



Access & Participation Plan 2019-20

York St John University

A history of widening access

York St John University has been widening access to higher education since its founding as a Teacher Training College by the Church of England in 1841: "...as the most powerful means of remedying the existing defects in the Education both of the Poor and Middle Classes of Society, to establish a School for the purpose of Training Masters in the Art and Practice of Teaching." This has underpinned our approach ever since, as can be seen in the development of our latest Strategic Plan.

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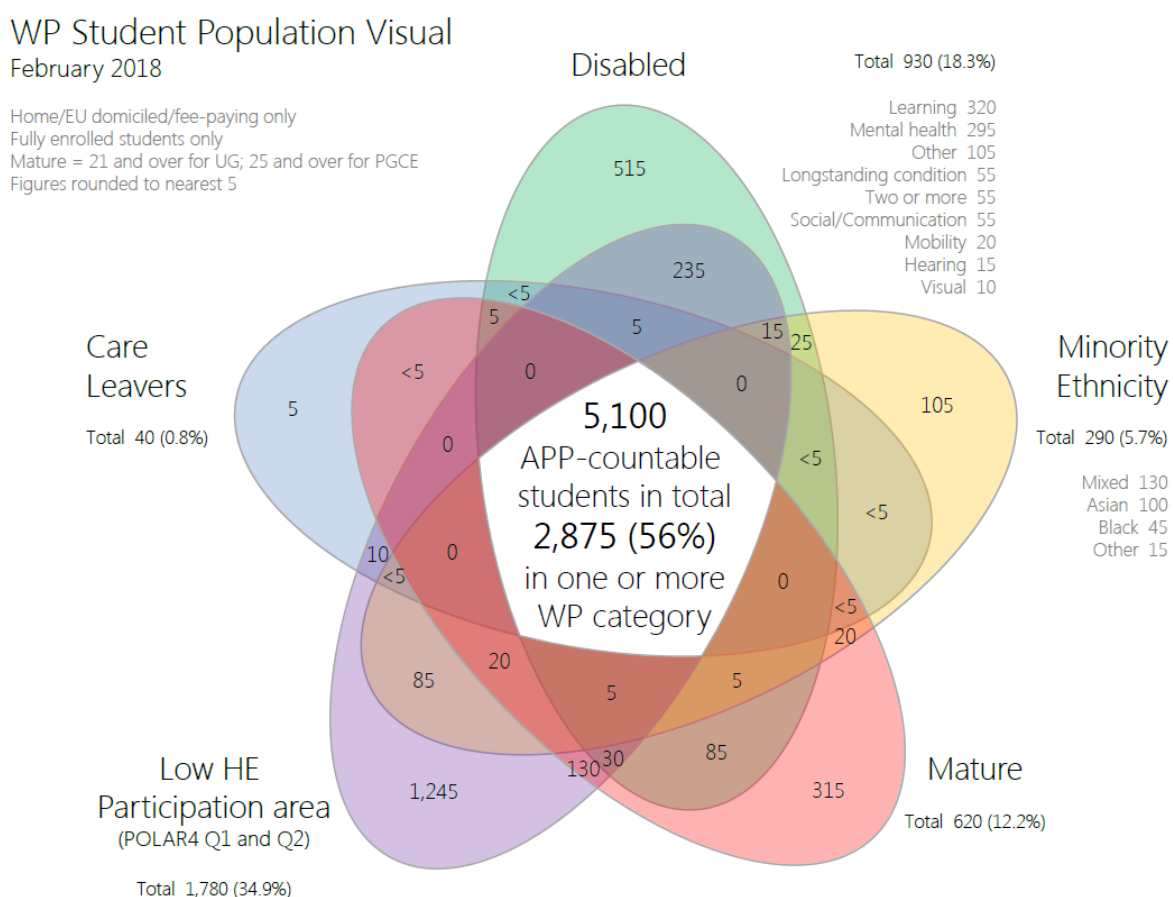
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1. Assessment of current performance

Our size and shape

York St John University currently has 5,100 APP-countable students (paying Home/EU fees and studying on UG Degree, Foundation Degrees or PGCE courses). Figure 1 shows how this overall student population is broken down into the five underrepresented groups identified by the Office for Students (OfS) and the intersections between those groups:

Figure 1 Understanding our student population in terms of underrepresented groups and their intersectionality (as at 1 February 2018)



The largest of our underrepresented groups is the **POLAR** quintiles 1 and 2 metric. POLAR looks at how likely young people are to participate in Higher Education (HE). Nationally, 25% of HE entrants fall into quintiles 1 and 2 – the geographical areas where young people are least likely to enter HE. 35% of York St John University’s population falls within POLAR quintiles 1 and 2, which shows our strength at attracting students from HE ‘cold spots’.

Next largest is the group of students who are known to have a **disability**. Nationally, 11% of students are known to have a disability, whereas 18% of our APP-countable student population have a disability. We have extensive access and support mechanisms in place for

all students; we are known as a University that enables and empowers students with disabilities to succeed, evidenced, for instance, through excellent degree classifications.

Conversely, we are relatively homogenous in terms of **ethnic diversity** once international students are discounted. York and North Yorkshire is not an ethnically diverse area (relatively); however, our ethnic diversity is below what we would expect.

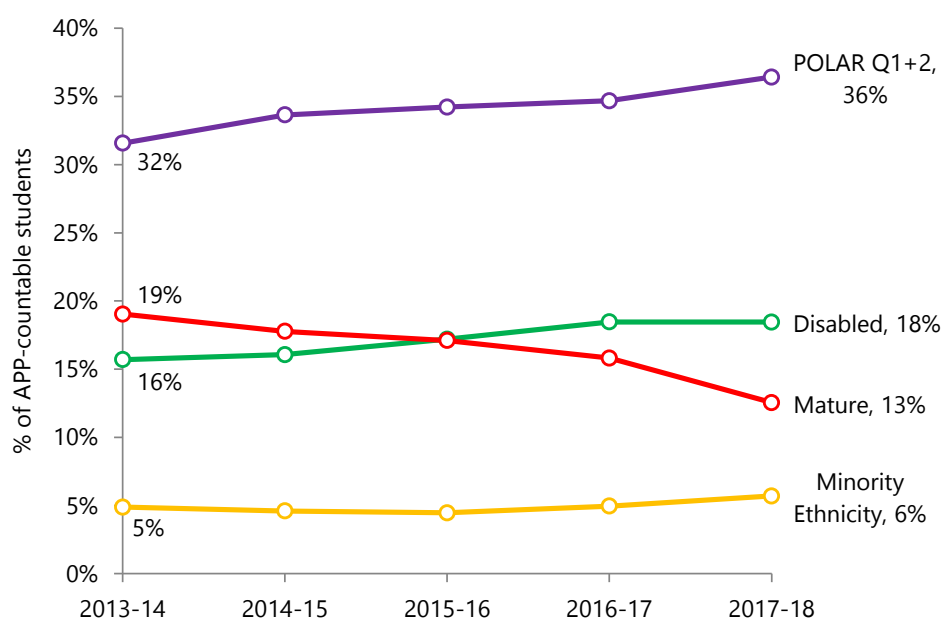
Most of the University's **mature students** are studying at sub-degree level and are thus excluded from Figure 1. However, we have experienced a significant reduction in mature (and part-time) learners in recent years, and it is an area we are working on redressing.

Accurate national data on **Care Leavers** is difficult to obtain but we have a small and growing group of students who are well supported to access and be successful at the University.

Assessing our performance

Trends in our student population for the key underrepresented groups can be seen in Figure 2¹. This trend analysis shows that we have increased the proportion of our students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 and students with a disability, in recent years. This is despite starting with high proportions of students from these groups. We have made some progress on recruiting students from minority ethnicities, but not as much as we would have liked. Our mature student population has fallen, mirroring national trends, and also the reduction in part-time learning that is connected to this trend.

Figure 2 Trends in underrepresented groups in our APP-countable population



¹ This analysis looks at all APP-countable enrolment records in an academic year. The Venn diagram in Figure 1 displays our APP-countable student population at 1st February 2018 and hence some slight variations in the percentages shown.

The University has worked hard over many years to increase the proportion of students from underrepresented groups. The last two recruitment cycles have delivered considerable growth in student numbers for the institution, whilst at the same time enhancing our performance on widening access.

The ‘**Performance Matrix**’ shown in Figure 3 summarises the University’s assessment of its performance for these five underrepresented groups in terms of access, success and progression. It is evidence-based, using internal intelligence and national data to evaluate and benchmark our performance and access and participation:

Figure 3 Performance Matrix

Performance summary:

	Representation in Student Population (Access)	Our activities (Access, Success and Progression)			Our TEF Split Metric flags		
		Outreach work	In study activities	Progression activities	Satisfaction (Success)	Continuation (Success)	Employment (Progression)
POLAR Q1/2 students	●	●			●		●
Disabled students	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mature students	●	●			●	●	●
Minority ethnic students	●	●			●		●
Care Leavers	N/A	●	●	●	N/A	N/A	N/A

Key:

Positive performance	●
Mixed performance	●
Negative performance	●
No performance gap	

The Performance Matrix reflects Figure 1 by showing both our strengths in POLAR and disabled students accessing HE, and the less positive picture on minority ethnic and mature students. In terms of our activities to promote access, success and progression, we have long-established outreach work for the underrepresented groups. However, we have identified the need to invest more energy in different communities to enhance our minority ethnic student recruitment.

Our TEF year 3 split metrics show that our underrepresented groups are, in the majority of cases, more satisfied with their learning experience than their comparator groups. Disabled students are the one group where satisfaction with teaching quality receives a negative TEF flag, which is not the case for non-disabled students. We are investigating the reasons for this. Our continuation metrics are all in line with TEF benchmarks and we have positive TEF flags for disabled and mature student continuation that are not present for their comparator groups. Finally, there are no gaps in employment outcomes for the underrepresented groups; however, we want to improve the proportion of our graduates who enter highly skilled employment or further study.

Intersectional performance is more difficult to measure due to smaller cohort sizes and also the nature of our official benchmarked data (e.g. NSS results and TEF metrics), where it is not possible to combine variables like POLAR and BME. There are, however, four intersectional groups from Figure 1 where we can draw preliminary conclusions about success:

1. Disabled students who are mature on entry;
2. Disabled students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2;
3. Mature students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2; and
4. Minority ethnic students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2.

Internal data shows that our continuation rates for disabled students are no different to the University continuation rate (92%). However, once Disability is combined with age and POLAR data, the continuation rate falls for the first two intersectional groups listed above (to 87% and 91% respectively). Students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 have a continuation rate slightly below (just 1 percentage point) the University average. Again, once POLAR is coupled with age and ethnicity (see intersectional groups 3 and 4 above), the continuation rate falls further (to 86% and 89% respectively). This would seem to make intuitive sense – combining variables of disadvantage would typically worsen student outcomes; however, it is difficult to comment on these intersections without reliable national benchmark data. Our intersectional analysis is relatively new and we intend to learn from, and strengthen, it in coming years.

Working with other underrepresented groups

We also work with a range of **other underrepresented groups**. Here is a selection of the work we do and how it enhances access and participation:

Mental health – We have a long-running and innovative scheme – Converge – that is run in partnership with local mental health service providers. It provides high quality education opportunities for users of NHS and non-statutory mental health services. The scheme has an excellent track record of providing effective, proactive support for individuals with mental health issues. Our Wellbeing Team offers same-day psychological assessments, counselling, mental health support and online support. Our students now benefit from a coaching intervention to help them reach their goals.

Military families – We are working with serving military personnel and their families in order to highlight HE opportunities and increase participation levels. This work is a new initiative and is being conducted in partnership with our National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) colleagues. We are well placed to work in this area as there is a high intensity of military establishments within our sub-region. York St John University is also leading on the creation of a 'northern hub' for the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance.

Student carers – Student carers are given the opportunity to identify themselves when they register with the University. These students are then contacted by our dedicated WP support team and offered additional learning support, advice and hardship funding.

Estranged students – Estranged students are given the opportunity to identify themselves when they register with the University. These students are then contacted by our dedicated WP support team and offered additional learning support, advice and hardship funding.

Refugees – We offer support for refugees through our 'Sanctuary Scheme' and through involvement with local charities and York City Council to promote opportunities. We recognise that this underrepresented group have already shown remarkable strength, resilience and commitment, so each year we offer scholarship opportunities that include a full tuition fee waiver; £1000 per year towards costs associated with study and personalised 1:1 support.

Evaluation and evidence-led approach

Our approach to understanding our student population, student outcome metrics, and understanding which interventions work, is evidence-led. Whilst our intersectional analysis is relatively new, we have well-established business intelligence that facilitates the analysis of our performance on underrepresented groups at each stage of the student lifecycle. We conduct regression analyses on the impact of our financial support package on student retention, success and progression. We are well informed as a University about the latest research related to access and participation and we strive to achieve a 'whole institution approach' to WP. We are mindful of the need to have due regard to equality, non-discrimination and harassment and this permeates through our business intelligence and analysis. Our governing body receives regular progress updates about equality and diversity and this informs our priorities.

2. Ambitions and Strategy

A new University Strategy to 2026

The University is currently working on a new Strategy to 2026. One of the fundamental sub-strategies relates to Access & Participation with the goal of “achieving a ‘whole institution’ approach to widening participation.” We will do this by:

a. Identifying target groups of students using evidence.

We work with the five key underrepresented groups and a range of other groups as shown in sections 1 and 4. Each group has a specific access, success and progression baseline and milestones for us to achieve by 2026.

b. Maintaining an effective resource model for all direct and indirect WP activities / spend.

We have a clear model for understanding our access and participation activities and spend. In addition to our direct expenditure on access and participation; for instance, through our financial support package; every area in the University is annually assessed in terms of its contribution to access, success and participation.

c. Conducting a coherent range of interventions across the entire student lifecycle to enhance participation and success of underrepresented groups.

Our annual review of access participation touches every academic School and Professional Service in the University. These reviews enable us to understand the totality of our activities across the student lifecycle, thereby surfacing best practice and potential gaps where additional effort or resource is needed.

d. Engaging all parts of the University in WP efforts, providing opportunities to learn best practice amongst different teams and projects.

Our Access & Participation working group facilitates a cross-University dialogue on our strategy, resourcing, interventions and evaluation of access and participation activities. It also serves as a way to share practice and become more effective at what we do.

e. Using data and evidence to inform strategy and to effectively evaluate activities.

As new data and evidence becomes available, we will use it to refine our strategic and operational intentions, in particular developing our intersectional analysis further. Our evaluation framework assesses the impact of our activities.

Successful collaborations

The University is an active partner in a number of collaborative outreach projects, including:

The **National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)** is part of the Higher York collaboration between York St John University, University of York, York College and Askham Bryan College. The NCOP includes other partners, with Coventry University in Scarborough, Craven College and Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education also involved in delivering and evaluating activity. As the lead partner for the Higher York NCOP, staff and activities naturally dovetail into existing University outreach activity.

We are also involved in other sustained collaborative programmes of outreach; for instance, **Green Apples**. Green Apples is a collaboration with the University of York, York College and Askham Bryan College, local business and education partnership. The collaboration covers local state secondary schools and a selection of targeted primary schools. The programme focuses on interventions in years 9-11 but also incorporates a range of activities from year 6 upwards. It continues to raise aspirations amongst underrepresented groups and encourages students to consider their options post-16 and thus also contributes to raising attainment. Activities include visits to partner institutions, residentials, workshops, mentoring and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) events.

The **North Yorkshire Coast Higher Education Collaboration (NYCHEC)**, launched in 2011, is a collaboration between the universities of York St John, Hull and York that aims to widen access to higher education and improve pupil attainment through high quality, hands-on, collaborative outreach for pupils in years 7-11. The activities support an area of high economic and educational deprivation in North Yorkshire. Provision has been expanded and now includes family engagement projects, subject revision support and taster events targeted at low socioeconomic groups. This project covers the North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area identified by the Government. A more focussed element of this activity, the High Five project concentrates on groups of pupils who are identified in partnership with their schools. A particular focus of High Five covers working class male pupils.

Continuous improvement through effective evaluation and progress monitoring

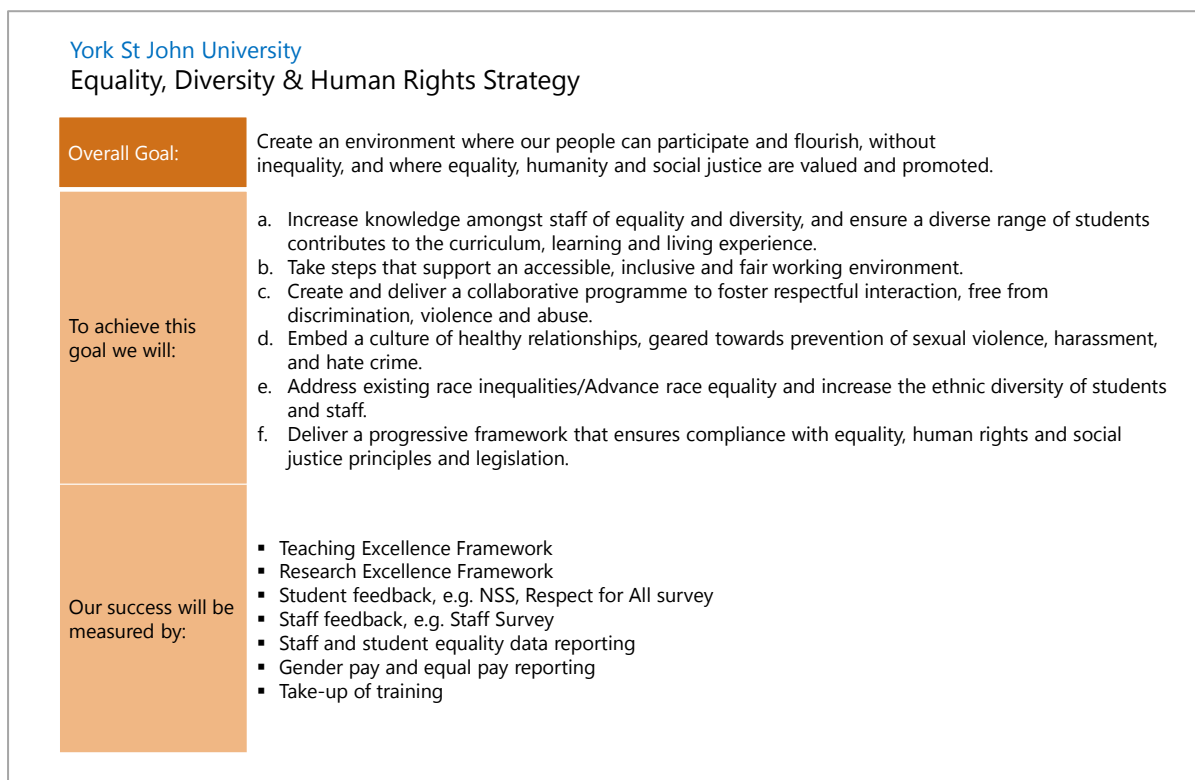
The University has established an Access & Participation working group that engages all parts of the institution. The group focuses on understanding and reviewing: (i) the institutional strategy on Access & Participation; (ii) our resource model for all access and participation activities; (iii) the implementation of interventions across all teams; and (iv) the effectiveness of those interventions. The group recommends changes to make our interventions more effective and to improve our access and participation outcomes based on data across these areas. It is currently developing a framework for all interventions, showing their HEAT² category, their impact (immediate, medium-term and long-term), financial commitment, and their lead worker.

² Higher Education Access Tracker.

Supporting our Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Strategy

The University’s Strategy to 2026 has a sub-strategy related to Equality, Diversity & Human Rights. The University’s Executive Director of Strategy and Planning and the Equality and Diversity Adviser have been working closely to align the goal, objectives and success measures for this sub-strategy and the one related to Access & Participation. Of particular note is our commitment to address race inequalities amongst both staff and students and also our intention to continue to promote an institutional culture which embraces equality and widening participation:

Figure 4 Our Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Strategy



Consultation with students

York St John University Students’ Union (SU) submission (see appendix 1) demonstrates the regular, high level of engagement between the University and the SU that enables all our students to feel included, succeed and progress at the University. The SU-led Student Zones, Academic Representation system and Liberation Officers provide a vital framework for student feedback that helps us to identify issues and resolve them in partnership.

3. Targets

The University has fully reviewed its Access & Participation targets. Given that 2019-20 is a transition year, we will contribute our thinking to the Office for Students in the coming months with the hope of introducing a new set of strategically aligned targets in 2020-21.

Our thinking suggests three *categories* of targets: (i) [Representation targets](#); (ii) [Outcomes targets](#); and (iii) [Activity targets](#). Representation targets would focus on the recruitment of underrepresented groups and any intersectional groups that are significant in size. Outcomes targets would draw from the TEF split metrics, and their benchmarks, and relate to student satisfaction, retention and employability. Activity targets would relate to our interventions with collaborators, schools, geographical areas and specific communities.

Within these three broad categories, we would envisage two *types* of targets: (a) targets that seek to [drive-up performance](#) in an area where it is lower than expected (and thus the target trajectory would be steeper); and (b) targets that seek to [maintain high performance](#) that has been evidenced.

4. Access, success and progression measures

Delivering our Strategy – access, success and progression measures

York St John University uses a variety of measures to maintain and improve our access, success and progression for students from underrepresented groups. Section 4 sets out examples of our work across the student lifecycle and shows how these are evaluated. This section also summarises our financial support package for students and explains how this has been developed and evaluated over time. We have broken this section into Access, Student Success, and Progression sub-sections.

Access

Long-term and short-term measures

In addition to the collaborative, longitudinal initiatives highlighted earlier in this document, our work to widen participation amongst young people from lower socioeconomic groups and low participation neighbourhoods is centred on our [year 12 Summer School](#), which we previously called our 'Compact Scheme'. The Summer School is based on campus and focuses on year 12 students from partner schools and colleges and provides a range of attainment and aspiration-raising activities. Applicants who choose to submit a final piece of assessed work will receive UCAS point credits to aid and encourage their entry to York St John University. Our year 12 Summer School has grown over the years and we expect 80 participants again in 2018.

Our year 10 [Summer School](#) targets participants from schools with high percentages of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, high proportions of BME students and first in family HE participation. The Summer School is based on our campus and includes academic and IAG components. Alongside a number of subject-specific strands, the Summer School provides opportunities for participants to tackle research-based questions that are aimed at promoting individual learning skills, confidence and attainment levels. We also provide mentoring for participants after the Summer School has finished.

In addition to the Summer Schools, we deliver a wide variety of [bespoke interventions with our partner schools](#). These encompass activities including: aspiration raising and 'myth-busting' relating to HE with years 6-8 pupils; subject taster sessions, masterclasses, study skills and revision sessions, delivered by our academic staff to years 12-13 pupils, with the aim of raising attainment. We also offer a programme of mock interviews for partner schools wishing to send applicants for professional courses such as Primary Teaching and Physiotherapy.

A number of our measures aimed at younger year groups have an element of [parental engagement](#), which is seen as a vital element for improving pupil achievement.

We are proud of our activity with [Care Leavers](#). Our outreach activity covers a range of interventions for raising attainment and achievement levels, as well as pre and post-application support.

We offer regular bi-monthly events aimed at attracting more [mature students](#) to the University. Potential applicants are invited to one of a series of sessions for mature students held on campus in the evening, including current mature students and a member of the Admissions team. These sessions provide mature students with a variety of advice on courses of study, applying to university and potential sources of funding. Our annual mature student dinner pulls together applicants and current students at the University to expand social networks. For 2018 entry, we have reviewed the entry requirements and application review process for mature students. As a result, we have introduced equivalency exams related to Maths and English GCSEs to remove the barrier some mature students face with our general entry requirements for Maths and English GCSEs or from the expense of external equivalency tests. Our equivalency tests are offered without charge; we will also include Maths and English preparatory sessions for any mature students who need them. We also introduced a Foundation Year option to many of our undergraduate degrees in 2016-17 in order to facilitate re-entry to HE.

We work with school partners and local specialist teaching teams to raise attainment levels, aspirations, confidence and knowledge about HE among young [disabled](#) people. This work includes the opportunity to visit the campus for a day to learn about university life and speak to our Disability Support Team to gain advice on funding and to understand the support available on the programme. Our current students with disabilities are involved in these activities to give additional insight into our learning experience and student life.

Priorities

As shown in section 1, whilst we have made good progress on widening access over the years, we have some priorities to address in terms of under-performance. In particular, we will be putting additional energy into improving access for [minority ethnic students](#). Our student population does not currently reflect the local and regional BME population and this is a significant priority area for us.

We have had significant engagement with the [Equality Challenge Unit](#) and have implemented a number of changes related to diversifying our curriculum and unconscious bias training as part of the staff induction process. We have also looked at the image of the University and how we promote ourselves to BME students. Our Students' Union has created a Liberation Officer role related to BME students within its student representation framework.

Our work with schools in the more ethnically diverse neighbouring sub-regions of [South and West Yorkshire](#) has intensified. We now have partnerships with schools in Barnsley, Wakefield, South Leeds, Dewsbury and Scunthorpe. The school partnerships that have been formed are longitudinal – they last for four years and commence work with pupils in Year 7 – and are sequenced to run initial workshops at the schools, two campus visits, and final preparatory workshops that cover life skills, mock interviews and study skills.

In addition, further work is being initiated with schools in Bradford and Keighley in West Yorkshire. We are aiming to increase significantly the proportion of BME students studying at the University and take forward other work to enhance BME student success and progression with interventions with schools, teachers and the local community groups.

Working towards a 'whole institution' approach

We are committed through our Mission and Values to giving learning opportunities to anyone who might benefit from them, regardless of the students' background. As seen in section 2, we are working towards a 'whole institution' approach to widening participation.

Our Access & Participation working group has recently facilitated a comprehensive review of our strategy, interventions, funding model and evaluation framework. It is clear from this work that there is plenty of evidence of access and participation activities embedded in our academic Schools and Professional Services and that considerable cooperation, sharing of good practice and working in partnership occurs.

One area of work that demonstrates our whole institution approach relates to supporting [Transgender](#) students. Led by our Equality and Diversity Adviser, this project has educated the whole institution about the experiences and issues that transgender students may face. Information sessions and talks have been well attended by staff from the University; and a working group has subsequently implemented some important changes to our procedures so that they are more inclusive for transgender students. This work has been recognised in the 2018 Guardian University Awards, where we were a runner-up in the Student Experience

category. Our staff have also presented at Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE) and Equality Challenge Unit annual conferences to share good practice in this area.

Evaluating the effectiveness of our measures

We participate and collaborate in a wide range of access and participation initiatives that focus on specific student groups. We evaluate continuously to ensure we know what works and that our time and money is spent wisely.

All of our activities are evaluated using surveys of participants, normally before and after the activity, in order to gain feedback on how useful they have found the activity. Schools and partners are also asked to provide feedback along similar lines.

For longitudinal activity, evaluation is more detailed. Schools and partners are involved in helping to establish a baseline for participants based on their aspirations and attitude to learning at the start of each year of the project. Surveys are run again after each year of the project to monitor the progress of individual participants. We use the HEAT system extensively; during the last year, participants in our West and South Yorkshire scheme have been added to the HEAT database.

At a strategic level, an annual analysis of the makeup of our intake and wider student population is conducted. This examines tariff points on entry, recruitment of underrepresented groups and the intersections, recruitment pathways from feeder schools and colleges, and a geographical analysis of recruitment linked to POLAR. Assessing our performance on these four factors and linking the findings to our access and participation measures gives us an accurate barometer of the success of our work.

An example of how we scrutinise the effectiveness of our outreach activities is the review of the Green Apples collaborative scheme, which has long been a flagship WP initiative in York. This scheme was evaluated in dialogue with school partners, through analysis of data collected by the scheme, and through focus groups with participants. As well as recognising the many positive activities and outcomes, the review highlighted some issues with school partners and some areas of lower pupil engagement that are now being addressed.

Student Success

We recognise that supporting our students to succeed, especially those from underrepresented groups, is central to our Mission and crucial for our business model too. We understand that WP is crucially about supporting success in terms of the transition to HE, continuation, achievement and progression into employment and further study. We have a wide range of initiatives for supporting the success of underrepresented groups, which continue to be refined based on evaluation and student feedback.

We have worked hard on the transition to HE. We have focused on the development of pre-entry information for new students, registration and Welcome Semester. Welcome Semester has been developed both in terms of its content, how it is delivered, and the way we communicate with students (now using an app). These developments help all our students, but they have a disproportionately positive benefit on students from underrepresented groups.

An [Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework](#) (ILTAF) was introduced for the whole University in 2016-17. Since then, our Student Services and Academic Development Directorate continue to help staff enhance the inclusivity of their learning and teaching. We also work on enhancing our central learning support through regular evaluation and re-implementation. This includes individual / group study tutorial support and an ever-increasing range of online study tools that students can access at any time. Our Library staff and services are very responsive to student feedback, evidenced by positive results in the most recent National Student Survey.

Our [First in Family](#) scheme is popular and effective at helping students with no family history of HE make the transition to studying with us. Additional support is offered to students who identify themselves as being First in Family and who may fall into another underrepresented group. Assistance comes from Academic Tutors (someone to talk to about academic or pastoral matters); study support opportunities that develop study skills and essay writing; and access to wellbeing workshops, for instance, on stress management, getting good sleep, living with housemates, etc. First in Family students are contacted at key points throughout their time with us so they can access specific support tailored to their needs. The scheme is also student-led and involves three paid posts that are filled by current students.

[Early Start](#) is a scheme aimed at supporting students who disclose to us that they are on the Autistic Spectrum. Autistic Spectrum students are invited to enrol at an earlier stage than others in the year group to enable them to familiarise themselves with their surroundings before the hustle and bustle of Welcome Semester. Acting on feedback from the Disabled Students Forum, the Early Start programme has, since 2015, been expanded to include students with other disabilities. So that Early Start students are able to build their own networks, we run the [Stratus initiative](#) throughout the year – a social programme for students on the autistic spectrum.

We offer high levels of support for all students with disabilities. In particular, we have enhanced our support for students with mental health difficulties. The growth in mental health issues among students and society more broadly is a national concern. To respond to growing demand for mental health support, we made a number of changes to our approach, including same day psychological assessments from our Wellbeing Team for students in need, the expansion of online advice, and face-to-face support in our Wellbeing Zone. Our students can also now benefit from one-to-one coaching to help them reach their goals. Online training is given to front line staff to help recognise symptoms and support students with mental health difficulties. The University is active on mental health issues in the City of York and via the Higher York partnership is a member of a number of different groups aimed at supporting a wide range of people who suffer from poor mental health. We work in

partnership with local mental health services delivered through the NHS and suicide prevention groups within the city (see Converge section on page 5). York's new mental health hospital will be co-located with our sport campus, which will open up a number of further opportunities for partnership and cooperation on services and research.

We have a well-established support framework for [Care Leavers](#). Care Leavers receive help and support throughout their programmes. Depending on individual circumstances, Care Leavers are offered a bursary of up to £1,000 per year; flexible accommodation to ensure that they have somewhere to live throughout their studies; and the offer of a scholarship that enables participation in our Study Abroad programme. One-to-one support is offered through informal regular catch-up meetings with our Care Leaver Advisor, who is there to discuss any personal issues or signpost to additional services.

We are investing significantly in implementing a system for Learning Analytics, which will be piloted in the 2018-19 academic year. This system will draw on a number of indicators such as attendance, academic achievement and use of learning resources to give an indication of student engagement that facilitates earlier intervention. This will be a key tool to drive improvements in support for all students, particularly those from underrepresented groups.

[Evaluating the effectiveness of our measures](#)

Achievement levels and support for all students, especially students from underrepresented groups, are continuously monitored; changes are made based on evidence:

[Student data](#): access, retention and attainment data are monitored regularly and interactive business intelligence is available for staff across the institution at any time. Analysis on underrepresented groups is conducted and reports are published in an Annual Equality and Diversity report, which is scrutinised by Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

Individualised [activity-based evaluation](#) is carried out for all of the interventions that the University makes. Students who use our Student Services Team are surveyed; feedback is collated and analysed and changes are based on this evidence. For example, changes were made to the way in which counselling sessions were offered and booked as a result of feedback from service users. Individual interventions are carefully monitored and feedback is sought; for instance, First in Family is reviewed annually as part of the rotation process of the student facilitators of the scheme. Another example of how evaluative evidence has changed practice relates to our funding arrangements for Care Leavers (see above).

Progression

We have made student progression, careers and employability a key part of the University's 2026 Strategy. Our 'Clear about Career' strategic priority sits alongside 'Inspiring Learning' and 'Impactful Research' as one of our three fundamental strategies. Significant work is underway on Clear about Career, with very positive results already emerging. The initiatives are aimed at all students but are focused using a Graduate Employment Matrix (GEM), which takes into account a number of factors within the data that we hold about students, including entry tariff, the course that they are registered on (by looking at previous DLHE results) and progress through the course. The matrix indicates those students from underrepresented groups who are predicted to have poorer progression and employment outcomes than other students. This intelligence enables us to inform these students about, and to encourage participation in, the many employability sessions that are offered, such as CV preparation and interviews skills. GEM also facilitates early interventions from the Careers Department in the student's journey with us. Our work on GEM has been recognised through being shortlisted for a Guardian University Award in 2018.

Our strategic drive on graduate careers and opportunities has resulted in a dramatic increase in students engaging with the Careers Department:

In 2016-17, 18% of all undergraduates engaged with Careers. In 2017-18, during the first 14 weeks of teaching, engagement levels reached 28% (the full year national average for HE institutions is 24%).

We offer a range of additional funding to encourage students from underrepresented groups to participate in schemes such as our [Graduate Internships](#), where personal circumstances may otherwise have been a barrier. We have a number of internal and external internships, the latter developed through links with business. In 2017, 44 students were placed on a Graduate Internship, an increase of 217% on the previous year.

Our [Grad2Director](#) scheme nurtures our budding entrepreneurs, giving expert help on developing, planning and starting a business. More than fifty graduates registered on the programme and submitted business plans in 2017-18. These were fully considered by the University and eight graduates were awarded financial support from us to found their own companies. Our eight new company directors are drawn from a wide range of disciplines across the University: Business, English Literature and Linguistics, Education, Design, Social Sciences and Performing Arts. The businesses they have set up are equally diverse, ranging from counselling services for local authorities to designing state-of-the-art home products.

[Gradcore](#) is a scheme for our alumni that offers ongoing careers support for as long as they need it. From our 2017 leavers, 57 participants registered with Gradcore with only 24% initially being in employment. The scheme enabled 79% of the alumni to gain employment, with 45% of the cohort having gained 'graduate-level' jobs.

Evaluating the effectiveness of our measures

Overall progression of all students but particularly those of underrepresented groups is monitored using data from internal sources, such as data about engagement levels with Careers and official HESA DLHE data. Activity-based evaluation is also key and participants are regularly surveyed in order to fine-tune our provision.

Financial Support

Since 2017-18 we have been offering financial support for all new undergraduate students through bursaries loaded onto the [Aspire Card](#). All entrants are given a card with £100 loaded onto it. Students with a residual family income of less than £25,000 are eligible for an additional £400. This money can be spent on a range of products: books, programme materials and other learning aids, as well as University catering. This award is repeated each year throughout the students' programme.

In addition to this general financial support package, specific financial support is aimed at a number of underrepresented groups. This includes the yearly £1,000 for [Care Leavers](#). The support package for this group has been changed, based on feedback and now takes on two elements during the first two years of study, £300 in cash and £700 in order to develop non-academic skills and enhance employability prospects. Our [Sanctuary Scholarship](#) supports refugees. [Opportunity funding](#) is also available to allow participation in Internships and Study Abroad experiences for those who would otherwise not be able to afford them.

Our financial packages are supported by our [Student Funding Advice Team](#) who offer help to students with financial issues. They are trained to assist students from a range of backgrounds to resolve any barriers to remaining in HE. This is backed up by extensive use amongst our students of [Black Bullion](#), an online modular system that enables students to develop money management skills at their own pace.

From 2017-18, a package of bursaries aimed at encouraging our students to stay on and register on taught postgraduate courses was implemented. Bursaries are based on UG degree classifications, with tuition fee reductions of up to 75% available on selected courses. Following a successful introduction that has boosted PGT study, this scheme is being rolled out to include more courses in 2018-19. Evaluation has shown us that this, together with the improved funding levels for PGT students from the Student Loans Company, has enabled more students to continue with us who would have otherwise not been able to afford to do so.

Fine-tuning and evaluating our financial support package

The move to the Aspire Card scheme was meticulously planned and implemented by a working group that included representation from our Students' Union. Due to the nature of the scheme, it is possible to gain a holistic picture of student engagement with it and also

how the money is being spent. In addition to the intelligence we have gleaned from Aspire about student needs, a survey of students has been commissioned to obtain feedback on the scheme. The working group continues to operate with active input from our Students' Union. As a result of this evaluation, we are making changes to the scope of the scheme and the range of areas that students can spend on. Currently, we are exploring the possibility of enabling students to spend the money on subscriptions for SU clubs and societies to enhance student engagement more broadly.

Working with schools to increase attainment

We believe in strengthening links with schools in order to extend the life opportunities of our young people, irrespective of socioeconomic background, race, faith, gender and other factors that so often are seen as determining parameters. On top of all our work on Access, our School of Education leads on our work to raise attainment in schools.

Our strategy for engaging with schools centres on offering Continual Provision Development (CPD) and research opportunities with partners schools. These activities will enable the staff in schools to work more effectively with their pupils, thus driving-up pupil attainment:

Delivery of teacher training and CPD activity for teachers and school leaders

We have established links with primary and secondary schools across North Yorkshire from our work on School Direct, Initial Teacher Education placements, and existing CPD activity. These activities impact indirectly on pupil attainment through the quality of teaching and the ongoing engagement in development of those teachers.

Research

Staff within our School of Education are actively engaged in research that will help schools and the sector understand the factors at play in successful schools and the evidence base supporting pupil success. Examples of our current research in this field include: the parental voice and its role in helping to close the attainment gap; understanding the conditions that can create positive and sustainable change in schools and the tools that can be used by students, teachers and HE partners to facilitate this; and piloting a model to embed teaching grammar in the primary curriculum.

To complement these activities, the University has become a corporate member of Ebor Multi Academy Trust, as well as developing relationships with other Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). School sponsorship and other long term school partnerships are a matter of ongoing discussion, as we clarify how we can use our considerable strength and expertise in the field of education to the best possible effect in raising attainment.

5. Investment

We plan to invest £4.2m on Access, Success, Progression and our Financial Support package in 2019-20. That is equivalent to 26.5% of higher fee income. The investment is disaggregated as follows:

	2019-20
Access investment	795,215
Success investment	1,801,694
Progression investment	246,872
Investment in financial support	1,360,000
Total investment	4,203,782

In addition to this institutional investment, we will also invest our Student Opportunity Funding into inclusive learning and teaching practices.

6. Provision of information to students

We provide prospective students and their families with clear information about fees and finance packages, and there is an individualised approach to admissions handling to ensure appropriate information is provided. Information is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains up to date, including that which is located on the University's website. For example, this includes illustrations of the net costs of studying undergraduate programmes at the University, taking into account estimates for the cost of living and the total financial support that will be available.

This information is also developed into printed materials and information packs around student finance and support. A brief summary is included in the undergraduate prospectus with signposting back to the website and direct contacts for further information. The brochure and pack will be used in our liaison activities with a particular focus on underrepresented groups. The detail available on the website and in the Student Finance Support pack will also be used as the basis for advice and guidance through talks, seminars and workshops targeted at parents, key target WP groups, prospective students, advice and guidance professionals, school staff and others who may have a key influence on student decision making not only in areas of student recruitment but also in new areas of activity.

Advice and support is not confined to prospective students. Additional information for new students is provided as an embedded feature of the schedule of Welcome Semester, both prior to and after arrival. Additional support for current students is clearly signposted, and Student Services staff work closely with the Students Union to provide welfare guidance and support.

Appendix 1 Access & Participation Plan (York St John Students' Union Submission)

From the beginning of this process, the University has involved students and representatives of the Students' Union to give insight into the student journey and provide student opinion during key stages of the development of the Access and Participation Plan. As a Students' Union, we have been continually invited to 'Widening Participation' working groups that firstly, centred on assessing data about our current students, and secondly centred on discussing what can be done to improve the experience of our current and prospective students. Within these meetings, the contributions given, from both the elected representatives and students, has been welcomed positively and been acted upon. Alongside these meetings, representatives had frequent one-to-one meetings with directors and relevant staff members from the working group, who were eager to gather feedback and opinions from a student perspective about the 'student journey' from recruitment through to when the students continue past graduation.

Within the Students' Union we run Academic Representation systems, where there are elected students representatives on each course for each year group, alongside a Zone structure, namely our 'Student Experience' and 'Education' Zone. In addition to this, the Student Senate and Students' Union Executive Group is established at the beginning of each academic year. By creating and maintaining these schemes, we are able to ascertain and monitor opinions and views of students (both supported and unsupported by the access participation plan). Fortnightly Academic Rep meetings and monthly Zones have given valuable feedback about widening participation and the access plan composed by the University.

From listening and acting upon student feedback, we have since established a Liberation Officer Representative structure where an elected representative from each 'yet to reach' group works with both the union and the university to improve wider student engagement. Currently, we have LGBTQ+, BAME, Postgraduate, Disabled, and International Officers. These officers run sub-Zones of the 'Student Experience' Zone, where they have group discussions with the students they are representing. These discussion topics vary from general student experience, through to academic attainment, university accommodation, and support plans for specific student needs. One issue identified by students who will be supported by the access and participation plan, was that the university promotes an image of widening participation through its recruitment materials and subsequent Open Days, however once a student joins the university, there is a feeling that little support is provided to certain groups.

Since obtaining that feedback, students and representatives were invited onto relevant sub-committees to address not only the evaluation of the findings but also the implementation of the access and participation plan. Students, and their views, have been consistently welcomed by the University, showing that they value a student view on these matters. The hope is that by having the Liberation Officers working with both the university and the Students' Union, we can improve wider student engagement in the future and ensure that the further evaluation of the access and participation plan is student-centred.

George Coombs and Stephanie Foxton, YSJ SU Presidents, 2017-18 and 2018-19.

* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

We reserve the right to increase our fees in line with RPI inflation should this be permitted by the government.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		£3,500
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

Table 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	State school	HESA T1a - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	% from state school	No	2012-13	95.3	95.9	96	96.1			Currently 96.1
T16a_02	Access	Socio-economic	HESA T1a - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	% from NS-SEC 4-7	No	2012-13	34.5	36.5	37	37.5			No longer available as a HESA PI
T16a_03	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	% from LPNs	No	2012-13	16.7	17.8	18	18.2			Currently 16.9
T16a_04	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (All, full-time, first degree entrants)	Continuation rate	No	2012-13	94.4	95.6	96	96			Currently 94.2
T16a_05	Access	Mature	Other statistic - Mature (please give details in the next column)	% Mature students	No	2014-15	41.7	42	42.1	42.2			Currently 40.4

T16a_06	Access	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	% UK BME students	No	2014-15	4.4	5.6	6	6			Currently 4.7
T16a_07	Access	Part-time	Other statistic - Part-time (please give details in the next column)	% PT students	No	2014-15	16.2	16.5	16.6	16.7			Currently 13.2
T16a_08	Access	Disabled	Other statistic - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	% Disabled students	No	2014-15	13.3	13.6	13.7	13.8			Currently 14.9
T16a_09	Other/Multiple stages	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	% overall student satisfaction	No	2014-15	88	89	89	89			Currently 83
T16a_10	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	% Into employment/study	No	2014-15	95.7	95.8	95.8	95.9			Currently 94.0

Table 8b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Green Apples: a successful innovative partnership involving all local FE and HE partners as well as the Local Authority, the North Yorkshire Business and Education Partnership, Higher York and local primary and secondary schools. This is a progressive programme of interventions, mainly focused on Year 9-11 but also involving pupils from year 6 upwards.	Yes	2013-14	433	730	740	760	760		Numbers of students engaged with the Green Apples programme.
T16b_02	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)	Year 10 Aspiration raising residential	No	2012-13	60	80	80	80	80		Gradual increase in numbers to become stable at 80 for this identified group
T16b_03	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)	Part of a broader series of work with schools which are in the lowest POLAR quintiles, have high levels of FSM and a low GCSE attainment level	No	2016-17	0	40	45	60	60		A series of general interactions culminating in a course specific project based residential.
T16b_04	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	North Yorkshire work with schools negotiated through a consortia, expanded to include Selby (NYCHEC)	Yes	2013-14	11	15	15	12	12		To appropriately expand the geographical reach while at the same time become more targeted within schools, this would result in limited growth in numerical targets but would be more focussed on need

T16b_05	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Access to the professions and other taster day sessions	No	2012-13	83	105	110	115	150		Increased focus on taster sessions, through both self selection by individuals and school targeting
T16b_06	Access	Multiple	Management targets	Improve data capture methods and build coherent longitudinal tracking	No	2015-16	0	75% participants included	95% participants included	All participants included	All participants included		Implement HEAT tracking and improve data collection across all projects, this has fallen a year behind predicted due to the availability of support from HEAT.
T16b_07	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	SPEAK UP a project targeting BME students involving English Language mentoring to support attainments delivered by current students	No	2016-17	0	100	120	150	150		The Speak up project is now called YEAL.
T16b_08	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Game Theory - community project to use sport to create a sense of belonging and identity in learners	No	2016-17	0	35	40	45	45		This project is now called SW5 Youth.
T16b_09	Multiple	Attainment raising	Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	Expand the number of MATs the University is working with from 1 to 4 in 2017-18, with outcomes targets in place for the 2019-20 Access Agreement.	No	2016-17	1	4	4	4	4		This target is for 2017-18. It is hoped that this work will expand in future years but are not certain of developments other than the 4 MATs that will be in place for 2017-18.