

# University of Bradford: Access and participation plan: 2020-21 to 2024-25

At the University of Bradford, we place equality and diversity, inclusion and a commitment to social mobility at the centre of our mission and ethos. As the University of and for Bradford, we recognise the significant social and economic challenges of our region. We therefore seek to work collaboratively with key partners to remove the barriers to Higher Education (HE) which students from under-represented groups face, in order to bring about tangible, positive change for students, communities and businesses. We recognise and embrace the unique role HE plays in supporting social mobility and improving the life trajectory of people from disadvantaged backgrounds<sup>1</sup>. This Access and Participation Plan APP forms a key element of the University's overall strategy to position it as a sector-leader in creating and sustaining the necessary conditions for holistic, inclusive learning and development. To achieve this strategic ambition, we have adopted an overarching system-wide structural equality and inclusion approach to remove barriers within the University and the region to eradicate all access and participation gaps and create equality. Through this work, all students at our University will be valued, empowered and supported to excel.

## 1. Assessment of performance

We are proud of our strong track-record in furthering equality and diversity, inclusion and social mobility. Our performance at supporting under-represented groups to access HE is compelling: over 50% of our intake come from the most deprived areas, and over 70% are BAME. We have above benchmark overall continuation rates, and outstanding overall graduate employability figures. However, for some groups of students, gaps in access, attainment and progression persist. This APP focuses our efforts on closing these gaps. Our assessment of performance has been undertaken within the context of the region in which we operate. We recruit a significant proportion of our intake from the Bradford region, a conurbation of relative social deprivation, and our student body reflects the make-up of our local communities. Bradford is a young, diverse city with many strengths; it also faces many challenges, and was ranked 277th out of 324 local authority districts in the 2016 Social Mobility Index<sup>2</sup>. In recognition of these challenges, Bradford has been designated one of twelve Department for Education Opportunity Areas. In all cases, our dedicated educational statisticians have evaluated our internal data<sup>3</sup> and compared our performance with that of the sector, as well as with trends in national and regional populations. Where necessary, we have compiled our own data sets to complement those provided by the Office for Students and those available from other national and regional sources.

### 1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access: We have outstanding performance in supporting access for this group of entrants. We have no gap for access for students from the areas of lowest and highest HE participation, and 50.7% of our intake come from the most deprived areas, exceeding the percentage of 18 year olds living in these areas nationally by over 30% and exceeding the percentage of 18-year olds in HE by over 28%. New entrants from POLAR4 quintile 5 form the smallest proportion (10.2%) of our

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1 Social Mobility Commission, State of the Nation 2018-2019: Social Mobility in Great Britain. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/798404/SMC\\_State\\_of\\_the\\_Nation\\_Report\\_2018-19.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/798404/SMC_State_of_the_Nation_Report_2018-19.pdf)

2 Department for Education, Bradford Opportunity Area 2017-20. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/696830/Social\\_Mobility\\_Delivery\\_Plan\\_Bradford\\_v10\\_FINAL\\_WEB.PDF.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696830/Social_Mobility_Delivery_Plan_Bradford_v10_FINAL_WEB.PDF.pdf)

3 In all cases, we have reviewed our performance relating to full time students and apprenticeship students, as our part-time students are either studying short, non-degree programmes or are full time students repeating elements of their study.

student intake, the reverse of the sector position, which by definition has the highest proportion from quintile 5. As we also have a low proportion of new entrants from quintile 1 (11.5%), the gap between the proportions of entrants from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 5 is very small at 1.3 %, in favour of quintile 1. This compares favourably to a much larger sector gap of 18.3 % for the sector in favour of quintile 5. Over the last five years we have increased the proportion of students we recruit from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2. Over the five-year period, the proportion of new entrants from quintile 1 has risen from 9.5% to 11.5% while the proportion from quintile 5 has decreased from 13.8% to 10.2%, effectively closing the access gap between these groups, which is now negligible at 1.3% in favour of quintile 1. Analyses of available data indicate an important change in the classification by quintile of a number of Bradford postcodes from POLAR3 to POLAR4. We believe that this indicates that our work in widening participation in these areas has contributed to an overall improvement in participation rates in these neighbourhoods. This shift highlights that increasing numbers of young people from these areas are accessing HE, demonstrating our success in delivering our long-term strategic commitment to achieving societal change in relation to access and participation in HE. Analysing the University's performance using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) demonstrates that, over the last five years, on average 50.7% of the University's intake of 18-year olds came from IMD quintile 1, with 54.3% of the intake from IMD quintile 1 in 2017/18. This is significantly higher than for the English population of 18-year olds, where on average over the last five years 22.0% were in IMD quintile 1 and where 22.1% were in quintile 1 in 2017/18. This demonstrates our marked success in recruiting students from these backgrounds.

Success: Non-continuation: There is little difference between continuation rates for students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 5. The continuation rate of new entrants from quintile 1 is 92.0% compared to 93.2% for quintile 5, averaged over the five-year period, and 91.0% compared to 91.8% in 2016/17. For the IMD, the continuation of new entrants from quintile 1 is 91.4% compared to 92.3% for new entrants from IMD quintiles 2-5, averaged over a five-year period, and 92.0% compared to 92.3% for 2016/17. There is, therefore, no significant continuation gap. Attainment: The attainment for students from POLAR4 quintile 1 is 74.7% compared to 80.5% for students from POLAR4 quintile 5, averaged over the last five years, and 76.5% compared to 81.0% in 2017/18. For students from IMD quintile 1, attainment is 70.1% as compared to 79.6% for students from IMD quintiles 2-5, averaged over the last five years, and 74.0% compared to 83.7% in 2017/18. There is, therefore, an unacceptable gap in attainment for students from IMD1.

Progression to employment or further study: Analysis of POLAR4 data shows that although there has been a small gap in progression rates over the last five year, this has reduced steadily and students from quintile 1 now have better graduate employment rates than students from quintile 5. Progression to graduate employment or further study for students from quintile 1 was 74.5% compared to 77.7% for students from quintile 5, averaged over the last five years, and 82.0% compared to 76.7% in 2016/17. Analysis using IMD data shows that there was a significant gap (12.9%) in progression rates between students from IMD quintile 1 and IMD quintile 5 in 2013/14. There was significant improvement in this gap in 2014/15 and 2015/16, at which point the gap had narrowed to 3.8%. However, in 2016/17 and 2017/18 the gap has worsened and is now at 7.4%. Over the last five years, progression rates for students from IMD groups 3-5 have steadily improved (other than a slight recent dip for IMD 5), while progression rates for students from IMD 2 have stayed at a similar level. In 2017/18, progression rates for students from IMD 1 and 2 were

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<sup>4</sup> The proportion of postcodes in quintile 1 in Bradford MBC with a BD postcode has dropped from 22.3% to 13.9% from POLAR3 to POLAR4 (where there is a mapping in both POLAR versions). This corresponds to a drop in the proportion of 18 and 19 years olds from 18.4% to 12.7% in the lowest quintile. The proportions are different because 18/19 year-olds are not distributed evenly across postcode areas.

similar (76.1% and 76.8% respectively) and progression rates for students from IMD 3, 4 and 5 were also similar (at 83.5%, 83.9% and 84.4% respectively). There is therefore a significant progression gap between the two lowest and three highest groups.

Summary: As detailed above, despite a strong performance in access, we recognise that an unacceptable attainment gap persists between students from the most and least deprived areas. We will therefore include eradication of this attainment gap as one of our strategic aims and objectives. Although there is no progression gap based on POLAR4 data, there is an increasing progression gap based on analysis of IMD data, and we will therefore include eradication of this progression gap as one of our strategic aims and objectives.

## **1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students (BAME)**

Access: Our performance at attracting BAME students is strong. Over the last five years we have consistently recruited greater proportions of Asian, Black and Other students than are found in the UK population of 18 years. Based on data for full time entrants of all ages, on average over the last five years our cohort has comprised 56.8% Asian entrants (compared to the UK population which comprises 8.2% Asian 18 year olds); 9.1% Black entrants (compared to 3.6%); 2.8% Mixed entrants (compared to 3.2% Mixed); 2.0% Other entrants (compared to 1.1%); and 29.3% White entrants (compared 84.0%). Our overall proportion of BAME entrants is significantly higher, at 70.7% averaged over the last five years, than our proportion of White entrants, at 29.3%.

Success: Non-continuation: There is little difference in continuation rates between BAME students and White students. Continuation rates by ethnic groups averaged over five years are: Asian 93.2%; Black 90.7%; Mixed 86.1%; Other 94.7% and White 90.6%. Continuation rates by ethnic groups in 2016/7 are: Asian 93.4%; Black 93.1%; Mixed 87.5%; Other 92.7% and White 90.0%. Attainment: Although there has been significant progress in closing attainment gaps since 2012, we still have a significant unexplained attainment gap for BAME students. Attainment (good honours) by ethnic groups averaged over five years is: Asian 71.3%; Black 68.7%; Mixed 77.4%; Other 74.1% and White 85.6%. Attainment (% good honours) by ethnic groups in 2017/8 is Asian 75.1%; Black 83.9%; Mixed 75.9%; Other 78.9% and White 87.1%. There has been a significant improvement in the attainment of Black students in 2017/18, however we are concerned to ensure that we sustain this improvement moving forwards.

Progression to employment or further study: We have made significant progress in closing progression gaps; however we still have an unacceptable progression gap for BAME students. Comparing the different ethnic groups averaged over five years gives: Asian 70.7%; Black 78.2%; Mixed Ethnicity 75.1%; Other Ethnicity 77.1%; and White 79.7%. Comparing the different ethnic groups in just 2017/8 gives: Asian 74.8%; Black 83.0%; Mixed Ethnicity 79.3%; Other Ethnicity 85.3%; and White 82.9%.

Summary: Although we have very strong performance in access for BAME entrants compared to the sector, we recognise that there are significant attainment and progression gaps. We will therefore be addressing these gaps in our strategic aims and objectives.

## 1.2 Mature students

Access: In 2017/8, 23.6% of new FT UG students were mature, compared to a 24.5% five-year average. This is slightly below sector figures of 27.8% and 26.6% respectively. As noted above, the University recruits a significant number of students from the Bradford region. Bradford is the youngest major city in the UK<sup>5</sup>. A total of 24% of the population is under sixteen and nearly 42% of the population is under 30<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, although our proportion of new entrants who are mature students is slightly behind the sector, we do not consider this to be significant since our cohort reflects our local population. We are, however, aware that within Bradford, there are a significant number of mature people without level 3 qualifications, and are working with FE partners and the Local Authority (LA) to support City-wide approaches to increase their potential to access HE.

Success: Non-continuation: In 2016/7, we achieved continuation rates of 91.1% for mature entrants, compared to 92.5% for young entrants, while the five-year averages are 89.2% for mature and 92.8% for young entrants. Attainment: In 2017/8, 85.3% of mature students achieved good honours, compared to 76.9% of young students, while the five-year averages are 78.2% for mature and 74.1% for young students.

Progression to employment or further study: In 2017/8, 87.5% of mature students obtained a graduate level job or went on to further study, compared to 75.4% of young students, while the five-year averages are 83.2% for mature and 71.9% for young students.

Summary: As detailed above, our intake of mature students reflects the population of the local region from which we recruit a significant proportion of our students. Mature students significantly outperform younger students in attainment and progression, and there is no continuation gap. We will therefore prioritise this group within our strategic aims and objectives associated, although we are working with FE and our LA to support mature people within the region to improve their educational qualifications, and therefore raise their potential to access HE.

## 1.3 Disabled students

Access: In 2017/8, 11.0% of our new full-time undergraduate students were disabled, compared to an 11.5% five-year average. This is slightly below the sector figures of 14.6% and 13.1% respectively. The greatest difference from the sector position relates to the disability type of mental health, where the sector has a 2.4% five-year average while we have a 1.5% five-year average.

Success: Non-continuation: In 2016/7, 89.4% of disabled entrants continued, compared to 92.5% of non-disabled entrants, while the five-year averages are 91.6% for disabled and 91.9% for non-disabled entrants. The disability type with the lowest continuation averaged over five years is mental health at 88.9%, although, given the small numbers, this gap is not considered to be significant. Attainment: In 2017/8, 78.5% of disabled students obtained a good honours degree, compared to 79.5% of non-disabled students, while the five-year averages are 77.6% for disabled and 74.8% for non-disabled students. The disability type with the lowest good honours proportion averaged over five years is mental health at 72.0%, representing a significant attainment gap.

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<sup>5</sup> Department for Education, Bradford Opportunity Area 2017-20. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/696830/Social\\_Mobility\\_Delivery\\_Plan\\_Bradford\\_v10\\_FINAL\\_WEB.PDF.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696830/Social_Mobility_Delivery_Plan_Bradford_v10_FINAL_WEB.PDF.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [https://datahub.bradford.gov.uk/ebase/districtdashboardiyp.eb?ebd=0&ebp=10&ebz=1\\_1513337501432](https://datahub.bradford.gov.uk/ebase/districtdashboardiyp.eb?ebd=0&ebp=10&ebz=1_1513337501432)

Progression to employment or further study: In 2017/8, 78.2% of disabled students obtained a graduate level job or went on to further study, compared to 78.5% of non-disabled students, while the five-year averages are 75.5% for disabled and 74.6% for non-disabled students. The disability type with the lowest progression averaged over five years is mental health at 63.7%.

Summary: As detailed, we are slightly behind the sector in relation to access for disabled students and we have significant gap in attainment and progression for students with mental health disabilities. Student mental health is a significant concern for the sector as a whole<sup>7</sup>, and we recognise the importance of supporting the mental wellbeing of all our students, and the particular vulnerability of those with declared mental health disabilities. In this regard our priority focus in this area will be improving attainment and progression of students with mental health disabilities.

## 1.4 Care leavers

Access: From 2014/5 to 2016/7, Bradford averaged 12 care leavers entering per year. This has risen to 26 in 2017/8 and 27 in 2018/9. Within the Bradford region, the numbers of care leavers (of all ages) are rising, with 308 care leavers in 2017/18 and 368 in 2018/19<sup>8</sup>. The University can attract care leavers from a wider range of LA areas, and some care leavers in Bradford may access other HEIs. However, our intake would represent 9% of the Bradford care leave population which is below the 12% of care leavers who enter HE nationally, significantly below the proportion of non-care leavers who enter HE. We recognise the urgent need for the national performance to improve significantly and are therefore aiming to eradicate this gap and outperform the sector.

Success: Non-continuation: Numbers are too small for accurate comparison, but the proportion of continuers appears to be at least as high as for the overall student population of UK FT UG.  
Attainment: Insufficient data for meaningful analysis.

Progression to employment or further study: There is currently too little data for analysis.

Summary: We recognise that, with the rising population of care leavers both nationally and in Bradford, we must do more to ensure that this group can access HE and will set a strategic aim and objective to achieve this. Although we are not setting strategic aims and objectives for success and progression for this group at this stage as numbers are too small to make analysis meaningful, we will keep the data under review for this group over the course of our plan. Our overall aim is to have no success or progression gaps for this group. We will review continuation, attainment and progression data annually for care leavers, by identifying care leavers (via our Student Record System) in OfS individual datasets and then comparing this group in the wider population and a strategic objective will be set should a statistically significant gap be identified.

## 1.5 Intersections of disadvantage

We have undertaken a detailed analysis of the impact of intersections across all groups. We highlight here only groups for which a significant intersection of disadvantage has been identified.

Asian Females: Progression rates for Asian females are the lowest for any group within the University. The overall average progression rate for all students is 74.6% averaged over the last five years, and 78.5% in 2016/17. For Asian female students, the progression rate is 69.7%

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<sup>7</sup> IPPR, 2017, Not by Degrees: Improving Student Mental Health in Universities, IPPR, available at [https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-09/1504645674\\_not-by-degrees-170905.pdf](https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-09/1504645674_not-by-degrees-170905.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Data obtained from Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

averaged over the last five years, and 71.3% in 2016/17. For white female students, the progression rate is 83.0% averaged over the last five years and 85.7% in 2016/17. White females have outperformed Asian females every year over the past five years. Asian female students outperformed Asian male students in 2012/13, followed by a period in which there was a negligible gap in progression. However, in 2016/17, there was a significant improvement in progression for Asian male students, to 79.0%, resulting in a 7.8% progression gap between Asian female and male students in 2016/17.

White Working-Class Males (WWCM): To identify our performance for WWCM, we have analysed our data using the IMD as not all our students are assigned a socio-economic class (SEC) and we do not have access to sector level SEC data, so are unable to make a comparison on this basis. Participation levels based on the IMD for WWCM are particularly low, at 1.7% of intake averaged over 5 years, and 1.4% in 2017/18. We have derived estimates of the proportions of WWCM within the sector from Office for Students data for white males and white students of IMD quintile 1 and estimate the proportion for the sector to be 4.6%. Within the general population of Bradford, we estimate the population of WWCM to be approximately 10%, based on the 2011 census and 2015 IMD classification by the Lower Layer Super Output Areas<sup>9</sup>. We have not been able to arrive at an accurate estimate of the proportion of WWCM 18- and 19-year olds in Bradford entering HE overall due to the number and complexity of variables involved. However, based on our estimate of the overall population in Bradford, and our understanding of the national population, we consider WWCM to be significantly under-represented within our intake. It has not been possible to analyse continuation for WWCM<sup>10</sup>. We estimate attainment (good honours) to be 80.1% averaged over the last five years, and 70.6% in 2017/18. This is considerably behind the performance of other white students, for whom attainment is 86.0% averaged over the last five years and 87.8% in 2017/18. There is also a significant progression gap, with WWCM achieving progression rates of 68.8% averaged over the last five years and 76.9% in 2016/17, compared to other White students who achieved progression rates of 80.1% averaged over the last five years and 83.3% in 2016/17. However, numbers of WWCM are very small, which makes reliable statistical analysis difficult.

Summary: As detailed above, there is a significant progression gap between Asian female students and White female students. Asian females are therefore a key focus in our strategy. We have identified that WWCM are significantly under-represented within our population and we will be setting strategic aims and objectives to significantly increase their participation.

## **1.6 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education**

Refugees and Asylum Seekers: We acknowledge the significant challenges that refugees and asylum seekers face and the unique role that higher education can play in alleviating these challenges through the provision of opportunities and support<sup>11</sup>. As one of the first universities to be awarded University of Sanctuary status, we foster a culture of welcome and inclusion for asylum seekers and refugees and are wholeheartedly committed to their support. Bradford is a City of Sanctuary, and we seek to support the local community through initiatives to encourage and support refugees and asylum seekers to access HE. Over the past five years, we have recruited on average 19 refugees and asylum seekers per year, with a marked increase to 38 in 2018/19. We have an explicit ambition to continue to increase the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers who

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<sup>9</sup> This does not take into account the age spread within the population. There are greater proportions of young people in the lower quintiles of the IMD, however there are lower proportions of white young people than white older people.

<sup>10</sup> OfS have not supplied the relevant data set due to data protection issues.

<sup>11</sup> UUK, 2018, Higher Education and Displaced People, available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/International/higher-education-and-displaced-people-final.pdf>

join our university, to at least 60 per year by 2024/25. As there are no reliable national datasets upon which to calculate measurable aims for refugee and asylum access, we have not included this group as a specific strategic objective or target. However, they are an important part of our intended Access and Participation work, and we are therefore including them as a written commitment. Numbers are too small to undertake meaningful statistical analysis on success and progression at this stage. However, we aim overall to have no succession or progression gaps for this group. Our ability to undertake meaningful statistical analysis will improve as numbers grow, and we will keep our data under review and set objectives and targets, with associated strategic measures, should we identify gaps in the future.

Part Time Students: We do not offer part time UG programmes as part of our standard UG offer: our part-time entrants undertake top-ups and short courses within our Health Studies provision. There is a continuation gap between White and BAME students, which has averaged 8% over the five-year period, during which period the gap has varied significantly and was 3.2% in 2017/18. There is also an 8.7% continuation gap between IMD1 and 5 in 2017/18, which has also varied significantly over last five years. There is a widening progression gap between white and BAME students, at 22.6% in the 2017/18. While we acknowledge these continuation and progression gaps, we also note that this provision is small and has been steadily decreasing with the shift in 2011 to nursing becoming an all-degree profession. We are therefore not setting specific aims and objectives or strategic measures for this group. However we believe that our wider plan will benefit this group of students and will ensure that part time students benefit from the same initiatives we are implementing for full time students.

Summary: As a University of Sanctuary, we acknowledge that we must do more to ensure that refugees can access HE and will therefore include this group in our strategic aims and objectives. We have not set strategic aims and objectives for success and progression for refugees at this stage as numbers are too small to make analysis meaningful, but we will keep outcomes under review for this group over the course of our APP.

## **2. Strategic aims and objectives**

This five-year APP details an ambitious mission and establishes challenging aims and objectives that seek to improve access for specific groups, eradicate attainment gaps, and achieve significant reductions in progression gaps for those groups most significantly affected. We will reflect our ambitions in our University KPIs. The following strategic aims inform the APP:

- To adopt and embed a whole system approach to Access and Participation based on an overall structural equality and inclusion theory of change;
- To work in partnership with the Bradford Metropolitan District Council, business and other key stakeholders to deliver a multi-agency approach to social mobility;
- To further develop an evidence-based student lifecycle approach to evaluate impact of our APP;
- To embed E&D and A&P into the University values-based 2020-2025 strategy;
- To build upon our sector-leading practice in Access and Progression to employment.

### **2.2 Target groups**

Based on an holistic assessment of our performance to date, we are targeting the following groups:

- Students from low HE participation, household income or socio-economic status – success (attainment) and progression

- BAME students – success (attainment) and progression
- Asian female students - progression
- Disabled students with mental health disabilities – success (attainment) and progression
- Care Leavers – access
- White Working-Class Males – access
- Refugees – access. We have made a written commitment above to this group but are not setting aims / objectives due to the lack of reliable national data on which to calculate the gap.

## 2.3 Aims and objectives

In setting our aims and objectives, we note that our APP is a five-year plan, and that although we are committed to making significant progress immediately and within this five year period, change for some groups (particularly access for WWCM) will require longer term social and cultural shifts, and it may be a much longer period (in excess of ten years) before we see significant change.

### Students from low HE participation, household income or socio-economic status backgrounds

Our strategic approach is to adopt a whole systems student life cycle inclusive approach to support the attainment of students from this group.

Strategic Aim 1: We will eradicate the 8.9% attainment gap (good honours) for students from **low participation/financially disadvantaged backgrounds**, reducing it to 0% by 2024/25.

Measurable objective: the 8.6% attainment (good honours) gap for students from IMD quintile 1 as compared to IMD quintile 5 will reduce to 0% by 2024/25.

Strategic Aim 2: We will significantly reduce the 7.4% progression gap (graduate employment) for students from **financially disadvantaged backgrounds** to 2% by 2024/25. Measurable objective: the 7.4% attainment gap between students from IMD 1 and IMD 5 for progression to graduate employment or further study as measured by DLHE/GO will reduce to 2% by 2024/25<sup>12</sup>.

### Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students:

Success (Attainment): Our strategic approach is to address the structural and individual barriers to attainment within the University through implementation of the BAME Attainment pledge.

Strategic Aim 3: We will eradicate the 10.7% attainment gap (good honours) for **BAME**<sup>13</sup> students to 0% by 2024/25. Measurable objective: we will to reduce the 10.7% attainment gap (good honours) between BAME and white students to 0% by 2024/25.

Progression: Our strategic approach is to address structural and individual barriers to progression within the University and the region through the implementation of a multi-agency OfS-funded Graduate Workforce Bradford project.

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<sup>12</sup> For strategic aim 2, our long term aspiration is to eradicate the progression gap for this group. However there is intersectionality for this group with ethnicity and gender, and for reasons explained in footnote 13 we believe there are cultural and structural barriers external to the University which will take longer to address. We therefore do not believe it is realistic to entirely eliminate this gap over the duration of the plan, but have set an aspirational target to significantly reduce it.

<sup>13</sup> We have undertaken analysis of the performance of sub-groups within the BAME category and have noted differential performance above. However, we believe that we need to improve attainment for all BAME groups. Therefore, we have decided to set an aggregate target for the BAME group as a whole to ensure that we deliver sustained performance for all BAME students. We will continue to monitor at sub-group level as well as at aggregate level over the period of the plan to ensure that there are no differential outcomes.

Strategic Aim 4: We will significantly reduce the 6.6% progression gap between BAME students and white students to 3% by 2024/25. Measurable objective: the 6.6% gap between **BAME** and white students for progression to graduate employment or further study as measured by DLHE, GO or its successors will reduce to 3% by 2024/25.

Strategic Aim 5: We will significantly reduce the 14.4% progression gap between **Asian female students** and White female students to 6% by 2024/25. Measurable objective: the 14.4% gap between Asian females and white females for progression to graduate employment or further study as measured by DLHE, GO or its successors will reduce to 6% by 2024/25<sup>14</sup>.

#### Students with Mental Health Disabilities:

Our strategic approach is to embed preventative measures across the University by establishing a Wellbeing College in partnership with the NHS.

Strategic Aim 6: We will eradicate the 11.1% attainment gap (good honours) between **disabled students with mental health disabilities** and non-disabled students to 0% by 2024/25. Measurable objective: the 11.1% attainment gap (good honours) between disabled students with mental health disabilities and students without disabilities will reduce to 0% by 2024-25.

Strategic Aim 7: We will significantly reduce the 20.2% progression gap between **disabled students with mental health disabilities** and students without disabilities (as measured by DLHE, GO or its successors) to 3% by 2024-25. Measurable objective: the 20.2% progression to graduate employment/further study gap between disabled students with mental health disabilities and students as measured by DLHE, GO or its successors will reduce to 3% by 2024/25.

#### Care Leavers:

Our strategic approach is to raise the profile of this group and integrate their specific support needs across all systems and processes, through an improved care leavers package.

Strategic Aim 8: We will significantly reduce the 40.8% access gap between care leavers and the general population to 10.8% by 2024/25. Measurable objective: the 40.8% gap between care leavers and non-care leavers will reduce to 10.8% by 2024/25.

#### White Working-Class Males:

Our strategic approach is to undertake develop and enhance long-term collaborative outreach work across the school and community system within the Bradford region to raise aspiration among male children to inspire them at an early age to aspire to HE.

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<sup>14</sup> For strategic aims 4 and 5, our long term aspiration is to eradicate the progression gap. However, we do not feel that this is feasible in the timescale of the APP as we are of the view that there are cultural factors external to the University which impact up our progression outcomes, particularly for Asian female students. A report into poverty and ethnicity in the UK labour market by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Weekes-Bernard, D, 2017 'Poverty and ethnicity in the labour market'. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation) identifies that despite rising levels of employment, some groups are still more likely to experience unemployment, including African groups and Mixed White and Caribbean groups. They also note, in line with our own experience, that women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds have much higher levels of economic inactivity than others, linked to unpaid caring responsibilities in the home. Those from these BAME groups who are in work, also have more likelihood of receiving low pay. The report also highlighted issues of racism and discrimination when seeking and attempting to progress in work particularly for African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups. These are ethnic groups that are particularly highly represented within our student population. We have therefore set targets to significantly reduce the gap, but have not, within this plan, aimed to eradicate it, though this will remain a longer term aspiration.

Strategic Aim 9: We will reduce the 3.2% access gap for WWCM at the University of Bradford as compared to the current sector position to 1% by 2024/25<sup>15</sup>. Measurable objective: the 3.2% access gap for WWCM at the University as compared to the current sector position will reduce to 1% by 2024/25.

### 3. Strategic measures

#### 3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

##### Overview:

Equality and Diversity is part of the University of Bradford's heritage and will continue to feature significantly as a central pillar in the next revision of our University Strategy (2020-2025).

We are proud of our achievements to date: we have a very strong performance on access for under-represented groups and have demonstrated year on year improvement in student progression and attainment. However, we recognise that in order to achieve our mission to create a truly inclusive environment where we have no attainment and progression gaps, we must make a step change in our approach. We therefore see the development of this five-year APP as a catalyst to a new approach which will enable us to fully achieve our strategic aspirations.

Through our 2020/21-2024/25 APP we are seeking to nurture an environment in which students and members of staff from all backgrounds and contexts can thrive, where all students and members of staff feel welcome and develop a sense of belonging, and in which all gaps in success and progression are eradicated, resulting in equal outcomes for all. Our values-based approach centres on placing equality and diversity at centre of our University Strategy, a strategy that will focus on ensuring the university structures and cultures are developed to create inclusion and acceptance. Additionally, our APP will be delivered in partnership with other key stakeholders who we are working with to address broader issues related to social mobility. Through our Civic University Agreement<sup>16</sup>, we will integrate our APP work within the City Region plans for sustainable social and economic growth, and work closely with the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership.

##### Structural Equality and Inclusion Theory of Change:

Our overarching structural equality and inclusion theory of change is predicated on our understanding of the consensus that is emerging from research on the complexity of the role of three central inter-related causes which produce inequality: individual factors, organisational structures and institutional cultures. Research<sup>17</sup> demonstrates that early individualised understandings of inequality have led to a range of policy measures - from the legislative prohibition of explicit discrimination to targeted actions for individuals - which have tended to result in the construction of a deficit model of equality based around 'fixing the individual'. In recent years, this deficit model has been called into question as it does not acknowledge that a complex interplay of individual and organisational factors influence outcomes for different people and, most importantly, produce and reproduce structures and systems of inequality that cumulatively

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<sup>15</sup> The profile of our region is not comparable to the national picture and the University cannot therefore commit to match the pace and scale of the sector in improving access for WWCM. However we are strongly committed to improving our performance for this group.

<sup>16</sup> See <https://upp-foundation.org/civic-university-agreements-list-of-signatories/>.

<sup>17</sup> GENOVATE (2016). The GENOVATE Model for Gender Equality in Transforming Research and Innovation. GENOVATE. Available at: <http://www.genovate.eu/resources/genovatemodelforgenderequalityintransformingresearchandinnovation/>; and GENOVATE (2016) Evaluating Gender Structural Change: Guidelines for Evaluating gender Equality Action Plans. GENOVATE available at: <http://www.genovate.eu/resources/guidelines-evaluating-geaps/>;

disadvantage members of certain social groups throughout the socio-educational process<sup>18</sup>. Given this, our APP entails designing and delivering a range of new and existing strategic interventions aimed at addressing the structural and cultural factors that have historically inhibited equality of opportunity and outcome in order to create a fully inclusive educational environment. This will support our students to attain their maximum academic potential, regardless of starting point. We believe that by taking this approach, and designing programmes aimed to address the inequalities experienced by our most under-represented groups, we will deliver enhancements which result in improved outcomes for all.

We recognise that, in addition to the structural and cultural factors we must address within in the University, there are structural and cultural factors in our communities and region which also impact upon our outcomes. Importantly therefore, we will adopt a whole-system, multi-agency approach across all our programmes, harnessing the expertise and knowledge of key local partners to assist us to have maximum impact and achieve our strategic aims and objectives. The importance of taking an evidence-based, multi-agency, whole-institution approach to addressing attainment gaps for all groups is evidenced by the work of UUK's Social Mobility Advisory Group<sup>19</sup>. We have committed to implementing the institutional-level recommendations set out within this report. In support of our whole system approach, we have also committed at institutional level to a number of pledges aimed to support inclusivity. These include the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student (BAME) Attainment Pledge; the Social Mobility Pledge; the Care Leavers Pledge; and The Students Estranged from their Families Pledge. We believe that the five pillars of activity identified within the BAME Student Attainment Pledge<sup>20</sup> can be applied more broadly across all our Access and Participation work. These pillars will therefore situate a range of programmes designed to address specific factors that currently lead to differential experiences, outcomes and opportunities for our students. We have situated our strategic measures within the Leadership; Dialogue and Inclusive Environments pillars, our approach to evaluation within the Understanding What Works pillar, and our approach to monitoring within the Data pillar.

Alignment with other strategies: As stated, our commitment to equality and diversity, inclusion and social mobility is placed at the heart of the University strategies, and therefore aligns fully with this plan. Our vision is to '*build on our heritage and areas of strength to be a world leader in the dissemination of knowledge by teaching students from all backgrounds*'. Equality and Diversity is identified as a strategic objective within our strategy, which states '*we will continue to recruit and retain students and staff from all regions and countries, irrespective of background or characteristics, guided by the principle that those people have the ability to succeed at the University of Bradford*'. Our newly appointed Vice-Chancellor has signalled that social mobility will continue to form a key component of a refreshed University strategy<sup>21</sup> which is currently in preparation and is expected to be approved and implemented in 2019/20. Equality and diversity is also positioned as one of the University's five University values<sup>22</sup>. Our University Vision and Strategy is underpinned by a series of supporting strategies (Academic Strategy, Learning and Teaching Strategy, People Strategy, Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy, Finance Strategy)

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<sup>18</sup> Raffo C, Dyson A, Gunter H, Hall D, Jones L and Kalambouka A (2007) *Education and poverty: A critical review of theory, policy and practice*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

<sup>19</sup> UUK, 2016, 'Working in partnership: Enabling social mobility in higher education', available at <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2016/working-in-partnership-final.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> UUK/NUS, 2019, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #closingthegap, available at <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Available at <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/opinion/columnists/bradford-university-s-new-vice-chancellor-on-how-family-tragedy-shaped-her-career-1-9925185>

<sup>22</sup> Available at <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/about/strategy-vision/university-strategy/>

and our strategic measures are designed to support the aspirations we have set out within these. Our Academic Strategy articulates our commitment to social mobility and our long term aspiration to eradicate attainment gaps and sets out a series of high level programmes of work which provide a framework for the strategic measures identified in our APP. This includes strong collaboration with local agencies to enhance access and attainment, a commitment to extending active and collaborative learning, improving assessment and feedback, and significant development of the academic workforce. These programmes of work are addressed in more detail in our Learning and Teaching Strategy, which sets out a more detailed framework for comprehensive enhancement and oversight of all areas of University activity that impact on learning, teaching and assessment. The strategy includes specific emphasis on several of the actions within our APP for 2020 – 2025 including but not limited to access and opportunity, collaborative learning, assessment and feedback and employability, where all programmes are to include work-based/placement learning. The strategy seeks to develop greater academic engagement in pedagogical research that informs enhancements in our practice and strengthens programme governance to ensure that our students have a voice throughout all levels of University governance. Technology Enhanced Learning is enabled through the strategic investments in facilities for example state of the art Wi-Fi, lecture capture, e-portfolio, and electronic assessment. At the time of writing, we are developing a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which will fully align with this APP and work on this strategy has been undertaken in parallel with the development of this plan. The new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy is currently under development, and will be approved during the first half of the 2019/20 academic year. Implementation will commence immediately following approval. The strategy will cover a 5 year period, from 2020 to 2025.

Strategic measures: We have identified a series of strategic measures to support the delivery of our aims and objectives. All are based on evidence and insight from research undertaken within the University or elsewhere in the sector. All are mapped to our overarching theory of change, and we have aligned them to the five pillars of the BAME Attainment Pledge.

## **Leadership**

### 'The Bradford Academic':

The Bradford Academic, a comprehensive human resource framework and staff development toolkit, will support the delivery of our strategic vision and values. The framework, due for implementation in the 2019/20 academic year, establishes the key requirements and attributes of academic staff within the University and identifies a comprehensive staff development programme to accompany this. Clear career gateways reinforce the value placed upon excellent teaching, research, student support, and engagement in projects to enhance student experience and success. To support our APP aims and objectives, we will embed the expectation of a deep and nuanced understanding of issues related to equality and diversity, inclusion and social mobility within 'The Bradford Academic'<sup>23</sup>. To support the achievement of our APP work, we will embed within this programme a series of development and training interventions in cultural competence, supporting staff to develop an enhanced understanding of equality and diversity issues, including but not limited to: understanding micro-aggression, white privilege, unconscious bias, having conversations about race, in addition to understanding and supporting students with mental health disabilities, collaborative learning methodologies and inclusive assessment methods. Our theory

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<sup>23</sup> Berry, B., & Loke, G. (2011) Improving the degree attainment of Black and minority ethnic students. London, England: Higher Education Academy/Equality Challenge Unit.

of change for this strategic measure is that by ensuring that staff are developed to understand the barriers to student success, the impact of current teaching, learning and assessment practices, and to appreciate the steps they can take to enhance every student's experience they will be enabled to provide students with the confidence that their performance matters, which will result in increased student attainment. This strategic measure will therefore contribute to **eradicating the attainment gap for students from low participation, household income or economic status backgrounds, BAME students and students with mental health disabilities.**

### Role Models Programme:

Drawing on the extensive literature on the positive impact which role models can have on student outcomes, we will seek to embed role models across all of our access and participation work. We will seek to include role models at all stages of the student lifecycle, for all groups of under-represented students and from within our staff community, student body, alumni and broader networks. This work will have two aspects:

- **Role Models for Access:** This will include engagement with employers and partners from the local and wider communities, students and employers to engage and inspire children from primary school throughout their learner journey. Here, our theory of change is that by seeing other WWCM males, care leavers and refugees who have gone on to HE and excelled, WWCM primary school children will be inspired so that they strive to attain the GCSEs they need to continue on their educational journey to reach HE, thereby supporting a significant **increase in the numbers of WWCM, care leavers and refugees joining the University.**
- **Role Models for Success and Progression:** We will seek to develop a sustainable pipeline of diversity within our workforce, through inspiring students with the ambition to become academics of the future; encouraging staff and students to talent spot potential academics within professional practice; and aligning our HR approach to promote diversity in the full employment cycle, through attraction, recruitment, progression and retention. Here, our theory of change is that by increasing the diversity of our staff we will create a more vibrant community for engagement in wider discourse and understanding around diversity<sup>24</sup>. Staff from diverse backgrounds will provide students with role models who understand their own individual circumstances and background, providing them with the confidence that they too can aspire to achieve, therefore contributing to **eradicating the BAME attainment and progression gaps.**

## **Dialogue**

### Learning Partnerships:

We will establish an over-arching Learning Partnerships approach to dialogue with our student body to understand their experiences in the context of our APP and to directly impact upon student continuation and attainment. Research undertaken at the University of Bradford<sup>25</sup> has informed the development of a 'Learning Partnerships' approach to mentoring, which challenges traditional

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<sup>24</sup> Eddo-Lodge, R. (2017) *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*: London. Bloomsbury

<sup>25</sup> The Cultural Understanding in Learning and Management (CULM) Project (Archibong, U; Burford, B (2006) *Embedding Cultural Understanding in Leadership and Management*. *International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities & Nations*. Vol. 6 Issue 3, p1-8) aimed at enhancing the diversity competence of leaders and managers and at fostering inclusive leadership. The CULM approach brought together middle to senior leaders/managers within the University with diverse staff to offer personal 'mutual' learning opportunities to learn from a partner's experience, help with problem solving and change management, increase confidence through support and guidance, challenging existing ideas and fostering an understanding of what the partner is 'experiencing'.

approaches<sup>26</sup>. Through Learning Partnerships, both parties mutually learn from and with each other. We will use this model to bring together teams of core teaching and support staff with students from a diverse range of backgrounds to understand and learn from each other in pursuit of an inclusive learning environment. The aim will be to enhance staff understanding of the lived experiences of students from different backgrounds, and how their teaching/student support practice impacts upon students. The reciprocal learning insights derived from Learning Partnerships will then be used to identify and implement real, discernible changes in University practice. This work will underpin all the other strategic measures identified within this APP. We will roll this work out in phases, commencing with Programme Leaders, and then extending to Module Leaders and then other teaching staff and support staff involved in group or individual student support. In each phase, participants will be teamed with students for a 3-6 month period, during which at least four partnership meetings and three learning circles will take place. We will then use the outputs of the work to inform our other strategic measures, for example to co-create the design of the staff development and training programme described below. In addition to informing the strategic measures set out within this plan, the learning partnerships will also generate a series of lower-level, short term actions which will also have positive impact. Our learning partnerships theory of change, based on narrative and empirical evidence from the CULM project, is that the development of Learning Partnerships will foster an enhanced sense of the lived experiences of students from a diverse range of backgrounds among staff with key responsibilities for delivering and supporting learning and teaching. It will facilitate conversations to inform tangible changes to curricula and processes which will contribute to **improving the success (continuation) and eradicating attainment gaps for all students.**

#### Collaborative Outreach:

We will continue our collaborative outreach working with Go Higher West Yorkshire, NCOP and the Industrial Centres of Excellence established by the Bradford Metropolitan District Council local authority to raise aspiration and attainment in local schools and colleges. Our work will include:

- Working within the Bradford Partnership to deliver targeted outreach activity to pupils;
- Acting as a key partner of 'Bradford Pathways', an aspiration-raising model led by the LA to embed the education, skills and employment infrastructure in the Bradford District, enabling individuals to be prepared for changing business and economic needs;
- Continued commitment to the 'Go Higher West Yorkshire' partnership, which acts as a single point of contact for information on our HE provider partners, improving access to, and achievement in, HE to enhance individual and economic development;
- Involvement in the Go Higher West Yorkshire NCOP, employing a dedicated staff member to undertake targeted interventions with applicants from low participation neighbourhoods, and develop community links with key stakeholders and influencers from target wards;
- Delivering a diverse range of activities and HE workshops in schools and colleges in low-participation neighbourhoods;
- Introduction of a targeted programme of interventions for those students from low-participation neighbourhoods who are the first in their family to access university;
- Operating a STEM (Science, Technology, Education and Mathematics) Centre delivered from our Faculty of Life Sciences, which works in partnership across the district to raise attainment and aspiration in STEM subjects;

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<sup>26</sup> Traditional mentoring suggests a hierarchical relationship in which the mentor is more experienced than the mentee and, importantly, one in which the mentor has or can provide knowledge and skills that the mentee wants or needs. In this context, mentoring is a unidimensional relationship with the mentees working towards specific professional and personal norms for the mentor.

- Collaborating with our LA and local FE to support Industrial Centres of Excellence which support young people to gain qualifications, skills and experience planned around the requirements of local businesses;
- Continuing our contextual admissions scheme designed to benefit undergraduate applicants whose personal and educational circumstances mean they could be less likely to receive an offer based on our standard entry criteria.

Our theory of change is that working in partnership with key agencies including the LA, schools FE and local employers to support WWCM to make pre-16 choices which include HE we will support WWCM to see HE as a viable progression route, as evidenced by research undertaken by the Southern Universities Network<sup>27</sup>, and will thereby **increase the numbers of WWCM we recruit.**

### **Inclusive Environments**

#### De-Colonising the Curriculum:

Based on work undertaken in SOAS, University of London<sup>28</sup>, we will revise our Curriculum Framework to generate an approach to decolonising the curriculum. This will include development of curricula that deconstruct long-held biases of colonial supremacy and ensuring that staff consider the implications of our student body in terms of pedagogy and achievement. We will ensure that students from diverse backgrounds can identify role models eminent within their field, regardless of background, and learn from diverse case studies. We see the refresh of the curriculum as a long-term project which will start to impact towards the second half of the APP implementation period. Therefore, alongside review and revision of our Curriculum Framework, we will undertake a comprehensive review of all programme reading lists to ensure that they draw on culturally-diverse sources, to create short term gains for this strategic measure. Our theory of change, based on growing evidence of its fundamental importance to students<sup>29</sup>, is that more culturally diverse discourse, including reading lists and learning materials will enhance students' sense of belonging and increase their belief in the underlying principles informing their curricula. There is multifold evidence that an enhanced sense of belonging leads to increased engagement and confidence, which in turn leads to increased attainment. This strategic measure will thereby contribute to **eradicating the BAME attainment gap.**

#### Active and Collaborative Learning:

We will continue with the aspiration set out in our Academic and Learning and Teaching Strategies to extend the principles and methods of active and collaborative learning within all of our programmes of study. Research undertaken at the University<sup>30</sup> has identified that outcomes for students of all backgrounds are improved, and attainment gaps are narrowed, for modules which are taught and assessed through active and collaborative learning principles. Our research supported the introduction of student-centred inclusive-practice teaching interventions into a range of modules across three HE institutions to identify the extent to which this could reduce differential outcomes between student groups. Project evaluation indicates that, while all students have

<sup>27</sup> Gagnon, J, 2017, White Working Class Males in British Higher Education: pre and post entry perspectives, Southern Universities Network, available at <https://www.sunoutreach.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ReportWhiteBritishWorkingClassmaleresearch5March-2.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> SOAS, University of London: Decolonising SOAS. Available at: <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/decolonisingsoas/about/>

<sup>29</sup> Shay, S (2016) Decolonising the curriculum: It's time for a strategy. Available from: <http://theconversation.com/decolonising-the-curriculum-its-time-for-a-strategy-60598>

<sup>30</sup> The HEFCE Catalyst funded project Scaling-Up Active Collaborative Learning for Student Success (SACLSS), Available from: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/addressing-barriers-to-student-success-programme/nottingham-trent-university/>

benefited from the move to a curriculum delivered using active and collaborative learning, groups for whom there are attainment gaps have shown significant, positive impact on academic progression and attainment. We believe, based on the evidence from our Catalyst project, that introducing more active and collaborative learning methods, will achieve increased student engagement and students taking deeper approaches to learning, which in turn will lead to increased attainment, thereby contributing to **eradicating the attainment gap for students from low participation, household income or economic status backgrounds, BAME students and students with mental health disabilities.**

#### Assessment and Feedback Programme:

We will develop an assessment framework with associated staff development programme, which will include:

- Criteria for successful assignment briefs and development, training and support for academics to produce clear, high quality assignment briefs;
- Guidance for students to demystify the expectations and provide clear discussion opportunities;
- Establishment of an expectation that academic staff routinely ensure that students feel safe and able to ask questions in relation to assessment;
- Inclusion of assessment literacy in induction to ensure that students clearly understand expectations from first year of study;
- Embedding the principles of the Fair Access charter we have co-created with our students across all programmes;
- Introduction of assessment choice for inclusivity where possible.

Here, our first theory of change is that by making expectations clearer, students will be more confident in their approach to assessment, resulting in them increasingly focusing on demonstrating their learning, and thereby increasing attainment. This strategic measure will therefore contribute to **eradicating the attainment gap for all students.**

Our second theory of change is that by introducing optionality of assessment methodology where possible, students will feel in control of the assessment process, reducing anxiety and therefore increasing their confidence in assessment and providing a deeper approach to learning<sup>31</sup> which will lead to increased attainment. This strategic measure will therefore contribute to **eradicating the attainment gap for students with mental health disabilities.**

#### Graduate Workforce Bradford:

We are proud to have been awarded OfS Challenge Competition funding to support this project, specifically designed to improve progression outcomes for BAME students. We recognise the critical role of employers in improving social mobility through inclusive approaches to graduate employment<sup>32</sup>. The project will address both the un- and under- employment of BAME graduates within the region and the recruitment, skills gaps and diversity challenges of priority sectors of the region's labour market. The project utilises action research methodology to test and modify an innovative, inclusive and sustainable approach to graduate employability and employment, building

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<sup>31</sup> Long, P (2008) Does having a choice in the form of assessment help to promote deep learning amongst students? York: Higher Education Academy

<sup>32</sup> UUK, 2016, 'Working in partnership: Enabling social mobility in higher education', available at <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2016/working-in-partnership-final.pdf>

a model to unite the University, industry, community organisations and local government on this key imperative, and prioritising the societal responsibilities of the University to grow the knowledge economy through its graduates, research and innovation. The project brings together multi-disciplinary viewpoints to work collaboratively, acting on shared values to drive innovative practice that benefits Bradford graduates/students and partners through the delivery of four inter-connected work streams which will:

- Support businesses to embed graduate recruitment into their workforce planning;
- Provide career and enterprise coaching to un- and under-employed BAME graduates;
- Run a series of events through which real and perceived barriers to progression to highly skilled employment can be discussed and innovative and creative solutions identified and tested;
- Apply action research methodology to develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of the impact of place and culture on decision-making in BAME student and graduate career choices.

There is some intersectionality of graduates from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 with ethnicity and gender, however this does not fully cover this group. We will therefore undertake a parallel stream of activity to specifically target graduates from IMD quintile 1 who are not otherwise covered through this project. This additional work will not form part of the formal OfS project, but will be monitored through the same mechanisms. We will also undertake additional analysis of data relating to students within the formal project and provide additional support to BME and Asian female students who fall within IMD quintiles 1 and 2.

Our theory of change, based on evidence from UUK<sup>33</sup>, is that by working in partnership with key employers to address structural barriers, and providing community support to address cultural issues in the region, while at the same time supporting graduates to develop their individual employability skills, we will support graduates to progress into employment or further study, thereby contributing to **significantly reducing the progression gaps for BAME, Asian female and students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds.**

#### Transition:

Over the duration of the 2020/21 – 2024/25 APP, we will continue our work to extend our transition offer to all students, recognising the important role that a well-designed transition programme can plan in supporting student success<sup>34</sup>. Our theory of change is that by providing transition support, students will feel confident to commence HE, which will lead to an increased sense of belonging<sup>35</sup> from the start of the University journey, and therefore to increased continuation and attainment<sup>36</sup>. We will include preventative work relating to mental health within our transition activity and ensure that needs of all disadvantaged students are specifically addressed. This strategic measure will therefore contribute to **eradicating the attainment gap for** students from low HE participation, household income or socio-economic status backgrounds, BAME students and students with mental health disabilities.

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<sup>33</sup> As above.

<sup>34</sup> Tangney, S, Sutcliffe, M and Matheson, R 2018 Transition In, Through and Out of Higher Education, Routledge

<sup>35</sup> HEA, 2012, 'Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change', available at [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/what\\_works\\_summary\\_report\\_0.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/what_works_summary_report_0.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> As above

### Wellbeing College:

We will broaden our work with the Bradford District Care Foundation NHS Trust (BDCFT) to extend their successful Wellbeing College model to our students. The Wellbeing College is an ‘improving access to psychological therapy’ (IAPT) service delivered in the Bradford region, offering a wide range of learning opportunities in mental health and wellbeing. The approach provides targeted interventions aimed at preventing mental health issues from escalating. In 2017/18, 10,700 people participated in the Wellbeing College, with a 50% recovery rate<sup>37</sup>. Through the Wellbeing College model, we will offer a suite of targeted wellbeing interventions which students can access on a self-referral basis during the academic year (e.g. understanding symptoms of stress, suicide awareness, employability and mental health, substance misuse and mental health) and will embed the Wellbeing College within the wider offering of the University’s own Mental Health Services and Counselling Services. Within the Wellbeing College model, we will build on recent research that has demonstrated that preventative measures are the most successful in supporting students with mental health disabilities to succeed in HE<sup>38</sup>, we will extend preventative wellbeing workshops, being piloted in 2019/20 to all new students from 2020/21, with a view to extending the offer to continuing and graduating students over the longer term of this APP. The workshops will be developed in partnership with our local NHS mental health trust, and will focus on providing the tools and techniques support individual students to better manage the everyday ups and downs of study, e.g. feeling low or depressed, having problems sleeping, feeling anxious, experiencing stress at work or at home or struggling with a change in circumstances. Our theory of change, based upon the empirical evidence from BDCFT Wellbeing College outcomes, is that access to Wellbeing College support interventions will reduce the likelihood of mental health issues developing, and that this in turn will support increased engagement with study, resulting in increased attainment for students with mental health disabilities. This strategic measure will therefore contribute to **eradicating the attainment gap for students with mental health disabilities**.

### Peer Mentoring for Wellbeing:

We are planning to extend the peer mentoring approach we have established through our HEFCE Catalyst-funded project to support Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student mental health – PGR Connect – across the taught student population from September 2020. The project has run during 2018/19, establishing peer support groups based around the Peer Assisted Learning model to support PGR students to own their own wellbeing and support each other. Following a successful first year, we will be enhancing the model through a second year of delivery in 2019/20, with a view to extending it to the wider student body from 2020/21. To support the evaluation of wellbeing outcomes, we are embedding the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale within our pre- and re-enrolment portals, enabling us to measure the wellbeing of students on an annual basis, and to determine whether interventions are having positive impact<sup>39</sup>. Our theory of change, based upon the empirical evidence from the PGR Connect project, is that increased peer support will reduce the likelihood of mental health issues developing and increase a sense of belonging, and that this in turn will support increased engagement with study (as evidenced by recent research published in *Lancet Psychiatry*<sup>40</sup>), resulting in enhanced attainment for students with mental health

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37 Data provided by Bradford District Care Foundation NHS Trust.

38 <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/08/prevention-the-new-holy-grail-of-treating-mental-illness#img-2>

39 <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/>

40 See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/08/prevention-the-new-holy-grail-of-treating-mental-illness>

disabilities. This strategic measure will therefore contribute to **eradicating the attainment gap for students with mental health disabilities.**

#### Care Leavers Package:

We are proud to have been chosen as a pilot organisation for the development of a quality mark for the support of care leavers<sup>41</sup>. Through involvement in the quality mark pilot, we will establish a renewed care leaver's package, incorporating elements of support identified by sector research<sup>42</sup> as effective in raising aspiration and supporting care leavers within HE. This work has already begun, with the new package being piloted and further developed in 2019/20 to ensure it is established as we commence delivery of plan. Work in this area includes:

- Outreach to raise aspiration and pre-entry support (including provision of role models)
- Application support
- Induction and pre-enrolment support
- Articulation of a clear definition for 'care leaver' which is widely understood across the University, and which incorporates all 'care experienced' students.
- Embedding additional data collection in our Pre-Enrolment Portal to ensure that all care experienced students (who choose to disclose) are identified and offered the support available to them. This has already been actioned and will support a clearer understanding of our data to facilitate meaningful analysis of success and progression rates.
- Development of clear, tailored support for care leavers on programme, including named care leaver contacts, enhanced support service offer, targeted financial support
- Articulation of clear, tailored employability support for care leavers
- Annual monitoring of care leaver outcomes (continuation, attainment and progression) with further action being introduced should any statistically significant gaps be identified.

Our theory of change is that by implementing the seven activities identified in 'The Caring University' report<sup>43</sup>, care leavers will feel inspired and supported to enter higher education and confident of the support that will be available to them, thereby **increasing the numbers of care leavers who enter HE and that they will be supported to continue, attain good outcomes and progression to graduate employment, thereby ensuring that no significant success or progression gaps develop.**

#### University of Sanctuary:

We will continue our University of Sanctuary work to embed best practice in raising aspiration among refugees and asylum seekers.

#### Financial Support:

To sustain our current strong performance on access, as well as providing targeted focus on the groups identified in section 2, we will continue to offer financial support to students from the most under-represented groups. Details on the eligibility criteria, and levels of financial support we will offer to students from under-represented groups are provided in section 4 of this APP.

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<sup>41</sup> Development of the quality mark is being undertaken by the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL);

<sup>42</sup> NNECL, 2013, Supporting Care Leavers in Higher Education, available at <https://www.nnecl.org/resources/nnecl-supporting-care-leavers-in?topic=guides-and-toolkits>;

<sup>43</sup> Rawson, A, 2016, 'The Caring University in 2016: Practice, partnership and strategy with the care experienced student (Action on Access post-Buttle) available at <https://www.nnecl.org/resources/the-caring-university-in-2016-pr?topic=guides-and-toolkits>;

We recognise the importance and impact that financial support has in enabling students who experience financial hardship to continue with their studies. Our support package is targeted towards our priority groups, though any student in crisis will receive support. Given the high proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds we recognise that financial difficulties can be a barrier to success and have well-established mechanisms to support students in financial crisis. We provide financial support to continuing students who experience financial hardship or crisis through our Student Life Service, through which we can provide support as follows:

- Award of grants and interest-free loans;
- Operation of an emergency food store for students in hardship and their families;
- Provision of an holistic approach which ensures that emergency financial support is accompanied by longer-term interventions and initiatives, including support to find paid work, assistance with applying for and receiving benefits, interventions with landlords, assistance and support with budgeting and travel planning, and broader support on financial awareness.

Survey data from our students about their preferences for financial support has identified that the students considered that hardship and crisis funding had a positive impact in terms of supporting students in financial hardship to stay on their programme of study.

Finally, we are committed to ensuring that students with disabilities are not financially disadvantaged as a result of their disability. This includes financial support for the purchase of IT equipment for students with disabilities on a means-tested basis and to supporting all students to access screening for Specific Learning Differences at enrolment, and funding the cost of the Educational Psychologist assessment to ensure that this is not a barrier to any student.

### **3.2 Student consultation**

As a University committed to working in partnership with our students we have devised this APP in partnership with students: input from students has comprised the following:

#### Formal Consultation:

Two of our four Sabbatical Officers are members of our APP working group and have co-created our APP with us. Our Sabbatical Officers and student representatives have also had opportunity to comment on this plan formally through their membership of our Learning and Teaching Committee, Senate and Council. Feedback received from students through these forums has been positive: students agreed with the overall strategic objectives and confirmed that the strategic measures identified addressed the ideas raised by students through the listening events described below. Measures directly arising from student feedback and co-created with students include the Care-Leavers package, Role Models Work, Decolonising the Curriculum and staff training initiatives.

#### Listening Events:

We have used the outputs of student listening events to understand the lived experiences of our students, and the measures they feel are important to improve inclusivity within the University. We have co-created the strategic measures identified in our APP through these exercises. These listening events have included:

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment Gap Listening Event: this event provided a round table discussion forum in which first students and then staff discussed their views and

concerns relating to the BAME Attainment Gap. Students identified the barriers they saw to attainment, which included the need for understanding of student cultures, the need for BAME role models; the need for cultural diversity in the curriculum; and staff training to understand and break down cultural clichés and avoid unintended micro-aggressions.

- Disabled Students Feedback Fest: this annual event provides an opportunity for disabled students to provide direct feedback on their experiences. Students identified the need for consistent implementation of Learner Support Profiles; the need for a consistent approach to Extenuating Circumstances for students with disabilities and the impact that this can have on students with mental health disabilities; the need for quiet spaces; and the placement experience as key issues for action.
- Care Leavers Conference: Current students who are care experienced organised and delivered a conference on their experiences and the challenges they face within the University. This has led to an open dialogue between care experienced students and the University which has highlighted the need to deliver more consistently on commitments made to care leavers.
- Vice-Chancellor Elect Listening Events: The Vice-Chancellor Elect hosted general listening events with students to inform strategic priorities.

### Survey Feedback:

We have analysed the open comments from student surveys, including the NSS, Bradford Student Survey (BSS, which is provided to all undergraduate students who are not partaking in the BSS), PTES, PRES, UKES and the International Student Barometer, which are all undertaken annually at the University.

### **3.3 Evaluation strategy**

We have undertaken a self-assessment of our approach to the evaluation of A&P initiatives, which has demonstrated that although we have strengths in programme design, many of our access and participation interventions have relied on narrative evaluation approaches. We have therefore developed an evaluation strategy built on quantitative and qualitative evaluation derived from empirical enquiry, and aligned to the 'Understanding What Works' pillar of the BAME Attainment pledge, in response to our self-assessment. We have also drawn heavily on models of good practice developed within our Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, which undertakes international research into equality, diversity and inclusion issues. The implementation of the APP will involve the development of two overlapping and interlinked processes at the micro-Faculty/Directorate level and at the macro-Institutional level. The implementation of the plan will utilise the Bradford Action Research Cycle and Process (BARCP), adapted from the GENOVATE project<sup>44</sup>, which will constitute 5 overlapping stages: map actions; take actions; evaluate/reflect; specify learning; and review and refine actions. BARCP will guide the overall delivery and implementation of all strategic measures at both micro and macro levels, to produce both action outcomes and research outcomes. Implementation activities will help to embed the strategic measures identified in this plan into institutional structures and organisational cultures. BARCP will remain cyclic, participative, qualitative, reflective, responsive and emergent throughout the project. It will respond effectively to the emerging needs of all stakeholders based on their contexts. BARCP provides an ongoing evaluation process involving both formative and summative assessments at different levels of implementation, fulfilling the functions of (a) improvement - informing learning from practice and improving APP implementation, (b) accountability - towards the Executive Board and

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<sup>44</sup> GENOVATE (2016). The GENOVATE Model for Gender Equality in Transforming Research and Innovation. GENOVATE. Available at: <http://www.genovate.eu/resources/genovatemodelforgenderequalityintransformingresearchandinnovation/>

Council - and (c) enlightenment - supporting sustainability and learning beyond the implementation period and for contributing to the transformation of organisational cultures towards academic outcomes and opportunity equality for our students. The evaluation will provide opportunities to foresee what else can and should be done in this realm beyond the defined APP implementation period. The evaluation will contribute to two different, but complementary, purposes – to facilitate the decision-making processes within and beyond the APP implementation period and to facilitate organisational learning and transformation of institutional culture towards equality for all students. This means that the evaluation will be embedded and integrated into the whole program cycle, and will use participatory, empowerment, learning and capacity-building tools. This integrated evaluative approach will require the participation of all those responsible for the implementation of the APP; not only for facilitating the systematic information-gathering needed for the evaluation accomplishment, but for the generation and analysis of specific data at all levels of the program and the development of recommendations as well as ensuring dialectic of feedback and learning throughout the project for all participants. Therefore, evaluation capacity-building will take place throughout the process.

We will evaluate our financial support through use of the OfS financial support evaluation tool, qualitative feedback from students and quantitative data analysis. We are currently working on enhancing our data collection to enable us to undertake more robust quantitative analysis relating to access and success for students benefitting from our annual support. We will undertake annual evaluation of the impact of our financial support.

#### Evaluation Timeline:

We will commence our evaluation work immediately, establishing evaluation guidelines and training for relevant staff in the first six months of the delivery of the plan. Regular bespoke workshops will be held during the delivery of the plan to support staff in undertaking evaluation work. BARCP is by design intended to be a continuous cycle of evaluation activity and will therefore be undertaken throughout all stages of APP delivery: formal evaluation cycles will be undertaken at the micro-level in months 12, 36 and 60 and at the macro-level in months 24, 48 and 72. Evaluation activity will be overseen by the APP working group to ensure evaluation is delivered to schedule and informs planning and delivery for future APP work.

#### Methods of Evaluation, Reflection and Sustainability of APP activity

A range of tools will be utilised to monitor and assess milestones including virtual feedback tools, e.g. eportfolios for recording personal learning and activity, and GENOVATE guidelines for on-going evaluation of equality programme implementation with quality criteria<sup>45</sup>. As outlined in section 3.4 below, our evaluation work will be formally reported to our major deliberative committees. The evaluation will provide ongoing knowledge that allows us to learn and make mid-programme adjustments, as well as an overall assessment of success. The evaluation will be iterative providing a balance between process and outcome, allowing a combination of uniform outcome measures across the programme as well as initiative specific outcome measures. Utilising a mixed-method approach (combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques), the evaluation aims to produce a richer, credible, nuanced, contextual and more comprehensive understanding of each programme's accomplishments, learning and impact.

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<sup>45</sup> GENOVATE (2016) Evaluating Gender Structural Change: Guidelines for Evaluating gender Equality Action Plans. GENOVATE available at: <http://www.genovate.eu/resources/guidelines-evaluating-geaps/>

### **3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan**

Biannually, APP progress reports will be presented through the University's governance committee structure to Executive Board, LTC, Senate and Council, to ensure that the supreme decision-making bodies of the University have overview of our performance, endorse actions taken and challenge progress made. These reports will provide quantitative data on progress as well as qualitative narrative. On a more regular basis, the University Student Experience and Retention Board will review our Access and Participation Action Plan on a quarterly basis, our Access and Participation Working Group will meet monthly and we will establish specific University-wide APP review events biannually. The University has invested in a new BI tool which facilitates embedding of monitoring at all levels of the University, from institutional governance structures to programme level activities. In line with our overall theory of change, we are taking a whole-systems approach to monitoring, ensuring that all aspects of learning, teaching and student support delivery consider APP impact and data within real-time, and that staff delivering are empowered to act on the outcomes of monitoring, eliminating the time lags which can be caused by an over-reliance on formal, senior decision-making. As part of our whole-systems approach, we will also include consideration of our APP work in our established review mechanisms to ensure access and participation becomes embedded within our business as usual – this will include module evaluation, annual and periodic programme review, staff PDRs. Where deliverables are based on data which is only available annually we will develop proxy measures to ensure that progress is monitored regularly so that action can be taken swiftly should outcomes not be as expected. For example, we will monitor monthly withdrawal rates as a proxy measure for continuation, and module performance outcomes each semester as a proxy for attainment. We will provide programme level data dashboards to programme teams, aligning with the data pillar of the BAME attainment pledge. Should we identify that gaps are worsening we will review our activity to identify new or amended action to address this. Staff will be empowered to react in real time to adjust interventions in-delivery, while more strategic decisions for additional or modified interventions will be made through our APP working group and endorsed through our formal committee structure. Students will be involved in monitoring of the plan through a variety of mechanisms. Firstly, this will take place through their formal involvement in committees and meetings at both University level (Senate, Council, Learning and Teaching Committee) and at programme level (Student Liaison Committees, Programme Review Meetings and Faculty-level committees). We will continue to have student membership of our APP implementation group. Each of our strategic measures will involve students in co-creation, taking action and specific monitoring (e.g. through project boards and working groups). We will also continue to run specific focus groups and interventions to seek input and views from students on specific areas of our APP work (e.g. our Disabled Students Feedback Fest, BAME Listening Events, Care Leavers events).

## **4. Provision of information to students**

We provide prospective and current students with information on the financial support available to them (from any source): through our website and intranet; in our printed mini-guide prospectus; at Open Days and Applicant Visit Days; through our Student Handbook; through our Student Life Service; and through our Students' Union.

We give prospective students information on the fees for the duration of their course: through our website; in the offer letter; at Open Days and Applicant Visit Days; through our online pre-enrolment portal; through our Student Contract and associated Important Information - this is available to prospective students from the point of researching HE opportunities, and is formally provided to all applicants when an offer of a place is made. Students formally accept the terms and

conditions of the contract when they accept the offer of a place, and re-confirm their acceptance at enrolment in each academic year of their studies.

We publicise this APP to current and prospective students by: including the APP within the Important Information associated with our Student Contract (available to prospective students as described above); through our website; through our Students' Union; in our Student Handbook. The following financial support available to students through our APP is set out on our website:

- Undergraduate Bursary Scheme. Payment of £500 in Y1, £600 in Y2 and £700 in Y3. Eligibility criteria: new Home/EU students commencing in 2020/21 and studying full time, paying a full programme fee of £9,250 per annum, with family income of under £30,000 as assessed by the relevant student finance service. Students must be fully engaging with their programme (i.e. attending lecturers, handing in coursework and sitting examinations).
- UK Academic Excellence Scholarship. £1,000 per annum, up to a maximum of £3,000. Eligibility criteria: Home students achieving AAA or higher in their A Levels or equivalent (from three Level 3 qualifications only. Foundation years are not considered as part of this scholarship. A list of qualifications and their equivalencies is available online), who are from a low participation area as defined by POLAR areas 1 and 2, domiciled in the UK and who do not already hold a degree level qualification.
- Sanctuary Scholarships: Tuition fee grant (i.e. no fees are charged) until such time as the student is awarded a status that entitles them to access to student finance; £500 per year travel and course costs grant; and pastoral support. Eligibility criteria: students must be an asylum seeker or the partner/dependent of an asylum seeker OR an asylum seeker/refugee/partner/dependant who has been granted Discretionary Leave to Remain or some other temporary status OR a refugee who is unable to access student finance due to previous study AND have a conditional or unconditional offer from the University for a 2020 start; be currently attending a school, college, community or voluntary group who can provide a reference; be unable to access mainstream funding e.g. student finance or a local authority grant (other than those classed as care leavers who can apply); live within the Bradford Metropolitan District Council Area or within a commutable distance and able to cover travel costs or able to relocate to Bradford without requiring extra financial support; and who do not require support for living expenses or accommodation. This is a competitive award: applicants are required to complete an application and shortlisted applicants will be interviewed.
- Care Leavers Grant. Cash payment of £1,000 per year. Eligibility criteria: students must have been in the care of a local authority as a child and have household income of under £30,000.