Staffordshire University

Access and participation plan 2024-25 to 2027-28

Introduction and strategic aim

Staffordshire University is a teaching-intensive and research-inspired University with a focus on delivering an excellent academic experience while also ensuring the development of relevant employability and entrepreneurial skills. This focus enables us to deliver a dynamic, enriching and future-focused student experience, which equips all our learners with the opportunities to make significant contributions to society and the economy.

We are a successful modern University with the foundational purpose of providing higher and applied learning opportunities relevant to our region and beyond. We support the transformation of our learners, our people and the local communities within which we live, work and engage. We are proud that our excellence in applied teaching and learning can be traced back to 1914, when we were founded as the Central School of Science and Technology, with a mission to support regional industries and the needs of society. The centrality of that mission continues to inform our Strategic Plan, articulated as *Catalyst for Change* (Figure 1). This commitment is shaped by and shapes our 'place'' and drives us to ensure transformational opportunities and outcomes through our academic expertise. This commitment continues to be the dynamic, which drives our ambition for continued learning and teaching excellence.
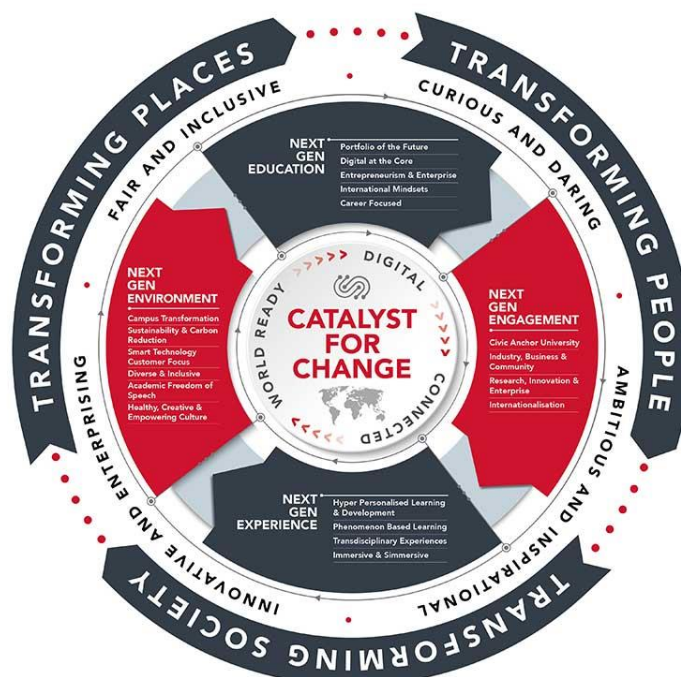

Figure 1. Catalyst for Change

The Strategic Plan focuses on four interdependent priorities: Next Generation Education. Next Generation Experience, Next Generation Engagement, Next Generation Environment. This focus allows us to deliver a student academic experience which reflect our context and the skills needed for the future workforce. Digital innovation is a feature of our pedagogical approaches and it

furthers our ability to personalise learning through digital coaching and tailored academic interventions. Our embedded employability, work-integrated learning, enterprise skills and business engagement equip all our learners with the knowledge, skills, behaviours and experience to meet directly the needs of the emerging sectors and roles.

Our academic strategy is the framework through which we deliver our Strategic Plan to ensure the academic benefits and outcomes of our students' experience. Our academic strategy is delivered through a consistent educational philosophy across all our courses. It was developed to:

- meet our commitments for access and participation to increase equality of opportunity.
- develop a modern portfolio which meets the needs of the regional and national economy and global civil society.
- ensure the success of students from diverse backgrounds.
- facilitate an inclusive research culture and extend our research base (including enterprise, innovation, and impact) through internationally renowned research centres.
- embed research inspired education at the heart of our curriculum.
- co-create pioneering approaches to pedagogy and digital infrastructure with our students, trainees and apprentices.
- recruit, develop and retain high quality staff, reflecting the region we serve.
- develop sector leading approaches for pedagogic evaluation to raise the standards of evidence for what works.

We serve a diverse range of learners at all levels of study including undergraduate, postgraduate as well as those enrolled on other types of flexible and modular learning provision. The university delivers qualifications at all levels of Higher Education, and in the academic year 2022/23, over 25,700 students were taught directly by Staffordshire University or by one of our collaborative academic partners within the UK. Figure 2 shows our shape and size by study mode over the previous four academic years. The largest proportion of our delivery is for full-time (FT) undergraduate (UG), but we also have large cohorts of learners on our part-time (PT) UG, FT postgraduate, Apprenticeship and partner provision.

Risks to equality of opportunity

In this section we outline the key risks to equality of opportunity that our plan will address. These risks to equality of opportunity were identified through an assessment of performance (Annex A) of student outcomes within the student lifecycle including access, completion, good degree attainment and progression to graduate employment.
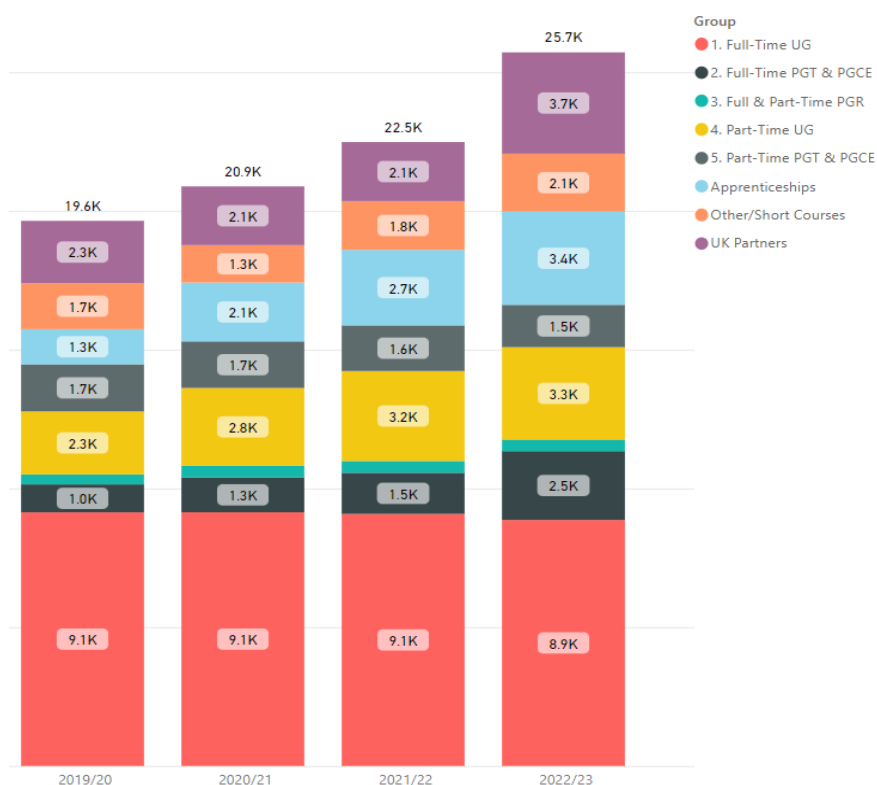
Figure 2. Shape and size of the university

Access

In Stoke-on-Trent approximately half of (53%) disadvantaged 16–18-year-old 2019 school leavers continued their education (DfE, 2021). Over 30% of neighbourhoods in Stoke-on-Trent belong to the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods nationally. The communities we serve face poverty and hardship which is currently exacerbated by increased cost-of-living (Etherington, et al. 2022). Internally we have calculated that approximately 22.7% of Stoke-on-Trent 18-year-olds entered higher education in 2021/22 and that 28.4% of Staffordshire 18-year-olds entered higher education in 2021/22.

As part of our assessment of performance we have analysed the access rates across different student characteristics and found variation between particular characteristics. As part of our assessment of performance we have identified the following indications of risk:

- 28.9 percentage point (pp) full-time access gap between student who were eligible for FSM and those who were not.
- Low access rates for students with racialised ethnicities, particularly students from Black (3.8%) and Asian (6.9%) backgrounds.

Widening access to higher education remains key to supporting the life chances of young people in our region. The Equality of Opportunities Risk Register (EORR)[1] was developed by the Office for Students (OfS) to support and focus higher education providers understanding of the key risks of equality of opportunity faced by students. Through our assessment of performance, we have

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[1] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/

identified four areas of risk from the EORR that may impact equality of opportunity to access higher education for students. They are:

Risk 1. Knowledge and skills. Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.

Risk 2. Information and guidance. Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.

Risk 3. Perception of higher education. Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.

Risk 4. Application success rates. Students may not be accepted to a higher education course or may not be accepted to certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.

Post-entry

Higher education providers use quality standards, regulation and the provision of an excellent academic experience to ensure successful outcomes for students. However, across the sector there are differences in positive outcomes for different types of students. These unexplained differences may represent a risk to equality of opportunity. Our institutional assessment of performance identified the following indications of risk post-entry:

- 15.9 pp FT completion gap between students from ABCS Q1 and Q5.
- 5.6 pp four-year aggregate FT completion gap between Asian and white students.
- 29.5 pp four-year aggregate FT attainment gap between Black and white students.
- 23.6 pp four-year aggregate FT attainment gap between 'Other' ethnicities and white students.
- 17.6 pp four-year aggregate FT attainment gap between Asian students and white students.
- 6.3pp four-year aggregate FT attainment gap between students with declared Cognitive or Learning disabilities and those without.
- 8.7pp four-year aggregate FT attainment gap between students with declared Social or Communication Impairment disabilities and those without.

Our persistent indications for risk were observed for FT students. Using the EORR, we identified six risks to equality of opportunity which may be linked to our indications of risk outlined above. They are:

Risk 6. Insufficient academic support. Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.

Risk 7. Insufficient personal support. Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.

Risk 8. Mental Health. Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.

Risk 9. Ongoing impacts from Coronavirus. Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

Lifecycle Stage	APP Objective	EORR
Access	**AO1.** Staffordshire University will close the access gap between students eligible for free school meals and their peers not eligible for free school meals to 10 pp or less by 2028.	• Risk 1 - Knowledge & Skills • Risk 2 - Information & Guidance • Risk 3 - Perception of HE • Risk 4 – Application Success Rates • Risk 9 – Ongoing impacts from Coronavirus • Risk 10 - Rising cost pressures
	AO2. Staffordshire University will increase access rates for students from racialised ethnicities to 29.5% of our undergraduate student profile by 2028.	
Completion	**CO1.** Staffordshire University will close the FT completion gap between students from ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q5 to 7 pp or less by 2028.	• Risk 6 - Insufficient academic support • Risk 7 - Insufficient personal support • Risk 8 - Mental Health • Risk 9 - Ongoing impacts from Coronavirus • Risk 10 - Rising cost pressures • Risk 11 - Capacity issues
	CO2. Staffordshire University will close the FT completion gap between students from an Asian background to 2 pp or less by 2028.	
Attainment	**AtO1.** Staffordshire University will close the FT attainment gap between students from Asian backgrounds to 10 pp or less by 2028.	
	AtO2. Staffordshire University will close the FT attainment gap between students from Black backgrounds to 15 pp or less by 2028.	
	AtO3. Staffordshire University will close the FT attainment gap between students with a declared disability and no declared disability to less than 3 pp or less by 2028. Particular focus on decreasing the attainment gap for students with cognitive or learning difficulties and students with a social or communication impairment.	
Progression	**PO1.** Staffordshire University will increase the progression rates for students from ABCS Q1 to 68% or higher by 2028.	• Risk 9 - Ongoing impacts from Coronavirus

| | | | • Risk 10 - Rising cost pressures |
| | | | • Risk 12 - Progression from HE |

Risk 10. Rising cost pressures. Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

Risk 11. Capacity issues. Students may not have equal opportunity to access limited resources related to higher education, such as suitable accommodation.

Risk 12. Progression from HE. Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.

In the next sections, we will detail the objectives defined and intervention strategies developed in order to ensure equality of opportunity.

Objectives

We have committed to eight whole institution objectives to mitigate against the risks of equality of opportunity identified as part of the assessment of performance. Table 1 maps the student lifecycle stage, our institutional APP objectives and the risks to equality of opportunity. We have identified several risks that exist across all parts of the student journey, particularly Risk 9 and Risk 10. We have an ambition as an organisation that we close the gaps which manifest due to a lack of equality of opportunity. However, our objectives offer realistic targets that are achievable within four years while still maintaining our aspiration to eliminate the measurable indications of risk we have articulated as objectives. We are keen to understand more about the role of higher education in eradicating inequalities and therefore have developed an access and participation which has this in mind. Our objectives largely relate to fulltime students which was where the persistent indications of risk were observed. However, our part time and apprenticeship students will also benefit from the range of intervention strategies discussed below to ensure equality of opportunity.

Table 1. Equality of opportunity objectives mapped to the equality of risk register and student lifecycle.

AO1. Staffordshire University will close the fulltime (FT) UG access gap between students eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their peers not eligible for FSM to 10 pp or less by 2028.

AO2[2]. Staffordshire University will increase access rates for students from racialised ethnicities to 29.5% of our undergraduate student profile by 2028.

- *Staffordshire University will increase the access rates for students from an Asian background to 10% which mirror the local community profile.*
- *Staffordshire University will increase the access rates for students from Black backgrounds to 10%.*

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[2] Objective AO2 was set to align with our strategic key performance indicator (KPI) which ensures that our student profile reflects the student profile of Post-92 higher education institutions (HEI). To develop a realistic KPI, we developed a weighted target to account for differences in subject delivery and the overall delivery profile of Staffordshire University and Post-92 HEIs. Our weighted measure for this is set a 29.5%.

We have identified six post-entry objectives related to completion, attainment and progression outcomes from our assessment of performance.

CO1. Staffordshire University will close the FT completion gap between students from ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q5 to 7 pp or less by 2028.

CO2. Staffordshire University will close the FT completion gap between students from an Asian background to 2 pp or less by 2028.

AtO1. Staffordshire University will close the FT attainment gap between students from Asian backgrounds to 10 pp or less by 2028.

AtO2. Staffordshire University will close the FT attainment gap between students from Black backgrounds to 15 pp or less by 2028.

AtO3. Staffordshire University will close the FT attainment gap between students with a declared disability and no declared disability to less than 3 pp or less by 2028.

- Particular focus on closing the attainment gap for students with cognitive or learning difficulties and students with a social or communication impairment.

PO1.Staffordshire University will increase the progression rates for students from ABCS Q1 to 68% or higher by 2028.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

As an institution we are a *Catalyst for Change* and through the development of this APP we have developed a set of transformational actions around four key aspects of the student journey: Access, Transitions, Curriculum and Student Support. These four aspects of the student experience relate directly to the risks we have identified from the EORR in the previous section and will form the basis of our four strategic interventions for the APP. Our intervention strategies have been developed using a theory of change approach and are aligned with our strategic plan. However, our intervention strategies alone will not be enough to ensure equality of opportunity. We have identified several **mechanisms for change** which will support the University to meaningfully embed the plan across the institution. These mechanisms for change are discussed in the whole provider approach section of the plan. This focus combined with our mechanisms for change will enable us to deliver effective, joined up interventions which can then be evaluated for impact. Each intervention strategy is detailed in the section below.

Strategic Intervention 1: Transforming Access

This intervention strategy addresses two institutional APP objectives – **AO1 and AO2**. These interventions complement existing recruitment and outreach strategies which are designed to widen participation. In addition, the Institute of Education have developed strategic partnerships with local schools and colleges alongside our own Staffordshire University Academy Trust and Woodlands Day and Forest School to enhance equality of opportunity for local young people. In addition, we have strategically sought to diversify our provision. We offer Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and are participating in the DfE Short Course trial. We have recently launched our first phase of micro credential (MC) provision and have ambitious plans to extend this offer. These additional strategic interventions detailed below are designed to complement this work

to increase equality of opportunity to access higher education particularly for student groups where we have observed persistent indications of risk (i.e. students from racialised ethnicities and students eligible for FSM). Trajectories and outcomes of disadvantaged students in HE requires collective action to be impactful (Colley, et al., 2014). By co-designing and delivering these activities with local and regional partners we aim to reduce access gaps and increase representation of marginalised student groups – particularly those students eligible for free school meals (AO1) and students from racialised identities (AO2) – to ensure equitable access to HE. Evidence suggests that effective outreach interventions designed to widen access should be implemented early on and in a sustained fashion in learners' education journeys (Siegel, 2010).

Our transforming access intervention strategy was developed to:

- make the most out of partnership working including schools and Higher Horizons (HiHo+).
- provide long-term, multi-touch point activities which directly address risks of equality of opportunity.
- offer a range of activities to evidence what works.
- ensure students are aware of a diverse rang of pathways including apprenticeships.

The transforming access intervention strategy is comprised of a suite of activities designed to support students with English and Maths attainment, familiarise students with the university environment, explore aspirations, create expectations and develop a sense of belonging and mattering to the university community to support future transitions to higher education.

Where objective AO1 aims to close the access gap between students eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their peers who are not eligible by 10 pp or less by 2028, this intervention targets schools like the Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT) in Cannock characterised by income deprivation and lower GCSE attainment. This multifaceted intervention seeks to raise attainment and aspiration among these disadvantaged students, enhancing their chances of progressing to higher education and reducing the access gap. Simultaneously, AO2 focuses on increasing access rates for racially ethnic students, targeting schools in Stoke-on-Trent with higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and lower higher education participation. The project also addresses schools with significant percentages of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) students and those with English as a second language, promoting pathways to higher education through aspiration and attainment-raising activities. These interventions, in collaboration with Higher Horizons+, utilise data-driven targeting and outreach strategies to reduce access disparities and foster greater representation of underrepresented student groups, extending their impact to regions with shifting demographics like Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and the northwest, further promoting diversity and inclusivity in higher education.

More details on the activities part of our transforming access interventions are below:

FutureMe: FutureMe is a bespoke programme designed to deliver a range of informative, immersive and supportive confidence building activities and sessions. Students from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 5 engage with HE students and staff as well as work with a range of resources to support the development of self-efficacy and motivation. The programme also supports students with English and Maths attainment. A coordinated long-term programme to support self-efficacy and motivation was developed because evidence suggests that increased self-efficacy and motivation is correlated with high engagement with school (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). Engagement with school combined with familiarisation with university is also

theorised to increase attainment and enhance access to HE. The sessions and activities in FutureMe are designed to support students through important key stages and transition where self-efficacy support and motivation is needed most.

Children's University: Children's University (CU) is a charity that works in partnership with schools to develop a love of learning in children by encouraging and celebrating participation in extra-curricular activities in and outside of school. Research has shown that participation in the programme has positive impacts on attainment, confidence, aspiration as well as skills development of the pupils. Staffordshire University leads Staffordshire Childrens' University (CU) and already engages with schools across our region to raise aspirations, support attainment and increase opportunities regionally. Staffordshire CU works with 21 schools in the region and intends to grow this partnership to evidence impact at scale. Currently 52% of active schools have higher than 30% of their student population eligible for FSM. Currently Staffordshire University has validated 56 extracurricular 'learning destinations' which offer young people opportunities whilst underpinning the value of place and community.

Stoke Scholars: Key Stage 4 attainment rates across Stoke-on-Trent are lower than the England average. There is also a 20pp gap between the proportion of disadvantaged students achieving a grade 4 or above in Maths and English at GCSE, compared to their more advantaged peers. This gap remains the same for the proportion of students achieving a 5 or above (a strong pass) in their Maths and English GCSEs when compared to their more advantaged peers. Across England 50% of students achieve a 5 or above in their Maths and English GCSEs; in Stoke-on-Trent, 43% of non-disadvantaged students achieve a 5 or above in their Maths and English GCSEs, while only 24% of disadvantaged students achieve a 5 or above in Maths and English. Achieving a 4/5 or above in Maths and English is not only an entry requirement for many university courses. Improving Maths and English attainment levels at Key Stage 4 is key to mitigating against equality of opportunity risks that limit access to university study.

Stoke Scholars is a new pre-16 attainment-raising intervention at Staffordshire University which has been developed in collaboration with Higher Horizons+ and Keele University. Students take part in workshops related to study skills and metacognition developed by Higher Horizons, which aims to improve key skills needed for learning. Later activities are extracurricular taster sessions focused on core subjects, to stretch classroom learning, while also giving learners as experience of what HE is like and how to get there. Participants return for a final day in the autumn term of Y11 which focused on revision skills ahead of them taking their GCSE exams at the end of the year.

National Saturday Club: Across the UK the National Saturday Club has been working with our partners to deliver real action in local communities for over 13 years (National Saturday Club Annual Review, 2022). The programme offers multiple touchpoints with students to inspire and ignite passion for creative courses. Evidence suggests the National Saturday Club has long term positive impacts on students from widening participation backgrounds (National Saturday Club Annual Review, 2022). As part of our National Saturday Club we enable young people to explore Art & Design subjects within a local university setting (Staffordshire University). The activities run over 16-weeks and offers insight into a different discipline each week; exposure to a university setting with industry experts. The activities end with a celebration event in London where participants get to display their work.

Transforming Access

The risks to equality of opportunity addressed by this intervention include:

- Risk 1 – Knowledge & Skills
- Risk 2 – Information & Guidance
- Risk 3 – Perception of HE
- Risk 4 – Application Success Rates
- Risk 9 – Ongoing impacts from Coronavirus
- Risk 10 - Rising cost pressures

Further detail can be found in our Assessment of Performance (Annex A).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes *ST=short term (1-2 years)* *MT=medium term (3-4 years)* *LT= long term (5 years or longer)*
FutureMe	12+ main intervention touch points from KS2 to KS5 HiHo+ Staffs Hub team Project officer Placement students Student ambassadors Internal mentoring platform HiHo+ evaluation team Evaluators	ST1. Increased awareness of pathways and transition to HE. ST2. Positive attitudinal change to HE. ST3. Increased awareness of careers pathways. ST4. Increased self-efficacy (KS2&4). MT1. Improved KS2 attainment (Maths, reading and writing). MT2. Improved attainment at KS4. MT3. Increased aspirations to apply for HE.
Children's University Intervention crossover: - FutureMe	Community Engagement Manager Community organisations Student Ambassadors System to track student activity and to support the dissemination of awards Evaluators	ST1. Increase knowledge and understanding of careers and pathways. ST2. Increased engagement with local community organisations. ST3 Increased self-efficacy. MT1. Increased transferable skills development MT2. Increased attainment.

Stoke Scholars	Academic Staff	ST1. Increased knowledge on pathways, routes and delivery methods.
Intervention crossover:	Student Ambassdors	ST2. Increased self-efficacy.
• FutureMe	Central team staff time to support with activity.	MT1. Increased aspirations to progress to Higher Education.
	HiHo+ officers	MT2. Increased attainment because of improved study skills and metacognitive strategies.
	HiHo+ evaluation team	
	Evaluators	
National Saturday Club	Student Ambassadors	ST1. Raised awareness of Higher Education, Careers linked to creative courses and pathways to study.
Intervention crossover:	HiHo+ staff	ST2. Increased self-efficacy.
• FutureMe • Stoke Scholars	Academic Staff	
	Resources	
	Transport	
	Workshop space	
	Evaluators	

Table 2. Transforming Access Intervention Strategy.

References & evidence base:

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Linnenbrink, E. A., & Pintrich, P. R. (2003). The role of self-efficacy beliefs instudent engagement and learning intheclassroom. *Reading &Writing Quarterly*, *19*(2), 119-137.

Saeed, S., & Zyngier, D. (2012). How motivation influences student engagement: A qualitative case study. *Journal of Education and learning*, *1*(2), 252-267.

Strategic Intervention 2: Transforming Transitions

Our Transforming Transitions intervention strategy will reshape how we support learners as they transition to HE. This intervention strategy addresses five of our institutional APP objectives – **CO1, CO2, AtO1, AtO2, and PO1.** we are committed to empowering students and fostering their sense of belonging in the HE community. This intervention strategy was developed to complement our existing approach to Welcome and our spiralised induction offer which has also been developed to specifically increase equality of opportunity. Across the sector, marginalised students are less likely to access HE, are more at risk of withdrawal and have lower rates of attainment than their peers. Lack of HE awareness and study readiness are known barriers to academic success in HE for harder to reach learners, such as student groups identified in our institutional objectives. These barriers can lead to negative impacts on continuation, completion and attainment across the student lifecycle (Lemmens, 2010).

In 2022 the UPP Foundation released the Student Futures Manifesto which detailed 6 areas of need that students had in the post-covid HE context (these included pre-arrival support, transition support, wellbeing support, learning and teaching support, capital building support and graduate pathways). They also called for universities to develop a student manifesto that addressed these needs. At Staffordshire we conducted a large-scale research project in partnership with our future and current students and the Student's Union to fully unpick their needs and identify what we needed to address in our own manifesto. The findings showed that students needed accessible support to develop academic, digital and personal skills before, during and after arrival. In response we have developed a transition programme that familiarises them with university life, equips them with the fundamental skills and normalises the use of all the resources the university provides. This intervention weaves through different student lifecycle stages, detailed below.

Student engagement with their academic studies and wider community life is correlated with positive student outcomes. A sense of belonging and mattering at university is crucial to students' engagement and support growth during times of transition (Meehan & Howells, 2019; Vinson et al., 2010).To support students during transition we have developed a strategic intervention focused on

- developing academic skills and study readiness
- enhancing belonging and mattering.

We will do this by providing students with academic skills and study readiness micro credentials; linking students to positive connections with the local community and face to face programmes designed to settle students to university life. Through the different programmes of learning, we aim to:

- develop students' skills, competencies and confidence to participate effectively and successfully in HE and/or employment,
- increase learners' knowledge of and familiarity with HE environment and learning at Staffordshire University, and
- cultivate a sense of belonging and mattering for learners at Staffordshire University.

Our Transforming Transition activities will:

Enhance our programmes for transition. We will enhance our bespoke transition programmes, such as the FE2HE programme and Step Up to HE while also offering MC as part of our transition support. Developing a HE learner identity is important for academic success in HE (Briggs, Clark &

Hall, 2012). These programmes offer multiple opportunities and activities to smooth the transition to HE. Students are encouraged through the programmes to:

- develop expectations of HE life and a greater understanding of being an HE student may be like.
- aspire to be an HE learner.
- acquire knowledge and skills to underpin academic learning.

These programmes were developed to establish student identities as a learner and develops sense of belonging in students (Briggs et al., 2012). This provision engages with students during key stages of transition in the student lifecycle. It provides a variety of pathways to support learner's transitions:

- **FE2HE Programme.** this programme enriches local FE curricula by addressing the concerns specific to transitioning students through a range of in person workshops embedded into their FE curriculum and asynchronous resources.
- **FE2HE Microcredentials.** This suite of microcredentials is accessible to all learners who have accepted an offer from the University. The modularised courses aim to contribute to students' academic success, personal development, and employability throughout the student lifecycle.
- **Step Up to HE Short Course:** this short course provides key academic skills to pre-degree learners joining an undergraduate course at Staffordshire University.

Enable positive community connections. We will pilot a community engagement programme and conduct a community mapping project support belonging and mattering to both the University as well as the wider community. This will start with a pilot project working with the local Gurdwara and projects will be scaled up through recommendations from the community mapping and student co-creation.

We will address these aims through the suite of activities outlined in Table 3, the University is dedicated to ensuring that students have the necessary skills, knowledge and support to thrive during times of transition and achieve their full potential.

Transforming Transitions
The risks to equality of opportunity addressed by this intervention include: - Risk 1 - Knowledge & Skills - Risk 2 - Information & Guidance - Risk 3 - Perception of HE - Risk 5 – Limited choice of course type and delivery mode - Risk 10 – Cost pressures - Risk 12 – Progression from HE Further detail can be found in our Assessment of Performance (Annex A).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes *ST=short term (1-2 years)* *MT=medium term (3 -4 years)* *LT= long term (5 years or longer)*

FE2HE Programme Intervention crossover: • FE2HE Microcredentials	Programme Manager Academic Lecturers Programme Content Higher Horizons HiHo+ Staffs Hub Teaching space Evaluators	ST1. Increased familiarisation of university level study ST2. Increased confidence and motivation ST3. Increased study readiness MT1. Increased attainment MT2. Smoother transition into HE MT3. Increased continuation LT1. Increased attainment LT2. Increased social mobility
Step Up to HE Programme Intervention crossover: • FE2HE Microcredentials	Programme manager Academic tutors Teaching space Programme Content Evaluators	ST1. Increased knowledge and skills in academic practices ST2. Increased confidence in participating in HE MT1. Increased sense of belonging in HE MT2. Improved continuation and attainment LT1. Increased social mobility
FE2HE Microcredentials	Content creation TDM VLE system Academic staff time EDGE project officer Data analyst Evaluators	ST1. Increased student awareness and understanding of learning in HE. ST2. Increased student understanding of own approach to learning. ST3. Increased knowledge of self and possible career paths. ST4. Increased knowledge of digital platforms, skills and literacy in HE. ST5. Increased confidence in own digital skills. ST6. Increased confidence in time management and organisational skills. ST7. Increased confidence in technical writing and numeracy skills.

		ST8. Increased understanding of future learning and development opportunities.
		ST9. Increased student confidence and ability to of successful transition to HE transition into HE successfully.
		ST10. Increased likelihood that students will apply to HE.
		ST11. Increased understanding of student life and the benefits of engaging in the wider university life.
		ST12. Increased confidence in personal and professional development portfolio.
		ST13. Increased confidence to engage in non-academic university activities.
		ST14. Increased understanding of wellbeing.
		ST15. Increased knowledge of how to manage self and access support when needed.
		MT1. Increased applications to Staffordshire University.
		MT2. Increased student intake at Staffordshire University.
		MT3. Increased rates of attainment.
		MT4. Increased participation in non-academic university activities.
		MT5. Increased prioritisation of wellbeing.
		LT1. Enhanced career readiness.
Community Connections	Director of EDI Students Students Union Researcher Programme staff Transportation arrangements	ST1. Increased awareness of the Gurdwara and support available. ST3. Increased cookery skills MT1. increased support in time of food insecurity MT2. Increased belonging to community

	Gurdwara Staff	MT3. Increased engagement with the local community
	Community Organisation staff	ST2. increased knowledge of affordable food options
	Evaluator	MT4. Increased knowledge about the local community and possible ways of working
		LT1. increased engagement between the University and local community

Table 3. Transforming Transitions Intervention strategy.

References & evidence base:

Briggs, A. R., Clark, J., & Hall, I. (2012). Building bridges: understanding student transition to university. *Quality in higher education*, *18*(1), 3-21.

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Strategic Intervention 3: Transforming the Curriculum

Our Transforming the Curriculum intervention addresses six institutional APP objectives – **CO1, CO2, AtO1, AtO2, AtO3, and PO1.** This strategic intervention reinforces our work to refresh the curriculum, implement our academic strategy and deliver on our goals for equality, diversity and inclusion. This intervention strategy has activities designed to enhance staff pedagogic practice, increase the student voice in equality of opportunity and offer direct support to enable students to engage in placements and work experience. This intervention strategy was developed in response to the assessment of performance which showed indications of risk for students from racialised ethnicities and students with declared disabilities including cognitive and learning difficulties as well as multiple impairments.

This strand of work has two key aims. Firstly, it will create an inclusive environment, across all aspects of university life, that will enable our neurodiverse, disabled, care leaver, commuter, racially diverse and mature students, for example, to participate and experience a high-quality student journey. It does this by firstly, adopting the QAA Inclusion framework and Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap (EDAG) toolkit, which ensures that policies, practices, services and the curriculum are designed and delivered in a wholly inclusive way. Secondly there is specialised staff training around neurodiversity and a racially inclusive curriculum (including the EDAG toolkit). In addition to this the student voice work will encourage and enable students who may be under-represented the opportunity to be more active, have an increased sense of belonging and mattering, and allow the university to be more aware of how to support them effectively. Finally, direct funds for placements allows students from deprived areas to participate in activity that is either curricular or extra-curricular, but which directly enhances their student experience, their skill set and progression outcomes. Details for these activities can be found below.

Enhancing staff pedagogic practice: We will deliver staff development packages and resources to support learning and teaching practice for

- racial equity and
- neurodiverse-inclusion

which are key to curriculum development and our intention to refresh our curriculum. This activity was designed to promote equality of opportunity for students whose needs otherwise might not be considered as part of curriculum design. Evidence suggests that inclusive teaching practices lead to increased student engagement, satisfaction and academic success (Thomas, 2016) so embedding these approaches into academics' practice will be critical to addressing our completion and attainment gap objectives (CO1, CO1, AtO2, and AtO3).

Increasing the student voice. We have developed student co-creation interventions as part of this strategy to enable different types of students to engage with issues of equality of opportunity. Evidence suggests that engaging in student voice work is more likely to be taken up by students who can give their time for free to support the student experience (Stuart et al., 2009; Bols, 2017; Brooks et al., 2015). Conversely, students who experience barriers to equality of opportunity are less able to contribute to the student voice. These students are more likely to hold part-time or full-time jobs to sustain themselves and/or have caregiving responsibilities to family members. In order to enable more students to contribute their voice we have designed two activities (outlined in Table 4 below) underpinned by student co-creation.

- **Elective module.** A Phenomenon-Based Learning (PhBL) elective module will be launched where learners explore equality of opportunity through the articulation of an HE-related challenge, an intervention to solve the challenge and a plan to evaluate what works. This credit bearing module was designed to allow students otherwise unable to take part in extra-curricular or enrichment activities but want to contribute to the student experience have an opportunity. In each iteration of the module, our learners will co-create the module format, structure, output(s), and assessment aligned to their chosen intervention.
- **Student Research and Evaluation Assistants.** To empower students as partners in shaping their educational experiences, the university will recruit five students for 1-year roles as Student Research & Evaluation Assistants. These assistants will be paid for their time to receive certified evaluation training through an evaluation skills MC package. Student Research & Evaluation Assistants will be guaranteed evaluation and fieldwork experience.

The students as partners approach, central to co-creation, encourages greater student engagement and satisfaction with their learning and increased academic success (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Using the participatory approach was designed to centralise students' lived experiences and to identify and address barriers that our students may face.

Direct funds for work experience. Evidence suggests that engaging in formalised work experience during degree studies (e.g.; placements, internships, etc.) improves students' academic success, progression rates and graduate outcomes (Smith, 2017; Kerrigan, Manktelow & Simmons, 2018). However marginalised students are less likely to be able to engage with placements due to several barriers, such as finances, anxiety, or childcare commitments (Abbott, 2019). To ensure equal opportunities for students, new financial support initiatives have been introduced to facilitate their engagement with placements and work experience. Students who meet specific criteria will be eligible for a placement fee waiver, removing a key financial barrier associated with securing valuable work experience. Costs associated with both the application process and placement could include:

- transport, accommodation and/or moving costs,
- uniforms or work appropriate clothing (can change greatly based on role/industry), and
- equipment and/or sundries.

Transforming the Curriculum		
Risks to Equality of Opportunity	The risks to equality of opportunity addressed by this intervention include: - Risk 6: Insufficient academic support - Risk 7: Insufficient personal support - Risk 8: Mental health - Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus - Risk 10: Cost pressures - Risk 12: Progression from HE Further detail can be found in our Assessment of Performance (Annex A).	
Activity	**Inputs**	**Outcomes** *ST=short term (1-2 years)* *MT=medium term (3 -4 years)* *LT= long term (5 years or longer)*
Pedagogies for Racial Equity Intervention crossover: - Creating a Neuro-Diverse Friendly Learning & Teaching Experience	Staff Students Workshop Space Academic Development Team Evaluators	ST1. Increased confidence to discuss topics of race and racism. ST2. Increased knowledge in ways to effectively signpost students. ST3. Increased knowledge in the ways in which race and racism can impact learning. ST4. Increased knowledge of common biases.

		MT1. Increased engagement with tools to mitigate the impact of unconscious bias on student learning and assessment.
		MT2. Increased discussion and exploration of the impact of racism on student attainment.
		MT3. Increased implementation of pedagogies known to reduce outcome and progression disparities.
		LT1. Increase in courses validated which explicitly consider the impact of race and racism as part of the curriculum delivery.
		LT2. Increased student belonging.
		LT3. Increased student voice in curriculum design and delivery.
Creating a Neuro-Diverse Friendly Learning & Teaching Experience Intervention crossover: • Pedagogies for Racial Equity	Staff Students Workshop Space Academic Development Team Evaluators	ST1. ND students have an increased sense of belonging. (Students) ST2. Co-creation participants will feel they are valued by the university. (Students) ST3. Co-creation participants will feel that their voice is heard. (Students) ST4. Increased awareness of what neurodiversity means to students. (Staff) ST5. Increased knowledge around neurodiverse student needs. (Staff) ST6. Increased understanding of biases held by ourselves and others. (Staff)

		ST7. Increased ability to support neurodiverse students. (Staff)
		ST8. Increased understanding of neurodiversity. (Staff)
		ST9. Increased engagement of student voice in their L&T. (Staff)
		MT1. ND students are satisfied with their learning experience. (Students)
		MT2. ND students increase engagement with their learning experiences (Students)
		MT3. ND students increase engagement with their learning experiences. (Students)
		MT4. Co-creation participants will have increased self-efficacy. (Students)
		MT5. Co-creation participants will have increased sense of belonging. (Students)
		MT6. Co-creation participants will have increased employability skills. (Students)
		MT7 Increased engagement with neurodiversity training. (Staff)
		MT8. support for ND students embedded in practice. (Staff)
		MT9. Enhanced pedagogical practice which is inclusive of neurodiverse students. (Staff)

		LT1. Increased institutional attention to neurodiverse student needs. LT2. Increased sector dialogue around ND L&T student needs. LT3. Increased retention and attainment for student co-creators.
Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gaps (EDAG) Toolkit Intervention crossover: • Pedagogies for Racial Equity	Design time (staff) Training hours (staff delivering) Training hours (staff participating) Evaluation design and delivery (hours) Evaluators	ST1. Improved awareness of EDAG ST2. Increased knowledge of inclusive and accessible ways of working MT1. Increased engagement with inclusive practices as part of day to day working MT2. Increased sense of belonging LT1. Improved attainment
Placement Fee Waiver and Bursary Intervention crossover • Student Success Fund and Care leaver and estranged student bursaries	Fees and Funding Officer Head of Careers and Employability Funding Staff coordinator Funding disbursement mechanism Evaluators	ST1. Increased confidence in ability to take part in sandwich year, placement or internship ST2. Increased engagement with placements and internships MT1. Increased employability skills MT2. Increased attainment LT1. Increased progression to graduate jobs
Elective module Intervention crossover: • EDAG toolkit • Pedagogies for racial equity	Head of Academic Quality Staffordshire Centre for Learning and Pedagogic Practice (SCoLPP) Module development and module approval Staff facilitators	ST1. Increased staff and student awareness of PhBL module ST2. Increased student self-efficacy and transferable employability skills. ST3. Increased skills to manage and participate in social value projects

	Module content	ST4. Increased PhBL facilitation skills for academic staff
	Learning and teaching space	
	Budget to support student output	MT2. Broadened horizons and increased aspirations for students
		MT3. Increased belonging and mattering
		LT1. Increased student employability
		LT2. Increased representation among underrepresented groups in the UK workforce
Student Research & Evaluation Assistant Training	SCoLPP evaluation MC development	ST1. Increased awareness of evaluation approaches and methods
	Staff coordinator	ST2. Increased engagement with University life
	Students	MT1. Increased employability skills
	Educational Research and Evaluation Team	MT2. Increased sense of belonging
		MT3. Increased continuation
	Budget	LT1. Increased attainment
	Evaluators	LT2. Increased progression
Evaluative mindset institutional development Intervention crossover: • Student Research & Evaluation Assistant Training	Training, guidance, resources and assets	ST1. Awareness and knowledge of methods and rationale behind implementing a Theory of Change and evaluation informed approach to practice
	Workshop space	ST2. Increased confidence and ability to implement a Theory of Change and evaluation informed approach
	Staff coordinator	
	Staff time – engaging with training	MT1. Increased implementation/embedding of effective evaluative practices at school level
	Education Research and Evaluation Team	
	School management teams	MT2. Increased ownership of APP commitments and delivery to meet them at a School or Service level
	Evaluators	

		MT3. Increased ownership of intervention and evaluation design and delivery by Schools and Services

Table 4. Transforming Curriculum Intervention Strategy.

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Strategic intervention 4: Transforming Student Support

The Transforming Student Support strategic intervention will address the following objectives **CO1**, **CO2**, **AtO1**, and **AtO2**. They have been developed to support our student support offer and to enhance practice following the COVID-19 pandemic. This workstream aims to effectively addresses multiple objectives related to closing the gap in student completion and attainment. To achieve CO1 (close the completion gap between students from ABCS Q1 and ABCS Q5 to 7pp or less by 2028), the university is enhancing its learning analytics capabilities. This will enable early identification of at-risk students, including those from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and provide tailored support. Similarly, Objective CO2 (targeting the FT completion gap for students

from an Asian background) will benefit from these analytics, ensuring timely interventions and support. Meanwhile, AtO1, focused on closing the attainment gap for Asian students, will benefit from both enhanced analytics and a redesigned student support system that accounts for cultural nuances, fostering better engagement and academic success. AtO2, addressing the attainment gap for Black students, will also benefit from these strategies, with the redesigned support system ensuring inclusivity and academic mentoring enhancements increasing engagement. Finally, the provision of direct financial support through various funds will further assist students, irrespective of their background, in overcoming economic barriers and ultimately contribute to closing the identified gaps in completion and attainment. Greater detail about activities can be found below. Similarly, objective-activity mapping is outlined in Table 5 below.

Young people and the larger society have experienced the cost-of-living increase and lost learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the sector there is increased prevalence of mental health challenges (Lewis and Bolton, 2023). As a result, there is a strategic imperative to review our current mechanisms of student support to ensure it meets the current needs of students. For students to succeed on their courses we want to enhance our learning analytics capability to personalise support; redesign our service to best support students and enhance the modes of support (i.e. academic, pastoral and peer).

Increasing our learning analytics capability. An institutional approach to data analytics can support and inform planning and decision-making in HE (Wong et. al 2017). Learning analytics can help us to understand our own institutional context and student needs which can help support student outcomes (Clow, 2013). Staffordshire University's learning analytics is functional, but not optimised. We are currently enhancing our learning analytics based on three key pillars: engagement; wellbeing and employability. Through the development of analytics in these core areas we hope to enable student support areas access to timely data to tailor support.

Supporting students through student support redesign. Student wellbeing is linked with academic success (Khodabakhsh et al., 2019; Cobo-Rendon et al., 2020; Thomas & Maree, 2022). However, there is evidence that student help-seeking behaviour varies by student characteristics, such as cultural differences in help-seeking, societal gender norms of help-seeking, and some evidence of age-related experiential differences in help-seeking (e.g. Martín-Arbós & Castarlenas & Dueñas, 2021). This is further exacerbated by additional differences; for example, those with external loci of control are less likely to actively seek help. This understanding forms one of the bases for the student support redesign; that students may not seek help from our student support services at times of distress. We need to optimise the nature of these services, in addition to how we present the services, what the support offer looks like, and we need to work with students to ensure equitable access.

Enhancing modes of support. Academic Mentoring (often referred to as 'personal tutoring') is an essential part of our students' experience. Academic mentors are crucial to student success, not least because they help develop a sense of belongingness and connectedness (Palmer, O'Kane, & Owens, 2009), but also because of their support in identifying personalised ways for the student to learn and grow. However, similarly with students services, student engagement with mentors vary. We will increase the accessibility of academic mentoring so that it is useful to students during their student journey. By using learning analytics and student co-creation, we can develop and deliver an academic mentoring offer that is relevant and useful to students who may otherwise not have equality of opportunity.

Direct funds for Student Needs. Evidence suggests that direct financial support to students in need have a positive correlation with student outcomes. We have identified three funds to provide direct financial support in times of hardship. Our student success fund is available to all students from backgrounds which have been identified as an indication of risk or can evidence hardship. As part of the Care Leavers Covenant, we also offer financial bursaries for care leavers and estranged students to ensure they are able to meet their basic needs. In addition we provide dyslexia assessments and equipment to students to support their success.

- **Student Success Fund** which provides bursaries to students with indications of risk in times of hardship.
- **Care leaver and estranged students fund** which provide bursaries to students who are care leavers or estranged from their families.
- Dyslexia assessment and equipment fund **which provides funding for assessment and equipment to enable dyslexic students to succeed.**

Transforming Student Support		
Risks to Equality of Opportunity Our Assessment of Performance (Annex A) has mapped key indicators to risk at our university, which have informed our objectives, to the EORR.	The risks to equality of opportunity addressed by this intervention include: - Risk 7: Insufficient personal support - Risk 8: Mental health - Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus - Risk 11: Capacity issues (re: Student Support Services) - Risk 10: Cost pressures Further detail can be found in our Assessment of Performance (Annex A).	
Activity	**Inputs**	**Outcomes** *ST=short term (1-2 years)* *MT=medium term (3 -4 years)* *LT= long term (5 years or longer)*
Learning Analytics	Data infrastructure Learning analytics developer Learning analytics platform Academic Mentors Careers and Employability Team Student development services team User group training Evaluators	ST1. Increased data informed perspective of our students ST2. Increased understanding of student needs MT1. Increased use of data to inform action with regards to successful student outcomes. MT2. Cultural shift in the regular use of data to inform action with regards to successful student outcomes.
Re-designing wellbeing services	Research and data analysis Stakeholder consultation Students	ST1. Increased engagement with student services. ST2. Increased self-report benefit of student services engagement

Intervention crossover: • Learning Analytics (evidence-informed student support)	Cross-institution working group Resourcing and budget Implementation team Evaluators	MT1. Reduction in student withdrawals, deferrals, and non-submissions MT2. Increase in summative assessment grades for Black and Asian students LT1. Increased rates of academic success (reduction of awarding gaps), specifically for students identified as greater risk of inequalities of outcomes.
Academic mentoring Intervention crossover: • Learning Analytics (evidence-informed student support)	Academic Mentors Academic Development Team Academic Lead for Academic Mentoring Staffordshire Centre for Learning and Pedagogic Practice Academic mentor systems Students Evaluators	ST1. Consistency in staff approach to academic mentoring MT1. More Black, Asian, and ABCS students accessing academic mentoring MT2. Increased sense of belongingness with academic community MT3. Students reporting usefulness of academic mentoring MT4. Increased attainment on summative assessments for Black, Asian, and ABCs students LT1. Reduction in the awarding gap between Black and White students, Asian and White students, and ABCs quintile 1 and 5 students
Direct fund for student needs Intervention crossover: • Academic Mentoring (one mechanism for signposting funds)	Funds Disbursement mechanism Money Advice and Guidance Service Dyslexia diagnostics Dyslexia equipment Funding governance structure Evaluator	ST1. increased assurance about ability to continue on their course ST2. increased belief of mattering to the University MT1. increased financial certainty MT2. Increased completion LT1. increased progression LT2. increased social mobility

Table 5. Transforming Student Support Intervention Strategy.

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Evaluation

This section outlines our approach to evaluation. Our evaluation approach was developed to support our **mechanisms for change.** Our approach was designed to ensure:

- evidence-informed intervention strategies using ToC approaches.
- robust methodologies that inform and strengthen the evidence.
- focus on both the process and outcomes of our intervention strategies as part of our evaluation approach.
- student co-creation and meaningful evaluation experience.
- evaluation outputs fit for external publication.

Evidence-informed intervention strategies. Our intervention strategies were designed using ToC to support the articulation of evaluation questions based upon theorised short, medium and long-term outcomes. Activities are mapped to a project plan with a complementary evaluation plan to manage delivery and evaluation output timelines which are mapped onto our whole institution intervention catalogue. Project monitoring logs will track timelines, progress and limitations efficiently. Risks to ensuring we meet delivery and evaluation targets will be added to a risk register which will be monitored and updated regularly. These assets will be included in a project strategy document that guides programme teams to support evaluation implementation.

Robust methodologies. Evaluation plans for intervention strategies will include process, outcomes and learning dimensions utilising a mixed method approach. This will ensure that we are able to reflect upon evidence holistically of what we are doing and what impact it is having on our students, staff, partners, and the wider community. Below is a description of the types of metrics that could be included in evaluation dimensions. The incorporation of these will be dependent on the evaluation priorities for each intervention.

- **Process.** This evaluation type will assess elements including the relevance, effectiveness, and coherence of interventions so that we understand how programmes were implemented and whether the implementation was effective. Process evaluations ensure continuous improvement and provide recommendations for activity enhancement. Evaluating process works best using a range of data collection methods including collation and analysis of statistics such as reach, engagement, length of engagement, use of resource, both individual intervention and summative stakeholder surveys, and semi-structured focus groups and interviews. Through these we will be able to capture satisfaction rates and feedback on delivery and resource.
- **Outcomes and impact.** This evaluation type enables us to track progress against objectives and areas of change for staff, students, partners and community members engaged in equality of opportunity interventions. This could include increases in awareness, knowledge, and skills; changes in attitude, behaviour, and activity; and environmental, social or policy changes that might be attributable to our APP activity. We will capture impact through longitudinal surveys, project diaries and video diaries, and summative semi-structured focus groups and interviews; these will also assess barriers to implementation and perceptions of sustained long-term impact. Where possible, control group testing will be utilised, where relevant and ethical, to explore causal change. A combination of these will help us to evidence change over time.
- **Learning and reflection.** Reflection and learning will be a core focus of our evaluation approach and specific dimensions and questions designed to draw feedback from students, staff and partners that informs how we can improve our delivery processes and enhances the impact we have over the four-year APP cycle.

Student co-creation. Co-creation is an important part of this element; our APP activities will be tailored to the needs of our students and the wider community by ensuring their voice is a part of the creation process, both in terms of designing interventions and evaluation. Our work to develop an evaluative mindset across the institution includes Theory of Change and evaluation literacy sessions to ensure students are a part of the process throughout delivery and evaluation. This is reinforced by a commitment to train student research and evaluation assistants who will deliver evaluation outputs. Project design meetings and annual findings validation and reflection workshops will include a cross-section of stakeholders (including students) to ensure our interventions are tailored to need and that we are able to use findings from evaluation outputs to inform decision-making.

We are committed to inclusivity, ensuring that traditionally underrepresented students have opportunities to participate, contribute and benefit from our APP. To ensure this, our efforts will include:

- **Student awareness initiatives:** Our Education Research and Evaluation team, in collaboration with the Students Union, is actively involved in raising awareness and promoting engagement through various means. This includes organising APP student-specific workshops, which not only raise awareness but also provide and signpost students with opportunities for engagement. We are committed to ensuring that these workshops are accessible to a diverse group of learners. Furthermore, we plan to explore alternative mediums for disseminating information about the APP (e.g.; student-designed "zines") which can cater to varying learning preferences and backgrounds.
- **Paid student evaluators:** We plan to establish a team of five paid and trained student evaluators. This initiative is designed to ensure that students who may traditionally face

barriers to participating in extra-curricular activities are not only compensated for their time but also receive training in evaluation. This approach not only enhances their employability but also ensures that we include voices and perspectives from a wide range of backgrounds in our evaluation process.

- **Phenomenon-Based Learning module:** We are launching a Phenomenon-Based Learning (PhBL) elective module focused on exploring equality of opportunity within higher education. This credit-bearing module provides an opportunity for students who might have other commitments, such as work or other time pressures, to actively engage with the APP. In each iteration of this module, our learners will co-create the format, structure, output(s), and assessment criteria aligned with their chosen intervention. This approach ensures that students from diverse backgrounds have a direct hand in shaping their learning experiences and contributing to the success of the APP.

Through these efforts we aim to foster diversity of views and perspectives in the design, implementation, and evaluation of our plan.

Collaborative evaluation. In addition to working with students to evaluate APP interventions, we are working with Higher Horizons (part of Uni Connect) to co-evaluate many of our access activities and interventions.

Dissemination of Findings. APP strands will be reported on, led by evaluation leads, at a local level on an annual basis to monitor progress towards outcomes. Opportunities to both disseminate and reflect on progress for all stakeholders will be facilitated at a local level, with an additional commitment to feed these findings into APP Board meetings for review at least once annually ensuring stakeholders voice at all levels becomes integral to delivery. To ensure full engagement from all stakeholders with the findings, we will welcome representation from across the university and students' union to validation workshops to engage with the findings; these will be accessible and tailored to audience with a focus on the key messages from the evaluation and recommendations for future delivery years. In the final year of the APP cycle, a summative evaluation of all strands will also be published at the end of the four-year cycle which will include recommendations on next steps to ensure that learning feeds into the next APP cycle and evaluation is central to informing ongoing access and participation work streams.

Whole provider approach

Staffordshire University has a whole provider approach to addresses the risks to equality of opportunity outlined in our institutional objectives. We are proud to fulfil our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and have a whole institution approach to equality, diversity and inclusion of which access and participation forms a strand of work. Our whole provider approach for our APP is articulated through our mechanisms for change. We have identified seven institutional mechanisms for change which will enable us to effectively deliver our plan.

Whole provider planning. The interventions developed to support equality of opportunity have been articulated using a theory of change and have defined and measurable short-, medium- and long-term outcomes. Our interventions were designed to support our strategies for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in line with our existing EDI frameworks.

Underpinning our work across the student lifecycle. Our four overarching strategic interventions are connected to our core offers across outreach, transitions, curriculum and student support. We believe that the academic experience and wider student experience we cultivate should be designed to ensure equality of opportunity. As a result, we support students at all stages of their journey, from preschool on to through successful graduates. Our plan supports our ongoing work in the following ways:

- **Transforming Access:** We are strengthening our partnership with HiHo+ and schools to support our core recruitment and outreach approach and to support raising attainment initiatives from KS2.
- **Transforming Transitions:** This strategy enhances focus on transitions before, during and after a students' time at university and links to our core Welcome programme and spiralised induction model.
- **Transforming Curriculum:** Our strategic interventions for equality of opportunity are part of our Curriculum Refresh programme to review and enhance our current academic strategy and EDI.
- **Transforming Student Support:** We are working with the Student Support Champion to redesign our student support services while enabling our current offer to remain effective.

Student co-creation and engagement is articulated at the outset of each intervention strategy. Student co-creation is essential so that student can:

- develop their own activities.
- support the development of intervention strategies.
- contribute to the evaluation approach.

Localised planning. Schools will develop plans on a two-year cycle which enable them to:

- articulate their specific commitments to engagement with the institutional plan.
- develop their own interventions relevant to their specific cohorts which may present unique indications of risk. The assessment of performance identified subject-level variation in good degree attainment by racialised ethnicity. We will use a localised planning approach to further interrogate that data with Schools, departments and courses to develop specific actions for equality of opportunity.

Evaluative Mindset. We will embed a cross-institutional approach to developing the evaluative mindset to ensure staff and students engage with our plan through reflective practice with the goal to implement evidence-based approaches to support equality of opportunity into their work with students. We offer a range of 1:1 and small group training to support Theory of Change development, evaluation design, data analysis and reporting which support academic schools and professional service teams to evaluate their own work related to our plans as well as to enhance the standard of evidence more broadly. This work is underpinned by group workshops centred on:

- small team evaluation design workshops;
- one-to-one support sessions to develop Theory of Change and evaluation literacy;
- development of guides and templates for data collection.

Our 1:1 support enables us to work with a specific team to develop a ToC and evaluation plan for their interventions. Our small group workshops support awareness raising regarding ToC and evaluation literacy. We have integrated Advance HE's Changebusters ToC board game

methodology into our small group offer. We support with the design, delivery and reporting outputs offering a level of expertise and independence that is critically important to student-facing and support staff. In addition, the Data and Business Intelligence (DBI) department are a dedicated team of data analysts supporting APP delivery. DBI creates data reports and dashboards that enable academic schools and professional service departments to prioritise localised APP objectives: including monitoring student recruitment, attendance, mentoring, placements, and attainment. As part of this service, DBI also offers data literacy session to enhance staff understanding of reports and dashboards.

Strategic Oversight. Our objectives to ensure equality of opportunity are reflected in our strategic KPIs which are overseen by our Board of Governors. Work related to the APP is overseen by our APP Steering Board and is guided by our frameworks and strategy for EDI. Our quality assurance processes such as continuous course monitoring ensure meaningful discussions take place at course level about the local actions to ensure equality of opportunity. The strategic oversight we have in place will monitor and ensure target groups are not adversely impacted by the intervention strategies outlined in the APP.

Evaluation and insights. We have built internal capacity through the creation of the Educational Research and Evaluation (EREV) team and Staffordshire Centre for Learning and Pedagogic Practice (SCoLPP) to:

- ensure the development of robust evaluation designs.
- undertake fieldwork and data analysis.
- publish the results of the evaluations related to the APP.

Our evaluative mindset activity and localised planning activity will ensure that we can draw on skills and expertise from across the university to develop the evidence base.

Student consultation

The timing of the APP development provided significant challenges to meaningful student consultation. The planning cycle for wave one providers occurred outside of the academic calendar and during the election season for the Students Union (SU). Despite these challenges we have been able to engage the students' union with the development of the plan and we are both looking forward to working more closely together to realise the articulated intervention strategies.

The SU has meaningful presence on the APP Steering Board of which a full-time SU Officer and Chief Executive are members. The SU President and the Student Voice manager were part of the task and finish group for our assessment of performance. The task and finish group explored our data using a bespoke Power BI dashboard and supported us to identify the persistent indications of risk articulated in the assessment of performance annex.

Furthermore, The SU arranged a student consultation on the plan which we presented and received feedback from 10 student representatives. We facilitated a comprehensive review of intervention development through a nearly two-hour meeting with Student Union officers. Prior to the meeting, these officers were provided with a summary of our plan as well as the intervention catalogue detailing and its proposed activities, ensuring they were well-prepared to contribute effectively. This session provided a platform for candid discussions, feedback, and suggestions, which directly influenced the design of our interventions, including target populations and the feasibility of various strategies.

Looking ahead, we are dedicated to further enhancing student involvement in our APP and related initiatives. To achieve this, we plan to appoint and train five annual Student Evaluation Officers who will actively participate in the evaluation of interventions, ensuring that student voices guide our ongoing efforts. We are also working closely with the Students' Union to enhance communication and implementation of the APP among our student population. For instance, we have engaged officers in theory of change training, which not only explores the APP but also raises awareness of attainment gaps and their implications. Furthermore we are developing workstreams to increase awareness and understanding of the APP for true transparency and engagement with our student population.

Student co-creation is key to getting this right and how students will be involved in our plan is reflected in our intervention strategies. Student co-creation will:

- generate student led equality of opportunity activities through our elective module.
- ensure that our pedagogies for neurodiversity and racial equity interventions are fit for purpose.
- allow students to access training and work experience in research and evaluation.

Evaluation of the plan

Evidence informed decision making through robust evaluation is key to the planning and delivery of our intervention strategies. This is reinforced through our mechanisms for change that allow us to understand what works, why and how for our students.

We have developed our evaluation plans in a consistent and standardised manner which articulates an evaluation lead, the standard of evidence we are aiming to generate and the evaluation types we will implement. In addition, each plan has mapped data collection methods to the outcomes articulated as part of the theory of change.

We offer a range of 1:1 and small group training to support Theory of Change development, evaluation design, and data analysis for support to academic schools and professional service teams to evaluate their own work related to our plans as well as to enhance the standard of evidence more broadly. This work is underpinned by group workshops centred on

- small team evaluation design workshops.
- one-to-one support sessions to develop Theory of Change and evaluation literacy.
- development of guides and templates for data collection.

Our 1:1 support enables us to work with a specific team to develop a ToC and evaluation plan for their interventions. Our small group workshops support awareness raising regarding ToC and evaluation literacy. We have integrated Advance HE's Changebusters ToC board game methodology into our small group offer. We support with the design, delivery and reporting outputs offering a level of expertise and independence that is critically important to student-facing and support staff. In addition, the Data and Business Intelligence (DBI) department are a dedicated team of data analysts supporting APP delivery. DBI creates data reports and dashboards that enable academic schools and professional service departments to prioritise localised APP objectives: including monitoring student recruitment, attendance, mentoring, placements, and

attainment. As part of this service, DBI also offers data literacy session to enhance staff understanding of reports and dashboards.

Provision of information to students

Students can access our access and participation plan here: https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/course-administration/academic-policies-and-regulations/access-and-participation-plan

Our fees are published on our website at http://www.staffs.ac.uk/undergraduate/fees/.

All Undergraduate students who are assessed as paying "Home" student fees will be charged at the current capped rate set by the UK government for the academic year 2023/24 this is £9250 per year. All part time undergraduate courses, including those on Lifelong Leaning Entitlement (LLE) delivery will be charged proportionally based on the number of credits studied at £77 per credit, up to a maximum of £6935 per year. Home fees are based on UK citizenship, right to remain in the UK and Asylum status. Fees for International, Postgraduate and Research students will be available on our website and are subject to change. See chart below for Home fee paying students.

UKPRN	Provider	Has an approved APP in force for 2022-23?	Fee cap applicable for 2022-23	Holds a TEF award at the relevant time to inform 2022-23 fee caps?	Course type	Maximum full time fees chargeable to 2022-23 entrants	Maximum part-time fees chargeable to 2022-23 entrants [note 1]	Prescribed fee cap for full-time entrants in 2022-23	Prescribed fee cap for part-time entrants in 2022-23
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	CertHE/DipHE	9,250	*	9,250	6,935
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	Postgraduate ITT	9,250	4,500	9,250	6,935
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	Accelerated degree [note 2]	11,100	NA	11,100	NA
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	Sandwich year	1,850	NA	1,850	NA
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	Erasmus and overseas study years	1,385	*	1,385	1,385
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	Other	5,950	4,500	9,250	6,935
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	First degree	9,250	6,935	9,250	6,935
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	Foundation degree	9,250	6,935	9,250	6,935
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	Foundation year/Year 0	9,250	6,935	9,250	6,935
10006299	Staffordshire University	Yes	Higher	Yes	HNC/HND	5,950	4,650	9,250	6,935

* As of 2022/23; fees are subject to government policy changes.

We offer a range of bursaries and financial support which are also set out on our website: http://www.staffs.ac.uk/undergraduate/funding/financial-support/

Information on our support arrangements, including the different elements, the value, the eligibility criteria and priority groups will be provided to prospective students and all current students. The criteria used and value of awards will remain the same through the period of the plan.

Our financial support includes the following bursaries and funds:

Care Leaver & Estranged Student Bursary which provides bursaries to students who are care leavers or estranged from their families.

Eligibility:

- Be an undergraduate 'home' fee status student, studying at Staffordshire University *, on a full-time or sandwich course, paying the full tuition fee either yourself or through a sponsor (such as the NHS for some health courses).
- Have met the definition criteria of a Care Leaver or Estranged student as detailed on this page (https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/support/student-support-and-experience/care-leavers-and-estranged-students)
- Be 25 or under when you start the course.
- Be entitled to funding for fees and living costs from Student Finance England, Wales or Northern Ireland.
- Be in receipt of the full tuition fee loan or comparable funding.

Funding Value:

- Students will receive a bursary worth £1,000 for each year they study and pay full tuition fees.
- On completion of their studies students will receive an additional 'graduation' payment of £225.

Student Success (Support) Fund which provides bursaries to students with indications of risk in times of hardship.

Eligibility:

- A current and active student (you cannot have withdrawn or taken a break in studies).
- Classed as Home for fees.
- Studying full or part time on an eligible course (if studying part time, you must be studying at 25% of a full-time equivalent course).
- Enrolled onto a course which is a minimum of 1-year duration.
- Enrolled onto a course that leads to an award such as a HND, Foundation Degree, BA, BSc, BEng, Masters or Doctorate.
- Entitled to funding from Student Finance England, Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland.
- In receipt of the full tuition fee loan or comparable funding.
- In proven genuine financial hardship.
- Able to show that reasonable provision was made prior to commencing your course to cover expected tuition and living costs.

Priority groups:

Although applications will be considered from any student, priority is given to students who are:

- Lone parents.
- Disabled students (especially where DSA is unable to meet particular costs).

- Mature students.
- Students who are care Leavers.
- Students who are estranged from their parents.
- Students who are carers.
- Students from low-income families.
- Students whose courses have additional costs.

Funding value:

All bursaries will depend on individual circumstances, with awards ranging from £100 to £2,000 per student per year. For those students studying on our London campus an additional weighting will be applied (currently calculated at 31% and based on Student Finance maximum maintenance loan entitlements).

Annex A: Assessment of performance

This annex details our assessment of performance which was used to determine our risks to equality of opportunity and to develop our access and participation plan (APP) to addresses equality of opportunity. Analyses were undertaken at key points in the student lifecycle to identify key indications of risk and to map these indications of risk onto the Office for Students (OfS) Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR).

Our assessment of performance uses sector-level and provider-level data available on the OfS APP data combined with relevant internal data to identify our key indications of risk. These datasets were reproduced in a bespoke dashboard which a task and finish group comprised of student and staff stakeholders explored and supported the process to identify our persistent indications of risk.

Much of the data interrogated had some amount of statistical uncertainty. Indications of risk were identified where the largest gaps existed with the lowest levels of statistical uncertainty. We plan to engage in further course-level disaggregation as part of our localised planning approach set out as part of our mechanisms of change.

Indications of risk were identified at the access, completion, attainment and progression points in the student journey.

Access

We explored indications of risk at the access stage of the student lifecycle by analysing access rates and access gaps for the following student characteristics:

- Age
- Ethnicity
- ABCS quintiles
- Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility
- Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) quintiles
- TUNDRA quartile
- Disability declaration

Data was also compared at the sector-level to support decision-making around key indications of risk.

The first indication of risk identified at the access stage is the ***full-time access gap between student who were eligible for FSM and those who were not***. Access rates for students eligible for FSM declined from 2019 to 2021 with small levels of statistical uncertainty observed (± 2.1 at 75% confidence interval) in 2021. A decline in FSM eligible was also observed at sector level from 2019. However, we have experienced a more significant rate of decline resulting in a larger access gap than sector average. The full-time access gap for students eligible for FSM has slightly declined from 31.9% in 2019 to 28.9% in 2021. The slight decline observed is due in part to increased enrolments of students for whom we have no data on FSM eligibility.

Students are eligible for FSM if their family earns £22,700 or less outside London with one child and £26,300 or less for families outside of London with two or more children. FSM eligibility is often used as a proxy measure for socioeconomic disadvantage. In Stoke-on-Trent over one third

(34.8%) of students are eligible for FSM compared to the 17.6% of students eligible across Staffordshire[3].

Four-year aggregate *access rates for students with racialised ethnicities* continue to remain below the sector average (Figure 4).
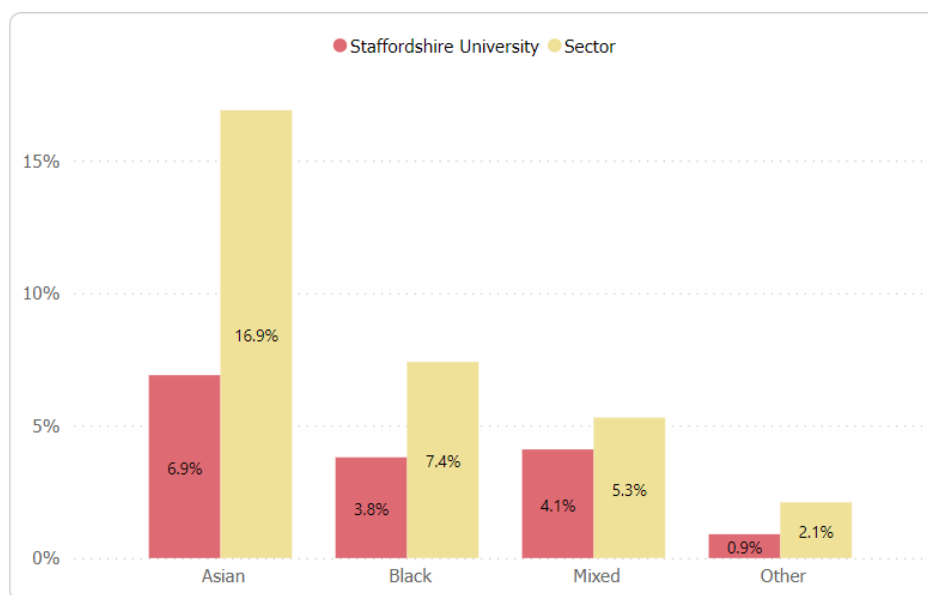

Figure 3. Four-year aggregate access rates for students with racialised ethnicities

In particular, the **access rate for Asian students** is a key indication of risk. We have a 10-percentage point (pp) difference in access rates from the sector. In addition, Asian access rates do not match our local Stoke-on-Trent community profile where 9.9% of Stoke residents identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh in the 2021 Census.[4] **Access rates for Black students** are also a key indication of risk as our access rate is 3.6 pp below the sector average.

Post entry

We conducted an assessment of performance for three key post entry outcomes in the student lifecycle: continuation, completion and good degree attainment. We explored how these outcomes varied based on a range of student characteristics to identify key indications of risk. The student characteristics explored were:

- Age
- Ethnicity
- ABCS quintiles
- Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility
- Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) quintiles
- TUNDRA quartile
- Disability declaration

Completion

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[3] https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/cost-of-living/number-pupils-free-school-meals-7220946
[4] https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E06000021/

Completion refers to proportion of students who received their qualification four years and 15 days from course start. As a result, our completion data is lagged. We observed four key indications of risk at the completion stage of the student lifecycle.

The 2017 **FT completion gap between students from ABCS Q1** and ABCS Q5 is 15.9 pp. This gap is smaller than the sector gap (23.5 pp) but remains the largest completion gap observable in our completion data. ABCS is a measure of intersectionality. It was developed to account for how different characteristics together can lead to barriers of equality of opportunity. The measures used for ABCS vary depending on the student lifecycle stage being looked at. Five quintiles are used to classify disadvantage.

The four-year **aggregate FT completion gap between Asian** and white students is 5.6 pp compared to the four-year aggregate sector gap of 1.4 pp. In addition, we have larger four-year FT completion gaps who identified as having a mixed ethnic background as well as students who identified as 'other' ethnicity.
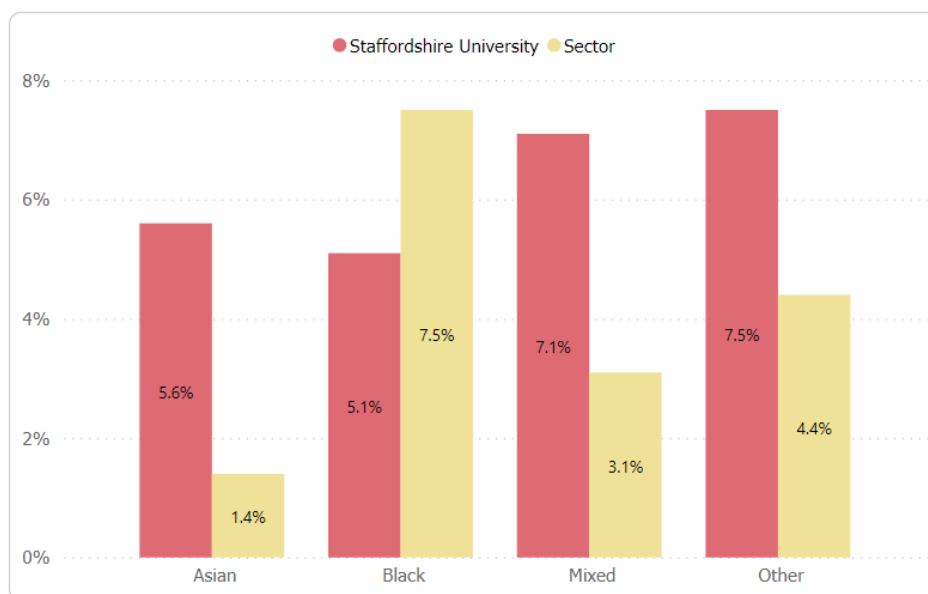

Figure 4. Four-year aggregate completion gaps for students with racialised ethnicities

Good degree attainment

Good degree attainment refers to the rate at which students receive a 2:1 or 1st class degree. We have identified several indications of risk centred on the ethnicity degree awarding gap (EDAG). We have observed several indications of risk through analysis of the four-year aggregate ***attainment gap for students from racialised ethnic groups including Asian student, Black students and students who identify as 'other ethnicity.'***
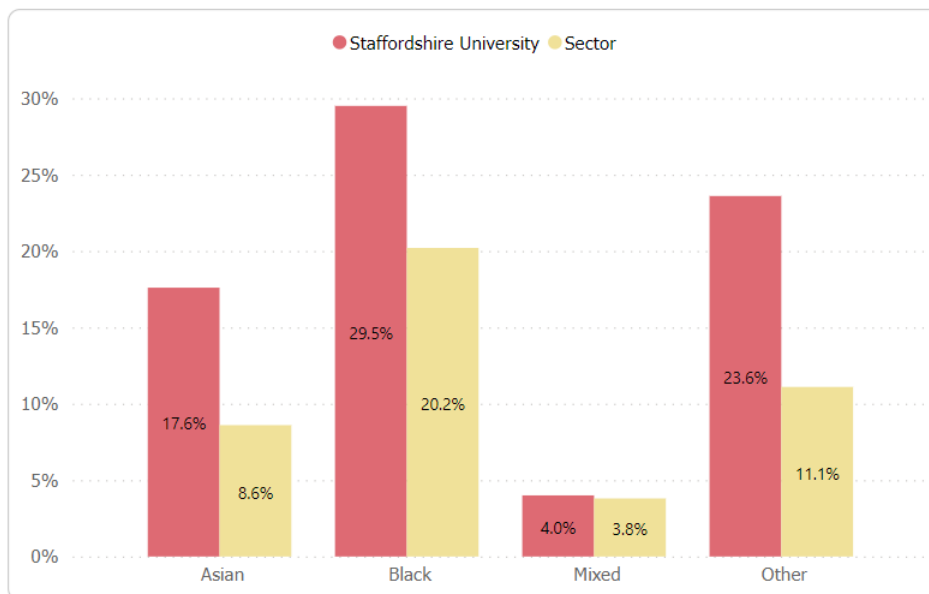
Figure 5. Four-year aggregate good degree gaps for students with racialised ethnicities

A thorough disaggregated analysis of ethnicity and good degree attainment by year was frustrated due to the low population sizes of racialised ethnic groupings and significant variation was observed each year. Four-year aggregate analyses offered more insight and the analysis found that persistent risks exist across a range of ethnicities including:

- 33.2 pp attainment gap between Black or Black British – African
- 23.7 pp attainment gap between Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
- 16 pp attainment gap between Black or Black British - Caribbean
- 13.6 pp attainment gap between Asian or Asian British – Indian
- 9.7 pp attainment gap between Other Asian background

Lower attainment gaps were observed for Mixed – white and Black Caribbean (4.3 pp). Four-year aggregate data were too low to publish (n<30) for the following racialised ethnicities:

- Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
- Arab
- Chinese
- Mixed – White and Black African
- Other Black background
- Other ethnic background

Figure 7 shows four-year aggregate subject-level variation in good degree outcomes between Black, Asian and white students with gaps observed in all areas except for Education and teaching. This data was not disaggregated further due to low population sizes for some racialised ethnicities.

Ethnicity ● Asian ● Black ● White
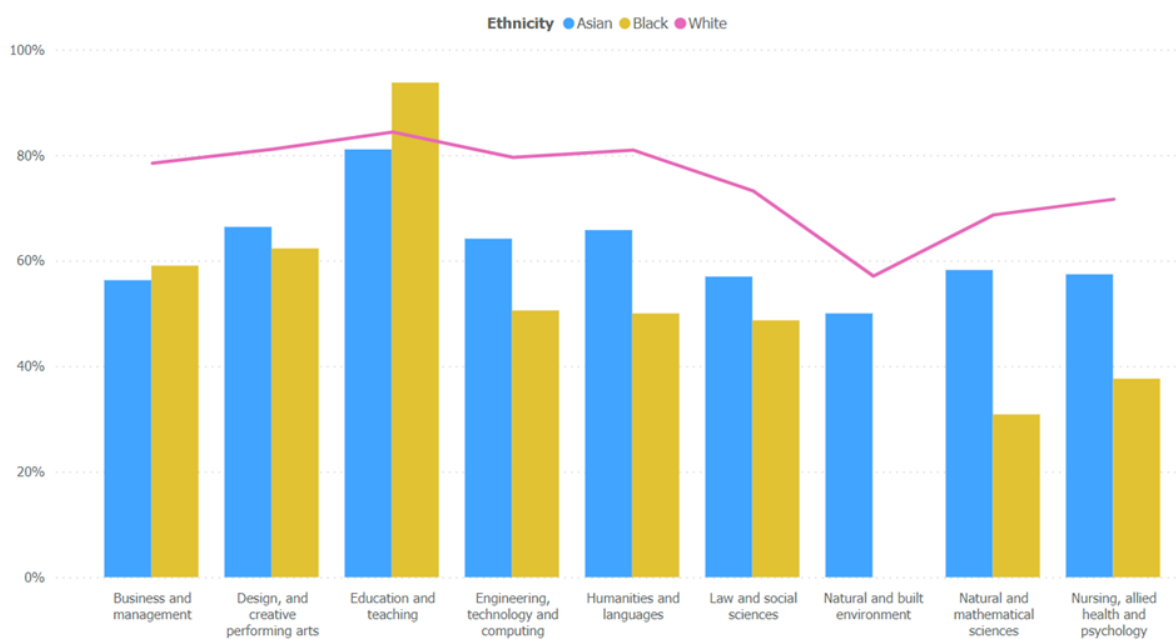
There has been a steady increase in the number of HE students declaring a disability in England, with a 47% uptick in the number of students with a known disability from 2014/15 to 2019/20.[5] The growth in declaration has been reported across all different disabilities categories, however the sharpest rise has come through mental health declarations (see Figure 9).

Between 2010/11 and 2021/22, the number of students declaring a mental health disability increased nearly seven-fold.[6]

These figures only consider students with an official diagnosis for their condition(s) and have declared this condition with their providers. We know that there are students outside of these parameters who are likely struggling with mental health. While just over 5% of the student population in England has a declared mental health disability, Student Minds' 2022 mental health survey[7] indicated 57% of respondents (N = 1037) self-reported a mental health issue and 27% stated they had a diagnosed mental health condition.

FT UG enrolment for students with a declared disability, particularly students with a declared mental health or multiple disabilities have increased from 2018. We have identified several indications of risk for students with a declared disability. We have ***increasing enrolments of students with a mental health condition or multiple impairments*** which may have an impact on attainment rates in the future. We also have ***low attainment rates for students with social or communication impairments as well as students with a cognitive or learning difficulty.***

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[5] Hubble, S., & Bolton, P. (2021). Support for disabled students in higher education in England. *Briefing Paper*, *8716*. Accessed on: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8716/#:~:text=In%202019%2F20%20332%2C300%20UK,47%25%20since%202014%2F15.

[6] Lewis, J. & Bolton, P. (2023). Student mental health in England: Statistics, policy and guidance. Accessed on: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8593/

[7] Student Minds (2023). Student Minds Research Briefing – February '23 [PowerPoint slides]. Accessed on: https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/student_minds_insight_briefing_feb23.pdf
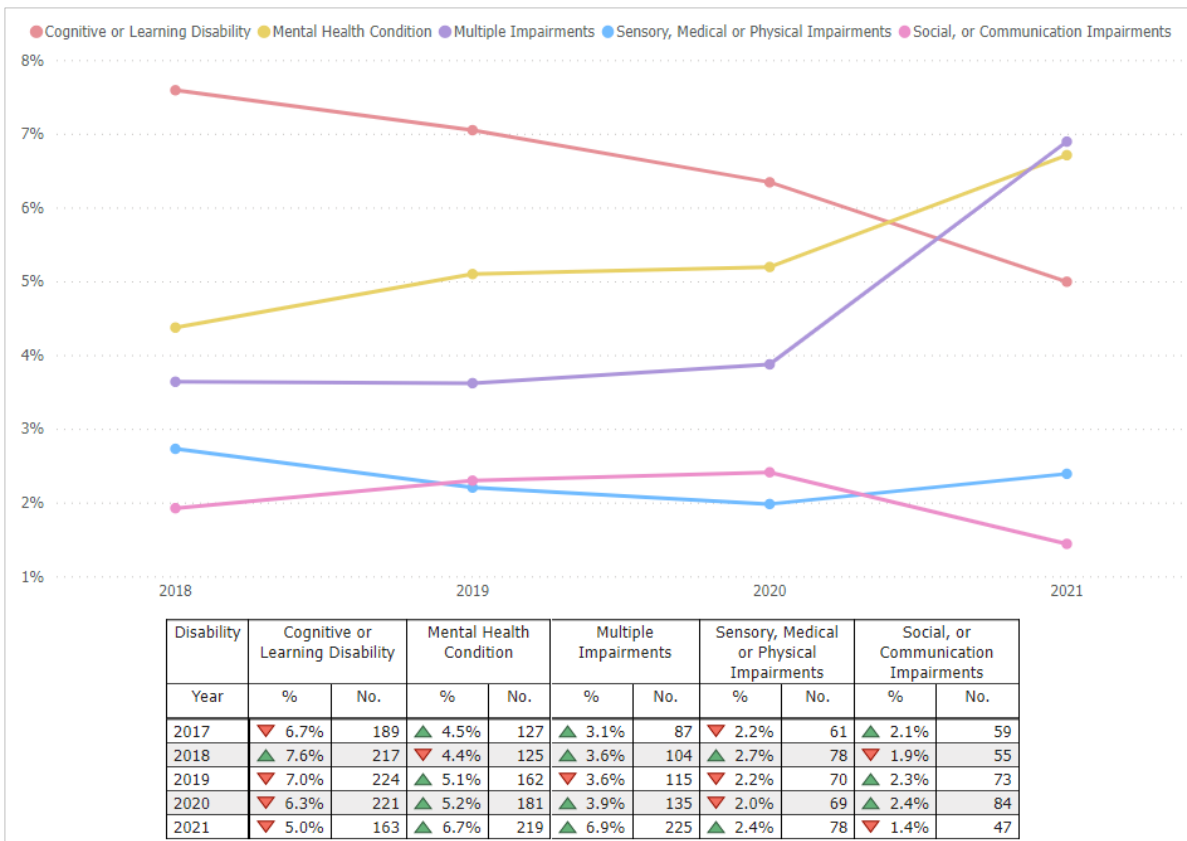
Figure 6. Full-Time Undergraduate enrolment for students with a declared disability

Disability	Cognitive or Learning Disability		Mental Health Condition		Multiple Impairments		Sensory, Medical or Physical Impairments		Social, or Communication Impairments	
Year	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
2017	▼ 6.7%	189	▲ 4.5%	127	▲ 3.1%	87	▼ 2.2%	61	▲ 2.1%	59
2018	▲ 7.6%	217	▼ 4.4%	125	▲ 3.6%	104	▲ 2.7%	78	▼ 1.9%	55
2019	▼ 7.0%	224	▲ 5.1%	162	▼ 3.6%	115	▼ 2.2%	70	▲ 2.3%	73
2020	▼ 6.3%	221	▲ 5.2%	181	▲ 3.9%	135	▼ 2.0%	69	▲ 2.4%	84
2021	▼ 5.0%	163	▲ 6.7%	219	▲ 6.9%	225	▲ 2.4%	78	▼ 1.4%	47

Figure 8 summarises the four-year aggregate attainment rates for students with a declared disability. The lowest attainment rates observed were for students with a declared social or communication impairment (65.8%) and for students with a cognitive or learning difficulty (68.2%)
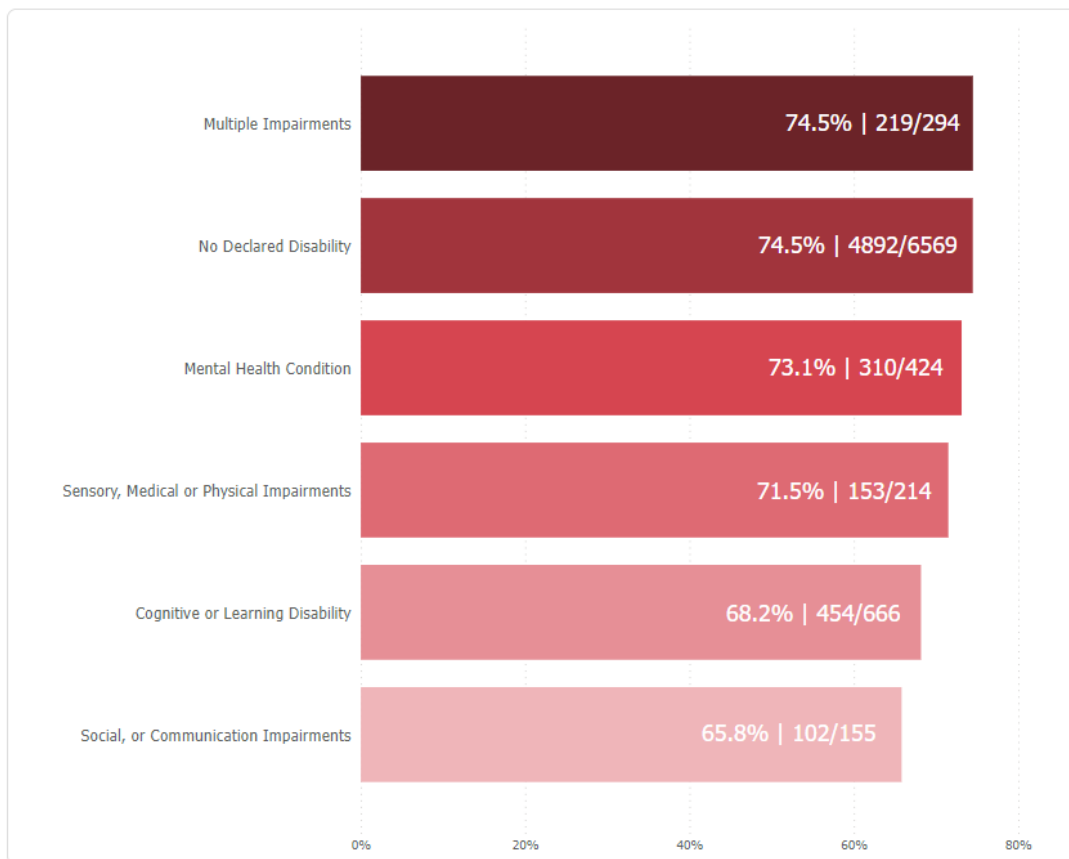
Figure 7. Four-year aggregate attainment rates for students with a declared disability

Progression

Progression is defined as whether a student reports, *'managerial or professional employment, or further study, 15 months after a higher education qualification has been awarded'* as part of the graduate outcomes survey (GOS).[8] Our three-year (2017/18 to 2019/20) aggregate progression rate was for FT was 68.1% and 78.4% for PT studies. An assessment of performance for progression found an indication of risk related to the **progression gap between students from ABCS Q1 and Q5** (32 pp). Progression rates for ABCS Q1 are particularly low (56.6%) and are higher than average for ABCS Q5 (84.8%) students

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[8] OfS. (2022). https://officeforstudents.org.uk/media/6c99753c-2ccf-4dc6-93e1-cc712a987b43/exploring-student-outcomes.pdf

Annex 2. Evaluation plan example

We have created a high-level evaluation template to communicate our evaluation plans with stakeholders. We have reproduced an example of this template using our high-level evaluation plan of FutureMe.

FutureMe. Staffordshire University's Student Recruitment Admissions & Partners (SRAP) and Education Research and Evaluation (EREV) will lead evaluation of FutureME. This evaluation plan was designed to fit OfS Type 2 standards of evidence and will capture the impact on students' awareness on transition to HE and careers pathways, attitudinal changes towards HE. Programme statistics will be collected to monitor the number of interventions, number of students and staff engaged, and number of deliverers trained to monitor progress against targets. Stakeholder surveys will gauge feedback on the relevance and effectiveness of the programme from students, school staff and deliverers. Survey questions will cover satisfaction with delivery and resources and invite suggestions to enhance delivery in future. The impact of the programme will be measured using longitudinal intervention day surveys (embedded into activity resources) capturing increases in awareness, attitudes and skills; while separate summative end of year Key Stage surveys for students and school staff will measure sustained impact. Qualitative outputs will ensure that we can contextualise and enrich quantitative findings and will combine traditional semi-structured student focus groups with guided student intervention diaries completed by students that trace student learning journeys.

FutureMe Evaluation Plan	
Evaluation lead: SRAP	
OfS Standards of evidence: Type 2	
Evaluation dimensions: Process, impact, and learning	
Data collection methods	**Outcomes**
Programme data review	MT2
Longitudinal intervention feedback form	ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, MT3
Annual student survey	ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, MT3
Student intervention diaries	ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, MT3
Annual student FGs (one per KS)	ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, MT3
SRAP/HiHo programme delivery team FG	ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, MT3
Annual provider school WP and teacher survey	ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, MT3

Table 6. FutureMe Evaluation Plan