

# **Riverside College (10002863)**

## **Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29**

### **Introduction and strategic aim**

Riverside College is a medium-sized general further education college located in Halton. The College serves the towns of Widnes and Runcorn which have a combined population of 128,964 (2022) as well as attracting learners from outside of the borough, including within the Liverpool City Region.

Riverside College's commitment to widening participation is underpinned by its vision which is, "through the excellence of the education we provide, we will enhance and transform lives." This agreement seeks to build on the College's experience, success, and reputation to ensure that students from underrepresented groups are able to have access to an affordable and cost-effective higher education curriculum that reflects the needs of the local community, the labour market and personal aspiration.

The college has a small Higher Education provision with an average of 169 full-time students and 181 part-time students in the past four years who have chosen to study with us. The college offers courses that focus on the local needs of the area, including students and employers, with courses in Counselling, Engineering, Construction, Computer Science, Education, Health & Social Care, Sport, Media Makeup and Teacher Education. The largest curriculum area at Riverside College is Counselling with 43% of students at the college studying one of four courses in the area in 2023/24. The college offers Foundation Degrees and one-year top-up bachelor's degrees in franchised partnership with Staffordshire University. The college also delivers Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND). The college delivers courses in formats that meet the needs of students including full-time and part-time courses and the provision of evening classes in Counselling. Riverside College, alongside partners, work to keep curriculum up to date and relevant to employers, including the delivery of two Higher Technical Qualifications in Computing and Construction with a third in Engineering to start in September 2024.

Equality of opportunity is promoted throughout the organisation and continues throughout its provision of Higher Education. According to the Department for Education's index of multiple deprivation, the College is located in the 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived borough and the 4<sup>th</sup> most deprived in the Liverpool City Region. 30% of Halton's populace live in high deprivation areas. Nearly 22% of Halton's population are classed as economically inactive and the number of people claiming out of work benefits is higher than the national average. Adults qualified to level 4 and above the lowest in the Liverpool City Region at 30.4%. Our strategic direction is therefore shaped by the unique and challenging context in which we operate.

Analysis of the 2023-2024 cohort at the college indicates 45% of our part and full-time Higher Education students are recruited from POLAR quintile 1, 16% from POLAR quintile 2, 14% from quintile 3, 13.5% from quintile 4 and 11.5% from POLAR quintile 5. Therefore, almost half of our students come from backgrounds of the lowest participation rates in Higher Education. Most students are consistently drawn from areas of least participation in Higher Education. 61% of our total Higher Education cohort come from quintiles 1 and 2.

Riverside College have supported the development of the Liverpool City Region Uni Connect programme, Shaping Futures. As members of the governance board, we have supported the development of a sustained programme of activity that informs and inspires learners and their key stakeholders, supporting them to make informed choices about their future.

The college has contributed to the development of the new priority for Uni Connect to raise attainment at Key Stage 3 and 4. The Partnership vision is to create an effective and sustainable collaboration between schools and higher education providers to contribute towards attainment raising activity and maximise opportunities to collaborate with external partners to support the regional education and skills agenda.

In 2023-24, the college delivered activity funded by Shaping Futures including Women in STEM which targeted raising aspirations of females to progress to higher education in a STEM area, with a focus on engineering and construction and continues to promote opportunities to develop sessions to engage these students.

Further, the college has also delivered raising aspirations for Higher Education starting with pupils from as young as Year 9 and Year 10 in the Liverpool City Region. This is done through a series of sampling and taster days which provide an insight into progression paths towards Higher Education, seeking to raise aspiration not only to our own Higher Education provision but also to wider opportunities at Level 4, 5 and 6. This commitment to raising aspiration to all Higher Education opportunities can also be seen in the delivery of the Aspire Fair which invites other HEIs and providers of other progression routes to provide information and guidance for students, and their parents, studying on Level 2 and 3 courses at the college.

To continue to support Shaping Futures' work Riverside will:

- Provide hosting support for staff working on the coordination and delivery of the Shaping Futures funded activity.
- Share relevant outreach opportunities with the Shaping Futures core team to allow them to effectively signpost activity to schools across the region.
- Host and provide on-campus resources for campus visits as part of Shaping Futures sustained programme of activity.
- Provide academic expertise and support as part of Shaping Futures subject specific attainment raising activities.
- Support Shaping Future's work with underrepresented groups by attending and actively contributing to Communities of Practice. These CoPs bring together partners from across the local region to discuss barriers facing students from underrepresented group in accessing HEZ, share best practice and, work together to develop activities and outreach initiative to support these learners as they transition from school to FE & HE. The CoPs focus on BAME learners, learners with SEND, and learners that have experienced care or are care givers.
- Support Shaping Futures aim to build stronger evidence base around 'what works' in higher education outreach by following their evaluation framework and sharing best practice at the Shaping Futures Monitoring and Evaluation facilitated working group.

## **Risks to equality of opportunity**

We have used the Access and Participation dashboard as the main source of evidence alongside internal data analysis and the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) to identify and outline the risks to equality of opportunity that the plan will address. The college acknowledges that as a small HE provider there are limitations to analysing small data sets and have often used 2-year and 4-year aggregates from the Access and Participation dashboard where data is suppressed alongside ILR (individualised learner record), individualised data, internal reporting systems, Graduate Outcomes and findings from consultations with students. Risks were identified through assessment of the student lifecycle (Annex A) including access, continuation, completion, attainment, and progression.

### **Risks to equality of opportunity identified:**

Risk 1: There are low access rates for students with minority ethnicities accessing higher education at Riverside College. While participation at the college is higher than the local Halton population, it is below the wider Liverpool City region. Evidence suggests analysis of performance relates to risks in information and guidance and perception of higher education.

Risk 2: There is a lower percentage of full-time students from the most deprived areas IMD (2019) Q1 that continue their course than students from the least deprived areas. Evidence suggests analysis of performance relates to risks in access to personal and academic support, mental health, and cost pressures.

Risk 3: There is a lower percentage of part-time (other undergraduate) students with a disability or learning difficulty that continue their course than students who do not have a disability or learning difficulty. Evidence suggests analysis of performance relates to risks in access to personal and academic support, mental health, and cost pressures.

Risk 4: There is a lower percentage of young students who attain a degree outcome of 2:1 or above than mature students. Evidence suggests analysis of performance relates to risks in knowledge and skills including impacts of coronavirus, access to academic and personal support and cost pressures.

Risk 5: There is a lower percentage of full-time young students who progress into highly skilled employment or postgraduate study than sector average. Evidence suggests analysis of performance relates to risks in knowledge and skills including impacts of coronavirus, access to academic and personal support and cost pressures.

### **Other Identified Risks**

When completing analysis of data, there were further groups of students with potential risk of opportunity; however, as a small HE provider, additional risks for these groups have not been created with these groups monitored and reviewed alongside the impact from the interventions planned where most change is expected.

Access: Access for part-time students with a disability and learning difficulty was considered as a potential risk; however internal admissions data has shown an increase

for this student population and will be continued to monitor that progress for these students continues with existing practices in place.

Continuation: When analysing data, the college has identified gaps for students from TUNDRA Q1 and students eligible for free school meals, however gaps for deprivation (IMD) are larger with activities planned to reduce this impact expected to also impact on other underrepresented groups which will continue to be monitored, and new activity planned where gaps do not reduce.

Completion: The college has chosen to not set specific objectives around completion as analysis of data shows that pass rates for students are high, with continuation having the greater impact on students completing their course.

Attainment: Analysis of ILR data indicates intersectionality of young students from the most deprived areas, with the target and activities developed to improve attainment of young students expected to have a positive impact on deprivation performance.

Progression: Internal progression systems at the college continue to be developed to supplement findings from Graduate Outcomes. Additional risks are not currently developed for part-time study modes due to the progression goals of students in these groups; however, students in these groups will continue to benefit from cross-intervention strategies to impact progression.

## Objectives

Following assessment of performance throughout the student life cycle, Riverside College has committed to six objectives to address the risks of quality of opportunity which have been identified. Objectives have been set to provide realistic targets which are achievable within the four-year plan to reduce and close gaps that have been identified.

**Objective 1:** Riverside College will increase the proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds accessing higher education at the college to 4.6% by 2029 through development of marketing activity and raising aspiration activities.

**Objective 2:** Riverside College will increase the continuation of students studying a full-time course in IMD Q1 to 87% or above by 2029 through financial support, academic support, and pastoral support activities.

**Objective 3:** Riverside College will increase the continuation of students with a disability or learning difficulty studying a part-time course to 81% or above by 2029 through enhance support, academic support and pastoral support and careers aspiration raising activities.

**Objective 4:** Riverside College will increase the attainment of young students achieving a 2:1 or above to 65% or above by 2029 through academic support, careers aspiration raising and raising attainment activities.

**Objective 5:** Riverside College will increase the proportion of young students progressing in employment to 60% or above by 2029 through employability skills activities.

## **Intervention strategies and expected outcomes**

**Intervention strategy 1:** Riverside College will increase the proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds accessing higher education at the college to 4.6% by 2029 (Objective 1)

In assessment of the college's performance, access rates were analysed across different student characteristics with the available data points, due to small numbers some of the data available was limited. Through this assessment the low access rate of students from ethnic minorities (3.6%) was identified as greatest indications of risk for access. Further, due to a low number of enrolments from ethnic minorities, the college needs to first develop access for this group of students before deeper analysis of other stages of the student life cycle.

This section includes activities that will be aimed at providing information and guidance that will impact on perceptions of higher education for students from minority ethnicities. While general activities already take place around this area, this section considers activities to directly address the lower participation in this area.

### **Risks to equality of opportunity**

Through assessment of this performance through analysis of data and consideration with students and staff, risks were identified from the EORR which may impact on access to higher education and equality of opportunity: Risk 2: Information and guidance, Risk 3: Perception of higher education.

### **Evidence base and rationale**

Interventions have been developed using a theory of change approach to identify processes of the intervention and considering the impacts that activity is expected to achieve to aid evaluation of strategies. The first intervention strategy consists of activities that intend to complement existing activity and process to improve outreach to potential students from ethnic minorities; including development of marketing materials to remove barriers considering the sharing of practice from communities, including Shaping Futures (Uni Connect) BAME Community of Practice, considering differing methods of outreach as explored by Sanderson and Spacey (2020).

With a growing provision of English as a Second Language (ESOL) students studying at Level 2 and below, the college is well positioned to expand on existing raising aspiration activity with students of ethnic minorities in this group to raise aspirations for further study through to Higher Education as a longer-term target within this intervention.

Additionally, the college already runs a 'High Achievers Programme' (HAP) aimed at raising aspirations and attainment of students aged 16-19 studying a Level 2 or Level 3 course at the college from areas of social deprivation, a new target group will be added to support students from ethnic minorities considering the findings of McCabe, Keast and Kaya (2022) and other sources to inform the breakdown of activities to be delivered in this bespoke group.

Activity & Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Marketing activities to promote Higher Education courses at the college to potential ethnic minority applicants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted marketing materials (digital &amp; print).</li> <li>Advertising campaign</li> </ul> <p><b>EORR Risks: 1, 2</b></p>	<p>HE Admissions Team</p> <p>Marketing Team – Marketing Budget</p> <p>HE Curriculum Staff</p> <p>Head of Higher Education</p>	<p>Increase in admissions enquiries from ethnic minority applicants.</p> <p>Increase in applications from ethnic minority applicants</p>	
<p>Aspiration raising activities to target potential ethnic minority students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum and Admissions sessions with ESOL students studying at the college.</li> <li>High Achievers Programme (HAP) – expansion of existing delivery to pre-HE students at the college to include ethnic minority focus.</li> </ul> <p><b>EORR Risks: 1, 2</b></p>	<p>HE Curriculum Staff</p> <p>Marketing Team – Marketing Budget</p> <p>Head of Higher Education</p> <p>Pastoral Support hours</p>	<p>Increase in admissions enquiries and applications from ethnic minority applicants.</p> <p>Increase in pre-HE ethnic minority students intending to progress to Higher Education</p> <p>Positive event satisfaction</p>	

## Evaluation

The evaluation for this intervention strategy will be developed with a focus on admissions and aspiration raising activities and will be made up of majority Type 2 evidence. Using guidance from TASO Toolkit (2023), evaluation of intervention will be focused on monitoring and comparing admissions enquiries and pre/post surveying, forming evidence through data collection to recognise impact.

Findings will be reported annually through HE Academic Board which will be forwarded to the Quality & Standards committee with outcomes reported at Governors Board.

The annual progress and evaluation of objectives will have interim evaluation findings shared on the college website. Additionally, findings here will be shared through the networks we participate with, including, but not limited, to local Uni Connect programme, University Partnership and AOC area networks with the intention for the college to expand its networks over the duration of the plan, to share findings of what has worked and has not worked with a wider audience to be able to develop approach to evaluation and enhance understanding of findings from working with small datasets.

At the conclusion of the 4-year Access and Participation Plan, evaluation of the objective and findings will be reported on the college website. Further, where appropriate, the college will share interim and final evaluation findings in calls for evidence.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Marketing Activities	Increase in admissions enquiries and applications from ethnic minority applicants	Type 1 – Event Attendance Type 2 – Monitoring and comparison of enquiry and application rates	Published on Access and Participation Plan website section.  Reported and monitored internally in HE Academic Board and Quality & Standards Committee
Aspiration Raising Activities	Increase in admissions enquiries and applications from ethnic minority applicants.  Increased intention to progress onto Higher Education	Type 2 - Monitoring and comparison of enquiry and application rates  Type 2 – Event Survey outcomes  Type 1 – Monitoring progression intentions from pre-HE courses	

## **Intervention strategy 2:** Riverside College will increase the continuation of students studying a full-time course in IMD Q1 to 87% or above by 2029 (Objective 2)

In assessment of the college's performance, access rates were analysed across different student characteristics with the available data points, this highlighted gaps in continuation rates where activity will be focussed on students from the most deprived areas. Further gaps were identified in Appendix A, however activities planned are also intended to address these gaps as well.

Further, through analysis of data on completion and high pass rates, the activities to improve continuation are expected to have a positive impact on students completing their courses.

The activity related to this strategy will be aimed at students with a high proportion of IMD Q1 students, studying from the most deprived areas and support Objective 4 aimed to improve attainment rates in young students where a high proportion are from IMD Q1.

### **Risks to equality of opportunity**

Through assessment of this performance through analysis of data and consideration with students and staff, risks were identified from the EORR which may impact on continuation to higher education and equality of opportunity including academic support (Risk 6), personal support (Risk 7) and Cost pressures (Risk 10). Further, consideration has been taken for student mental health (Risk 8) and how activity can support this.

### **Evidence base and rationale**

This intervention strategy consists of the introduction of new activity to target the improvement of continuation of students from socially deprived backgrounds while also maintaining the existing financial support that TASO Toolkit (2023) identifies as evidenced some positive impact alongside the strong positive response existing students at the college report, noting that current students surveyed who have received the current bursary responded positively in its benefit to assist them in costs associated with study, but limited causality in its impact for continuation improvement.

Through use of TASO Toolkit (2023), while causality with programmes of student support provides limited evidence of positive impact on continuation, the college does understand its importance of both academic and pastoral support for all students, including students from deprived areas (Clotfelter, Hemelt and Ladd, 2018) where financial support alone is unlikely to impact on continuation.

Development and delivery of new weekly study skills drop-in sessions and transition workshops are planned to reduce non-continuation of students reporting academic issues by empowering students through a student voice first approach to development of study skills and associated academic skills, while fostering a learning community. Activity here was directly informed through student voice and particularly evidenced from students who were not previously studying at the college or were returning from a break in their education.



TASO Toolkit (2023) notes limited research in programmes targeted to improve student wellbeing, the college will build on its experience of delivering 'Wellbeing Conferences' in other areas of the organisation to develop and deliver termly HE Wellbeing Conferences that will be responsive to student voice and current research. The activity will be evaluated alongside other wellbeing activities to develop evidence.

Further, the college will facilitate termly Writing Retreats, Murray (2015) suggests that this mechanism can improve motivation and provide structure to academics to make time for writing. While this activity is identified as academic support, Stevenson (2020) and Tremblay-Wragg et al. (2020) can impact positively on wellbeing through the social writing experience and developing sense of community, providing facilitation of time management and target setting.

While this intervention is primarily aimed at full-time students, as discussed in Appendix A and with counselling curriculum provision being the largest in the college new activity is included to offer a new Counselling Supervision Bursary to support students in this area with costs associated with supervision required with their placement. Foundation Degree Counselling is delivered in a part-time to meet the attendance needs of the students the course attracts; however, current students report difficulties with financing supervision sessions while being in a mode of study which does not attract maintenance loan funding, this new activity seeks to close this disadvantage gap and will review its impact.

Activity & Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Financial support for students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuation of HE Bursary</li> <li>Continuation of Hardship Fund</li> <li>New activity - Counselling Supervision Bursary</li> </ul> <b>EORR Risks: 7, 10</b>	HE Bursary Hardship Fund Counselling Supervision Bursary Pastoral Support / Administration support	Reduction in non-continuation rate due to cost pressures	
Academic and Study Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New activity – Weekly Study Skills drop-in sessions, including provision for students studying in the evening.</li> <li>New activity – Study Skills ‘drop-in’ electronic resources</li> <li>New activity – Transitions workshop</li> <li>New activity – Writing Retreats held termly.</li> </ul> <b>EORR Risks: 6, 7</b>	HE Curriculum Staff Head of Higher Education Development of Resources Pastoral Support / Administration support	Reduction in non-continuation rate due to academic or personal issues	Objective 3
Personal and Pastoral Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Activity – Termly HE Wellbeing Conference</li> <li>Expansion of activity – Half-Termly Coffee ‘Mornings’</li> </ul> <b>EORR Risks: 7, 8</b>	Pastoral Support Hours HE Curriculum Staff Head of Higher Education Development of Resources Catering	Reduction in non-continuation rate due to personal issues or mental health	Objective 3 & 5

## Evaluation

The evaluation for this intervention strategy will be developed with a focus on monitoring student reported reasons for non-continuation in comparison to previous academic years and considered alongside pre and post event surveying of activities to evaluate impact of intervention using majority of Type 2 evidence in evaluation. A focus on the introduction of new activity will be a focus, including the impact of the new Counselling Bursary financial support, Study Skills sessions, and HE Wellbeing Conference.

Findings will be reported annually through HE Academic Board which will be forwarded to the Quality & Standards committee with outcomes reported at Governors Board.

The same methods in Intervention Strategy 1 to externally share evaluation and findings on annual interim basis and the conclusion of the 4-year Access and Participation Plan will be used for this strategy.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Financial support for students	Reduction in non-continuation rate due to cost pressures	Type 2 – Monitoring of continuation rates and reasons for non-continuation	Published on Access and Participation Plan website section.
Academic and Study Skills	Reduction in non-continuation rate due to academic or personal issues	Type 2 – Monitoring of continuation rates and reasons for non-continuation Type 2 – Event Survey outcomes	Reported and monitored internally in HE Academic Board and Quality & Standards Committee
Personal and Pastoral Support	Reduction in non-continuation rate due to personal issues or mental health	Type 2 – Monitoring of continuation rates and reasons for non-continuation Type 2 – Event Survey outcomes	

**Intervention strategy 3:** Riverside College will increase the continuation of students with a disability or learning difficulty studying a part-time course to 81% or above by 2029 (Objective 3)

As noted in Intervention Strategy 2, an assessment of continuation highlighted gaps for students who study at the college with a disability or learning difficulty. Some of the activity planned within this strategy is similar to Intervention Strategy 2, however targeted and differing approaches are noted within similar activities and related to the needs of students studying on part-time courses.

### **Risks to equality of opportunity**

Through assessment of this performance through analysis of data and consideration with students and staff, risks were identified from the EORR which may impact on continuation to higher education and equality of opportunity including academic support (Risk 6), personal support (Risk 7), mental health (Risk 8) and Cost pressures (Risk 10).

### **Evidence base and rationale**

Students targeted within this strategy are expected to benefit from many of the activities in intervention strategy 2; however, the college is committed to deliver an inclusive experience for all and seeks to ensure activity meets the needs of all students and promoting self-advocacy for disabled students (TASO Toolkit, 2023).

The college has identified an increase in students identifying a learning difficulty or disability, including mental health conditions in line with Drakeley (2022) findings studying a degree. Any student who reports a learning difficulty or disability is invited to 1:1 with an Inclusion Support Worker to develop an Inclusive Teaching Plan which promotes self-advocacy and supports teaching strategies in the classroom and assessments. Within this strategy, these meetings will take place pre-entry during the admissions process to develop the plan and be able to share appropriate support and provide for students to be prepared for commencement of courses (Fleming, Plotner and Oertle, 2017) and assist in the development of teaching strategies for curriculum staff earlier.

Academic and Pastoral Support activity is similar to those planned in Intervention 2; however, the college is aware that students with learning difficulties or disabilities can benefit from the social support that can be developed by providing opportunities for study skills groups and community (Fleming, Plotner and Oertle, 2017) and will provide a bespoke offer for the targeted group and continue to seek learner feedback to inform activity.

Targeted careers activity will be used to raise aspirations of students in the targeted group with the aim of increase self-advocacy and motivate students to continue courses, with research suggested that students with a reported learning difficulty or disability require more support to gain employment (Vincent and Ralston, 2023; Drakeley, 2022).

Activity & Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Enhanced Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of activity – ITPs to be developed at admissions stage.</li> <li>• Continuation of fund for diagnostic assessments for specific learning disabilities e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia</li> </ul> <p><b>EORR Risks: 6, 7, 10</b></p>	<p>Inclusion Support Worker Hours</p> <p>Pastoral Support Worker Hours</p> <p>Funding for Diagnostic Assessments</p>	<p>Reduction in non-continuation rate due to academic or personal issues</p>	
<p>Academic and Study Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New activity – Weekly Study Skills drop-in sessions, including provision for students studying in the evening, including bespoke sessions to support students with SpLD.</li> <li>• New activity – Study Skills ‘drop-in’ electronic resources</li> <li>• New activity – Transitions workshop</li> </ul> <p><b>EORR Risks: 6</b></p>	<p>HE Curriculum Staff</p> <p>Head of Higher Education</p> <p>Inclusion Support Worker Hours</p> <p>Development of Resources</p> <p>Pastoral Support / Administration support</p>	<p>Reduction in non-continuation rate due to academic issues</p>	<p>Objective 2</p>

<p>Personal and Pastoral Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Activity – Termly HE Wellbeing Conference</li> <li>• Expansion of activity – Half-Termly Coffee ‘Mornings’</li> </ul> <p><b>EORR Risks: 7, 8</b></p>	<p>Pastoral Support Hours</p> <p>HE Curriculum Staff</p> <p>Head of Higher Education</p> <p>Development of Resources</p> <p>Catering</p>	<p>Reduction in non-continuation rate due to personal issues or mental health</p>	<p>Objective 2</p>
<p>Careers Aspiration Raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted careers activity, including employability skills.</li> </ul> <p><b>EORR Risks: 7</b></p>	<p>Pastoral Support Hours – ACE Team</p>	<p>Raising of aspirations to reduce non-continuation rates</p>	

## **Evaluation**

The evaluation for this intervention strategy will be developed with a focus on monitoring student reported reasons for non-continuation in comparison to previous academic years and considered alongside pre and post event surveying of activities to evaluate impact of intervention using majority of Type 2 evidence in evaluation. Activity will be reviewed on a regular basis with input from student views and other data sources, in particular the early intervention process and its impact for students.

Findings will be reported annually through HE Academic Board which will be forwarded to the Quality & Standards committee with outcomes reported at Governors Board.

The same methods in Intervention Strategy 1 to externally share evaluation and findings on annual interim basis and the conclusion of the 4-year Access and Participation Plan will be used for this strategy.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Enhanced Support	Reduction in non-continuation rate due to academic or personal issues	<p>Type 2 – Monitoring of continuation rates and reasons for non-continuation</p> <p>Type 1 – Surveying on impacts of activity on learning and success</p>	<p>Published on Access and Participation Plan website section.</p> <p>Reported and monitored internally in HE Academic Board and Quality &amp; Standards Committee</p>
Academic and Study Skills	Reduction in non-continuation rate due to academic or personal issues	<p>Type 2 – Monitoring of continuation rates and reasons for non-continuation</p> <p>Type 2 – Event Survey outcomes</p>	
Personal and Pastoral Support	Reduction in non-continuation rate due to personal issues or mental health	<p>Type 2 – Monitoring of continuation rates and reasons for non-continuation</p> <p>Type 2 – Event Survey outcomes</p>	
Careers Aspiration Raising	Raising of aspirations to reduce non-continuation rates	<p>Type 2 – Monitoring of continuation rates and reasons for non-continuation</p> <p>Type 1 – Student survey prior and following careers sessions</p>	



**Intervention strategy 4:** Riverside College will increase the attainment of young students achieving a 2:1 or above to 65% or above by 2029 (Objective 4)

As noted in Intervention Strategy 2, young students will benefit from the activities within this objective, with related activities and their outcomes related to attainment included here.

Activity within this objective will also likely have an impact on Objective 5, to increase progression rates for young students studying at the college and completion rates for students from a deprived background where a separate objective has not been produced.

### **Risks to equality of opportunity**

Through assessment of this performance through analysis of data and consideration with students and staff, risks were identified from the EORR which may impact on attainment to higher education and equality of opportunity including academic support (Risk 6) and personal support (Risk 7) while on course and also their knowledge and skills when they enter the course (Risk 1). While the objective is aimed at young students, many of the targeted group will also be from a deprived background.

### **Evidence base and rationale**

Activity in this intervention has partial cross strategy with intervention 2, where academic support activities will be monitored and evaluated in their impact on attainment of young students. Additionally, activity will be focussed in two areas, the first for students studying a Higher Education course to raise career aspirations and the second which aims to raise attainment and aspiration of pre-16 students in Halton.

TASO Toolkit (2023) finds emerging evidence in the impact of IAG for employment and employability, the college will be using the features identified to develop targeted support for young students through one-to-one guidance, career planning and providing specific employment and training opportunities, with the aim of increasing aspirations having a positive impact on student attainment by allowing students to consider a wide range of possible careers (Gutman and Schoon, 2012; Agasisti and Maragkou, 2022).

The college is well positioned in the local community to support in pre-16 attainment raising activities with existing and developing activity with high school students, including raising attainment in mathematics. Within this intervention, a pilot of raising attainment activities will be delivered and evaluated within the HE Curriculum Team. Shaping Futures has identified that Computing is one of the subject areas in the Liverpool City Region where attainment is below national average at GCSE, considering this, the college will first deliver at least three sessions with pre-16 students in the local area focussed on computing and computational thinking, which can also have positive impact on mathematic skill (Aydeniz, 2018).

Activity & Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Academic and Study Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New activity – Weekly Study Skills drop-in sessions, including provision for students studying in the evening.</li> <li>• New activity – Study Skills ‘drop-in’ electronic resources</li> <li>• New activity – Transitions workshop</li> <li>• New activity – Writing Retreats held termly.</li> </ul> <p><b>EORR Risks: 6, 7</b></p>	<p>HE Curriculum Staff</p> <p>Head of Higher Education</p> <p>Development of Resources</p> <p>Pastoral Support / Administration support</p>	<p>Increased Attainment for young students</p>	<p>Objective 2</p>
<p>Careers Aspiration Raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted careers activity, including employability skills.</li> </ul> <p><b>EORR Risks: 7</b></p>	<p>Pastoral Support Hours – ACE Team</p>	<p>Increased aspiration to achieve a 2:1 or above.</p> <p>Increased Attainment for young students</p>	<p>Objective 5</p>

Attainment Raising Activity: Pre-16

- Deliver at least three raising attainment sessions with pre-16 students. Initially delivery of Computational Thinking skills sessions

**EORR Risks: 1**

HE Curriculum Staff

Development of Resources

Marketing Staff Hours

Administration support

Increased self-efficacy with engaged pre-16 students.

Increased KS4 results in targeted subject

## Evaluation

The evaluation for this intervention strategy will be developed with a focus on attainment of the target group in comparison to previous academic years and considered alongside pre and post event surveying of activities to evaluate impact of intervention using majority of Type 2 evidence in evaluation, with raising activity aiming to move towards Type 2 evidence during the course of the intervention. As with similar activity, they will be reviewed on a regular basis with input from student views and other data sources.

Findings will be reported annually through HE Academic Board which will be forwarded to the Quality & Standards committee with outcomes reported at Governors Board.

The same methods in Intervention Strategy 1 to externally share evaluation and findings on annual interim basis and the conclusion of the 4-year Access and Participation Plan will be used for this strategy.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Academic and Study Skills	Increased Attainment for young students	Type 2 – Monitoring of attainment rates and comparison	Published on Access and Participation Plan website section.  Reported and monitored internally in HE Academic Board and Quality & Standards Committee
		Type 2 – Event Survey outcomes	
Careers Aspiration Raising	Increased aspiration to achieve a 2:1 or above.	Type 2 – Monitoring of attainment rates and comparison	
	Increased Attainment for young students	Type 2 – Student survey prior and following careers sessions	
Attainment Raising Activity: Pre-16	Increased self-efficacy with engaged pre-16 students.	Type 2 – Student survey / knowledge review prior and following activity.	
	Increased KS4 results in targeted subject	Type 1 – Targeted KS4 student attainment	

**Intervention strategy 5:** Riverside College will increase the proportion of young students progressing in employment to 60% or above by 2029 (Objective 5)

As noted in Intervention Strategy 4, young students are expected to have an impact from improvements in their attainment linked to their progression into graduate employment.

The activity around this objective is targeted at the graduate employment rates of young students but is also expected to have positive impact in gaps in Associations between Characteristics of Students (ABCS) and Free School Meals (FSM).

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Similar to the risks seen in young student attainment, similar risks were identified in analysis of data and consideration with students and staff, risks were identified from the EORR which may impact on progression to graduate employment and equality of opportunity personal support (Risk 7) alongside the identified risk for progression from higher education (Risk 12). Further links were considered against risks from academic support and a student's knowledge and skills they start their course with addressed within Objective 4. While the objective is aimed at young students, many of the targeted group will also be from a deprived background.

**Evidence base and rationale**

This strategy contains links in activity to both Objective 2 and Objective 4, where activity is aimed at providing targeted careers advice and exposure to graduate employers.

TASO Toolkit (2023) discusses positive association to students completing work experience in higher education including progression into graduate employment, while most courses delivered at the course have an element of mandatory work experience there is a gap in courses where students do not have this requirement. Activity here will develop mechanisms to promote and support work experience and internships where they do not currently often participate, with its importance to gaining employment highlighted by Mason, Williams, and Cranmer (2009).

Activity & Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Employability Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted careers activity, including employability skills.</li> <li>Targeted support to help students gain relevant work experience where this is not already part of their course.</li> <li>HE Wellbeing Conference</li> </ul> <p><b>EORR Risks: 7, 12</b></p>	<p>Pastoral Support Hours – ACE Team</p> <p>HE Curriculum Staff</p> <p>Head of Higher Education</p> <p>Development of Resources</p> <p>Catering</p>	<p>Raised awareness of Graduate Careers</p> <p>Increased graduate employment rate on Graduate Outcomes</p>	<p>Objective 2</p> <p>Objective 4</p>

## Evaluation

The evaluation for this intervention strategy will be developed with a focus on progression and destinations of the target group analysing data available through Graduate Outcomes and internal reporting mechanisms alongside surveying of students engaged in activities to evaluate impact of intervention using evidence to move towards attaining Type 2 evidence in evaluation.

Findings will be reported annually through HE Academic Board which will be forwarded to the Quality & Standards committee with outcomes reported at Governors Board.

The same methods in Intervention Strategy 1 to externally share evaluation and findings on annual interim basis and the conclusion of the 4-year Access and Participation Plan will be used for this strategy.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Careers Aspiration Raising	Raised awareness of Graduate Careers	Type 2 – Student survey prior and following careers sessions.	Published on Access and Participation Plan website section.
	Increased graduate employment rate on Graduate Outcomes	Type 1 – Graduate Outcomes Survey results	Reported and monitored internally in HE Academic Board and Quality & Standards Committee

## Whole provider approach

Riverside College is committed to promoting equal opportunities and the practice of fairness in all services provided by the College throughout the student journey, it is an inclusive college where we promote and protect equality and diversity seeking to deliver an inclusive curriculum for the residents of Halton. The college's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy applies to all staff (including paid staff and volunteers), students and governors, as well as visitors and subcontractors, at all sites to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality and Diversity Action Group at the college will report termly on the composition and progress of the student body, according to disability, age, ethnicity, gender and whether students live in a Widening Participation area. Data and information obtained as a result of activities will inform the annual Self-Assessment Report and all related College development plans as appropriate. Statistics about staff and students based on ethnicity, gender, age, and disability will be collected as will views of staff and students via staff surveys and student perception of course questionnaires. These will be monitored against key College performance indicators and will be reported to the Equality and Diversity Action Group, SMT Monitoring and then to the Board through the Quality & Standards Committee, alongside performance updates across all other interventions in the Access and Participation Plan.

The College recognises that students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds are also statistically at greater risk of not achieving their full educational potential and will endeavour to take steps to redress this imbalance. A useful indicator for identifying disadvantaged students is if they live in a Widening Participation area, so the College will use this as a key performance measure throughout the organisation.

All marketing materials reflect the College's commitment to equality and diversity and are made available in public places throughout the community, with strategies devised for marketing and targeting under-represented groups to encourage learning. Appropriate outlets are used to promote the College's programmes to all sections of the community.

In relation to students with a Learning Difficulty or Disability, further guidance is provided during the admissions process and is also available on the College's external website. Students who apply for the Higher Education course also meeting with an Inclusion Support Worker to develop an Inclusive Teaching Plan and advise them of further support and resources before starting their course. During the induction process in students are informed of the full range of support available, the location of the welfare services, their rights and responsibilities as students and the College's Equality & Diversity Policy. Students continue to be able to access support through Inclusion Support Workers and Pastoral Worker for Adults and HE.

Staff involved with the HE student journey at the college, including curriculum staff, are welcome to a termly HE Learning Community with an emphasis on sharing best practice considering the access and participation plan, allowing staff to input to the development and changes to interventions. Staff are updated regularly with updates on APP targets and



use these as a source of evidence at HE Academic Board. The Riverside Research Group was formed to facilitate discussion and sharing best practice on research with curriculum staff.

Training opportunities relating to equality and diversity are provided for staff so that they can fulfil all requirements of their positions and to recognise students' differing needs, to encourage the highest level of achievement.

## **Student consultation**

Students currently studying at the college have been involved and consulted in the process and create of this access and participation plan. In addition to findings from surveying the whole student body, following the completion of the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality and opportunity, focus groups were held with targeted groups of learners where risks were evident including students from areas of high deprivation, students with SpLD, students from ethnic minority backgrounds and young students.

From consultation with targeted students, activities were able to be developed to address these needs. For example, Counselling students raised the issues around funding supervision sessions as they are not eligible for maintenance loan funding on their part-time course which has directly impacted on the introduction of the Counselling Supervision Bursary to mitigate these concerns.

Similarly, in discussion with students with a Disability or Learning Difficulty, the need for earlier intervention to develop Inclusive Teaching Plans has been identified with adjustment to existing activity to align with the needs of students. Further, the proposed targeted drop-in sessions were welcomed by all students consulted in the group.

Students will continue to have the opportunity to be involved in the continued monitoring and evaluation of the Access and Participation Plan through HE Learner Voice Forum, where updates to progress will be shared and further consultation on existing and new activities be considered. Students were consulted on the development of targeted Learner Voice groups; however full consensus was for all groups to be included through the whole area HE Learner Voice Forum. Adjustments will be made if in future consultation with students a new need arises for targeted Learner Voice activity.

## **Evaluation of the plan**

The college has used OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment tool to review current evaluation practices and identified areas where evaluation strategy can be improved across teams that support Higher Education. Currently the college identifies evaluation practices as Emerging across the five areas of the self-assessment, with improvements identified to strengthen evaluation during the plan.

### **Strategic Context**

Governance of Higher Education and the APP is reported at Quality and Standards Committee of the Governing body. Governors at Riverside College have been engaged with monitoring our previous Access and Participation Plan and will continue to have oversight of this new plan. The Board will continue to receive reports to allow them to monitor progress and ask challenging questions if we are not delivering, to ensure that we achieve the targets set out in this plan. In addition, the Access and Participation Plan priorities, milestones and objectives will be continuously monitored through the termly Quality and Standards Committee of the Board of Governors, and through termly Senior Management Team (SMT) monitoring reports.

The College continues to use several quality assurance processes in its evaluation strategy. Most important of these is the cycle of Senior Management Team (SMT) Monitoring, Quality and Strategy meetings, and Higher Education academic boards. The Access and Participation Plan is monitored at the HE Academic Board held twice an academic year, with membership from key stakeholders involved in the delivery and evaluation of the plan, including HE Curriculum, Marketing and Admissions, Pastoral Support and also student representatives. Termly SMT Monitoring reports are developed to scrutinise age, disability, ethnicity, gender and widening participation recruitment data on all programmes and, where appropriate, strategies devised to address imbalance. Reporting mechanisms will be developed to highlight intersections of characteristics to aid earlier identification of potential new risks and evaluation.

Reports are prepared for governors, for Higher Education academic boards and SMT that will show progress against the targets identified in the Access and Participation Plan. The Higher Education academic boards will also provide student representatives with the opportunity to monitor performance and provisions of the plan on at least two occasions during each academic year. If, for any reason, targets are not being met, a robust action plan will be put into place which will be monitored closely by SMT and governors. The embedding of the targets into the College's Annual Monitoring Reports will give clear oversight of the work and monitoring of progress for academic staff.

The college have identified areas for improvement for evaluation in strategic context. The college has in a Monitoring and Evaluation group as part of Uni Connect programme but will strengthen this with the introduction of Evaluation and Data Collection items to HE Learning Community to focus on evaluation skills and to also develop and disseminate a common evaluation framework building from work with external partners and research to strengthen evaluation.

## **Programme Design**

Intervention strategies have been developed with research, with TASO, OfS, Uni Connect and other related literature to inform rationale, objectives and outcome measures of interventions. We are also engaged with networks through university partnership. As its work in evaluation develops, the college will draw on further resources and literature in development of programmes. While data gained from programmes may be small, programmes are designed to measure success through a variety of measures to identify if they have made impact.

Within the development of the common evaluation framework, the college is drawing from the experiences working with external partners to develop common programme design so that planning and evaluation design is consistent throughout all programmes to ensure they are consistently research informed and have considered their evaluation and data collection mechanisms prior to delivery. The college will draw from internal and external expertise to assist teams in developing these through HE Learning Community.

## **Evaluation Design**

Through implementation of the APP, as a small provider of higher education, intervention strategies intend to develop evaluation evidence from majority Type 1 standard to Type 2 standards of evidence through the ongoing development of evaluation design from research informed practice and working with external partners, including local Uni Connect and University partner including sharing learning from 'what works'. As previously discussed, the introduction of a common evaluation framework intends to assist in the development of evaluation design with a theory of change for each intervention planned at its centre.

Evaluation of the plan will be focussed on the high-level Intervention Strategy, while also evaluating individual activity to compare outcomes within a strategy while also allowing capture of a wider range of data. With small cohorts in higher education which can result in limited data, the college intends to use its larger internal further education cohorts and external school links to enhance evaluation where activities involve their participation.

The college intends to move towards Type 2 evaluation evidence further through comparison with counterfactual data by measuring data before and after interventions and beginning to gather data for participants who were involved in intervention and those who were not, within the constraints of a small provider.

## **Evaluation Implementation**

The college has developed reliable and robust methods for collecting data, with policy and guidance to support implementation any new data sources or practices, with full compliance of GDPR, including data sharing agreements with external partners and stakeholders. Risks assessments, with mitigation strategies, are completed for activities.

Development of internal systems allow for capturing and measuring of individual, cohort and sub-group data, including tracking participants over time with further developments of tracking progression of students to enhance evaluation in this area and developing further analysis of intersections of data. Further, the college is aware of limitations of self-report

data in the surveying it completes and will implement piloting and testing of surveys in the implementation of this plan.

In planning for interventions, the college believes that costs of evaluation will be appropriate to the activities being delivered, with some activities being shared across different strategies, and will be responsive to development in evaluation practices in the duration of the plan.

## **Learning**

The college acknowledges as a small higher education there will be limitations to sample size of data collected but will seek to learn from best practices from small provider research develop evaluation practices including working with other providers and triangulating findings with other sources and stakeholders. Strength of scholarly literature in evaluation is intended to develop through focusses in HE Learning Community and Riverside Research Group. The college has integrated its previous APP into our practice and embedded into strategic decisions to improve outcomes for targeted groups, while developing internal reporting systems to support evaluation which will be developed in support of this plan.

Findings from evaluation are shared internally cross-institution in a variety of areas including within governance (Quality & Standards), HE Academic Board, SMT Monitoring Reports and also across all levels of the college at EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion).

The annual progress and evaluation of objectives will have interim evaluation findings shared on the college website. Additionally, findings here will be shared through the networks we participate with, including, but not limited, to local Uni Connect programme, University Partnership and AOC area networks with the intention for the college to expand its networks over the duration of the plan, to share findings of what has worked and has not worked with a wider audience to be able to develop approach to evaluation and enhance understanding of findings from working with small datasets.

At the conclusion of the 4-year Access and Participation Plan, evaluation of the objective and findings will be reported on the college website. Further, where appropriate, the college will share interim and final evaluation findings in calls for evidence including TASO.

## **Provision of information to students**

Riverside College is committed to providing timely, accurate and comprehensive information to current students and applicants to ensure they can make informed decisions about the Higher Education courses they may wish to apply for. To ensure that prospective students from all backgrounds are confident and well informed about the costs of Higher Education and the financial support available, information will be specifically provided to students on our website and through open day / evening presentations.

Further, our Marketing and Admissions team, pastoral support team, ACE (Advice, Careers and Employability) team and curriculum staff provide information to prospective students and students enrolled at the college. During the admissions process or on-

course, students who declare a disability or learning difficulty will be invited to meet an inclusive support worker to develop an Inclusive Teaching Plan and provide assistance to access diagnostic assessments and information for DSA with pastoral support.

Students enrolled at the college are continued to be provided with up-to-date information related to their course and enrolment at the college through an online portal and printed displays.

In our 2023 re-accreditation with the MATRIX quality standard for information advice and guidance services was achieved by the college which covered the Advice, Careers and Employability staff, who work with current students, both pre and post entry to HE at the college, to secure their progression on to university or employment, as well as the College's Schools Liaison, Marketing and Admissions team and Employer Services Teams.

Riverside College will publish course related information on the Higher Education pages of our website including entry requirements, fees per year, and total course fees, costs, availability of bursaries and progression opportunities. The College publishes the Access and Participation plan on the main College website.

## **Financial support available with eligibility criteria**

### **PART ONE: Bursary for first year full-time students only (studying in College for 12 hours per week or more)**

The College is committed to offering cost effective and more accessible routes into Higher Education by providing bursary support of £500 to any full-time Higher Education student in their first year of study (studying in College for 12 hours per week or more), subject to them meeting the three criteria below:

1. The student meets a minimum of 90% attendance\*<sup>1</sup> during term 1, term 2 and term 3 to receive a bursary instalment at the end of each subsequent term.
2. The student complies with all course related deadlines for submission of work.
3. The student complies with the College's expectations on conduct and behaviour (as outlined in the Higher Education Student Contract).

*\*<sup>1</sup>exceptional circumstances that impact on the minimum requirement of 90% attendance will be considered on a case-by-case basis.*

### **PART TWO: Bursary for FdSc Counselling and FdSc Counselling Children and Young People**

To support students with associated costs when studying FdSc Counselling and FdSc Counselling Children and Young People, including supervision fees, any Higher Education student studying one of these courses, enrolling from September 2025, will be eligible for the bursary support of £600 split in three equal payments, subject to them meeting the three payment criteria below:

- Payment 1: The student has been approved to begin placement.

- Payment 2: A 50-hour report has been submitted and approved by the student's placement supervisor.
- Payment 3: 100-hour report has been submitted and approved by the student's placement supervisor.

### **PART THREE: Bursaries for Care Leavers, Care Givers, Estranged from Family, Travel (studying in College for 12 hours per week or more) and Hardship Fund**

Higher Education full-time students who are in their second or third year of Higher Education study at Riverside College, may apply for the following bursaries:

- Care Leavers' Bursary – full time Higher Education students (Year 2/Year 3) who have been in care of a local authority for 13 weeks or more.
- Carer's Bursary – full-time Higher Education students (Year 2/Year 3) who have full time carer's responsibility.
- Estranged from Family Bursary – full-time Higher Education students (Year 2/Year 3) who are estranged from their family.
- Travel Bursary – full-time Higher Education students (Year 2/Year 3) who study 3 or more days per week in College.

Additionally, students studying on a Higher Education course at the college may apply for the Hardship Fund.

A limited number of bursaries of up to £300 per person, will be awarded to those students with the greatest need. Meeting eligibility criteria does not equate to an entitlement to a Care Leavers', Care Givers, Estranged from Family, Travel Bursary or the Hardship Fund. This is a one-year benefit, not a recurrent annual entitlement, annual applications must be submitted.

#### **What does Riverside College mean by care experienced?**

The legal definition of a care leaver is someone who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and was in care on their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. Care includes but is not limited to:

- Foster care
- Semi-independent living
- Residential care homes

#### **Criteria: Eligible Students**

- Must be enrolled on an undergraduate course.
- Must have declared household income of less than £25,000 (including benefits) to be eligible for either the Care Leavers' Bursary, the Carer's Bursary, the Estranged from Family Bursary, Travel Bursary or the Hardship Fund.
- May apply for more than one bursary award but will only be awarded one bursary in addition to the Travel Bursary.

Students whose fees are paid or part-paid through a sponsorship arrangement are not eligible for the Care Leavers' Bursary, the Carer's Bursary, Estranged from Family Bursary or Travel Bursary.

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

### Access

Data exploration resulted in the identification of a number of potential risks to equality of opportunity. The initial risks identified are outlined below, with a rationale for final target group choice.

Identified Area	Explanation	Rationale
<b>Ethnicity (Risk 1)</b>	Size and Shape of Provision shows 96.4% of students were White in 18/19 – 21/22.	In the Halton region, ethnic minority is 2.5% in Jan 24 <sup>[1]</sup>
Disability	Limited numbers available.  Data dashboard shows full-time students studying with a disability is above sector average, while part-time students are below sector average.	Overall access for students with a reported disability is higher, with more full-time students with a disability studying at the college. Recruitment will continue to be monitored, and variation made if gap increases.

One objective was developed following consideration of potential risks to equality of opportunity to increase access for ethnic minority students studying both full-time and part-time courses.

The college has made progress in targeting raising access for students from ethnic minority backgrounds in relation to the population of the local region where the majority of students enrol from; however, the wider Liverpool City Region has a higher population of students from ethnic minority backgrounds and so an objective has been developed to continue to increase access for this student group at the college.

Access for part-time students with a disability and learning difficulty was considered as a potential risk; however internal admissions data has shown an increase for this student population and will be continued to monitor that progress for these students continues with existing practices in place.

Further areas of potential risk were considered but objectives were not developed:

- Changes in Access for Age groups between 2016-17 – 2021-22 show a reverse of data trends; however, this is due to the reclassification of some courses from part-

time to full-time where more Mature students were enrolled. Further, Counselling courses, which has the largest enrolment at the college, recruits a majority of mature students.

- For Part-time (All Undergraduates), TUNDRA measure was considered however due to a large majority being Mature learners the measure does not provide enough data for young entrants.

## **Objectives**

**Objective 1:** Riverside College will increase the proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds accessing higher education at the college to 4.6% by 2029.

[1] <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/CensusandStatistics/populationprofile.aspx>



## Continuation

Identified Area	Explanation	Rationale
<b>Deprivation (Risk 2)</b>	Limited numbers available. Difference between students studying a full-time course IMD Q1 – Q4 Full-Time is 6.4pp.	<p>Alongside the gap in Q1-Q4, continuation for IMD Q1 is 3pp below sector average.</p> <p>Gap is less prevalent on part-time studies, but activities would also look to address this group.</p>
<b>Disability (Risk 3)</b>	<p>Limited numbers available.</p> <p>A 2-year aggregate gap of 11.8pp for students studying a Part-time (Other Undergraduate) course.</p>	<p>While this is 12.4pp above sector average in 2-year aggregate data, there has been an increase in the gap.</p> <p>Data is more limited for full-time provision but shows a positive gap.</p>
Age	Limited numbers available. For full-time students there is a 4-year aggregate gap, 11.3pp fewer mature students continue, with a closing gap in 2-year aggregate data. 11.5pp above sector average in 4-year aggregate.	<p>Gap is less for part-time undergraduates and is 18.2pp above 4-year aggregate sector average.</p> <p>Targets for Deprivation to include activities which will have impact on mature continuation, to be monitored and variation if impact is not evident.</p>
TUNDRA	Limited numbers available. 4-year aggregate for Q1 FT students below sector average.	Greater difference is evident in Deprivation measure, where target is expected to have impact on TUNDRA measure.

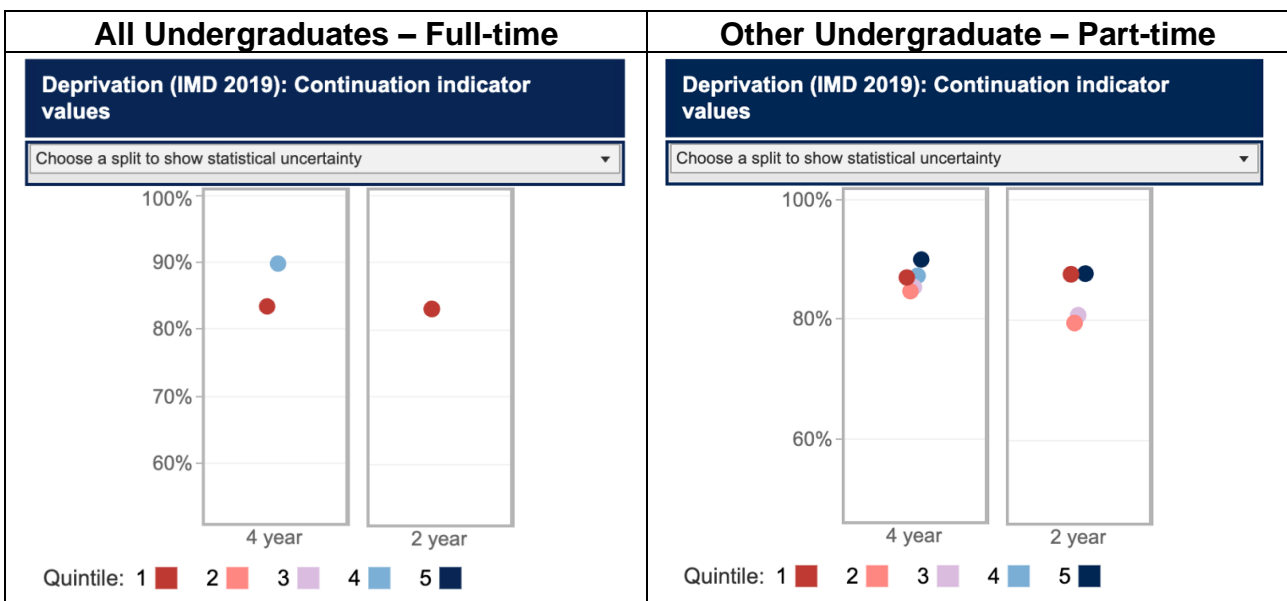
		Further, 55.6pp of students in this measure were mature students, where targets to address IMD can impact both age groups.
Eligibility for free school meals	Limited numbers available. 4-year aggregate 2.3pp gap but is above sector average.	Greater difference in evident in Deprivation measure, where target is expected to have impact on FSM measure.

Two objectives were developed following consideration of potential risks to equality of opportunity to increase continuation for students studying a full-time course from the most deprived areas and students studying a part-time course with a disability or learning difficulty.

### Deprivation

Using the Access and Participation Dashboard, Full-Time All Undergraduates (4-year aggregate) shows that less students from the most deprived areas (IMD Q1) continue on their courses compared to some of the least deprived areas (IMD Q4) with a gap of 6.4pp.

Over the 4-year aggregate, the dashboard shows that students from IMD Q1 at the college have a gap of 3pp compared to sector average. Data from our ILR shows that the gap between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 initially increases before the gap begins to narrow, with this considered, an objective is designed to continue to reduce gaps in continuation for IMD. Gap is less prevalent on part-time studies, but activities would also look to address this group.



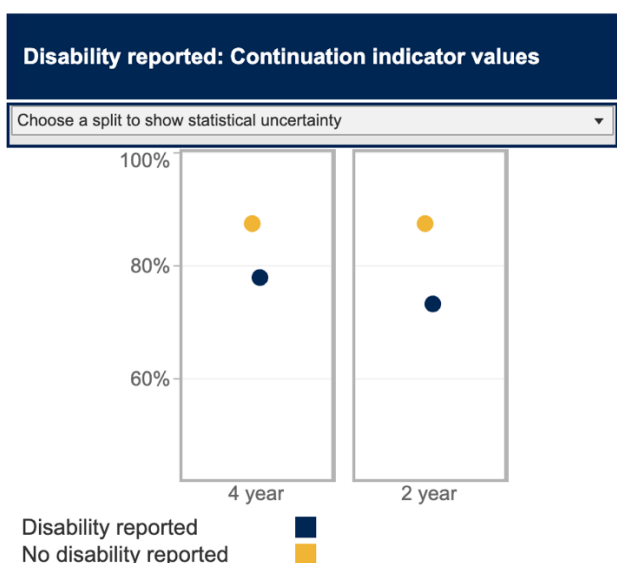
Further, while considering the impact from work on improving continuation informed by deprivation gaps were also identified however, consideration of targets set for deprivation will include activities that will impact on TUNDRA Q1 and students eligible for free school meals where gaps were evidenced but less prevalent from IMD. Further, when considering national sector data, the data considered for Age and FSM were both above averages in the sector.

Through use of reporting systems, the college will continue to monitor underrepresented groups where objectives are not currently designed and will action these through a variation of the plan if the strategy for deprivation for deprivation does not also show impact in closing gaps for these groups.

## Disability Reported

Analysis of the dashboard also identified gaps for the continuation of part-time students with a reported disability or learning difficulty shown in 2 and 4-year aggregate with the gap showing an increase between the time series. Analysis of the college’s ILR shows that this gap narrowed, however highlights the importance of activity required to continue to improve outcomes for the student group.

Data for full-time students continues to show high continuation rates for students with a reported disability; however, new activity will still be used to continue to maintain and improve outcomes for these students.



## Objectives

**Objective 2:** Riverside College will increase the continuation of students studying a full-time course in IMD Q1 to 87% or above by 2029.

**Objective 3:** Riverside College will increase the continuation of students with a disability or learning difficulty studying a part-time course to 81% or above by 2029.

## Completion

With no data being available for Completion of students completing an Undergraduate (First degree) due to the first students completing their qualifications after 2017/18, data that is reported through the ILR (Individual Learner Record) has been considered (4-year aggregate - 19/20 – 22/23) this data has been considered provisionally.

Identified Area	Explanation	Rationale
Deprivation	Limited numbers available.  For Part-Time (Other undergraduate), there is a 5.1pp gap between IMD Q1 – Q5 on 4-year aggregate data. A similar gap for Full-time students in ILR data is also identified.	Completion performance is above sector averages on four-year aggregate, including 12.3pp more Q1 students at the college completing.  Activity will be focussed on Continuation targets to impact on Completion.
Age	Limited numbers available.  For Part-Time (Other undergraduate), there is a 6.4pp gap for young students completing their course.	The gap shows a decrease between 4 and 2-year aggregates (6.9pp).
Disability	Limited numbers available, provisional Completion data from ILR. 4-year aggregate (19/20 – 22/23) has a 1.4pp gap.	Though different timescales, measure would be above sector average. Further, targets for Continuation are expected to impact on Completion performance.

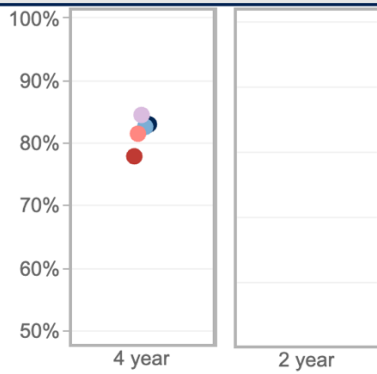
Data for Completion for Full-Time (All Undergraduates) was limited, where data points are available for IMD Q1 and ABCS Q1, both were positive in comparison to sector averages. In addition, ILR data indicates high pass rates for students across all modes of study indicating that students who continue their courses have a high completion rate.

Activity will be focussed on Continuation gaps which is expected to have a positive impact on Completion performance, if evaluation of activity identifies that this is not evident a variation will be requested to develop separate objectives.

## Other Undergraduate – Part-time

### Deprivation (IMD 2019): Completion indicator values

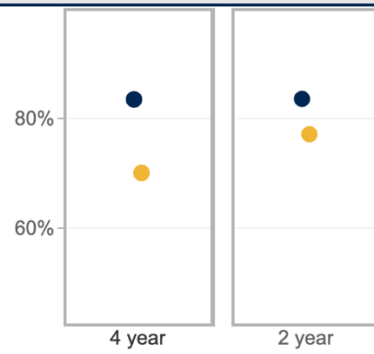
Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty



Quintile: 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■

### Age: Completion indicator values

Choose a split to show statistical uncertainty



Mature (21 and over) ■  
Young (under 21) ■

## Attainment

Identified Area	Explanation	Rationale
Age (Risk 4)	Young – 4-year aggregate: 29.7% gap compared to mature learners.	Mature learners' attainment is higher than sector average, while young students are below the sector average.
Deprivation	Limited numbers available.  Full-Time (First Degree) – 10.5% gap on 4-year aggregate between Q1 and Q5. In 2-year aggregated data, attainment for Q1 improved by 8%, but no Q5 comparator available, but is now above sector average.	The number of IMD Q1 students achieving a good degree award has improved in 2-year aggregate data.  Targets for Young Learners to include activities which will have impact on Deprivation attainment, to be monitored and variation if impact is not evident.

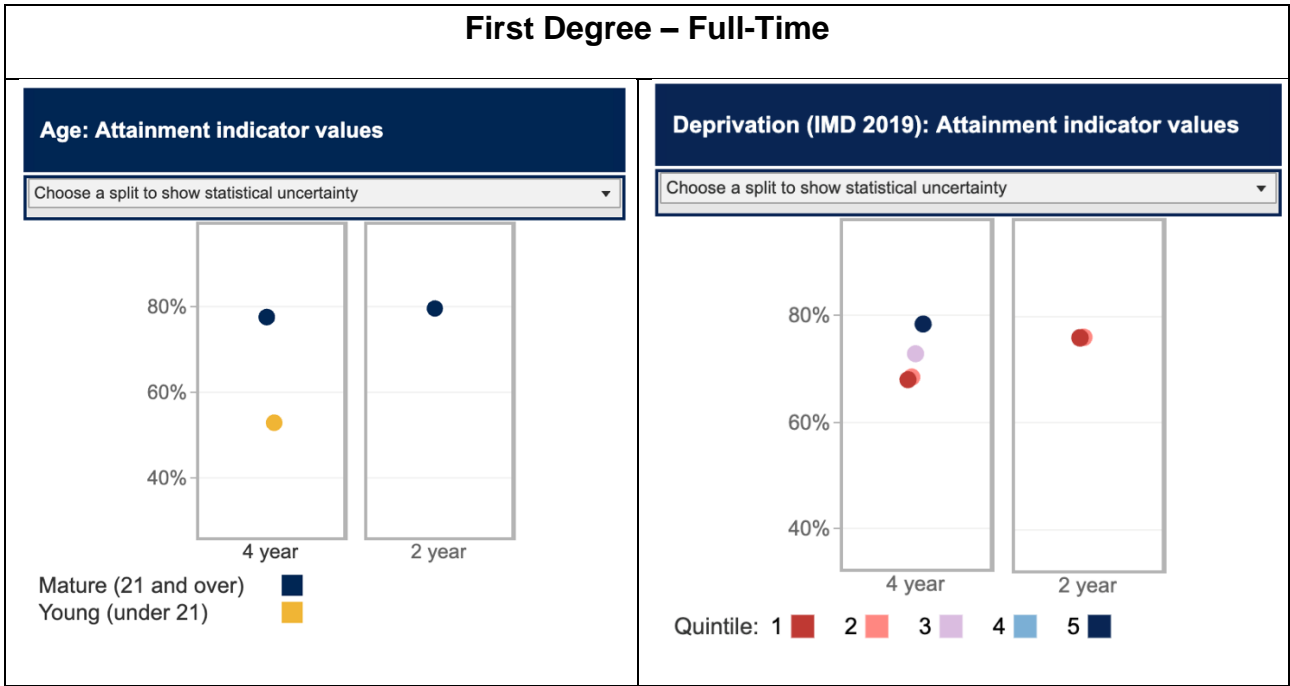
One objective was developed following consideration of potential risks to equality of opportunity to improve attainment for young learners.

### Age

Using the Access and Participation Dashboard, Full-Time First Degree (4-year aggregate) shows that young students (under 21) at the college are less likely to achieve a 2:1 classification of above than mature students.

Analysis of ILR data indicates intersectionality of young students from the most deprived areas, with the target and activities developed to improve attainment of young students expected to have a positive impact on deprivation performance, if evaluation of activity identifies that this is not evident a variation will be requested to develop separate objectives.

Positive attainment gaps for students with a disability or learning difficulty have been identified on the APP dashboard initially showing on 4-year aggregate data, before reducing on 2-year aggregate data; however, analysis of ILR data indicates that this positive gap will return in proceeding years.



Part-time (First Degree) has not been considered in analysis as these are no longer offered at the college, if they are reintroduced, a variation will be completed to consider targets for this area.

**Objectives**

**Objective 4:** Riverside College will increase the attainment of young students achieving a 2:1 or above to 65% or above by 2029.

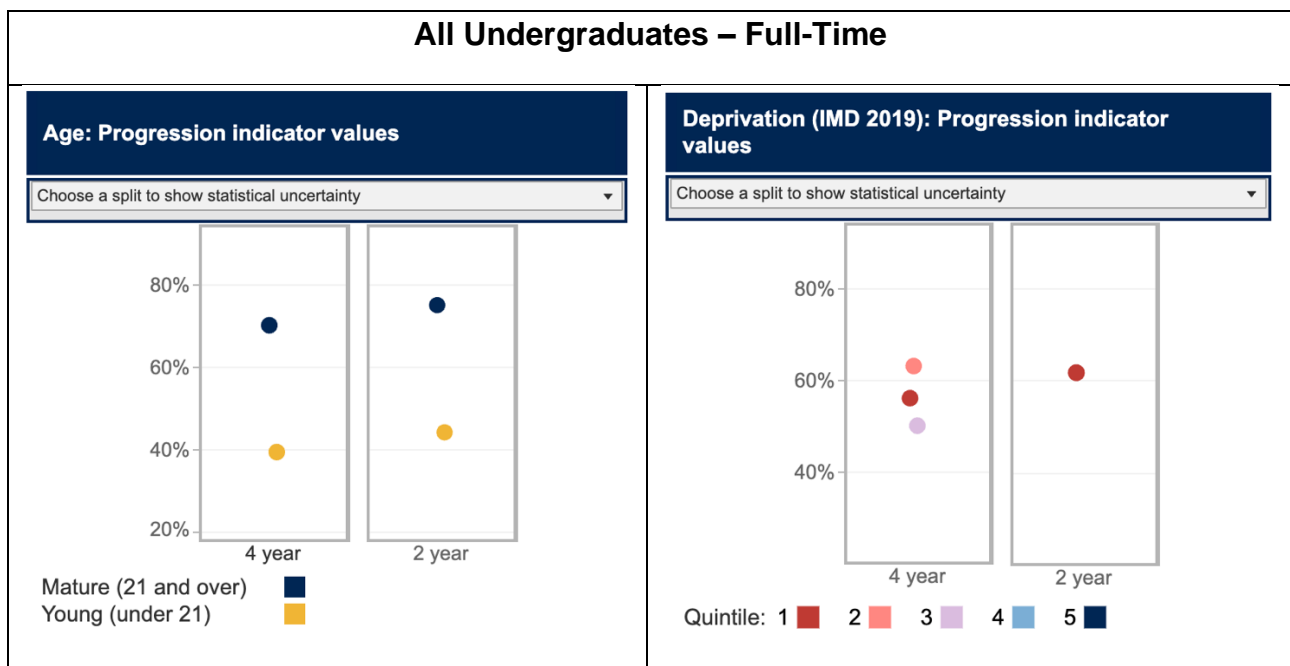
## Progression

Data is currently limited in this area, alongside lower completion rates of the Graduate Outcomes survey, where general activity is to be undertaken to improve completion rates of the survey, and students who are studying their courses with employer sponsorship who do not change roles within the survey timeline and students studying higher education courses that may not lead to employment classed as highly skilled.

Identified Area	Explanation	Rationale
<b>Age (Risk 5)</b>	Young students on Full-time (All undergraduates) are reported to have lower progression rates into graduate employment than mature learners in both 2 and 4-year aggregate data; and is also below sector average.	More data points are available for young students, while the impact of activities will also be monitored against ABCS and Free School Meals. These will be monitored, and variation made if impact is not evident on ABCS and FSM data.

One objective was developed following consideration of potential risks to equality of opportunity to improve progression for young learners.

Analysis of Progression data shows that young students (under 21) at the college are less likely to progress than mature students and is currently reported under below sector average, similar to Attainment, through analysis of ILR the college has identified intersections for young students and deprivation.





Data for part-time students was also analysed; however, part-time (first degree) has not been considered in analysis as these are no longer offered at the college, if they are reintroduced, a variation will be completed to consider targets for this area.

The largest population of part-time students is within the Counselling curriculum where many will not progress directly into management or professional roles but are successful in achieving the goals of employment in their sector, additionally an average of 65% (2020-2023) progress to the 1-year BSc Counselling course at the college. The second largest area is in the Engineering curriculum where many students are employer sponsored to complete their qualification or are supported into employment in the sector during studies, alongside their new role at the start of their course, so students often do not change or gain promotion within the survey timeline but have achieved their goals. The college will continue to develop internal progression monitoring to supplement Graduate Outcomes findings. Part-time students will benefit from the cross-intervention strategies to improve progression.

## **Objectives**

**Objective 5:** Riverside College will increase the proportion of young students progressing in employment to 60% or above by 2029.

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# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Riverside College

Provider UKPRN: 10002863

## Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

### Inflation statement:

We will not raise fees annually for new entrants

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	BA Education / BSc Counselling	N/A	5750
First degree	BA Sport Coaching and Sport Development / BSc Computer Science / BSc Health & Social Care	N/A	6950
Foundation degree	All except FdA Education	N/A	6950
Foundation degree	FdA Education	N/A	5250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	All except HND Engineering	N/A	6950
HNC/HND	HND Engineering	N/A	5550
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation degree	FdSc Counselling / FdSc Counselling CYP	N/A	4850
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	HNC Construction / HNC Engineering	N/A	3500
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	3995
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	3995
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

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

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

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Riverside College

Provider UKPRN: 10002863

### Investment summary

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

#### Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

**Table 6b - Investment summary**

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£16,000	£17,000	£19,000	£21,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£34,000	£43,000	£50,000	£55,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£2,000	£2,000	£3,000	£3,000

**Table 6d - Investment estimates**

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£4,000	£4,000	£5,000	£5,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£12,000	£13,000	£14,000	£16,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (£)</b>	<b>£16,000</b>	<b>£17,000</b>	<b>£19,000</b>	<b>£21,000</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</b>	<b>£10,000</b>	<b>£11,000</b>	<b>£11,000</b>	<b>£12,000</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</b>	<b>£6,000</b>	<b>£6,000</b>	<b>£8,000</b>	<b>£9,000</b>
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£26,000	£35,000	£42,000	£47,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>	<b>£34,000</b>	<b>£43,000</b>	<b>£50,000</b>	<b>£55,000</b>
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>27.0%</b>	<b>29.3%</b>	<b>31.4%</b>	<b>31.4%</b>
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£2,000	£2,000	£3,000	£3,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	1.6%	1.4%	1.9%	1.7%



