

University of Liverpool

Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Introduction and strategic aim

The University of Liverpool is absolutely committed to raising aspirations and improving the attainment of school children across the region. We also remain steadfast in our dedication to ensuring that those students with the ability to benefit from higher education and the desire to study with us can access our courses and receive the support they need to succeed. The promotion of equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups is core to achieving these commitments.

Our founding mission in 1881 was ‘for advancement of learning and ennoblement of life’ and this continues to underpin all that we do. This is evident throughout our new Strategic Framework, [Liverpool 2031](#), which sets out the University’s vision as follows:

‘The University of Liverpool will be recognised for globally leading research and education, the quality and scale of its partnerships, and its positive impact on people, our place and the planet. Driven by our values and diverse community of colleagues, students and alumni, we will make ground-breaking discoveries that shape the future, empower individuals to become changemakers, and inspire students to fulfil their academic and personal ambitions.’

The continued commitment to our widening access and participation work is a clear thread running throughout Liverpool 2031. Our Education and Experience objectives include a re-imagining of our research-connected curriculum ‘to ensure that qualified students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in their studies and research’. Meanwhile, our Place and Innovation objectives include a renewed commitment ‘to widening participation and outreach to raise educational attainment and aspiration, so that students from all backgrounds are able and supported to achieve their full potential.’

This regional focus is particularly important to us. We are proud of our city and are determined to support the wellbeing and prosperity of communities across the region. We are proud of our successes in attainment and aspiration-raising to date but we also recognise that more work is needed in a City Region where child poverty levels remain much higher than the national average, and education attainment lags well behind. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score for the Liverpool City Region is 40.1, which compares to a national average of 22.3.¹ Within this, Knowsley and Liverpool local authorities have the highest scores, at 43.0 and 42.4 respectively, which places them second and third for average scores across all local authorities in England and Wales.² Attainment at Key Stage 4 in Liverpool is below national and core city averages across all measures and, with only 57.4% of young people in Liverpool achieving a standard GCSE pass (grades 9-4) in English and Maths compared to 64.6% nationally, this places the city in the bottom 10% in the country.³

We are proud of our achievements in widening participation (WP), in the programmes we deliver, the students we have helped and the successes they have gone on to achieve. Many of our current UK students have at least one widening participation characteristic, our 2021 intake saw us recruit almost 100 more students from the most deprived IMD quintile than the year before, setting a new record for the University, and we are proud of the 100% increase in our care experienced student population since 2018.⁴ These are

¹ Penney, 2019

² Penney, 2019

³ Liverpool City Council’s Liverpool Education Improvement Plan 2021

⁴ Internal figures. Growth from 31 entrants in 2018 to 66 entrants in 2023.

important improvements and we remain committed to building on these and other successes over the course of this Plan.

Risks to equality of opportunity

With reference to OfS Regulatory Notice 1, we conducted a full assessment of performance to understand the most significant risks to equality of opportunity for our own students, which we will seek to address through this plan.

The data provided below aggregates all ethnic groups other than white, under “Black, Asian and minority ethnic”; this is in line with current requirements as set out by the Office for Students (OfS). We recognise the limitations of aggregating data in this manner. Throughout the development of this plan we have disaggregated and analysed data by ethnic group and carefully considered intersectionality to identify where inequalities specifically arise and tailor actions accordingly.

Access

Access Risk 1 (Ethnicity):

There is a lower percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students at Liverpool than in the sector. This stands at 16.8% of entrants in 2021/22 compared to a sector average of 34.2%. Evidence suggests that this could be due to a low application rate, low offer rate, varying application rates to competitive programmes and high rates of students not meeting the conditions of their offer.

Access Risk 2 (IMD):

There is a lower percentage of students of IMD Q1 at Liverpool than in the sector. This stands at 16.7% of entrants in 2021/22 compared to a sector average of 20.1% (IMDQ1 2021 English entrants). Evidence suggests that this could be due to a low application rate, low offer rate, varying application rates to competitive programmes and high rates of students not meeting the conditions of their offer.

Continuation

Continuation Risk 3 (IMD):

There is currently a continuation gap between IMD Quintile 1 and IMD Quintile 5 students at Liverpool. This stands at 4.9% as a four-year average as compared to an 8% gap for the sector. We clearly have further to go, and evidence suggests that areas to target include: a knowledge and skills gap, low levels of access to information and guidance, a difference in perception of higher education and low on course attainment.

Completion

Completion Risk 4 (IMD):

There is a completion gap between IMD Quintile 1 and IMD Quintile 5 students at Liverpool. This stands at 6.1% in 2017/18 starters compared to a sector average of 10.7%. Evidence suggests that this could be due to knowledge and skills, insufficient academic and personal support, and cost pressures.

Degree Attainment

Degree attainment Risk 5 (Disability):

The degree attainment gap between students with a reported disability and non-disabled students at Liverpool is 2.4%, larger than the sector average of -0.5%. Students with a disclosed mental health condition have a gap of 3.7% in 2021/22 compared to a sector gap of -2.1%. Evidence suggests that this could be due to knowledge and skills and insufficient academic and personal support.

Degree attainment Risk 6 (Ethnicity):

There is a degree attainment gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic students and White students at Liverpool. The gap stands at 8.8% for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students compared to White students and 23.8% for Black students compared to White students. The sector average is a gap of 11.0% for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students compared to White students and a 20% gap for Black students compared to White students. This is clearly a significant gap, which evidence suggests could be due to knowledge and skills and insufficient academic and personal support.

Objectives

Access

Objective 1: Black, Asian and minority ethnic student access

Liverpool will increase the percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students entering the University from 18.9% of entrants in 2021/22 to 21.8% in 2028/29 through: partnership working with schools and other organisations to support raising attainment; diverse higher education pathways and foundation programmes; reviewed targeting of our outreach activity; refocusing and adding staff capacity; and increased places on our supported access projects so that more students, particularly Black students, can receive intensive support during their educational journey to HE.

Objective 2: Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 student access

Liverpool will increase the percentage of students from IMD Quintile 1 attending the University from 16.7% of entrants in 2021/22 to 18.1% by 2028/29 through: partnership working with schools and other organisations to support raising attainment; promoting diverse higher education pathways and foundation programmes; reviewed targeting of our outreach activity; and reviewing the metrics used for our university admissions strategy.

Continuation

Objective 3: Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 student continuation

Liverpool will reduce the continuation gap between IMD Quintile 5 and IMD Quintile 1 students from 3.90% in 2019/20 to 1.31% by 2028/29 through the delivery of schemes such as: Liverpool Plus (which works with under-represented groups); using our Learner Analytics Dashboard to monitor success and inform interventions; providing financial support; increased cross-institutional emphasis on success-related objectives through governance structures; student voice and pedagogical enhancement such as the implementation of our Liverpool Curriculum Framework (LCF) and inclusive practice resources e.g. the Inclusive Curriculum Tool and other guides, such as those supporting the design of inclusive and accessible materials and assessments. Staff and students from diverse backgrounds have co-created these reflective tools, which have the capacity to offer a programme-level end-to-end overview of inclusivity.

Completion

Objective 4: Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 student completion

Liverpool will reduce the completion gap between IMD Quintile 5 and IMD Quintile 1 students from 6.1% in 2017/18 starters to 4.0% by 2028/29 through the delivery of schemes such as: Liverpool Plus (which works with under-represented groups); using our Learner Analytics Dashboard to monitor success and inform interventions; financial support; increased cross-institutional emphasis on success-related objectives through governance structures; student voice and pedagogical enhancement such as the implementation of our Liverpool Curriculum Framework and inclusive practice resources e.g. the Inclusive Curriculum Tool and other guides, such as those supporting the design of inclusive and accessible materials and assessments. Staff and students from diverse backgrounds have co-created these reflective tools, which have the capacity to offer a programme-level end-to-end overview of inclusivity.

Degree Awarding

Objective 5: Degree awarding for students with a reported disability

Liverpool will eliminate the degree awarding gap between students who have reported a disability and those who have not by 2028/29. We will do this by: addressing structural barriers, including the development of more inclusive pedagogies; reviewing our curriculum; enhancing our disability coaches scheme; rolling out a new, specialist employability initiative designed to empower students and graduates who face barriers, biases, and unequal access to progression and future success through an enhanced package of careers support; and improving individual support for disabled students including specific support for those who have disclosed a mental health condition. These measures will provide an increased sense of belonging and aid cohort building for mutual support.

Objective 6: Degree awarding for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Liverpool will reduce the degree awarding gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic students and white students, from 8.8% in 2021/22 to 4.3% by 2028/29 (with a commitment to eliminate the gap by 2032) through the delivery of schemes such as: as Liverpool Plus (which works with under-represented groups); using our Learner Analytics Dashboard to monitor success and inform interventions; financial support; increased cross-institutional emphasis on success-related objectives through governance structures, student voice and pedagogical enhancement such as the implementation of our Liverpool Curriculum Framework (LCF) and inclusive practice resources 'Inclusive Curriculum Tool' and the 'Decolonising the Curriculum Toolkit' and a range of other guides, such as those supporting the 'design of inclusive and accessible materials and assessments'. Staff and students from diverse backgrounds have co-created these reflective tools, which have the capacity to offer a programme-level, end-to-end overview of inclusivity.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategy 1: Black, Asian and minority ethnic student access

Objectives and targets: Liverpool will increase the percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students attending the University from 18.9% of entrants in 2021/22 to 21.8% by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Knowledge and skills (EORR 1), Information and Guidance (EORR 2), Perception of higher education (EORR 3), Application success rates (EORR 4)

The activities set out below are new or significantly enhanced existing interventions, which have been carefully designed to complement work already underway. Existing activities, such as the Merseyside Young Health and Life Scientists initiative, Go Higher, collaborative outreach through our Shaping Futures partnership and many others are detailed in the Whole Provider Approach below.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Liverpool Scholars	100 additional places on our Liverpool Scholars Programme (a multi-event, pre-entry programme for year 12). We will target schools with high numbers of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, particularly Black students, in the LCR. This will be delivered in collaboration with our current Black, Asian and minority ethnic students as well as societies. Successful completion will result in a 2-grade reduction to the standard offer at Liverpool. Enhanced existing activity	Administration WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses Student staff pay and expenses Student travel costs and expenses	1. Young people better prepared to enter HE and make informed choices about their future study options 2. Young people have an increased sense of belonging with HE 3. Increased applications from and offers for local students from target postcodes and Black, Asian and minority ethnic demographics	IS2
Primary school activity	In-school and campus-based activities with local primary schools. We will target schools with high numbers of Black, Asian and	WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses	1. Young people informed and engaged with early on the benefits of HE	IS2

	<p>minority ethnic pupils, particularly Black pupils in the Liverpool 8 postal code area.</p> <p>For schools outside our immediate area, a bespoke, interactive website has been created to aid classroom delivery of university information, advice and guidance.</p> <p>Evidence suggests engaging young people early in their education is key to encouraging them to feel positively about higher education as they age.</p> <p>Delivered in collaboration with our current Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students as well as societies.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	<p>Student staff pay and expenses</p> <p>Student travel costs and expenses</p>	<p>2. Young people know that HE is a diverse setting with role models they can relate to</p>	
<p>Bespoke 1:1 Information and Guidance</p>	<p>Bespoke individual support and guidance for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, particularly Black students, in Years 11-13 from ten schools linked to the Scholars programme. Guaranteed access for engaged students to the Scholars programme, including 1:1 visits to campus, support to attend Open Days and Applicant Discovery Days.</p> <p>New activity</p>	<p>WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses</p> <p>Student staff pay and expenses</p> <p>Student travel costs and expenses</p>	<p>1. Young people better prepared to enter HE and make informed choices about their future study options</p> <p>2. Young people develop sense of belonging with HE</p> <p>3. Increased number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students accessing Scholars programme</p> <p>4. Increased applications from and offers for local students from target postcodes and Black, Asian and minority ethnic demographics</p>	

Year 11 attainment mentoring	<p>Extend our successful one-year mentoring programme to additional schools, with a particular focus on Black students. This is designed work with communities to support Year 11 students to get the most out of their final school year and maximise their results at GCSE level.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	<p>WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses</p> <p>Student staff pay and expenses</p> <p>Student travel costs and expenses</p>	<p>1. Young people have increased GCSE attainment</p> <p>2. Young people have increased academic confidence and skills</p> <p>3. Young people more likely to progress to level 3 study and HE</p>	<p>IS2</p>
Disrupted Education Programme	<p>Increase capacity of the Disrupted Education Programme (working 1:1 with students who have had significant barriers to their educational journey e.g. care experienced students) by 0.5 FTE and greater promotion to community groups and schools/colleges with high proportions of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, particularly Black students, to increase the number of Black students receiving support.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	<p>WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses</p> <p>Student staff pay and expenses</p> <p>Student travel costs and expenses</p>	<p>1. Young people able to access the additional support available</p> <p>2. Young people better prepared to enter HE and make informed choices about their future study options</p> <p>2. Increased applications from and offers for local students from target postcodes and Black, Asian and minority ethnic demographics</p>	<p>IS2</p>
Liverpool Advocate Programme	<p>The Liverpool Advocate Programme provides paid, flexible work for students, and enables WP students to directly support our WP work and act as role models. We will provide a guaranteed interview to Black students applying to the Programme.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	<p>WP Project Officer</p> <p>Administration</p>	<p>1. Increased number of Black student advocates</p> <p>2. Young people more likely to see people from their background delivering outreach as a role model</p>	<p>IS6</p>

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £2,782,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale for Intervention Strategy 1:

We have conducted a literature review, engaged with colleagues at other institutions to ascertain best practice, completed focus groups with current Black, Asian and minority ethnic students and engaged with our Student Advisory Panels on the research, rationale, and design of the intervention strategy. More detailed information on evidence base and rationale can be found in Annex B.

Intervention strategy 2: Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 student access

Objectives and targets: Liverpool will increase the percentage of students from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintile 1 attending the University from 16.7% of entrants in 2021/22 to 18.1% by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Knowledge and skills (EORR 1), Information and Guidance (EORR 2), Perception of higher education (EORR 3), Application success rates (EORR 4)

The activities set out below are new or significantly enhanced existing interventions, which have been carefully designed to complement work already underway. Existing activities, such as the Merseyside Young Health and Life Scientists initiative, two-year access programmes in partnership with the Sutton Trust, Go Higher and others are detailed in the Whole Provider Approach below.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Liverpool Scholars Programme	100 additional places on the Liverpool Scholars Programme (a multi-event pre-entry programme for year 12 targeting schools in areas of high deprivation). Successful completion will result in a 2-grade reduction to the standard offer at Liverpool Enhanced existing activity	Administration, WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses Student staff pay and expenses Student travel costs and expenses	1. Young people better prepared to enter HE and make informed choices about their future study options 2. Young people have an increased sense of belonging with HE 3. Increased applications from and offers for local students from target postcodes and	IS1

			Black, Asian and minority ethnic demographics	
Primary school activity	In-school and campus-based activities with local primary schools based in areas of high deprivation. Activities delivered by current undergraduates, academics and other educational providers, such as our Museums and Galleries staff. Evidence suggests engaging young people early in their education is key to encouraging them to feel positively about higher education as they age. Enhanced existing activity	WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses Student staff pay and expenses Student travel costs and expenses	1. Young people informed and engaged with early on the benefits of HE 2. Young people know that HE is a diverse setting with role models they can relate to	IS1
Year 11 attainment mentoring	Extend our successful one-year mentoring programme to additional schools in areas of high deprivation. This programme is designed to support Year 11 students to get the most out of their final school year and maximise their results at GCSE level. Enhanced existing activity	WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses Student staff pay and expenses Student travel costs and expenses	1. Young people have increased GCSE attainment 2. Young people have increased academic confidence and skills 3. Young people more likely to progress to level 3 study and HE	IS1
Disrupted Education Programme	The Disrupted Education Programme works 1:1 with students who have had significant barriers to their educational journey (e.g. care experienced students, estranged students). Work is underway to enhance the promotion of this programme and we will increase its capacity by 0.5 FTE to work with these additional students. Enhanced existing activity	WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses Student staff pay and expenses Student travel costs and expenses	1. Young people able to access the additional support available 2. Young people better prepared to enter HE and make informed choices about their future study options 3. Increased applications from and offers for local students from target postcodes and Black, Asian and minority ethnic demographics	IS1

Contextual admissions	<p>We will incorporate IMD as a consideration in our contextual admissions policy</p> <p>During the life of this plan, we aim to further investigate why the low offer rates exist, considering low application assessment scores, differential application patterns and poor course selection against achieved grades/course essentials – this work will be led by our newly appointed Evaluation and Impact Manager, who will feed back findings and make recommendations.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	Staff time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase Application rate for IMD Q1 students 2. Increase offer rate for IMD Q1 applicants 3. Increase conversion rate for IMD Q1 applicants 	
IntoUniversity Kirkby	<p>IntoUniversity opened a new centre in Kirkby in Autumn 2023 in partnership with the university, the Liverpool Football Club Foundation, Everton in the community and the Steve Morgan Foundation.</p> <p>The centre provides primary and secondary academic support and mentoring programmes in an area with one of the highest IMD scores in the country. It will seek to mirror the success of our IntoUniversity North Liverpool centre, where in 22/23 72% of students reported improved school grades as a result of the academic support provided.</p> <p>New activity</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Student advocate time</p> <p>Use of facilities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people have increased GCSE attainment 2. Young people have increased academic confidence and skills 3. Young people more likely to progress to level 3 study and HE 	
Pre-16 attainment raising with Shaping Futures Uni Connect	<p>Liverpool is the lead institution and host for the Shaping Futures partnership, which supports young people and adult learners to know what higher education is, make informed decisions about their next steps and support them gain skills for success.</p> <p>Shaping Futures’ attainment raising activities will be supported by Liverpool staff and students, including providing Liverpool Advocates for their year 7 reading mentoring project (all participants in the initial small-scale trial showed an improvement in reading age), and providing campus-based interventions for subject-specific support where there are GCSE attainment gaps in the region.</p>	<p>Student advocate time</p> <p>Staff time to run campus visits</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people have increased GCSE attainment 2. Young people have increased academic confidence and skills 3. Young people more likely to progress to level 3 study and HE 	

	Enhanced existing activity			
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £2,446,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale for Intervention strategy 2:

We have conducted a literature review, engaged with colleagues at other institutions to ascertain best practice, and reviewed internal evaluation for access work focussed on POLAR 4 Quintile one students to establish best practice for IMD Quintile 1. More detailed information on evidence base and rationale can be found in Annex B.

Evaluation for intervention strategies 1 and 2

We are fully committed to evaluating the success of our intervention strategies and will prioritise our resource in this area on new or large-scale activities. This means we will focus on evaluating our enhanced Scholars work, the new Year 11 attainment monitoring and our admissions interventions. We will generate OfS type 2 standards to determine if and how the activities contribute to the intended outcomes, objectives and targets.

We will begin these intervention strategies in 2024/25 and intend to produce an annual report on interim findings. We anticipate we will share our findings at community of practice forums, with the North West Research and Evaluation Group, with TASO (if relevant) and will publish our findings on our website after four years.

More detailed information on evaluation is provided in the Evaluation section or at Annex B.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Liverpool Scholars	1. Young people better prepared to enter HE and make informed choices about their future study options 2. Young people have an increased sense of belonging with HE 3. Increased applications from and offers for local students from target postcodes and Black, Asian and minority ethnic demographics	Data analysis of correlation between Scholar's participants and Liverpool entry profile Tracking participants into HE via HEAT Regular review of admissions offer rate and conversion rate Focus groups and attitudinal surveys across programme lifecycle, using TASO ASQ	Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2025 released on university website. Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing. 5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.

		Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.	
<p>Year 11 attainment mentoring</p> <p>IntoUniversity Centre Kirkby</p> <p>Pre-16 attainment raising with Shaping Futures Uni Connect</p>	<p>1. Young people have increased GCSE attainment</p> <p>2. Young people have increased academic confidence and skills</p> <p>3. Young people more likely to progress to level 3 study and HE</p>	<p>Tracking participants into HE via HEAT</p> <p>Tracking participants KS4 attainment via HEAT</p> <p>Focus groups and attitudinal surveys across programme lifecycle, using TASO ASQ</p> <p>Plan to generate Type 2 evidence.</p> <p>Following IntoUniversity's evaluation plan</p> <p>Following Shaping Futures' evaluation plan</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p> <p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.</p> <p>IntoUniversity's evaluation reports can be found here: https://intouniversity.org/our-impact/</p> <p>Shaping Futures' evaluation reports can be found here: https://shaping-futures.org.uk/impact/</p>
<p>Disrupted Education Programme</p>	<p>1. Young people able to access the additional support available</p> <p>2. Young people better prepared to enter HE and make informed choices about their future study options</p> <p>2. Increased applications from and offers for local students from target postcodes and Black, Asian and minority ethnic demographics</p>	<p>Theory of change and qualitative data collection from students and supporters</p> <p>Plan to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29.</p>

Intervention strategy 3: Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 student continuation

Objectives and targets: Liverpool will reduce the continuation gap between IMD Quintile 5 and IMD Quintile 1 students from 3.90% in 2019/20 to 1.31% by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Knowledge and Skills (EORR 1), Insufficient academic support (EORR 6), Insufficient personal support (EORR 7), Cost Pressures (EORR 10)

The activities set out below are new or significantly enhanced existing interventions, which have been carefully designed to complement work already underway. Existing activities, such as our inclusive curriculum work, English Language Centre study skills support, global opportunities programme and others are detailed in the Whole Provider Approach below.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
Liverpool Plus	Tailored, centrally led, post-entry support programme for widening participation students to enhance sense of belonging. This includes specific events to encourage cohorts of students to fully engage in their first year of undergraduate study and seek out support, including for mental health conditions, as needed. Also facilitating peer-to-peer connections and support. New activity	WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses Student staff pay and expenses Resources	1. Students have increased awareness of support services 2. Students have increased sense of belonging to Liverpool 3. Students have increased academic self-efficacy 5. Increased continuation rates of participants compared to similar non-participants	IS4, IS5, IS6
Liverpool Advocate Programme	The Liverpool Advocate Programme provides paid, flexible work for students, and enables WP students to directly support our WP work and act as role models. This should reduce financial concerns for students whilst avoiding impacting their studies. IMD Quintile 1 students will be prioritised in the recruitment for this scheme. Enhanced existing activity	WP Project Officer Administration	1. Advocates have increased self-efficacy 2. Advocates have increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 3. Advocates have decreased financial concerns	IS1, IS4, IS6

			4. Advocates have a lower impact of paid work on study time compared to those doing other part time work	
Student coaches	<p>We will continue to grow our sector-leading student coaches programmes (such as Disability Coaches, Money Coaches, Digital Coaches), providing peer-to-peer support and paid, flexible working opportunities for our students. This should reduce financial concerns for students whilst avoiding impacting their studies.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	<p>Student staff pay and expenses</p> <p>Student travel and subsistence costs</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have an increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 2. Students have increased knowledge of HE support systems and processes 3. Students have increased engagement in activity 4. Coaches develop transferable skills 5. Coaches have decreased financial concerns 6. Coaches have a lower impact of paid work on study time compared to those doing other part time work 	IS4, IS5, IS6
KnowHow transition support	<p>Pilot bespoke academic and skills support for modules where IMD Q1 learners underperform.</p> <p>Study at Liverpool support pack sent to IMD Q1 and other under-represented groups after confirmed place to support transition to HE level study.</p> <p>Existing support modules to be reviewed by Liverpool Advocates, with those most impactful to successful transition and entering university life highlighted in order to be included in the above pack.</p> <p>New activity</p>	<p>Student staff pay</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New entrants have increased knowledge of skills required and how to access support 2. Students have increased confidence in their academic skills 3. Increased continuation for IMD Q1 students 	IS4, IS5, IS6

Learner analytics	<p>Utilising our learner analytics dashboard to monitor and seek to address continuation, completion and attainment gaps, informing the implementation of our interventions.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	Staff time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff have increased knowledge of student engagement 2. Staff have increased ability to identify students at risk of non-continuation and offer support 	IS4, IS5, IS6
100 Days 100 Voices	<p>100 Days 100 Voices is the evolution of an annual longitudinal student voice project that has been run in the previous three academic years.</p> <p>As well as taking part in this student voice project, the cohort also receive advertisements from other departments conducting their own local level research, thereby giving them additional opportunities to provide their feedback.</p> <p>Although this survey focusses on all new students, it should reduce the gap by enabling students from underrepresented groups to voice their opinions in a safe space, by building their sense of belonging and by providing us with important information on their experience which we can use to make improvements.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	Staff time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 2. Students have increased knowledge of HE support systems and processes 3. Students have increased awareness of HE opportunities 4. Students have increased engagement in university activity 5. Staff have increased knowledge of student support requirements 6. Staff have increased ability to adapt provision to student need 	IS4, IS5, IS6
Scholarships and bursaries	<p>We will continue to invest in financial support for students with an enhanced emphasis on impact evaluation. Enhanced focus on fundraising initiatives to support students.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	Scholarships Officer time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recipients are less likely to have financial issues during study 2. Recipients are more engaged in university activities 3. Recipients have an increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 	IS4

Curriculum Project	Our new Curriculum Project will see us build on the Liverpool Curriculum Framework. The Project will consider the design of our curriculum, including a focus on scaffolding learning and transitions between years to ensure all students are appropriately supported throughout their learning. It will consider how more inclusive assessment can be embedded within our curriculum. New activity	Staff time	1. Students more successfully transition between years via improved scaffolding 2. Students can demonstrate their abilities more effectively via more inclusive assessment leading to increased module and degree attainment	IS4, IS5, IS6
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £1,996,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale for Intervention Strategy 3:

We have conducted a literature review, engaged with colleagues at other institutions to ascertain best practice, engaged with our student panel and reviewed internal evaluation for work focussed on POLAR 4 Quintile one students to establish best practice for IMD Quintile 1. More detailed information on evidence base and rationale can be found in Annex B.

Intervention strategy 4: Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 student completion

Objectives and targets: Liverpool will reduce the completion gap between IMD Quintile 5 and IMD Quintile 1 students from 6.1% in 2017/18 starters to 4.0% by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Knowledge and Skills (EORR 1), Insufficient academic support (EORR 6), Insufficient personal support (EORR 7), Cost Pressures (EORR 10)

The activities set out below are new or significantly enhanced existing interventions, which have been carefully designed to complement work already underway. Existing activities, such as our inclusive curriculum work, English Language Centre study skills support, global opportunities programme and others are detailed in the Whole Provider Approach below.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
Liverpool Plus	Tailored, centrally-led, post-entry support programme for widening participation students to enhance sense of belonging. This includes specific events to encourage cohorts of students to fully engage in	WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses	1. Students have increased awareness of support services	IS3, IS5, IS6

	<p>their first year of undergraduate study and seek out support, including for mental health conditions, as needed. Also facilitating peer-to-peer connections and support.</p> <p>New activity</p>	<p>Student staff pay and expenses Resources</p>	<p>2. Students have increased sense of belonging to Liverpool 3. Students have increased academic self-efficacy 5. Increased completion rates of participants compared to similar non-participants</p>	
<p>Liverpool Advocate Programme</p>	<p>The Liverpool Advocate Programme provides paid, flexible work for students, and enables WP students to directly support our WP work and act as role models. This should reduce financial concerns for students whilst avoiding impacting their studies.</p> <p>IMD Quintile 1 students will be prioritised in the recruitment for this scheme.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	<p>WP Project Officer Administration</p>	<p>1. Advocates have increased self-efficacy 2. Advocates have increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 3. Advocates have decreased financial concerns 4. Advocates have a lower impact of paid work on study time compared to those doing other part time work</p>	<p>IS1, IS3, IS6</p>
<p>Student coaches</p>	<p>We will continue to grow our sector-leading student coaches programmes (such as Disability Coaches, Money Coaches, Digital Coaches), providing peer-to-peer support and paid, flexible working opportunities for our students. This should reduce financial concerns for students whilst avoiding impacting their studies.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	<p>Student staff pay and expenses Student travel and subsistence costs</p>	<p>1. Students have an increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 2. Students have increased knowledge of HE support systems and processes 3. Students have increased engagement in activity 4. Coaches develop transferable skills 5. Coaches have decreased financial concerns 6. Coaches have a lower impact of paid work on study time</p>	<p>IS3, IS5, IS6</p>

			compared to those doing other part time work	
KnowHow transition support	<p>Pilot bespoke academic and skills support for modules where IMD Q1 learners underperform.</p> <p>Study at Liverpool support pack sent to IMD Q1 and other under-represented groups after confirmed place to support transition to HE level study.</p> <p>Existing support modules to be reviewed by Liverpool Advocates, with those most impactful to successful transition and entering university life highlighted in order to be included in the above pack.</p> <p>New activity</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Student staff pay</p>	<p>1. New entrants have increased knowledge of skills required and how to access support</p> <p>2. Students have increased confidence in their academic skills</p> <p>3. Increased continuation for IMD Q1</p>	IS3, IS5, IS6
Learner analytics	<p>Utilising our learner analytics dashboard to monitor and seek to address continuation, completion and attainment gaps, informing the implementation of our interventions.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>1. Staff have increased knowledge of student engagement</p> <p>2. Staff have increased ability to identify students at risk of non-continuation and offer support</p>	IS3, IS5, IS6
100 days 100 voices	<p>100 Days 100 Voices is the evolution of an annual longitudinal student voice project that has been run in the previous three academic years.</p> <p>As well as taking part in this student voice project, the cohort also receive advertisements from other departments conducting their own local level research, thereby giving them additional opportunities to provide their feedback.</p> <p>Although this survey focusses on all new students, it should reduce the gap by enabling students from underrepresented groups to voice their opinions in a safe space, by building their sense of</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>1. Students have increased sense of belonging with Liverpool</p> <p>3. Students have increased knowledge of HE support systems and processes,</p> <p>4. Students have increased awareness of HE opportunities,</p> <p>5. Students have increased engagement in activity</p> <p>6. Staff have increased knowledge of student support requirements</p>	IS3, IS5, IS6

	<p>belonging and by providing us with important information on their experience which we can use to make improvements.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>		7. Staff have increased ability to adapt provision to student need	
Scholarships and bursaries	<p>We will continue to invest in financial support for students with an enhanced emphasis on impact evaluation. Enhanced focus on fundraising initiatives to support students.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	Staff time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recipients are less likely to have financial issues during study 2. Recipients are more engaged in university activities 3. Recipients have an increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 	IS3
Curriculum Project	<p>Our new Curriculum Project will see us build on the Liverpool Curriculum Framework. The Project will consider the design of our curriculum including a focus on scaffolding and transitions between years to ensure all students are appropriately supported throughout their learning. It will consider how more inclusive assessment can be embedded within our curriculum.</p> <p>New activity</p>	Staff time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students more successfully transition between years via improved scaffolding 2. Students can demonstrate their abilities more effectively via more inclusive assessment leading to increased module and degree attainment 	IS3, IS5, IS6

Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £1,796,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale for intervention strategy 4:

We have conducted a literature review, engaged with colleagues at other institutions to ascertain best practice, engaged with our student panel and reviewed internal evaluation for work focussed on POLAR 4 Quintile one students to establish best practice for IMD Quintile 1. More detailed information on evidence base and rationale can be found in Annex B.

Evaluation of intervention strategies 3 & 4

We are fully committed to evaluating the success of our intervention strategies and will prioritise our resource in this area on new or large-scale activities. This means we will focus on evaluating Liverpool Plus, Liverpool Advocate Programme, KnowHow Transition support, scholarships and bursaries, Learning Analytics, the Curriculum project. We will generate OfS type 2 standards to determine if and how the activities contribute to the intended outcomes, objectives, and targets.

We will begin these intervention strategies in 2024/25 and intend to produce an annual report on interim findings. We anticipate we will share our findings at community of practice forums, with the North West Research and Evaluation Group, with TASO (if relevant) and will publish our findings on our website after four years.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Liverpool Plus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have increased awareness of support services 2. Students have increased sense of belonging to Liverpool 3. Students have increased academic self-efficacy 5. Increased continuation and completion rates of participants compared to similar non-participants 	<p>Theory of change underpinning activity</p> <p>Data analysis comparison of engagement by participants and non-participants</p> <p>Focus groups and interviews with participants and staff</p> <p>Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p> <p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.</p>
Liverpool Advocate Programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocates have increased self-efficacy 2. Advocates have increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 3. Advocates have decreased financial concerns 4. Advocates have a lower impact of paid work on study time compared to those doing other part time work 	<p>Theory of change underpinning activity</p> <p>Focus groups and interviews with participants and staff</p> <p>Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p>

			5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.
KnowHow transition support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New entrants have increased knowledge of skills required and how to access support 2. Students have increased confidence in their academic skills 3. Increased continuation for IMD Q1 students 	<p>Theory of change underpinning activity</p> <p>Data analysis comparison of engagement by participants and non-participants</p> <p>Focus groups and interviews with participants and staff</p> <p>Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p> <p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.</p>
Learner analytics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff have increased knowledge of student engagement 2. Staff have increased ability to identify students at risk of non-continuation and offer support 	<p>Data analysis comparison of engagement by underrepresented group</p> <p>Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p> <p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.</p>
Scholarships and bursaries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recipients are less likely to have financial issues during study 2. Recipients are more engaged in university activities 3. Recipients have an increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 	<p>Data analysis comparison of engagement by recipients and non-recipients</p> <p>Focus groups and interviews with recipients</p> <p>Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p> <p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.</p> <p>Findings shared with funders upon request.</p>

Curriculum Project	<p>1. Disabled students more successfully transition between years via improved scaffolding</p> <p>2. Disabled students can demonstrate their abilities more effectively via more inclusive assessment leading to increased module and degree attainment</p>	<p>Theory of change underpinning activity</p> <p>Data analysis comparison of engagement by participants and non-participants</p> <p>Focus groups and interviews with participants and staff</p> <p>Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p> <p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.</p>
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Intervention strategy 5: Degree awarding for students with a reported disability

Objectives and targets: Liverpool will eliminate the degree awarding gap between students who have reported a disability and those who have not by 2028/29.

Risks to equality of opportunity: Knowledge and Skills (EORR 1), Insufficient academic support (EORR 6), Insufficient personal support (EORR 7)

The activities set out below are new or significantly enhanced existing interventions, which have been carefully designed to complement work already underway. Existing activities, such as our inclusive curriculum work, student support, global opportunities programme and others are detailed in the Whole Provider Approach below.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
Curriculum Project	<p>Our new Curriculum Project will see us build on the Liverpool Curriculum Framework. The Project will consider the design of our curriculum including a focus on scaffolding and transitions between years to ensure all students are appropriately supported throughout their learning. It will consider how more inclusive assessment can be embedded within our curriculum.</p> <p>New activity</p>	Staff time	<p>1. Disabled students more successfully transition between years via improved scaffolding</p> <p>2. Disabled students can demonstrate their abilities more effectively via more inclusive assessment leading to increased module and degree attainment</p>	IS3, IS4, IS6

Student Support Project	<p>Our Student Support Project is considering our overall model for student support to better meet the changing needs of our student body. Support for disabled students, including those with mental health conditions, will be one strand within the project and we have already identified two key workstreams with additional scoping taking place to identify further activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving support for staff to support disabled students 2. Implementing a new CRM system to improve processes for accessing support and information sharing within the University. <p>Creation of a Student Board to ensure effective co-creation of the project including disabled students.</p> <p>New activity</p>	<p>Project staff Disability subject matter expert Student Board member pay</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disabled students will be able to access support quickly and with minimal barriers 2. Disabled students will be visible as part of the review of support 3. Students have increased confidence in accessing support services 4. Staff will be able to implement support more effectively, reducing delays and barriers for disabled students 	
Equality+ (EQ+) Programme	<p>This is a new, specialist employability initiative designed to empower students and graduates who face barriers, biases, and unequal access to progression and future success. EQ+ will provide an enhanced package of careers support for students with disabilities and other target groups, including tailored communications and targeting to boost engagement, employer mentoring and programmes such as the three-year career development plan, UPREACH Rise.</p> <p>New activity</p>	<p>Staff member</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have increased awareness of support services 2. Students have increased sense of belonging to Liverpool 3. Students have increased self-efficacy 4. Students have improved interpersonal skills 5. Students have increased confidence in ability to make informed decisions 6. Students have increased awareness of progression options 	<p>IS6</p>
Disability Coaches scheme	<p>Build on the success of our Disability Coaches scheme (which employs disabled students to provide frontline information and advice to</p>	<p>Disability Coaches time</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coaches develop employability skills 	<p>IS3, IS4, IS6</p>

	<p>disabled students) to promote positive images of disabled students and reduce stigma and barriers to support.</p> <p>This will provide additional opportunities for students to learn more about the support available and to encourage uptake of this support.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	Coordinator time	<p>2. Coaches are better prepared for graduate jobs.</p> <p>3. Disabled students have improved access to information and advice,</p> <p>4. Disabled students are able to get a quick resolution to issues and barriers to accessing support are reducing.</p> <p>5. Coaches have decreased financial concerns</p> <p>6. Disabled students are more able to access paid work whilst studying</p>	
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £1,356,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale for intervention strategy 5:

We have conducted a literature review, engaged with colleagues at other institutions to ascertain best practice, and reviewed internal evaluation for work focussed on POLAR 4 Quintile one students to establish best practice for IMD Quintile 1. More detailed information on evidence base and rationale can be found in Annex B.

Intervention strategy 6: Degree awarding for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Objectives and targets: Liverpool will reduce the degree awarding gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic students and white students, from 8.8% in 2021/22 to 4.3% by 2028/29 (with a commitment to eliminate the gap by 2032).

Risks to equality of opportunity: Knowledge and Skills (EORR 1), Insufficient academic support (EORR 6), Insufficient personal support (EORR 7)

The activities set out below are new or significantly enhanced existing interventions, which have been carefully designed to complement work already underway. Existing activities, such as our inclusive curriculum work, student support, global opportunities programme and others are detailed in the Whole Provider Approach below.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
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<p>Black Student Panel</p>	<p>The panel seeks student feedback on various services, functions, and procedures across the University with a view to making enhancements and improvements which remove barriers to success for Black students. Students are encouraged to collaborate and co-produce new and innovative activity</p> <p>New activity</p>	<p>WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses Student pay Resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have increased awareness of support services 2. Students have increased sense of belonging to Liverpool 3. Students have increased self-efficacy 4. Students have improved interpersonal skills 5. Increased continuation and completion of course for Black students 6. Increased degree attainment for Black students 7. Staff have increased awareness of the student experience and can adapt support accordingly 8. Changes to existing policies and practices developed to remove identified barriers to success 	
<p>Liverpool Plus</p>	<p>Tailored, centrally-led, post-entry support programme for widening participation students to enhance sense of belonging. This includes specific events to encourage cohorts of students (including Black students) to fully engage in their first year of undergraduate study and seek out support, including for mental health conditions, as needed. Also facilitating peer-to-peer connections and support.</p> <p>New activity</p>	<p>WP Project Officer facilitation, and expenses Student staff pay and expenses Resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have increased awareness of support services 2. Students have increased sense of belonging to Liverpool 3. Students have increased academic self-efficacy 5. Increased attainment of participants compared to similar non-participants 	<p>IS3, IS4, IS5</p>

Equality+ (EQ+) Programme	<p>This is a new, specialist employability initiative designed to empower students and graduates who face barriers, biases, and unequal access to progression and future success. EQ+ will provide an enhanced package of careers support for Black students and other target groups, including tailored communications and targeting to boost engagement, employer mentoring and programmes such as the three-year career development plan, UPREACH Rise.</p> <p>New activity</p>	Staff member	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have increased awareness of support services 2. Students have increased sense of belonging to Liverpool 3. Students have increased self-efficacy 4. Students have improved interpersonal skills 5. Students have increased confidence in ability to make informed decisions 6. Students have increased awareness of progression options 	IS5
Liverpool Advocate Programme	<p>The Liverpool Advocate Programme provides paid, flexible work for students, and enables WP students to directly support our WP work and act as role models. This should reduce financial concerns for students whilst avoiding impacting their studies.</p> <p>We will provide a guaranteed interview to Black students applying to the Programme.</p> <p>Enhanced existing activity</p>	WP Project Officer Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocates have increased self-efficacy 2. Advocates have increased sense of belonging with Liverpool 3. Advocates have decreased financial concerns 4. Advocates have a lower impact of paid work on study time compared to those doing other part time work 	IS1, IS3, IS4
Student coaches	<p>We will continue to grow our sector-leading student coaches programmes (such as Disability Coaches, Money Coaches, Digital Coaches), providing peer-to-peer support and paid, flexible working opportunities for our students. This should reduce financial concerns for students whilst avoiding impacting their studies.</p>	<p>Student staff pay and expenses</p> <p>Student travel and subsistence costs</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coaches develop employability skills 2. Coaches are better prepared for graduate jobs. 3. Coaches have decreased financial concerns 	IS3, IS4

	Enhanced existing activity		4. Coaches have a lower impact of paid work on study time compared to those doing other part time work	
KnowHow transition support	<p>Pilot bespoke academic and skills support for modules where Black, Asian and minority ethnic learners underperform.</p> <p>Study at Liverpool support pack sent to Black, Asian and minority ethnic students after confirmed place to support transition to HE level study.</p> <p>Existing support modules to be reviewed by Liverpool Advocates, with those most impactful to successful transition and entering university life highlighted in order to be included in the above pack.</p> <p>New activity</p>	Student Library staff pay	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New entrants have increased knowledge of skills required and how to access support 2. Students have increased confidence in their academic skills 3. Increased continuation for IMD Q1 students 	IS3, IS4
Decolonising your Module Reading List pilot study	<p>Building on our <u>inclusive curriculum tool</u> and <u>decolonising the curriculum toolkit</u>, our Library is creating a Reading List Toolkit which will support academics to decolonise their module reading lists. This will be piloted with selected modules and departments.</p> <p>New activity</p>	Staff time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff can create reading lists from a wider range of source materials 2. Students have an increased sense of belonging to their course 3. Increased attainment of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students 	
Curriculum Project	Our new Curriculum Project will see us build on the Liverpool Curriculum Framework. The Project will consider the design of our curriculum including a focus on scaffolding and transitions between years to ensure all students are appropriately supported	Staff time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students more successfully transition between years via improved scaffolding 2. Students can demonstrate their abilities more effectively via more inclusive assessment 	IS3, IS4, IS5

	throughout their learning. It will consider how more inclusive assessment can be embedded within our curriculum. New activity		leading to increased module and degree attainment	
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £2,500,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale for intervention strategy 6:

We have conducted a literature review, engaged with colleagues at other institutions to ascertain best practice, engaged with our Black student panel and reviewed internal evaluation for work focussed on POLAR 4 Quintile one students to establish best practice for IMD Quintile 1. More detailed information on evidence base and rationale can be found in Annex B.

Evaluation of intervention strategies 5 & 6

We are fully committed to evaluating the success of our intervention strategies and will prioritise our resource in this area on new or large-scale activities. This means we will focus on evaluating Liverpool Plus, Liverpool Advocate Programme, KnowHow Transition support, scholarships and bursaries, Learning Analytics, the Curriculum project, the Student Support project, the Disability Coaches scheme, the Black Student Advisory Panel and Equality+. Due to the high level of overlap in activities between the intervention strategies, the evaluation is presented below only for activities not in Intervention strategies 3 and 4. We will generate OfS type 2 standards to determine if and how the activities contribute to the intended outcomes, objectives, and targets.

We will begin these intervention strategies in 2024/25 and intend to produce an annual report on interim findings. We anticipate we will share our findings at community of practice forums, with the North West Research and Evaluation Group, with TASO (if relevant) and will publish our findings on our website after four years.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Student support project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disabled students will be able to access support quickly and with minimal barriers 2. Disabled students will be visible as part of the review of support 3. Students have increased confidence in accessing support services 3. Staff will be able to implement support more effectively, reducing delays and barriers for disabled students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory of change underpinning activity Data analysis comparison of engagement by participants and non-participants Focus groups and interviews with participants and staff Intend to generate Type 2 evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website. Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing. 5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.

Disability coaches scheme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coaches develop employability skills 2. Coaches are Better prepared for graduate jobs. 3. Disabled students have improved access to information and advice, 4. Disabled students are able to get a quick resolution to issues and barriers to accessing support are reducing. 5. Coaches have decreased financial concerns 6. Disabled students are more able to access paid work whilst studying 	<p>Theory of change underpinning activity</p> <p>Focus groups and interviews with participants and staff</p> <p>Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p> <p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.</p>
Student Advisory Panel for Black students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have increased awareness of support services 2. Students have increased sense of belonging to Liverpool 3. Students have increased self-efficacy 4. Students have improved interpersonal skills 5. Increased continuation and completion of course for Black students 6. Increased degree attainment for Black students 7. Staff have increased awareness of the student experience and can adapt support accordingly 8. Changes to existing policies and practices developed to remove identified barriers to success 	<p>Theory of change underpinning activity</p> <p>Data analysis comparison of engagement by participants and non-participants</p> <p>Focus groups and interviews with participants and staff</p> <p>Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p> <p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.</p>
Equality+ Programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have increased awareness of support services 2. Students have increased sense of belonging to Liverpool 3. Students have increased self-efficacy 4. Students have improved interpersonal skills 	<p>Theory of change underpinning activity</p> <p>Data analysis comparison of engagement by participants and non-participants</p>	<p>Progress reports on an annual basis commencing October 2026 released on university website.</p> <p>Findings from evaluation shared at conferences and networks ongoing.</p>

	<p>5. Students have increased confidence in ability to make informed decisions</p> <p>6. Students have increased awareness of progression options</p>	<p>Focus groups and interviews with participants and staff</p> <p>Intend to generate Type 2 evidence.</p>	<p>5-year report on impact of projects to be available 2028/29 on university website.</p>
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More detailed information on evaluation can be found in Annex B.

Whole provider approach

We are proud of our long-standing track record in improving the social mobility of our students and of our reputation as one of the most successful Russell Group universities for widening participation.

In 2021 our intake included over 860 students from the most deprived IMD quintile – a new record for the University and almost 100 students more than the previous high-performing year. In 2022 we confirmed places for 75 new students who are classed as having a disrupted education, which again is our highest intake to date and reflects the University's well-established support programme for these inspiring young people. These successes are even more significant in the wider context of shifting national grade boundaries, missed learning opportunities and greater competition for places at selective universities.

Governance

Our Strategic Framework, Liverpool 2031, renews our commitment to widening participation and our governance structure reflects both the senior engagement in this work and our approach to ensuring it is managed and coordinated across all relevant workstreams within the University. Both the APP Steering Group and the Student Success Board are chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education. The Student Success Board membership includes representation from each of the three faculties together with professional services leads from all relevant areas and our Guild of Students. It oversees the majority of widening participation work and, together with the Student Intake Strategy Group, which oversees admissions, reports to the Education Committee. All significant decisions on widening access and participation work, including this Plan, are then subsequently taken to University Council.

Each of our three faculties has a Widening Participation Faculty Director responsible for promoting equality of opportunity across the student lifecycle within their area. Each chairs a faculty WP committee (or equivalent) which reviews local data and progress against plans, oversees specific success projects (such as belonging and degree outcomes) and develops and oversees the implementation of further targeted interventions. Each faculty also has Equality, Diversity and Inclusion leads and Working Groups to ensure embedded good practice.

This structure means academic and professional services colleagues across the institution are actively involved in both the development and delivery of our access and participation work.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The University of Liverpool is committed to promoting a learning and working environment which recognises, values, respects and celebrates people's differences and strengths. Inclusivity is one of the core values committed to in our strategic framework, Liverpool 2031, and we are continuously working together as a community to create a more inclusive environment, maximising the potential of our staff and students.

University Council, the Vice Chancellor and Senior Leadership Team, all University Committees and all staff and students have very clearly defined responsibilities in our [Diversity and Equality of Opportunity Policy](#). In particular, the University's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee has overall responsibility for advancing equality at the University. The Education Committee and the Finance & Resource Committee also have equality within the scope of their remit. As part of this, and in line with our access and participation activity, the Education Committee closely monitors a range of measures across the student lifecycle to ensure that our policies are effective and to enable action to be taken when necessary.

Ensuring equality of opportunity is a guiding principle behind all the University's policies and procedures. In relation to our student body, the departmental admissions policies, which support the institutional admissions policy, are clearly one of the key ways in which we seek to deliver our equality and diversity and our access and participation agendas. On the teaching side, inclusivity is at the core of the Liverpool Curriculum Framework. The discussion of diversity and equality issues are a requirement of programme approval, annual programme monitoring and periodic review. This includes consideration of curriculum content, design and delivery to ensure that it is accessible and inclusive of all student equality groups. The University is committed to providing colleagues with the appropriate training to support their work in this area and more information can be found in the success section below.

Our Equality Objectives Action Plan (2022 – 2028) aims to make significant and sustained progress in four specific EDI-related areas over the next five academic years. It is fully aligned with the objectives and interventions set out in this plan and, indeed, the Equality Objectives Working Group leading this work is co-chaired by the Head of Diversity and Equality and the Associate Director, UK Student Recruitment and Widening Participation, with membership from relevant teams across the University and the Guild of Students. The four objectives, based on data trends and feedback from staff and students relating to their overall University experience in recent years, are to:

- Increase diversity and representation of our staff and student population
- Make significant improvements to enhance staff and student experiences (with a particular focus on those who identify as People of Colour and/or disabled)
- Promote a culture where bullying and harassment is not tolerated
- Reduce the awarding gap between People of Colour and White students (with a particular focus on Black student outcomes).

Access and participation activity is also woven into our Race Equality Charter (REC) work, for which we have received a Bronze award, and REC action plan objectives are reflected within this Plan. Student-prioritised themes for action, identified through consultation for the REC, include the diversity of the University, assessment and support, curriculum and course content. These, and the need more broadly identified in the REC Action Plan to closely consider intersectionality and nuance, have been carefully considered as part of the process of writing this plan.

We work hard to ensure that students and staff are not disadvantaged on the grounds of any of the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 and, in line with University policy procedure, a thorough Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted in the formulation of this Plan. This seeks to ensure target groups and others are not adversely affected by our interventions.

We are also committed to eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination. We actively encourage students and staff to report any incidences of bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, hate crime, assault or discrimination through our [online reporting tool](#). If the student chooses to submit contact details, they will be contacted by a Wellbeing Advisor to make a confidential appointment to offer support, advice and guidance. If the perpetrator is another member of the university community and the student chooses to make a complaint, this is thoroughly investigated by the recently enhanced Student Conduct Team in line with our standard procedures. Where an anonymous report is submitted, we are not able to instigate any formal processes, but we use the information provided to better understand the issues impacting our community, monitor trends and inform our preventative work.

Whole student lifecycle approach

Our Widening Participation activity is carefully structured to address risks to equality of opportunity for students across the whole student life cycle, with access work beginning at primary school level and leading

right through to enrolment, success initiatives looking holistically at all applicable areas of university activity and progression ensuring our students go on to rewarding work or further study opportunities, knowing they can return for advice at any point in the future.

Access

Building partnerships to support raising prior attainment and aspirations

At Liverpool we firmly believe in the vital role of collaboration in helping to address the multifaceted barriers facing young people wishing to access higher education. For over 20 years we have formed and developed our partnerships with 40 local secondary schools containing high levels of students meeting Widening Participation criteria, and their feeder primary schools. Regular interactions with these schools has helped to develop a positive culture amongst their pupils towards Higher Education, leading to improved academic attainment, raised aspirations and greater progression to university.

During 2022-23, the Widening Participation and Outreach team delivered campus visits for over 6,000 young people and our partner schools received 169 engagements, including campus visits, long-term projects, academic mentoring and teacher events. When delivering these engagements, we act in partnership and are responsive to the needs of the schools and how we can best support them, recognising that one plan would not fit all. At any one time there are in the region of 1,600 young people registered on our long-term outreach projects.

Our raising aspirations and attainment work starts at primary level. We work closely with Liverpool Children's University, who encourage children from age 5 to 14 to try new learning experiences, through hosting campus visits and Children's University graduation events. For students who cannot be hosted on campus, we have a student-led in-school workshop and an [interactive website](#) we can signpost schools to for classroom assistance.

Meanwhile, our partnership with charities IntoUniversity and Liverpool Football Club Foundation sees the University continue to co-sponsor a long-term community approach supporting young people in Anfield to achieve their educational potential. As part of our support for the IntoUniversity centre we host primary and secondary school events on campus and provide academic staff and current students to support in-centre work including session delivery and volunteering. The Centre has worked with over 4,000 children since opening in 2017, with several positive outcomes, including improved school performance and progression to higher education. Building on this success, a second centre based in Knowsley has recently opened, bringing on board new partners Everton in the Community and the Steve Morgan Foundation. As noted above, Knowsley has one of the highest IMD scores in the country.

We are the lead institution and host of the Liverpool City Region Uni Connect programme, Shaping Futures. As members of the governance board, we have supported the development of a sustained programme of activity that informs and inspires learners and their key stakeholders to make informed choices about their future. We have also contributed to the development of Uni Connect's new priority - to raise attainment at Key Stage 3 and 4. In addition, this work has seen us contribute to Communities of Practice focused on underrepresented groups and collaborative outreach projects such as Inclusive Transitions, a resource designed to support students with special educational needs and disabilities in their progression to Higher Education.

At a subject level, in partnership with the Sutton Trust, we offer two-year access programmes targeted at high-achieving WP students interested in highly selective courses, specifically Banking and Finance, Law and Engineering. The programme focuses on exposure to academics and undergraduates, developing academic skills, improving attainment and providing support with admissions and transitions, alongside invaluable opportunities to engage with employers and work placements.

Other widening access and raising aspiration activities

For over ten years our Liverpool Scholars programme has offered over 250 Year 12 students per year the chance to take part in a range of activities aimed at supporting their entry into higher education and preparing them for university. This includes application guidance masterclasses, lectures and academic key skills workshops. Activities are frequently led by undergraduates who have previously progressed through the programme, providing successful role models.

In response to the Medical Schools Council '[Selecting for Excellence](#)' report in 2014, we developed Merseyside Young Health and Life Scientists, a rolling three-year programme of health-related activities and support for young people in Years 9-11 who are from under-represented groups and have the potential and interest in studying health and life sciences subjects at university.

The University of Liverpool Maths School opened its doors to students in September 2020. The first of its kind in the North of England, the School enables children in the region with a strong interest and talent in the mathematical sciences to achieve their potential, thoroughly preparing them for STEM degrees and their future careers. Several of those attending come from local schools that struggle to recruit science and mathematics teachers or from WP backgrounds. The school undertakes a range of outreach work, including partnership with local schools to raise aspirations and attainment levels in mathematics across the region. This takes the form of school visits, online courses, STEM Saturdays, Easter and Summer School and more.

As part of our commitment to equality for local Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, we work to widen access to higher education with the local Somali, Yemeni and Black British heritage community, through our [Fast Trackers](#) initiative. This is a one-year mentoring programme designed to support Year 11 students to get the most out of their final school year and maximise their results at GCSE level. It has previously been cited as national best practice by both the Russell Group and the Office for Students because of its work in creating positive role models and embedding widening participation in underrepresented communities. We offer a similar programme through the Liverpool Arabic Centre, providing academic support to GCSE students in a community setting.

The Widening Participation and Outreach team offer a well-established support programme for young people who have faced a Disrupted Education, which has supported over 250 students since its inception. This programme supports young people who have experienced significant personal barriers to their education (for example those who are care experienced, young adult carers, asylum seekers, refugees or from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities). It provides pre-entry support including bespoke information and guidance about course choice and transition to university, support with transport to attend Open Days and Applicant Discovery Days and personalised campus visits. Once studying with us, these students can access 365-day accommodation with priority access, financial and additional academic support. Our work with care experienced students has been recognised with a National Network for the Education of Care Leavers Quality Mark.

Within our three faculties there are leads for Widening Participation in each subject area, under the leadership of a Faculty Widening Participation Director, who ensures strategy direction and a holistic approach to outreach. Subject taster events are delivered throughout the year to varying age groups. In addition, as part of their teaching, our Faculty of Science and Engineering and our School of the Arts undergraduates can opt to take a communications module in which they develop their own practical outreach sessions, which then form part of our Widening Participation offer to target schools.

The University's [Museums & Galleries](#) learning team has been supporting WP activity for over a decade. The primary and secondary schools outreach programme is a collaboration across the Victoria Gallery and Museum, the Garstang Museum of Archaeology and the WP Team, led by the Curator of Lifelong Learning, and focuses on delivering National Curriculum-linked workshops to WP schools. Schools are given a list of workshops to choose from as well as tours linked to exhibitions and opportunities to 'go behind the scenes' at the museum and explore the roles that underpin it.

Diverse higher education routes via access programmes and foundation years

For over 20 years, we have delivered our in-house one-year, part-time humanities foundation programme 'Go Higher' for those who wish to return to learning but lack traditional entry qualifications or wish to change their career pathway to degrees in the arts or social sciences. For those who pass the Go Higher diploma, there is direct access to a wide range of degree programmes.

Working with partner colleges in the local region, we offer a range of innovative Foundation Year programmes that support students with non-traditional qualifications, or students who do not meet typical entry requirements but have much to offer. In collaboration with Carmel College, we offer Foundation Years providing pathways to degrees in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences and the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Working with Wirral Metropolitan College, we offer a 2+2 Psychology programme with Foundation Element.

Contextualised admissions

To support the admission and success of applicants who experience barriers to their education we have embedded a contextual admissions strategy for eligible UK students, adopting the use of alternative offers in the UCAS cycle and through clearing.

Supporting teachers and advisors

Together with other Russell Group universities, we co-fund Advancing Access which provides a variety of CPD resources, online events and physical conferences for teachers and advisers to help them support students' progression to Russell Group universities, particularly those from cold spot areas. Our Widening Participation and Access Manager is the current Chair of the National Steering Group.

We also run our own Annual Teachers and Advisors Conference on campus which attracts staff from across the North West and further afield who have responsibility for the progression of students to higher education. Delegates interact with academic departments and a range of Professional Services teams (Admissions, Recruitment, WP and Student Support) to build beneficial relationships with the University on behalf of their students.

Success

Induction

Before the Liverpool Welcome commences for all students, we provide a Discover Week (consisting of enhanced and targeted welcome activities) for groups of students with known barriers to engagement, including commuter students, disabled students and mature students, offering extra opportunities to get to know fellow students, the campus and student services. Discover Week has been instrumental in student retention, contributing to high completion rates among these groups which is reflected in feedback from students, who say they would have otherwise been unlikely to participate in the opportunities offered.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies

Our programmes are designed to inspire, educate and connect our students, and provide a foundation for their success regardless of background, mode or discipline of study. The Liverpool Curriculum Framework (LCF) supports students to become creative and culturally rich graduates with the capacity to find employment that will enable them to be agents for change in a connected world. Helping our students to apply knowledge in real-world settings in partnership with employers, create knowledge in partnership with researchers, and consider knowledge in a global context in partnership with our international community, we enable them to thrive today while providing a launchpad for future success.

In 2022 we updated the LCF to place inclusivity as its core value. We define an inclusive curriculum as one which recognises potential barriers to learning and seeks to ensure all students can access the curriculum regardless of their circumstances. This requires us to think deeply and purposefully about curriculum design to ensure that it is representative of our diverse student body and provides equal access to the curriculum. Over the last five years, our Centre for Innovation in Education (CIE) has supported the growth of inclusive

practice and culture. Equality-focused workshops and communities of practice have shared evidence-based inclusive strategies and sparked ongoing conversations, helping to nurture an ecosystem in which discipline-focused, inclusive work thrives. Our range of inclusive practice resources and case studies (including the Inclusive Curriculum Tool and the Decolonising the Curriculum Toolkit and a range of other guides, such as those supporting the design of inclusive and accessible materials and assessments) were accessed over 2,000 times between September 2022 and January 2024. Between 2018/19 and 2021/22 the attainment of Class 1 and 2:1 degrees obtained by students with a registered disability increased from 83% to 89%.

Our Inclusive Curriculum Tool acts as an audit tool for decolonising the curricula and forms part of our work towards the Advance HE Race Equality Charter. It is a reflective tool with the capacity to offer a programme-level, end-to-end overview of inclusivity. Staff and students from diverse backgrounds have co-created these tools, and a 2022 pilot involved 18 student reviewers/testers, including students from Widening Participation backgrounds, who provided excellent insights on their experience of equality in the curriculum. We have since continued to involve students in inclusive curriculum design and review, including employing a team of students to review and develop the tool through our Student Advisors Programme.

All new programme provision from 2022, and all programmes revalidating from that point, must demonstrate how they are addressing the Liverpool Curriculum Framework, including the core value of inclusivity, within the University Academic Quality and Standards approval process. In addition to this, each School is required to complete an Annual Subject Action Plan that identifies any awarding gaps between learners on their programmes and how they plan to address closing these gaps. These action plans are submitted to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee each year and monitored to discern progress.

CIE continues to provide bespoke support to departments and schools regarding inclusive practices, delivering 26 workshops between June 2022 and January 2024 on a range of topics from digital accessibility to supporting neurodivergent learners. Three in-depth inclusivity curriculum reviews have also recently been undertaken with Clinical Psychology, the English Language Centre and the Department of Physical Sciences (which covers Chemistry, Maths and Physics). In addition to use of the inclusive curriculum toolkit, these areas requested further support with staff surveys, focus groups, reflective group activities and action planning. In the School of Physical Sciences CIE also delivered a 'train the trainer' programme for 25 staff members to develop School-level inclusivity champions to assist with inclusive curriculum design and classroom practices.

Academic support

KnowHow is our overarching academic skills support providing synchronous and asynchronous skills tutorials; tailored skills activities embedded into the curriculum; subject-specific one-to-one support and more. Activity delivered under KnowHow is underpinned by the Information and Digital Fluency Framework, which reflects the Liverpool Hallmarks and the Liverpool Curriculum Framework. Its work enables students to develop practical research skills, build confidence, become digitally fluent and use information critically to support their development as independent learners.

KnowHow is particularly well-accessed by some key WP groups including mature students (46% of attendees compared to 11% of the university population), those with a declared disability (15% compared to 13% of university population) and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students (53% compared to 37% of the university population). The KnowHow team also delivers skill support workshops and library orientation for the Liverpool Scholars programme outlined above.

Recognising students at risk of non-continuation at the earliest opportunity can be key for putting interventions in place and achieving positive outcomes. Through our learning analytics system we will be able to identify students not engaging with their course content and proactively reach out to them and offer support. Through careful monitoring of this system, we also aim to understand the key points in the academic cycle when students are most at risk of disengaging and actively seek to address these.

The [English Language Centre](#) provides an extensive programme of English language and study skills support for all current students - both international and home - who would like to improve their use of Academic English. Taught throughout the academic year, students have multiple opportunities to make significant ongoing improvements to how they study. Areas of provision include academic language and skill classes (designed closely with departments) and 1:1 academic writing consultation. These sessions are well-used by widening participation students. The English Language Centre also works closely with the Widening Participation Team and the Go Higher Foundation programme to provide language support for refugees and asylum-seeking students engaging with those programmes.

Paid employment and skills development

Our Liverpool Advocate programme employs students on a casual basis to fit around academic commitments and provided over 11,500 hours of paid work in 2022/23. Students from Widening Participation backgrounds are prioritised in the recruitment process and in 2023 over 25% of our advocates have been involved in a WP outreach programme. As well as providing an important opportunity for paid, flexible work, the scheme also enables WP students to directly support our WP work, inspiring the young people we work with by sharing their journeys to Higher Education and acting as positive role models. Typical duties include leading campus tours, supporting classroom sessions, delivering talks, acting as attainment mentors and supporting school and college students to prepare for their exams.

The paid employment and skills development opportunities are an important additional way in which we support our widening participation students, who often come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, to succeed and progress on to rewarding work or further study. We also continue to develop paid opportunities for trained students to provide information, advice and guidance to their peers across other parts of the University, including as Disability, Career and Digital Coaches.

Global Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring that life-changing Global Opportunities programmes are accessible to all students across the institution, especially students from a WP background, who are often the least likely to take up a mobility programme but have the most to gain. Indeed our Liverpool 2031 Education pillar includes a target that 31% of UG Home first-degree students who graduate in 2031 will have had a mobility experience of 5 days or more and that WP students are appropriately proportionally reflected in those participating. In 2022/23, 36% of all students who participated in a centrally supported mobility programme met one or more of our WP criteria. Research suggests that finance is the biggest barrier to participation and that WP students are more likely to participate in short-term mobilities. As such, we currently guarantee all WP students taking part in a central mobility programme either [Turing](#) funding or Turing-equivalent funding (paid for by the University).

WP students have priority for all places on our Summer Abroad programmes (3 to 6 weeks abroad at summer schools, volunteering or on work experience). We often provide additional funding for these activities to contribute towards the cost of programme fees. We also encourage these students to use this as a taster and guarantee their eligibility for further funding should they decide to apply for a longer-term mobility in the future.

The University fully funds, through philanthropic donations, two one-week programmes (one in Europe, one in the USA) exclusively for 50 WP students. Care leavers are particularly prioritised for these opportunities,

given they are one of the most under-represented groups in mobility. At the time of writing, 10 care-leavers are due to participate in the 2024 USA programme.

The University's Global Opportunities Team also supports WP students practically through bespoke sessions on topics such as race and ethnicity and additional needs. They operate a [varied programme of central opportunities](#) with different academic requirements, destinations and lengths so that all students, regardless of background, have the chance to participate in what works for them.

Student support

Our commitment to inclusivity, set out in the Liverpool Curriculum Framework, means we recognise potential barriers to learning and seek to ensure students can succeed in and complete their studies regardless of their circumstances. We offer a comprehensive range of services to promote wellbeing and resilience, with our central Student Services, supported by Faculty-based Learning and Teaching Support Officers, working together to provide seamless support. Offering multiple access routes offers choice for students, who may want to access help locally or alternatively prefer not to speak to their academic department.

This year specialist WP appointment slots were introduced in our Student Services Booking Hub to prioritise those WP students wishing to access support. Every WP student was provided with individual 1:1 appointments to discuss specialist support, such as information on their respective bursaries and the academic support plan available to Young Adult Carers.

Supporting students who have declared a mental health condition or are experiencing poor mental health

From 2019 to 2022 we successfully led the Improving Student Mental Health through Partnership Working Project, funded by the Office for Students and delivered with NHS partners. The project focused on provision for students who were experiencing significant mental health difficulties and distress. Two new services were established as a result: UCOPE provides therapeutic interventions for students who self-harm, and the Student Liaison Service ensures effective information sharing in relation to students presenting to NHS urgent care services and universities. Evaluation showed that the 172 students who engaged with the therapy service from the two participating universities showed significant clinical improvement, while the initiative also improved communication between organisations, improved safety, enhanced the student experience and increased students' likelihood of success during and beyond their studies. The service has been recognised as an example of good practice by the Office for Students and Department for Education and subsequently been expanded to all higher education institutions in Liverpool.

On a day-to-day basis, our Wellbeing team acts as first point of contact for students and triages queries, providing advice, support and intervention and, if appropriate, referral to specialist services. They also follow up incident reports and provide a quick response to students who experience difficulty on campus. Our counselling service provides single session therapy with a quick response time, offering students help to manage any difficulties they experience. Where students are referred on for longer term therapy, we provide access to a range of evidence-based interventions. The Mental Health Advisory Service works with students with complex mental health needs, providing support and case management to help them continue their programme.

The Widening Participation Team provides the Wellbeing Team with a list of all the students who they are aware may need support ahead of the new academic year. These students are invited to a Welcome event where they are provided information on the services available to them at the University. In addition, all WP students are informed via email about the support available and provided with information about bursaries.

Disability Advice and Guidance

The Disability Advice and Guidance team provides individual meetings before and during the application process with WP students, in collaboration with the Widening Participation team. This enables potential students (with parents welcome to attend) the opportunity to discuss their disability needs, any concerns they may have about the support they require within a university setting, the types of adjustments available to them and the next steps to accessing support. This is undertaken with a disability adviser, often as part of a wider visit to several areas of the university. The team helps with the Disabled Students Allowance application process and additionally, provide the opportunity to talk with our student Disability Coaches, to discuss their lived experience of studying at the University.

We recognise that students with mental health difficulties form a significant proportion of disabled students. We continue to develop our offer to support students with mental health concerns from those with emerging or relatively low-level concerns to those with the most complex needs, as outlined above. In addition to group support and one-to-one appointments, our Student Services Teams can refer students to our Sports Centre's exercise on referral scheme where students get personalised support and free access to the Sports Centre for a limited period.

Money Advice and Guidance

A range of session types are offered for students to see a Money Adviser about queries including student loans and grants, welfare benefits, budgeting, bursaries, financial hardship and debt advice. We prioritise WP students if they need support and advice from the team.

The team administers the University Hardship Fund which can help with general day to day living costs and in cases where a student has a one-off unexpected financial cost that they could not have foreseen which is causing them hardship.

Over the last 12 months the University has launched a Food Pantry to help students who struggle to buy food and other general provisions. The pantry is staffed by our new Student Money Coaches.

Progression

Careers and Employability

Our Careers and Employability Service seeks to make employability a central part of the student experience. Its multifaceted delivery model ensures that students have access to the support, opportunities and experiences they need to feel confident about their future ambitions. A peer-to-peer approach sits at the centre of the Service's strategy, and student voice, feedback and creativity are valued in all parts of the offer. For example, the Career Studio is staffed by student Career Coaches who use our unique co-exploration delivery model to help students take their next steps.

The Service also embeds employability within the curriculum, making key contributions to the design and delivery of modules in every Department across the University and ensuring every student has the chance to engage with employers, access digital tools and work collaboratively to develop essential workplace skills. The Career and Employability Service's extracurricular events feature local, national and global graduate employers and provide the chance for students to interact directly, to gain new experiences and to explore new career options. Meanwhile, the intensive Design Your Future programme enables students to understand entrepreneurship and how an enterprising mindset can make a difference to the world around them.

All students have access to this central offer, but we know that that many of our students also encounter additional barriers to their success. This is why we have developed Equality+ (EQ+), a new, specialist employability initiative designed to empower students and graduates who face barriers, biases, and unequal access to progression and future success. Since the launch of EQ+ in September 2023 to February 2024, 12,004 of the Career and Employability Service's interactions have been from students from

underrepresented groups (representing 55% of total engagement for the semester). All main areas of the Service's provision are measured with the engagement of target APP groups monitored.

The programme has three main pillars: support and funding; intensive career provision; and work experience. As part of the support and funding work, an employability fund of £33k was established to provide students from relevant APP groups, particularly Black, commuter and IMDQ1 students, with the opportunity to apply for funding to take away barriers to success, for example by funding travel to interviews and memberships of professional bodies. An example of the work currently underway in the intensive career provision is the UpReach RISE programme, a three-year career development plan providing tailored support and guidance aimed at the same APP groups as the employability fund. More broadly, our strategic partnership with UpReach, a charitable company, has supported students from less advantaged backgrounds since 2018, seeking to address socio-economic barriers to securing highly skilled jobs.

An example of the work experience pillar is the Digital Accelerator Programme which targeted undergraduate commuter students, training them to become Digital Coaches through an 8-week development programme with regional social enterprise, Agent Academy. Those recruited were from a wide range of backgrounds, including mature and disabled students and each received a bursary to enable them to attend training days and cover expenses related to travel and technology. Upon completion of training, they researched a brief on Understanding EDI Approaches for Liverpool City Region Employers, the results of which are being cascaded for use across the region, and the students are currently delivering digital coaching sessions to their peers.

Student consultation

Our university is shaped by our students through a wide range of forums, formal governance and feedback mechanisms, as articulated in our Student Engagement Framework and our Code of Practice on Student Representation. Students play a central role in the development and delivery of our Education Strategy for excellent teaching and student outcomes across the University. Particularly important is our close partnership with the Liverpool Guild of Students. The President and a further three Student Representative Officers are elected annually to represent students and lead the Guild. These Officers make significant contributions through the University's governance processes, bringing the student voice to various groups and committees including the Education Committee, Senate and Council, and through the Guild Liaison Committee, which is jointly chaired by the Guild President and Pro Vice Chancellor for Education. They also sit on a range of other groups, where they input into curriculum design, University strategy, operation and action. This approach to student engagement has been mirrored in the APP process. The Guild President is a member of the APP Writing and Steering Group which has been responsible for reviewing institutional and sector data, setting our targets and formulating all other key sections of this plan.

In addition, we have formed two APP Student Engagement Panels which have informed the development of this plan and will continue to feed back on the delivery of our interventions and evaluation of our plan post-submission. One panel has 25 student members from POLAR4 Quintile 1, low income, disabled, estranged, mature, young adult carer, Black, Asian and minority ethnic and care-experienced backgrounds and the other is formed of ten Black students, given the specific risks to equality of opportunity identified in our data analysis. The membership of both groups was carefully considered to ensure representation from a wide range of backgrounds who do not feedback to the University through other formal routes, such as the course representative programme. Representatives from the Guild of Students also attended these sessions.

Student panel members were provided with information on the APP and the panel process from the outset and have co-created the panel format. Accountability is at the core of these panels and each session begins with a review of actions and discussion points from the last meeting. We bring topics to each session, but students are also encouraged to bring their own items for discussion, including the opportunity for written submissions.

Key themes from the sessions included:

1. Access - Students felt that they lacked pre-entry support from their schools/colleges. Some students felt that university was not for them, and they were discouraged from applying.
2. Success - Students felt that the support offered to them (both academically and pastorally) should be more individualised and that the opportunity to build stronger relationships with their academic staff would make them more likely to access support and lead to a better student experience.
3. Progression - Students felt that the cost of pursuing postgraduate study was prohibitively expensive.
4. Representation – Black students felt that they lacked role models throughout their university journey, including at Open Days and Offer Holder Days, within their peer group (particularly older students), in academic and Professional Services staff and in employers they engaged with through the Careers programme. Students felt that more role models, or more Black students and staff in visible roles would help foster a feeling of community and belonging.

This feedback has been specifically incorporated into this plan through:

- Enhanced access activities in our intervention strategies to provide more opportunities for students to receive intensive support
- The introduction of new success initiatives such as Liverpool Plus to provide more individualised support and relationship building opportunities.
- Providing a guaranteed interview to Black students applying to the Liverpool Advocate Programme with the aim of providing more Black role models.
- The development of the sense of belonging aspect of Liverpool Plus.

Student feedback from a range of other sources has also been important in formulating this plan. For example, our 100 Days, 100 Voices campaign is the evolution of an annual longitudinal student voice project that has been run in the previous three academic years. The campaign surveyed all new undergraduate and postgraduate students at five points across their first 100 days at the institution, with discrete questions per survey and also a repeat set of questions for longitudinal purposes. For 2023/24, we have taken the opportunity to increase the amount of student voice data generated, both quantitative and qualitative, through improved promotional routes and a final consultation event with roundtable discussions.

The free text feedback from these surveys has identified barriers to sense of belonging, particularly in relation to cultural differences, racism and commuter students. This has been fed into the development of the Liverpool Plus initiative and has led to adjustments to our plans to enhance our welcome during Discover Week.

Evaluation of the plan

The University of Liverpool is committed to understanding whether the interventions we deliver to support our underrepresented students are successful, so we can learn from what works and what doesn't and amend our approaches accordingly to have maximum impact.

Self-assessment

Completion of the OfS self-assessment tool⁵ indicates our evaluation strategy is emerging across the five areas of strategic context, programme design, evaluation design, evaluation implementation and learning. Due to this we have a renewed focus on strengthening our evaluation practice for this Access and Participation Plan period, aiming to reach advanced in a number of areas during the next APP cycle. In

⁵ Office For Students March 2023 [Standards of evidence and evaluation self-assessment tool](#) accessed 12/2/24

particular, we will focus our efforts on evaluating new activities, those with an emerging evidence base, or those which require most resource to establish whether they lead to the intended outcomes.

Strategic Context

We have an embedded evaluation culture in place across our widening access and participation work which has been supported by a senior academic for over a decade. At the beginning of 2024 we appointed a full-time Evaluation and Impact Manager to increase evaluation capacity at Liverpool, although every member of the central widening participation team continues to have responsibility for evaluation. This approach is also strengthened by a close working partnership with the Strategic Planning and Insight teams, which have colleagues dedicated to supporting access and participation. We also utilise HEAT⁶ to longitudinally track participants of access activities entry and success in HE.

The Evaluation and Impact Manager will roll out best practice more widely within our institution, ensuring more colleagues have a clear understanding of the importance of effective evaluation when designing new programmes or activities.

Design of Activities and Evaluation, and Implementation of Evaluation

When designing new access and participation programmes or activities, colleagues will:

- Undertake data analysis utilising internal management data, the OfS APP Data Dashboard and any other relevant datasets
- Complete a literature review and review best practice across the sector, engage in our local networks and utilise the TASO toolkits and OfS effective practice examples
- Complete a theory of change, consulting with relevant staff and student stakeholders
- Attend a Student Advisory Panel to seek their input
- Meet with the Evaluation and Impact Manager to discuss the evaluation plan, resources required and considerations such as GDPR compliance, sample sizes and any ethics requirements
- Complete an Initiative Planning Document.

As a minimum, widening access and participation programmes will be evaluated to OfS Type 2: empirical. We will use the TASO Access and Success Questionnaire⁷ and complete baseline and post programme impact surveys with participants. Where appropriate, we will also complete focus groups or listening exercises with participants to further enhance our ability to ascertain impact. We will seek feedback on impact from supporters and other stakeholders where appropriate. When working collaboratively with Uni Connect partners or other HE institutions, we will evaluate projects collaboratively and have data sharing policies in place with key collaborative partners.

Learn from and disseminate findings

Our APP Steering Group and our Education Committee will receive evaluation reports once per year on interim findings for identified initiatives, and this will be presented by the lead member of staff responsible for this work. In addition to sharing findings through these groups and other internal committees, we will also attend internal conferences such as our Learning & Teaching conference and internal forums such as Learning and Teaching Support Network to share findings and best practice.

We will continue to respond to calls for evidence and opportunities to share our best practice and anticipate that we will share our findings at community of practice forums, on the OfS planned evidence

⁶ Higher Education Access Tracker: <https://heat.ac.uk/>

⁷ TASO 2023 [Access and Success Questionnaire \(ASQ\)](#) accessed 12/2/24

repository, with the North West Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Group, with TASO (where relevant) and will publish our findings on our website after four years.

We encourage colleagues to engage in professional networks and a representative of our team attends the North West Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Group, the Shaping Futures Monitoring and Evaluation Group and the Russell Group Widening Participation Evaluation Forum. These networks allow us to share evidence-based best practice, strengthen peer-to-peer review and explore collaborative evaluation processes and research.

Additionally, colleagues engage with conferences and events such as those offered by TASO.

Provision of information to students

Prospective students and applicants are provided with information on student fees at various touchpoints with us. Our [webpages](#) are a single source of truth for fee information and clearly set out: tuition fees; student loans and government grants; scholarships and bursaries; and information on additional study costs (both subject-specific and general). They also signpost the Money Advice and Guidance team who are available to advise on a wide range of financial support queries.

Offer emails direct applicants to those pages and they are advised to download a copy of the information for future reference. Information on student finance and advice on budgeting and managing the cost of living is included in emails from offer up to arrival. In addition, all WP students are contacted directly via email about the bursaries and other financial support available to them.

Information on finance and fees are included in finance presentations at Open Days, virtual Open Days and Applicant Discovery Days and colleagues are available at finance stands to talk through specific queries with parents, supporters and prospective students. At Open Days and offer holder events, students also share their own experiences of budgeting.

The Programme Terms and Conditions inform applicants and students that fees may increase in future years. Any such increases are communicated via email in advance.

Financial support

The below financial support information was accurate as of July 2024. We regularly review financial support and therefore recommend going to our website for the most up to date financial support information and eligibility criteria.

For academic year 2025-2026, our financial awards for eligible students will be:

The Liverpool Bursary:

£2,000 per annum for the duration of programme, available to 'home' (UK) undergraduate students with a household income of £25,000 and under.

£750.00 per annum for the duration of programme, available to 'home' (UK) undergraduate students with a household income of £25,001 - £35,000.

Care Leavers Opportunity Bursary:

£3,000 per annum for the duration of programme, available to 'home' (UK) undergraduate students who have been in public care. To be eligible for the award students need to meet the following criteria:

- Have spent a minimum of 13 weeks in Local Authority care since the age of 14; and

- Be aged 28 years or under (on 1 September of the year in which they intend to commence their studies).

Estranged Students Bursary:

£1,000 per annum for the duration of programme, available to 'home' (UK) undergraduate students who are identified as estranged by Student Finance England (Wales, Northern Ireland, or the NHS).

Young Adult Carer's Bursary:

£1,000 per annum for the duration of programme, available to 'home' (UK) undergraduate students who are young carers. To be eligible for the award students need to meet the following criteria:

- Be aged 18 – 25 on 1 September of the year in which they intend to commence their studies; and
- Have a household income of £35,000 and under; and
- Have been in receipt of Carers' Allowance prior to the start of the course or have engaged with their local Carer's Centre or YAC Services as a registered carer and can produce evidence to confirm this. It may be possible for us to accept written evidence of young carer status from a medical professional or teacher/tutor.

The University reserves the right to amend our current financial support for incoming students beyond 2025-26 and therefore we recommend going to our website for the most up to date financial support information and eligibility criteria.

Annex A: Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity

Introduction

- Building on our reputation as one of the leading Russell Group institutions for widening access, the University of Liverpool continues to deliver innovative projects to attract and support a diverse student body.
- The purpose of this assessment of performance is to identify any gaps in equality of opportunity across all the stages of the student journey for at risk groups of students – highlighted by the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR).
- As per OfS preparatory guidance, where possible we have used the aggregated provider and sector access and participation datasets to identify any gaps in opportunity, supplemented through use of the OfS individualised file for cross-sectional analysis.
- For a small number of student characteristics, the OfS access and participation individualised dataset has been supplemented with internal data to allow for comparative analysis.
- Identification of gaps is broken down into the five stages of the undergraduate student lifecycle;

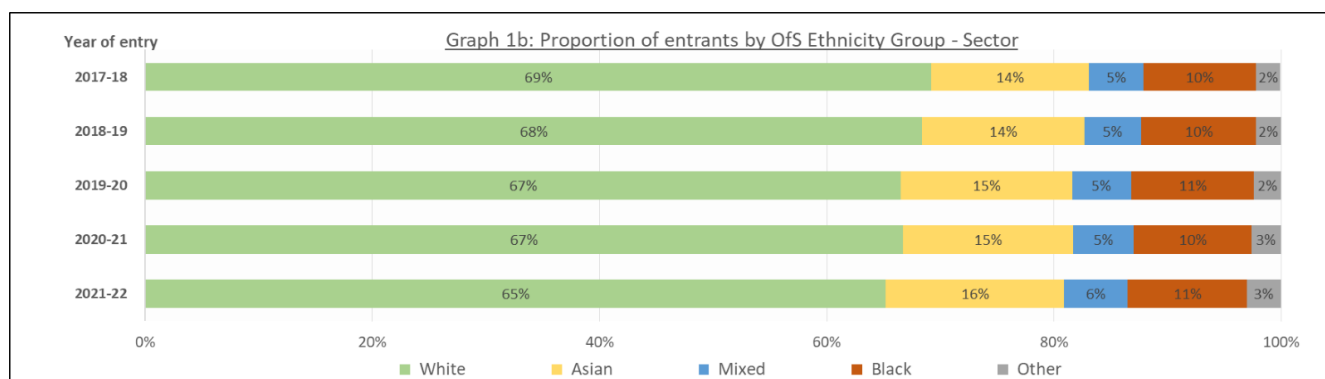
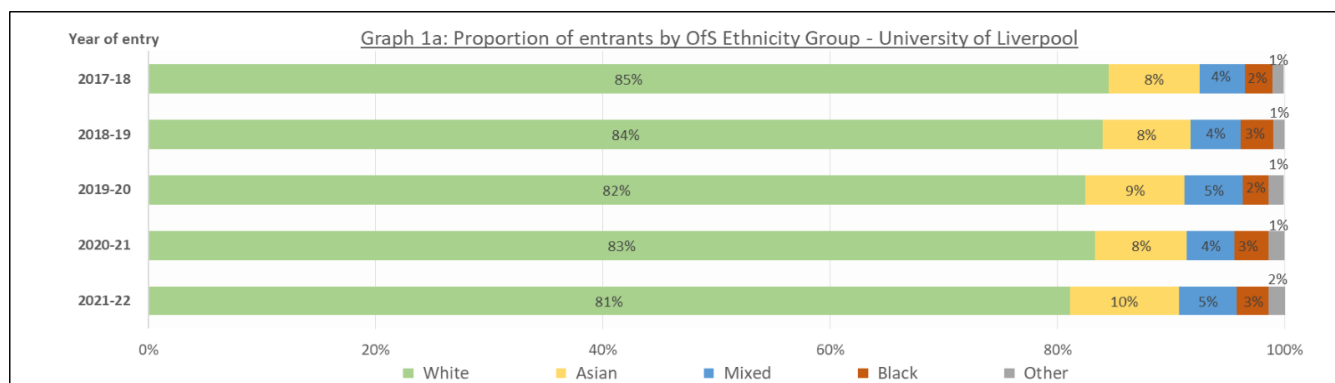
Lifecycle Stage	Definition	Cohort
Access	Measures show the makeup of students entering higher education.	Year of Entry (most recent 2021/22)
Continuation	Students continuing one year and 15 days after they started	Year of Entry (most recent 2020/21)
Completion	Students gaining a higher education qualification, or continuing, four years and 15 days after they started	Year of Entry (most recent 2017/18)
Attainment	Students awarded a first or upper second-class degree at completion of higher education qualifications	Year of Graduation (most recent 2021/22)
Progression	Students progressing to managerial or professional employment, further study, or other positive outcomes 15 months after leaving higher education	Year of Graduation (most recent 2020/21 - only available for 4 years)

- As full-time students make up over 99% of the University for Liverpool (Home Domicile) undergraduate student body, the sector comparative data given below is also for Full-time undergraduate students.
- All percentages in this document, unless noted, comply with the suppression rules outlined by the OfS and refer to statistical significance where relevant.

1. Access

1.1 Ethnicity

- As can be seen in Graphs 1a & 1b below, for both the University of Liverpool and the sector the proportion of White entrants within the full-time undergraduate entrant profile has steadily decreased.
- Comparing the make-up of ethnicity groups as a proportion of the entrant profile, the University has a similar proportion of students from the Other and Mixed ethnicity groupings. However, the proportion of Asian and Black students within our entrant profile is much lower than the overall sector profile.



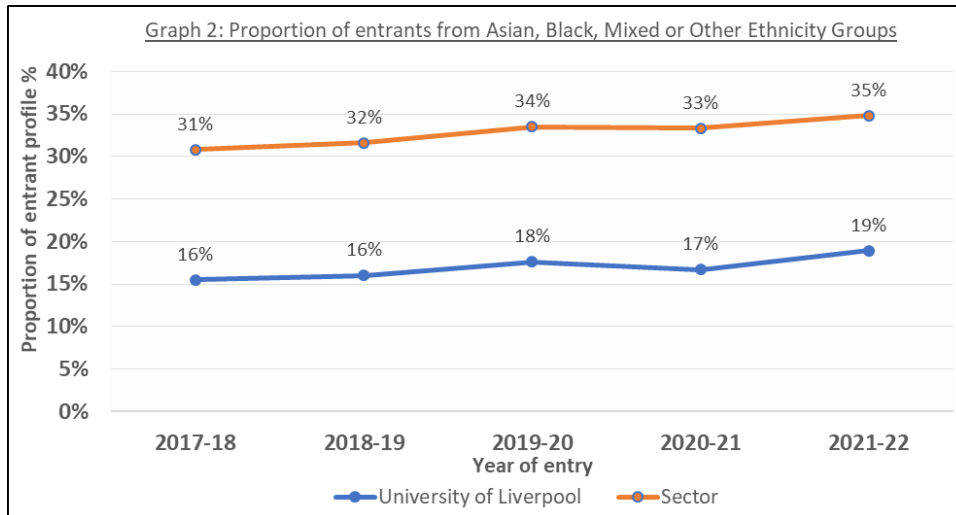
- The University of Liverpool recruits around 16% of its full-time undergraduate home domiciled population from the Liverpool City Region and around 30% from the North West of England. Therefore, the ethnicity makeup of the local region will have a significant bearing on the entry profile of our students. Office for National Statistics data provides the following census data about ethnicity categories across the Liverpool City Region, North West and England:

Ethnicity Group	Liverpool City Region	Northwest England	England
Asian, Asian British	3.0%	8.4%	9.6%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	1.4%	2.3%	4.2%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	2.1%	2.2%	3.0%
White	92.1%	85.6%	81.0%
Other ethnic group	1.4%	1.5%	2.2%

(Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021)

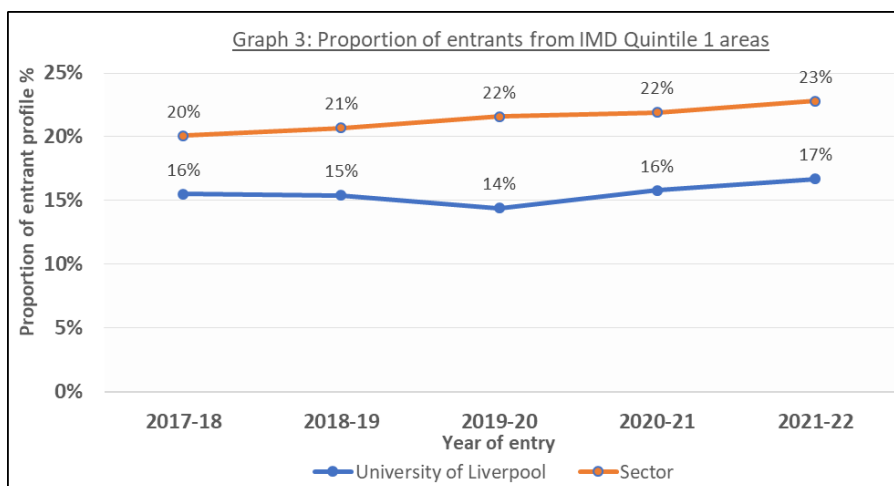
- The proportion of University of Liverpool entrants from Asian, Black, Mixed or Other Ethnicity groups has seen a **3 percentage point (pp)** rise between 2017-18 and 2021-22, aligned with a similar rise across the sector of **4pp**, from **31%** to **35%**.

- A dip of **1pp** was consistent with the sector in 2020-21, but overall, the variance between the University of Liverpool and the sector has remained consistent at **16%** since 2018.
- The University of Liverpool continues to support local minority ethnic pupils through its longstanding successful 'Fast Trackers' programme, committing to raise aspirations to enter HE and aiding attainment within under-represented and disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds.
- To further improve our recruitment performance amongst Asian, Black, Mixed or Other Ethnicity Groups, the University commits to setting this access measure as a target.

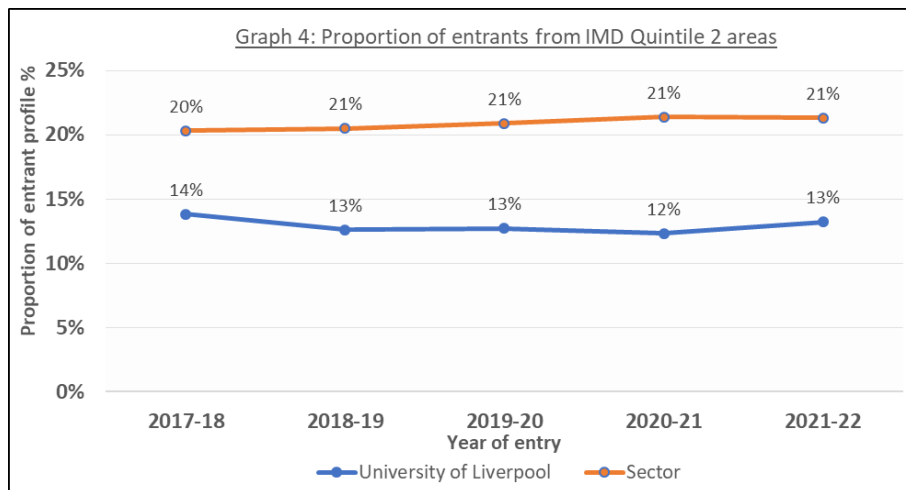


1.2 IMD

- The entrant profile of students from IMD Quintile 1 areas shows a **1pp** rise over the previous 5 years, despite a drop to **14%** in 2019-20.
- The sector has shown a **3pp** rise since 2017, with an incremental **1pp** rise each year except for one.
- 2019-20 shows the biggest gap, a difference of **8pp** compared to the sector, which has now lessened to **6pp**, but still higher than the 2017-18 data which only had a **4pp** variance between UoL's entrant profile and the sector.



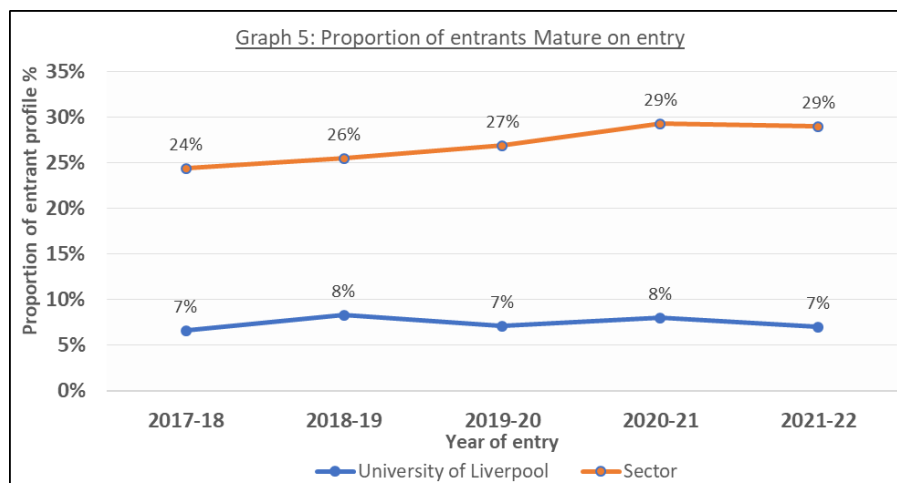
- Entrants from IMD Quintile 2 has shown a **1pp** decrease since 2017-18, comparatively with the sector showing a **1pp** increase.
- Currently, the proportion of IMD Q2 entrants at UoL is **8pp** lower than the sector, a gap which has widened from a **6pp** variance in 2017.



- Although the percentage of entrants from IMD Quintile 1 is moving in an upwards trajectory, we recognise that we are still performing below the sector, and therefore will be committing to setting a target to address this.

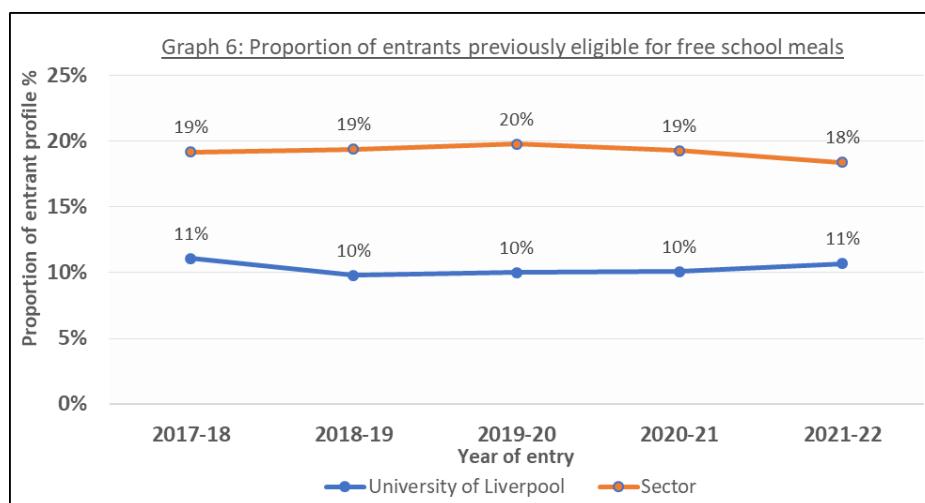
1.3 Mature

- As a proportion of the University of Liverpool's undergraduate entrant profile, mature students remained around the **7-8pp** mark. The sector has risen **5%** since 2017, although remained consistent in the last 2 years at **29%**.
- For the most recent year, the variance between UoL's proportion of mature full-time undergraduate entrants and the sector is **22%** and this has increased steadily from **17%** in 2017-18.
- It is important to consider that, although we offer a varied provision of subjects and courses, we do not offer courses in the disciplines that typically attract higher proportions of mature students, which will be a significant contributing factor in the variance to the sector average. For example, we do not offer Teaching as a course, however **10.4%** of the sector wide FT UG Mature population (**137,880**) are studying a Teaching course. This represents a significant portion of this cohort studying a subject which the University does not offer.
- However, through analysis of HESA data, we can see that there is no equality of opportunity risk regarding local provision, with other local HEIs offering courses that mature learners are typically progressing into in higher numbers.
- We have therefore decided not to set a target in this area but will continue to monitor our progress against this, and remain committed to our work with this cohort, such as our Go Higher Access Programme.



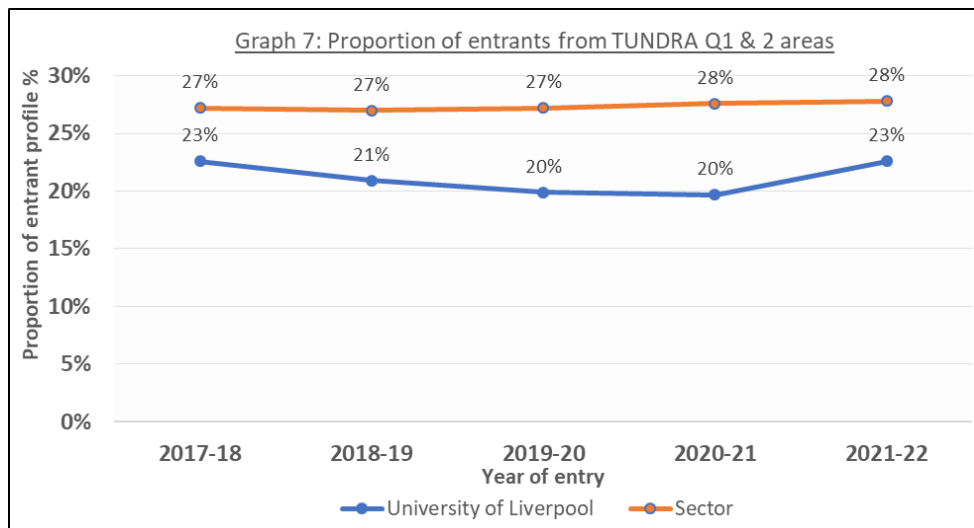
1.4 Free School Meal Eligibility

- The proportion of entrants previously eligible for FSM (Free School Meals) has remained consistent at **11%** since 2017-18, compared with the sector which has seen a **1%** fall in the same timeframe.
- The gap between UoL and the sector has been closed by **2pp** in the previous year, denoted by the **1pp** increase in UoL and **1pp** decrease in the sector, a further marginal increase of **1pp** over the worst performing year of 2019-20 (**10pp** variance).
- UoL continues to support students who wish to access HE regardless of background, for example through our Liverpool Scholars Programme, and will continue to monitor our performance against this measure. Intersectional analysis shows that of the IMD Quintile 1 students recruited to the university in 2021/22, **32%** were previously eligible for FSM. We will not be setting a formal target in this area, as we feel the strong correlation with IMD creates a notable overlap between the two areas, negating the need for a separate target relating solely to FSM Eligibility.



1.5 TUNDRA

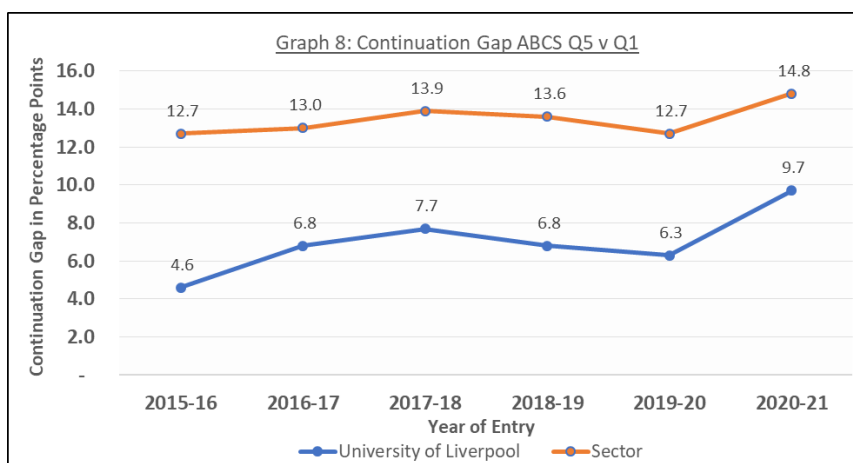
- Across the 5 years, the proportion of entrants from TUNDRA Q1 & Q2 remains at **23%** for the University of Liverpool, despite a **3pp** drop recorded in 2019-20 and 2020-21, while the sector maintained a consistent and slow increase within the same timeframe.
- The gap currently stands at **5pp**, **1pp** further from the sector than 2017-18 despite no drop in UoL's proportion of entrants, with the highest recorded difference being in the 2020-21 data at **8pp**.
- UoL has decided not to set a target relating to TUNDRA, due to the fact we are already committing to IMD as an area-based measure, which has a strong correlation with TUNDRA distribution. Intersectional analysis shows that for academic year 2021/22 of the IMD Quintile 1 entrants **62%** came from postcodes categorised as TUNDRA Quintiles 1 or 2. Although we will not be setting a formal objective, the University will continue to monitor our progress against this measure.



2. Continuation

2.1 ABCS

- UoL data for Associations between characteristics of students (ABCS) Q5 v Q1 continuation has shown a similar trend line to that of the sector for the previous recorded 6 years.
- While the sector has seen a **2.1 percentage point (pp)** increase from 2015-16, UoL has seen a **3.1pp** increase, which closes the gap by **1pp** over a 6-year period.
- 2015-16 shows the biggest gap (**8.1pp**) while the most recent data shows the most significant improvement with only a **5.1pp** gap; a **3pp** improvement over the 6-year period.
- Due to this being a composite measure, further intersectional analysis shows a correlation between ABCS and the other measures set out below. The correlation between ABCS Q1 and IMD Q1 is particularly strong. For example, over a five year period, intersectional analysis shows that of the **114** students within ABCS Q1 who did not continue, **94 (82%)** were also from IMD Q1 areas. As set out below, the University has committed to setting a formal target for IMD Q1 continuation which will indirectly improve performance within this measure as well.

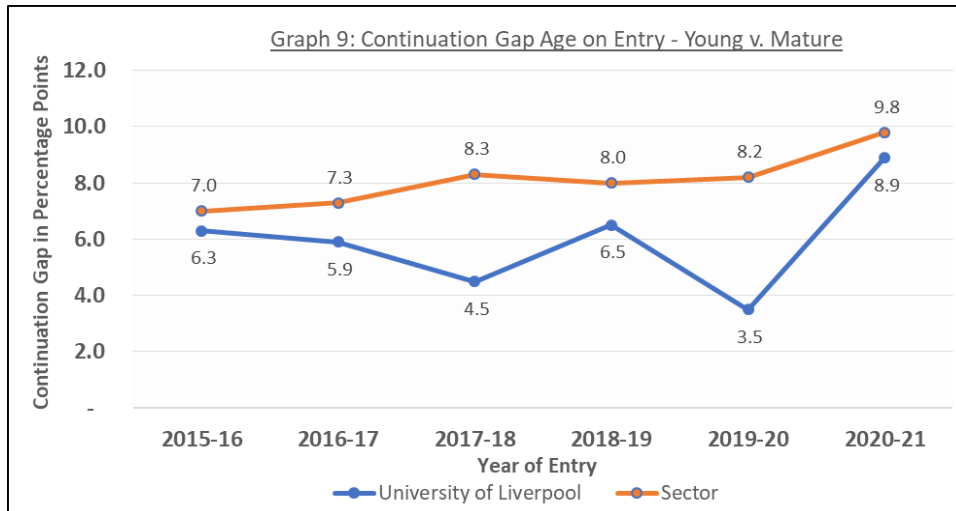


2.2 Mature

- The gap in mature versus young student continuation has seen a **2.6pp** rise since 2015-16, most notably with a **5.4pp** spike in the last recorded year.
- The figures show a **0.9pp** deficit compared to the sector for the most recent year, despite a significant drop in 2019-20 to as low as **3.5pp**. This variance in performance is primarily due to the

relatively low cohort numbers. The continuation gap across a 2-year average is **6.5pp** and for a 4-year average **6.0pp**, well below the sector averages of **9.1pp** and **8.7pp** respectively.

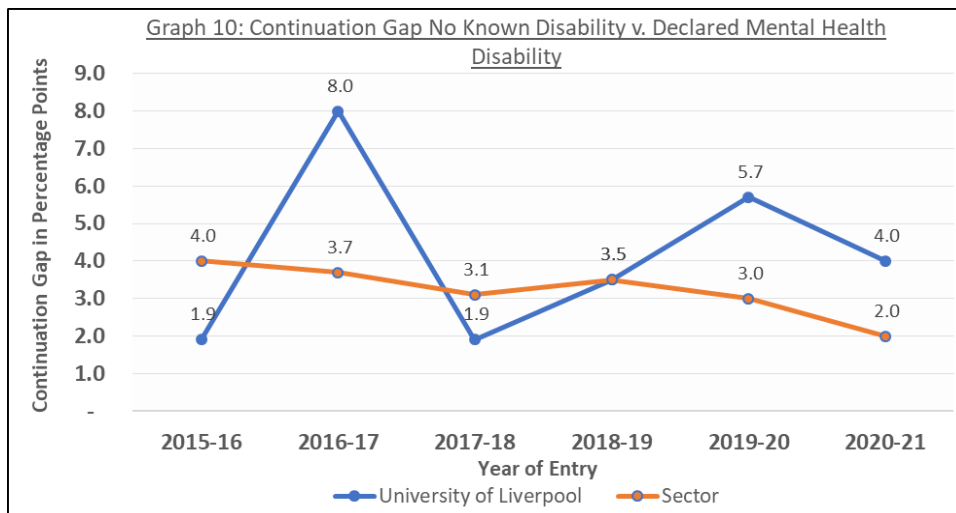
- The University recognises that, although there is a consistent Continuation gap between Young and Mature learners, we are continuing to outperform the sector and therefore will not be proceeding with a formal target in this area. We will continue to monitor our performance and remain committed to our ongoing work with this cohort.



- Additional intersectional analysis also shows a strong correlation between mature students who do not continue and IMD Q1. Across a 4-year period, of the non-continuing mature undergraduate students, just under half (**45%**) are also from IMD Q1. Therefore, within our commitment to an IMD target below we will specifically monitor the outcomes of mature students within this data.

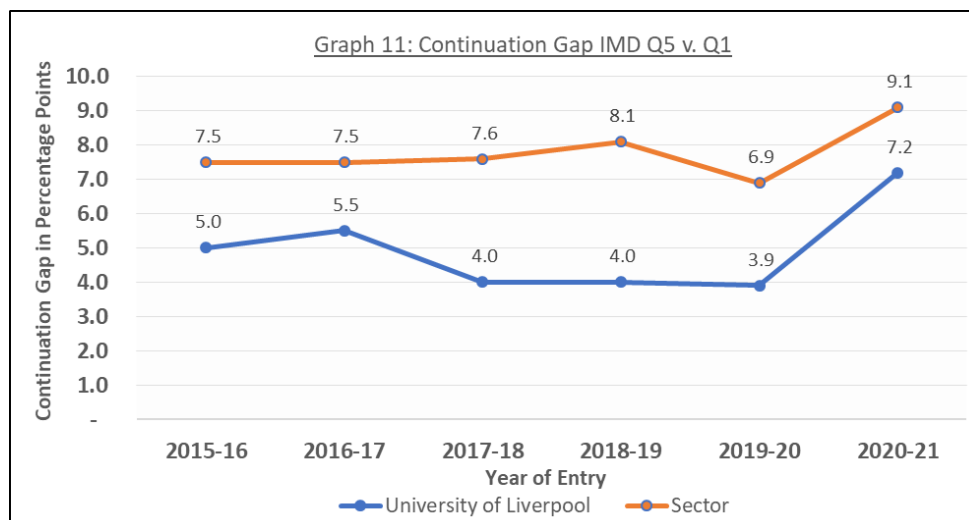
2.3 Declared Mental Health Disability

- Gap in continuation rates for students with a declared mental health disability and all other students is higher than the sector for the previous 2 years, although level in the year prior (2018-19).
- The gap is **4.0pp**, significantly lower than UoL's highest gap of **8.0pp** in 2016-17. The significant variances in yearly performance can be attributed to the small cohort size (~**155** per year), although still large enough to make the data meaningful.
- Across a 4-year average the gap in continuation for students with a declared mental health disability compared to all other students is **3.8pp**, **1.0pp** higher than sector average.
- Due to the small cohort size, the University will not be setting a formal target. It does however recognise the deficit shown in the data and will continue to monitor this closely with the long-term objective of eliminating the gap.



2.4 IMD

- The continuation gap between students from IMD Quintiles 5 and 1 shows a **2.2pp** rise since 2015/16, notably a rise in the last year of **3.3pp** after a slight drop consistent with the rest of the sector.
- Although the gap is consistently lower than that seen across the sector, this has dropped from **3pp** to **1.9pp** in the last year. The the most significant variance was in 2018-19 at **4.1pp**.
- The University recognises that, although we are consistently performing better than the sector, the current gap between IMD Q5 and Q1 is significant and requires addressing. We will therefore be committing to setting a formal target to improve this.



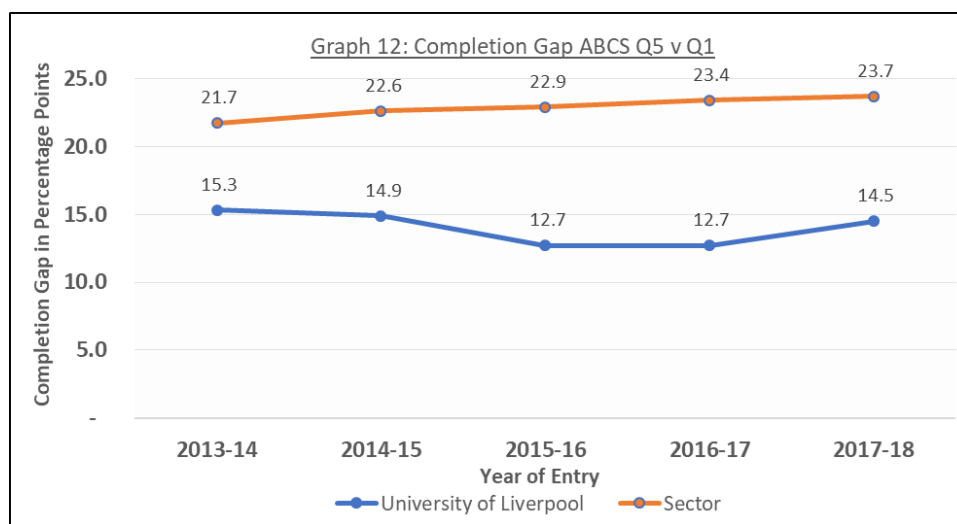
2.5 Other Characteristics

- Although a small cohort, the continuation performance of students who are identified as care leavers is below that of their peers. Given the low cohort numbers (around **34** per academic year) across a 5-year period, the continuation rate for care leavers is **89%** compared to **96%** overall.
- Given the low cohort size a formal target would be the wrong approach to address this gap in equality and is committed to continuing the individualised student support which exists already to support students identified as care leavers.

3. Completion

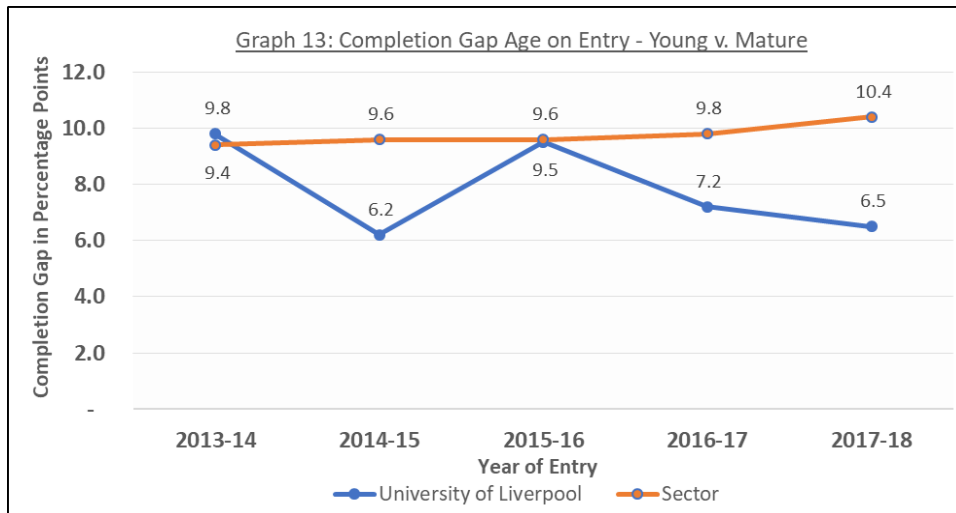
3.1 ABCS

- The completion gap for students from ABCS Quintile 5 v Quintile 1 (most risk) has shown a consistent increase across the sector from **21.7pp** in 2013/14, to **23.7pp** in 2017/18.
- Comparatively, UoL has shown a **0.8pp** drop in the completion gap over the same period.
- The variance between the sector and UoL performance has increased from **6.4pp** to **9.2pp** - an increase of **2.8pp**.
- Due to this being a composite measure, further intersectional analysis shows a correlation between ABCS and two other measures set out below; mature and declared mental health disability. There is no correlation between ABCS and IMD for this success measure.



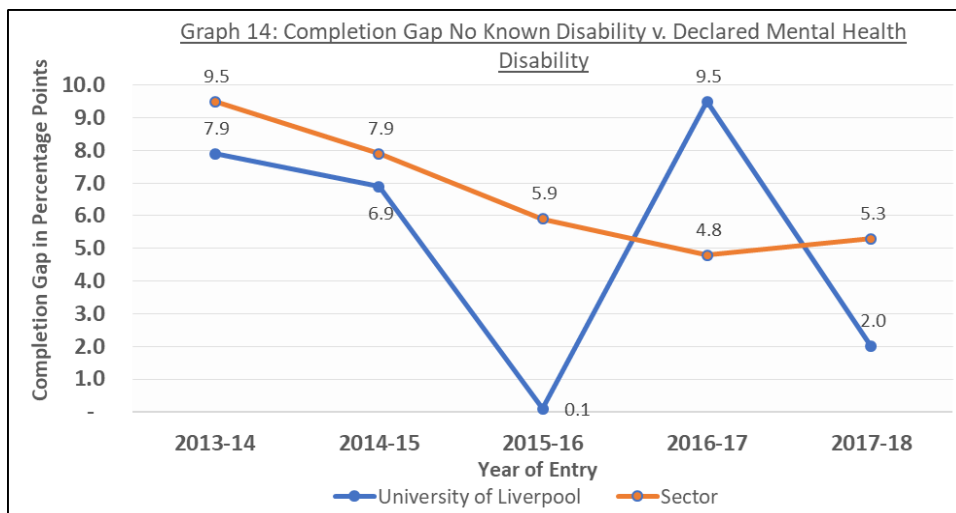
3.2 Mature

- The gap between young and mature student Completion rates has dropped **3.3pp** over the last 5 years as shown in Graph 13 below.
- Although UoL started **0.4pp** higher than the sector, the sector's gap has seen consistent growth up to **10.4pp**.
- UoL now sits **3.9pp** below the sector average, with a **0.7pp** decrease in the most recent year.
- We recognise that there remains a Completion gap between Young and Mature learners, however comparatively with the sector, UoL's performance is consistently in an advantageous position and improving. We will continue to monitor this gap but will not be proceeding with a formal target.
- Additional intersectional analysis shows that of across a 4 year period, 40% of mature students who did not complete were from IMD Q1, therefore objective 4 will indirectly address this completion gap.



3.3 Declared Mental Health Disability

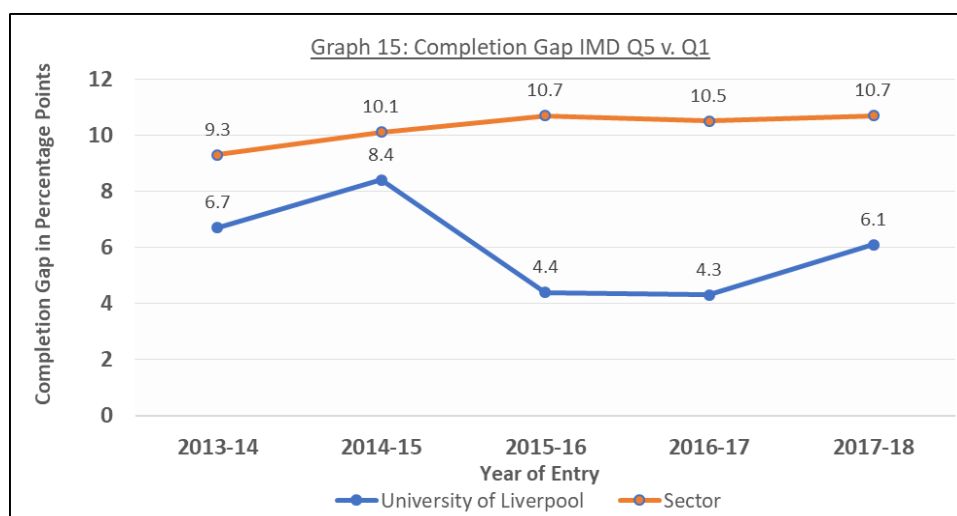
- As set out in Graph 14 below, the UoL completion gap for students with no known disability versus those with a declared mental health disability is **3.3pp** better than sector average for the most recent year.
- Despite a significant rise of **9.4pp** between 2015/16 and 2016/17 following a fall to near zero in 2014/15, this is indicative of a small cohort prone to significant change without necessarily having any contextual reasoning.
- Across a 4-year average the gap within UoL is **4.7pp**, versus a sector 4-year average of **5.8pp**.
- Although concerned about this gap, due to the small cohort size the University will not be setting a formal target. It does however recognise the deficit shown in the data and will continue to monitor this closely.



3.4 IMD

- University of Liverpool IMD Q5 v Q1 completion gap has dropped between 2013 and 2017 by 0.6 percentage points, despite a **1.8pp** inflation in the most recent recorded years.
- Compared to the sector, this increases the deficit by **2pp** from **2.6** to **4.6**, as well as showing 2015-2017 being years of significant gap decrease compared to the sector, only showing at most a drop of **0.2** percentage points at any given point (2015-16 to 2016-17).

- Despite performing better than the sector, the University recognises the increase in the gap over the previous 3 recorded years. Due to this, we will commit to ensuring that the Completion gap is brought closer to previous figures achieved and set this as a formal target.



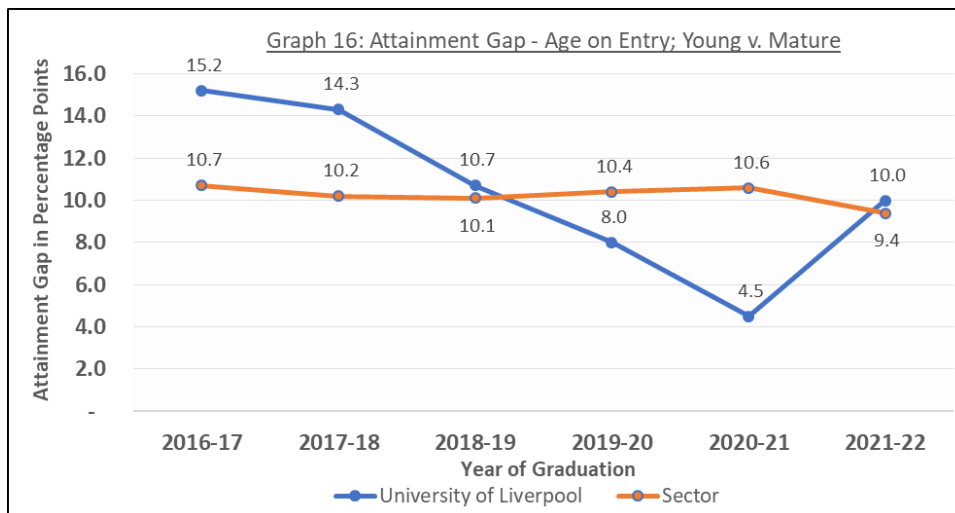
3.5 Other Characteristics

- As per section 2.5 above, although a small cohort size the completion rate of students who are identified as care leavers is below that of their peers. Across a 5-year period, completion rates for care leavers is **89%** compared to **96%** overall.
- Given the low cohort size a formal target would be the wrong approach to address this gap in equality and is committed to continuing the individualised student support which exists already to support students identified as care leavers.

4. Attainment

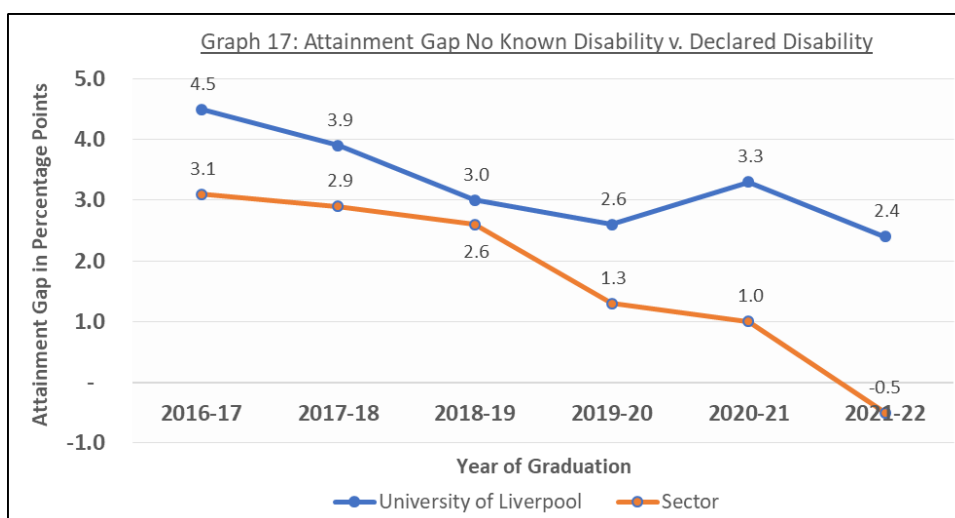
4.1 Mature

- The attainment gap for age on entry (young v mature) has seen a **5.2pp** drop since 2016 for UoL, compared to a drop of only **1.3pp** for the rest of the sector.
- As set out in graph 16 below, despite decrease across the 6 years, the most recent data for UoL is **0.6pp** higher than compared to the sector average. This is predominantly due to a **5.5pp** rise since 2020-21 after a period of consistent and significant improvement to as low as **4.5pp** in 2020/21.
- Although performance in the most recent year is concerning, given the consistent improvement in reducing the attainment gap over the previous years, the University will not be committing to improve this as a target, but will continue to monitor our progress against this and build upon the improvements seen in previous years.



4.2 Declared Disability

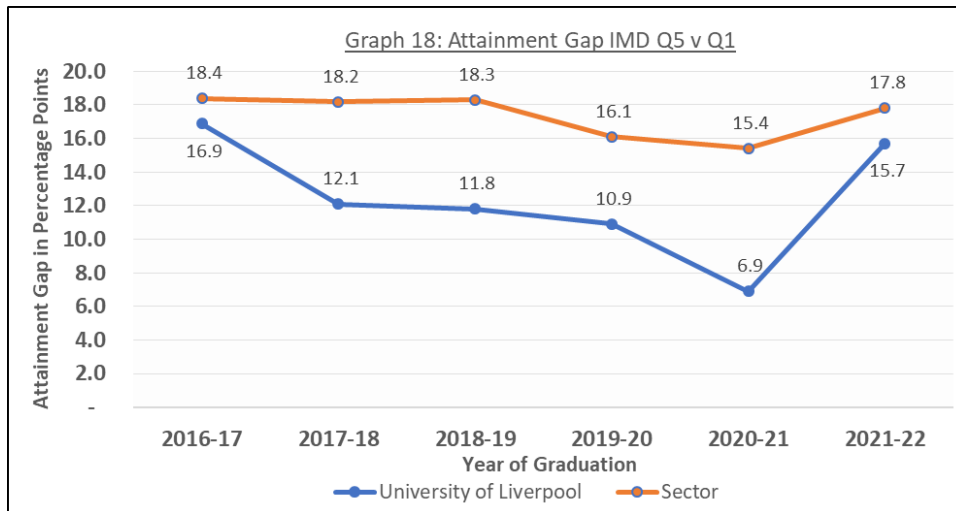
- The attainment gap for students with no known disability, compared with those with a declared disability in the sector has, in the last recorded year, entered a minus figure of **-0.5pp** gap.
- Over this same period UoL has also seen a decrease by **2.1pp** since 2016/17, showing the lowest figures in the most recent year 2021-22 at **2.4pp**.
- Over the 6-year period, the sector has shown a decrease of **3.6pp**, compared with the **2.1pp** decrease in attainment gap recorded by UoL.
- The University has shown a steady decline since 2016/17, in-line with the rest of the sector, but remains significantly distant from the figures shown in the most recent year, therefore UoL will commit to eliminating this gap through interventions and a formal target.



4.3 IMD

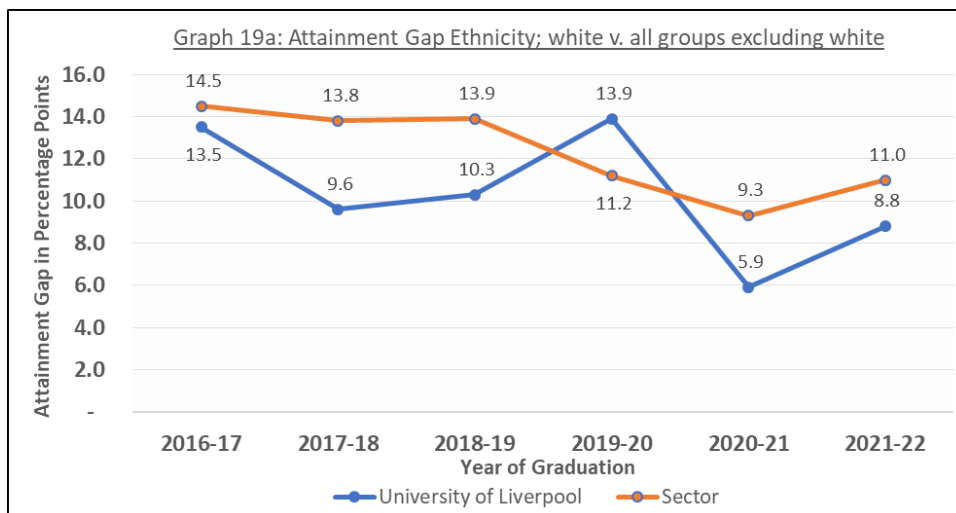
- Attainment in IMD Q5 v Q1 students has shown a drop of **1.2pp** in the gap since 2016 to the most recent recorded data.
- Comparatively, the sector has only shown a **0.6pp** drop, maintaining a consistently larger gap every year recorded.
- Current standings being **17.8pp** in the sector and **15.7pp** in University of Liverpool; **2.1pp** lower than the sector. The most significant gap being recorded in 2020-21 (**8.5pp**), also UoL's lowest recorded gap across 6 years.

- Following several years of consistent and significant improvement in closing this attainment gap, the University will continue to monitor this gap and the reasons for the increase in 2021/22, however will not be proposing a formal target.



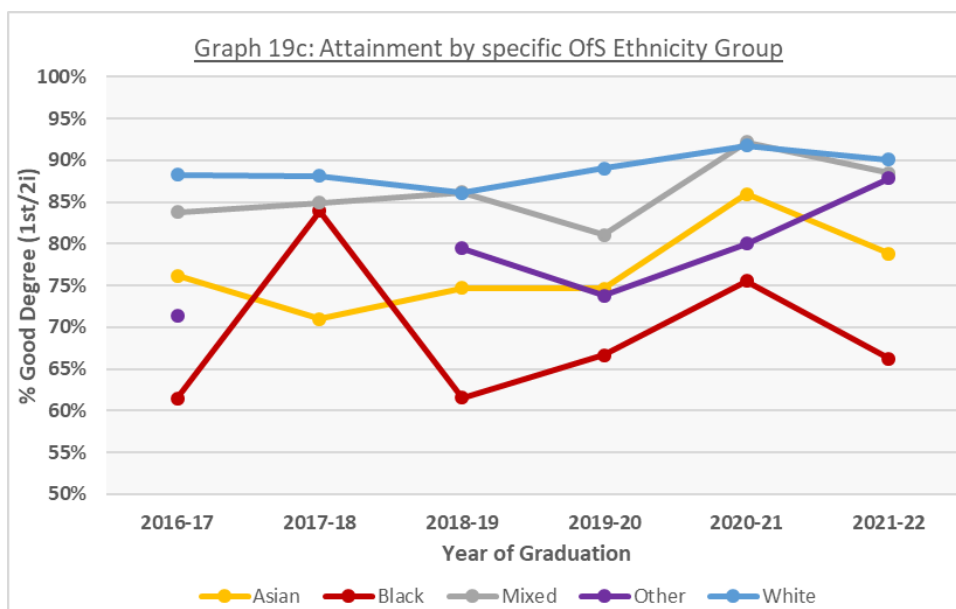
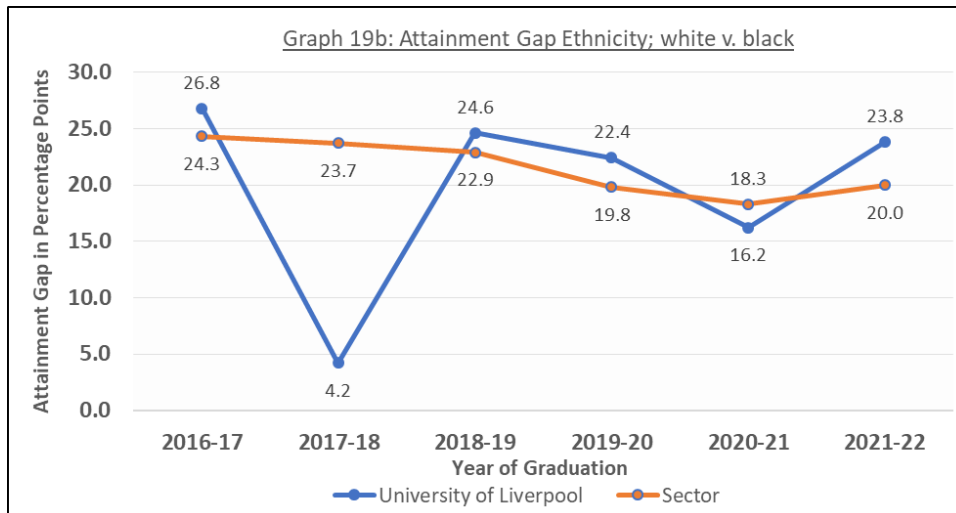
4.4 Ethnicity

- As set out in Graph 19a below, the attainment gap between White students versus all other ethnic groups other than White have shown a **4.7pp** drop over the six years in UoL.
- The sector has experienced a similar fall of **3.5pp**. Data for the most recent year places UoL **2.2pp** better than the sector average for this specific attainment gap.
- 2020-21 was both UoL and the sector's lowest recorded gap, while the year with the most significant variance was 2017-18 (**-4.2pp** compared to the sector).
- The University acknowledges that that the attainment gap is concerning and will set a formal target to address this gap.



- As per graph 19b below, within the specific ethnicity categories the attainment gap between White and Black students has shown a consistent steady decline for both the sector average and the University of Liverpool up to 2020-21, including a notable drop in 2017/18. However, both the sector and UoL recorded an increase in attainment gap for the most recent year.
- The University is currently **3.8pp** higher than the sector average, following a **2.1pp** better than sector performance the year prior.

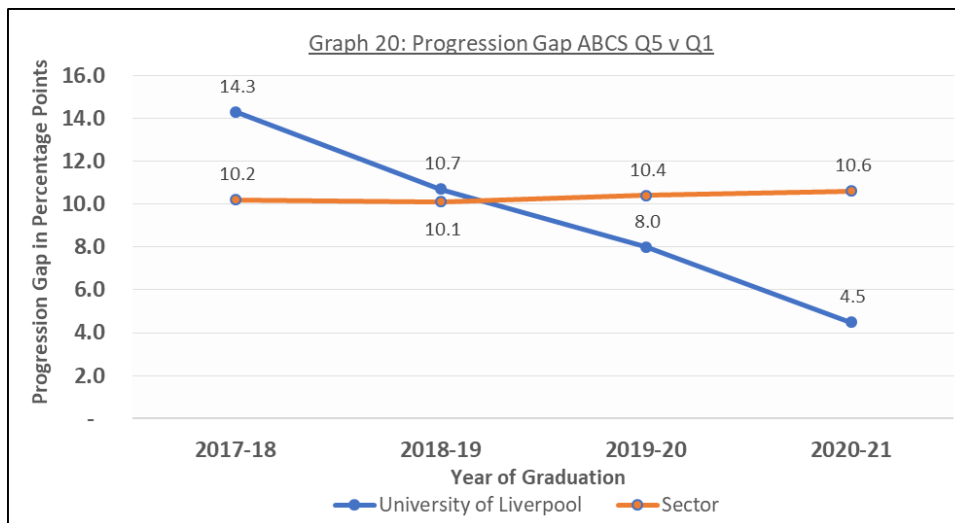
- Most notably, 2017-18 was an anomalous year for UoL, falling entirely out of the trend visible for both the sector and UoL otherwise. This was shown by a **22.6pp** drop all the way down to **4.2pp**, with a sharp rise back to **24.6pp** the following year.
- Graph 19c below, shows good degree attainment split out by the underlying specific OfS ethnicity categories. This graph shows that within the specific groups, Black student attainment (other than 2017-18 as described above), falls well behind the attainment of all other specific ethnicity categories. Encouragingly, the performance of the ethnicity categories Mixed and Other, is aligned with that of White students (the highest performing group) for the most recent year's results.
- The University acknowledges that this specific gap is also significant and concerning. The University is committed to monitoring the performance of Black students specifically within the setting of a formal target for all racial categories other than White (Objective 6 as set out above).



5. Progression

5.1 ABCS

- The progression gap between ABCS Quintile 5 and Quintile 1 has consistently dropped year on year since 2017 for UoL, while the sector has slowly increased since 2018.
- Most recent figures place UoL **6.1pp** better than the sector average, following a drop of **3.5pp** from 2019-20 to 2020-21. In the same time frame, the sector seen **0.2pp** increase.
- Over the 4 years UoL has demonstrated a near **10pp** drop, compared to the sector rising by **0.4pp**.
- Although the gap for the most recent year is significant (**4.5pp**), given that ABCS is a composite measure and the consistent improved performance over the 4 reported years, the University will not be proceeding with a formal target for this measure.



Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan.

Intervention Strategy 1 (Ethnicity Access)

Evidence

Black, Asian and minority ethnic students are less likely to access courses at the University of Liverpool and other academically selective universities⁸. Research undertaken in Sheffield shows that reasons behind the inequalities with HE access for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are complex and inter-related with socio-economic factors, culture, perceptions and factors at an institutional, parental and community level⁹. The key issues students faced were lack of information, advice, and guidance about post-16 options and university; and limited opportunities for work experience and understanding the labour market. Contextual factors such as cultural background and parental knowledge levels need to be considered when designing interventions for young people who are Black, Asian and minority ethnic¹⁰.

Using internal data on admissions, we find that non-white applicants are less likely to complete the steps necessary for application to acceptance, with a particular barrier at application to offer stage, with this figure at 52.3% for Black African applicants and 46.8% for Asian Pakistani applicants, compared to 76.7% for White applicants.

Considering the whole admissions cycle, Black African applicants who are made an offer have a better conversion to firm reply than White counterparts, although over the full admissions cycle of application to acceptance, Black African applicants perform 5% below White applicants.

As a result of this analysis and our assessment of performance, the intervention strategy focuses on increasing the number of applications from Black, Asian and minority ethnic students and increasing the likelihood that those applying are made an offer to study with us.

Rationale

Role models are key for young people's pre-entry sense of belonging in Higher Education¹¹, something that has been reinforced in conversations with our Black Student Panel. Prioritising recruitment of Black students for the **Liverpool Advocate Scheme** will support local Black students to access the University. Evidence says that undergraduate mentors from the same background or gender of mentees can act as relatable role models, and improve young peoples' aspirations, confidence¹² and progression.

Outreach undertaken by the University should lead to increased rates of applications from Black, Asian and minority ethnic students. One reason that these students are not being accepted at the same rate as White students may be due to lower attainment. To increase the acceptance rate of these students' applications, their GCSE attainment needs to increase. The **Y11 attainment mentoring** project should lead to increased GCSE grades in Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in the city due to targeting schools and community centres with higher proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people. As outlined in the

⁸ Arday, et al. October 2021 [What Do We Know About Black and Minority Ethnic \(BAME\) Participation in UK Higher Education?](#) Accessed 14/2/24

⁹ Rehman August 2022 [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student and Parent Expectations and Perceptions of Higher Education Progression in Sheffield](#) Accessed 14/2/24

¹⁰ Sanderson & Spacey January 2021 [Widening access to higher education for BAME students and students from lower socio-economic groups: A review of literature](#) Accessed 14/2/24

¹¹ Rehman August 2022 [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student and Parent Expectations and Perceptions of Higher Education Progression in Sheffield](#) Accessed 14/2/24

¹² Robinson & Salvestrini January 2020 [The impact of interventions for widening access to higher education](#) Accessed 12/02/2024

OfS Attainment Raising Toolkit¹³, mentoring programmes have been shown to increase young people's attainment, particularly when the young people form close relationships with their mentors.

In line with a planned increase in the cohort size of our **Liverpool Scholars programme**, attention will be paid to targeting local schools with greater ethnic diversity and engaging with these cohorts at pre-16 events to embed the idea of university as an option.

Engaging young people early in their education is key to encouraging them to feel positively about higher education as they age. The **primary outreach** programme aims to increase the young people's engagement with higher education. Schools in more racially diverse areas in the city are prioritised for this outreach. Evidence from the University of Nottingham¹⁴ shows that primary outreach can be successful in increasing young people's awareness and understanding of higher education, engaging them in learning and raise their aspirations for the future.

As evidenced, we believe early intervention and transitional support to be key for this group of students, and as such have appointed a Student Transitions Project Officer to work with Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, as well as other WP cohorts, from Year 11 to Graduation.

Intervention Strategy 2 (IMD Q1 Access):

Evidence

We noted that although our entry rates for students classed as IMD Q1 performs well against our comparator institutions, there is still a gap to the sector average – 16.7% compared to 22.4% in 2021-21, which was large enough to draw our focus.

Further investigation took place into the composite parts of the admissions cycle to see if there were any underlying, unintentional factors which could be causing these risks. We found that the largest discrepancy in data came at the application to offer stage, where applying Q1 applicants were 12% less likely to receive an offer. Looking at the later stages of the admissions cycle, we can see that once past this point Q1 applicants outperform all other quintiles in 'offer to firm reply' and even accounting for the issues at the beginning of the cycle, are within 3% of Quintile 5 applicants over the entire 'application> acceptance' journey, outperforming Q2 and Q3 applicants.

As a result of this analysis and our assessment of performance, the intervention strategy focuses on increasing the number of applications from IMD Q1 students and increasing the likelihood that those applying are made an offer to study with us.

Rationale

As an immediate intervention to mitigate some of these risks, we are planning to reframe our **Contextual Offer**, to produce more of a focus on IMD as the targeted metric – which we believe will produce more applications due to greater attainability, more offers being made as entry to the courses becomes more achievable, and a drop in the rate of students missing the conditions of their offer at the acceptance stage.

We also propose to review the criteria for our supported Access Projects, with particular focus on the **Liverpool Scholars programme**, which is the main pipeline for local disadvantaged students achieving a place at the University of Liverpool. These projects include: additional support to tackle low applicant assessment scores; giving advice on appropriate application opportunities; and creating a sense of belonging in the University. This will increase our application rates and lower the drop out between acceptance and course start.

¹³ Causeway Education November 2022 Attainment raising: a toolkit accessed 14/02/2024

¹⁴ Robinson & Salvestrini January 2020 The impact of interventions for widening access to higher education Accessed 12/02/2024

Evidence suggests that multi-intervention outreach programmes, like the **Liverpool Scholars programme**, have a positive impact on young people's aspirations, awareness and confidence.¹⁵ Participation in these programmes increases student confidence around applications and affirms that HE is for them.¹⁶ They have also been shown to be successful in increasing the proportion of disadvantaged students accessing more selective institutions, like the University of Liverpool. Two national programmes, Realising Opportunities and The Access Project, report the positive impact of programmes similar to the Scholars programme, including campus-based interventions, skills sessions and mentoring, on student application rates to selective universities.¹⁷ Internal evaluation of the Scholars programme, using HEAT tracking information for the 800 participants with an expected HE entry year between 2019 and 2021, shows that 77.2% of participants progressed to HE study, and 35.5% progressed to the University of Liverpool. IMD Quintile 1 Scholars students progressed at a rate of 76.7%, 35.7% to the University of Liverpool. This shows that extending this programme to more IMD Quintile 1 students should enable a greater number of young people from these postcodes to access the university.

The importance of providing information, advice and guidance to young people through their educational journey has long been known. Not only effective in raising aspirations and awareness, expert mentoring appears to be effective in supporting students from low participation groups to progress to prestigious institutions.¹⁸ Mentoring programmes similar to the **1:1 Bespoke Information and Guidance** we will offer can directly influence young people's confidence and motivation, as well as providing necessary advocacy and support to these students.

Information and guidance also forms a key part of the **Disrupted Education programme**. Research shows that young people with experience of children's social care (the target group for this intervention) have ambitions and goals to enter HE but there is often a lack of support to keep their aspirations on track.¹⁹ Supporting these young people via coaching and mentoring, ensuring communication with foster carers and local authorities, and promoting inspirational success stories have been shown to be positive for this group. These young people also particularly value clear and direct access to contact details for designated members of staff at universities, which is provided by this programme. In 2022, 38% of applicants to the university who reported being estranged from their family were from IMD Quintile 1 postcodes. For this reason, supporting estranged students or other young people with disrupted secondary education should increase the access rate of IMD Q1 students.

Partnership work to raise pre-16 attainment has also been shown to be successful. **IntoUniversity** provides academic support, mentoring and skills development workshops. Their evaluation shows that their work increased motivation, self-esteem and confidence, as well as improving academic, social and practical skills.²⁰ **Shaping Futures'** initial evaluation of their attainment raising work shows that their 6-week year 7

¹⁵ Robinson & Salvestrini January 2020 [The impact of interventions for widening access to higher education](#) Accessed 12/02/2024

¹⁶ TASO May 2023 [Evaluating multi-intervention outreach and mentoring programmes](#) Accessed 12/02/2024

¹⁷ Robinson & Salvestrini January 2020 [The impact of interventions for widening access to higher education](#) Accessed 12/02/2024

¹⁸ Robinson & Salvestrini January 2020 [The impact of interventions for widening access to higher education](#) Accessed 12/02/2024

¹⁹ Styrnol et al. January 2021 [Supporting access and student success for learners with experience of children's social care](#) accessed 12/02/2024

²⁰ Robinson & Salvestrini January 2020 [The impact of interventions for widening access to higher education](#) Accessed 12/02/2024

reading project pilot increased the learners' reading age by an average of 9 months.²¹ Increased attainment at GCSE level should lead to increased offer rates for young people from IMD Q1 postcodes.

Success in this work will be measured by an increase in the number of IMD Q1 students achieving a place with us and a narrowing of our entry rate gap to the sector average.

Intervention Strategy 3 (IMD Q1 Continuation) and Intervention Strategy 4 (IMD Q1 Completion)

Evidence

As outlined in Annex A, the continuation and completion rates for IMD Quintile 1 students at the University are lower than that of other quintiles. Having reviewed this analysis, it appears that much of the completion gap appears in the first year of study, meaning that the underlying reasons for the completion and continuation gaps will be the same.

IMD Quintile 1 students at the University of Liverpool are more likely to be from low income families, or be mature.²² This means that any interventions put in place to support IMD Quintile 1 students need to be mindful of the intersectionality of disadvantage these students face. Research shows there are many reasons that a student may not complete their course and so the intervention strategies at the University of Liverpool will focus on transition to HE, increasing sense of belonging, financial support and academic/study support.

Rationale

One reason students may not continue is not achieving in their assessments, and at the University these are typically exams in the first year. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more prone to test anxiety and more impacted by it.²³ Disadvantaged students have less access to exam preparation resources and are more likely to be facing additional stress such as financial concerns, discrimination and lack of access to study materials. Transition support activities will help IMD Q1 students with this. The **KnowHow Transition support** will allow students to access study support and exam preparation resources early in their studies, with resources being sent directly to students pre-arrival, when parents can still have a positive influence.

Financial barriers to engagement with HE particularly impact students from low-income backgrounds. As reported in the Office for Students Cost of Living insight brief,²⁴ 92% of higher education students reported that their cost of living had increased from 2022 to 2023, and almost one in five said that they had considered dropping out of university due to these increases. In light of this, many more students are looking to undertake part-time work whilst studying. The **Liverpool Advocate scheme** and **Student Coaches schemes** allow students to undertake this work at the University which is flexible around their study requirements. Working on campus and with university staff should allow the students to attend their taught sessions without adding to their travel expenses.

Internal review of the **University bursary schemes** impact shows that students from a less than £25,000 income home in receipt of a bursary were 36.4% more likely to attain a first than those who were not bursary recipients.²⁵ Other evidence also highlights that financial support has mixed results on retention and completion for disadvantaged students. However, the main finding is that needs-based grants are effective in supporting retention whereas evidence regarding merit-based support is limited²⁶. For this reason we are focusing our bursary support on students from low-income backgrounds. Further analysis

²¹ Shaping Futures November 2023 [Annual Impact Report](#) accessed 12/2/24

²² Internal University statistics

²³ Boustani December 2023 [Examining exam anxiety: how disadvantage impacts performance](#) accessed 12/2/24

²⁴ Office for Students March 2023 [Studying during rises in the cost of living](#) accessed 12/2/24

²⁵ Internal University analysis for entry 2010/11 cohort.

²⁶ TASO No date [Financial support \(post-entry\)](#) accessed 12/2/24

and evaluation of our financial support will be undertaken. To bolster our financial support, we have appointed a new Scholarships Officer, who will work to ensure financial pressures are not a barrier where possible.

Students' sense of belonging to their university and course has been shown to be critical in their likelihood to continue and complete their course.²⁷ Recent research from WonkHE and Pearson outlines four key pillars for students belonging:²⁸

- Connection – connecting with peers enables students to build a support network and increases confidence
- Inclusion – students associated diverse, inclusive content with course credibility
- Support – well-defined, clearly articulated, inclusive support systems and networks were fundamental to building a sense of belonging in students
- Autonomy – being able to make informed decisions about their learning and contribute to the wider university experience was a strong indicator of feelings of belonging.

Three of these pillars are included in the activities for these intervention strategies. The **Liverpool Plus** programme enables a sense of connection for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, via facilitating peer-to-peer connections.

Support is available throughout the university, but our intervention strategies particularly focus on the transition into university. Evidence says that students are often not prepared for the independent learning required at higher education and start to develop self-directed learning skills during their first year.²⁹ Some of the greatest challenges students face include time management, using effective study strategies and maintaining motivation. The **Knowhow Transition support** and the **Liverpool Plus** programme will provide independent learning and stress management support to students, as well as signposting students to wider support available at the institution, including that provided by the **Student Coaches**.

A key part of students' autonomy is contributing to the wider university experience. The **100 days 100 voices project** allows all incoming students to do this and we specifically encourage WP student involvement. There is often a gap between student expectations and what the university provides.³⁰ This project allows us to understand student expectations and any gaps in provision. New measures can then be put in place to support students with their transition.

The **learning analytics** system will also link to students' autonomy and provide support by identifying students not engaging with their course content. The system will allow staff to proactively reach out to these students and offer support.³¹ Although the learning analytics system will be used with all students, it is likely that students from disadvantaged backgrounds will be flagged for support more often, as was found in Nottingham Trent University.³² The learning analytics system will therefore be used as an enabler for change, informing the action taken within the system for student support. In the long term, we expect this

²⁷ Thomas 2012 [Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: final report](#) accessed 5/4/24

²⁸ Jackson October 2022 [The four foundations of belonging at university](#) accessed 12/2/24

²⁹ Cameron & Rideout June 2020 ['It's been a challenge finding new ways to learn': first-year students' perceptions of adapting to learning in a university environment](#) accessed 12/2/24

³⁰ Mearman & Payne June 2023 [Reflections on welcome and induction: exploring the sources of students' expectations and anticipations about university](#) accessed 12/2/24

³¹ Jackson October 2022 [The four foundations of belonging at university](#) accessed 12/2/24 <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/the-four-foundations-of-belonging-at-university/>

³² Foster & Siddle November 2019 [The effectiveness of learning analytics for identifying at-risk students in higher education](#) accessed 12/2/24

system will also allow the University to identify key touch points and times of the year that students are most likely to disengage and provide support before this happens.

Intervention Strategy 5 (Disability Attainment)

Evidence

The most common disability disclosed by our students is cognitive or learning difficulties, followed by multiple or other impairments and mental health conditions. Mature students are eight percentage points more likely to have disclosed a disability than young students and are particularly more likely to have a mental health condition or multiple impairments.

Although the attainment gap has been slowly decreasing over the last five years, disabled students are still facing barriers to equal attainment. The gap in attainment between disabled students and non-disabled students could be for many reasons, however it is likely to have significant overlap with the reasons for non-continuation and completion for IMD Quintile 1 students outlined above – namely, struggles with assessments and lower sense of belonging. The activities in this intervention strategy focus on reviewing the curriculum to support all students and direct support for those with disabilities to succeed.

Rationale

Our **Curriculum Project** will consider the design of our curriculum, including a focus on scaffolding and transitions between years to ensure all students are appropriately supported throughout their learning. It will consider how more inclusive assessment can be embedded within our curriculum. This is in line with recommendations from TASO³³ for inclusive learning. However, their findings also state that there is not a good understanding of what inclusive practice is and how to facilitate it effectively. The transition support of the Curriculum Project is also in line with TASO recommendations, where it is reported that there are correlations between transitions support and performance.

Our **Student Support project** is considering our overall model for student support to better meet the changing needs of our student body. As outlined in the previous rationales, support is a key part of enabling students' sense of belonging in HE.³⁴ Enabling students to access support and information in an easier way should increase their sense of belonging and therefore their attainment.

In addition to cohort-level approaches such as those detailed above, we recognise the importance of individual support for disabled students. Our **Disability Coaches Scheme**, which employs disabled students to provide first line information and advice to other disabled students, has been recognised by the government as an example of good practice. The coaches can support students to navigate access to support and enable self-advocacy. Self-advocacy has been seen to be the strongest predictor of academic performance when considering a range of variables for disabled students' performance in the US.³⁵ There is also evidence that there is a positive relationship between mentoring and self-advocacy. In the UK, participants in UCLAN's Student Wellbeing Ambassadors Programme were just as likely to perform well as those who did not. However, students who acted as ambassadors for the programme were more likely to continue into their second year and complete their degrees.³⁶

³³ TASO February 2023 [What works to reduce equality gaps for disabled students](#) accessed 12/2/24

³⁴ Jackson October 2022 [The four foundations of belonging at university](#) accessed 12/2/24

³⁵ TASO February 2023 [What works to reduce equality gaps for disabled students](#) accessed 12/2/24

³⁶ TASO October 2023 [Efficacy Pilot Evaluation Report University of Central Lancashire's Student Wellbeing Ambassadors Programme](#) accessed 12/2/24

Intervention Strategy 6 (Ethnicity Attainment)

Evidence

Our Black, Asian and minority ethnic students have lower attainment than their white counterparts. This could be for many reasons. The ethnicity degree awarding gap in the sector is seen as a wicked problem, as it is complex, pervasive and persistent – it has existed for at least 25 years.³⁷ Wicked problems need to be addressed by looking at the surrounding infrastructure, not emphasising the deficit model to explain underachievement of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students.³⁸

Due to this, the intervention strategy for closing this gap focusses on supporting Black, Asian and minority ethnic students to navigate the systems currently in place and working with them to understand and reduce the systemic issues that they face at the university.

Rationale

One way we are working with the students to understand the barriers they face is the **student advisory panel for Black students**. This follows evidence from Winchester that Afro-Caribbean and Asian students were more reluctant to voice their opinions, ideas and concerns leading to white student views being overrepresented.³⁹ Providing Black students with a safe space to express their opinions should help with this and allow the students to have their voice heard.

As Black, Asian and minority ethnic students are facing systemic barriers to equal attainment, it is important to understand what they are being taught and how it can be made more inclusive. The **inclusive curriculum and decolonising toolkit** allows academics to critique their module and expand their reading lists to be more representative of the student body. Evidence on the effectiveness of this work on attainment is mixed,⁴⁰ however it is important to undertake to promote the inclusion of all students. Inclusion is also a key pillar in sense of belonging, and it has been reported that more inclusive reading lists are seen as more academically rigorous and giving a more rounded perspective of the discipline by students.⁴¹

The **Liverpool Plus** and **Equality+** programmes build on the need for increased sense of belonging at university. Evidence from similar programmes, including the Manchester 10/10, show early indicators of increasing student grades and sense of community.⁴² As outlined in intervention strategies 3 and 4, increasing sense of belonging should lead to increased attainment as students feel more able to access support from peers and staff when required.

Employment opportunities on campus, including the **Liverpool Advocate scheme** and **student coaches** should also link to an increase in sense of belonging, as well as addressing some of the intersectional barriers to success regarding undertaking part-time work and study at the same time. As outlined in intervention strategies 3 and 4, undertaking part-time work on campus means that students can work around their study more effectively and do not have to spend money on travel to work and university separately.

³⁷ Ugiagbe-Green & Ernsting October 2022 [The wicked problem of B\(A\)ME degree award gaps and systemic racism in our universities](#) accessed 12/2/24

³⁸ Austen et al. 2017 [Why is the BME attainment gap such a wicked problem?](#) Accessed 12/2/24

³⁹ Andrews et al. June 2023 [Approaches to addressing the ethnicity degree awarding gap](#) accessed 12/2/24

⁴⁰ TASO No date [Ethnicity and Race Equality Gaps - TASO](#) accessed 12/2/24

⁴¹ Jackson October 2022 [The four foundations of belonging at university](#) accessed 12/2/24

⁴² Pilot results of Manchester 10/10 presented at North West Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Group October 2023. Information on their programme can be found here: <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/social-responsibility/social-inclusion/widening-participation/manchester-10-10/>

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The University of Liverpool

Provider UKPRN: 10006842

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

The University reserves the right to increase our fees in line with inflation, where this is permissible under OfS guidance.

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9250
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year		N/A	1850
Turing Scheme and overseas study years		N/A	1385
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	Carmel College	10001201	7500
Foundation year/Year 0	Wirral Metropolitan College	10007553	9250
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	6935
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The University of Liverpool

Provider UKPRN: 10006842

Investment summary

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

Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£1,803,000	£1,831,000	£1,861,000	£1,890,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£10,712,000	£10,660,000	£10,636,000	£10,640,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£272,000	£278,000	£284,000	£289,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£541,000	£549,000	£558,000	£567,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£1,262,000	£1,282,000	£1,303,000	£1,323,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£1,803,000	£1,831,000	£1,861,000	£1,890,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (as % of HFI)	3.4%	3.5%	3.6%	3.6%
Access activity investment	Total access investment funded from HFI (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£10,212,000	£10,160,000	£10,136,000	£10,140,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£10,712,000	£10,660,000	£10,636,000	£10,640,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)	20.5%	20.4%	20.3%	20.3%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£272,000	£278,000	£284,000	£289,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: The University of Liverpool

Provider UKPRN: 10006842

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Liverpool will increase the percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students entering the University from 18.9% of entrants in 2021/22 to 21.8% in 2028/29	PTA_1	Access	Ethnicity	Not specified (please give detail in description)		We will be looking at all students with an ethnicity other than White, but will continue to monitor the spread of different ethnic groups to ensure that we do not preferentially recruit one ethnic group over others as a result of our interventions. This target and milestones were calculated using the information in the Access and Participation Dashboard for other Liverpool-based universities and the Russell Group, to take our recruitment profile into context.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	18.9%	20.6%	21%	21.4%	21.8%
Liverpool will increase the percentage of students from IMD Quintile 1 attending the University from 16.7% of entrants in 2021/22 to 18.1% by 2028/29	PTA_2	Access	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations (IMD))	IMD quintile 1	N/A	This target and milestones were calculated using the information in the Access and Participation Dashboard for other Liverpool-based universities and the Russell Group, to take our recruitment profile into context. This milestone was chosen to bring us more in-line with the national population of IMD	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage	16.7%	17.5%	17.7%	17.9%	18.1%
	PTA_3														
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Liverpool will reduce the continuation gap between IMD Quintile 5 and IMD Quintile 1 students from 3.90% in 2019/20 to 1.31% by 2028/29	PTS_1	Continuation	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations (IMD))	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	The University recognises that, although we are consistently performing better than the sector, the current gap between IMD Q5 and Q1 is significant and requires addressing.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2019-20	Percentage points	3.90	2.42	2.05	1.68	1.31
Liverpool will reduce the completion gap between IMD Quintile 5 and IMD Quintile 1 students from 6.1% in 2017/18 starters to 4.0% by 2028/29	PTS_2	Completion	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations (IMD))	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	The University recognises the increase in the gap over the previous 3 recorded years as seen in the dashboard. The target aims to bring us back in-line to before our gap widened.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2017-18	Percentage points	6.1	4.9	4.6	4.3	4.0
Liverpool will eliminate the degree awarding gap between students who have reported a disability and those who have not by 2028/29	PTS_3	Attainment	Reported disability	Disability reported	No disability reported	The University has shown a steady decline since 2016/17, in-line with the rest of the sector, but remains significantly distant from the figures shown in the most recent year. The target aims to remove the gap completely, as the sector has already done.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2021-22	Percentage points	2.4	1.2	0.8	0.4	0

