



Access Agreement 2018-19

PART 1: NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY IN CONTEXT

- 1.1 This Access Agreement between Newcastle University and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) covers the period from 1 September 2018 until 31 August 2019. It relates to **Home undergraduate and PGCE students entering the University in September 2018**. The University may review the provisions and commitments of this Access Agreement in the event of a change in government policy or legislation.
- 1.2 Newcastle University is a highly selective institution committed to widening participation (WP) and fair access. We believe that **ability should be able to access opportunity, regardless of circumstance**. We aim to admit able, highly-motivated and enthusiastic students of all ages, and from all backgrounds and contexts, and to provide **education for life**, leading to strong retention and employability outcomes and optimum opportunities for our graduates to fulfil their career aspirations. As a **world-class civic university**, we aim to marry excellence with relevance and to respond to the needs and demands of civil society.
- 1.3 The **North East of England** has been identified by HEFCE¹ as the region where **young people are least likely to access Higher Education**. The latest Higher Education Statistics Agency's (HESA) data published February 2017, confirms that the region also has the highest proportion of entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN), 23.2% compared to a national average of 11.3%.
- 1.4 According to the Department for Education², **North East schools fell below the average** standard in England (state fund sector) for **GCSE results** in 2016. 56.3% of pupils from North East schools achieved 5+ A* - C grades including English and Maths, compared to 57.7% nationally (fourth bottom overall). Three of the twelve North East Local Authorities fell in the bottom third overall, and only one (North Tyneside) in the top third.
- 1.5 The DfE data shows that Schools and Colleges in the **North East performed less well in terms of 'A' level**³ performance, with 16.3% of pupils achieving AAB or above in 2015/16, compared to 18.5% across state schools nationally, resulting in the North East being the second bottom region in terms of 'A' level performance in England. Moreover, half (six) of the NE Local Authorities are in the bottom third overall, with only two (County Durham and Northumberland) in the top third.
- 1.6 The University has been **working intensively for more than 20 years** with schools and colleges, from primary through to sixth form, to promote engagement, attainment and progression for students in the **North East**. We pride ourselves on the strategic links established with senior leaders in schools and colleges, through Trusts, SCHOOLS NorthEast and via governing bodies to maintain regular and open communication channels that enable us to be pro-active in responding to and supporting our regional schools' needs.
- 1.7 Newcastle University currently offers a robust and **progressive outreach programme** for all schools and colleges **nationally**. Events and activities range from sessions that can be delivered in classrooms to week-long residential courses, and have been developed in conjunction with academic colleagues, teachers in schools and colleges, Newcastle University Careers Service and Alumni, as well as regional employers. The aim of the programme is to: support students to realise their aspirations; develop enthusiasm for learning and encourage engagement in school; develop subject, study and personal skills to support attainment throughout school/college; increase the level of informed decision making of young people; and develop social and cultural capital for participants. This ethos continues post-entry to support retention and attainment at degree level, and ultimately employability outcomes, post first degree.
- 1.8 We play a **leading role in national and regional collaborative partnerships** to promote social mobility and fair access. Newcastle University leads **Realising Opportunities** - an award-winning national fair access scheme involving 15 leading universities, working together to promote access for 'most able, least likely' students to research intensive universities, as well as offering a supported entry route to all participating institutions. Regionally, we lead the **North East Raising Aspiration Partnership (NERAP)**, through which the five universities in the North East aim to ensure that all young people (pre-16) regionally, have the opportunity to make informed decisions about Higher Education. Using the National Networks for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO) funding, we expanded to include targeted activity for young carers, estranged students, a progressive programme for primary schools, and additional activities to support care-leavers and their influencers. NERAP has committed funding until July 2019 to sustain this delivery and the Single Point of Contact website, developed as part of the NNCO.

¹ HEFCE: The trends in young participation report, January 2017

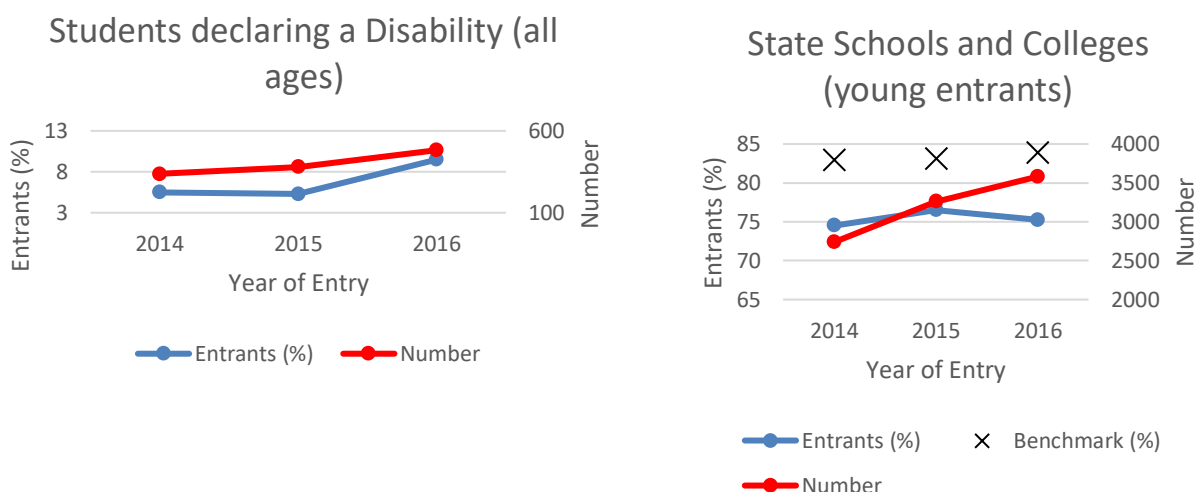
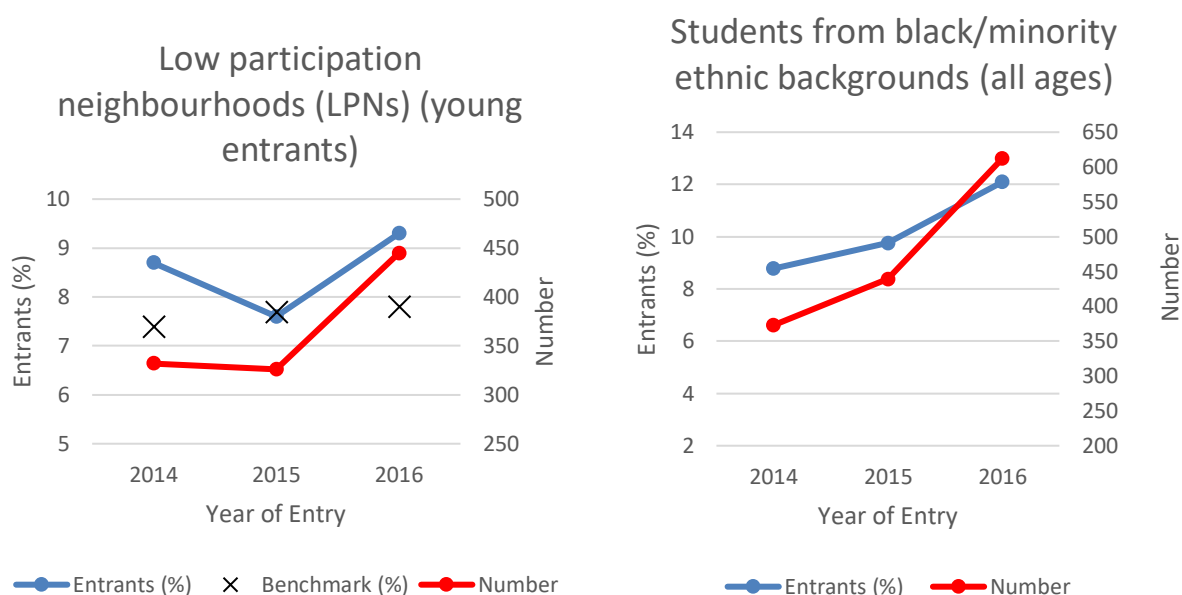
² DfE: SFR03/2017: GCSE and equivalent results in England 2015/16 (revised), 19 January 2017

³ DfE: SFR05/2017: A Level and other 16-18 results (revised): 2015/16, 19 January 2017

1.9 In 2016, the NERAP Partnership led a successful bid for funding to be part of the **National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)**, with initial regional funding (£7.7 million) to December 2018. The North East Collaborative Outreach Programme (NECOP) will be delivered by a new consortia of the 5 universities and 19 colleges in the region to support young people from targeted wards, as well as the under-representation of white British men and ethnic minority groups.

1.10 **Our record of Widening Participation in the North East continues to be outstanding. We not only significantly exceed all of the national WP benchmarks in terms of the WP profile of North East entrants, but we also continue to make good progress against the overall benchmarks nationally.** Figure 1.10 shows that for 2016 entry, the most notable progress made was for young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN), from black and ethnic minority backgrounds (BME) and from students declaring a disability. The proportion of students from state schools has dropped slightly for 2016 entry, but the actual number has increased considerably.

Figure 1.10: University's Progress against HESA benchmarks



1.11 Newcastle University attracts **students of high ability and potential from all parts of the UK**, though just over half (56%) are from the three northern regions of England: the North East, Yorkshire & Humberside and the North West. Our expanded targeted outreach activity has contributed to an excellent WP profile for students from this broader Northern region, again with most notable progress in young entrants from LPN, BME backgrounds and students with a disability.

- 1.12 For 2015 entry, further disaggregation of our data revealed that participation rates for **young white working class males** were particularly low. 2016 data also shows a slight drop in applications from this group (-1.7%) from 991 for 2015 entry to 974. Despite this, the University has made some progress in terms of new entrants from this group, with an increase from 2.88% to 3.69% in 2016. However, when comparing these figures against female applicants from similar backgrounds (Polar 3, Quintile 1), data shows that more applications were received and that white working class females were more likely to receive an offer (80.4% compared to 75.5% for 2015 entry). This resulted in an increase of new entrants (white working class females) in 2016 (4.4%) from 3.9% in 2015.
- 1.13 2015 entry data highlighted an under-representation of **females in science and engineering** courses at Newcastle, and in particular to the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering, with only 31.4% of applications from females (in comparison to 56.7% for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) and 63.3% for Medical Sciences (FMS)). However, we have seen a larger increase in the percentage of applications from females to this Faculty from 2014 entry (21.5% increase compared with 12.2% in HASS and -17.4% in FMS). We also saw a 20.3% increase in offers made to females in SAgE, compared to 12.8% in HASS and 7.3% in FMS. This increase is noticeable across all Schools in the Science, Agriculture and Engineering Faculty.
- 1.14 The University has been gathering data to show **subject trends** for these target groups, and further information is included in Part 3 and 4b.
- 1.15 Our admissions policies and practices are based on principles of **integrity and fairness**, in which each applicant's ability, achievements and potential are carefully assessed in the context in which they have been achieved, through the universal use of contextual data.
- 1.16 Our Access Agreement commitments and our Admissions Policy take account of our responsibilities under the **Equality Act 2010**. The targets in our Access Agreement are reflected in our Single Equality Policy in terms of the admission of under-represented groups. Fair access issues and relevant data are considered throughout the cycle by the relevant University committees. See Part 8 for further information.
- 1.17 The University continues its **focus on outcomes for WP groups**, with full analysis on performance post-entry and degree outcomes for our WP groups: BME, disabled, LPN, NS-SEC 4-7, mature and PARTNERS students, mentioned in Part 3 in more detail.
- 1.18 Financial Support remains an important part of our Access Agreement. Whilst national research shows that financial support does not have a significant impact on *access* to Higher Education, our institutional research indicates that it does support *retention and progression* post-entry. For 2018-19, we propose to continue with the reduced provision detailed in the 17-18 Access Agreement, and will focus on the development of a robust evaluation plan, based on the Financial Evaluative Tool recommended and supported by OFFA.
- 1.19 The University offers its students **challenging, flexible and relevant degree programmes**, taught by experts whose research enriches the learning environment, and using methods and facilities that are accessible for all. From 2017/18 all undergraduate degree programmes will include the option of a placement year in industry.
- 1.20 As the diversity of our student population increases, so too does our **commitment to providing enhanced study skills and pastoral support for our students**, so that all students, particularly those with additional or complex needs, have the maximum opportunity to be successful in their studies.
- 1.21 Our commitment to providing education for life is demonstrated by extensive voluntary, accredited or paid opportunities for our students to add value to their academic studies by gaining additional skills and experience which will prepare them for rewarding careers. Our Career Insights Programme, supporting graduate-level outcomes for WP UG students, has gone from strength to strength, delivered in partnership with employers and Newcastle Alumni. Our strengths in enterprise education and vocationally-relevant programmes are reflected in our **excellent record of graduate employability**.
- 1.22 The University takes a **strategic, whole-institution approach** to widening participation and fair access. Promoting, encouraging and supporting diversity is embedded in the University's key strategies: *Vision 2021*, the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy, the Equality Strategy and the Student Recruitment Strategy. The Access Agreement itself has been developed by a **cross-University Working Group, supported by expert Sub-Groups**, involving representatives from the University Finance and Planning Teams, the Students' Union, Student Advice Centre, Faculties and key Student Services, reflecting the importance of a seamless and coherent student journey throughout the student lifecycle.

PART 2: FEE LIMITS AND FEE INCOME ABOVE £6000

- 2.1 All fees mentioned in this Access Agreement for 2016 entry onwards **will be subject to inflationary increases permitted by Government legislation**, and to any **future changes in Government Fee Policy**. The figures mentioned below are the fee amounts as they stand currently (April 2017) for the Academic Year 2018-19.
- 2.2 In the academic Year 2018-19, Newcastle University will charge the maximum annual tuition fee, determined by government fee policy (currently £9,250) for full-time undergraduate degree programmes and the full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme. This fee applies to Home undergraduate and PGCE students entering Newcastle University in 2018 and is expected to rise for continuing students' year on year in-line with inflation.
- 2.3 The provisions of this Access Agreement do not apply to certain programmes (or parts of programmes) funded under contract by the Department of Health⁴. This includes the following fully or partly NHS-funded programmes or years: the fifth year of the five-year programmes in Medicine and Dentistry; and the four-year accelerated Medicine degree for graduates. Owing to changes in the NHS Bursary funding, the undergraduate degree in Speech and Language Sciences has been included in the Access Agreement arrangements from 2017-18 onwards.
- 2.4 Placement Year fees for students entering Newcastle University are as follows:
- Students on a part-year work or study abroad placement, including a part-year ERASMUS placement, (where the rest of the year is spent at Newcastle University), will pay the full fee relevant to their programme of study and year of entry.
 - For 2018 entry, students undertaking a full year work placement or study abroad year which is additional to the standard programme, and which does not contribute to the final degree classification, will pay a fee of £1,385. This fee is subject to inflation and to Government changes to fee caps, fee levels or fee policy.
 - Students on the four-year Business Accounting and Finance programme provided in collaboration with PriceWaterhouseCoopers will undertake a placement year spread over years 2, 3 and 4 of the programme. For students entering in 2018, the fee will be £9,250 in year 1 and £6,508 in each of years 2, 3 and 4. This fee will be subject to inflation.
 - Students on a full year work placement or study abroad year that is fully assessed and contributes to the final degree classification, replacing a year of study in Newcastle, will pay fees as follows:
 - Students studying for a full year overseas or on an ERASMUS placement: £1,385
 - Students on a non-ERASMUS business / industry placement year: £1,850

These fees are subject to inflation.
 - An optional 'year out' in which the student suspends study (i.e. is not registered with the University) incurs a zero fee.

The Placement Year fee is reviewed annually.

- 2.5 The University's fee levels, scholarships and financial support for eligible students are reviewed each year. Our **fee levels may be increased** or amended in future years if the Government raises the maximum fee cap amount or changes fee levels or fee policy.
- 2.6 Fees for both new and continuing students are expected to change annually in line with any inflationary increases and other regulations agreed by the Government.
- 2.7 The University's estimated fee income above the basic fee is summarised below:

Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Total (estimated) number of students paying above the basic fee	15,906	16,501	17,161	17,557	17,557
Total fee income <u>above the basic fee</u>	£46,610,953	£49,162,346	£51,588,971	£51,998,421	£52,010,921

⁴ This funding is in the form of a National Health Service (NHS) bursary
University of Newcastle upon Tyne, trading as **Newcastle University**: Access Agreement for 2018 entry (April 2017).

Note: These figures include Accounting and Finance students and Placement year students and do not take account of any future increases in the fee cap after 2017-18.

PART 3: ACCESS, STUDENT SUCCESS AND PROGRESSION METHODS

3(a) Expenditure on additional access and retention measures

- 3.1 Our estimated Access Agreement expenditure is based on our current assessment (see section 3(b) below) of the University's overall performance in WP and fair access, from which we conclude that it remains appropriate to maintain expenditure within the broad outlines shown in the table below, and to ensure that the expenditure (excluding bursary costs for returning students who entered Newcastle University prior to 2012) is on average between 32% and 33% of fee income above the basic fee.
- 3.2 We review our level of investment on an annual basis, taking into account progress towards the targets set in this Access Agreement, emerging priorities and the development of new ideas and initiatives.
- 3.3 The table below shows our financial commitments and current estimates of planned expenditure in broad categories over five years from 2017-18. All planned expenditure is OFFA-countable.

Activity / Scheme	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Outreach, Admissions and Fair Access (incl. staffing, infrastructure, evaluation)	£4,113,133	£4,301,120	£4,534,047	£4,620,419	£4,629,083
Retention and success (incl. staffing /infrastructure)	£2,098,831	£2,803,436	£3,355,309	£3,555,312	£3,556,949
University matched funding contribution to the National Scholarship Programme	£138,250	£10,500	£2,000	£0	£0
Other (non-NSP) student financial support for students entering from 2012	£8,610,401	£8,616,895	£8,617,115	£8,463,764	£8,457,463
Bursary commitments to pre-2012 entry returners	£1,500	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total estimated expenditure on Access Agreement commitments	£14,962,115	£15,731,951	£16,508,471	£16,639,495	£16,643,495
Expenditure as % of income above the basic fee	32.1%	32.0%	32.0%	32.0%	32.0%

- 3.4 The University's total contribution to WP and fair access includes outreach, disability support and student success activities funded by the HEFCE Student Opportunity allocation and collaborative funding, which contributes to our overall WP strategy.
- 3.5 The financial commitments in the table above do not include the additional indirect costs of employing additional Graduate Ambassadors / staff to deliver activity (office space, infrastructure, utilities etc.).

3(b) Assessment of our access and retention record

Pre-Entry

- 3.6 On the basis of our assessment of our performance pre-entry, a focus on programmes of outreach that encourage the intake of WP students to Newcastle University remains a key priority in our 2018 Access Agreement.
- 3.7 The University's progress in WP is measured and monitored annually through the national HESA performance indicators and through the OFFA monitoring processes. In addition, the University undertakes an annual assessment of progress in WP, based on UCAS application and entry data.
- 3.8 Figure 3.8 summarises the University's performance from 2014 to 2016 against the latest HESA benchmarks (where available) and other priority groups. The table is based on our own analysis of UCAS data, and, where available we have included the final HESA statistics:

Figure 3.8: University's Performance against HESA benchmarks

	Year (and total intake)	State Schools and Colleges (young entrants)	Lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 4-7) (young entrants)	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs) (young entrants)	Students from black/minority ethnic backgrounds (all ages)	Students declaring a Disability (all ages)	White, Working Class, Male, Quintile 1 (% out of all)
HESA Benchmark 2015-16		83.90%	25.50%	7.80%	N/A	N/A for all declaring disability (5.9% benchmark for in receipt of DSA)	N/A
Whole Cohort	2014 4267	2738/3641 <i>HESA = 74.5%</i>	694/3406 <i>HESA = 20.3%</i>	332/3857 <i>HESA = 8.7%</i>	373/4247 <i>8.78%</i>	338/4267 <i>HESA = 5.5%</i>	190/4092 <i>4.64%</i>
	2015 4522	3258/4222 <i>HESA = 76.5%</i>	820/3663 <i>22.39%</i>	326/4256 <i>HESA = 7.6%</i>	439/4499 <i>9.76%</i>	380/4522 <i>HESA = 5.3%</i>	130/4512 <i>2.88%</i>
	2016 5078	3581/4760 <i>75.23%</i>	897/4175 <i>21.49%</i>	445/4787 <i>9.30%</i>	612/5063 <i>12.09%</i>	482/5078 <i>9.49%</i>	187/5063 <i>3.69%</i>
North East only	2014 890	673/721 <i>93.34%</i>	210/662 <i>31.72%</i>	156/779 <i>20.03%</i>	80/884 <i>9.05%</i>	54/890 <i>6.07%</i>	99/890 <i>11.12%</i>
	2015 1002	822/868 <i>94.70%</i>	279/780 <i>35.77%</i>	162/872 <i>18.58%</i>	105/995 <i>10.55%</i>	86/1002 <i>8.58%</i>	73/1001 <i>7.29%</i>
	2016 1188	977/1041 <i>93.85%</i>	314/945 <i>33.23%</i>	211/1051 <i>20.08%</i>	128/1187 <i>10.78%</i>	97/1188 <i>8.16%</i>	109/1187 <i>9.18%</i>
From North East, North West, Yorks & Humbs	2014 2210	1719/1961 <i>87.66%</i>	427/1762 <i>24.23%</i>	261/2065 <i>12.64%</i>	170/2198 <i>7.73%</i>	132/2210 <i>5.97%</i>	158/2208 <i>7.16%</i>
	2015 2390	1951/2196 <i>88.84%</i>	517/1939 <i>26.66%</i>	254/2216 <i>11.46%</i>	217/2381 <i>9.11%</i>	178/2390 <i>7.45%</i>	98/2387 <i>4.11%</i>
	2016 2874	2295/2666 <i>86.08%</i>	597/2374 <i>25.15%</i>	349/2682 <i>13.01%</i>	292/2866 <i>10.19%</i>	228/2874 <i>7.93%</i>	156/2870 <i>5.44%</i>
From target regions excluding the North East (NW, Y&H, E Mids, W Mids, Grtr London)	2014 2113	1502/1947 <i>77.14%</i>	331/1737 <i>19.06%</i>	131/2039 <i>6.42%</i>	202/2103 <i>9.61%</i>	152/2113 <i>7.19%</i>	71/2110 <i>3.36%</i>
	2015 2283	1714/2178 <i>78.70%</i>	370/1887 <i>19.61%</i>	133/2200 <i>6.05%</i>	237/2277 <i>10.41%</i>	172/2283 <i>7.53%</i>	43/2280 <i>1.89%</i>
	2016 2679	1900/2576 <i>73.76%</i>	426/2260 <i>18.85%</i>	174/2588 <i>6.72%</i>	370/2761 <i>13.40%</i>	252/2679 <i>9.41%</i>	57/2671 <i>2.13%</i>

(Note: percentages are based on known data in each category, so the denominator differs in each case. Figures are Newcastle University figures unless indicated as = HESA)

3.9 Based on an analysis of our internal data, our WP performance overall for 2016 entry is extremely positive and we have increased the number of young entrants from all groups relating to the key benchmarks. This reflects our strategic approach in making offers to WP students. Proportionally however, our performance has dropped slightly for entrants from state schools and colleges and from NS-SEC 4-7. Progress towards the benchmark for students from LPNs has once again improved significantly (from 7.6% to 9.3%) after a drop in 2015 entry. Fair Access to Newcastle University remains a strategic priority - the number of offers made by the University to identifiable WP students (PARTNERS, Realising Opportunities and LPN) has increased again by 2.7% for 2017 entry, compared to the same point last year.

3.10 Newcastle University continues to perform extremely well in terms of WP intake from the North East, the region with the lowest young progression rate to HE in England. It is in the North East that our most intensive outreach work takes place and for this cohort, we already significantly exceed the HESA benchmarks. This record reflects our delivery of an intensive, progressive and sustained programme of activity over 17 years, outlined in Appendix 1.

3.11 Figure 3.11 (a): Distribution of young entrants to Newcastle University, 2016 Entry

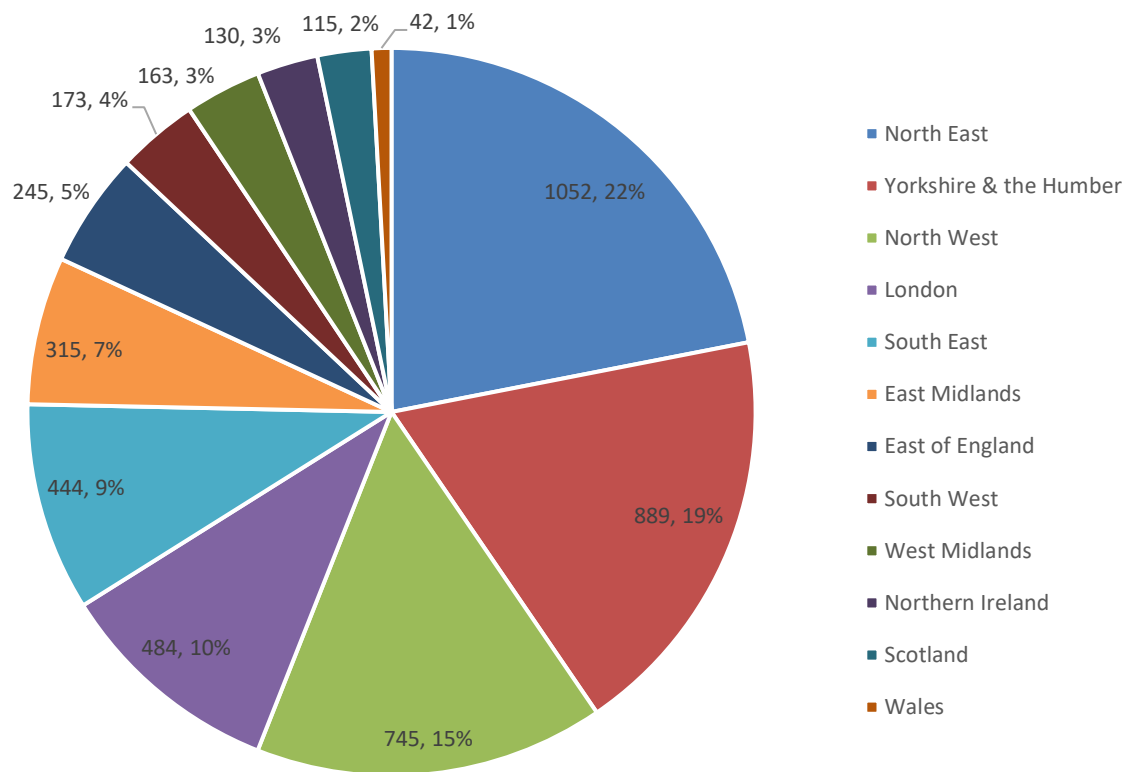
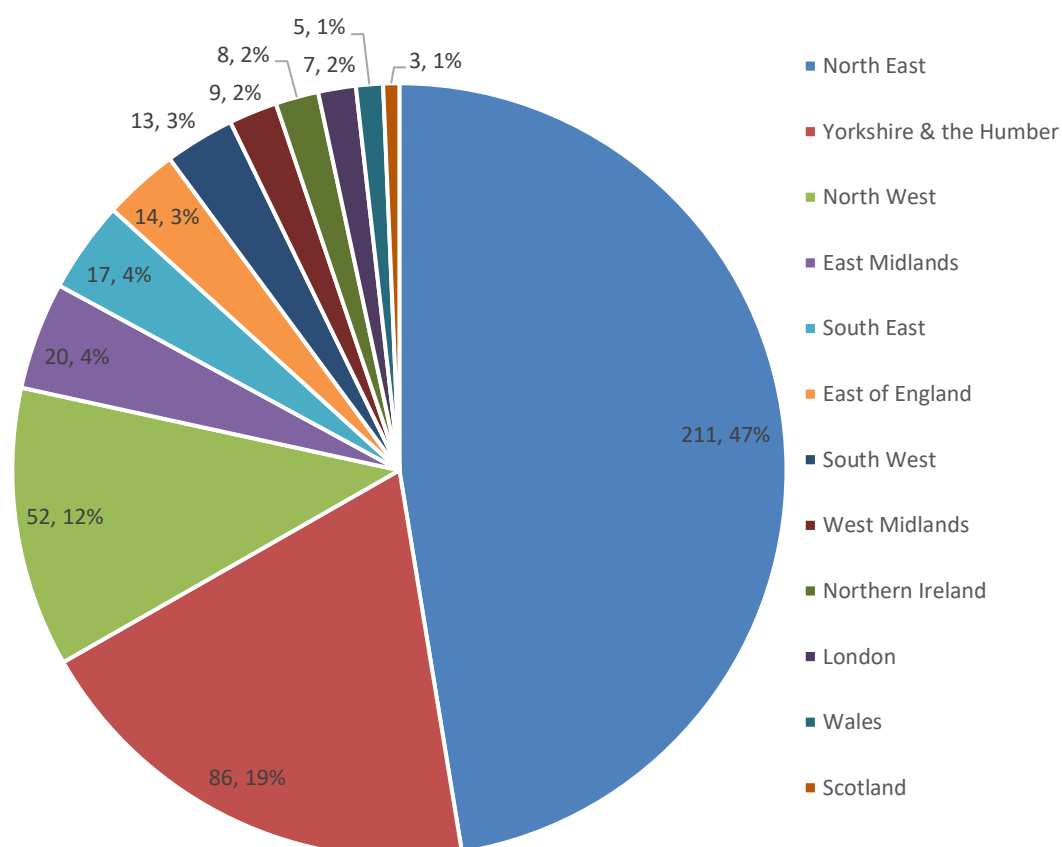


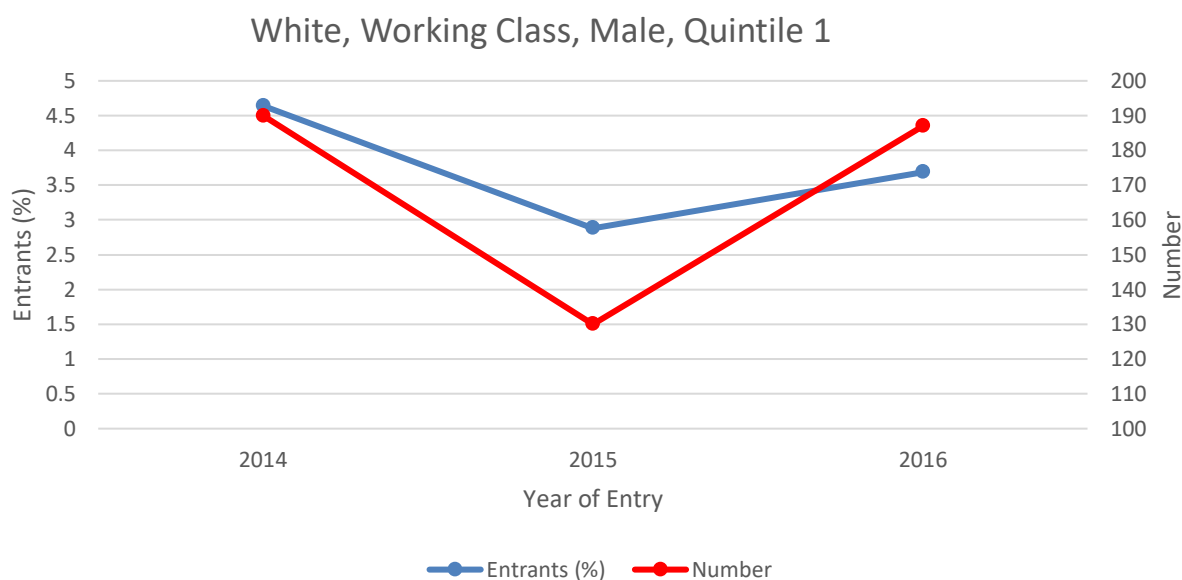
Figure 3.11 (b): Distribution of LPN young entrants to Newcastle University, 2016 Entry



- 3.12 Figure 3.11(a) shows the distribution of young entrants to Newcastle University in 2016 by region of domicile. Approximately 22% of our 2016 young entrants were from the North East (reflecting the relatively sparse regional population). This figure has risen slightly from 21% in 2015. However more than half (56%) of all entrants were from the three northernmost regions of England: the North East, Yorkshire & Humberside and the North West, where the majority of our school visits and targeted outreach takes place. This figure has risen from 53% in 2015, indicating that intensive WP engagement in these areas also has an impact on recruitment. Analysis of this cohort also shows strong WP performance against our benchmarks.
- 3.13 Figure 3.11(b) shows the distribution of young LPN entrants to Newcastle University in 2016 by region of domicile. Approximately 78% of our LPN entrants come from the three northernmost regions of England, again likely to be a result of our targeted WP outreach work.
- 3.14 Overall, the charts show that the University has a strong national recruitment profile, and this continues to have an impact on our overall WP performance. Despite the fact that only 22% of our 2016 intake was from the North East, this accounted for 47% of our total LPN intake. Detailed analysis by region demonstrates the challenge of WP in regions that are geographically more remote. For example, London and the South East are our next largest providers of the University's students (19% collectively) yet only account for 8% of LPN intake (24 students). The impact of our intensive outreach activity in the Northern region is, therefore, diluted when the total intake is analysed, a key factor affecting our progress towards overall HESA benchmarks over the past ten years.
- 3.15 For this reason, if we are to increase our overall profile of WP students, we must continue to review our strategic approach to targeting state schools and colleges and to deliver intensive outreach activity beyond the North East. As part of this, it has been important for us to take into account the 'cold spots' identified by HEFCE, and we plan to work with the NCOP to support engagement outside of their target wards and schools, as well as taking into account the 12 Opportunity Areas identified by the Secretary of State for Education.

- 3.16 Data from our UG home student population highlights some stark differences in WP levels across subject disciplines. For 2016 entry, our lowest intake profiles of young entrants from state schools are found in the following academic schools: Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (62%), Geography, Politics and Sociology (62%), the Business School (65%), Combined Honours Centre (66%) and Medical Education (67%). Looking at LPN data for young entrants, the results differ slightly with only three of these Schools featuring in the bottom five: Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (5%), Business School (6%), and Geography, Politics and Sociology (7%). Dentistry, Modern Languages and Civil Engineering and Geosciences also performed well below the University's average at 5%, 5% and 7% respectively.
- 3.17 For 2015 entry, females accounted for more than half of Newcastle's applications and intake – a shift from a previous male majority. Offer rates were similar at 83% for both male and female, resulting in a female:male intake of 51%: 49%. Further disaggregation of intake data also demonstrates a continuing under-representation of females into our Science and Engineering Faculty at 34.3%. This has however increased from 30.7% for 2014 entry. The Schools of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Computing Science have the lowest proportion of female new entrants at 9.8% and 10.1% respectively.
- 3.18 Figure 3.18 shows participation rates for young white working class males (WWCM) from low participation areas are well below the national participation average, and at Newcastle University, have shown a decline from 2014 from 4.64% to 3.69% (using POLAR 3, Quintile 1 to define Working Class). However, this has increased slightly from 2.88% in 2015. Over half of these students (109/187) come from the North East.

Figure 3.18: Participation rates for white, working class males



- 3.19 Further analysis has enabled us to look at intake for WWCM by academic school. As with other groups there are disparities by subject area. Marine Sciences and Dentistry have no new entrants from WWCM backgrounds (0% each) and the School of Arts and Culture shows only 0.5% of new entrants are from this group. Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Computing Sciences have the largest proportions of WWCM at 8.2% and 6.7% respectively.
- 3.20 The proportion of BME applications to Newcastle University for 2015 entry has increased slightly to 15%. However, the sector's rate was much higher at 26%. Proportions of BME applicants also differed by Faculty, with 27% in Medical Sciences, 15% in Science, Agriculture and Engineering and 10% in Humanities and Social Sciences. The offer rate for BME students in 2015 entry at Newcastle was 69%, compared to 85% for White. The 16% gap is large but has narrowed from 18% in 2014. Further analysis has been carried out this year, building on the work carried out by the School of Dentistry previously, looking at offer rates to BME students in subject areas, with the largest discrepancies being seen in certain Schools (Accounting and Finance, Civil Engineering and Geosciences and Law) but found no evidence to show that BME students were being treated less favourably. It concluded, therefore, that offer rates were not a cause for concern but did highlight that the withdrawal rate amongst black applicants might be. Further work is being undertaken to investigate this. 10% of Newcastle's new entrants in 2015 were from BME backgrounds, compared to 23% in the sector.

- 3.21 The intake of students declaring a disability to Newcastle University has increased considerably in 2016 at 9.5%, compared to 5.3% in 2015. Looking at application data by Faculty for 2014 and 2015 entry, an increase was apparent in two of the three University faculties: +14% in Humanities and Social Sciences and +25.2% in Science, Agriculture and Engineering; but -12.1% in Medical Sciences.
- 3.22 Mature student intake fell slightly between 2014 and 2015 entry to just under 7% (compared to a sector average of 21%), despite an increase in offer rates to mature students at Newcastle. This is likely to reflect the lack of part-time provision at Newcastle University.
- 3.23 The number of students participating in our PGCE programmes has declined in recent years as a result of changes to teacher training provision (from 218 in 2012 to 125 in 2015/16). Original objectives for Newcastle University for this cohort were to increase diversity in terms of male and BME applicants and also to support retention of these under-represented groups. The University has made progress in both areas for this cohort, however percentages become misleading as numbers drop. On reflection, and given emerging priorities for white working class males and BME students across the lifecycle and across all disciplines (backed up by the University's data), we will monitor performance for these groups across the whole student body, rather than singling out PGCE cohorts. This has been reflected in the Targets and Milestones Table (7a).
- 3.24 Applications to Newcastle University through the PARTNERS Programme have increased year on year. A total of 2,044 applications were received for 2017 entry (1,790 of these have been accepted onto the Programme). This compares with 1,914 applications and 1,660 acceptances for 2016 entry (resulting in an intake of 507) and 1,481 applications and 1,279 acceptances for 2015 entry (resulting in an intake of 389). The most popular subject areas for this group for 2017 entry are Biomedical Sciences, Medicine, Geography, Politics and Sociology and Law.
- 3.25 UCAS analysis continues to show evidence of increased application and offer rates for Realising Opportunities (RO) students. HEAT analysis for students entering HE between 2011 – 2014 and UCAS analysis for those entering in 2015 shows that higher numbers of RO students are entering HE generally and research-intensive universities (RIUs) than comparator groups. RO has increased the number of students it works with annually, and since 2014 has seen the number of students progressing to RIUs increase, both as a percentage of the cohorts, and in terms of the number of students (74 more students progressed to RIUs in 2015 than 2014 and 65 more in 2016 than 2015).

Post-Entry: Success and Progression

Data

- 3.26 Newcastle University has a strong record of student retention, progression and success overall, and therefore the proportion of funding and resource allocated to these areas is lower than that to support fair access. These areas of the student lifecycle do, however, feature strongly in the Access Agreement to ensure that Newcastle University remains focused on improving non-continuation rates, degree classifications and outcomes (in terms of the proportion of graduates in work or study and those in positive destinations/Graduate-level employment) for all its students. Figure 3.26 shows HESA's non-continuation performance indicators (March 2017) for UK domiciled full-time first degree entrants in 2014/15: Newcastle University performs significantly better than the national average - just 3.5% of our young entrants were no longer in HE after one year (compared with a benchmark of 3.9% and a UK average of 7.4%). The University also performed better than the national average when looking at non-continuation rates for young entrants, mature entrants and for young entrants from LPN backgrounds. We also perform better than the benchmark in all categories except for mature students (11.1% at Newcastle compared to a benchmark of 9.3%). The non-continuation rate for PARTNERS students for the same period was 4.5% - this deteriorated slightly in 15-16 to 4.6% but is still well below the national average.

Non-continuation rates - UK domiciled FT first degree entrants 2014/15

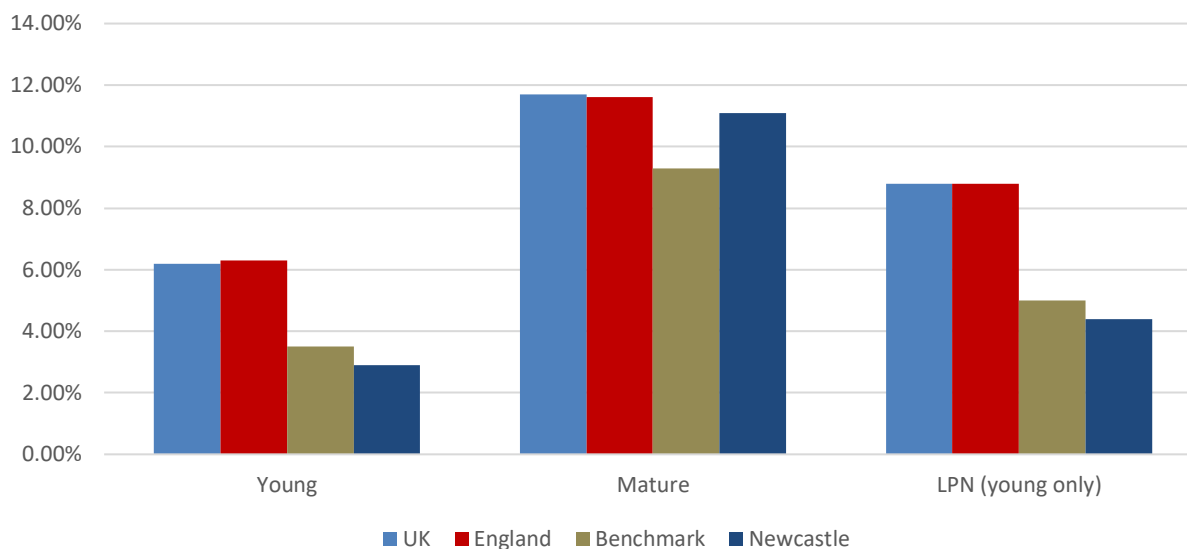
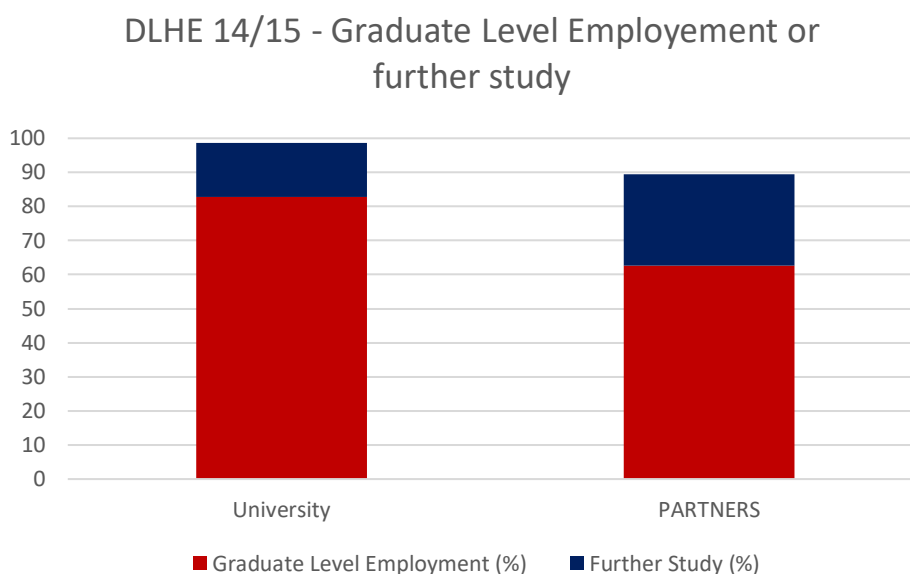


Figure 3.26: Comparison of non-continuation rates

- 3.27 Overall, Newcastle graduates have an outstanding employment record with 94% of our 2015 UK/EU graduates progressing to employment or further study within six months of graduating. With an emphasis on developing employability skills, our excellent reputation with employers, and access to a multi-award winning Careers Service, our graduates are in a strong position in the world of work. Our students are offered a wide range of options to help them gain skills and experiences and we are always seeking to develop and expand the opportunities for them to undertake work experience. In order to embed current skills within our UG programmes we have worked with employers to develop a Graduate Skills Framework, identifying the skills and attributes employers are seeking from graduates, and have mapped each UG module to this.
- 3.28 Whilst the progression of our students to highly skilled graduate destinations is high (83% in 2015) emerging evidence suggests there is work to be done in supporting the success of those from under-represented groups. National research on WP student progression and success indicates that inequalities experienced by many WP students continue at university.
- 3.29 Further analysis has been carried out at Newcastle to assess whether the experiences and outcomes of students at Newcastle University differ depending on their characteristics: for PARTNERS students, LPN, disabled students, BME and mature students. Full analysis can be found in the University's **Equality and Diversity Report, March 2017**.
- 3.30 Key points from Newcastle data have been summarised **by WP Student Group**:
- 3.31 In 2015/16, non-continuation rates for students from **LPN backgrounds** were higher than the non-WP population (15% against 9% for other students). LPN students achieved fewer 2:1s compared the University average (77% against 86%), and were less likely to be in work or further study six months after graduation (90% against 94%). In addition, they were significantly less likely to be in a positive destination (75% against 83%).
- 3.32 Data shows that non-continuation rates were higher for **BME students** (14% in 2015/16 compared to 9% for White students) and degree classifications were lower (77% achieving a first or 2:1 against 86% of White students). BME students performed slightly better in terms of positive destinations (85% against 83%) however, further disaggregation showed that this was due to a larger proportion of BME students graduating from Medicine and immediately entering graduate-level employment.
- 3.33 **Females** achieved more firsts and 2:1s than **males** in 2015/16 (90% against 81%), and this gap of 9% is higher than the previous year. However the proportion of females in positive destinations was slightly lower (82% compared to 83%).

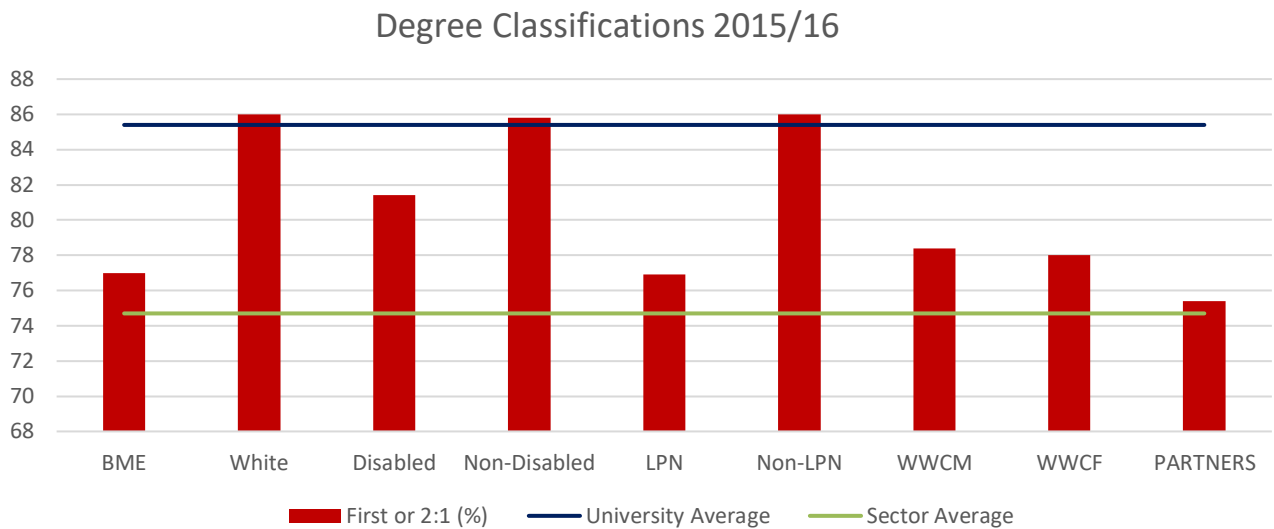
- 3.34 Non-continuation rates were higher for **students with a disability**, especially for those students who did not receive the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). In addition, a lower proportion went onto work or further study (90% with a disability compared to 95% without). However, of those who went into employment, they had a slightly higher progression into positive destinations (84% compared to the University average of 83%).
- 3.35 **Mature students** at Newcastle achieved fewer Firsts and 2:1s than young entrants (74% compared to 86%). Positive destinations were, however, better for mature students (88% against 82% for young students).
- 3.36 For **PARTNERS students**, 75.4% achieved a First or 2:1 in 2015/16. This dropped slightly from 2014/15 when the figure was 76% and is considerably lower than the University figure of 85.4%. It does however remain higher than the sector average of 74.7%.
- 3.37 Using 2014/15 DLHE data, Figure 3.37 shows that 86% of PARTNERS students were in employment or further study six months after graduation, compared to the University figure of 94.1%; 62.6% in graduate-level employment compared to 82.7% for the University; and 26.8% in further study which is significantly higher than the University figure of 16%. The proportion of PARTNERS students who are employed in graduate-level positions is the highest it has ever been: 62.6% compared to 53.8% of the 2013 cohort and 42.4% of the 2012 cohort.

Figure 3.37: Newcastle University Graduate Level Employment/Further Study



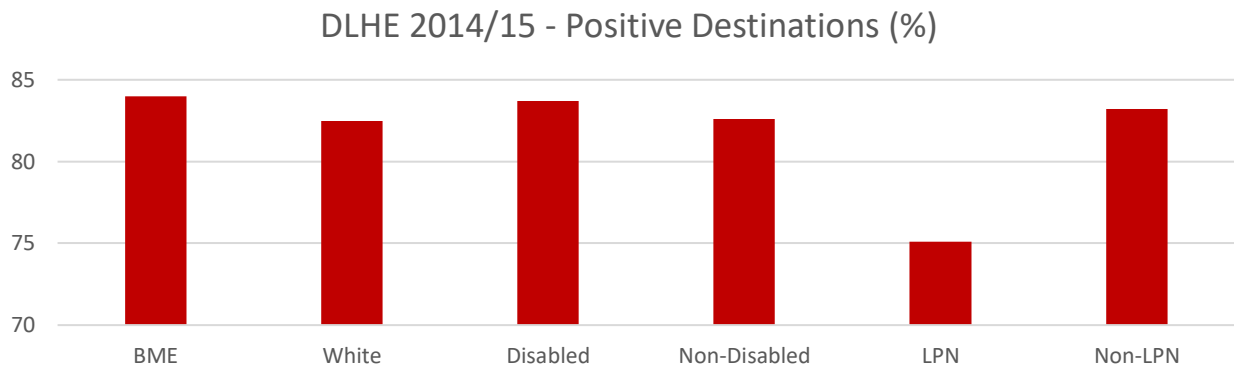
- 3.38 HESA data has highlighted the success of **Realising Opportunities students** in higher education and beyond graduation. According to the HESA data from 2011/12, 83% of students received a first or 2:1 compared to 66% of all students nationally. 93% of RO students who graduated in 2013/14 were in work or study six months after graduation, compared to 89% from the sector.
- 3.39 Looking at the HESA data **by performance indicator**:
- 3.40 **Degree classifications**: 77% of BME students achieved a first or 2:1 compared to 86% of white students (a gap of 9%); this figure was 81.4% for disabled students compared to 85.8% for non-disabled students (a gap of 3.2%); and 76.9% for students from LPNs, compared to 86% from other areas (a gap of nearly 10%). Furthermore, 78.4% of white working class males achieved a first or 2:1 - this figure was nearly 7% below the University average of 85.4% and has narrowed slightly from 2014/15 when the gap was 9%. Notably this is on a par with the attainment of white working class females with 78% of those students achieving a first or a 2:1 degree classification.

Figure 3.40: Degree Classifications by student group



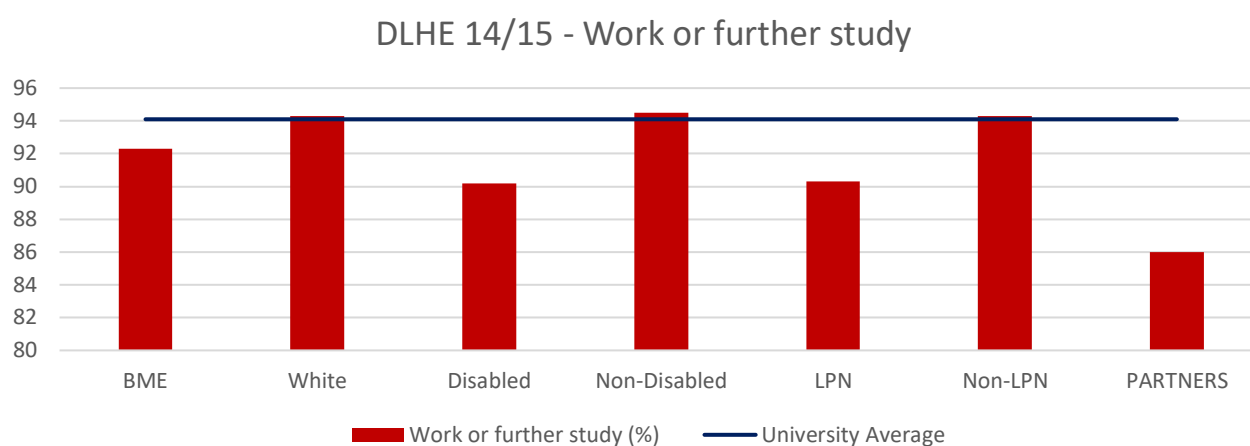
3.41 In terms of **employment outcomes**, using the 2014/15 DHLE data and reporting on **positive destinations**: BME and disabled students performed better than their comparator groups (84% of BME students were in positive destinations compared to 82.5% for white students and 83.7% of disabled students compared to 82.6% for non-disabled). This was not case for students from LPNs at 75.1% compared to 83.2% for non-LPN.

Figure 3.41: Employment Outcomes by student group



3.42 Comparing the proportion of students who are in **work or further study** using the 2014/15 DHLE data (Figure 3.42), the percentage is lower for each of these WP groups (92.3% of BME students compared to 94.3%; 90.2% of disabled students compared to 94.5%; and 90.3% for LPN students compared to 94.3%).

Figure 3.42: Work or further study outcomes by student group



3.43 The 2013/14 DLHE data indicates that 26.8% of PARTNERS graduates are in **further study**. This figure is significantly higher than the University figure of 17% and the national average of 14%. For BME students from Newcastle University, this figure is 21%, for disabled students (18%) and for students from LPNs (25%).

Student Support Initiatives

3.44 The University invests significant funding and resource to support student progression and success post-entry. Our Access Agreement is aligned with expected Student Opportunity Funding changes and overall University resource planning, so that we can provide all our students with a portfolio of support, with more emphasis and tailored support for those who have additional or complex needs. An increase in this resource, both in financial and staffing terms, particularly for those under-represented and/or vulnerable groups, has been built into the 2018-19 Access Agreement (including the provision of financial support for students declaring a disability and requiring additional support during their studies).

3.45 The number of students who declare multiple disabilities has increased from 18 to 24 in that same period (33% increase), and the number of undergraduate students declaring a specific learning difficulty (e.g. Dyslexia) has increased from 685 to 887 (a 30% increase). Whilst this is a welcome indicator of the increasing diversity of our student body, we recognise the need to review the support we provide. We are developing appropriate support mechanisms to respond to these increases. As well as being committed to the provision of **inclusive teaching strategies** across all disciplines, including **Technology Enhanced Learning**, we have developed specific programmes to support students with hidden disabilities.

3.46 Our Technology Enhanced Learning provision includes a **comprehensive lecture capture service**, known as **ReCap** and a **University-wide Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Threshold Standard**. This requires that a VLE site is in place for every one of our undergraduate modules, and defines a minimum set of resources that must be included. ReCap has been installed in all our centrally-supported teaching spaces (220+ rooms) enabling the recording of all appropriate undergraduate lectures. The number of lectures recorded (and number of views) has risen considerably from 10,783 recordings (with 164,032 viewings) in 2012-13 to 24,385 recordings (with 647,235 viewings) in 2015-16.

3.47 To evaluate our developments in Inclusive Learning so far, the University has established an **Inclusive Learning Working Group** with just over half the membership from academics, and the other half equally comprised of professional services staff and students. The aim of the groups is to consider how we can build on good practice, share learning between subject disciplines and identify resource issues so these can be built into future planning. The Working Group is being piloted in our Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty and will make recommendations to the Student Experience Committee in summer 2017.

3.48 The number of students declaring an Autistic Spectrum Disorder between 2012 and 2015 has increased from 33 to 49 (48.5% increase). In 2013-14, we introduced innovative holistic support mechanisms for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) via three schemes: **The Autism/Asperger's Support Network (AASN); Social Mentoring; and a pre-registration Transition Event for new students**. These schemes enable students to become collaborative partners in the development of their support provision during their studies at Newcastle. Each of the initiatives has provided a robust platform for student transition, with the aim of enhancing the university experience and supporting retention, and each has been improved and developed based on evaluation and feedback.

- 3.49 The AASN meetings are now set up immediately following the transition events, and this has encouraged greater student engagement. Employability was a recurring theme during student discussions at AASN meetings. This, coupled with plans for Newcastle University to offer placement years to all UG students from 2017, has led to the development of a **Next Steps Event** offering tailored careers advice and support as part of this Programme. In collaboration with the Careers Service, two pilot workshops have been developed, with delivery planned for May 2017.
- 3.50 The number of undergraduate students declaring a **long term mental health difficulty** has more than doubled between 2012 and 2015 from 54 to 115 (a 113% increase) and supporting students suffering from mental health issues is a priority for the University. Key areas of focus are: the creation of a multidisciplinary group focusing on the care of these students, involving key NHS partners (Early Intervention Psychosis Team, Eating Disorders Team, Community Mental Health Team and all GPs in the area) to facilitate efficient referrals and share best practice; and the development of long-term mental health provision for students with severe mental disabilities (in collaboration with the NHS and the University's School of Psychology) enabling doctoral clinicians to work in partnership with Wellbeing Services to provide long-term health care on campus.
- 3.51 A **literature review of study skills** to identify best practice, and focus groups with staff and students undertaken by the University in 2014, identified the need to make the provision of study skills for all students more coherent. Staff from a variety of services (Library, Wellbeing, Maths Aid, Writing Development Centre, IT Services) and the Students' Union continue to work together to achieve greater coherence. In 2016, the University launched the Academic Skills Kit (ASK) which currently provides online information and signposting to key services across the institution. There are plans for further development of digital resources for 2017-18.
- 3.52 An analysis of study skills provision in 2015-16 revealed that of the total number of students declaring a specific learning difficulty in 2015-16, 26% requested specialist study skills support. Analysis of the students who access specialist support enabled us to design a **model of support** to meet a variety of learning needs.
- 3.53 The University is working hard to **increase the engagement of WP students with the Careers Service**, as soon as students enter the University. Improved targeting of WP students, a planned communications campaign and bespoke events pre- and post-entry have helped raise awareness and engage more WP students in developing their employability skills. Data shows that in 2012-13, 774 WP students engaged with the Careers Service. In 2015-16, this figure rose to 1,331.
- 3.54 The **Career Insights Programme**, designed to support WP students into graduate-level employment, has been expanded and is now offered to all WP students at Newcastle University (although at present places are capped because of the bursary element of the programme). The Programme supports students from Induction in Stage 1 through to employment by providing employer mentoring, networking opportunities, employer engagement, as well as sessions designed to build confidence and enhance employment skills. Students on the Programme also have the opportunity to apply for a bursary to help them take up work placements, and, where appropriate, attend external conferences and workshops. The Programme engages University Alumni who play an active role in supporting WP students, including at events based at our London campus, designed to encourage not just social but also geographical mobility. The University is currently working with its Alumni to raise money to support the Career Insights bursary and increase the number of places on the Programme.
- 3.55 **Work based placements** are an important part of graduate success. These allow students to apply and develop their learning in a work-based setting. Over the period 2014-16, 96.4% of undergraduates who undertook a placement are now in employment or further study, and 88% are in highly skilled employment, both of which far exceed our overall performance. As a result, from 2017 entry, all UG degree programmes will now offer a placement year.
- 3.56 **Supporting WP students into PG study** to enable social mobility is a priority for the University. We offer a programme of activities to raise awareness of PG study opportunities including Open Days, virtual and physical on-campus events, and student-led web content. Financial support is also available through Career Insights and PG Opportunity Scholarships.
- 3.57 The University is part of the HEFCE-funded Catalyst Project: progression to and success in postgraduate study for students from BAME and Polar 1 & 2 backgrounds.
- 3.58 Newcastle University is planning further investment in strategies to sustain and improve all aspects of student support.

PART 4: TARGET GROUPS AND APPROACH

4(a) Target Groups and Approach

4.1 For the purposes of this Access Agreement, the University's outreach work, support and financial investment across the lifecycle are aimed particularly at students of high ability and potential from the following groups:

- Eligible students entering the University through the **PARTNERS Supported Entry Route** or the **Realising Opportunities Scheme**
- Young entrants from **Low Participation Neighbourhoods and/or low income backgrounds**
- Students from **black and minority ethnic groups**
- Students with a **disability**
- **Looked After Children** / those who have experienced local authority care and **Estranged Students**
- **Young Carers**
- **White working class males**
- **Under-represented groups in particular subject areas, identified by University data**

In addition, our WP and student success activities also seek to support and / or engage the following groups: students from state schools and colleges, younger-age pupils including those in primary schools; students who are parents; mature students; teachers and senior management teams in schools/colleges; parents and other influencers of potential students. Our admissions policies also support access for students from these target groups as well as refugees and asylum seekers.

Progress is monitored annually through our own analysis and on publication of HESA performance indicators.

4.2 Based on our assessment of our access and retention record, our approach in the 2018 Access Agreement focuses on five key objectives:

- **To raise the aspirations and expectations of young people and their influencers in the North East; support informed decision making and increase the number of young people from the region applying to and entering both Newcastle University and HE generally.**
- **To work with schools and colleges to support raised attainment across Key Stage 4 and 5 to increase progression from the region to Newcastle University, to HE generally and to research-intensive universities.**
- **To increase WP student applications and intake to Newcastle University from all UK regions.**
- **To enhance student support for vulnerable groups to improve retention rates for targeted groups and degree classifications for WP students, underpinned by a better understanding of the issues affecting WP student progression.**
- **To develop skills for life to support transition into graduate-level employment or further study for WP students at Newcastle University.**

4.3 Milestones and targets relating to our approach are set out in Tables 7a and 7b of the Resources Plan.

4(b) Access Agreement 2017-18 Summary of Key Priorities

Based on an assessment of our access and retention record outlined in section 3 (b), the key issues, objectives and activity priorities for Newcastle University's 2018 Access Agreement are summarised in the tables below, and illustrated in Appendices 1 - 4.

Issue 1: The North East of England continues to have the lowest progression rate to Higher Education in England
Evidence: North East HE Progression data, HESA data (February 2017)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Objective: To raise the aspirations and expectations of young people and their influencers in the North East; support informed decision making and increase the number of young people from the region applying to and entering both Newcastle University and HE generally.
Key Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lead the North East Raising Aspiration Partnership involving the five universities in the region to ensure that every young person in the North East has access to activities that support progression, and can make informed choices about Higher EducationOffer and review our University-wide programme of long term, sustained outreach (from primary upwards).Launch our 'Access to Medicine Programme' from Year 7 through to Year 13 for WP students, to support access to medical professionsExpand our primary provision to promote careers awareness from an early ageProvide high quality information to support informed decision making (online, print, digital and social media and CRM communications)Continue to develop the evidence base to understand the barriers for groups of WP students and what works in terms of HE outreach, identified by the Equality and Diversity report.
Impact measures: Longitudinal tracking of beneficiaries through our programmes via the HEAT database and HESA statistics; pupil and teacher evaluations and no. of activities and interventions delivered for number of beneficiaries.

Issue 2: Schools and Colleges in the North East of England have attainment rates below the national average for both GCSE and 'A'levels.

Evidence: Department of Education (DfE) statistics, January 2017

- **Objective: To work with schools and colleges to support raised attainment across Key Stage 4 and 5 to increase progression from the region to Newcastle University, to Higher Education generally and to research-intensive universities.**

All of the planned activity in this section is new, and a direct response to the 18-19 Access Agreement Strategic Guidance. We have decided upon this approach as a result of work with school leaders to understand their needs, and in response to research carried out by our School of Education. All activity is therefore in the early scoping and planning stages, and will be built upon in future Access Agreements.

Key Priorities:

- **Lead the North East Collaborative Outreach Programme (NECOP) involving the five universities and 19 FE colleges in the region.** Target schools will have access to an intensive programme, including attainment raising strands, to support HE progression in the NE. Newcastle University are working intensively with 21 schools, targeting specific pupils across Years 9 -13, with delivery starting in July 2017 until December 2018.
- **Work in collaboration with senior leaders and Local Authority staff in NE schools identified as 'requiring improvement' by Ofsted** to develop a bespoke programme of interventions to support areas of greatest need. Support to potentially include CPD for staff (focusing on middle managers), after school clubs and pupil mentoring.

Development will begin in 2017 with Westgate Hill Primary School, working directly with the Head to scope out a bespoke programme to meet their current needs. The school has 94% of students with English as a foreign language and a large Roma community. Areas discussed so far include targeted support for students with English as a second language, activity to support attainment raising in literacy and activities to increase parental engagement in pupil learning. Support will include classroom resources, Teacher CPD, active links with the School of Education and engagement with outreach. Activity will be evaluated and the programme of support will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Roll out to additional schools is likely to take place by 2019/20.

- **Support Maths attainment: A new Further Maths Teaching Centre in the North East**
Work will start in 2017-18 to set up a new Further Maths Teaching Centre in partnership with the Further Maths Support Programme (FMSP), to deliver AS/A-level Further Maths teaching to local year 12/13 students from targeted widening participation schools. AS level teaching will begin in 2017-18 with the first cohort sitting the full A' level in 2018-19. Teaching will be enriched with maths-specific outreach, and undergraduate mentors from Newcastle University will add-value to the Programme offering classroom support for teachers at weekly sessions; face-to-face homework support for students in a 'mentoring' role; as well as contributing to the marking of coursework. This will be provided for up to 10 students in 17-18 and will be scaled up to include more schools and students in future years (see target in Table 7b).
- Develop further our **University-wide programme of long term, sustained outreach** in collaboration with senior teachers (to support 'A' level attainment). Include in the programme:
 - **Subject specific study skills sessions for Year 12 students**
Sessions will be developed for delivery on campus or in schools. Delivery on campus in 2017-18 will include a bespoke Year 12 event (unlimited numbers) giving students an opportunity to develop subject skills with academics over one to three days in a broad range of subject areas.

- **EPQ support for teachers and students**
Delivered by Education Officers in the University Library and using library research resources, this will be offered to up to 50 schools (involving over 1000 students) in 2018-19.
- **Access to Medicine (Year 7 – 13)**
Access to Medicine will provide a targeted, progressive programme of activity to raise attainment and support access to medical-related professions. The programme will be targeted at years 7 to 13, with separate activities for each year group, building up knowledge and skills. The programme will be rolled out at the start of the 2017-18 academic year for up to 120 students per year group.
- **Subject specific Teacher Network/Affiliates and Action Learning Sessions** bringing together University academics and school teaching staff to address 'real time' teaching challenges in identified curriculum subjects. Activities may include: Teacher CPD, Teacher Conferences, Subject Challenge Days (involving staff and outreach for children), opportunities to share good practice and 'peer review' as well as teacher-led sessions in the Great North Museum to support curriculum topics.

This will be explored as part of the work with Westgate Hill Primary School detailed above in 2017-18, and with targeted secondary schools at a later stage (likely to be 2019-20 and piloting with Computing Science and Maths in the first instance). The long-term objective is a model for roll out across priority curriculum areas by 2020-21.

The University is currently **reviewing its approach to school/academy sponsorship**. Sponsoring academies does not currently align with the strategic priorities of the University nor the needs of the region, but the drive from the Department for Education has led to a review of this approach. This will be carried out in the 2017-18 academic year and the outcome of the review reported in the 19-20 Access Agreement.

Impact measures: School performance data, attainment rates in Maths for participating schools, number of pupils in the NE achieving 'A' level Further Maths qualifications, teacher and pupil evaluations, long term tracking through HEAT of individual participants.

Issue 3: Newcastle is making good progress in WP and significantly exceeds its benchmarks in terms of students from the North East, but it does not meet all of its' national WP benchmarks

Evidence: HESA data; UCAS application/intake data; Newcastle University Equality and Diversity Report

- **Objective: Increase WP student applications and intake to Newcastle University from all UK regions**

Key Priorities:

- **Extend the geographical reach** of our intensive outreach work through geographical tours, University-based events at the London campus, the Students' Union Back to Schools Project, Teachers' Toolkit, and the further development of digital outreach
- Biennially review our **strategic approach to school targeting**, using IMD, attainment and participation data to ensure it achieves impact
- Work with **Newcastle University London** to encourage applications and intake to the new campus, particularly for students from a BME background
- **Lead and develop the national Realising Opportunities Programme**, involving 15 universities supporting "most able least likely students" into leading universities. Review the programme and increase participant numbers to maximise intake
- Offer the **PARTNERS Programme Supported Entry Route** to eligible students in all schools and colleges in England. Expand further to include all schools and colleges in Northern Ireland for 2018 entry
- Continue to offer schools 1000+ places per year on **intensive outreach activities (including residential summer schools, e-mentoring) that support individual students from under-represented groups**. New developments in 2018 will include the Access to Medicine Outreach Programme for Year 7 to Year 13
- Ensure the **University UG Admissions Strategy** supports the recruitment of WP students and those with protected characteristics cited in the Equality and Diversity Act, through the **University-wide use of contextual data in admissions**, to enable **reduced grade offers** and **special consideration for WP students at Confirmation**
- **Maximise current student input** in outreach development and delivery. New for 2018 : Work with the Students' Union Equality and Diversity Sabbatical Officer to include 'welcome' areas at Open Days and other large events for ethnic minority groups, care-leavers, disabled students and other target groups.
- **Provide high quality information** about Newcastle University to support informed decision-making

Impact Measures: No. of schools/colleges reached (and engaged); Applications, offer rates and intake of WP students to Newcastle University from target schools; Intake through PARTNERS & Realising Opportunities and longitudinal tracking of students; Pupil and teacher evaluation; The University Admissions Strategy; Number of Graduate / Student Ambassadors employed; Statement of Partnership from Newcastle University Students' Union; Newcastle University's Equality and Diversity Report

Issue 4: National evidence shows that post-entry, WP students do not perform as well in terms of retention and degree classification as non-WP students. This is also the case for WP students at Newcastle University

Evidence: PARTNERS Progress statistics; Evaluation of the Performance of PARTNERS and other WP Students at Newcastle University Academic Years 2004/05 – 2012/13, ECLS; NU Equality and Diversity Report; The Higher Education Academy 'Undergraduate retention and attainment across the disciplines' Report 2014; Differences in degree outcomes: Key findings – HEFCE, March 2014; The work, health and disability green paper: improving lives YEAR

- **Objective: Enhance student support for vulnerable groups to improve retention rates and degree classifications for WP students, underpinned by a better understanding of the issues affecting WP student progression**

Key Priorities:

- Provision of **targeted and appropriate financial support for WP students**
- Provision and awareness-raising of **coherent academic study skills support** for students, to improve awareness of and increase the number of referrals
- Provision of **inclusive teaching strategies** across all disciplines including **Technology Enhanced Learning**
- **Investment in the physical and digital learning environment**, for example, in learning resources, library space, and the development of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Threshold standard for all UG modules
- Provision of **tailored support for students with additional support needs** (e.g. in transition and induction, additional financial advice, mental health support and practical support for disabled students)
- Further development of innovative holistic **support mechanisms to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder** via three schemes: The Autism/Asperger's Support Network (AASN); Social Mentoring; and the pre-registration Transition Event for new students
- **Continue to review the evidence base for student support provision** and identify gaps in evaluation, including investigation of student performance/retention by qualification, subject area and, where possible, by WP group
- **Peer Mentoring Programme** for all new entrants offering support pre-arrival and during the transition period
- **Implement a withdrawal procedure**, a direct result of the Task and Finish Group, to provide support for students considering withdrawal to ensure this is an informed choice, and also to gather information about why students withdraw to identify areas that may need to be addressed

Impact Measures: % of students in receipt of financial support; Evaluation of impact of financial support; Report on the development (and impact) of Academic Study Skills support project and no. of students accessing current services; University retention rates; National Student Survey and UG New Entrants Survey results, in particular student experience and satisfaction levels; Retention of students declaring a disability and those with autism; Newcastle University Equality and Diversity Report.

Issue 5: Once our WP students graduate, a smaller proportion go into graduate-level employment than their non-WP counterparts.

Evidence: PARTNERS Progress statistics; Evaluation of the Performance of PARTNERS and other WP Students at Newcastle University Academic Years 2004/05 – 2012/13, ECLS; DLHE statistics; FutureTrack longitudinal research project 2008-2014, HECSU; The 'Paired Peers Project', University of Bristol and UWE 2013

- **Objective: Develop skills for life to support transition into graduate-employment or further study for WP students at Newcastle University**

Key Priorities:

- Further develop the **Career Insights Programme** to support the development of employment skills, work experience, employment networks and confidence. Developments include: working with Alumni to secure inspirational speakers; employer visits including a London trip to maximise the range of opportunities/ networks available; and pilot postgraduate study interventions
- Launch of three new **Ncl+ Employability Awards** in partnership with the NSPCC, Santander and Gradvert specifically for WP students to encourage engagement
- **Increased join up between student recruitment, student wellbeing, careers and alumni** to better support students across the life-cycle to promote positive outcomes. Examples include: Year 9 'Investigate your future' outreach event, employer visits, and alumni guest speakers as part of summer schools; an alumni-led Careers Management Module: Managing transition from student to professional life; fundraising to support disabled students
- **Increase the engagement of WP students in careers-led activity** through better communication with targeted groups
- **Creative Careers event** to address a trend of under-employment in the creative arts and social sciences cohorts, offering practical work shadowing and internship opportunities
- **BME Employability** event, led by Students' Union, to support employability outcomes for this group
- Maximise the number of **employment and volunteering opportunities** providing work experience for WP students
- Provide **Placement Year opportunities for all undergraduate students**
- Align systems and data in order to **track students from application through to destination outcome according to WP group**. Use the data to identify issues and develop strategies
- Develop a **professional networking platform** to facilitate student-alumni contact for both current and prospective students, providing online contact with alumni volunteers for careers advice. Pilot with PARTNERS and Career Insights students
- Use Postgraduate, Graduate and Student Ambassadors to **develop and deliver a programme of activities for current WP students that raises awareness of PG study opportunities**. This will include campus-based events, PG cafes (student-led themed events), enhanced digital information (blogs, videos and student stories) and drop-in advice sessions on how to apply
- **PG Scholarships** for UK taught and research masters' students targeted at under-represented groups. NB. This is not Access Agreement funded, but illustrates the commitment of the University to WP across the whole student lifecycle, access to the professions and social mobility

Impact Measures: No. of students engaged with the Career Insights Programme (and by 18-19 those entering graduate employment); Number of WP students engaged in careers-led activity; Number of students employed/volunteering; UUK research outcomes; number of WP students progressing to PG study and employed at graduate level, Graduate Level employment rates for disabled and BME students

PART 5: FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

- 5.1 The University has committed to reduce spending on financial support by removing Promise, Laidlaw and Access Scholarships from 2017 entry. The savings from this will be ring-fenced to scope, identify and address issues relating to student progression and success, subject to the outcome of any changes in external circumstances. Ideally, this will result in more staff resource in Student Wellbeing, and more investment in study skills support. In future years, this will also be used to cover the anticipated reduction in Student Opportunity funding.
- 5.2 The University will continue to provide targeted financial assistance to students from low income backgrounds and under-represented groups, despite a reduction in funding in this area. Students entering the University in 2018, who are ordinarily resident in the UK/EU and to whom the home rate of tuition fee applies (subsequently referred to as ‘home students’) will be eligible for scholarship support according to the criteria below. We are anticipating this to be circa. £5.5m, allocated to 3,630 undergraduates in the form of Opportunity Scholarships (approximately 28% of students).
- 5.3 Although recent OFFA research indicates that cash bursaries may not affect students’ choice of institution, our assessment of the applications for hardship support over the past five years shows that bursaries play an important role in reducing the financial burden and debt for individuals. 83.3% of Newcastle University recipients said that receiving a scholarship impacted a lot or somewhat on their ability to remain on their course. It is also clear that students favour money that supports their living costs, rather than fee discounts: 92.4% of respondents stated that a cash bursary over any other kind of incentive (fee discount, accommodation discount, equipment or vouchers) would influence their decision the most to accept their offer from the University. As a result, our financial support for 2018 entry focuses on the provision of cash bursaries to provide optimum support and student choice.
- 5.4 Our overall package of student financial support provides: targeted support for the duration of undergraduate study; additional funding for hardship support and an extended range of paid placements and work opportunities on campus. We have also reviewed and minimised additional costs to students as well as providing financial support towards the costs of compulsory field trips, and participation bursaries for low income students wanting to get involved in student clubs and societies.
- 5.5 Newcastle University is committed to improving our evaluation and assessing the impact of financial support in terms of access and student success. This year we propose to further develop this strand of our evaluation plan using the online tools and technical workbook recommended by OFFA, and will be reporting on findings in future monitoring returns.
- 5.6 The University’s financial support schemes will continue to be reviewed annually and may be revised again to reflect changing circumstances, student need, numbers and/or government support arrangements.
- 5.7 Our Student Financial Support for **2018 entry Home fee undergraduate students** is as follows:

Household Income	Amount of Award	a) Newcastle University Opportunity Scholarships for home students
Up to £25,000	£2,000 per year	Paid as a cash bursary to all eligible UK/EU domiciled entrants in 2018
£25,001-£35,000	£1,000 per year	Paid as a cash bursary to all eligible UK/EU domiciled entrants in 2018

- 5.8 Students eligible for a Newcastle University Opportunity Scholarship will be identified on the basis of their UCAS application and household income information provided by the Student Loans Company. Students do not have to apply separately, but must submit financial information to Student Finance England (or equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) for assessment.

- 5.9 The Student Financial Support arrangements described in this Access Agreement do not apply to students studying on certain programmes (or parts of programmes) funded under contract by the Department of Health⁵. Specifically:
- Students on the graduate entry Accelerated Medicine degree are not eligible for funding under the provisions of this Access Agreement.
 - Students funded by the NHS for any part of their course are not eligible for Newcastle University Opportunity Scholarships in the year(s) when they receive NHS funding. This includes the fifth year of the five-year programmes in Medicine and Dentistry.
- 5.10 Students undertaking a placement year where the fee payable is £1,000, £1,025, £1,350, £1,385, £1,800 or £1,800 (see Section 2.4 above) are not eligible for a Scholarship during the placement year.
- 5.11 As part of our ongoing commitments as an exemplary accredited Buttle UK institution (a commitment that continues now the Buttle UK award has ended), we will provide financial support to students who have experienced local authority care (and who meet relevant criteria) of £2,000 through scholarships. This would usually be through the Opportunity Scholarship (Section 5.7) which is payable in each year of their course (though these scholarships are not payable during placement years). If they don't meet the criteria for this scheme Care Leavers would be given a Care Leaver Bursary of equal value. For 2018 entry, we propose to extend this support to estranged students and young carers.
- 5.12 All students will be informed of available scholarships at various stages in the UCAS application cycle: on application; on receipt of an offer and during the conversion stage.
- 5.13 From the information which we have about our current students, we estimate that ca. 28% of our new entrants in 2017 are likely to receive financial support (compared to the projected 32% under the old model).
- 5.14 In addition to our Access Agreement financial support schemes, we also offer a range of bursaries, scholarships and prizes to recognise outstanding achievement (on entry or during the course). Some of these are targeted at students from low income backgrounds or other under-represented groups. Further information is available on our Subject Scholarships website and on individual subject websites. We include payments to relevant students in our annual monitoring return to OFFA.
- 5.15 All of Newcastle University's PGCE programmes fall into the subject categories where generous Teaching Agency (TA) Training Bursaries are available for well-qualified students. We support this drive for excellence and do not offer additional bursaries to students who are not eligible for TA support. PGCE students who suffer financial hardship whilst at Newcastle University can apply for relevant support.
- 5.16 From 2012, the University covers the fee for all individual undergraduate students requiring a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as a requirement of their course. For PGCE students with household income up to £42,600, the DBS costs will be funded as part of our Access Agreement Faculty commitments.
- 5.17 Continuing students who entered Newcastle University prior to 2017 will continue to receive financial support as specified in the relevant Access Agreement for their year of entry.
- 5.18 Newcastle University will fulfil all of its commitments to returning students who entered prior to 2012. Full details are included in the Access Agreement for 2011 entry (available on the OFFA website).

⁵ This funding is in the form of a National Health Service (NHS) bursary
University of Newcastle upon Tyne, trading as **Newcastle University**: Access Agreement for 2018 entry (April 2017).

PART 6: TARGETS AND MILESTONES

- 6.1 Making progress towards intake targets has been challenging in the context of a rapidly changing external environment. Progress has been limited in particular by a number of external issues, which have made it more difficult for selective universities to capitalise on the flexibility offered by the removal of student numbers controls. These include:
- Rapid developments in Education Policy often making engaging with schools more difficult
 - Curriculum Reform at both GCSE and 'A' level (and the possible negative impact this may have on student attainment). The full effects of this will not be seen until 2021 entry
 - Demographic decline of 18-21 year olds until 2020
 - Increased number of students taking BTEC, other vocational qualifications and/or a combination of qualifications
 - Government steer towards vocational qualifications including apprenticeships, which are often more appealing for WP students
 - Reduction in funding streams previously used to identify and support under-represented groups.
- 6.2 The University uses six sets of data for milestones, monitoring and evaluation:
- UCAS application and intake datasets;
 - HESA Performance Indicators concerning student intake;
 - Data provided by the Student Loans Company regarding eligibility of students for financial support (supplemented by the University's own data relating to non-SLC payments to eligible students);
 - Destination of Leavers Higher Education Leavers (DLHE) data;
 - Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) HESA track datasets;
 - Newcastle University internal data
- 6.3 Our main Activity Targets focus on delivery linked to the key priorities. Targets have been refined, extended and, in a number of cases, added to, in order to reflect new and emerging priorities. They also reflect our focus on the whole student lifecycle.
- 6.4 The University's outreach activities target schools/colleges in the identified regions but a key focus is also to promote fair access and increase the diversity of our overall student intake. We work closely with teachers to target individual students from LPNs, to ensure that we particularly encourage these students to apply to and enter Newcastle University, as well as working with our recruitment team at our London campus to maximise engagement with BME students. Data from 2015-16 shows this approach has been successful: for all non-residential outreach held at Newcastle, only 11.6% of students were from BME backgrounds, compared to 34.1% at a Future Leaders event held at the London campus and 38.7% at our Year 12 residential summer school where we have seen a substantial increase in participants from Greater London. Where available, we also use IMD data and other indicators, such as eligibility for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium data, to help us refine our targeting.
- 6.5 In setting regional intake targets for LPN students, and targeting state schools using a range of datasets, we also anticipate having a positive impact on the University's overall intake figures for students from LPNs and from state schools.
- 6.6 Assessing progress against targets has also been made more challenging by ongoing issues relating to data protection, ownership and in particular the availability of UCAS data. This is particularly the case in our work to assess the impact of the Realising Opportunities Scheme on participating student behaviour.

PART 7: APPROVAL, MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.1 This Access Agreement has been considered and approved by Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching and Chair of the University Recruitment and Admissions Committee (URAC). All Access Agreement commitments have been agreed at the University's Executive Board and will be reported to Senate and Council, both of which include student representation.
- 7.2 The University's performance against targets and HESA benchmarks is monitored annually by the University Recruitment and Admissions Committee (URAC). This includes a particular focus on progress towards targets relating to WP intake overall.
- 7.3 The University reports to OFFA each year through the annual monitoring processes.
- 7.4 Within the University, the effectiveness of the outreach and financial support schemes included in the Access Agreement is reviewed and evaluated annually by the Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions Monitoring Committee (UGRAMC)⁶ and reported to Executive Board, Senate or Council as appropriate. Recommendations for revisions to the Access Agreement are considered and agreed by UGRAMC (or its Chair) and by Executive Board and then submitted to OFFA for approval.
- 7.5 A crucial strand of the work of the University's outreach team is to focus on monitoring and evaluation to ensure that resources are targeted to maximise impact. Our Evaluation Plan implements the use of common questions to compare short term impact across year groups, as well as using a range of quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate all aspects of our approach to fair access in the long term. The purchase of the collaborative HEAT database, and its use across the University, enables us to track the impact of our outreach work, showing progression to any HE provider, as well as enabling the University to engage with collective WP sector research. An **internal annual report** is produced, and, together with findings from the individual events and activities, and the results of the E&D report, enables the University to focus resource on activity that maximises impact; takes account of equality and diversity issues; and ensures that the outcome of evaluation directly informs the development of future activity.
- 7.6 **Newcastle University's Evaluation Plan** is reviewed annually, and provides an overview of our whole student lifecycle approach to monitoring and evaluating. It is a working document and is continuously evolving, enabling the University to adopt a robust approach that is now thoroughly embedded into our practice, and as a result, we have a number of **evidence-led developments** across the student lifecycle:
- Access:** extension of outreach programme and PARTNERS Supported Entry Route nationally; the development of a strategic approach to school and college targeting; more places on 'intensive' activities
- Success:** implementing a 'withdrawal procedure'; and development of tailored support for students suffering from ADSN, reduction in funding for financial support
- Progression:** targeted support for WP students post-entry via Career Insights; opportunity of a placement year on all UG degree programmes; disaggregation of student outcome data to inform future development in this area
- 7.7 Our more intensive, residential events are over-subscribed and this has enabled us to identify a control group – a group of students who are eligible for the event (as they meet our widening participation criteria) but are unable to attend because of number restrictions. In the coming year, we will be working with HEAT to enable these students to be tracked so that we can draw comparisons against those who attended the event and those who did not.
- 7.8 New activity designed to increase attainment will be built into the Evaluation Plan, and reporting will take place via future Access Agreements and Monitoring Returns.
- 7.9 The outreach team have worked with colleagues in the School of Mathematics and Statistics to undertake detailed analysis on the range of individual eligibility criteria used to identify appropriate students for the PARTNERS Programme. As a result, in 2014, a sophisticated '**fitted probability**' model was implemented, in order to determine social, economic and financial deprivation based on postcode. This allowed various postcode variables to be considered on weighted basis, in order to identify pre-entry students who would later be confirmed as 'WP' using post-entry data. This exercise will be reviewed in 2018-19.

⁶ The Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions Monitoring Committee (UGRAMC) is a sub-group of the University Recruitment and Admissions Committee (URAC). Both are chaired by Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching.

- 7.10 In addition, colleagues in the School of Education, Communication and Languages Sciences and the Equality and Diversity Team have conducted research into the performance of WP students (including students from our PARTNERS Programme supported entry route) at the University. We work with them closely to inform our evaluation framework.

PART 8: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 8.1 Consideration of Equality and Diversity plays an important part in the development of the Access Agreement. Colleagues with responsibility for the University's responsibility under the Equality Act sit on the Access Agreement Working Group and are members of the Data Analysis Sub-Group.
- 8.2 The University produces an annual Equality and Diversity Report. The findings and recommendations of the report are reported to the University Recruitment and Admissions Monitoring Committee annually. Where appropriate, equality impact assessments are undertaken and the outcomes and recommendations fed into the University's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and the Access Agreement Working Group.
- 8.3 As a direct result of recent OFFA guidance, this year's report included detailed analysis of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, LPN and socio-economic class. A copy of the report is available to OFFA upon request.
- 8.4 Initiatives to support access, progress and success have been developed as a direct response to these findings.
- 8.5 The University, in partnership with Arthur's Hill Federation Primary Schools, Middlesex University, Helsinki University, Montpellier University and the People to People foundation in Romania, is undertaking research into the Gypsy Roma community to explore poor participation and persistently low achievement in education as well as the decline of home language use in primary classrooms. This will be used as a pedagogic tool to raise attainment of pupils whose home language differs from the official language of schools. The project will begin in the UK using high quality dual language learning techniques, and the results from this will act as a springboard to develop a future approach to working with this community.

PART 9: PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND THEIR INFLUENCERS

- 9.1 Key to the success of our initiatives to promote and safeguard fair access is the provision of clear, timely and accurate information about all aspects of Higher Education, including student finance. Our aim is to support potential students, parents, teachers and advisers to make informed decisions. We will provide relevant information to UCAS, the Student Loans Company, UCAS Teacher Training and other relevant bodies as required.
- 9.2 We have been working with senior leaders from schools and colleges in the North East to support curriculum change at both at Key Stage 4 and 5, providing sessions to support independent learning and practical skills for prospective HE students.
- 9.3 Our printed 2018 Undergraduate Prospectus is supplemented by our [Guide to Student Finance](#). The Guide is revised bi-annually to reflect any mid-year changes.
- 9.4 For younger students, our printed literature now includes a mini-prospectus, a city guide "My kind of toon" as well as [On Course to Newcastle website](#), which includes contributions from a team of student bloggers.
- 9.5 Our website for schools and colleges, as well as prospective students and their parents, is now fully mobile responsive, and includes a postcode 'look up' tool so that students can check their eligibility for identified access and financial support schemes.

- 9.6 We continue to invest significantly in innovative digital developments to ensure that students are fully-informed about their HE choices, the courses we run and the financial support available. Potential and current students contribute to user testing processes to ensure that digital information is clear and easy to understand. We run a range of marketing campaigns on social media, aimed at raising awareness and encouraging applications from prospective students. This includes new initiatives to promote specific courses, for example an eighteen-month social media advertising campaign, engaging with students ‘from investigation to registration’ through a range of multi-media content. In addition, the use of new channels (Snapchat & Instagram Stories) and industry developments (live video streaming, 360 videos) ensure that campaigns remain cutting-edge and relevant to the audience. All applicants who receive an offer of a place receive timely and relevant further information, with additional information on financial support for identified WP applicants.
- 9.7 This year we have launched a closed Facebook offer holders group for all applicants who are made an offer. The aim of this group is to enable prospective students to meet one another in an environment they are accustomed to and for the University to share useful information and guidance to the group with a view to guiding students on their way to university.
- 9.8 Webinars have been held this year to support students’ pre-entry, including for PARTNERS students to support them through their application year and at the summer school, and for support with the UCAS deadline day and Confirmation and Clearing.
- 9.9 We regularly review and develop our website to include resources or information about student finance and other relevant topics for those who advise students. Our online [Teachers’ Toolkit](#) provides a rich source of downloadable resources, subject-specific taster events and activities to encourage HE progression, accessible through a single, searchable database.
- 9.10 Our outreach teams and trained undergraduate Graduate Ambassadors visit schools and colleges to give presentations to teachers and pupils about all aspects of applying to HE including student finance, and provide finance information at Open Days and post-application visit days. Our programme of activities has been developed to include events that support informed subject choice and study skills development at key stages, in particular for students in the North East, where progression to HE is low. Our innovative Postgraduate Graduate Ambassador scheme enables us to provide targeted information and sessions informing current WP students about opportunities for postgraduate study.
- 9.11 New entrants and eligible continuing students are reminded through a variety of channels about the fees and financial support schemes relevant to them for each year of study at the University. We also provide one-to-one financial / budgeting support to WP students.

PART 10: CONSULTATION WITH STUDENTS

- 10.1 Student consultation and engagement are a vital part of our annual Access Agreement planning and WP delivery processes throughout the student life cycle.
- 10.2 We have approximately 1,400 academic representatives attending staff-student committees, ensuring regular engagement in all aspects of learning and teaching. This enables a pro-active rather than re-active approach to support student retention, progression and success.
- 10.3 The Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Chris Day, meets regularly with our Sabbatical Officers to ensure good communication, and ensure that that the “student voice” is heard at the highest level.
- 10.4 The President, Education Officer and Welfare Officer of the Students’ Union as well as the Co-ordinator for Inclusive Sport, are all members of the Access Agreement Working Group and are also responsible for the development and delivery of key outreach and retention activities aligned with the University’s Access Agreement objectives. Their Statement of Partnership is attached as Appendix 4.
- 10.5 We have a team of Part-Time Sabbatical Officers in the Students’ Union who represent specific WP target groups, including a Student Parent, Guardians and Carers Officer, a Racial Equality Officer and a Students with Disabilities Officer. They meet regularly with the full time officers and represent the wider student body at Student Council.

- 10.6 Our students continue to play an important role throughout the student lifecycle to support outreach, student progression and success. Students are fundamentally involved in each stage:
- Pre-Entry as student ambassadors; mentors; developers of WP activity; tutors in schools; and for market research;
 - Post-Entry as representatives; advocates and peer mentors;
 - Graduation and Success: as staff (Graduate Ambassadors), fundraisers, placement providers and role models for future prospective students.
- 10.7 We regularly gather and use student opinion and feedback. Questionnaires and surveys to prospective and current students, focus groups, student representatives and increasingly, feedback via social media, inform all of the WP and student success activity outlined in this Access Agreement.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Newcastle University: Key Outreach Activities

Appendix 2: Supporting Access for Under-represented Groups

Appendix 3: National Long-term Outreach Programme

Appendix 4: Statement of Partnership from Newcastle University Students' Union

Appendix 1: Newcastle University: Key Outreach Activities

ACCESS PROGRAMMES

PARTNERS PROGRAMME: Newcastle University's access scheme for students from under-represented groups who have the potential to succeed at Newcastle University. Established in 2000 as a regional programme, in 2015 the [PARTNERS Programme](#) expanded for eligible students from *all* schools and colleges in England. A basket of eligibility criteria is employed to identify appropriate students for the programme, taking into account information relating to their social, economic, financial and personal background. In particular, students from target groups are eligible for the Programme: care leavers; estranged students; young carers and students with a disability. The Programme culminates in an Assessed Summer School at the end of Year 13, successful completion of which forms part of a student's (reduced) offer to Newcastle. The scheme provides access to all University degrees and involves a combination of academic teaching and assessment, transition skills development and peer mentoring. **In 2016 entry PARTNERS students accounted for 57% of Newcastle University's WP intake.**

REALISING OPPORTUNITIES: Newcastle University is the lead institution for [Realising Opportunities](#), a unique collaborative partnership of research intensive universities delivering a national fair access scheme to promote social and geographical mobility for under-represented groups. Realising Opportunities (RO) is underpinned by a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the longitudinal tracking of students through the HEAT database. This award-winning programme aims to prepare students for successful transition to higher education through a range of interventions, offered locally and nationally, including a National Student Conference, student e-mentoring and an assessed academic element. Successful completion of RO results in additional consideration given to applications through UCAS from all Partner universities, and the potential for an alternative offer worth two 'A' level grades or equivalent. White males are well represented and there is a higher proportion of Black and Asian students taking part in RO, compared to the population as a whole.

COLLABORATION

NORTH EAST RAISING ASPIRATIONS PARTNERSHIP: Newcastle University leads the [Raising Aspirations Partnership](#), a regional collaboration involving Newcastle University, Northumbria University, the University of Sunderland, Durham University and Teesside University. In 2015, the partnership became part of HEFCE's **National Network for Collaborative Outreach**, and has committed funding to sustain the delivery, aiming to ensure that every young person in the North East has the opportunity to make informed decisions about higher education, as well as supporting their advisors and influencers. Specific target groups include: care-leavers, estranged students, young adult carers, teachers and advisers and disabled students. In 2016 the partnership led a successful bid to be part of the **National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)** and in the North East this now involves a new consortia of 5 universities, 19 FE colleges working with over 100 schools.

RUSSELL GROUP ADVANCING ACCESS PROJECT: Newcastle University is one of 24 universities working together to develop continuing professional development (CPD) resources for teachers and advisors to support student progression to selective universities. The [Advancing Access](#) project specifically targets schools and colleges in identified geographical 'cold spots' and/or less advantaged areas with low levels of progression to higher education. Initially funded through HEFCE's collaborative outreach network scheme, Advancing Access is now funded until July 2018 through financial contributions from each partner university.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

PROGRESSIVE ACTIVITY: Newcastle University offers a progressive programme of events and activities for students in schools and colleges nationally, beginning in Year 5, and for parents, carers and teachers. We have worked with teachers, our students and graduates to develop a range of informative and interactive activities, both on-campus and for delivery in-schools, to inform students about higher education and develop skills to help them with key transition stages in school and beyond. The programme of activities is reviewed regularly in collaboration with school teachers, using a comprehensive and robust Evaluation Framework.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC OUTREACH & TEACHERS' TOOLKIT: Faculties and Academic Schools play a vital role in WP and outreach, delivering the essential academic content of our key WP access programmes and events, in addition to a range of subject-specific interventions on-campus and in schools. All subject-specific activities offered, including extensive resources developed by our staff in the University libraries, are listed on [Teachers' Toolkit](#) – a unique online resource that brings together everything the University offers to schools in one place.

TARGET GROUPS: The majority of the on-campus activity, such as residential summer schools and student shadowing, is targeted at widening participation students, using a range of eligibility criteria relating to the social, economic, financial and personal circumstances of the individual. In addition, a range of events are delivered to specific target groups, such as girls interested in Engineering and the 'Choices Together' programme for young people in care, a progressive range of events, including a residential experience, for young carers, and a range of events to support the KS2 to KS3 and KS3 to KS4 transition of white, working class boys from 'cold spots'.

ACCESS TO THE PROFESSIONS: Newcastle University is involved in a number of initiatives to improve access to courses that lead to specific careers. A new development is the **intensive and progressive Access to Medicine outreach programme** for Year 7 to 13 which will be rolled out from September 2017. Access to Medicine aims to raise attainment and support access to medical professions for WP students. 228 schools and colleges across the North East of England and Cumbria will be invited to participate and places will be allocated to WP students based on contextual data. A full evaluation plan is in place enabling longitudinal tracking of beneficiaries to gauge impact both on attainment and progression.

STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS: In 1993 Newcastle University established 'Students into Schools', a scheme for undergraduate students to be tutors in schools, offering positive role models and classroom support. Now part of the broader **Career Development Module**, the student tutoring route places approximately 140 tutors each year in local schools, undertaking 70 hours of work for academic credit.

CAREER INSIGHTS: The [Career Insight Programme](#) offers WP students at the University the opportunity to start building their career and confidence by gaining relevant work experience, exploring a range of opportunities and building strong networks with employers on a local, national and global level. In addition, the Career Insights Bursary offers financial support to enable WP students to take advantage of work experience opportunities.

THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

SOCIAL MOBILITY FOUNDATION: The University has been working with the Social Mobility Foundation (SMF), a charity which aims to improve social mobility for young people from low-income backgrounds, since July 2016. We have hosted one of their Year 12 university visits for 40 students in 2016, providing an insight into university life and an introduction Newcastle University. In July 2017, we will host a one night residential visit for 40 of the Foundation's Year 12 students from across the country in order for them to experience what life is like at university. In order to measure the impact of this event we have an agreement with the Foundation that we will be able to track the progression of the students who attend the residential using the HEAT database and HESA data. The Foundation have also approached our School of Medical Education in order to explore the opportunity of working with them to deliver a mentoring scheme for their students who are interested in applying to Medicine.

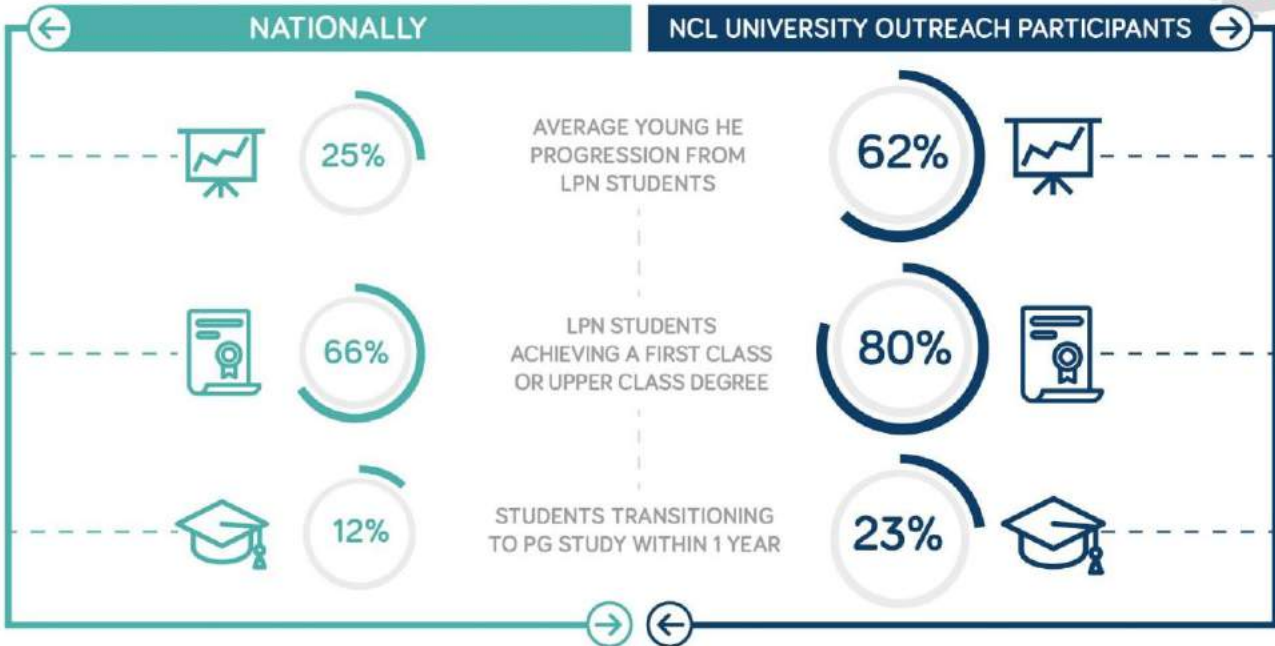
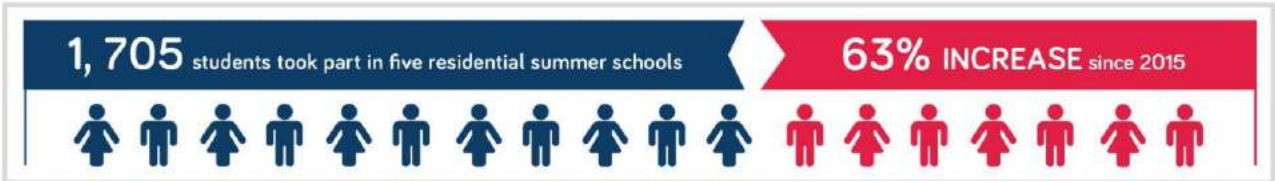
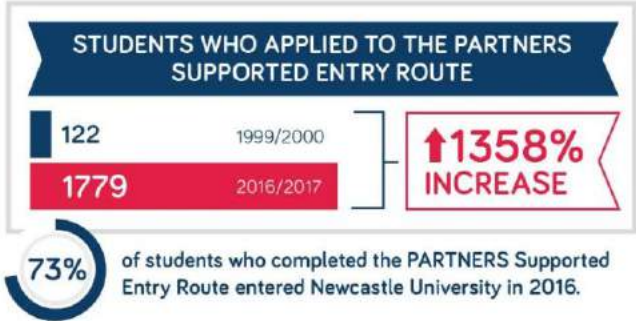
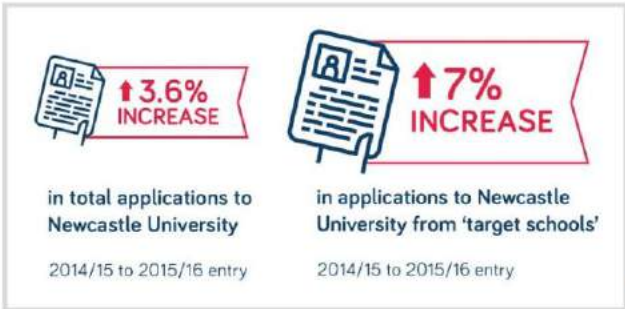
TEACH FIRST: The University works closely with Teach First in the region, promoting this graduate level opportunity to current students. In addition we host and are involved in the delivery of their teacher CPD events. In 2016-17 we hosted four events for over 450 delegates, these have included their launch event for year 12 students and their parents; Teacher CPD event; and the Futures Launch event for teachers. We work closely with the organisation to further develop our relationships with schools and colleges, communicating with their teachers in order to ensure our outreach activities and events continue to support their key priorities in school/college.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

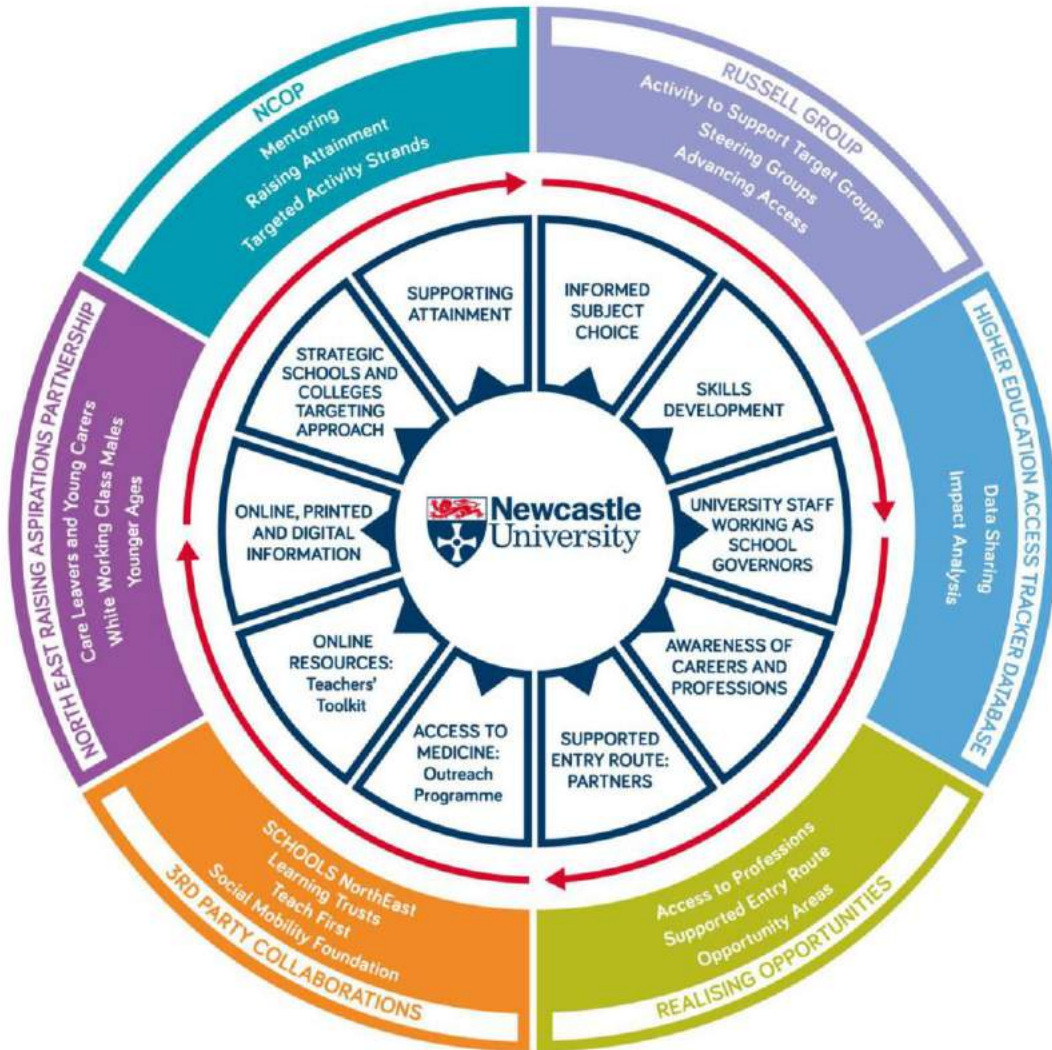
GRADUATE AMBASSADORS: Every year since 2006, the University has employed Graduate Ambassadors, a team of recent Newcastle University graduates to deliver interactive face-to-face outreach activities to young people and their parents, particularly in schools across the UK. Currently, the University employs 17 Ambassadors, enabling us to extend outreach geographically and target key regions across the UK. The scheme is designed as a Graduate Training Scheme so Ambassadors gain valuable employability skills to help in their future careers. We have extended this scheme to have two Graduate Ambassadors at our Newcastle University London campus, to support us in making progress towards our BME intake target, and an additional two to support WP student progression into PG study.

STUDENT AMBASSADORS: 170 of our current undergraduate students from all disciplines are employed on a part-time internship contract each year. They support the extensive range of outreach delivered by the University.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Social media plays an important role in supporting our work with prospective students, enabling communication and information on a national stage. Our [On Course to NCL](#) website provides information and guidance for students aged 14 to 18, and includes current student bloggers. We are in the process of developing specific social media support for parents.



WORKING WITH STUDENTS AND THEIR INFLUENCERS FROM RECEPTION TO YEAR 13



Appendix 4: Statement of Partnership from Newcastle University Student Union

Newcastle University Students' Union is consulted during the planning and implementation of all access and retention activities. There continues to be a permanent full-time member of staff (the Widening Access Co-ordinator) based in the Students' Union who manages and delivers various access and widening participation projects. This has ensured that the Students' Union and its members are very much involved in any plans for access, student success, progression and financial support from the early stages. In last year's Access Agreement we detailed examples of the work we undertake to support access and student success. This year's summary looks to demonstrate how these initiatives have developed and become more embedded throughout the course of 2016/17.

The Welfare & Equality and Education Sabbatical Officers sit on the **University's Access Agreement Working Group** alongside the Widening Access Co-ordinator. Student representatives also sit on over **70 University boards, forums and committees, including Council, Senate and Court**. In addition, the Sabbatical Officer team meet once a month with the Vice-Chancellor to represent the wider student population at an institutional level.

The **outreach programme NUSU: Into Schools**, led by the Students' Union has now been running for three academic years. The project involves both alumni and current students of Newcastle University visiting either their former or local schools to inspire current pupils to consider Higher Education. In 2015/16, NUSU Into Schools attracted 180 volunteers who worked with over 2500 pupils, increasing the numbers engaged during the previous year by 19%. In 2017/18 these numbers have grown yet again. Over 200 students have run 25 NUSU: Into Schools projects covering a diverse range of important themes such as sexual health and relationships, debating skills and mental health awareness. The consistent growth of this programme not only impacts positively on so many young people across the UK, but also highlights the commitment by the Students' Union for student led access and outreach volunteering.

In 2015-16 the Students' Union launched a **disability sports project: Inclusive Newcastle**. Inclusive Newcastle is now in the second year of delivery and has made excellent progress in 2016/17. Currently, Inclusive Newcastle is directly supporting 17 students with a range of disabilities from physical, medical, hearing and visual impairments to SpLDs (Specific Learning Disability) and other mental health disabilities. Indirectly, the programme supports many more students through NUSU sport memberships for students with disabilities and initiatives such as Earn Your Stripes. The **Earn Your Stripes initiative** was launched in September 2016 encouraging Athletic Union (AU) clubs to increase their inclusivity. The initiative offers varying levels of financial support dependant on criteria. Within 6 months 15 clubs have been approved. Initial steps have also taken place to ensure AU clubs are educated on mental health issues within sport and the Higher Education environment. The **first mental health in sport workshop** was delivered to 20 prospective Welfare Officers, part of a wider aim to ensure all AU clubs have a Welfare Officer by 2020. In addition to this, relationships with other stakeholders have gone from strength to strength, such as with Percy Hedley, our preferred local para sport provider and English Federation of Disability Sport of which we remain an Associate member. Internally, the partnership with the University Wellbeing department has grown, with particular focus on improving communication on student referrals. The inclusive sport offering has been shortlisted for two student experience awards at the Guardian University and Educate North awards.

NUSU Participation Bursaries were again awarded to 275 Stage 1 UK undergraduates from 375 applicants during the last academic year. Eligible students received a bursary of £200 to enable them to join clubs and societies and/or to fund additional costs such as sports kit, equipment and travel. This year we further developed our offer and criteria was expanded to also include those who have caring responsibilities for a family member or friend and/or who have a disability or long-term health condition. Due to high demand, additional criteria of home postcode had to be introduced in order to allocate funding to those who needed it the most.

In 2017/18, we aim to build on the successes of the previous year whilst also looking to develop existing programmes by introducing an Inclusive Newcastle sport scholarship, introduce a more formalised volunteer structure where students can find opportunities both internally and externally to support disabled people playing sport and also continue to survey our students to ensure our Participation Bursaries are reaching those that need them the most. In conclusion, we support the 2018/19 Access Agreement in its current form and all of the outlined activities as methods to support student access, retention and success at Newcastle University.

Jack Taylor (President), Rachael Kitching (Welfare and Equality Officer) & Christopher Duddy (Education Officer)
Newcastle University Students' Union: 22nd March 2017.