is recognised as being an enabler for the provision of consistent and accessible teaching and learning. During 2016-17 and 2017-18 significant work was undertaken to implement universal approaches to the use of lecture recording (Encore) and disseminate and embed good practice in use of the VLE for either blended or online learning, and this focus will continue in 2018-19.

Overall the University has a strong track record on student retention and progression, as evidenced by the relevant HESA data. On this basis, our focus is 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 provides a summary of support and development provided across the student lifecycle:

**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 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.
• Autism Pre-arrival events: annual 1 or 2 day summer events to prepare applicants on the autism spectrum for university life.
• The Disability & Dyslexia Support Service has promoted an optional social group for students on the autism spectrum (including those awaiting or considering pursuing a diagnosis) for several years and the group continues to grow and promote confidence for the students who engage

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.

*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 Learning students (mature and part time), study skills sessions for widening participation students from the Department of History, 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. Specific work undertaken by 301 relating to WP groups includes:

- 301 has launched an interactive online course to support transitions into HE, developed through a collaboration with online course developer Epigeum. The course is currently being piloted with a focus on integrating the course with subject/department based transition activities. Pilot cohorts include the Department for Lifelong Learning, the AMRC Degree apprentices, Foundation Engineering, the School of Languages and Cultures and Dental Hygiene and Therapy. An evaluation is underway to identify what students have gained from taking the course and how to integrate it further into departmental learning and teaching.

- Peer Assisted Study Schemes (PASS) are running in the Department for Lifelong Learning, Foundation Engineering, Biomedical Sciences, Hispanic Studies and two first year Engineering modules. Not all participants are WP but there is strong evidence that peer-led learning has benefits for students relating to retention, sense of belonging and academic attainment. PASS models are being used to support less formal peer learning initiatives in academic departments and SU societies with a focus on study skills (not just module-specific content) to help with academic transitions. Outcomes from Engineering PASS schemes has also contributed to the qualitative strand of the BME Attainment Gap project.

- MASH provide workshops on Maths Anxiety which aim to help students to self-identify challenges around numeracy and mathematical ability and to develop techniques and strategies to overcome them. In addition, MASH
has also launched a new Maths4All workshop, 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 during the summer vacation, 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 trialling ring fenced bursaries for WP students this year (5 in total). An analysis is also being undertaken of SURE student cohorts, with WP indicators being one of the factors which will be considered. Data demonstrates that the scheme has a significant impact on conversion rates from undergraduate to postgraduate taught programmes by offering students a chance to try out the research environment and develop networks and contacts. 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 department. 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. Development of ‘single point of access’ approach to mental health and well-being, involving closer working between various teams - Counselling, Disability & Dyslexia Support Service, Central Welfare & Guidance and University Health Service was being worked through at the time this Access Agreement was in production.

**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 includes tailored workshops 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. In addition, to ensure additional opportunities are accessible:

- 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 US’ 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 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. In addition, the Careers 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.

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 2017/18 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.

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

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 2018/19. 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 currently take advantage of a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan will be available from 2018/19 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household income</th>
<th>£0-£25,000</th>
<th>£25,001-£30,000</th>
<th>£30,001-£40,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bursary</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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; awards from this fund are intended to help students at risk of leaving their studies to remain on course and successfully complete.

Section 5: Targets and Milestones

5.1 Targets
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
• Increase the diversity our mature student intake through the promotion of degrees with foundation year

Due to the current changes in Higher Education and Access policy we have chosen not to extend our current targets beyond 2020. A full review of targets and milestones will be undertaken as part of our 2020/21 Access Agreement.

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 4 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) support and deliver institution-specific WP related research and iii) 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 undertaking research projects in inclusive learning and teaching issues, student progression and have recently reviewed and revised 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 a semi-flexible outreach evaluation questionnaire system, and qualitative methods such as focus groups, interviews, case studies,
longitudinal student tracking and interviews. We evaluate activities to understand how successfully they are 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 and are now using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) to record and track our outreach 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 are generally effectively targeted, with a significant proportion of activities reaching students in the intended cohorts. In previous years, 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
Evaluation indicates that our outreach activities were widely seen by participants as successful in achieving their skills and knowledge development objectives. In addition evaluation outcomes have highlighted 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;
- 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 made a number of 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 Evidence-Informed Approaches to Outreach Activity Development
We are also developing a more experimental approach to outreach development in which we have made space to build new intervention activities from the ground up. We are using the NERUPI (Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions) 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 to confirm their fitness for use. The aim is to develop a detailed evidence-informed intervention methodology and carefully calibrated evaluation or diagnostic measures. We hope in this way to be able to reduce ambiguity about the specific outcomes of these interventions and increase the robustness of causal claims we might make about their impacts.

For example, during the 2016-2017 academic year, the Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit and the central Outreach team are collaborating on the development of a new programme of support for parents and young people (in Y7-8). The development of this project draws on external research and a quasi-action research approach working closely with young people and their parents. We are also undertaking an action research process with outreach practitioners to surface their experience and tacit knowledge of working with disadvantaged young people and their parents.

We view Y7-8 as a crucial transitional time for young people as they progress from adapting to the new secondary school environment to considering important GCSE choices. Previous research also suggests that many students
experience a tailing off of academic potential during this period.\textsuperscript{12} As such, it represents a pivotal opportunity for meaningful intervention.

Moreover, the evidence from existing literature suggests that the high aspirations of both parents and young people tend be consistent across different socio-economic groups – but that aspirations for more disadvantaged young people tend to be eroded as they progress through the school system by more ‘realistic’ expectations about the options available to them.\textsuperscript{13} For this reason, we will work with parents to co-develop resources that will help mitigate or reduce the impact of these perceived or actual barriers. In addition, and on the basis that opportunities for parental support may be limited by their own lack of experience and knowledge about Higher Education, the project also seeks to develop IAG for parents to support them in supporting their offspring.


Bok, J. (2010) ‘The capacity to aspire to higher education: ‘‘It’s like making them do a play without a script’’’, \textit{Critical Studies in Education}, 51(2), pp.163–178. \url{dx.doi.org/10.1080/17508481003731042}

6.4 Student Success and Progression Research and Evaluation

The importance of supporting widening participation students through their whole HE journey via a ‘whole institution approach’ to widening participation, is reflected in the development of our research and evaluation capacity to focus on the whole student lifecycle. Accordingly, we are increasingly researching and evaluating the support we offer students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds during their degree studies and into employment and postgraduate study. As such, we are working with student support and guidance colleagues to understand more about service and support usage and student retention patterns. For example, during the 2016-17 academic year, we are analysing usage data for ‘301’ our student skills and development centre, to identify any student cohorts who are under-represented in usage data. This is a response to suggestions by, amongst others, Stevenson (2012) and Stuart et al (2011) that some student cohorts (and BME students in particular) may be less inclined than others to seek help and support. Once we have mapped take up, we target qualitative research in an effort to understand why some students are reluctant to take up the academic support offered and consider more effective ways of engaging them.

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 (PAD) to investigate relevant aspects of inclusive learning and teaching. Our work in this area is expanding; last year, for example, we also brought together a range of stakeholder interviews focusing on academic transition and inclusive learning and teaching to present a well-received symposium at the 2016 British Educational Research Association (BERA) conference. The symposium included papers which explored differential outcomes within a large academic department and investigated the relationship between institutional policy, philosophy and practice around inclusive learning.

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This year, we have had a number of proposals accepted for the 2017 BERA conference and are looking forward to presenting papers to an academic audience on conducting participatory research with students and using realist methodology to evaluation outreach work. We are also delivering a symposium bringing together several strands of work on academic engagement and ‘widening participation’. We hope that this ongoing work will provide a foundation for further research and an expansion of our evaluation of learning and teaching interventions targeted at disadvantaged or underrepresented students.

We feel that the range and diversity of our student-focussed support, success and provision activities, and the nature of self-selection activities rather than specifically-targeted interventions, means that it is more appropriate to take a ‘patchwork’ approach in which individual activities, services and interventions are evaluated on their own terms rather than drawn into a consistent evaluation strategy. 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 and a case study of inclusive learning and teaching practice in a Social Science department.

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. In refining and


reviewing our financial support offer we also draw on outcomes from the Sheffield Student 2013 longitudinal project and annual evaluations of the impact of this support. www.sheffield.ac.uk/als/wp/stp2013

The impact of financial support on decision-making
To date we have been able to find little robust evidence establishing a positive relationship between financial support offer and the young people’s decision making about HEI choice. 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\(^{16}\) 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\(^{17}\) and tends to reinforce the conclusions of earlier research\(^{18}\) that the financial support packages offered by different institutions have had only a limited impact on applicant decision-making. In part perhaps, because financial support entitlement tends to be confirmed post-application and more often post-confirmation.

The impact of financial support on the student experience
Along with external research\(^ {19}\), our own research suggests, however, that our financial support provision is positively impacting on the quality of recipients’

\(^{16}\) Response rate in 2012 = 64% (115 individual responses)


university and academic experiences by a) removing or reducing a potential source of worry and/or reliance on term-time working\textsuperscript{20}, 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.

Research 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. This was confirmed by our 2016-17 Financial Support Evaluation, in which over 60\% of non-bursary recipient survey respondents indicated they relied on family financial contributions to pay accommodation costs. This fell to 17\% of students in receipt of UoS financial support. This suggests that the additional support they received from the University was extremely useful to them.

Indeed, we are increasingly finding that our financial support is instrumental in supporting disadvantaged students’ academic and University experience. Indeed our research suggests that:

i) There are no clear patterns indicating which types of students are more likely to take on part-time work during term times, but the emerging evidence is increasingly suggesting that there may be a distinction between those disadvantaged students have to focus on the pecuniary drivers of paid work, and their more advantaged peers, who are also able to focus on the qualitative benefits of their jobs and are able to leverage employability skills and other positive experience from their work.

ii) The receipt of financial support provides lower income students with increased agency in how they structure their experience of degree level study. By alleviating the need to work just to survive, financial support enables these students to shape their own experience and chose work that a) supports their own interests, needs, and aspirations and b) have the flexibility to engage more fully with academic and student experiences.

iii) Due to the complexities and variation in each student’s financial and other circumstances (for example, their bursary entitlement, the ability/willingness of their family to provide expected support, number of contact hours), we were unable to identify clear correlations between student demographic profiles and their involvement in part-time work. However, our evaluation outcomes tend to support the suggestion in other academic research that 15 hours per week represents the tipping point at which students felt that their work was having a detrimental impact on their academic experience and engagement with university life and studies.

External and internal evidence helps confirm a clear correlation between well-being, 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. The University’s Financial Support Team continues to work closely with WPREU researchers and to draw on existing research to better understand the impact of the financial support we offer.

6.6 Collaborative Evaluation

In previous years, we completed 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. The University’s Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit will work closely, where it can add value, to HEPP-SY, the new regional NCOP partnership. We anticipate finding opportunities for collaboration on evaluation and location-specific research topics.

**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, part-host and contribute to NEON’s Impact and Evaluation Working Group, which provides a valuable cross-sector opportunity to discuss and develop evaluation approaches.

**OFFA ‘Pracademic’ Programme**

Two WPREU researchers are also providing mentoring support for teams of WP practitioners from other institutions during a year long project in which they aim to produce and publish academic papers reflecting or drawing on their practice. The project has provided a number of excellent opportunities for cross-institution reflection and learning.
6.7 Encouraging Dialogue and Collaboration / Developing Communities of Practice

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 the University’s practice in this area is steered by a broad range of voices and perspectives. We also aim to convene 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.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, we will be introducing a WP ‘Special Interest Group’. This agile grouping, which will report to the University’s Learning and Teaching Committee, will bring together relevant colleagues on an ad hoc topic or issue-focused basis to engender a joined up ‘whole institution approach’ to widening participation and student success and progression issues, to build a community of practice and identify and share good practice. We anticipate this will facilitate better linkages between different operational practices and result in a better student experience for disadvantaged or students from under-represented groups.

WPREU 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). We continue to collaborate and link with external colleagues (for example, researchers based in the Centre for Education and Inclusion Research at
Sheffield Hallam University), which have lead to the early stages of a collaborative research project exploring WP student decision making. Closer links have also provided opportunities for each institution to support the other’s research projects by providing access to current students and/ or other resources.

6.8 Further evaluation developments
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) taking a pragmatic approach to the range of activities we evaluate. Having established a detailed set of data over previous years by attempting to evaluate as wide a range of activities as possible, we are now attempting to reflect the diversity of activities, objectives and outcomes by developing a rolling programme of more closely 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 and will focus on developing this area over the next two or three years.
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, the associated tuition fee costs, as well as details of financial support available. We also commit to providing accurate and timely information to UCAS and Student Finance England to ensure that up to date information is available at all times.
Another mechanism for communicating information to students and their families is through advisers within schools and colleges. This is achieved via consultation events, as a result of delivering presentations at gatherings of teaching staff (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 2018/19 Access Agreement. The Education 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 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

We have flagged some of our activity in this area above, and in particular our wide-ranging institutional work mapping, understanding and addressing degree outcome differentials and our work with the Equalities Challenge Unit on recruiting and supporting students with specific learning difficulties, mental health and autism spectrum conditions.

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, Diversity and Inclusion Board (EDIC). The membership of this board has recently been reviewed and restructured to enhance its ability to support and facilitate institutional change via membership links to Faculty governance structures. One of the responsibilities of this committee 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 has been awarded a silver Athena Swan award in recognition of its commitment to gender diversity.
21 academic departments (including all STEM departments) have individual Athena Swan awards, including the award of 7 silver awards. 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 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, as noted above, 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; The Engineering Faculty Executive Board has recently produced a new Equality and Diversity
Strategy (2016-2021) that includes objectives to increase the proportion of female undergraduates to 25% by 2021 (national average is currently just over 15%) and to reduce the BME attainment gap by 5% by 2021

- employ 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;
- provide 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);
- provide a multi-faith chaplaincy;
- offer 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 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference number</th>
<th>Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)</th>
<th>Main target type (drop-down menu)</th>
<th>Target type (drop-down menu)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Is this a collaborative target (drop-down menu)</th>
<th>Baseline year (drop-down menu)</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T16a_01</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Socio-economic</td>
<td>HESA T15a - W-BMI classes 7 (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>Proposed to remove target as data not available from 2016/17</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_02</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)</td>
<td>HESA T15a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>Young FT first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_03</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>HESA T15b - (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>Percentage with no previous HE &amp; from low participation neighbourhood (POLAR3)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_04</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>HESA T15f - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>FT first degree new entrants who have declared a disability</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_05</td>
<td>Student success</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>HESA T16a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>Young FT first degree entrants: non continuation following year of entry to institution</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>T16a_06</td>
<td>Student success</td>
<td>Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)</td>
<td>HESA T16b - No longer in HE after 1 year &amp; low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 4) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>Young FT first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhood: non continuation following year of entry to institution</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>T16a_07</td>
<td>Student success</td>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>HESA T16c - No longer in HE after 1 year &amp; no previous HE qualification (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>Mature FT first degree entrants with no previous HE qualification: non continuation following year of entry to institution</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>T16a_08</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Socio-economic</td>
<td>Other statistic - Postgraduate (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>PGDE Targets - low IMD (based on number of UoS UG progressing to PGDE)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_09</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Other statistic - Postgraduate (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>PGDE Targets - Ethnicity (number)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>T16a_10</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Other statistic - Mature (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Mature FT Undergraduate entrants</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_11</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Year One, first degree Full Time Equivalent: from minority ethnic backgrounds (Black, Asian, Other (including mixed))</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_12</td>
<td>Progression</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Progression of WP students from UG to PGD at Sheffield</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_13</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Attainment raising</td>
<td>Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Percentage of Successful Post-16 Outreach scheme participants progressing to the University of Sheffield</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_14</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Attainment raising</td>
<td>Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Percentage of Successful Post-16 Outreach scheme participants progressing to higher Education providers other than the University of Sheffield</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>T16a_15</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>White economically disadvantaged nodes</td>
<td>Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Percentage of white males from disadvantaged backgrounds registering on sustained Outreach scheme.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference Number</th>
<th>Select stage of the lifecycle</th>
<th>Main target types (drop down menu)</th>
<th>Target type (drop down menu)</th>
<th>Description (500 characters maximum)</th>
<th>Is this a collaborative target?</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T16b_01</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity</td>
<td>Develop a project to foster the</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-15</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2017-18 to 2021</td>
<td>In the request of the local authority, this project is designed to engage schools which are involved in the target schools.</td>
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<td>(collaborative - please give</td>
<td>effectiveness of longitudinal</td>
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<td>details in the next column)</td>
<td>engagement with target schools</td>
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<td>T16b_02</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity</td>
<td>Develop a project to foster the</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2016-15</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2017-18 to 2021</td>
<td>At the request of the local authority, this project is designed to engage schools which are involved in the target schools.</td>
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<td>(collaborative - please give</td>
<td>effectiveness of longitudinal</td>
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<td>engagement with target schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>T16b_03</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity</td>
<td>TUDGS has committed to continue</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2021-22</td>
<td>The aim of this project is to engage and influence young people and their parents, so that they consider university as an option at an early stage.</td>
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<td>(collaborative - please give</td>
<td>regional collaboration to maintain</td>
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<td>develop our successful Excellence</td>
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<td>Higher Education (HE) and Teacher</td>
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<td>Development (HE4T) partnerships</td>
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<td>Universities of Leeds, York and TUDGS</td>
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<td>This partnership will continue to</td>
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<td>target high achieving students from</td>
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<td>currently under represented groups</td>
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<td>from across the region to encourage</td>
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<td>and facilitate progression of the</td>
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<td>&quot;most able, least likely&quot; group of</td>
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<td>students, through the provision of</td>
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<td>quality HE experiences and opportunities</td>
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<td>T16b_04</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity</td>
<td>Realising Opportunities Targets for</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2013-07</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2021-22</td>
<td>Sustained opportunities to continue to involve</td>
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<td>(collaborative - please give</td>
<td>progression of RO participants into</td>
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<td>the University of Sheffield.</td>
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<td>details in the next column)</td>
<td>a research intensive university</td>
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<tr>
<td>T16b_05</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity</td>
<td>Realising Opportunities Targets for</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2013-07</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2021-22</td>
<td>The partnership will continue to involve</td>
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<td>(collaborative - please give</td>
<td>progression of RO participants into</td>
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<td>the University of Sheffield.</td>
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<td>details in the next column)</td>
<td>an RO Partner university</td>
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<tr>
<td>T16b_06</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Strategic partnerships</td>
<td>We will develop more formal partnership</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>360 360 360 360 400 400 400 400 400 400 400 400</td>
<td>Through the partnerships we will clarify our &quot;target to students from achieving participation backgrounds &amp; ensure that activities are effectively targeted. We will also deliver &quot;comprehensive networking events targeting senior managers.</td>
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<td>(ag formal relationships with</td>
<td>arrangements with schools and colleges</td>
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<td>schools/colleges/employers)</td>
<td>as well as with Local Authority and</td>
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<td>other external agencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>T16b_07</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Retirement funding</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity</td>
<td>We will expand the number of</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>360 360 360 360 400 400 400 400 400 400 400 400</td>
<td>Each scheme will seek to increase their total cohort (712 x 12) by 4 students per year until 2016/17. Participants benefit from direct teacher involvement as part of the University of Sheffield Faculty's wider commitment to wider participation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>(other - please give details</td>
<td>participants in the target schools</td>
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<td>in the next column)</td>
<td>and their parents to consider</td>
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<td>university as an option at an early</td>
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<td>stage. Feeder schools of a HEPP</td>
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<td>target school will be chosen, so that</td>
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<td>that other schools, depending on</td>
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<td>their target years, rolling out to</td>
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<td>other primary schools, and activity</td>
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<td>depending on future funding.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_08</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity</td>
<td>We will expand our delivery of</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>360 360 360 360 400 400 400 400 400 400 400 400</td>
<td>Each scheme will seek to increase their total cohort (712 x 12) by 4 students per year until 2016/17. Participants benefit from direct teacher involvement as part of the University of Sheffield Faculty's wider commitment to wider participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(other - please give details</td>
<td>activities targeting primary school</td>
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<td>students, including staff, mentors,</td>
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<td>T16b_09</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity</td>
<td>From 2015/16 we will introduce a</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>360 360 360 360 400 400 400 400 400 400 400 400</td>
<td>Each scheme will seek to increase their total cohort (712 x 12) by 4 students per year until 2016/17. Participants benefit from direct teacher involvement as part of the University of Sheffield Faculty's wider commitment to wider participation.</td>
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<td>(collaborative - please give</td>
<td>hybrid long-term intensive</td>
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<td>WP students from Y9 to Y11,</td>
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<td>providing academic skills, development</td>
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<td>activities alongside a range of subject</td>
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<td>based optional sessions, to give</td>
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<td>students a greater understanding of</td>
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<td>what subjects are available at HE level</td>
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<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Outreach: WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>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 to promote HE to post-16 students, their parents/carers and teachers, in order that students can make informed choices about whether, and if so where and what to study. Na</td>
<td>2011-12-13</td>
<td>Over 100 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 1000 participants. Over 180 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 2000 participants. Over 180 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 2000 participants. Over 180 events - a mixture of small and large scale activities reaching an audience of over 2000 participants.</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Attainment raising</td>
<td>We will expand our successful US in Schools Mentoring programme to schools and colleges using current University of Sheffield Students.</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>2011-14-15</td>
<td>30 mentors, following support to 200 mentees across 12 schools in the Sheffield City region. Expands scheme to work with 15 schools. Expand scheme to work with 20 schools. Maintain scheme to work with old schools. The scheme seeks to increase the number of schools we provide mentoring support to by 2020-21. Pupils benefit from one to one personal mentoring over a sustained period to support confidence, applications and attainment during years 9, 10 and 11.</td>
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<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Contextual data</td>
<td>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 drawn from 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. We will continue to work collaboratively with academic departments and faculties, we identified at department/faculty level, and programmes of activities targeted at the most under-represented groups, leading to more effective use of resources, and more effective evaluation of impact. Yes</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>Continue to use contextual data in holistic way on a University wide basis as an indicator, providing additional background information to applicants, selecting, 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, selecting, 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, selecting, 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, selecting, and adapt the policy accordingly.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Other/Multiple stages</td>
<td>We will continue to develop university led WP strategies, linked to L&amp;T strategies, to ensure that policies of under-representation are identified at department/faculty level, and programme of activities are developed to address these issues. Through central teams working collaboratively with academic departments and faculties, we will be able to ensure that policies and strategies that are developed are appropriate to and specific to under-represented groups within each subject. Yes</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>Continue to develop Faculty plans to address and implement University's widening participation strategy with specific focus on under-represented groups within subject disciplines. Continue to develop Faculty plans to address and implement University's widening participation strategy with specific focus on under-represented groups within subject disciplines. Continue to develop Faculty plans to address and implement University's widening participation strategy with specific focus on under-represented groups within subject disciplines. Continue to develop Faculty plans to address and implement University's widening participation strategy with specific focus on under-represented groups within subject disciplines.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Management targets</td>
<td>We have a wide-ranging approach to researching and evaluating student success and progression activities - and will continue to develop a range of projects in the area.</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>Continue to develop and implement evaluation framework and tools for monitoring and evaluating Student success and progression activities. Academic, financial, and pastoral for key WP groups. Continue to develop and implement evaluation framework and tools for monitoring and evaluating Student success and progression activities. Academic, financial, and pastoral for key WP groups. Continue to develop and implement evaluation framework and tools for monitoring and evaluating Student success and progression activities. Academic, financial, and pastoral for key WP groups. Continue to develop and implement evaluation framework and tools for monitoring and evaluating Student success and progression activities. Academic, financial, and pastoral for key WP groups.</td>
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<td>T16b_15</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>Management targets</td>
<td>(WPREU) WP Research and Evaluation Unit - Continue to develop the evaluation and research of the University's WP outreach activities.</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continue to develop a model and framework to support the annual evaluation of the University's WP outreach activities.</td>
<td>Na</td>
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| T16b_16 | Other/Multiple stages | Multiple | 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. | Na | Other (please give details of description relevant) | N/A | Continue to develop research and evaluation activities exploring the impact of the University's financial support package on the student experience. | Na | Other (please give details of description relevant) | N/A | Continue to develop research and evaluation activities exploring the impact of the University's financial support package on the student experience. | Na | Other (please give details of description relevant) | N/A | Continue to develop research and evaluation activities exploring the impact of the University's financial support package on the student experience. | Na | Other (please give details of description relevant) | N/A | We continue to develop our annual reviews of financial support. This is a longer process in which we are refining our focus each year on the basis of outcomes from the previous year. |

| T16b_17 | Other/Multiple stages | Multiple | Management targets | (WPREU) WP Research and Evaluation Unit - Support and deliver the Sheffield Student 2013 tracking project. | Na | 2012-13 | N/A | Project extended by 18 months to include an evaluation of the graduate employment outcomes and experience. | End of project and publication of academic paper / monograph | N/A | N/A | Project due to conclude in Summer 2018. | N/A | N/A | N/A | End of project and publication of academic paper / monograph | N/A | N/A | N/A | End of project and publication of academic paper / monograph | N/A | N/A | N/A | End of project and publication of academic paper / monograph |
| T16b_18 | Other/Multiple stages | Multiple | Management targets | WPRU 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. | Na | 2015-16 | N/A | We continue to build an evidence base from outcomes from the Sheffield Student 2013 project and a range of smaller scale research projects in this area. |
| T16b_19 | Other/Multiple stages | Multiple | Management targets | WPRU WP Research and Evaluation Unit - Continue to foster links between academic, managerial and practitioner staff to ensure that both the University and WP practice and academic research have the opportunity to inform each other. | Na | 2015-16 | N/A | We have introduced an annual programme of events – designated round tables together with a range of institutional WP stakeholders and continue to run one-off activities – such as guest lecturers, topic focused workshops etc. |
| T16b_20 | Student success | Multiple | Student support services | Enhanced support for commuter students | No | 2015-12 | N/A | A minimum of three events focussed on activities to include peer mentoring. |
| T16b_31 | Student success | Care leavers | Student support services | Care Leaver support | No | 2015-12 | N/A | We already have a dedicated role to support care leavers as they enter the University but more staff resource will be available to support this area of work and to provide additional support throughout the year. We also plan to maintain University wide dissemination for students from a care background and our ongoing monitoring in College based practice. |
| T16b_22 | Student success | Multiple | Student support services | Additional support for students facing difficulties | No | 2011-12 | N/A | Targeted separate sessions being held towards WP groups to two key transition points: Entry and exam periods. One-to-one and group sessions delivered through the Higher Futures (HFL); Expanding awareness sessions held in WP groups to one key transition point: Entry and exam periods. These awareness sessions focus on key points: Entry and exam periods. | Targeted awareness raising events wp groups to one key transition point: Entry and exam periods. These awareness sessions focus on awareness of social, academic, and face to face contact. | This resource may be adjusted subject to review outcomes. |
| T16b_23 | Student success | Disabled | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Expand our activity for prospective students with disabilities to ensure they see a range of support available. A provider, super-marketing scheme, WP workshops targeting students and families: DSA guidance sessions collaboratively with other HEIs | No | 2011-12 | N/A | 20 events providing pre-entry and transition support to groups of between 150 and 150 participants. 20 events providing pre-entry and transition support to groups of between 150 and 150 participants. | 20 events providing pre-entry and transition support to groups of between 150 and 150 participants. | 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 | Multiple | 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 advisors/families, but also working in some cases with pre-16 students. This will include, for example, workshops and talks. | No | 2011-12 | N/A | Deliver 15 pre-entry workshops to targeting 150 students. Deliver 15 pre-entry workshops to targeting 200 students. | Deliver 15 pre-entry workshops to targeting 150 students. Deliver 15 pre-entry workshops to targeting 200 students. | This resource may be adjusted subject to review outcomes. |
| T16b_25 | Progression | Multiple | 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 career advice sessions for students from under-represented groups to support their progression to graduate level employment. | No | 2011-12 | N/A | Deliver 20 pre-entry advice workshops (50 current ideas, 100 individual advice sessions. Deliver 20 pre-entry advice workshops (50 current ideas, 100 individual advice sessions. | Deliver 20 pre-entry advice workshops (50 current ideas, 100 individual advice sessions. Deliver 20 pre-entry advice workshops (50 current ideas, 100 individual advice sessions. | This resource may be adjusted subject to review outcomes. |
| T16b_26 | Access | Multiple | Outreach / WP activity (collaboration - 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 | N/A | N/A | N/A | 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. The student success, outreach / WP activity across the Sheffield City Region for young people and adults who have faced difficulties on their respective HEIs. This partnership may be adjusted subject to review outcomes. |
| TR16_27 | Access | Multiple | 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 includes and resources developed by young people, schools, teachers and advisers. Develop and maintain activity levels. Develop and maintain tracking and monitoring systems. Develop and maintain activity levels. Develop and maintain tracking and monitoring systems. | N/A | 2011-12 | 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 to post-16 education, employment and training, and on to higher education. |
| TR16_29 | Access | Multiple | 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 activity, a detailed work plan and data that might be shared in order to monitor the participation of target group in WP activity. 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. | N/A | 2012-13 | 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 to post-16 education, employment and training, and on to higher education. |
| TR16_29 | Access | Multiple | 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 with schools (Y10, including a summer school). Consider outcomes of further cohorts depending on the outcomes of evaluation and future funding. Consider outcomes of further cohorts depending on the outcomes of evaluation and future funding. Consider outcomes of further cohorts depending on the outcomes of evaluation and future funding. Consider outcomes of further cohorts depending on the outcomes of evaluation and future funding. | N/A | 2013-14 | 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 to post-16 education, employment and training, and on to higher education. |
| TR16_30 | Access | Multiple | Management targets. (WPSEU - 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 1 new initiative in collaboration with local authorities to develop new workshops/development programmes. Outcome measures will include outcomes and processes. Develop 1 new initiative in collaboration with local authorities to develop new workshops/development programmes. Outcome measures will include outcomes and processes. Develop 1 new initiative in collaboration with local authorities to develop new workshops/development programmes. Outcome measures will include outcomes and processes. Develop 1 new initiative in collaboration with local authorities to develop new workshops/development programmes. Outcome measures will include outcomes and processes. Develop 1 new initiative in collaboration with local authorities to develop new workshops/development programmes. Outcome measures will include outcomes and processes. | N/A | 2016-17 | The annual development of new activities is continuing with collaboration as a programme for students in Y7 & 8 and their parents. For further information, please visit our website. |

Optional commentary on milestones.

This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional ‘supporting information’ as a separate Word/pdf document.