West Suffolk College

Access and participation plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Introduction and the Local Context[1]

This plan outlines West Suffolk College's (WSC) intentions to provide fair access and participation to all its HE funded full-time and part-time undergraduate programmes. The College fully appreciates the importance of supporting students throughout the duration of their studies at the College and this Plan provides reassurance to the students of the College's commitment.

WSC, based in Bury St Edmunds, has been delivering degrees to students for many years but always in partnership with a university. For the last 13 years this partnership has been through the Learning Network Partnership of the University of Suffolk (UoS) and the students studying at WSC are enrolled as UoS students. In 2018, the College was granted direct funding status and is now intending to broaden its HE opportunities to respond to the needs identified by the regional community and employer network. This Access and Participation Plan will be relevant only to the students enrolled directly as West Suffolk College HE students.

With the recently acquired direct funding status WSC intends to be a center of excellence for higher education, providing opportunity for its own level 3 students (including adult returners), those from sixth forms across the region and developing courses to meet the skills gap identified across East Anglia by the region's employers in conjunction with the LEP. The College is a member of Eastern Colleges Group which is a collective of visionary post-16 education providers, sharing the same ambitious strategic aims, committed to providing outstanding vocational and academic excellence to over 15,000 students across the region. ECG is comprised of West Suffolk College, Abbeygate Sixth Form College (Bury St. Edmunds) and One Sixth Form College (Ipswich). The College will work closely with regional employers, the LEP and other organisations to broaden the opportunities for post-16 education in a region which is acknowledged as an HE cold spot.

The College has made it a priority to focus on recruitment from under-represented communities, providing opportunity for access, success, and progression. The catchment area for West Suffolk College spreads from Thetford in the north of the region across to Diss in the east, Newmarket in the west and Sudbury in the south. Whilst the area includes communities which fall into the Quintile 3, 4 and 5 groups there are areas of the region which have high levels of young people from disaffected communities who do not typically engage in higher education, either as a student or an apprentice. This has been identified by the LEP sector skills plans, as has the need to increase the number of higher skilled professionals to meet the pending skills gap in specific areas of employment. Suffolk Observatory has also identified that amongst others, education is a declining domain for Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Norfolk in the IMD data.

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[1] Sector Skills Plans (2018)
[2] Suffolk County Council, The Economic Challenge, 2017; the Sector Skills Plans, 2018
www.suffolkobservatory.info/deprivation/report/view/18e4c294cd2c47bf95ae8589b78c7b57/E05007163
healthysuffolk.org.uk

1. Assessment of performance[2]

WSC currently has a very small cohort of direct funded students studying for a degree and higher national programmes, these include a small number of Higher Apprentices.

At this stage, we do not consider that the quantitative data set available to us is suitably robust to give an independent indication of need for access to, and participation in, higher education or inform our future provision alone. To be able to develop our Access and Participation Plan (APP Plan) we have drawn on the data available relating to the UoS compared with the national data available from the Office for Students Dashboard (2019), the UoS data available relating specifically to the WSC student body and internal data from WSC.

The College HE provision is primarily vocational HE which has been developed in conjunction with employer demand and informed by data from local sources, e.g., the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Suffolk County Council (SCC). A report from SCC (2017), indicates that all employment in 2016 was 1.5 % below the national level, the LEP Sector Skills Groups reports indicate that during the next 10 years there will be a significant need for skills development at level 4 and 5 to meet the skills gaps that will occur due to the aging population in the Eastern Region.
The same SCC report also identified that:

- The level of people employed at level 4 in Suffolk is approximately 4 % below the UK rate for the same level qualifications.
- People who worked in West Suffolk in 2021 earned on average £59 per week less than the GB average (ONS: Employee Earnings in the UK:2021)
- Gross Value Added in 2017 in Suffolk per worker was £5,014 lower than the UK average – improving and increasing the level of qualification achieved will help improve this

Through addressing the need for employment of a highly skilled workforce and working with schools and colleges to develop this pipeline we will be able to broaden access to HE for individuals who previously might not have considered it.

Through discussions and surveys with students, e.g., student focus group meetings, via email and Student Voice Forums we have been able to identify areas for development for each stage of the student journey:

Access
- Students expressed an interest in taster activity over the summer break to prepare students for the course upon which they will embark
- Offer a wider range of options for students to choose from
- Create a more 'university' feel
- Greater promotion of the provision for recruitment
- Information about any financial support available
- Information on support to develop academic skills for those who have not been in mainstream education for some time
- Care leaver bursary would be helpful

Participation
- Have a central electronic 'common room' on the VLE providing a better online atmosphere, encouraging chat and collaboration across the provision
- Bursaries helped students stay on track and succeed

- The support of personal support tutor and learning support mentor helped students continue and succeed
- Care leavers have greater interaction with support, so they know they're available whenever needed

Progression
- Career advice and guidance

- Planning guidance and next steps guidance for level 6 and beyond – earlier information about progression options would be useful

These points have all contributed to the design of the aims and objectives for this plan and will become key action points to achieve the targets.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status [3]

Access
The POLAR4 data relevant to WSC indicates that our students come from areas across all quintiles:

       Quintile 1 – 10 areas
       Quintile 2 – 6 areas
       Quintile 3 – 13 areas
       Quintile 4 – 15 areas
       Quintile 5 – 6 areas

Over 50% of the areas from which WSC recruits fall into quintile 1,2 or 3, including 50% in Cambridgeshire, Breckland in Norfolk (Q1 and 2) and mid Suffolk, with four in St Edmundsbury (Q2 and 3), the most local to WSC.

Analysis of socio-economic data relating to the catchment area for WSC was taken from the Suffolk Observatory website which reviewed the Index of Multiple Deprivation for England (IMD). It identified that across the region the IMD data indicated that between 2010 and 2015 Cambridgeshire (and Peterborough) became relatively more deprived in four of the seven domains including income, education, skills, and training. Norfolk's levels of deprivation increased in six of the seven domains including employment, education, skills, and training amongst others. Significantly Suffolk became more deprived in all seven domains. Whilst the Suffolk Observatory acknowledged that Suffolk is relatively affluent, its general position is declining, and the pockets of deprivation are expanding. There are also indicators of inequalities spreading in smaller market towns in Suffolk with the decline being worse than that of the nearest statistical neighbourhoods of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Essex. The district of Forest Heath is an area of serious concern and is a feeder for HE at WSC. It should be noted that the IMD does not rank rural deprivation. If this was included, it could change the data for areas of East Anglia significantly for the worse. As a result of the release of the IMD data an action for Suffolk is to focus on education, including equality of access to education and other services.

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[3] DfE, Widening Participation in Higher Education, (2017)
The East of England Science and Innovation Audit and the Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk (2018)

OfS Data Dashboard, Polar data (2019)
www.suffolkobservatory.info/deprivation/report/view/18e4c294cd2c47bf95ae8589b78c7b57/E05007163
healthysuffolk.org.uk

UoS data, relating to students studying at WSC, shows that there has been a decline in student numbers from all postal codes (CB, CO, IP, and NR) over the last three years. Most students from CB and NR post codes fall into quintile 1 and 2 groups.

Engagement with HE ranges from 12.4 % in Breckland to 37 % in St Edmundsbury. The average engagement across these three quintiles is 28.5 %. The DfE report Widening Participation in Higher Education, England 2016/17 identified there has been a gap of 16-18 % nationally between those under 19 who enter HE compared to those of the same age but in receipt of free school meals. This figure compares to those students entering HE from quintile 1 and 2 areas and supports suggestions of a gap of 10 % between quintile 1 and 2 at the UoS compared to the national population. Closing this gap will be a key commitment for WSC during the next five years.

WSC is involved with the regional NEACO partnership which has proved to be extremely successful in the last couple of years and has been working with c80 schools serving communities of target learners. It has engaged c27 % of target learners by its 2018 mid-year return to OfS (7 % above OfS requirement) and worked in close partnership with the region's three DfE Opportunity Areas. An outreach hub is being established in close partnership with key agencies in the region (notably the CEC, LEPs, LAs) to ensure that it supports local priorities.

The East of England Science and Innovation Audit and the Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk identify that there is a need to increase levels of aspiration and attainment across the region. This would fit with the analysis of the Suffolk Observatory which identifies that both IMD domains of income and education have declined since 2010 and a priority focus for Suffolk should now be on education, thereby supporting increase in levels of aspiration and attainment. To achieve this WSC engages with young people from early years to secondary education through WSC projects such as the Escalator project, the Science Box project, Crumble Box and the Big Bang project. It draws on the expertise of regional employers and HEI partners to continue to develop a pipeline to FE and HE, including the University of Cambridge, the UEA, Arm, BT, Bosch, EDF, Treatt and Cambridge Science Museum.

Success

Non-continuation

IMD data reports a decline in educational achievement across Suffolk, Norfolk, and Cambridgeshire and polar4 quintile 1 and 2 data for UoS shows a minimal gap (below 5 %) between its students continuing with study compared to the same groups nationally.

This has been roughly consistent over five years. However, the gap between continuation of students at WSC from quintiles 1 and 2, compared to those from quintiles 3, 4 and 5 is 8 % (20 % and 28 % respectively). At WSC 96 % of all students continued in their studies compared to 92 % at UoS as a whole.

UoS data suggest WSC has seen a decrease in withdrawals during the last three years with most students withdrawing for personal/financial/health reasons. A significant issue impacting continuation for students in Suffolk is the rurality of the region. Access to good transport links and roads affects students' opportunities because of the additional associated cost (childcare, loss of earning potential) and difficulties of travel causing students to consider progression to the next level of study.

<u>Attainment</u>

Data on attainment for students from socio-economic groups studying at UoS (OfS, 2019) indicates that attainment rates for students from quintile 1 and 2 have increased by 17 % since 2013. In comparison the national rate shows an increase of 7 % over the same period. In comparison to these data the WSC attainment rate ranges from 22 % down to 20 % between 2015 and 2017. UoS data for WSC demonstrates that 54 % for students from quintile 1 progress within year, as do those from quintile 5.

Progression to employment or further study

From the quintile 1 and 2 groups of students, WSC saw 100 % of students in 2015 progress to work or further study, in 2017 this declined to 96 %. Of these students, in 2015, 61 % progressed to professional or managerial roles, but 86 % progressed in 2017. This is consistent with the rise seen at UoS, and across other English HE providers which shows increases from 60 % in 2012 to 70 % in 2017. The difference between those progressing to professional or managerial roles from quintile 1 and 2, compared to quintiles 3, 4 and 5 was 5 % in 2016, this is comparable to the national data shared in the DfE report, Widening Participation in Higher Education, England 2016/17.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students[4]

Access

The make-up of student numbers on UoS courses at WSC are predominantly white (536 or 94 %) which is typical of the population of Suffolk (97 %) and Norfolk (90 %). The make-up of entrants from black ethnic groups to WSC was below 5 % and had declined by 2 %. Three years of data from UoS for WSC, demonstrates a consistent engagement of small numbers (below 5 %) of all entrants being from Asian communities, this is approximately 50 % below the Asian population in both Norfolk and Suffolk, which is also small (below 5 %).

Other entrants from ethnic groups to HE at WSC have declined by 50 % between 2016 to 2019 making the mixed population of the provision in 2019 a small percent of the population (below 5 %), however, this is in proportion to the small percentage of the regional population (below 5 %). This would indicate that recruitment from these groups is in line with the makeup of the regional population.

Success

<u>Non-continuation</u>

The retention rate of BAME students in 2018 was 88 %. This is lower than the WSC overall retention rate, currently at 95 %, leaving a gap of 7 % between retention of BAME students and overall retention. Reasons for withdrawal extend across a range of circumstances, including personal and health issues and the wrong choice of career.

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[4] Ethnic Breakdown Spreadsheet (2009)
University of Suffolk WSC Data Reports (2019)
NSS Report (2018)
Office for Students Data Dashboard (2019)

Attainment

NSS data shows that BAME students are more satisfied by their experience at WSC. In some cases, there is more than a 10 % difference in the level of satisfaction for non-white students, e.g., learning opportunities (90 % and 76 % respectively), organisation and management (83 % compared to 63 % respectively). This is positive for our students from BAME backgrounds.

In comparison to national and UoS data (national attainment – 68.8 % and UoS attainment – 55 %) in 2017, 77 % of WSC BAME students progressed with their course compared to 60 % in 2015. This is a 17-percentage point increase and nearly 10 % above the national rate for 2017.

At this stage WSC does not have access to data comparing good honours grades of different ethnic groups. This will be data that we will start to collect and analyse over the five years of this APP Plan.

Progression to graduate employment or post graduate study

National data for BAME groups of students shows that there was an increase of 10 % over 5 years from 2013 into undergraduate employment or post graduate study. The OfS data for UoS identifies a similar increase for the same period. During this same period WSC data indicates that for all ethnic groups in 2017, 67 % progressed. The progression rate for 2017 is in line with the national (69 %) and UoS (65 %) data.

1.3 Mature students[5]

Access

Data shared by CAVA, based on engagement with HE from Access to HE courses shows that of those students entering HE from disadvantaged areas, 23 % have successfully completed an Access to HE course whilst only 11 % have completed another level 3 course. However, the same CAVA report shows that in 2017 only 67 % of Access to HE students from the Eastern region progressed to HE, compared to the national figure of 77 %, making the Eastern region the second lowest progression in the country. Therefore, there is a gap in accessing HE of 10 % between the Eastern region and nationally. WSC will make a key commitment to close this gap over the next five years. If we do not achieve this, we will continue to work towards closing this gap between regional and national progression.

Typically, most students accessing HE at West Suffolk College are in the 19-21 age range and the 22-30 age range (29 % and 24 % respectively). The 22-30 age range has typically been the largest age group of students accessing the College but has declined in recruitment by 35 % during the three-year period from 2016 to 2019.

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[5] University of Suffolk WSC Data Reports (2019)
CAVA Key Statistics (2019)
Office for Students Data Dashboard (2019)
NSS Report (2018)

This contrasts with UoS but is in line with the national rate. However, this is a significant decline causing a gap in the number of mature students accessing HE in the region.

WSC will establish a key commitment to reversing the decline of students from the 22-30 age range progressing to HE. We will develop recruitment campaigns and work with appropriate regional groups to provide IAG and access to HE as well as review our curriculum to ensure accessibility for students from this group and other mature age ranges.

Success
Non-continuation
Continuation of students aged 21-25 at UoS over the last five years has increased from 83 % to 86 %. National continuation for mature students has remained steady in five years at 85 % to 84 %. At WSC, in this same age range, there was retention of 88 % of students, 2 % above the UoS rate and 4 % above national rates.

In the age range, 25-30, UoS retention has remained at around 83 % for five years whilst nationally retention has declined by 5 %. Over the same period retention at UoS for the 31-40 age bracket rose by 2 % and nationally it declined by 2 %. In the 41-50 category retention of UoS and nationally has seen a significant decline of 8 % and 3 % respectively and in the 51+ category UoS has increased retention from 80 % to 85 % since 2013 whilst national retention has declined by 2 %. Whilst WSC data reports from UoS do not breakdown data by so many categories, they do show data for 21-25 and over 25. Retention for this latter group has increased by a very small amount (less than 5% %) year on year for three years, in contrast to the UoS and national trends.

Attainment
At WSC, based on UoS data, 44 % of all mature students (over 21) achieved their award in 2017, showing a positive increase from 2015 when achievement of an award was at 30 %. Compared to UoS at 57 % achievement in 2013 rising to 68 % in 2017 and nationally, 66 % to 70 %. This indicates a gap of 22 % between WSC and UoS and a gap of 26 % between WSC and national attainment.

Over the three-year period 2016-18 at WSC, it is evident that satisfaction of mature students dipped during 2017 in all areas by as much as 17 % (assessment and feedback). However, satisfaction for mature students has improved in the last year with most areas on a par with younger students' levels of satisfaction at 84 % and comparing well with the results of 2016 (83 %). Although satisfaction in the use of technology, e- resources is consistently lower than the satisfaction rate of younger students.

At this stage WSC does not have access to data comparing good honours grades of students with disabilities. This will be data that we will start to collect and analyse over the five years of this APP Plan.

Progression to graduate employment or post graduate study
UoS reports for WSC show that progression to employment or further study for mature students in the 21-25 category has increased from 90 % to 98 % since 2014 and 2016 and of this 55 % progressed into graduate jobs or post graduate study in 2014 and 66 % in 2016. Similarly, there has been a rise in progression to employment or further study for those in the over 25 categories, from 92 % in 2014 to 96 % in 2016 and of this 56 % progressed to graduate employment or post graduate study in 2014 rising to 76 % in 2016. National progression to employment or further study has increased by 5 % to 75 % between 2012 and 2017 whilst UoS progression has declined (72 % to 69 %). WSC progression to employment or further study therefore is approximately 20 % higher than the national data and 26 %higher than UoS.

1.4 Disabled students[6]

Access
The range of disabilities that have been considered include cognitive/learning difficulties, mental health, sensory, medical, or physical, multiple impairments and social communication difficulties (OfS 2019).

Generally, the data for UoS is on a par, if not better than national rates in all areas and has been consistently so through the five years of data available. The range of comparison in each area has remained low (below 5 %) either way. In comparison, locally, at WSC, students enter with a range of disabilities, although 86 % in 2018 did not declare a disability or difficulty which was consistent with the previous two years (84% in 2017 and 85% in 2016).

The number of students declaring a disability upon entry to HE enables early assessment of needs. The percentage of students who did not declare a disability or difficulty upon access, but are found to have, or go on to declare a disability or difficulty on programme, will be monitored over the five years of this APP Plan.

Success
Non-continuation
Continuation of disabled students nationally has remained consistent at around 90 % since 2012, at UoS the data shows an increase from 82 % in 2012 to 85 % in 2016. At WSC data shows that retention of all disabled students in 2015 was 84 %, declining to 82 % in 2017. This is in the range of UoS retention rates but is 11 % below the retention rate of non-disabled students at WSC (93 %).

The highest numbers of students with disabilities at WSC are in the categories of long-standing illness and mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. This has been the case since 2015.

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[6] Office for Students Data Dashboard (2019)
University of Suffolk WSC Data Report (2019)
NSS Report (2018)

Comparing WSC with national data for the category, long standing illnesses (sensory, medical, or physical impairment), WSC remains consistent with UoS which has seen an increase in retention from 76 % to 80 %. National retention of this category was constant over five years at approximately 89 %.

Of those students at WSC with mental health illnesses, 36 % were not retained in 2017-18, however in 2016-17 and 2015-16 non-retention was approximately 50 %. However, the 2017-18 percentage point rate is still 14 % below the WSC retention rate of 50 % of students with no mental health difficulty.

The retention rate for specific learning difficulties does not compare well with national and UoS rates for cognitive and learning difficulty. Nationally, retention was consistent over five years at 91 %. At UoS the retention for this category saw a rise from 86 % to 92 % retention in the same period. At WSC retention for this group has been approximately 50 % in both 2015-16 and 2016-17 but declining to 34 % in 2017-18, giving a gap between UoS of 48 % and nationally of 55 %.

Attainment
NSS results show that disabled students are consistently satisfied with the provision they experience at WSC with overall satisfaction in 2018 increasing to 92 % from 83 % in 2017.

Progression from one year to the next for students with disabilities shows a decline from 53 % in 2015 to 40 % in 2017. UoS data shows that attainment for those with disabilities was 46 % in 2012, rising to 64 % in 2017. Nationally in the same group there was a rise in retention rate from 70 % to 76 % over the five-year period. This shows a significant gap between WSC progression and UoS of 24 % in 2017. Attainment of students with disabilities and learning difficulties at WSC is indicated to be 35 % and 37 % respectively, compared with those students without a disability or learning difficulty at 40 % and 41 % respectively, giving a fair comparison.

At this stage WSC does not have access to data comparing good honours grades of different ethnic groups. This will be data that we will start to collect and analyse over the five years of this APP Plan.

Progression to graduate employment or post graduate study
Nationally, the progression for students with disabilities to employment or further study has risen from 64 % to 72 % since 2013, this has been a consistent rise. At UoS over the same period it has remained consistent at 60-62 %. At WSC the data is broken into specific disabilities and for most, progression over the three years 2014-17 is good at 95 % or above. However, in 2016 the mental health category fell from 100% to 88 % progression to employment. There is a 10 % gap between students at WSC with no disabilities progressing to employment and those with mental health difficulties (98 % and 88 % respectively). Students with learning difficulties progressing to graduate employment or postgraduate study in 2016-17 was 33 % compared to 67 % of students with no learning difficulty, giving a gap of 34 %.

Progression to employment for students with no disability also ranged from 95 % to 98 % over the three years, showing favourable comparisons between the groups.

1.5 Care leavers[7]

Access

A report by Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers, 2018-21 identifies that young people leaving care want better opportunities to go to university. It identifies that across Suffolk the number of young people in care has risen by over 11 % in the last five years, that there is a close association between the most deprived sectors of the County and the number of young people in care. At WSC local data shows that a very small group of students (below 5 %) aged 16-18 were young care leavers in 2018-19. It is not known how many of these progress to HE at WSC, however data for 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 for the HE provisions only shows a very small number of students (below 5 %) who are care leavers enrol for a HE course at the college. During the period of this APP Plan, WSC will investigate the possibility of monitoring the progress of care leavers into HE following their time at WSC as an FE student.

Success

Non-continuation

Of the group of care leavers identified as having enrolled at WSC all were retained during their courses. This has been consistent since 2015.

Attainment

Despite all being retained in each year, 2015, 2016 and 2017, 60% of the original number enrolled progressed to the following level of study. Course completion data shows that in 2015 40 % of the original enrolled students successfully completed their course, in 2016 only 20% completed and in 2017, 100 % completed their course).

Progression to employment or further study

In 2014 there is no evidence of progression to employment for care leavers studying at WSC. In 2017, 100% of care leavers gained employment but there is no evidence to support this being graduate employment or post graduate study. Therefore, there is a greater need to track and support care leavers.

WSC will include in its action plan a key commitment to monitoring the progression from study to graduate employment or post graduate study of care leavers, we will work with appropriate regional and internal agencies to support progression of this group of students.

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[7] Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers (2018-21)
University of Suffolk WSC Data Report, 2019

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage[8]

Intersection of deprivation quintile and all ethnicity except white
UoS data shows that recruitment for quintiles 1 and 2 non-white students has remained below 10 % of national rates since 2013 (7.4 % in 2013 compared to national rate 17 % and 15.2 % in 2017 compared to national rate 20 % in 2017). However, it is above the population rates for Suffolk and Norfolk. Part time entrants in the same category were an extremely small group (below 5 %) in 2013 and whilst increased, it was still below 5 % in 2017. This compares well to regional population rates. WSC and UoS work closely with Suffolk County Council to reach applicants from this group, supporting the Council's commitment to support low aspiration and achievement amongst Quintiles 1 and 2.

Intersection of deprivation quintile and sex
Evidence indicates that the intersection across quintile 3, 4 and 5 and male entrants (full time) is consistent with the national data: UoS 20.9 % in 2013 and 18.5 % in 2017 compared to national rates of 28.2 % in 2013 and a similar decline to 26.4 % in 2017. For part time entrants in this same category, data shows an increase for UoS since 2013 (45 %) to 65 % in 2017, compared to national 24.1 % in 2013 and 26 % in 2017 putting the UoS entrants' above national rate.

In the same quintile groups, UoS saw a decline in female full-time entrants from 40 % in 2013 to 38.1 % in 2017. This contrasted with the rise in national rate of 10 % in 2013 to 32 % in 2017, putting UoS 6 % above national rate. Data on part time female students in quintile 3,4,5 shows that in 2013 UoS had 31 % of entrants in this category, declining to 16 % in 2016.

The national rate for this same category shows a consistent rate of entrants across the five-year period of 35.7 % in 2013 and 33.4 % in 2017, leaving a gap of 17 % between UoS and national rate. This is data that WSC should consider in planning.

In 2013 at UoS 13 % of full-time male entrants were from quintiles 1 and 2, increasing to 16 % in 2017. There has been a decline of entrants from this group nationally with 21 % of entrants in 2013 moving to 17.7 % in 2017. Part time entrants in the same group made up 12 % of entrants in 2013 at UoS declining to 11 % in 2017. The national rate for this group was 15.6 % in 2013, staying consistent at 15.8 % in 2017. However, at WSC there has been a decline of young, white male students of 64 students (16 %) between 2016 and 2019. With 8 % not continuing in 2017 this is an improvement on non- continuation in 2015 (12 %) but significantly higher than national rate of non- continuation at 2 %. WSC will make a commitment to work with external agencies, schools, and colleges to engage with white males from quintiles 1 and 2 to raise awareness of HE opportunities and encourage engagement.

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[8] University of Suffolk WSC Data Report, 2019 Office for Students Data Dashboard, 2019
Suffolk County Council, The Economic Challenge, 2017 Ethnic Breakdown spreadsheet, 2009

Females (full time) in this same group at UoS have made up a similar percentage of entrants between 2013 (26.1 %) to 2017 (27.5 %). Part time female entrants in this category were 12 % in 2013 to 8 % in 2017. National rates for this group were 24.6 % in 2013 and 24.8 % in 2017. Locally there is not only a decrease in recruitment from this group, but the numbers are not consistent with the national numbers or in line with the national numbers, leaving a gap of 16 % in 2017.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

2.1 Overview
To establish robust aims, objectives and targets for our Access and Participation plan we have drawn on the following data sources and information:
- Data provided by the OfS to inform our assessment of performance enabled us to identify the gaps in our recruitment and support for accessing HE
- Consideration of the strategic aims of HE at WSC with focus on addressing the widening participation needs of the community as well as recognising the employer needs for the coming generations. Data and research by the LEP and county councils.
- Reflections on our long-term curriculum aims and recognising the need to review this to establish a dynamic and responsive curriculum to meet the demands of the region over the next five years
- Awareness of the contribution WSC makes to closing skills gaps and recruitment gaps from widening participation communities and maintaining an evidence base to review this regularly and identify where WSC needs to focus
- The outcome of internal and national student surveys to understand the experiences and progression patterns across all courses delivered at WSC
- Student voice feedback
- Developing the HE data set for directly funded students to refine our actions.

2.2 Target groups
WSC is aware that there are students from a broad range of groups who are all priority areas for supporting access to higher education. However, we have identified specific target groups as the focus of this five-year plan. This will be reviewed on an annual basis and if evidence shows a need to change to prioritise different groups, we will address this accordingly.

Target groups for access, participation and progression from September 2020 will be:
- Students from areas of social deprivation and limited engagement with HE, including mature students, with a specific focus on male learners, requiring access and support for moving into a second career; addressing the skills gaps identified across the region:
    o *Through coordinated engagement across Eastern Colleges Group to raise awareness of HE and support progression from further education and adult learning*
    o *Continued working with NEACO and other outreach activities within schools and colleges*
    o *Diversification of the curriculum and the exploration of more diverse pathways into and through higher education such as Higher Technical Qualifications and Apprenticeships*
- Care leavers seeking to progress to HE across Eastern Colleges Group
- Students from Black and Middle Eastern ethnic origin to access HE and succeed on programme to postgraduate study or graduate employment

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- Students with disabilities – physical, mental health and specific learning difficulties.
  - *Through pre-sessional and sessional assessments*
  - *On-session support overseen by a Student Review Panel to review progress and provide bespoke support*
  - *Continued review and development of Student Support Framework*

This strategy has been informed by the data analysed pertaining to engagement with HE across East Anglia and the concerning increase in deprivation across Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk for both income and education. Local research from Suffolk County Council and the NALEP indicate engagement with education as a priority for development of local and regional workforce and care leavers.

2.3 Aims and objectives - 2020-2025

Below are our aims, with supporting objectives, for this APP Plan for the next five years. The aims are fully outlined in our Targets and Investment plan, giving outcomes and impact targets over the five-year period. We will monitor the achievement of these aims and objectives through our action plan.

Access Aims
- To close the gap in participation in HE for students from under-represented groups, with a specific target for care leavers
- To broaden opportunities for students from low participation neighbourhoods and groups to engage in higher education
- To increase proportion of students from quintile 1 and 2 communities, particularly white males, mature students, students with learning and mental health difficulties across Eastern Colleges Group.

Access Objectives:

- To develop and continually review the curriculum offer which is designed to provide flexible approaches to learning to enable access by students from widening participation communities.
- To work in partnership with schools, colleges, sixth forms and local community organisations through a programme of evidence-based outreach work to widen engagement with HE across underrepresented groups
- To diversify the curriculum through the exploration of pathways into higher education such as Higher Technical Qualifications and Apprenticeships

Success Aim
- To reduce the non-continuation gap for students with disabilities compared to those without
- To reduce the non-continuation gap of male students with disabilities from low-income households
- To reduce the non-continuation gap of students with mental health difficulties from low participation neighbourhoods
- To reduce the non-continuation gap of BAME students from low-income households

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Success Objectives

- Through pre-sessional and early on-session assessment, ensure access to a robust programme of wider academic support for students with mental health and specific learning needs to close the attainment gap
- To undertake thematic audits to review interventions based upon the factors identified as influencing non-continuation such as EDI / financial hardship / accessibility of the curriculum
- Enhanced personal tutor role guided and supported by Student Review Group comprised of Pastoral Support Tutor, Academic Skills Tutor and wider Welfare and Safeguarding leads
- Development of TLA strategy to support transition to HE from technical and vocational courses at level 3; embed academic skills, assessment literacy and time management within programme of study
- Financial support for eligible students alongside pastoral support for managing time, money, and debt
- Development of academic skills module to support students on-programme, with initial face to face digital skills component to encourage and enable engagement with materials embedded within VLE to support continued access and attainment.

Progression Aim

- To raise the progression to post graduate study or graduate employment for those students with a learning disability
- To raise the progression to post graduate study or graduate employment for those students with a mental health disability

Progression Objectives

- Develop and continually review the curriculum offer to embed placements, internships and accredited routes supported by Placement and Careers Support Teams to identify and share opportunities for placement / internships and part-time employment for students on programme and graduating students
- Embed employability skills and personal development into the curriculum and extra-curricular student support framework
- Build upon existing careers guidance by drawing upon opportunities for guest speakers from professional bodies and employers to raise awareness of the range of employment opportunities and further study options
- Develop careers service to support students to apply and prepare for selection processes.
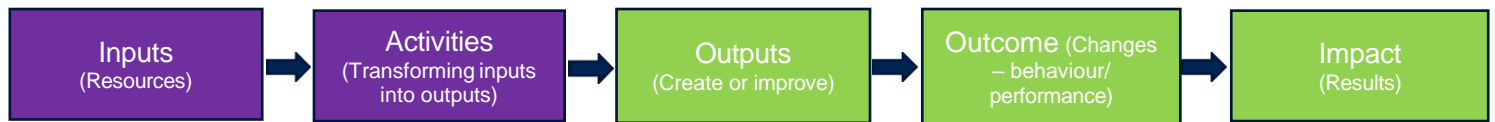
3. Strategic measures[9]

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

The strategy for monitoring the activities set to achieve the targets, aims and objectives

established in this APP Plan will be based on a Results Chain, to review the objective, identify inputs (resources), implement, review outputs, identify outcome and establish the impact:

| Inputs (Resources) | → | Activities (Transforming inputs into outputs) | → | Outputs (Create or improve) | → | Outcome (Changes – behaviour/ performance) | → | Impact (Results) |

It will require the college to consider the resources needed for an objective to be achieved effectively, for action to be taken against the objective, for review of the activities and to establish the outputs, identify the change and the impact of this against the objective.

West Suffolk College will ensure that we share data and collaborate on activities for widening participation into HE, endeavouring to match activities against our objectives whilst working collegiately with our partners appropriately to promote the broader opportunities available in HE.

West Suffolk College has excellent connections with primary and secondary schools, sixth form colleges and has its own level 3 provision with over 1000 students. We are actively involved in projects at all stages of education from reception upwards, working in partnership with universities and businesses across the region. For example, Accelerate East with the University of Cambridge, ARM and BT. We will be drawing on all our partners and our teaching teams to be involved with this Plan to broaden the understanding of what HE is and how it can be achieved locally.

WSC is involved with the regional NEACO partnership which has proved to be extremely successful in the last couple of years. It has been working with around 80 schools serving communities of target learners, it has engaged approximately 27 % of target learners by its 2018 mid-year return to OfS (7 % above OfS requirement) and worked in close partnership with the region's three DfE Opportunity Areas and an outreach hub is being established in close partnership with key agencies in the region (notably the CEC, LEPs, LAs) to ensure that it supports local priorities.

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[9] http://winderl.net/resultschain/, accessed: 14.5.19

Teaching and support teams at WSC are all involved in recruitment through visits to groups and schools, pre-application IAG and assessments for specific needs. All staff working in the community are aware of our Access and Participation targets and endeavour to work with associated groups to raise awareness and aspirations across the region. From 2022-23 the APP will be overseen in part by the Curriculum Development Board bringing together curriculum leads from WSC and Eastern Colleges Group to review progression and destination of the student body to inform and revise support and interventions.

WSC will work with the Student Governor and Student Representatives to work with the curriculum teams to promote and support access to HE from across the target groups. Students will be involved in monitoring the progress of the APP Plan through ongoing student voice activity, including Student Council, course team meetings, academic boards, and student surveys. In 2022-23 a Student Council lead by the Head of Student Success and the elected Student Governor will lead specific focus groups to review and inform the delivery of the APP plan specifically related to equality, diversity, and inclusion; student experience on programme and learning, teaching and assessment to inform WSC TLA strategy and professional development offer.

The college prides itself on an inclusive approach for all students. Students will be involved in course design; their opinions will be sought on accessibility, facilities, approaches to teaching and learning, all with the purpose of ensuring that students have a sense of belonging and ownership.

The APP Plan will be presented by the Executive Dean of Higher Education and Head of Student Success, to the Senior Executive Team of the college and reviewed by the Higher Education Excellence Committee, Governors Group, on behalf of the College Corporation. The KPIs associated with this APP Plan can be found in the table in the section Strategic Measures (KPIs).

Alignment with other strategies[10]
The APP Plan is aligned to the policies and procedures in some instances of our HEI validating partners, for instance assessment regulations, appeals and complaints. However, in terms of equality and diversity this strategy works in alignment with the policy of the college, ensuring that the requirements of this policy are considered and reflected by all levels of study at the college, including the HE provision. Equality objectives are established in our HE Strategy and are prioritised as a KPI for the HE department, challenged and monitored by the HE Excellence Committee, Governors Group. The objectives have been established following consultation with students representing the relevant groups through student voice forums and focus groups and the subject of E&D is always addressed when reviewing student profiles and experiences at course team meetings.

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[10] NALEP Sector Skills Plans (2018)
Suffolk County Council, The Economic Challenge, 2017; the Sector Skills Plans, 2018
www.suffolkobservatory.info/deprivation/report/view/18e4c294cd2c47bf95ae8589b78c7b57/E05007163
healthysuffolk.org.uk
Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers (2018-21)

The HE department at WSC has a teaching and learning strategy designed to address TLA specifically for this level of study – the TLA strategy will be reviewed against KPIs in 2022-23 and informed through the student voice. The TLA strategy has been designed to provide opportunities for flexible learning, meeting the diverse needs of individuals and ensuring accessibility for all students. This approach is reflected through the APP plan and the associated targets.

The HE and TLA strategy documents support interaction between students of all groups and characteristics, they are designed to promote inclusion and underpin the design and development of any programme in the provision.

The College has also developed a strategy for financial support for students on its directly funded courses. Evidence to justify this level of support comes from guidance from our partner HEI, the UEA. The purpose of this strategy is to support access for students from the identified target groups and to support them through progression to successful achievement of a qualification. The financial support available to students will be reviewed annually to ensure we meet the needs of our student body with respect to the delivery of the APP. Criteria for being eligible for financial support can be found through the College website: Policies | USWSC - University Studies at West Suffolk College

Strategic measures

All students have access to, and may experience, the following:
- Student Support Hub available on-line and as a physical presence in the University Centre. This provides both triage and guidance to students on programme with issues related to finance, health, wellbeing, academic and learning resources and IT support.
- Curriculum and assessment seek to ensure equality of opportunity with authentic and varied assessment and feedback. In 2022-23 we are reviewing our Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy which will be used to support the development of our academic design principles. This will be informed by feedback from our student body as one the strands of our Student Voice activities.
- Personal Academic Tutor roles with scaffolded prompts to focus the tutorials on the transition to HE; success on programme through the development of a personal approach to study in response to feedback on assessment; accessing wider support; preparing for further study or employment with a focus on personal and professional development.
- Pastoral Support Tutor to provide triage and access to bespoke support through the student support framework, including disability assessments and personal education learning plans.
- Academic Skills and Learning Advisors to develop study skills, academic writing and confidence in research and critical evaluation.
- Introduction of prescreening for neuro diversity and provision of ongoing support by the Learning Support Coordinator.

The table below provides an overview of the activity planned to achieve our targets. Activity in Bold is new activity from 2022 forward.

Access:

Need:	Activity / Input:	Method of Evaluation:
Fuller understanding of the factors influencing students' decision to undertake HE: - Progression from Level 3 feeder routes - Care Leavers - **Carers** - Those with disability - Adult Returners - ESOL and those with refugee status - Employer Sponsored	Promotion of student focus groups to inform curriculum strategy and curriculum design: through targeted outreach activity (internal pipeline / external collaborations) and students on-programme of study. **Curriculum Development Board** to analyse data to inform development of curriculum offer, modes of delivery and student support framework.	Insights into curriculum design, qualification, and modes of delivery to inform strategic plan Progression Board Data AOAR data UCAS end of cycle data **Impact Measure:** Increased intake of students from WSC/ECG, employers, and school/college partners
Need: Development of curriculum offer through engagement with regional employer steering groups to inform diversification of the curriculum offer to support regional/national skills shortages	**Activity:** Employer Steering Groups aligned to Curriculum Development Board to inform and support the development of curricular and personal / professional development of student body. **Promotion of apprenticeships and higher technical qualifications**; professionally accredited programmes and programmes offering placements and internships.	**Method of Evaluation:** Progression Board Data AOAR data UCAS end of cycle data **Impact Measure:** Curriculum Offer against student number target
Need: Closer working relationship and co-developed outreach activity across ECG and partner schools and colleges to raise aspirations to study HE.	**Activity / Input** Continued regional collaborative work to support aspiration to HE and Level 2 and 3 qualifications	**Method of Evaluation** Longitudinal study of collaborative outreach programmes for specific target groups Progression and destination data across ECG. **Impact Measure:** Increased intake of students from WSC/ECG and local

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Need:	Activity / Input	Method of Evaluation
		educational providers
To close the gap in participation in HE for care leavers	Development of partnership with relevant external organisations to engage with care leavers and facilitate co-ordination / evaluation of interventions with identified cohorts. **Interventions aligned to partnership projects to extend impact and enable greater analysis of outcomes to inform regional strategic approach.**	Longitudinal study of collaborative outreach programmes for specific target groups Progression and destination data across ECG.

Success

Need:	Activity / Input:	Impact Measure:
Fuller understanding of barriers to learning: - Learning Disability - Mental Health - Physical Disability - Equality and Diversity - Financial hardship	Internal and **external audits**/ advice and guidance, to inform action plans to address barriers to learning.	Engagement in audits and Student Voice Activity Insights into impact of academic failure for under-represented students across the curriculum. Insights into data reporting / monitoring to analyse and interpret academic failure of under-represented students. **Method of Evaluation:** Mapping of outcomes of audits against action plans and relevant policies / strategy.
Need: Through pre-sessional and early on-session assessment, ensure access to a robust	**Activity / Input:** **Student Review Board** to identify students requiring additional support to be addressed through pre-	**Impact Measure:** Fewer failed modules, improved grades, and continuation on programme of study.

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		Fewer withdrawals / deferrals and intercalations.
programme of wider academic support for students with mental health and specific learning needs	sessional engagement and access to **Get Ahead Materials / Sessions**.	**Method of Evaluation: Monitor students with mental health and specific learning needs – self-declaration alongside outcomes of pre-screening activity.**
	Introduction of pre-screening for neurodiversity with provision of on-going support through the Learning Support Coordinator.	Monitor correlation of the activity with module success and improved engagement.
	Funds to support students requiring further referrals for Disability Support Assessment.	Monitor engagement with Pastoral and Academic Support Teams – through reports provided via Pro-Monitor.
	Close liaison between Pastoral Support Tutor and Academic Teams to ensure Independent Learning Plans and pastoral support sessions are embedded.	Measure engagement with on-line support materials (e.g., Get Ahead) and correlation against module marks and continuation rates.
	Academic Skills Tutor to offer one to one mentoring and support for each student.	Monitor accessibility / inclusivity of learning, teaching and assessment through student voice activities.
	Access to Mental Health and Welfare Support through one-to-one mentoring and support for each student.	
Need: Review of TLA strategy.	**Activity / Input: Co-development of TLA strategy** through engagement with student body, professional development, and research informed practice, to ensure learning materials, activities, and assessment methods (including feedback – feedforward) are inclusive. **Development of VLE** to support accessibility and	**Impact Measure:** TLA review. Fewer failed modules, improved grades, and continuation on programme of study. Fewer withdrawals / deferrals and intercalations. **Method of Evaluation: Greater use of data analytics within VLE to determine correlation of**

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	inclusivity outside of the classroom.	**TLA projects** (such as the use of Rubrics) against student engagement with TLA activity, module marks and continuation rates. Staff CPD activity – new TLA initiatives and student outcomes.
Need: Address financial hardship	**Activity/Input:** Financial support for eligible students, including pastoral support for managing time, money, and debt. **Exploration of financial hardship as a barrier to continuing programme** to inform financial support offer.	**Impact Measure:** Fewer failures and withdrawals from programme. APP review – student voice review. **Method of Evaluation:** Evaluate impact of direct financial support.
Progression		
Need: Development of curriculum offer to embed opportunities for placements / internships / professional competencies aligned to accreditation	**Activity:** Curriculum Development Board to inform and support the development of curricular and personal / professional development of student body. **Promotion of apprenticeships and higher technical qualifications**; professionally accredited programmes and programmes offering placements and internships.	**Impact measure:** Improved progression to highly skills employment of further study at post-graduate level. **Method of Evaluation:** Validations / Professional Accreditations Curriculum Offer against student number target
Need: Develop students' awareness of employment and further study options – developing students' confidence and readiness to pursue next steps.	**Activity / Input:** **Embed employability skills and personal development into the curriculum and extra-curricular student support framework**: engagement with placement and careers service and package of support such as 1:1 coaching, preparation of	**Impact measure:** Improved progression to highly skills employment of further study at post-graduate level. **Method of Evaluation:** Monitor engagement with

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	CVs and applications, mock interviews (Career Ahead).	placement and careers service.
	Build upon existing careers guidance by drawing upon opportunities for **guest speakers from professional bodies and employers to raise awareness of the range of employment opportunities and further study options.**	**Monitor access to on-line Career Ahead materials and support and correlation of this access against graduate outcomes.**
	Develop careers service to support students to apply and prepare for selection processes.	Evaluate the success of job portal for students studying HE.
	Trial **Micro placement scheme** for students that need additional support - paid placement in college up to 30 hours for disabled students or those suffering mental health issues as a bridging opportunity towards graduation.	

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Financial support

Award	Eligibility	Amount	Frequency
WSC Bursary	Students with Household Income of less than £25,000:	*Pro rata for PT students	Annual Payment
	Band 1: Household Income less than or equal to £16,000	£600*	Annual Payment
	Band 2: Household Income of £16,001 to £20,000	£500*	Annual Payment
	Band 3: Household Income of £20,001 to £25,000	£400*	Annual Payment
Specific Learning Difficulty (spLD) Diagnostic Assessment Bursary	Funding to pay for the cost of a SpLD assessment, allowing eligible students to have a formal diagnosis of their learning difficulty, which can be used to develop an individual learning plan and/or support an application for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA): Eligibility criteria: - Positive indicator of SpLD using screening tool - Enrolled WSC HE student, with a minimum of one full semester left on their course NB: if inadequate notice to cancel is given and/or there is non-attendance at a booked session, the students should expect to be charged the full cost of the assessment.	Full cost of assessment through WSC approved assessor	One-off payment made directly to the supplier per eligible student.
Hardship Fund	A hardship fund is available to students experiencing financial disadvantage. A panel of senior staff assess hardship cases and provide a compassionate, consistent approach to hardship support. Hardship applications are supported by the Pastoral Support Tutor.	Means assessed	One off payment

3.2 Student consultation[11]

For the development of this APP plan, HE students at WSC were consulted both through the Student Voice Forum meetings and through an online survey, encouraging feedback on each element of access and participation. The responses to this survey, together with comments from the Student Voice Forum meetings have been analysed and used to inform the aims and objectives of this Plan. They will form key actions against which targets will be monitored in order

that we meet the objectives set.

The feedback from students supported the inclusion of the aims for Access to HE, specifically the inclusion of the continual review of the curriculum offers and the development of pre-course workshops and activities as taster events to enable engagement with HE and raise aspiration to undertake HE.

Student feedback influenced the inclusion of the development of an electronic 'common room' to enable peer support and to strengthen opportunities and access to academic support.

Student feedback influenced the aims and objectives for Progression through the development of career guidance and guidance for next steps from level 5 to level 6.

Student consultation will continue to take place formally at intervals throughout the academic year to encourage discussion around a variety of themes, including the direction and priorities in the APP Plan. The plan for this future consultation includes:

- The APP Plan being a standing agenda item for Student Council.
- Focus groups throughout the year to inform the decisions for objectives and targets for the APP Plan and the progress against our existing APP Plan. Students will be encouraged to have ownership of their experiences and our provision.
- Audits focused on specific elements of access, participation, and progression, for example, review of mechanisms to ensure our approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion from application to graduation.
- Course Representative feedback on the monitoring, review, and enhancement plan (as part of our quality assurance cycle) with respect to APP metrics against access, success, and progression.

In addition to those points outlined above informal opportunities for feedback are available to students through:

- Meeting with the Executive Dean or Head of Student Success at any time, either in groups or individually.
- Standing for the Student Governor post at WSC every year and representing the student body.

[1111] What works? Student Retention and Success Programme (2017)

All course representatives are provided with the opportunity for online training and meet regularly with the Head of Student Success as part of the Student Voice Strategy to review their role and expectations thereof. They and all students generally have responded to the opportunity to engage in the APP Plan development positively, contributing experiences in order that the plan can be developed to meet widening participation needs.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Strategic context

WSC is a small HE provider, within a college of general further education. It is led by a member of the Senior Executive Team and overseen by Higher Education Executive Committee comprised of Governor Representatives chosen specifically for their knowledge of HE, widening access and student welfare and support. Most of the provision is vocational, and our priority and focus are to support students in achieving employment. By completing the OfS evaluation self-assessment we have been able to identify where evidence is sourced to evaluate progress against our strategic measures for this APP Plan:

- Quantitative data is obtained from our partner HEIs databases as well as our own internal databases, providing information on participation and progress of current students. This data is used throughout our annual quality cycle. As we continue to recruit directly funded students, we can develop our data analytics to review and inform the APP
- Qualitative and quantitative data is available through student voice and student feedback throughout the year as well as the national student survey.

A Monitoring Review and Evaluation culture is supported institutionally up to Governor level. The University Studies Annual Monitoring Review and Evaluation plan is now embedded and will be used to monitor the success of our activities over the period of the APP. Student Support Framework staff understand the records required to produce our impact outcomes, with linked timescales. Our work to provide opportunity for honest reflection on effectiveness of our approach to evaluation, are to embed the evaluation programme across all access and participation plan activities. Expected outcomes include a greater understanding of how to evaluate, and share, best practice, and enhanced opportunity to apply learning into related policy and strategy, and a continued focus on availability of data with a culture of evidencing impact.

Objective:
Embed the evaluation model, across University Studies, across work aimed at addressing gaps in degree attainment, non-continuation, and progression into graduate employment.

Outcomes:

- Evaluation is embedded across all access and participation plan activities
- The staff and student community across University Studies will have increased opportunities to develop their skills base and expertise
- Focus on availability of data and culture of evidencing impact, to enable an evidence-based approach to the Student Support Framework
- Development of organisational culture and the attitudes of students and staff
- Data informing access is drawn from local sources, e.g., the LEP and county councils as well

as the OfS dashboard, UCAS and qualitative reports from local and national bodies supporting change and development of specific groups, e.g., care leavers.

All data is used throughout the year to inform and evaluate practice through our risk-based quality cycle. This cycle includes regular opportunities for analysis of data and for actions to be set because of the analysis by course and subject area.

To evaluate activities to ensure that they are having the desired impact on our aims and objectives we will regularly update the self-assessment tool and review the outcomes. At this stage, for us to successfully achieve the objectives of our APP plan we have identified that we must:

- Continue to develop our data analytics and utilise information available to us from potential internal progression routes and that of our partners, specifically in relation to outcome and progression data.
- Focus groups with level 2 and 3 students across WSC (including adult education, apprentices and ESOL students) and ECG to understand, meet and manage their expectations
- Review the current activity in place for engagement with students across our level 3 provision, drawing on feedback from the NEACO team, course leaders and students themselves.
- Develop existing activity to support students both academically and pastorally through reviewing our strategies for support and implementing changes as identified in the review in response to year-on-year student metrics. To include methodology upon which to evaluate the success of these initiatives.
- Implement Curriculum Development Board supported by employer steering groups to review and inform the curriculum strategy and associated student support needs.
- Implement a new programme of career preparation with workshops and one-to-one IAG support as well as developing all courses to have connections with relevant employers.
- Embed Student Review Meetings to assess individual student needs against success and progression

Programme and Evaluation Design and Implementation[12]

The programme design for ongoing evaluation will be based on Pawson and Tilley's model of Realistic Evaluation. In simple terms, this model is based on identifying what works, in which circumstance does it work, and for whom does it work. It draws on both qualitative and quantitative data and will provide an opportunity for robust evaluation of all activities. It will be used for establishing and measuring the impact of aims and objectives at subject level and will work in conjunction with the Results Chain process to monitor and review progress against activities.

Evaluation will be led by the APP Evaluation group (to be in place no later than August 2022) to provide strategic guidance and ensure consistency of evaluation activities at operational level and co-ordinate the analysis of outcomes and ensure dissemination across WSC to inform strategic planning (for example, the Curriculum Development Board). The APP Evaluation Group comprises the Executive Dean for HE, Head of Student Success, Subject Leads, Pastoral Support Tutors, Student Governor, and student representatives. This group will meet three times a year, to review progress and report to the Academic Quality Board, and Senior Executive Team and Curriculum Development Board and the Higher Education Excellence Committee which in turn

reports to the Corporation. Annually the group will evaluate progress against our APP Plan aims and objectives and these will be adjusted as needed based on the self-evaluation activity.

The College will appoint a strategic lead for Access and Participation, working with the Group Progression Manager and Head of Student Success. The strategic lead will embed APP across the institution through the up skilling of staff across academic and professional services to co-ordinate activity and inform strategic plans such as outreach, curriculum development and investment in student support services.

We will embed a simplified version of the self-assessment tool as part of the monitoring, review and enhancement quality assurance cycle at course level.,

These will be owned by subject leads and monitored by the HE Management Team to embed evaluation within course development, planning and delivery which will be increasingly useful as we seek to diversify our curriculum in response to student and employer needs.

Evaluation design

The evaluation design will be based on Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation. This involves considering four levels of impact of a programme, reaction, learning, behaviour, and results. A mixed-methods approach that captures quantitative and qualitative data, including an online survey of students, interviews with staff and, students, and analysis of primary and secondary data.

Self-Evaluation at the beginning of the module to gain base level knowledge and understanding and end of the module to determine change as well as monitoring data will be used to review these four impacts upon continuation, achievement, and graduate outcomes. Performance of students that have completed the programmes will be compared against those that have not. As the programmes are new it is anticipated that there will be continuous learning and improvement as we refine them.

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[12] Pawson, R and Tilley, N (2004), Realist Evaluation, Sage

Provider fee information 2022-23

Provider name: West Suffolk College
Provider UKPRN: 10007431

Summary of 2022-23 course fees

*course type not listed by the provider as available in 2022-23. This means that any such course delivered in 2022-23 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

Table 1a - Full-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,150
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,500
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,360
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1c - Part-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,100
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,250
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,240
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*

| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * | * |
| Other | * | * | * |

Provider fee information 2021-22

Provider name: West Suffolk College
Provider UKPRN: 10007431

Summary of 2021-22 course fees

*course type not listed by the provider as available in 2021-22. This means that any such course delivered in 2021-22 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

Table 1a - Full-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,150
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,500
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,360
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1c - Part-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,100
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,250
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,240
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*

Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

**Access and participation plan
Fee information 2020-21**

Provider name: West Suffolk College

Provider UKPRN: 10007431

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*Course type not listed by the provider as available to new entrants in 2020-21. This means that any such course delivered to new entrants in 2020-21 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	£6,150
First degree	*	£8,500
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	£6,360
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 students

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

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	£4,100
First degree	*	£4,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	£4,240
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21

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

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: West Suffolk College

Provider UKPRN: 10007431

Investment summary

The OfS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

Note about the data:
The figures in Table 4a relate to all expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education. The figures in Table 4b only relate to the expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education which is funded by higher fee income. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£4,000.00	£6,332.00	£13,000.00	£19,000.00	£19,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£1,000.00	£1,583.00	£3,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
Access (post-16)	£1,000.00	£1,583.00	£5,000.00	£7,000.00	£7,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£1,000.00	£1,583.00	£5,000.00	£7,000.00	£7,000.00
Access (other)	£1,000.00	£1,583.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£13,500.00	£21,371.00	£72,000.00	£110,000.00	£110,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£4,000.00	£4,500.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£38,400.00	£73,500.00	£479,265.00	£717,820.00	£717,820.00
Access investment	10.4%	8.6%	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%
Financial support	35.2%	29.1%	15.0%	15.3%	15.3%
Research and evaluation	10.4%	6.1%	2.1%	1.4%	1.4%
Total investment (as %HFI)	56.0%	43.8%	19.8%	19.4%	19.4%

Targets and investment plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: West Suffolk College

Provider UKPRN: 10007431

Targets

Table 4a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	2020-21 milestones	2021-22 milestones	2022-23 milestones	2023-24 milestones	2024-25 milestones	Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
To close the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_1	Care-leavers	Progression to HE at WSC to increase from 1 percentage point of the HE population to 2.25 percentage points (from 6 to 12 students). Measure: internal recruitment data	Yes	Other data source	2016-17	1%	1.29%	1.58%	1.87%	2.16%	2.45%	To achieve the milestones WSC HE will work with the FE provision and NEACO to identify target students and support them to progress to HE. This will include work with Personal Support Tutors, level 3 course leaders, the care leavers support team and localauthorities. This target will be reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary. If it is not achieved by 2024-25 the College is committed to continuing with its activity to meet this target.

Table 4b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	2020-21 milestones	2021-22 milestones	2022-23 milestones	2023-24 milestones	2024-25 milestones	Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
To reduce the non-continuation gap for students with disabilities	PTS_1	Disabled	Close the 11 percentage point gap between continuation of disabled students compared to non disabled students. Measure: internal retention data and withdrawal reports.	No	Other data source	2017-18	11	9	7	4	2	0	These milestones will be met through investigating the development of a student association at WSC for Sept 2020. Developing an extensive programme of student focus groups, drawing more on students from identified target groups starting in Sept 2019. We will also be focussing on developments in, and improving accessibility to DSA advice, academic skills advisor, individual personal support based on RAG rating and electronic ILP monitoring.
To reduce the non-continuation gap of male students, from quintiles 1 and 2	PTS_2	Disabled	Close the retention gap of 14 percentage points between students with mental health difficulties and those with no mental health difficulty. Measure: internal retention data and withdrawal reports.	Yes	Other data source	2015-16	14	11	8	6	3	0	Milestones will be met through creation of closer relations with WSC student welfare and local authority teams to develop promotion of direct, self-referal route to accessing student welfare for all students but particularly those with mental health difficulties. These students will also have access to the improved student support services. To be established during 2019-20 and promoted and fully in place by Sept 2021.
to reduce the non-continuation gap of students with mental health difficulties	PTS_3	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	close the on course progression gap of 8 percentage points between students from quintile 1 and 2 (20%) compared to those from quintile 3, 4 and 5 (28%). Measure: internal retention data and withdrawal reports	Yes	Other data source	2017-18	8	6	5	3	2	0	Milestones will be achieved by strengthening existing student voice activity and support to improve on-going student experience. To investigate the development of a student association at WSC for Sept 2021. We will be focussing on developments in, and improving accessibility to DSA advice, academic skills advisor, individual personal support based on RAG rating and electronic ILP monitoring.
To reduce the non-continuation gap for students from quintile 1 and 2	PTS_4	Ethnicity	close the 7 percentage point gap of progression on course for BAME students (88%) compared to students from white groups (95%). Measure: internal retention and withdrawal reports.	No	Other data source	2017-18	7	6	4	3	2	0	Further developing our existing programme of student focus groups to include groups for students from identified characteristics, eg BAME, starting in Sept 2019. to increase retention by steady rise of up to 2% each year over five years by developing existing student voice activity and targetted support.

Table 4c - Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	2020-21 milestones	2021-22 milestones	2022-23 milestones	2023-24 milestones	2024-25 milestones	Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
to raise the progression to post graduate study or graduate employment for students with disabilities	PTP_1	Disabled	Close the 11 percentage point gap in progression to graduate level employment or post graduate study between students with learning difficulties and those who do not have learning difficulties. Measure: student and alumni surveys.	Yes	Other data source	2016-17	11	9	7	5	3	0	To meet the milestones the college will build on the existing careers guidance programme by drawing on opportunities for guest speakers from international, national and regional employers promoting graduate employment and develop courses so that they can offer work placement years. Researching suitable on-line tools to support students searching for graduate opportunities, in place by Sept 2021 and working with the LEP and its local industrial strategy to address the skills gap in the region.
To raise the progression to post graduate study or graduate employment for students with disabilities	PTP_2	Disabled	Close the 10 percentage point gap in progression to graduate level employment or post graduate study between students with mental health difficulties and those who do not have mental health difficulties. Measure: student and alumni surveys.	No	Other data source	2016-17	10	8	6	4	2	0	To meet the milestones the college will build on the existing careers guidance programme by drawing on opportunities for guest speakers from international, national and regional employers promoting graduate employment. Researching suitable on-line tools to support students searching for graduate opportunities, in place by 2021 and working with the LEP and its local industrial strategy to address the skills gap in the region.