

University of Cumbria

Access and participation plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

Introduction and strategic aim

The University of Cumbria (UoC) was established to widen participation in Cumbria and address high-level skills demands across our public services and industries. We work together in partnership with local businesses and communities in all our locations extending to Lancashire and London, with 54% of our students studying on one of our campuses. Our off-campus provision is either in a workplace setting or via distance learning. Our Towards 2030 Strategy sets out how we will equip our students with the skills and confidence to realise their potential, succeed in their careers and become active global citizens.

We attract a diverse student population with higher than national average proportions of students who are 21 and over, from areas with low participation in higher education (HE), disclosed disabilities and experiencing multiple causes of disadvantage. We continue to focus on the access of regionally underrepresented groups through interventions outlined in this plan which include supporting young males from low participation areas. The introduction of our new Institute of Engineering, Computing and Advanced Manufacturing has diversified our portfolio to include courses with higher national application rates from men. Our campus in Barrow-in-Furness opened in 2025 and has created local access to HE for people in West Cumbria, an area where learners with potential have often been unable or unwilling to relocate to pursue their studies.

Our programmes are designed to create opportunities for students to engage in lifelong learning through flexible routes into HE from levels three to eight. In 2021-22 the university had 9,705 full person equivalent students (6,586 full-time (FT) equivalent). 60% were on undergraduate (UG) programmes, the remainder on postgraduate programmes and apprenticeships. 61% were registered on FT programmes, the remainder on part-time (PT) provision including continuing professional development. A further 4,987 full person equivalent students were registered with the university studying under collaborative provision, with the majority of these being on taught Masters programmes.

We have identified through our assessment of performance the greatest risks to equality of opportunity for students at the university, looking particularly at intersections of student characteristics which may increase such risks. Whilst we acknowledge the difference in outcomes for disadvantaged and underrepresented students generally, we have focused on the success of underrepresented males and of Black students, with a wider lens on ethnic minority students' success, mature students (aged 21 and over), care leavers and students with a disclosed mental health condition within this plan.

Risks to equality of opportunity

We identified our indications of risk to equality of opportunity through our assessment of performance using the Office for Students (OfS) access and participation data dashboard, Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) and reviewing UCAS data and our Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data. Where OfS access and participation data dashboard figures have been quoted, the indicator tab has been used to determine gaps in outcomes. A student and staff consultation further informed our understanding of risks to equality of opportunity through identifying challenges to students at each stage of university and particular student groups in need of support (see Annex B, pages 81-82, for survey questions). To prioritise the greatest indications of risk, we assessed the size of the gap between students in the affected group and the comparator group, and the persistence of the gap with a particular focus on where the gap has grown since the introduction of the previous plan. We have considered the numbers of students affected in each group, but we have not excluded a student characteristic where the population is small, but the group faces multiple barriers to equality of opportunity, as these include some of the most deeply disadvantaged students.

Our internal assessment of performance analysed exact data; however, we have applied the HESA Standard Rounding Methodology to our data reported in this document to reduce the risk of identifying individuals within the published figures. Therefore, some of our analysis includes suppressed data, due to the small student populations with stated characteristics, and exact figures are not quoted.

Whilst there is a level of statistical uncertainty relating to some of the student groups identified as most at risk to equality of opportunity stated in our objectives and targets, we have confidence in internal data and the challenges identified at national level that show persistent differences in outcomes are experienced by these students.

We have set objectives for the greatest indications of risk, linked to measurable targets. Where we have not prioritised student groups for formal objectives or targets, mitigating actions have been identified. These will be monitored internally in the comprehensive analysis of other identified risks in our assessment of performance Annex A (see pages 57-80). These indications of risk are largely clustered around characteristics of measures of socio-economic disadvantage and underrepresentation, minority ethnicity, reported disability, age, and care-leaver status.

We have an objective to raise the attainment of young people below the age of 16, to increase their chances of accessing HE as adults. As it is very difficult to set any baseline and to monitor the success of this objective, we have not set a target and we articulate the way we intend to pursue this objective in Intervention Strategy 1.

Indication of risk 1. Fewer applications from young males than young females to FT undergraduate courses leading to fewer enrolments at the university.

Males are less likely than their female peers both to apply and to accept an offer and enrol at the University of Cumbria. Research suggests this is likely to be an indication of the following risks in the EORR: NR1: **knowledge and skills**, NR2: **information and guidance**, NR3: **perception of higher**

education, NR5: **limited choice of course type and delivery** mode, NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus**, NR10: **cost pressures** in addition to an additional risk identified in our university-wide consultation, R13: **sense of belonging at university**. The university work together with North-West universities through two Uni Connect partnerships, Hello Future in Cumbria and Future U in Lancashire with a regional focus on young, underrepresented males' progression to higher education including through working groups, to research the needs of and target resource towards supporting this group. Collaborative research and knowledge of our context including the influences in rural and coastal communities, the difference between aspiration and expectation and the types of courses that attract this target group, give us a robust understanding of the risks stated and therefore which interventions to commit to in our strategy.

Linked objectives and target.

Due to the persistent nature of this indication of risk, and the fact we have not made the intended progress across our previous plan, we recommit to increasing enrolments of young males from underrepresented areas using the tracking underrepresentation by area (TUNDRA) metric where the gap is the widest, focusing on prospective students in quintile 1.

Target PTA_1: Raise the absolute number of FT young male entrants from TUNDRA Q1 by 50% over the duration of the APP (Baseline 30 students in 2021-22; target 45 students in 2027-28). Objectives 1 and 2.

Indication of risk 2. Higher rates of Black students not continuing onto the second year of their course, compared to white students.

Black students are more likely to leave their course after the first year of study compared to white students. Intersectional analysis shows that Black students are more likely than their white peers to come from backgrounds of socioeconomic disadvantage, and this helps to account for the significant decline in continuation of Black students in the years most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. For those starting FT study in 2020-21, white students had a continuation rate of 87.1% while Black students' rate was 69.6%.

Research suggests that higher rates of Black students' non-continuation may be an indication of the following risks: NR6: **insufficient academic support**, NR7: **insufficient personal support**, NR8: **mental health**, NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus**, NR10: **cost pressures**, R13: **sense of belonging at university**, R14: **placements** and R15: **facilities for parents**. From our university-wide consultation and local knowledge of our student groups, we know that historically, a holistic all-students approach has been deployed by staff supporting students through teaching and learning and student services at the university. This is in part, a limitation of different student records systems used across services in the university and has been a barrier to targeted interventions for specific student groups. We are also aware of the impacts of the lack of representation and ethnic diversity in our student and staff body and in the community, on a sense of belonging for our minority ethnicity students and staff, evidenced through initial work carried out for submission to the Race Equality Charter. Unfortunately, we know that racism is being experienced by some of our students in the community having detrimental impact on their mental health and wellbeing in addition to their studies. To tackle this openly, we commit to work with partners at all levels,

including those hosting placements to challenge structural racism, review who is represented when we invite speakers to engage with our students, and question the representation within our curriculum. We also commit to continue working internally with staff and students to ensure a culture of safety and respect so we can work together to champion diversity and tackle racism where it exists.

Linked objective and target.

Our previous plan focused on reducing the continuation gap between Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnicity students and white students without disaggregating by minority ethnicity in our target. However, while Asian and Other ethnicity students' continuation has steadily improved since 2018-19 to now exceed white students' continuation rates in 2020-21, Black students' continuation gap has markedly increased since then. Our Mixed ethnicity student population is suppressed between 2017-18 to 2020-21 due to low numbers, and the 4-year aggregate shows a marginal gap of 0.5 percentage points. We therefore consider it most effective to focus this target on the Black student population.

Target PTS_1: Reduce the difference in continuation between FT Black students and white students by 12.5 percentage points by 2028 (Baseline 17.5% in 2020-21; target 5% in 2027-28). Objective 4.

Indication of risk 3. Higher rates of PT students aged 21 and over not continuing onto the second year of their course, compared to students aged under 21.

Mature students are the majority of the population studying our PT courses at the University of Cumbria and their Continuation rates have been inconsistent and therefore closely monitored in recent years. Continuation for PT mature students in 2019-20 was 74.6% compared to young students' continuation which was 92.2%. Many PT mature students are studying on our flexible Practice Development Framework (PDF); this can make it difficult to track continuation with accuracy as the intended flexibility leads to unpredictable and very individual paths through their awards. We are committed to improving the way we manage students' progress through the PDF, and to ensuring that continuation rates for this group is a clear focus for us in the coming years.

Research suggests that the higher rates of PT mature students' non-continuation is likely to be an indication of the following risks: NR6: **insufficient academic support**, NR7: **insufficient personal support**, NR8: **mental health**, NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus**, NR10: **cost pressures**, R14: **placements** and R15: **facilities for parents**.

Linked objective and target.

With 89.2% of our PT population included in the access and participation data set aged 21 and over, the impact of the widening gap between their continuation rates and those of students under 21 is significant. In contrast, the continuation rates of FT students aged 21 and over have improved year on year since 2019-20 reducing to 3.1 percentage points. We have therefore focused our target on PT students.

Target PTS_2: Reduce the difference in continuation between PT students aged 21 and over and students aged under 21 by 12.6 percentage points by 2028 (Baseline 17.6% in 2019-20; target 5% in 2027-28). Objective 5.

Indication of risk 4. Higher rates of FT care leaver students not continuing onto the second year of their course, compared to non-care-leaver students.

Care leavers studying on FT courses are more likely to leave their course after their first year of study, which may be an indication of risks particularly relating to the key phase of transition to HE where greater support is required. The gap in continuation has widened in the years affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Using internal data, we see that the four-year aggregate gap is 8.8 percentage points but the most recent year's gap between the continuation rates for those who are care-leavers and those who are not is 19.3 percentage points.

Research suggests that higher rates of care-leavers non-continuation may be an indication of the following risks: NR2: **information and guidance**, NR3: **perception of higher education**, NR6: **insufficient academic support**, NR7: **insufficient personal support**, NR8: **mental health**, NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus**, NR10: **cost pressures**, NR11: **Capacity issues**, R13: **sense of belonging at university** and R14: **placements**. We know that care leaver students have little or no family network and linked household income to support them and that an additional stressor contributing to mental health concerns is the potential lack of accommodation outside of term-time. The COVID-19 pandemic brought these stressors into sharper focus for care leavers and the pandemic is likely to have contributed to the widening of the gap between their continuation outcomes and those for non-care leavers in 2021-22. Ensuring that there is consistency across staff of who can access information about care leaver status to proactively support this group of students, is a priority for the university along with identifying estranged student status and other characteristics underrepresented and with differential outcomes. We know that capacity issues with resource of staff in particularly student support services may have a pronounced impact on care leavers accessing the range of support offered by the university throughout their student career.

Linked objective and target.

Whilst a small group at the university, care leavers are likely to be impacted by multiple risks and barriers, and we have not made the progress intended in our previous plan, therefore we continue to commit to supporting them and identifying different ways where possible, to remove risks that they face, or mitigate them.

Target PTS_3: Reduce the difference in continuation between FT care leaver students and non-care leavers by 15 percentage points by 2028 (Baseline 19.3% in 2020-21; target 4.3% in 2027-28.) Objective 6.

Indication of risk 5. Higher rates of FT students with declared mental health conditions not completing their course, compared to students with no disclosed disability.

Students on FT courses with declared mental health conditions are less likely to continue onto their second year, and then complete their course, than students with no disclosed disability. We are not specifically targeting continuation as we are taking actions to improve completion in this intervention strategy that are also expected to improve continuation, which we will monitor over the course of this plan.

Research suggests that higher rates of students with a declared mental health condition non-completion may be due to the following risks: NR6: **insufficient academic support**, NR7: **insufficient personal support**, NR8: **mental health**, NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus**, NR10: **cost pressures**, R14: **placements** and R15: **facilities for parents**.

Intersection of characteristics: Over 80% of students with a declared mental health condition in 2017-18 were in quintile 1 or 2 for association between characteristics (ABCS), and these students were less likely to complete their studies compared to quintile 3-5 students with a disclosed mental health condition.

Our consultation with students indicated additional structural risks impacting upon mental health such as placements and the provision and quality of facilities on campus for students who are parents.

Linked objective and target.

The cost-of-living crisis is likely to further impact upon the mental health of students and their ability to manage their wellbeing during study.

Target PTS_4: Reduce the difference in completion between FT students with a declared mental health condition and no disability declared by 9.2 percentage points by 2028 (Baseline 12.2% in 2017-18; target 3% in 2027-28). Objective 7.

Indication of risk 6. TUNDRA Q1 FT male students are less likely to achieve a 2.1 or 1st class degree outcome, compared to TUNDRA Q5 FT male students.

Whilst there is a gap in attainment of achieving a 2.1 or 1st class degree outcome between males and females overall on FT courses, the gap is more significant for males from postcode areas in England with a history of low progression to university. Therefore, we are targeting the intersection of gender and TUNDRA Q1 where there is the greatest indication of risk to equality of opportunity for attainment.

Research suggests the attainment gap between FT males from low progression to university areas in England and those who are most represented may be due to the following risks: NR1: **knowledge and skills**, NR6: **insufficient academic support**, NR7: **insufficient personal support**, NR8: **mental health**, NR10: **cost pressures**, NR12: **progression from higher education** and R15: **facilities for parents**. Whilst there is a national gender gap in access and success outcomes, the university had previously focused on underrepresented males specifically through access interventions. Further collaboration with our students and access and recruitment teams is needed to understand the needs of this group once they enrol at university, to ensure that the barriers to applying to university identified in IR1 are not validated.

Linked objective and target.

Our previous plan focused on reducing the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and underrepresented students measured by IMD and participation of local areas (POLAR4) overall and significant progress has been made over time to reduce the gap overall. Consequently, in this plan we have set a new target and objective which focuses on intersectionality of gender, where the gap is widening between males and females.

Target PTS_5: Reduce the difference in attainment between FT TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 males by 12 percentage points by 2028 (Baseline 13.7% in 2021-22; target 1.7% in 2027-28). Objective 8.

Indication of risk 7. FT Black students are less likely to achieve a positive employment/further study outcome, compared to white students.

At the time of writing this plan, significant progress has been made closing the awarding and progression gaps year on year between FT Black students and white students. However, we have set an objective formally targeting progression for Black graduates where the gap is reducing more slowly, recognising that our success in raising their attainment needs to be maintained and augmented by targeted support for the transition to employment.

Research suggests that the gap in progression outcomes for FT Black students may be due to the following risks: NR10: **cost pressures** and NR12: **progression from higher education**. Through our Race Equity Action Plan, we will continue to further our understanding of risks to our Black and other minority ethnicity students to, through and onwards from the university, and put in place actions to address race equity for the whole university community. Risks identified in IR2 and the mitigation of these will have impacts on IR7.

Linked objective and target.

Target PTP_1: Close the gap in progression between FT Black and white students by 2028 (Baseline 6.1% in 2020-21; target 0 in 2027- 28). Objective 10.

Identified risks to equality of opportunity for students at the University of Cumbria summary.

The most significant risks identified through our student and staff consultation across the whole student lifecycle to all students were '**Cost of living and finance**' and '**Maintaining health and wellbeing**' which overlap with those identified in the National Equality of Risk Register, 'Risk 8: Mental health' and 'Risk 10: Cost pressures'.

The table below maps the key identified risks for student groups at the University of Cumbria to the risks articulated in the national Equality of Opportunity Risk Register.

Risk to equality of opportunity	FT Male students from low progression areas	Black students	Students aged 21 and over	Care leavers	Students with a disclosed mental health condition
National Risk 1: Knowledge and skills	IR1/IR6				
National Risk 2: Information and guidance	IR1			IR4	
National Risk 3: Perception of higher education	IR1			IR4	
National Risk 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode	IR1				
National Risk 6: Insufficient academic support	IR6	IR2	IR3	IR4	IR5
National Risk 7: Insufficient personal support	IR6	IR2	IR3	IR4	IR5
National Risk 8: Mental health	IR6	IR2	IR3	IR4	IR5
National Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus	IR1	IR2	IR3	IR4	IR5
National Risk 10: Cost pressures	IR1/ IR6	IR2/ IR7	IR3	IR4	IR5
National Risk 11: Capacity issues				IR4	IR5
National Risk 12: Progression from higher education	IR6	IR7			
Risk 13: Feeling a sense of belonging	IR1	IR2		IR4	IR5
Risk 14: Placements	IR6	IR2	IR3	IR4	IR5
Risk 15: Facilities for parents	IR6	IR2/ IR7	IR3	IR4	IR5

Objectives and targets

Indication of risk	Objectives	Targets	Intervention strategy
	1: Enhance the literacy attainment of young, disadvantaged students in year 7, by delivering and evaluating impact of catch-up reading support in collaboration with Hello Future in schools and colleges in 2024-28, building on the 2023-24 pilot.		
IR1: Fewer applications from young, underrepresented males in England than young, represented males to FT undergraduate courses leading to fewer enrolments at the university.	2: Increase the number of successful applications from FT young males, TUNDRA Q1 by 50% in 2028.	PTA_1: Raise the absolute number of FT young male entrants from TUNDRA Q1 by 50% over the duration of the APP (Baseline 30 students in 2021-22; target 45 students in 2027-28).	IS1
	3: Maintain progress in increasing proportion of FT students from minority ethnicities enrolling at NW campuses through continued engagement with Lancashire schools and colleges and continuing to support cost of transport to campus, to match North West census representation by 2028.		
IR2: Higher rates of Black students not continuing onto the second year of their	4: Increase the continuation rate of FT Black students to equal the continuation rate of white students by 2030.	PTS_1: Reduce the difference in continuation between FT Black students and	IS2

course, compared to white students.		white students by 12.5% by 2028. (Baseline 17.5% in 2020-21; target 5% in 2027-28).	
IR3: Higher rates of PT students aged 21 and over, not continuing onto the second year of their course, compared to students aged under 21.	5: Increase the continuation rate of PT students aged 21 and over and equal the continuation rate of PT students aged under 21 by 2030.	PTS_2: Reduce the difference in continuation between PT students aged 21 and over and students aged under 21 by 12.6% by 2028 (Baseline 17.6% in 2019-20; target 5% in 2027-28).	IS3
IR4: Higher rates of FT care-leaver students not continuing onto the second year of their course, compared to non-care-leaver students.	6: Increase the continuation rate of FT care leavers to equal the continuation rate of FT non-care leavers by 2030.	PTS_3: Reduce the difference in continuation between FT care-leaver students and non-care-leavers by 15% by 2028 (Baseline 19.3% in 2020-21; target 4.3% in 2027-28.)	IS4
IR5: Higher rates of FT students with declared mental health conditions not completing their course, compared to students with no disclosed disability.	7: Increase the completion rate of FT students with a disclosed mental health condition to equal the completion rate of FT students with no disclosed disability by 2029.	PTS_4: Reduce the difference in completion between FT students with a declared mental health condition and no disability declared by 9.2% by 2028 (Baseline 12.2% in 2017-18; target 3% in 2027-28).	IS5

<p>IR6: TUNDRA Q1 FT male students are less likely to achieve a 2.1 or 1st class degree outcome, compared to TUNDRA Q5 male students.</p>	<p>8: Increase the attainment rate of TUNDRA Q1 FT males achieving 2.1 or 1st degree outcomes to equal the attainment rate of TUNDRA Q5 FT males by 2029.</p>	<p>PTS_5: Reduce the difference in attainment between FT TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 males by 12 percentage points by 2028 (Baseline 13.7 percentage points in 2021-22; target 1.7 percentage points in 2027-28).</p>	<p>IS6</p>
	<p>9: Maintain and monitor progress in closing the gap in attainment between FT Black and Asian students, and white students.</p>		
<p>IR7: FT Black students are less likely to achieve a positive employment or further study outcome, compared to white students.</p>	<p>10: Increase the progression outcomes of FT Black students to equal progression for white students by 2028.</p>	<p>PTP_1: Close the gap in progression between FT Black and white students by 2028 (Baseline 6.1% in 2019-20; target 0 in 2027-28).</p>	<p>IS7</p>

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategy 1

Objectives and targets: Principal objective: PTA_1 & OBJ2 Increase the number of successful applications from FT young males, TUNDRA Q1 by 50% in 2028. Secondary objectives: OBJ3 maintain progress in increasing proportion of FT students from minority ethnicities enrolling at NW campuses through continued engagement with Lancashire schools and colleges and continuing to support cost of transport to campus, to match North West census representation by 2028 and PTS_5 & OBJ8 (IS6) increasing the attainment rate of TUNDRA Q1 FT males achieving 2.1 or 1st degree outcomes to equal the attainment rate of TUNDRA Q5 FT males by 2029.

Risks to equality of opportunity: NR1: **knowledge and skills** (IR1, IR6), NR2: **information and guidance** (IR1 & 4), NR3: **perception of higher education** (IR1 & 4), NR5: **limited choice of course type and delivery mode** (IR1), NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus** (IR1, 2, 3, 4 & 5), NR10: **cost pressures** (IR1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7) and R13: **sense of belonging at university** (IR1, 2, 4 & 5).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>Collaborative work with the Uni Connect, Hello Future: Raising attainment of disadvantaged students through catch-up reading support for 48 underachieving year 7 learners of all genders with eight schools in Cumbria. Building on the existing small two-school pilot from 2023-24.</p> <p>New metacognition activity for year 7-11 with 600 disadvantaged learners 2023/24 academic year.</p>	<p>Partnership relationships, tutors. Staff training, resources for tutoring. Match 50% funding from Higher Fee Income (£28k overall approximately, £14k for target group).</p>	<p>Short term- increased confidence of pupils in reading.</p> <p>Medium term- toolkit resource created to share following key evaluative milestones.</p> <p>Long term-70% of pupils demonstrated increased reading scores on York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC) between baseline and endpoint. Dissemination at national conferences.</p>	<p>Y-IS5</p> <p>The collaborative catch-up reading activity is designed to increase literacy attainment and prior attainment of this target group, therefore, longer term, it may impact the on-course attainment rate of males from low progression postcodes at university.</p>

<p>Develop existing pilot creative media collaborative project 'The Cumbrian Cut' with the Institute of Arts and Hello Future to increase outreach work in low participation neighbourhoods in Cumbria and Lancashire, targeting young, disadvantaged students in year 10 with a focus on males.</p> <p>Building on existing pilot of four schools in Cumbria with 90 students in 2024.</p>	<p>Staff, Student Ambassadors, Salesforce, knowledge and learning from research and experience, existing stakeholder relationships, university reputation.</p>	<p>Short term- increased engagements with target schools and colleges and target group.</p> <p>Medium term- increased student self-reporting of understanding of university options and self-efficacy. Increased attendance at Open events.</p> <p>Long term- increased applications from target audience.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Continue and expand on existing bespoke academic activity predominantly on campus. E.g., Sports collaborative programme, Future teachers programme, Health taster programme, Dream Placement- (in collaboration with Centre for Leadership Performance) for post-16 students.</p> <p>Existing activity and new pilot in 2023/24 academic year.</p>	<p>Staff expertise and time, funds for transport to campus for schools and colleges. (£9,500 overall, approximately 40% expected target group, £3,800).</p>		<p>N</p>

<p>Targeted recruitment activities for our new Barrow campus opening in 2025 to attract a larger number of this target group from the area local to Barrow and to the west coast of Cumbria.</p> <p>New activity- 2023/24 academic year.</p>	<p>Staff time, marketing. (£2,000).</p>	<p>Short term- increased engagements with target students through schools and colleges engagement.</p> <p>Medium- increased attendance from target audience at Open events.</p> <p>Long term- proportion of applications for Barrow courses from target audience to exceed other institutes.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Launch young, disadvantaged males and ABMO ethnicity campaigns to tailor messaging to ensure target group have the right information including about the transport fund to visit campus at the right time to make informed decisions on relevant digital platforms.</p> <p>New activity- 2023/24 academic year.</p>	<p>Expert in marketing, website, HAVAS (£13,200 overall approximately £6,600 for target group).</p>	<p>Short term- increase traffic on website, bookings on Open events.</p> <p>Medium term- increased attendance from target audience at Open events.</p> <p>Long term- increase in applications from target audience.</p>	<p>OBJ3</p> <p>This access campaign will also target minority ethnicity students.</p>
<p>Enhance and increase targeted transport fund to attend Open events to overcome financial constraints from 2023. Existing activity.</p>	<p>Marketing of funds, staff time to administer, (£12,000 overall. approximately 40% expected for target group, £4,800).</p>	<p>Short term- increased bookings from target groups to Open events.</p> <p>Medium term- increased attendance from target group at Open events.</p> <p>Long term- increased applications from target audience.</p>	<p>OBJ3</p> <p>This will support access to Open events for minority ethnicity students.</p>

<p>Collaborative work- Establish a Boys' Impact Hub in Cumbria.</p> <p>Form multi-stakeholder partnership, led by the University of Cumbria, to address urgent and growing challenge of low attainment, progression and engagement among under-resourced boys across the county.</p> <p>New activity - 2026</p>	<p>Cost of launch conference, indicative: £3,000 contribution from University of Cumbria, staff time to provide leadership, research expertise and evaluation design.</p>	<p>Short term- cross-county governance and shared aims, principles and theory of change established. Launch conference and two new projects scoped with delivery partners. Baseline data agreed and collected to support evaluation.</p> <p>Medium term- unify existing projects and build deeper collaboration. Build new targeted interventions with growth in participation of boys in activity, improved local data on belonging, confidence and aspiration. Share evidence and embed <i>Taking Boys Seriously</i> principles across local education ecosystems. Mid-point review of pilot interventions to understand impacts and effectiveness.</p> <p>Long term- improved sustained education destinations and outcomes for boys.</p>	<p>IS6</p> <p>The Hub acts as a unifying structure that strengthens and aligns existing Hello Future, university access and participation and partner activity. Through providing shared governance, evidence and learning, duplication is avoided.</p>
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Evidence base and rationale: Internal planning and performance management data.

Developing additional interventions- Boys' Impact Hub

We have developed research in collaboration with the Uni Connect Hello Future over time on our access target group which is open-source access. As the evidence base has developed over the course of the APP, findings have been reflected within additional intervention strategies. This includes insight generated through the Boys' Impact Hub network since its establishment in 2023, alongside early research findings from the University of Cumbria's Head of Student Recruitment and Outreach examining factors influencing the consideration sets of disadvantaged young males in Cumbria when progressing to higher education.

While existing activity has increased understanding of barriers faced by this cohort, participation rates for full-time young males from TUNDRA Q1 backgrounds have remained broadly static. This reinforces the need for a coordinated, long-term response that moves beyond isolated interventions to address the underlying causes of low prior attainment, confidence and progression.

In response, and informed by emerging evidence, the university commits to establishing a Boys' Impact Hub in Cumbria in collaboration with local councils, schools, Further Education and Higher Education providers. The Hub will provide a shared framework for evidence-led collaboration, enabling partners to align activity, test new approaches, and embed learning across the local education system over the lifetime of the APP.

Harland, K. and McCready, S. (2012) *Taking Boys Seriously: A Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Male School Life Experiences in Northern Ireland*. Ulster University. Available at: https://pure.ulster.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/11350226/Taking_Boys_Seriously_DE_FINAL_PDF.pdf (Accessed: 21 January 2026).

Hello Future (2019) *Perspectives & Prospects. The educational ambitions and intentions of young white British males from five disadvantages areas in North West England*. Available at: <https://www.hellofuture.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Perspectives-and-prospects-The-educational-ambitions-and-intentions-of-young-white-British-males-from-five-disadvantaged-areas-in-N.W.-England.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

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Morgan, S. (2021) *Taking Boys Seriously Principles*. Ulster University. Available at: [Ulster University Taking Boys Seriously Principles](#) (Accessed: 21 January 2026).

UCAS (2023) *A look into the mindset of current applicants and potential applicants. 2023 entry surveys hosted by UCAS at various points in this cycle*. Available at: [The 2023 Student Mindset \(ucas.com\)](#) (Accessed May 2023).

UCAS (2021) *Where next? What influences the choices school leavers make?* Available at: <https://www.ucas.com/file/435551/download?token=VUdIDVFh> (Accessed: 19 April 2023).

Intervention strategy 2

Objectives and targets: Principal objective: PTS_1 & OBJ4 Increase the continuation rate of FT Black students to equal the continuation rate of white students by 2030.

Secondary objectives: PTS_3 & OBJ6 (IS4) Increase the continuation rate of FT care leavers to equal the continuation rate of FT non-care-leavers by 2030 and PTP_1 & OBJ10 (IS7) increasing the progression outcomes of FT Black students to equal white students by 2028.

Risks to equality of opportunity: NR6: **insufficient academic support** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR7: **insufficient personal support** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR8: **mental health** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus** (IR1, 2, 3, 4 & 5), NR10: **cost pressures** (IR1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7), R13: **sense of belonging at university** (IR1, 2, 4 & 5), R14: **placements** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) and R15: **facilities for parents** (IR2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>Establish working group of cross-university staff and Student Advisory Panel (SAP) to invite students with characteristics identified in the APP to investigate experiences and impacts on their student experience and outcomes, to then act on findings.</p> <p>New activity - 2024.</p>	<p>Staff time, financial allocation for student time (approximately £1840 for 16 students per year on the SAP), funding/time for research and evaluation.</p>	<p>Short term- networks set-up to facilitate safe places for open dialogue about race and equality of opportunity in the university.</p> <p>Medium term- issues raised will result in a clear action plan co-created with students to improve outcomes. Staff working groups will then be combined to consider the intersection of characteristics reflected in the APP.</p> <p>Long term- interventions implemented and evaluated, with clear communication of actions taken based on student advisory panel and impact.</p>	<p>IS2-7</p> <p>Outcomes of this working group will impact all stages of student success for student characteristics identified in this plan.</p>

<p>Streamline systems capturing student data by access rolled out to the Student Enquiry Point (StEP) for academic tutors, and training and support for facilitating students to share experiences with initial pilot with Nursing beginning in 2023.</p> <p>Existing system, new application in 2024.</p>	<p>Funding for StEP (£20,000 approximately).</p> <p>Staff time for on-going training and support, reporting.</p>	<p>Short term- learnings shared from Nursing pilot to make recommendations and improvements for further rollout.</p> <p>Medium term- investigate onboarding the Academic Registry team before further rollout in the university.</p> <p>Long term- systems streamlined, so improved efficiency of acting on student information leading to proactive support.</p>	<p>IS4</p> <p>Better systems use by staff will support student groups such as care leavers, where characteristics are flagged in the system to allow proactive support interventions.</p>
<p>Community collaboration to tackle racism experienced towards students on placements.</p> <p>New activity - 2024.</p>	<p>Partnerships with the NHS, Multicultural-Cumbria etc.</p> <p>Training for staff on challenging partners if and where racism may be experienced by students on placement.</p>	<p>Short term- commitments agreed in partnership between organisations and working groups formed with theory of change.</p> <p>Medium term- pilot interventions agreed to and implemented with learnings shared.</p> <p>Long term- students and staff are aware of and use the reporting processes in place to report experiences of discrimination on placement and have increased ability to manage mental health.</p> <p>Increased reported ability to manage discrimination on placement.</p>	<p>IS7</p> <p>Outcome of working to tackle racism in the community will impact on all stages of student success for Black and other minority ethnicity students.</p>
<p>Inclusive curriculum development, with new validations of all ITE</p>	<p>Staff time (approximately £6,500 per year for one week</p>	<p>Short term- all revalidating programmes to prioritise inclusive curriculum</p>	<p>IS7</p>

<p>programmes including consideration of how to decolonise the curriculum for ITE students and the pupils they will teach. This will include embedding Black and minority ethnicity cultural experiences into curriculum and pedagogical practice to the benefit of all. Existing activity, new to some institutes - from 2023.</p>	<p>of Senior Lecturer time allocated per institute).</p>	<p>development review using the Equality Impact Assessment tool.</p> <p>Medium term- review and learnings shared internally.</p> <p>Long term- greater self-reporting of belonging amongst students. ITE students will report that they are confident in their preparedness to ensure that their pupils in school experience a curriculum that considers their ethnicity/backgrounds.</p>	<p>Inclusive curriculum with a decolonising lens will impact on all stages of student success for Black and other minority ethnicity students.</p>
<p>Institute One Plans (academic department action plans) to focus at course level on continuation by ethnicity, with pilot interventions rolled out where the gaps are most pronounced- Institute of Health (IoH) Nursing.</p> <p>New activity - piloting in 2024.</p>	<p>Staff time £950 per year for 2.5 of 5x grade 10 staff for course level focus on continuation by ethnicity and pilot interventions (£3,800 total), research.</p>	<p>Short term- staff to identify interventions in their 'One Plans' which address risk factors to continuation. Research to be conducted where causes unknown.</p> <p>Medium term- mid-point review of pilot interventions to understand impacts and effectiveness.</p> <p>Long term-increased continuation rates of Black students on courses with greatest gaps.</p>	<p>IS7</p> <p>By a focus at course level on continuation by ethnicity, interventions may impact progression rates of Black students.</p>
<p>Further roll-out of peer mentoring to target Black students and male students to</p>	<p>Staff time, funds.</p>	<p>Short term- percentage increase of target students engaging in mentoring scheme.</p> <p>Medium term- increased self-reported confidence from mentee and mentors and sense of belonging.</p>	<p>IS6</p> <p>Targeting student group identified also.</p>

<p>support their continuation and attainment.</p> <p>Existing activity, new application in 2024.</p>		<p>Long term- increased continuation rates of mentees and mentors compared to those not engaging with the scheme.</p>	
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Evidence base and rationale:

Berry, J. and Loke, G. (2011) *Improving the degree attainment of Black and minority ethnic students*. Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/improving-degree-attainment-black-and-minority-ethnic-students> (Accessed June 2023).

HEPI (2019) *The white elephant in the room: ideas for reducing racial inequalities in higher education*. Available at: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-white-elephant-in-the-room-ideas-for-reducing-racial-inequalities-in-higher-education.pdf> (Accessed May 2023).

Lander, V. (2022) Launching an anti-racism framework for initial teacher education and training. Available at: <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/blogs/carnegie-education/2022/11/anti-racism-framework/> (Accessed June 2023).

OfS (no date) *Topic briefing: Black and minority ethnic (BME) students*. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/145556db-8183-40b8-b7af-741bf2b55d79/topic-briefing-bme-students.pdf> (Accessed May 2023).

University of Essex (no date) *Dare to Care (Creating and Anti-Racist Environment)*. Available at: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/health-and-social-care/dare-to-care> (Accessed May 2023).

UPP Foundation (2017) *On course for success? Student retention at university*. Available at: <http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/UPP-final-report.pdf> (Accessed May 2023).

UUK and NUS (2019) *Black, Asian and minority ethnic student attainment at UK universities. #Closingthegap*. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf> (Accessed May 2023).

Intervention strategy 3

Objectives and targets: Principal objective: PTS_2 & OBJ5 Increase the continuation rate of PT students aged 21 and over and equal the continuation rate of PT students aged under 21 by 2030. Secondary objectives: It will also contribute to PTS_1 & OBJ4 (IS2) increasing the continuation rate of FT Black students to equal the continuation rate of white students by 2030 and PTS_4 & OBJ7 (IS5) increasing the completion rate of FT students with a disclosed mental health condition to equal the completion rate of FT students with no disclosed disability by 2029.

Risks to equality of opportunity: NR6: **insufficient academic support**, (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR7: **insufficient personal support** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR8: **mental health** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus** (IR1, 2, 3, 4 & 5), NR10: **cost pressures** (IR1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7), R14: **placements** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) and R15: **facilities for parents** (IR2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
Establish a working group of key staff involved in supporting students aged 21 and over, with specific focus on PT students and Student Advisory Panel (SAP) to invite students with characteristics identified in the APP, to investigate experiences and impacts on their student experience and outcomes, to then act on findings. New activity - 2024.	Staff time, financial allocation for student time (approximately £1840 for 16 students per year on the SAP). Funding/time for research and evaluation.	Short term- networks set-up to facilitate safe place for open dialogue about equality of opportunity in the University. Medium term- issues raised will result in a clear action plan co-created with students to improve outcomes. Staff working groups will then be combined to consider the intersection of characteristics reflected in the APP. Long term- Interventions implemented and evaluated, with clear communication of actions taken based on Panel and impact.	IS2-7 Outcomes of this working group will impact all stages of student success for student characteristics identified in this Plan.
Institute of Health review of flexible Practice Development Framework (PDF) which has high representation of PT mature students. Improve	Staff time (approximately £1,000 per year).	Short term- review of IAG from Ambulance Service to learners before they sign up, touch-points to students disengaging, method of delivery and community. Improve registration	N

<p>supporting students' progress to increase continuation rates.</p> <p>New activity - pilot 2024.</p>		<p>process of pathways. Review of exit awards. Update academic regulations and revalidation starting September 2025.</p> <p>Medium term- Improved entry-point information and introduction to individual programmes. Personal tutors timely follow up with all disengaged students.</p> <p>Long term- Autumn 2026, increased continuation rates of PT aged 21 and over students on PDF courses with greatest gaps.</p>	
<p>Review structural impacts on mental health identified in the consultation- e.g., facilities for parents (actions specified in Athena Swan action plan). Commit to continuous improvement for inclusive education.</p> <p>New activity - 2024 and ongoing.</p>	<p>Cost of facilities improvements if needed (e.g., for parents on campus- reviewing estates plan and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)) – included in other projects.</p>	<p>Short term- response to action plan shared by estates with mitigating actions and timeline.</p> <p>Medium term- review changes and commitments, improved feedback through Student-staff forums regarding facilities.</p> <p>Long term- improved reported wellbeing from students.</p>	<p>IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6 & IS7</p> <p>Reviewing structural impacts on mental health will benefit the mental health of all students by improving the culture and inclusiveness of our campuses.</p>

Evidence base and rationale:

Butcher, J. (2020) *Unheard: the voices of part-time adult learners*. Available at: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/02/06/unheard-the-voices-of-part-time-adult-learners/> (Accessed June 2023).

UUK (2013) *The power of part-time and mature higher education*. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/26225/1/PowerOfPartTime.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

Intervention strategy 4

Objectives and targets: Principal objective: PTS_3 & OBJ6 Increase the continuation rate of FT care leavers to equal the continuation rate of FT non-care leavers by 2030. Secondary objectives: PTS_1 & OBJ4 (IS2) increasing the continuation rate of FT Black students to equal the continuation rate of white students by 2030.

Risks to equality of opportunity: NR2: **information and guidance** (IR1 & 4), NR3: **perception of higher education** (IR1 & 4), NR6: **insufficient academic support**, (IR2, 3, 4, 5, 6), NR7: **insufficient personal support** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR8: **mental health** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus** (IR1, 2, 3, 4 & 5), NR10: **cost pressures** (IR1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7), NR11: **Capacity issues** (IR4 & 5), R13: **sense of belonging at university** (IR1, 2, 4 & 5), R14: **placements** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) and R15: **facilities for parents** (IR2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>Establish a working group of key staff involved in supporting care leavers and estranged students and Student Advisory Panel (SAP) to invite students with characteristics identified in the APP to investigate experiences and impacts on continuing studies, to then act on findings.</p> <p>New activity - 2024.</p>	<p>Staff time, financial allocation for student time (approximately £1840 for 16 students per year on the SAP), funding/time for research and evaluation.</p>	<p>Short term- networks are set up to facilitate safe places for open dialogue about equality of opportunity in the university. Medium term- issues raised will result in a clear action plan co-created with students to improve outcomes. Staff working groups will then be combined to consider the intersection of characteristics reflected in the APP. Long term- interventions implemented and evaluated, with clear communication of actions taken based on SAP and impact.</p>	<p>IS2-7</p> <p>Outcomes of this working group will impact all stages of student success for student characteristics identified in this Plan.</p>
<p>Develop current students' communications plan to ensure that those students facing the greatest barriers encounter plain English,</p>	<p>Staff time, £500 student focus group support.</p>	<p>Short term- review of all methods of communication with current students- e.g. social media accounts, university formal</p>	<p>IS1-7</p>

<p>compassionate communications and a consistent style of conveying important messages about learning activity, assessment, access to support and enhancement opportunities.</p> <p>New activity - 2025.</p>		<p>comms from various teams, Blackboard etc.</p> <p>Medium term- consultation about how current process is serving end goal and where changes need to be made.</p> <p>Development of best practice communication strategy including potential segmentation and processes.</p> <p>Use student focus groups and targeted surveys to test our language and tone for clarity and appeal to students from underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Long term- training for staff and implementation.</p> <p>Students' engagement with communications increases. Improved reported engagement with student services opportunities. Monitoring of response rates to key communications from Academic Registry (for example, assessment outcomes, placement administration, registration process) to ensure accessibility for all students regardless of background.</p>	
<p>Continue to allocate funds to the Cumbria Bursary, with points allocated towards care leavers. Introduce scoring for Estranged students who are also vulnerable and a growing group of</p>	<p>Funds, staff time, marketing (Approx £8,000 per year allocated to care leavers).</p>	<p>Short term- Equality Impact Assessment approval for changes to Cumbria Bursary to include Estranged students in prioritisation criteria.</p>	<p>IS2, IS3</p>

<p>students at risk, represented at the University. Existing activity.</p>		<p>Medium term- research (2025 Evaluation) conducted on impacts of Bursary on recipients with focus on reconsidering recommendations from 2018 review. Further qualitative research using OfS interview and survey tools in 2026 to include Student Support Fund and produce recommendations for future changes to the Funds.</p> <p>Long term- Cumbria Bursary and Student Support Fund changes proposed based on 2025 Evaluation findings. Equality Impact Assessment completed.</p>	
<p>Funded transport to the campus for an interview day or applicant visit day.</p> <p>An entry package (subject to availability) to support care-leavers get started at the University.</p> <p>A dedicated pre-entry and post-entry contact.</p> <p>Initial meeting with one of our key contacts including an initial finance meeting.</p>	<p>Funds, staff time, accommodation. (Approximately £10,000 per year for total package, £40,000 over the APP duration.)</p>	<p>Short term- increased rate of engagement with transition support from target audience.</p> <p>Medium term- review and refresh support package for care leavers, reflecting their feedback and needs.</p> <p>Long term- increased retention of care leavers.</p>	<p>N</p>

<p>Advice and guidance on applying and personal statements, which can be done via telephone.</p> <p>Accommodation available 365 days a year at Carlisle, Lancaster and Ambleside.</p> <p>Exit package upon graduation to include careers guidance.</p> <p>Existing activity to be reviewed in 2023/2024.</p>			
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Evidence base and rationale: Curry, F., Maughan, A. (2025) *Evaluating the Impact of the Cumbria Bursary and Other Student Characteristics on Student Outcomes at the University of Cumbria*

Jisc. (2022) *The Unite Foundation Scholarship Scheme. A quantitative impact analysis on 10 years of accommodation support for estranged and care leaver students*. Available at: https://thisisusatuni.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Unite-Foundation-JiscAnalysis-Report-_Final.pdf (Accessed May 2023).

Styrnol, M., Matic, J. and Hume, S. (2021) *Supporting access and student success for learners with experience of children's social care*. Available at: <https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Supporting-learners-with-experience-of-childrens-social-care.pdf> (Accessed May 2023).

Intervention strategy 5

Objectives and targets: Principal objective: PTS_4 & OBJ7 Increase the completion rate of FT students with a disclosed mental health condition to equal the completion rate of FT students with no disclosed disability by 2029. Secondary objectives: PTS_1 & OBJ4 (IS2) increasing the continuation rate of FT Black students to equal the continuation rate of white students by 2030, PTS_2 & OBJ5 (IS3) increasing the continuation rate of PT

students aged 21 and over and equal the continuation rate of PT students aged under 21 by 2030, PTS_3 & OBJ6 (IS4) increasing the continuation rate of FT care leavers to equal the continuation rate of FT non-care-leavers by 2030 and PTS_4 & OBJ8 (IS6) increasing the attainment rate of TUNDRA Q1 FT males achieving 2.1 or 1st degree outcomes to equal the attainment rate of TUNDRA Q5 FT males by 2029.

Risks to equality of opportunity: NR6: **insufficient academic support** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR7: **insufficient personal support** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR8: **mental health** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) NR9: **ongoing impacts of coronavirus** (IR1, 2, 3, 4 & 5), NR10: **cost pressures** (IR1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7), R13: **sense of belonging at university** (IR1, 2, 4 & 5), R14: **placements** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) and R15: **facilities for parents** (IR2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>Whole-institution approach: review internal systems to standardise the process of maintaining student records and streamline and improve cross-institution communication to support students in time for impact. Ensure student characteristics are accurately coded across the central system to identify students' personal circumstances.</p> <p>New activity - 2023/24.</p>	<p>Cost of systems/ staff time (approximately £3,500) to look across all systems of student records.</p> <p>Training support for staff on systems and conversations to signpost to support.</p>	<p>Short term- student records management plan reviewed and shared with timelines to internal stakeholders. Training needs identified for staff in data management and student support.</p> <p>Medium term-increased use by all staff of identified central system and reported understanding of staff knowledge to support students with mental health conditions.</p> <p>Long term- increased completion rate of target group.</p>	<p>IS2, IS3, IS4, IS6 & IS7- reviewing internal systems to improve process of maintaining student records and accurate coding of characteristics will positively impact all student groups.</p>

<p>Review by Disability team of Student Support Plan process. New activity-pilot 2025.</p>	<p>Staff time (approx. £950 per year).</p>	<p>Short term- review of existing process in consultation with Student Advisory Panel and staff. Equality impact assessment process to propose changes. Support Plans made more visible to staff through ICON system. Medium term- Pilot new process with staff teams and students for roll-out 2025/26. Long term- Improved communication between staff and students around Support Plan needs. Students co-create their plans so that they are more appropriate and personal to their needs.</p>	<p>IS2-6</p>
<p>CPD for staff and alignment of Disability Officers to Institutes- 2024-2026</p>		<p>Short term- CPD for the Disability team to enhance knowledge, understanding and practice in terms of the delivery to support students regarding neurodiversity. Specialist learning advisors complete accreditation as Autism/ADHD mentors. Disability Officers aligned to institutes to help develop understanding of programme requirements and provide a point of contact for advice and guidance. Medium term- review of training outcomes and alignment of Officers with institutes. Long-term- improved confidence of Disability team to support students and colleagues in institutes with neurodiversity.</p>	<p>IS4- Care leavers are disproportionately more likely to be formally diagnosed or declare neurodivergence.</p>

<p>Institute-led course review of student experience on placements in collaboration with placement providers. Existing activity ongoing.</p>	<p>Staff time.</p>	<p>Short term- risks to student mental health on placement identified and appropriate interventions outlined to mitigate these. Medium term- mid-point review of interventions with placement provider and findings shared with APSG. Long term- increased completion of placement and reports of students able to manage their mental health and wellbeing on placement.</p>	<p>IS2, IS3, IS4 & IS6- This exercise will go alongside the activity of tackling racism experienced towards students on placement.</p>
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Evidence base and rationale:

Robertson, A., Mulcahy, E. and Baars, S. (2022) *What works to tackle mental health inequalities in higher education?* Available at: https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Report_What-works-to-tackle-mental-health-inequalities-in-higher-education_AW-Secured-1.pdf (Accessed: June 2023).

UUK (2022) *Suicide-safer universities: support for placement students.* Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Reports/uuk-papyrus-suicide-safer-universities-support-for-placement-students.pdf> (Accessed: 19 April 2023)

Young People’s Benchmarking Forum (2024) *In Their Own Words: Mental Health & Health.* Available at: <https://leavingcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2.-In-Their-Own-Words-Mental-Health-and-Health-Report-final.pdf> (Accessed: February 2026).

Intervention strategy 6

Objectives and targets: Principal objective: PTS_4 & OBJ8 Increase the on-course attainment rate of TUNDRA Q1 FT males achieving 2.1 or 1st degree outcomes to equal the rate of TUNDRA Q5 FT males by 2029. Secondary objectives: PTA_1 & OBJ2 (IS1) It will also contribute towards increasing the number of successful applications FT young males, TUNDRA Q1 by 50% in 2028.

Risks to equality of opportunity: NR1: **knowledge and skills** (IR1, IR6), NR6: **insufficient academic support** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR7: **insufficient personal support** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR8: **mental health** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6), NR10: **cost pressures** (IR1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7), NR12: **progression from higher education** (IR6 & 7), R14: **placements** (IR2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) and R15: **facilities for parents** (IR2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>Establish cross-university working group to target support towards students with characteristics of socio-economic disadvantage across their lifecycle, with a focus on males and Student Advisory Panel (SAP) to invite students with characteristics identified in the APP to investigate experiences and impacts on their student experience and outcomes, to then act on findings.</p> <p>New activity - 2024.</p>	<p>Staff time, financial allocation for student time (approximately £1840 for 16 students per year on the SAP), funding/time for research and evaluation.</p>	<p>Short term- networks are set-up to facilitate safe places for open dialogue about equality of opportunity in the University. Medium term- issues raised will result in a clear action plan co-created with students to improve outcomes. Staff working groups will then be combined to consider the intersection of characteristics reflected in the APP.</p> <p>Long term- interventions implemented and evaluated, with clear communication of actions taken based on Panel and impact.</p>	<p>IS2-7- Outcomes of this working group will impact all stages of student success for student characteristics identified in this Plan. IS1- This may help identify barriers to the target group applying and enrolling at the University.</p>

<p>Collaborative work- Establish a Boys' Impact Hub in Cumbria.</p> <p>Form multi-stakeholder partnership, led by the University of Cumbria, to address urgent and growing challenge of low attainment, progression and engagement among under-resourced boys across the county.</p> <p>New activity - 2026</p>	<p>Cost of launch conference, indicative: £3,000 contribution from University of Cumbria, Staff time to provide leadership, research expertise and evaluation design.</p>	<p>Short term- cross-county governance and shared aims, principles and theory of change established. Launch conference and two new projects scoped with delivery partners. Baseline data agreed and collected to support evaluation.</p> <p>Medium term- unify existing projects and build deeper collaboration. Build new targeted interventions with growth in participation of boys in activity, improved local data on belonging, confidence and aspiration. Share evidence and embed <i>Taking Boys Seriously</i> principles across local education ecosystems. Mid-point review of pilot interventions to understand impacts and effectiveness.</p> <p>Long term- improved sustained education destinations and outcomes for boys.</p>	<p>IS1- The Hub acts as a unifying structure that strengthens and aligns existing Hello Future, University access and participation and partner activity. Through providing shared governance, evidence and learning, duplication is avoided.</p>
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Evidence base and rationale:

Harland, K. and McCready, S. (2012) *Taking Boys Seriously: A Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Male School Life Experiences in Northern Ireland*. Ulster University. Available at: <http://www.socsci.ulster.ac.uk/sociology/research/young.htm> (Accessed: 21 January 2026).

Hillman, N. and Robinson, N. (2016) *Boys to Men: The underachievement of young men in higher education – and how to start tackling it*. Available at: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Boys-to-Men.pdf> (Accessed May 2023).

Morgan, S. (2021) *Taking Boys Seriously Principles*. Ulster University. Available at: [Ulster University Taking Boys Seriously Principles](#) (Accessed: 21 January 2026).

Intervention strategy 7

Objectives and targets: Principal objective: PTP_1 & OBJ10 Increase the progression outcomes of FT Black students to equal progression for white students by 2028.

Risks to equality of opportunity: NR10: **cost pressures** (IR1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7), NR12: **progression from higher education** (IR6 & 7) and R15: **facilities for parents** (IR2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
<p>Updated Equality Objectives for 2025-29 to develop initiatives and solutions for action to remove barriers to minority ethnicity students and staff.</p> <p>New activity - 2024.</p>	<p>Staff (approximately £667), research.</p>	<p>Short term- Review and revised equality objectives for 2025-29.</p> <p>Medium term- mid-point review of identified interventions in the Equality Objectives.</p> <p>Long term- improved progression outcomes of target group.</p>	<p>IS2- Solutions and actions from the Equality Objectives action plan will support Black students and minority ethnicity students at all stages of study.</p>
<p>Staff-led review of employer partnerships and relationships representation for students in curriculum and events, to proactively welcome diversity and lead on race equality conversations with recruiters.</p> <p>New activity - 2024.</p>	<p>Staff training, employer engagement.</p>	<p>Short term- institute reviews of employer partnerships and relationships with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion lens, to share findings in 2024 with APSG with committed actions.</p> <p>Medium term- greater representation of minority ethnicities in employer engagement.</p> <p>Long term- diverse contacts database of employers to engage with through curriculum.</p> <p>Improved progression outcomes of target group.</p>	<p>IS2- Improved, proactive choices to include diverse employers in engaging with students will positively impact all students, and particularly include students from minority groups.</p>

<p>Continue to invest in My Career Enriched platform, to support practice interviews, CV/Application review, provide job vacancy information, access to online workshops and employer events relating to careers and employability.</p> <p>Existing activity.</p>	<p>My Career Enriched Platform. Staff time.</p>	<p>Short term- more targeted signposting of existing resources to target group.</p> <p>Medium term-increased uptake by students from target group to platform, accessing the support available.</p> <p>Long term- improved progression outcomes of target group.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Partnering with Mindless Academy to deliver personal development programme following 2024 internships pilot with prioritization for students with risk to equality of opportunity to progression at UoC.</p> <p>New activity - 2025</p>	<p>Staff time, Cost of Mindless Academy - £7,499</p>	<p>Short term- Targeted communications towards students identified in APP, promoting the opportunity leads to increased uptake from target cohorts.</p> <p>Medium term- reported increase in digital skills, emotional intelligence, self-awareness and confidence. Reporting of graduate attributes.</p> <p>Long term- increased levels of declared work experience from target group and confidence to find and apply for job opportunities.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Introduction of Student Opportunities Fund.</p> <p>In consultation with the Student Advisory Panel, this has been created to support students with low household income and prioritisation criteria based on our APP, to access development opportunities both</p>	<p>£10,000 per year 2025/26 – 2027/28</p>	<p>Short term- pilot fund launched open for 2x application rounds 2026.</p> <p>Medium term- impact evaluation. Review and revise as necessary.</p> <p>Long term- review of pilot scheme impact upon recipient students' progression outcomes and</p>	<p>N</p>

<p>academic and extra-curricular to support employability. Students can apply to up to £500 towards an opportunity that will help gain experience and skills and boost their employability. T&Cs are detailed on the website: https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/student-finance/scholarships-and-bursaries/</p> <p>New activity - 2026</p>		<p>other employability metrics to determine continuation of Fund into next APP.</p>	
<p>Pilot Black students and Alumni mentoring in conjunction with Alumni Officer.</p> <p>New activity - 2026/27</p>	<p>Staff time, promotion, indicative costs £4,000</p>	<p>Short term- scope potential options for alumni mentoring schemes with organisations with specific expertise for delivery of a two-year pilot beginning academic year 2027/28 for students studying non-vocational subjects.</p> <p>Medium term- delivery of pilot scheme including evaluation of activity.</p> <p>Long term- evaluation shared in HEEL, mentees report positive impacts on confidence to find and apply for job opportunities.</p>	<p>Y- IS2</p>

Evidence base and rationale:

Developing additional interventions

Black students and Alumni mentoring

Reflecting on our student and staff population, and identifying where we do not have the expertise or representation to deliver interventions alone, we have committed to exploring possible collaboration with organisations with specific expertise to deliver schemes such as Black students and alumni mentoring.

AGCAS (2018) *AGCAS First-Year Student Career Readiness Survey – Research Report*. Available at: <https://www.agcas.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/b671b272-c0fe-40b4-85dd-1c19b529ddd6> (Accessed May 2023).

With Insight (2025) *Student Voice Report 2025: Am I by myself?* Available at: [Am I by myself? - SVR 2025](#) (Accessed January 2025).

A literature review has been conducted for all the intervention strategies, in addition to a student and staff consultation through focus groups and a survey carried out in March 2023, with findings and recommendations impacting intervention strategy design.

The survey and literature consulted in question design can be found in Annex B. The consultation preceded the release of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register and questions used in the surveys and workshops were formed to consider challenges at each stage of university, groups of students in need of more support and what support was needed from staff in our own context. For the first three questions in the survey, barriers cited and evidenced in existing literature were used to create a quantitative base from which qualitative responses could add context.

We have developed research in collaboration with the Uni Connect Hello Future over time on our access target group which is open-source access.

Further qualitative Financial Support evaluation

Additionally, we produced an internal report reviewing our financial support packages for students in 2018 which evidenced the impact of the Cumbria Bursary; recipients of the Bursary achieved outcomes equal to those of students from more affluent backgrounds. The most recent evaluation of the Bursary in 2025 concludes that this is no longer the case, with recipients' outcomes no longer equal to those with higher household incomes.

Evaluation

We commit to evaluating and sharing the findings on an open access basis of the activities in **bold** below. Additionally, for our other interventions, we will conduct qualitative evaluation through participant experience evaluation and process evaluation each year to indicate whether the interventions have had the desired result. We will capture the experience and perceptions of stakeholders. Our quantitative analysis will use settled data throughout the year to monitor how interventions have impacted progress against our targets.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
IS1 Catch-up reading support of year 7 disadvantaged males.	Increased literacy attainment. Emerging findings: The project has proven highly effective in developing learners' confidence, comprehension and critical engagement with texts. YARC reading scores improved more in the intervention group, teachers reported positive progress with vocabulary.	Type 2- empirical. Outsourced to Cosmos Insight.	Rapid reading toolkit by 2025. Shared on website open access and through Uni Connect networks and the Higher Education Evaluation Library (HEEL), once established. https://www.hellofuture.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Hello-Future-Reading-Intervention_-Evaluation-Report_220324.pdf
IS1 & 6 Establish a Boys' Impact Hub in Cumbria.	Improved sustained education destinations and outcomes for boys	Type 2- empirical.	Shared externally through national and regional Boys' Impact Hub Conferences, the HEEL.
IS2 Roll out of Student Enquiry Portal to academic staff.	Improved student record keeping and more efficiency in proactive support offered to students identified as at risk of disengagement or in need of more support due to their characteristics. Longer-term improved retention.	Type 2- empirical. Using quantitative data through the Student Enquiry Portal reporting on engagements and reporting by academic	Shared internally through a report 2025.

	<p>Emerging findings:</p> <p>The pilot roll-out of the Portal was well-received, but it was reflected that full adoption by the academic registry team would be needed to ensure that all the documentation and systems academic teaching staff use relating to their students, align within the one system. This is considered a priority before further roll-out to academic teams. Meanwhile continuous improvements to sharing timely information are being made to the student record.</p>	<p>staff, in addition to reports by student characteristic linked to their continuation data.</p>	
<p>IS3 Institute of Health review of flexible Practice Development Framework (PDF) which has high representation of PT mature students. Improve supporting students' progress to increase continuation rates.</p>	<p>Increased continuation rates of PT aged 21 and over students on courses with greatest gaps.</p>	<p>Type 2- empirical. Using internal data to measure changes in continuation rates post-interventions year on year.</p>	<p>Internal through quarterly monitoring at Institute committee and annual evaluation through annual monitoring process, reporting through Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee (SSQAC) and Academic Board.</p>
<p>IS4 Continue to allocate funds for Cumbria Bursary, worth £1,000 per year of FT-study or £500 per year of PT study, with prioritisation for care leavers (as confirmed through</p>	<p>Continuation rates of Cumbria Bursary recipients to match students not eligible for the Cumbria Bursary. <i>Based on evidence conducted with HASCE in 2018, see Annex B.</i></p>	<p>Type 2. Expand on previous research led by HASCE into the impacts of the Cumbria Bursary on Care Leavers and other</p>	<p>Publish report using statistical OfS tool in 2025 on website, open access. https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/media/Cumbria-Bursary-Evaluation-Summary-2025.pdf</p>

<p>the Student Finance application process).</p>	<p>Emerging findings: The 2025 statistical evaluation found that students in receipt of the Cumbria Bursary had lower rates of continuation than those not eligible for the Bursary. Therefore further qualitative evaluation will be urgently prioritised as the findings were that the existing financial support alone is not sufficient to mitigate the gaps in student outcomes. This will inform future proposed changes to the University's financial support offer for 2027-2028.</p>	<p>student characteristics. Two phase- statistical evaluation in 2025, qualitative evaluation in 2026.</p>	
<p>IS5 Review by Disability team of Student Support Plan process. New activity- pilot 2025.</p>	<p>Improved communication between staff and students around Support Plan needs. Students co-create their plans so that they are more appropriate and personal to their needs.</p>	<p>Type 1 narrative moving to type 2- empirical. Using internal data to measure changes in completion rates post-interventions year on year.</p>	<p>Internal through quarterly monitoring at SSQAC.</p>
<p>IS6 Establish cross-university working group to target support towards students with characteristics of socio-economic disadvantage across their lifecycle, with a</p>	<p>Interventions implemented and evaluated, with clear communication of actions taken based on Panel and impact.</p>	<p>Type 1 narrative.</p>	<p>Internal through quarterly monitoring through Access and Participation Steering Group (APSG), and reporting through SSQAC and Academic Board.</p>

<p>focus on males and Student Advisory Panel (SAP) to invite students with characteristics identified in the APP to investigate experiences and impacts on their student experience and outcomes, to then act on findings.</p>			
<p>IS7 Pilot Black students and Alumni mentoring.</p>	<p>Increase progression rates for Black British students.</p>	<p>Type 1- narrative, moving to type 2 using Graduate Outcomes data.</p>	<p>Internally and externally through the HEEL.</p>

Whole provider approach

The university defines itself as a Widening Participation institution, and staff across the university recognise the importance of creating equality of opportunity for all students, with a focus on those from underrepresented groups. Our overarching strategy – Towards 2030 – is set by the Vice Chancellor’s Executive and approved by the University Board. It sets out our core mission, purpose and commitment to our statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010 and the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. Staff across academic and professional services work together through our committee structures to form, implement and reflect on action plans to continuously improve our service and support to all students. The elements of Towards 2030 most relevant to Access and Participation are: *Academic Strategy 2022-2030*, *People and Culture Strategy*, *Learning Teaching and Assessment Plan*, *Student Support Plan* and *Employability Action Plans*. Our Access and Participation Plan is framed within this institutional context, giving it prominence as the core statement of our challenges, risks, and commitments in relation to promoting equality of opportunity for our students.

An annual access and participation action plan at university level is approved, and progress against targets monitored, through the deliberative committee structure, ensuring oversight by the Board of Directors and Academic Board, both of which include student as well as staff representation.

Implementation of the APP is overseen by the Access and Participation Steering Group (APSG). The Group’s membership includes all Academic Institutes, representatives of Professional Services and representation from the Students’ Union. This group ensures the linking of insights from our ongoing data analysis and consultative work with the wider student body, to the development and implementation of activity to support students academically, professionally and personally across the lifecycle. The Access and Participation Steering Group reports to the Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee, which is a subcommittee of Academic Board. Student Access and Success outcomes for students from underrepresented groups are regularly formally reported to the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Committee, where alignment with the University’s Equality and Diversity Plan is tested and assured. This group oversees policies relating to equality of opportunity and offers constructive challenge to staff responsible for student recruitment, student support, study skills, curriculum design and teaching from an equality perspective.

In the academic institutes, an overarching “One Plan” is used to join up strands of planning linked to teaching and learning, curriculum, pedagogy and practice, in addition to actions intended to prepare students for progressing to employment and further study. The One Plan provides a single document setting out the strategic direction for staff, explicitly mapping these actions to the APP objectives. At course level, staff take a range of actions to support the achievement of the best outcome for students, applying their detailed knowledge of data and contextual information in working with their students to support success. The One Plan also references interventions and targets set in our Employability, Student Support and Learning Teaching and Assessment plans.

Achievement of the One Plan goals, at cohort, programme, and institute level, is monitored through the deliberative committees with ultimate oversight by Academic Governance Committee on behalf of the University Board.

In all cases we will continue to promote student success through our mainstream approaches to inclusive, accessible curriculum, to innovative learning, teaching and assessment methods, and to academic development which actively promotes success for all students rather than operating a deficit model. Our policies and strategies – notably the Curriculum Design Framework, Learning and Teaching Plan, Employability Plan and Personal Tutor Policy and Toolkit – seek to create the necessary infrastructure and practice to give all students the opportunity to develop in an appropriately challenging and supportive environment. The quality and consistency of what we offer to students is assured by this infrastructure of policies and plans, with pragmatic and context-sensitive daily attention to what students tell us they need within the institutes and services. Our Equality and Diversity Statement treats students and staff equally as members of a diverse community with equality of opportunity as its goal. Staff training is available in areas ranging from Unconscious Bias to Making Reasonable Adjustments; training is mandatory for those working directly with students or in the admissions and recruitment functions.

From 2023, new working groups will be established across the university with cross-university staff and student representation to ensure a joined-up approach to delivering interventions and so that we understand why persistent gaps in outcomes are present and what we can further do to eliminate them. These groups may focus on a particular characteristic (such as Disability) or an area of activity (such as assessment design) and will be informed by the Student Advisory Panel, with representation of students with characteristics identified in our APP. In 2025, the staff working groups will then be joined into one overarching working group, to ensure that the intersectionality of characteristics and committed interventions represented in our theories of change are considered and monitored with a holistic approach.

At the time of writing we are implementing our Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA 2024-27) Plan, which articulates the essential principles of our practice in supporting learning: inclusive curriculum, varied and active approaches to learning and authentic assessment are the key building blocks of a practice which is student-centred and focusses on facilitating the student's individual development as a professional. Our Learning, Teaching and Enhancement team leads on the promulgation of inclusive and universal approaches to curriculum design, informed by feedback from students in underrepresented groups.

Student consultation

A new Strategic Lead for Access and Participation was recruited to the University in September 2022 to lead on this work with a key priority to engage with the student body in APP work year-

round at all stages. There is representation from the Students' Union on the APSG to monitor and evaluate progress against our existing targets, and work together on new submissions.

Identifying risks to equality of opportunity in our context.

- To ensure that sufficient time was given to consult students and staff on their perceived risks to equality of opportunity at the University of Cumbria, a consultation was conducted across the university in March 2023, ahead of the publication of the Equality of Risk Register. Four student workshops were offered across our campuses in Lancaster, Ambleside, Carlisle and online. An additional online survey was opened to ensure that students unable to attend a workshop had another way to share their views. Students with characteristics focused on in the existing APP were sent a targeted email to encourage participation. Where students provided their contact details to receive the final report, they were asked if they would like to support the creation of the APP.
- Questions across workshops and the surveys were the same, but in the surveys pre-populated options were given to rank in the first three questions, based on themes present in existing research literature to provide a quantitative data set in addition to qualitative data providing further context for analysis.
- 36 students engaged across the consultation. The profile of the students contributing to the consultation survey were in the majority undergraduate (87.1%), mature (70.1%), eligible for student finance (93.5%) and identified as white (90.3%). 47.4% disclosed that they had a disability with 31.1% disclosing multiple disabilities. 26.3% are in receipt of the Cumbria bursary, and 10.5% are care experienced and 21.1% estranged from their parents.

Challenges to students at each stage identified in the consultation.

The greatest challenges identified in student survey responses were:

	Applying to university	Continuing studies	Progressing to further study or employment
1.	<i>'Cost of living & finance'</i>		
2.	<i>'Maintaining health and wellbeing'</i>		<i>'Balancing studies with employment'</i>
3.	<i>'Feeling a sense of belonging'</i>	<i>'Balancing studies with employment'</i>	<i>'Interview and CV/application skills'</i>
Additional themes in workshops			
<i>Applying to university: 'UCAS accessibility challenges', 'Limited Information, advice and guidance' particularly impacting first in family to higher education and 'Not having the confidence and self-efficacy'.</i>			
<i>Continuing studies: 'English comprehension and literacy' and 'Placements'.</i>			
<i>Progressing to further study or employment: 'Geography of opportunities.'</i>			



Action staff can take to support these students

The broad themes that suggested solutions were centred around were:

- Consideration of students' personal circumstances
- Review and align student record systems
- Review curriculum and assessment design
- Review bursary and financial support
- Review and improve communication with and to students
- Investment and review of staff resource

Forming our targets and interventions

The Students' Union Sabbatical Welfare Officer was represented on the APSG and consulted at all stages of developing the 2024-28 APP, including the drafting of targets and interventions. These have been shaped by the assessment of performance using the OfS APP dashboard, our internal HESA data and the consultation responses from students and staff. We have made the assessment of performance and intervention strategies available to the Students' Union who have conducted their own consultation exercise. Our intervention strategies have been designed to balance ambitious change in addressing risks, what we know of ongoing contextual challenges, and the resource we have available.

The Student' Union Academic Lead Officer is represented on the APSG and Board of Directors (2025-26) and has been consulted at all stages of developing additional interventions in the APP.

Forming additional interventions as part of the variation request to the 2024-28 APP

Student Advisory Panel

The Student Advisory Panel was formed in 2025 with representation from students who met one or more of the characteristics identified in our Access and Participation Plan.

<https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/student-life/student-voice/> They shared their experiences both between meetings using Padlets and in facilitated break-out groups virtually to provide constructive feedback on university support in place for students. They were instrumental in some key developments in the plan, added as part of a variation request in 2026. Their feedback was discussed by the staff working group involving facilitated discussions for further clarification and then linked to our existing theories of change (such as financial support for students experiencing socio-economic hardship to remove barriers to participation in core opportunities supporting access and participation) or where a gap was identified, new theories of change created.

- **Student Opportunity Fund**

Feedback from the Student Advisory Panel included the financial barriers to students with low income in accessing opportunities that will support with employability, such as internships and associated costs. The introduction of a Student Opportunity Fund, which is

already adopted by other universities to address this need, was developed and approved through the Equality Impact Assessment process, and will be piloted 2026-2028 for the remainder of the current APP.

- **Student Support Plans**

Students with a disability (with or without formal diagnosis) can complete a Support Request Form to provide information to the Disability Support team about the support and reasonable adjustments that they need at University. This then results in a Student Support Plan. Feedback from some members of the Panel who had Student Support Plans was that they felt like the process had been done to them, without consultation and that the adjustments suggested did not align with their expectations of their needs. The new process aims to address this and make the process as clear and accessible as possible to the student. There is also a focus on greater accessibility by tutors to the Student Support Plans so that consideration can be proactively given to specific student needs. This has been implemented for 2025-26.

- **Student Communications**

This was cited in the previous spring consultation as part of the assessment of performance in 2023 and as an issue across the Student Advisory Panel relating to all stages of engagement from the University from applying to enrolling and studying. Students have fed back about sometimes the lack of tailored communications and overwhelming volume of information impacting their ability to take in key messages when needed or find information. This could therefore disproportionately impact vulnerable students in need of support when they most need it.

Monitoring, evaluation and delivery of access and participation work

For 2023-2024, working groups relating to targeted student groups requiring support will be formed to ensure a whole-university approach, with student representation informing our APP work. Students with shared characteristics to those targeted within this Plan will be invited to apply to a Student Advisory Panel, with up to 16 paid positions on the panel each year of the APP. They will share their experiences and feedback on our committed interventions to improve equality of opportunity for our students, in addition to suggesting additional interventions. The APSG will have overall responsibility for the internal monitoring of our work, and the Students' Union will continue to represent students as part of this.

Additionally, the Strategic Lead for Access and Participation will develop a web presence for this important work to encourage year-round opportunities for feedback and discussion from students in an impartial space separate from those staff directly delivering the outcomes in access or teaching and learning.

Evaluation of the plan

Progressing on from our previous self-assessment of existing approaches to evaluation, a Strategic Lead for Access and Participation was recruited in 2020 and a common evaluation toolkit was developed with significant progress on previous identified actions and shared across services. However, the impacts of the pandemic between 2020-22 impacted the speed of implementation of this toolkit. Pockets of good practice in evaluation exist within the University, but embedding this toolkit and providing training and support for staff are a key priority for implementation in 2023 to move from emerging culture of evaluation to become more established and consistent.

Our overarching approach to evaluation is to ensure a progression of evidence type in areas where there is little evidence in the sector to support interventions. This will predominantly be moving from type 1- narrative, towards type 2- empirical enquiry. We will publish findings where evidence is emerging, for attainment-raising activity and the impact of bursary funds on student success outcomes on an open access basis on our website, and we will share findings through the OfS repository of evidence once it is created. We will also share findings with our networks in the sector, through Uni Connect partnerships and through the Access and Participation Special Interest Group, which we are a member of. This group provides a space for institutional leads for access and participation to share findings, best practice and approaches to supporting students from underrepresented groups. Over the course of this Plan, the Group will be working collaboratively to provide peer support, professionalisation opportunities and advocacy for access and participation across the country.

We will use a mixture of evaluation conducted internally and outsourced externally – including that generated in partnership with Uni Connect partners and other Higher Education institutions – to contribute to the sector understanding of ‘what works.’ By being explicit about our interventions and their intended impact, we will enable staff across the institution to focus on supporting students to reach their full potential. Where interventions outlined are to improve internal systems supporting our students and pilot activity to improve student success, we commit to full evaluation through a theory of change approach, sharing our findings internally at first through relevant committees including the APSG and SSQAC. We will then reflect on the best avenues for sharing what we have learned through sector networks.

The APSG will be responsible for monitoring the overall progress of the APP through the overall theories of change of the intervention strategies aligned with the student groups experiencing the greatest risks to equality of opportunity outlined in our assessment of performance (Annex A). The operational delivery of interventions and evaluation of these will be conducted through the working group, and information and areas requiring action escalated to APSG. This will allow those involved in delivery of activity to be agile to make any necessary adjustments to their approach in time for impact, if and where interventions are not making intended impact, or circumstances impacting the activity change.

We will conduct a review of our systems of data capture relating to student engagement and access to contextual information such as their characteristics so that systems are accessible and sufficient to carry out monitoring and evaluation of student engagement with interventions. The Strategic Lead for Access and Participation will also be leading a cross-university evaluation culture change relating to access and participation, developing our current best practice (established in access) to be applied in evaluation of success-related activity and interventions. We have developed an Evaluation Toolkit as a key enabler for the development of the culture of evaluation throughout the university. For detailed information about our plans for evaluation of the intervention strategies, please see the table starting on page 36 above.

Provision of information to students

We are committed to publishing timely, clear and accessible information to existing and prospective students on all aspects of their course and particularly the financial expectations. Focus is placed on ensuring that students from underrepresented groups are informed of the financial support that they are entitled to because of the provisions set out in this plan. The Student Enquiry Point is a point of contact to the Money Advice team for any potential queries regarding fees and finance. We are determined that no student will be deterred from exploring and achieving entry to an appropriate University of Cumbria programme because of poor information or poor access to information.

We take the following actions in this area:

- The annual tuition fee for each programme is stated in formal offer letters alongside details of the basis of any inflationary increases that may be applied during the programme. The fees are also published on the University's website as soon as they are confirmed.
- Eligibility and prioritisation criteria for the Cumbria Bursary and the amount of the bursary for FT and PT students, are published on the University's website and prominently linked for applicants and current students on the Student Finance page.

The Cumbria Bursary is our targeted financial support package for 1st year 'home' undergraduate students studying a qualifying course and is a non-repayable bursary which students do not need to apply for. Students and sponsors who consent to share their financial information with their Higher Education Institution and meet our eligibility criteria will be considered for the bursary. It is provided through a fixed number of allocated awards and uses a scored prioritisation process to impartially rank all eligible applicants (with household incomes of less than £25,000 per annum). We award bursaries to those with the highest scores.

For full time students awarded the Cumbria Bursary, they will receive £1,000 each year of study and part time students studying at least 50% of a full-time equivalent course and registered on a minimum three-year course will receive £500 per year of study.

Eligibility criteria

- Student is entering into year 1 or integrated foundation year of a specified undergraduate degree at the University of Cumbria.
- Student has a household income of £25,000 or less as assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland or Student Awards Agency Scotland. Assessed by funding provider before **2nd October 2026**.

Cumbria Bursaries will not be available to students who are:

- studying less than 50 credits per year
- already holding a HE qualification e.g. Cert HE, HND or Foundation Degree (Care Leavers will be exempted).
- undertaking a postgraduate qualification, including PGCE courses

Prioritisation criteria

Usually, there are more students who meet the criteria than there are awards available.

Bursaries will be allocated according to the following prioritisation criteria:

- the student's household income
- the student has declared Care Leaver status or Estranged from their family*
- the student has declared a disability on their UCAS form
- the student is from an area where not many people go into Higher Education

• Eligibility and prioritisation criteria for the Student Opportunity Fund and the amount of the fund available for application, are published on the University's website and prominently linked for applicants and current students on the Student Finance page.

In consultation with the Student Advisory Panel, the Student Opportunity Fund has been created to support students with low household income to access development opportunities both academic and extra-curricular to support their employability through professional and/or personal development.

Students can apply for up to £500 towards an opportunity that will help them gain experience and skills to boost their employability. Successful students will be required to submit a brief impact report to be uploaded to the website, reflecting on how they benefited from the funds towards their career and employability prospects, to demonstrate impact and encourage future applications.

Eligibility criteria

- Student is a UK undergraduate student
- Student had a household income of £25,000 or less as assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland or Student Awards Agency Scotland. Assessed by funding provider before **2nd October 2026**.

The Student Opportunity Fund will not be available to students who are:

- International students
- Full-time members of staff are not eligible to apply

- Apprentices
- Registered as students with our collaborative partners
- Distance learners

Prioritisation criteria

Funds are limited, so applications will be prioritised using the following characteristics, in line with the university's Access and Participation Plan:

- Estranged from parents*
- Care Leaver*
- Student with disclosed disability
- Black heritage

*the student must be identified as a Care Leaver or Estranged from their family by the Student Loans Company

Students can be in receipt of the Cumbria Bursary and be eligible for this.

- Student Financial Regulations are published each year and students are asked in their offer letter to read these prior to enrolment. These provide details across a range of subjects including how and when the University collects fees and how the University will respond if students are unable to make payments. These Regulations are available on the University's website, enabling prospective students to read these ahead of their application.
- Course webpages provide students with detailed information with respect to fees, additional costs, and the financial support packages we offer.
- The University participates fully in the Discover Uni official course data scheme as well as providing clear, accessible and up to date information on its website on the fees for each year of entry and the funding support available.
- Outreach staff and Student Money Advisors are trained to provide accurate information, advice and guidance on fees and funding as part of their work to support access to higher education. Comprehensive guidance is provided on the University's website.
- The University works closely with the Students' Union and through its student support and information services to ensure that students have a clear understanding of student finances and the current loan and payment arrangements.

Annex A: Assessment of performance

Summary of student groups with differential outcomes

In summary, there are differential outcomes for students at the following stages with the following characteristics. Data correct as of 12th June 2023.

Stage	Student groups with differential outcomes	Comparator group	Percentage point gap to comparator group in most recent year assessed	Commentary	Analysis
Access	Sex, Males (FT) IMD Q1 (PT) ABCS Q1 students (FT) ABMO (FT, North West campuses)	Sex, Females (FT) IMD Q5 (PT) ABCS Q5 (FT) White (FT, North West campuses)	29.2 percentage points 3 percentage points 6.3 percentage points 4.3 percentage points behind North West ONS data, and 3.3 percentage points difference to all campuses.	When controlling for North West campuses, we are 4.4 percentage points behind the North West	Males are less likely than their female peers to enrol at the University of Cumbria. This is an existing target using POLAR 4 in our 2020-24 APP and we have considerably fewer enrolling than in our original baseline year.

				census data for minority ethnicity students.	
Continuation	<p>TUNDRA Q1 (FT)</p> <p>IMD Q1(FT)</p> <p>IMD Q1 or 2 females (FT)</p> <p>IMD Q1 or 2 males (FT)</p> <p>POLAR 4 Q1 (FT)</p> <p>ABCS Q1 (FT)</p> <p>ABCS Q1 (PT)</p> <p>Black (FT)</p> <p>Black (PT)</p> <p>Mixed (FT)</p> <p>21 and over (FT)</p> <p>21 and over (PT)</p> <p>Mental health conditions (FT)</p> <p>Mental health conditions (PT)</p> <p>Eligible for FSM (FT)</p> <p>Care Leaver (FT)</p>	<p>TUNDRA Q5 (FT)</p> <p>IMD Q5 (FT)</p> <p>IMD Q3, 4 or 5 females (FT)</p> <p>IMD Q3, 4 or 5 males (FT)</p> <p>POLAR 4 Q5 (FT)</p> <p>ABCS Q5 (FT)</p> <p>ABCS Q1 (PT)</p> <p>White (FT)</p> <p>White (PT)</p> <p>White (FT)</p> <p>Under 21 (FT)</p> <p>Under 21 (PT)</p> <p>No disability (FT)</p> <p>No disability (PT)</p> <p>Not eligible for FSM</p> <p>Not care leaver</p>	<p>2.5 percentage points</p> <p>8.2 percentage points</p> <p>2.2 percentage points</p> <p>8 percentage points</p> <p>2.4 percentage points</p> <p>13.7 percentage points</p> <p>31.6 percentage points*</p> <p>17.5 percentage points</p> <p>18.4 percentage points*</p> <p>0.5 percentage points*</p> <p>3.1 percentage points</p> <p>17.6 percentage points</p> <p>2.5 percentage points</p> <p>10.3 percentage points*</p> <p>4.5 percentage points</p> <p>8.8* percentage points</p>	<p>*4-year aggregate (annual numbers suppressed)</p>	<p>While Asian and Other ethnicity students outperform their white peers in continuation, the gap between Black and white students is persistent. The gap between the most and least advantaged students and the most and least represented is growing. This is more pronounced for males IMD Q1.</p> <p>While the continuation rates of 21 and over PT students significantly increased in 2019-20, they are less likely to continue than students under 21.</p> <p>Reducing the gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 and between ABMO students and their white peers are two existing targets in our 2020-24 APP.</p>

<p>Completion (2017-18 most recent year)</p>	<p>TUNDRA Q1 (FT) IMD Q1 (FT) POLAR 4 Q1 (FT) ABCS Q1(FT) Asian (FT) Mixed (FT) Other (FT) 21 and over (FT) Disability (FT) Cognitive or learning difficulties (FT) Mental health conditions (FT) Multiple impairments (FT) Social or communication impairment (FT) Eligible for FSM (FT) Care leavers (FT)</p>	<p>TUNDRA Q5 (FT) IMD Q5 (FT) POLAR 4 Q5 (FT) ABCS Q5 (FT) White (FT) White (FT) White (FT) Under 21 (FT) No disability No disability No disability No disability No disability Not eligible for FSM Not care leaver (FT)</p>	<p>4.9 percentage points 10.5 percentage points 4.9 percentage points 14.1 percentage points 6.7 percentage points 1.1 percentage points* 5.3 percentage points* 1.9 percentage points 4.1 percentage points 1.2 percentage points 12.2 percentage points 4.4 percentage points* 8.7 percentage points* 4.7 percentage points 8.2 percentage points*</p>	<p>*4-year aggregate (annual numbers suppressed)</p>	<p>The gap between the most and least advantaged and most and least represented students is growing. This is more pronounced for males. While there are limitations due to small numbers of students to report on, the OfS 2-year aggregate gap for students with social or communication impairment is substantial and requires further analysis of our internal data. Completion is a new metric for the APP, and as such we do not have existing targets in our 2020-24 APP.</p>
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<p>Attainment ent (2021- 22 most recent year)</p>	<p>TUNDRA Q5 male (FT) IMD Q1 (FT) IMD Q1 (PT) IMD Q3, 4 or 5 males (FT) IMD Q3, 4 or 5 females (FT) POLAR 4 Q1 (FT) POLAR 4 Q3, 4 or 5 males (FT) Males Asian (FT) Black (FT) Mixed (FT) Other (FT) Over 21 (FT) Disability reported (PT) Cognitive or learning difficulties (FT) Sensory, medical or physical impairments (FT) Eligible for FSM Care Leaver</p>	<p>TUNDRA Q1 male (FT) IMD Q5 (FT) IMD Q5 (PT) IMD Q1 or 2 males (FT) IMD Q1 or 2 females (FT) POLAR 4 Q5 (FT) POLAR 4 Q1 or 2 males (FT) Females White (FT) White (FT) White (FT) White (FT) Under 21 (FT) No disability reported (PT) No disability (FT) No disability (FT) Not eligible for FSM Not a care leaver</p>	<p>8.5 percentage points* 4.3 percentage points 5.2 percentage points 9.7 percentage points 5.3 percentage points 4 percentage points 9.2 percentage points 9.1 percentage points 13.4 percentage points 4.3 percentage points 4.1 percentage points* 9.8 percentage points* 1.1 percentage points 3.8 percentage points 2.2 percentage points 2.9 percentage points 13.9 percentage points 3.3 percentage points*</p>	<p>* 4-year aggregate (annual numbers suppressed)</p>	<p>The gap between the most and least advantaged students and most and least underrepresented is growing. This is considerably more pronounced for males (IMD and POLAR 4). While there are limitations due to small numbers of students to report on, the OfS 2-year gap for students with mixed or other ethnicity compared to their white peers is substantial. Students with cognitive or learning difficulties and sensory, medical or physical impairments outperformed their peers with no disability between 2018-20/21. However, these gaps have opened in 2021/22. Eliminating the gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 and between POLAR Q1 and Q5 students are two existing targets in our 2020-24 APP.</p>
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<p>Progression (2020-21 most recent year)</p>	<p>TUNDRA Q5 (FT) IMD Q1 (FT) IMD Q3, 4 or 5 males (FT) IMD Q3, 4 or 5 females (FT) POLAR 4 Q1 (FT) POLAR 4 Q3, 4 or 5 males (FT) POLAR 4 Q3, 4 or 5 females (FT) ABCS Q1 (FT) Black (FT) Mixed (FT) Over 21 (FT) Disability (FT) Sensory medical or physical impairment (FT) Eligible for FSM (FT)</p>	<p>TUNDRA Q1 (FT) IMD Q5 (FT) IMD Q1 or 2 males (FT) IMD Q1 or 2 females (FT) POLAR 4 Q5 (FT) POLAR 4 Q1 or 2 males (FT) POLAR 4 Q1 or 2 females (FT) ABCS Q5 (FT) White (FT) White (FT) Under 21 (FT) No disability (FT) No disability (FT) Not eligible for FSM (FT)</p>	<p>7.4 percentage points 4.7 percentage points 14.5 percentage points 5 percentage points 9.4 percentage points 4.8 percentage points 3.8 percentage points 8.7 percentage points 6.1 percentage points* 4.7 percentage points* 2.5 percentage points 4.1 percentage points 12** percentage points 2.9 percentage points</p>	<p>* 4-year aggregate (annual numbers suppressed) ** 2-year aggregate (annual numbers suppressed)</p>	<p>The gap between the most and least advantaged and most and least represented students is growing. This is more pronounced for males. While significantly reducing, the gap between ABCS Q1 and Q5 still persists. The gap between Black students and their white peers has significantly decreased. While there are limitations due to small numbers of students to report on, the OfS 2-year gap for students with a disclosed sensory medical or physical impairment compared to no disability is significant. Reducing the gap between POLAR Q1 and Q5 and IMD Q1 and Q5 and between mixed ethnicity students and their white peers are existing targets in our 2020-24 APP.</p>
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Data sources: This assessment of performance primarily uses the OfS AP data dashboard, in addition to our own internal dashboard populated using HESA data to understand further intersectionality and investigate smaller populations of student characteristics that have been suppressed in the OfS public dashboard.

GDPR: To ensure students are not identifiable, we have aggregated smaller student populations where they are not present in the OfS public dashboard for reference and context, for example Care leavers.

Note: We have included within this annex data analysis only areas of identified risk, but conducted a full assessment internally and have summarised below where there are successes for nationally underrepresented groups.

Full time students summary - areas of success.

Access

Our proportion of students from underrepresented areas by the TUNDRA measure is outperforming the sector, and continued Q1&2 higher representation rates than Q5 over a 6-year period. There is a similar picture for IMD (2019). For Q1&2 there is a higher representation rate than Q5 over a 6-year period at the University and we are outperforming the sector. For POLAR 4 Q1&2 we are outperforming the sector and have 40.1% of students across Q1&2 in 2021-22.

We have a higher proportion of students aged 21 and over accessing FT UG courses than under 21-year-olds, growing to 67.1% in 2020-21, more than double the sector benchmark.

We have higher than sector benchmark rates of reported disability by students at 19.8% in 2021-22. Higher than sector benchmark reported rates of disabilities include, cognitive or learning difficulties, mental health conditions and sensory, medical or physical impairment.

Continuation- Asian and Other ethnicity students' continuation rates were higher than white students. Students with a reported disability, overall, had higher rates of continuation than students with none reported, except for students with a reported mental health condition.

Completion- While overall, students with reported disabilities had lower proportions of completion than those with none reported, in 2017-18 students with sensory, medical or physical impairments or multiple impairments had higher rates of completion than no disability reported.

Attainment- Overall, students with reported disabilities had greater attainment than those with none reported, except for students with disclosed cognitive or learning difficulties or sensory, medical or physical impairments who had lower attainment rates. Students with a disclosed mental health condition had particularly greater attainment rates than those with no disability disclosed.

Part-time students

Access- 65.8% of PT students were TUNDRA Q1&2 in 2021-22 and over 60% in both 2- and 4-year aggregates. Over 50% of PT students were POLAR4 Q1&2 over 2021-22 and the 4-year aggregate and over 60% in the 2-year aggregate. Our PT students are more likely to be aged 21 and over, with over 90% for the 2- and 4-year aggregates. They are less likely to be from IMD (2019) Q1&2 than FT students and less likely to report a disability. Over a 4-year aggregate, they are less likely to be eligible for FSM. They are more likely to have a white ethnicity and be ABCS Q1 than FT students.

Looking at intersections, PT males were twice as likely to be from POLAR4 Q1&2 over the 2-year aggregate than females.

Continuation- There is an overall continuation gap of over 12 percentage points between PT and FT students over 2- and 4- year aggregates. This is more pronounced for students aged 21 and over, with students under 21 more likely to continue than students under 21 on FT courses and comparatively students aged 21 and over less likely to continue their studies than FT student aged 21 and over. There is a persistent gap between quintiles 1-4 ABCS and quintile 5 over 2- and 4-year aggregates.

Attainment- PT 21 and over students were likely to have a better attainment rate than FT students. PT IMD Q1& 2 males were likely to have a higher attainment rate than females compared to FT courses in 2021-22 and across 2- and 4-year aggregates. Across the 2- and 4-year aggregates, PT students with a disclosed disability had better attainment rates than none disclosed over 2- and 4-year aggregates, but the gap opened to 1.1 percentage points in 2021-22. PT students with cognitive or learning difficulties were more likely to have better attainment in 2021-22 and across 2- and 4-year aggregates than no disability reported.

Progression- The percentage of PT aged 21 and over students who progressed into professional or managerial employment, further study or other positive outcome was over 27 percentage points higher than for aged 21 and over FT students 2020-21 and the 2-year aggregate. ABCS Q1&2 PT students had over 25 percentage points better progression outcomes in the 4-year aggregate than FT students.

Apprentices

Our apprentices are predominantly aged 21 and over and less likely to report a disability than our FT undergraduate students, however more likely to report cognitive or learning difficulties. They are less likely to be a minority ethnicity student than our full-time undergraduate students, with over 94% of the apprentice population white in 2- and 4-year aggregates. Over 50% of apprentices are from POLAR 4 Q1 & 2 across the 4-year aggregate which is more pronounced for females, with a 11.9 percentage point gap over the 4-year aggregate.

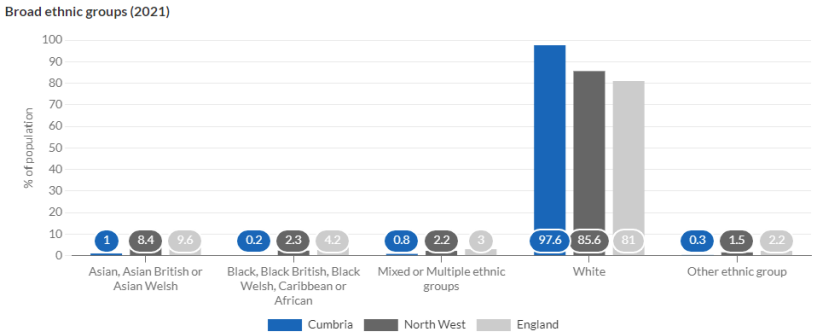
Our apprenticeship provision has grown over the last four years, and therefore we can't yet identify with confidence gaps in the data for our apprentices. During the 2024-28 plan, we will pay close attention through our Apprentice Steering group and APSG the outcomes of these students. We are working in partnership with North West Ambulance Service group alongside other universities, to proactively promote diversity and inclusion in the workforce and through recruitment and retention of students.

ACCESS

Measure	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2020-21 Sector all registered English HE providers	2021-22	2021-22 Sector all registered English HE providers
Sex gap between females and males (FT, UG)	38.2 percentage points	38.2 percentage points	35 percentage points	38.6 percentage points	42.4 percentage points	14.6	29.2 percentage points	13.6 percentage points
Deprivation (IMD 2019) gap between Q5 and Q1 (PT, UG)	4.7 percentage points	6.6 percentage points	6.1 percentage points	5.3 percentage points	18.4 percentage points	-2 percentage points	3 percentage points	-2.8 percentage points
ABCS (FT) gap between Q5 and Q1 (FT, UG)	5.8 percentage points	6.6 percentage points	9.1 percentage points	9.9 percentage points	10.7 percentage points	26.6 percentage points	6.3 percentage points	27.8 percentage points
Ethnicity (18-year-olds only, FT, UG) limitations <i>aggregated all campuses</i>	12.8% ABMO	14.7% ABMO	24% ABMO	22% ABMO	17.7% ABMO	33.3%	13.3% ABMO	34.8%
Ethnicity (18-year-olds only, FT, UG)	9.5%	7.5%	9.9%	10%	7.8%		10.1%	

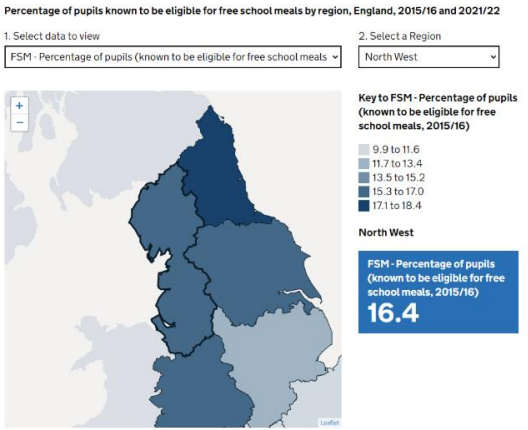
North West campuses*								
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* The North West ONS ethnicity average is 14.4% so we are still below the regional benchmark



Source: ONS, Census 2021

**Below the national average of 22.5% but above North West average of 16.4%



CONTINUATION

Measure	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2019-20 Sector all registered English HE providers	2020-21	2020-21 Sector all registered English HE providers	Comments
TUNDRA Gap between Q5 and Q1 (FT, UG)	2.6 percentage points	2.2 percentage points	6 percentage points	5.1 percentage points	0.5 percentage points	2.7 percentage points	2.5 percentage points	3.7 percentage points	
Deprivation (IMD 2019) gap between Q5 compared with 1 (FT, UG)	3.5 percentage points	7.8 percentage points	9.7 percentage points	10.6 percentage points	6.5 percentage points	6.9 percentage points	8.2 percentage points	9.1 percentage points	

Deprivation (IMD 2019) Gap between Q3, 4 or 5 compared with Q1 or 2 females (FT, UG)	2.7 percentage points	5 percentage points	5.6 percentage points	5.6 percentage points	3.7 percentage points	3.3 percentage points	2.2 percentage points	5 percentage points	
Deprivation (IMD 2019) Gap between Q3, 4 or 5 compared with Q1 or 2 males (FT, UG)	5 percentage points	6.9 percentage points	2.9 percentage points	15.8 percentage points	1.3 percentage points	6.2 percentage points	8 percentage points	7.9 percentage points	
POLAR 4 Gap between	2.9 percentage points	0.7 percentage points	4.4 percentage points	5.9 percentage points	-0.2 percentage points	3.9 percentage points	2.4 percentage points	5.1 percentage points	

Q5 and 1 (FT, UG)									
ABCS gap between q5 and 1 (FT, UG)	7.4 percentage points	9.6 percentage points	13.4 percentage points	19.3 percentage points	12.7 percentage points	12.7 percentage points	13.7 percentage points	14.8 percentage points	
ABCS gap between q5 and 1 (PT, UG)	11.1 percentage points	39.5 percentage points	27.8 percentage points	39.1 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	26.1 percentage points			4-year aggregate gap 31.6 percentage points.
Black and white gap (FT, UG)	6.5 percentage points	6.4 percentage points	4.2 percentage points	5.6 percentage points	18 percentage points	5 percentage points	17.5 percentage points	5.8 percentage points	
Black and white gap (PT, UG)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	No students in this denominator (or 2 or fewer).	8.8 percentage points			4 year- ending 2019- 20 aggregate 18.4 percentage points gap

Mixed and white gap (FT, UG)	-3.6 percentage points	3.9 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, but is within 2 of denominator)	Suppressed (more than 2, but is within 2 of denominator)	1.5 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	2.2 percentage points	4 year- 0.5 percentage points gap (denominator 80), 2 year- 2.7 percentage points gap (denominator 40).
Age: gap between under 21 and 21 and over. (FT, UG)	0.1 percentage points	-0.6 percentage points	2 percentage points	8.9 percentage points	8.8 percentage points	8.2 percentage points	3.1 percentage points	9.9 percentage points	
Age: gap between under 21 and 21 and over. (PT, UG)	9.6 percentage points	Suppressed (the under 21 numerator is more than 2 but within 2 of the denominator)	24 percentage points	Suppressed (the under 21 numerator is more than 2 but within 2 of the denominator)	17.6 percentage points	5.6 percentage points			

Mental health condition and no disability gap (FT, UG)	9 percentage points	-0.6 percentage points	4.6 percentage points	1.6 percentage points	4.2 percentage points	3 percentage points	2.5 percentage points	2 percentage points	
Mental health condition and no disability gap (PT, UG)	No students in this denominator (or 2 or fewer).	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	9.9 percentage points			4-year aggregate 10.3 percentage points gap
Eligibility for free school meals (FT, UG)	5 percentage points	3.2 percentage points	5.3 percentage points	3.8 percentage points	4.4 percentage points	4 percentage points	4.5 percentage points	5.3 percentage points	
Care leaver and not	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer	Suppressed (more than 2,	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer	Suppressed (more than 2,	8.8 percentage points		Suppressed (more than 2, fewer		2-year aggregate-13.1

care leaver (FT, UG)	than 23 students)	fewer than 23 students)	than 23 students)	fewer than 23 students)			than 23 students)		percentage points 4-year aggregate- 8.8 percentage points
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COMPLETION

Measure	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2016-17 Sector all registered English HE providers	2017-18	2017-18 Sector all registered English HE providers	Comments
TUNDRA (gap between q5 and q1) (FT, UG)	6.2 percentage points	1 percentage point	13.4 percentage points	3.3 percentage points	4.8 percentage points	5 percentage points	4.9 percentage points	4.8 percentage points	
Deprivation (IMD 2019) gap between q5 and q1 (FT, UG)	6 percentage points	3.7 percentage points	9.6 percentage points	5 percentage points	7.6 percentage points	10.4 percentage points	10.5 percentage points	10.6 percentage points	

POLAR 4 Gap between Q5 and 1 (FT, UG)	5.1 percentage points	0.8 percentage points	13 percentage points	3.3 percentage points	2.5 percentage points	76.9 percentage points	4.9 percentage points	6.7 percentage points	
ABCS (gap between q5 and q1) (FT, UG)	17.3 percentage points	21.5 percentage points	12.7 percentage points	15.7 percentage points	16.5 percentage points	23.2 percentage points	14.1 percentage points	23.5 percentage points	
Ethnicity- Asian and White gap (FT, UG)	-6 percentage points	-5.8 percentage points	-3.8 percentage points	-4.2 percentage points	5.9 percentage points	1.3 percentage points	6.7 percentage points	1.5 percentage points	
Black and White gap (FT, UG)	19.2 percentage points	10.6 percentage points	1.5 percentage points	7.6 percentage points	2.7 percentage points	7.3 percentage points	-2.5 percentage points	7.8 percentage points	
Mixed and White gap (FT, UG)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	6.3 percentage points	-0.7 percentage points	1.1 percentage points	4.7 percentage points	3.1 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students) Completion -0.7pp	2.9 percentage points	4-year aggregate 1.1 percentage points 2-year aggregate 2.4 percentage points
Other and White gap (FT, UG)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	4.4 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	4.5 percentage points	4-year aggregate 5.3 percentage points 2-

									year aggregate Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)
Age: gap between under 21 and 21 and over. (FT, UG)	2.5 percentage points	3 percentage points	-0.7 percentage points	1.4 percentage points	0.3 percentage points	9.7 percentage points	1.9 percentage points	10.2 percentage points	
Disability: gap between No disability reported and disability reported (FT, UG)	6.3 percentage points	1.5 percentage points	1.2 percentage points	14.2 percentage points	3.3 percentage points	1.9 percentage points	4.1 percentage points	2.1 percentage points	
Cognitive or learning difficulties and no disability gap (FT, UG)	8 percentage points	0	0.5 percentage points	12.1 percentage points	1.4 percentage points	-0.5 percentage points	1.2 percentage points	-0.9 percentage points	
Mental health condition and no	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer	10 percentage points	9.3 percentage points	4.9 percentage points	12.2 percentage points	5.3 percentage points	

disability gap (FT, UG)	than 23 students)	than 23 students)	than 23 students)						
Social or communication impairment and no disability gap (FT, UG)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	4.4 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	4.2 percentage points	4 years aggregate 8.7 percentage points 2-year aggregate 13.8 percentage points
Eligibility for free school meals (FT, UG)	1.6 percentage points	3 percentage points	4.1 percentage points	2.9 percentage points	2.7 percentage points	7.6 percentage points	4.7 percentage points	8.3 percentage points	
Care-leavers (FT)	No students in this denominator (or 2 or fewer).	No students in this denominator (or 2 or fewer).	0.2 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)		Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)		2-year aggregate 7.3 percentage points 4-year aggregate 8.2 percentage points

ATTAINMENT

Measure	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2020-21 Sector all registered English HE providers	2021-22	2021-22 Sector all registered English HE providers	Comments
TUNDRA Gap between Q5 and Q1 males (FT, UG)		Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	7.7 percentage points	20.1 percentage points	-4.9 percentage points		Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)		4-year aggregate gap 8.5 percentage points.
Deprivation (IMD 2019) gap between q5 and q1 (FT, UG)	14 percentage points	10.5 percentage points	19.9 percentage points	15.6 percentage points	11.2 percentage points	15.3 percentage points	4.3 percentage points	17.8 percentage points	
Deprivation (IMD 2019) Gap between Q3, 4 or 5 and Q1 or 2 males (FT, UG)	0.9 percentage points	10.8 percentage points	16.7 percentage points	14.9 percentage points	4.9 percentage points	9.5 percentage points	9.7 percentage points	11.5 percentage points	

Deprivation (IMD 2019) Gap between Q3, 4 or 5 and Q1 or 2 females (FT, UG)	5.5 percentage points	1.8 percentage points	10.8 percentage points	11.9 percentage points	7.8 percentage points	11.2 percentage points	5.3 percentage points	12.6 percentage points	
POLAR 4 Gap between Q5 and Q1 (FT, UG)	0.3 percentage points	3.8 percentage points	15.2 percentage points	11.9 percentage points	-6.7 percentage points	8.9 percentage points	4 percentage points	10.3 percentage points	
POLAR 4 Gap between Q3, 4 or 5 and Q1 or 2 males (FT, UG)	5.8 percentage points	-4 percentage points	5.9 percentage points	9.5 percentage points	0.2 percentage points	5.1 percentage points	9.2 percentage points	5.4 percentage points	
Ethnicity-Asian and White gap (FT, UG)	0.8 percentage points	3.4 percentage points	24.1 percentage points	30.1 percentage points	19.9 percentage points	6.1 percentage points	13.4 percentage points	8.4 percentage points	
Black and White gap (FT, UG)	15.4 percentage points	22.6 percentage points	28.2 percentage points	19 percentage points	15.6 percentage points	18.3 percentage points	4.3 percentage points	20.1 percentage points	

Mixed and White gap (FT, UG)	15.9 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	2.7 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	3.5 percentage points	4-year aggregate 4.1 percentage points 2-year aggregate 9.5 percentage points
Other and White gap (FT, UG)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	18.3 percentage points	9 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	10.6 percentage points	4-year aggregate 9.8 percentage points 2-year aggregate 16.6 percentage points
Age: gap between under 21 and 21 and over. (FT, UG)	-4 percentage points	-6.7 percentage points	6.3 percentage points	8.3 percentage points	4.3 percentage points	10.6 percentage points	3.8 percentage points	9.4 percentage points	
Disability reported and no disability gap (PT, UG)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 2, fewer than 23 students)	-10.7 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 2, fewer than 23 students)	3.7 percentage points	1.1 percentage points	4 percentage points	4-year aggregate -3.9 percentage points

	23 students)	23 students)	than 23 students)		than 23 students)				points, 2-year aggregate 5 percentage points.
Cognitive or learning difficulties and no disability gap (FT, UG)	3.7 percentage points	8.6 percentage points	-7.9 percentage points	-3.4 percentage points	-3.5 percentage points	2.1 percentage points	2.2 percentage points	0.3 percentage points	
Sensory, medical or physical impairments and no disability gap (FT, UG)	-3.1 percentage points	-7.8 percentage points	-1.6 percentage points	0.9 percentage points	-4.4 percentage points	0.6 percentage points	2.9 percentage points	-0.9 percentage points	
Eligibility for free school meals (FT, UG)	14.9 percentage points	9.4 percentage points	5.8 percentage points	15.4 percentage points	11 percentage points	10.3 percentage points	13.9 percentage points	12.4 percentage points	
Care Leaver and non-care-leaver gap .	<i>[Care leaver dominator more than 2, fewer than 23 students]</i>	<i>[Care leaver dominator more than 2, fewer than 23 students]</i>	<i>[Care leaver dominator more than 2, fewer than 23 students]</i>	<i>[Care leaver dominator more than 2, fewer than 23 students]</i>	<i>[Care leaver dominator more than 2, fewer than 23 students]</i>		<i>[Care leaver dominator more than 2, fewer than 23 students]</i>		4-year aggregate-3.3 percentage points gap.

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PROGRESSION

Measure	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2019-20 Sector all registered English HE providers	2020-21	2020-21 Sector all registered English HE providers	Comments
TUNDRA Gap between Q5 and Q1 (FT)	-1.5 percentage points	5.3 percentage points	-0.5 percentage points	7.1 percentage points	7.4 percentage points	6.7 percentage points	
Deprivation (IMD 2019) Gap between q5 and q1 (FT, UG)	4.3 percentage points	8.2 percentage points	9 percentage points	10.6 percentage points	4.7 percentage points	10.8 percentage points	
Deprivation (IMD 2019) Gap between Q3, 4 or 5 males and Q1	9.5 percentage points	17.1 percentage points	3.8 percentage points	7.4 percentage points	14.5 percentage points	7.9 percentage points	

or 2 males (FT, UG)							
Deprivation (IMD 2019) Gap between Q3, 4 or 5 females and Q1 or 2 females (FT, UG)	2.5 percentage points	5 percentage points	5.7 percentage points	6.7 percentage points	5 percentage points	7.2 percentage points	
POLAR 4 Q5 and Q1 gap (FT, UG)	6.2 percentage points	7.5 percentage points	2.2 percentage points	8.8 percentage points	9.4 percentage points	9.3 percentage points	
Gap between POLAR 4 Q3, 4 or 5 males and Q1 or 2 males (FT, UG)	-2.9 percentage points	4.3 percentage points	4.6 percentage points	5 percentage points	4.8 percentage points	5.4 percentage points	
Gap between POLAR 4 Q3, 4 or 5 females and Q1 or 2 females (FT, UG)	2.3 percentage points	-2.7 percentage points	5.1 percentage points	5.3 percentage points	3.8 percentage points	4.3 percentage points	

ABCS (gap between q5 and q1) (FT, UG)	32.9 percentage points	33.1 percentage points	22.7 percentage points	21.8 percentage points	8.7 percentage points	17.3 percentage points	
Black and White gap (FT, UG)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	3 percentage points	15.2 percentage points	4.5 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	3.6 percentage points	4-year aggregate 6.1 percentage points
Mixed and White gap (FT, UG)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	0.2 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	-0.6 percentage points	4-year aggregate 4.7 percentage points
Age: gap between under 21 and 21 and over. (FT, UG)	-13.3 percentage points	-10 percentage points	-2.5 percentage points	0	2.5 percentage points	2.8 percentage points	
Disability: gap between No disability reported and disability reported (FT, UG)	9.2 percentage points	4.6 percentage points	3.7 percentage points	1.7 percentage points	4.1 percentage points	2.1 percentage points	

Sensory, medical or physical impairments and no disability gap (FT, UG)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	1.3 percentage points	Suppressed (more than 2, fewer than 23 students)	2.1 percentage points	2-year aggregate 12 percentage points
Eligibility for free school meals (FT, UG)	4.6 percentage points	5.1 percentage points	6.9 percentage points	6.7 percentage points	2.9 percentage points	6.8 percentage points	

Indications of risk outside of formal targets and planned action.

For further information please see Annex A, assessment of performance.

Student characteristic(s): Measures of socio-economic disadvantage and underrepresentation		
Tracking underrepresentation by area, Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019), Participation of local areas (POLAR 4), Association between characteristics (ABCS), eligibility for free school meals (FSM)		
Stage	Indication of risk	Mitigation action
Access	In 2021/22 ABCS quintile 1 students were less likely than quintile 5 students to enrol at the University of Cumbria by 6.3 percentage points. The gap is wider over 2- and 4-year aggregates. Given the measure includes a cluster of indicators, and our assessment of performance clearly identifying the underrepresentation of disadvantaged males at the university, we will target this group, but explore the ABCS measures in our access targeting of interventions for schools and colleges.	1. Explore ABCS Access characteristics where they are not already used for access intervention targeting in 2024.
Continuation	In 2020/21 the gap between the most and least advantaged students grew by five measures (TUNDRA, IMD 2019, POLAR 4, ABCS and FSM eligibility). This is more pronounced for males IMD Q1&2. There had been progress made against all these metrics, except for students eligible for FSM, in the previous year, in some cases the gap closing or closed. However, evidence suggests that the pandemic has contributed to the re-opening of the gap for students experiencing one or more indicators of disadvantage.	2. Explore ABCS continuation characteristics where they are not already used for on-course student identification and success intervention targeting in 2024.
Completion	The gap between the most and least advantaged students grew by four measures in 2017-18 (TUNDRA, IMD 2019, POLAR 4 and FSM eligibility). This is more pronounced for males IMD Q1&2 and POLAR 4 Q1&2. While the gap reduced for ABCS, it remained high 14.2 percentage points, encompassing FSM, IMD and TUNDRA characteristics in addition to others.	3. Establish cross-university working group to target support towards students with characteristics of socio-economic disadvantage across their lifecycle in 2024.
Attainment	In 2021/22 the gap between the most and least advantaged students grew by two measures (POLAR 4 and FSM eligibility). This is considerably more pronounced for males (IMD and POLAR 4). While the IMD gap greatly reduced, when controlling for Q1 and 2 males compared to females, it sharply increased.	4. Target set for male attainment.

<p style="text-align: center;">Progression</p>	<p>In 2020/21 the gap between the most and least represented students significantly grew. While the gap between the most and least advantaged students reduced by three measures (IMD 2019, ABCS and FSM eligibility) the gap grew between the most and least advantaged males.</p>	<p>3. Working group as above. Target for male attainment expected to impact progression outcomes for target group.</p>
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Student characteristic(s): Minority ethnicity students		
Asian, Black, Mixed, Other ethnicity (ABMO)		
Stage	Indication of risk	Mitigation action
Access	We have made progress against our historic target of increasing the proportion of students from minority ethnicities enrolling at our North West (NW) campuses. This is due to the location and demography of our London campus skewing data if included. When controlling for NW, we are 4.4 percentage points behind the NW census data for minority ethnicity proportions, and therefore will continue to target efforts to diversify our student body through an aligned objective, to maintain progress in this area.	5. Set objective to maintain ABMO student proportion growth, to align with NW census data.
Continuation	While Asian and Other ethnicity students were more likely to continue to the second year of their course than their white peers in 2020/21, Black students were 17.5 percentage points less likely to than white students in 2020-21, only a reduction of 0.5 percentage points from 2019-20.	6. Disaggregate existing target, to target Black students' continuation.
Completion	While Asian students' completion rates were higher than white students over the academic years 2012-2015, a gap opened in 2016-17 which has continued to grow into 2017-18. Mixed and Other ethnicity student populations are small and have been suppressed for 2017-18, however the 4-year aggregate shows there are gaps between Other ethnicity student completion rates and white students. In 2017-18, Black and Mixed ethnicity students were more likely to complete their studies than white students.	7. Ongoing implementation of the London Campus Plan to support academic outcomes for students on our Top-up programme in Business, which attracts a very diverse student body consistent with its location in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. 8. Establish cross-university working group to target support towards minority ethnicity students across the student lifecycle in 2024.
Attainment	The gaps between Asian and Black students and white student attainment continued to close in 2021-22 and significantly so for Black students. While numbers are suppressed for Mixed and Other ethnicity students, the gap widened over the 2-year aggregate compared to 4-years.	9. Objective to maintain and monitor progress in Black and Asian student attainment.
Progression	Our numbers of students whose ethnicity is Black, Mixed or Other are suppressed for 2020-21. However, there are gaps in progression outcomes between all three ethnic groups in the 2 and 4-year aggregates.	10. Set target for Black students' progression.

Student characteristic(s): Reported disabilities

Disclosed mental health conditions, cognitive or learning difficulties, multiple impairments, social or communication impairment, sensory, medical or physical impairments

Stage	Indication of risk	Mitigation action
Continuation	The gap between students with a disclosed mental health condition and no disability declared in continuation was closing and had reduced by 1.7 percentage points to 2.5 in 2020-21. The number of students with a social or communication impairment is suppressed due to the number being fewer than 23, however over a four-year period there is a 1.8 percentage point gap.	11. Internally monitor continuation of students with disclosed mental health conditions and interventions committed to impact completion target to determine any impacts to continuation in 2023/24 and ongoing.
Completion	The gap between students with reported disabilities and none reported in completion widened in 2017-18 by 0.8 percentage points. The disability type with the largest difference in completion to none reported were those with a reported mental health condition at 12.2 percentage points difference. The students with cognitive or learning difficulties completion rate gap continued to close in 2017-18 and while the most recent year numbers are suppressed for multiple impairments, the 2-year aggregate shows a closing gap from 4-years of 0.2 percentage points. The gap for students with declared social or communication impairment and no disability is suppressed, however, the 2-year aggregate shows that the gap is widening compared to no disability reported.	12. Set target to improve the completion rates of students with disclosed mental health condition. 13. Internally monitor completion rates of students with declared social or communication impairment in 2023/24 and ongoing.
Attainment	While the gap has opened for 2021-22 for both students disclosing a cognitive or learning difficulty, or a sensory, medical or physical impairment, they were outperforming students with no disclosed disability in the 2- and 4-year aggregates.	14. Due to the exceptional nature of the pandemic and its impacts on students with a disability, we will continue to monitor their outcomes closely, as the longer-term impacts of the pandemic continue to be experienced throughout 2023/24 and ongoing.
Progression	While the progression outcomes of students with a reported disability improved in 2020-21, the gap slightly opened between students with a reported disability and those with none. While there are limitations due to small numbers of students to report on, the OfS 2-year gap for students with a disclosed sensory medical or physical impairment compared to no disability is significant.	15. Internally monitor progression rates of students with declared cognitive or learning difficulty and disclosed sensory, medical or physical impairment in 2023/24 and ongoing.

Student characteristic(s): Age Students 21 and over		
Stage	Indication of risk	Mitigation action
Continuation	While there is a gap in continuation between students who are 21 and over and under 21 students, this has significantly closed in 2020-21 by 5.7 percentage points to 3.1 percentage points. However, the gap in continuation between PT students 21 and over and under 21 is significant.	16. Target for continuation of PT students aged 21 and over.
Completion	The gap between students aged 21 and over opened over 2017-18 to 1.9 percentage points.	17. Internally monitor completion rates of students aged 21 and over in 2023/24 and ongoing.
Attainment	The gap between students aged 21 and over continued to close in 2021-22 and reduced to 3.8 percentage points.	18. Internally monitor attainment rate of students ages 21 and over to maintain progress in 2023/24 and ongoing.

Student characteristic(s): Care-leaver		
Stage	Indication of risk	Mitigation action
Continuation	Whilst the numbers are small, the gap between continuation of care leavers over a 4-year aggregate is 8.3 percentage points.	19. Target for continuation of care-leavers.
Completion	Whilst the numbers are small, the gap between completion of care leavers and non-care leavers over a 4-year aggregate is 8.3 percentage points.	20. Establish Care-leaver and estranged students cross-university working group to target support towards them across the student lifecycle in 2024.
Attainment	Whilst the numbers are small, the gap between attainment of care leavers and non-care leavers over a 4-year aggregate is 10.9 percentage points.	21. Internally monitor care leavers attainment rate and impact of interventions for target to improve continuation to determine any impact to attainment in 2023/24 and ongoing.

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

Consultation Survey questions (with supporting literature considered when designing survey options in brackets).

1. What do you think are the greatest challenges that students face in applying to university? Please rank with 1 as the greatest challenge. (Minimum of 5 must be selected).

Cost of living and finance (*Blackbullion, 2023; Blake, 2023; Jones, 2022; Johnston & Westwood, 2023; UniTasterDays, 2019*)

Understanding the benefits (*The Russell Group, 2020; UPP Foundation & HEPI, 2021*)

Higher level study skills

Feeling a sense of belonging

Social skills and relationships (*HEPI & Unite Students, 2017*)

Maintaining mental health and wellbeing (*Holt-White, De Genarro, Anders, Cullinane, Early, Montacute, Shao & Yarde, 2022, UCAS, 2021*)

Understanding the UCAS application and/or interview process (*The Russell Group, 2020*)

Understanding the Student Loan application process (*Unifrog, 2022; UniTasterDays, 2019*)

Gaining work experience (*Unifrog, 2021*)

Family expectations (*Zhao, L., Zhao, W., 2022*)

Getting the qualifications to meet the entry requirements (*OfS, 2022; The Russell Group, 2020; UCAS, 2021*)

Identifying if support will be available to meet specific needs (*UCAS, 2021*)

Other

2. What do you think are the greatest challenges that students face to continuing their studies at university? Please rank with 1 as the greatest challenge. (Minimum of 5 must be selected).

Cost of living and finance (*Neves (Advance HE) & Brown (HEPI), 2022; Blackbullion, 2023*)

Higher level study skills (*Neves (Advance HE) & Brown (HEPI), 2022*)

Feeling a sense of belonging (*Neves (Advance HE) & Brown (HEPI), 2022; Pearson & WONKHE, 2021*)

Social skills and relationships (*Neves (Advance HE) & Brown (HEPI), 2022*)

Maintaining mental health and wellbeing (*Neves (Advance HE) & Brown (HEPI), 2022; UUK, 2018*)

Balancing studies with employment (*Sutton Trust, 2023*)

Family expectations (Phillips, C., 2015)

Achieving the grades to progress onto the next stage of the course

Accessing support to meet specific needs (*Neves (Advance HE) & Brown (HEPI), 2022*)

Other

3. What do you think are the greatest challenges that students face continuing to further study or employment after university? Please rank with 1 as the greatest challenge.

(Minimum of 5 must be selected).

Cost of living and finance (*Lees, Foster, 2022*)

Interview and CV/application skills (*Lees, Foster, 2022*)

Social skills and relationships

Maintaining mental health and wellbeing (*ISE, WONKHE, AGCAS, Handshake, 2022; Lees, Foster, 2022*)

Balancing studies with employment (*Lees, Foster, 2022*)

Gaining work experience (*Lees, Foster, 2022; Prospects, 2021*)

Family expectations

Achieving the degree classification to progress onto the next stage (further study or employment) (UUK, 2019)

Understanding career pathways (*ISE, WONKHE, AGCAS, Handshake, 2022; Lees, Foster, 2022*)

Accessing support to meet specific needs

Other

4. What do you think is working well to support students at the University of Cumbria, that you think we should continue?

Free text.

5. Which student groups do you think particularly need more support from the University of Cumbria staff and why?

Free text.

6. What actions do you think staff at the university should take to support those students?

Free text.

Please use this space to add any further comments or questions you would like considered as part of your response.

Free text.

Excerpt from HASCE report

An Evaluation of the Effect of Bursary and Other Types of Financial Support on Student Outcomes at the University of Cumbria. October 2018.

High Level Summary

This project forms part of an evaluation of the impact of financial support, provided by the University of Cumbria (UoC), to students from under-represented groups. It reports on a statistical analysis to detect whether there is an impact of financial support, but also reports on the contribution of other variables likely to affect student outcomes.

In summary, the analysis finds **financial support at UoC is effective** because financial support recipients* have the same outcomes (continuation into 2nd year; degree completion; degree result and graduate outcomes) as students from homes with mid-level incomes and who had not received a bursary (the comparison group).

*students from homes with low-income levels and who had therefore received a bursary

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Fees, investments and targets

2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: The University of Cumbria

Provider UKPRN: 10007842

Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

Notes about the data:

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

Total access investment funded from HFI refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

Total access investment from other funding (as specified) refers to other funding, including OfS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£416,000	£436,000	£460,000	£480,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£323,000	£359,000	£379,000	£396,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£31,000	£33,000	£35,000	£36,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£83,000	£87,000	£92,000	£96,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£291,000	£305,000	£322,000	£336,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£42,000	£44,000	£46,000	£48,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£416,000	£436,000	£460,000	£480,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (as % of HFI)	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%
Access activity investment	Total access investment funded from HFI (£)	£416,000	£436,000	£460,000	£480,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£323,000	£359,000	£379,000	£396,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£323,000	£359,000	£379,000	£396,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)	3.1%	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£31,000	£33,000	£35,000	£36,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%

Fees, investments and targets

2024-25 to 2027-28

Provider name: The University of Cumbria

Provider UKPRN: 10007842

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
Raise the absolute number of FT young male entrants from TUNDRA Q1 by 50% over the duration of the APP.	PTA_1	Access	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)		Number of FT young male entrants from TUNDRA Q1.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Headcount	30	33	38	41	45
	PTA_2														
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2024-25 milestone	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone
Reduce the difference in continuation between FT Black students and white students by 12.5 percentage points by 2028.	PTS_1	Continuation	Ethnicity	Black	White	Percentage difference in continuation rates between Black students and white students.	No	The access and participation dataset	2020-21	Percentage points	17.5	15	11	7	5
Reduce the difference in continuation between PT students aged 21 and over and students aged under 21 by 12.6 percentage points by 2028.	PTS_2	Continuation	Age	Mature (over 21)	Young (under 21)	Percentage difference in continuation rates between PT students aged 21 and over and under 21 year olds continuing their studies.	No	The access and participation dataset	2019-20	Percentage points	17.6	15	11	7	5
Reduce the difference in continuation between FT care-leaver students and non-care-leavers by 15 percentage points by 2028.	PTS_3	Continuation	Care leavers	Care leaver students	Students who are not care leavers	Percentage difference in continuation between FT care-leaver students and non-care-leavers. UCAS data into SITS via the interface when an application is submitted and is provided by the applicant on the UCAS application form.	No	UCAS data (please include details in commentary)	2020-21	Percentage points	19.3	15.55	11.8	8.05	4.3
Reduce the difference in completion between FT students with a declared mental health condition and no disability declared by 9.2 percentage points by 2028.	PTS_4	Completion	Reported disability	Mental health condition	No disability reported	Percentage difference in completion between FT students with a declared mental health condition and no disability reported.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	Percentage points	12.2	11	9	6	3
Reduce the difference in on-course attainment between FT TUNDRA Q1 and Q5 males by 12 percentage points by 2029.	PTS_5	Attainment	Intersection of characteristics	Other (please specify in description)	N/A	Percentage difference in attainment between FT TUNDRA Q1 males and Q5 males.	No	The access and participation dataset	2021-22	Percentage points	13.7	12	9	7	1.7
	PTS_6														
	PTS_7														
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

