# Boston College

# Access and participation plan

**2022/23 to 2026/27**

# 1. Assessment of performance

Data provided throughout this plan is taken primarily from the OfS Access and Participation (A&P) data dashboard (Access and participation data dashboard - Office for Students) unless otherwise stated. In some cases, there is insufficient data available in order to disaggregate specific underrepresented groups, the college will develop its own data collection to address this. This enhanced data will inform future analysis, monitoring and re-setting of targets. Where data from the OfS data dashboard is unavailable, we have used other sources including our own internally sourced data to assess our performance for the lifecycle of students from all backgrounds.

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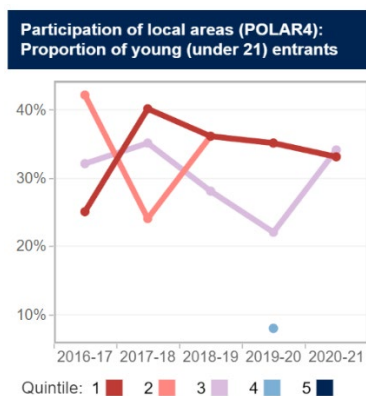
**Access**



**Figure 1: Participation of local areas (POLAR4): Proportion of young entrants 2016/17-2020/21** (Source: OfS APP Dashboard)

The College is situated within an area of high deprivation and Office for Students (OfS) data exemplifies that across a 4-year trend, between 64-72% of young entrants are from deprived areas classified as POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2. POLAR quintile 1 students constitute 33-36% of our student cohort as an average over three years against the highest proportion over the last 5 years of *all* providers of 12.5% (2020/21). This consistently demonstrates that the College enables access for young students from low participation neighbourhoods and demonstrated by a +20pp difference, there are no gaps in access.
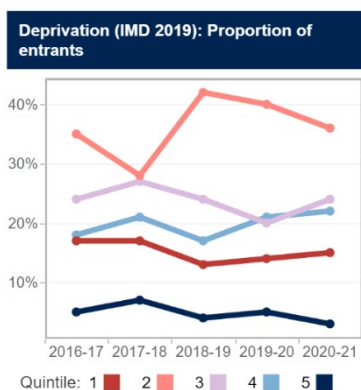


**Figure 2: Deprivation (IMD 2019): Proportion of entrants 2016/17-2020/21** (Source: OfS APP Dashboard)

The College has seen falling proportions of total entrants from quintile 5 over a 5-year period (highest 7% to 3% in 20/21) and 15% of all students in 20/21 were from quintile 1. Although the proportion of IMD quintiles 1 and 2 students has fallen from 55% in 18/19 to 51% in 20/21, the headcount has slightly increased as our overall student numbers have grown (fig.3). 51% of entrants in 20/21 were from quintile 1 or 2 (IMD 2019) against the evidence from all providers of 43.2% (a +7pp positive gap.)

There are therefore no gaps in access between students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 and those from quintile 5 compared to national proportions.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) 2017 noted, when visiting the College, that "*students tend to come from local areas with low levels of HE participation, and therefore require more support to access, participate and succeed at HE level study*".

**Figure 3: Boston College Higher Education Enrolment 2018/19 - 2020/21 (Source: internal data)**

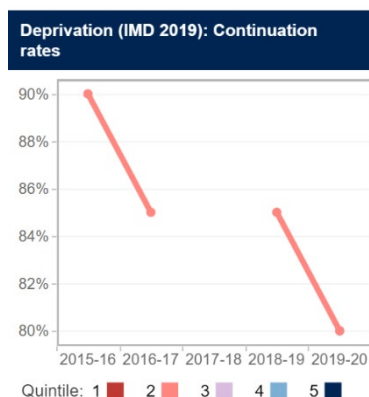|  | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | 21/22 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total - All HE | 190 | 209 | 208 | 233 |

## Success

### Continuation



**Figure 4: Deprivation (IMD 2019): Continuation Rates 2015/16-2019/20 (Source: OfS APP Dashboard)**

There is no OfS data available for continuation rates for POLAR4.
There is a negligible (–3%) difference in continuation rates of students from areas of deprivation and others in 2019/20. However, this is not considered significant in OfS data sets since we have very few students from Q4 or Q5 (and in some years *no* students as comparators). There are therefore no gaps to consider.

| Group | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total - All HE | 95% | 97% | 85% |

**Figure 5: Boston College Continuation Data 2018/19 - 2020/21 (Source: internal data)**

Overall, continuation rates at Boston College are good with a three-year trend at or above 85% although the pandemic impacted on continuation in 20/21 due to many factors including the caring responsibilities of students, the escalation of mental health issues and the low-wage occupations of the area in agriculture, hospitality, health and care industries.

We aim to develop our own continuation data enabling disaggregation of underrepresented groups including those that are POLAR4 and those from deprived backgrounds (IMD 2019). We have committed to achieving this as part of this plan by 2023/24.

### Attainment

| Group | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total - All HE | 46% | 59% | 63 % |

**Figure 6: Boston College Attainment Rate Data 2018/19 - 2020/21 (Source: internal data)**

Attainment rates at Boston College are showing improvement over time and students remain highly positive about the academic support they receive (85% against sector average of 74%) and the overall quality of their learning experience at the College (National Student Survey (NSS) 2021). Overall satisfaction rates were 80% against the sector average of 75%. Furthermore, recent overall satisfaction rates increased to 87% compared to the sector average of 76% (National Student Survey (NSS) 2022).

There is no OfS data available for attainment rates or gaps for POLAR4 or Deprivation (IMD 2019). Since there were no students from IMD Q5 in 19/20 and very few in other years, the table below taken from internal data, denotes the gaps in attainment between IMD Q1 and Q2+Q3 the highest comparator (Q3/Q5). From this data, there is not currently an attainment gap between students from the most deprived areas and others. As stated, there are so few students who are *not* from the most deprived (Q1 and Q2) we do not have adequate comparators to derive any conclusions of a gap in attainment as the small numbers skew the data between years. The data below does not prompt a target based on absolute performance, but we will continue to employ strategies to improve attainment for all students.

| GROUP - IMD | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | 39% | 46% | 61% |
| Q1 and Q2 | 44% | 52% | 66% |
| Q3-5 | 50% | 73% | 60% |
|  |  |  |  |

| GROUP - POLAR4 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | 39% | 46% | 50% |
| Q1 and Q2 | 44% | 52% | 46% |
| Q3 | 50% | 73% | 66% |
|  |  |  |  |

**Figure 7: Boston College Attainment Rate Data by quintile comparators 2018/19 - 2020/21**
**(Source: internal data)**

## Progression to employment or further study

There is no updated and current OfS data available for progression as the "data is historic representing the results of the DLHE survey up to 2016/17".

The Graduate Outcomes (GO) survey data (2017/18-2018/19) demonstrates that from Boston College, 39% of students went onto work full-time, 18% went into part-time employment and a further 13% progressed into full or part-time study. Given the constraints of rural deprivation and volume of micro-small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across Greater Lincolnshire, we are acutely aware that opportunities for roles in 'highly skilled' employment are severely lacking. Therefore, the partnership the College has developed with the University of Derby, has enabled the College to develop more of its HE curriculum up to and including level 6. Although this is a relatively new relationship, the College has been very proactive and has written two bespoke programmes: a foundation degree in Sport, Fitness and Wellbeing, and another for Creative Arts. There are also a further two-degree programmes now offered at the College in Business and in Education Studies. We feel as this curriculum broadens and becomes more established, more local students will be able to progress into higher skilled employment, or higher-level study where these are available and in turn, drive a thriving local economy to generate graduate opportunities.

**Figure: Graduate Outcomes 2017/18-2018/19**

**(Source: GO Survey academic years 2017/18-2018/19)**

| Total responses | 65 |
|---|---|
| Non respondents | 55 |
| summary | |
| FT employment | 39% |
| PT employment | 18% |
| FT further Study | 11% |
| PT further Study | 2% |
| Other Travel/ Caring | 9% |
| Unemployed | 3% |

College level data shows a significant increase in progression rates to further study (L5-L6) across our total student body increasing from 0% to 65% in the last 3 years. There are currently no identifiable gaps in progression for those from deprived backgrounds.

We aim to develop our own progression data enabling disaggregation of underrepresented groups including those that are POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 and Deprived (IMD 2019). We have committed to doing this as part of this plan by 2023/24.

We aim to enhance our measures to support opportunities for all graduates (almost all of whom are from low participation/deprived neighbourhoods) to fully prepare for further study or high-level career outcomes by 2024/25.

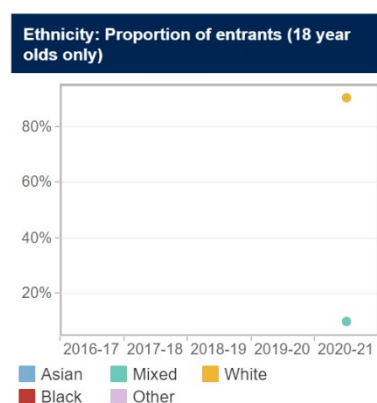## 1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

### Access



**Figure : Proportion of entrants (18-year-olds only) 2016/17-2020/21 (Source: OfS APP Dashboard)**

Within the county of Lincolnshire, the BAME population is 2.4%, and in Boston 89% of the population was White British according to the 2011 census. However, we know that Boston has seen one of the largest increases in population during the period since the last census and known to be attributable to migration from Eastern European peoples many to undertake some of the low-paid manual jobs available in the area and settle their families. A sizeable proportion of our students are therefore 'White Other' (11%), and this is reflective of our context and the local community demographics. We continue to have low enrolments from the BAME community which is also reflective of the general population demographic in Boston and the wider county. From our internal data, student demographics for ethnicity show a consistent trend of low student numbers from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME) but slightly above the local demography at between 3-4%. We will continue to review our data for ethnicity as we receive data from the latest census by 2023/24 to identify any emergent gaps and intersections of disadvantage. We will continue to work to attract students from BAME backgrounds

by actively promoting our HE offer to these groups of potential entrants as well as better understanding and addressing barriers to HE.

The OfS dashboard does not have sufficient data to identify any gaps in access for BAME students

**Figure 10: Higher Education BAME Enrolments**
**(Source: internal data)**

| Enrolment | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| % BAME students enrolled | 4% | 3% | 4% | 3% |
| % White British | 81% | 86% | 85% | 86% |
| % White Other students enrolled | 15% | 11% | 11% | 11% |

## Success

### Continuation

There is no OfS data identifying continuation gaps for BAME.

**Figure 11: Higher Education Continuation Data BAME Students (Source: internal data)**

|  |  | Continuation Rate | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Group** | | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
| Total - All HE | | 95% | 97% | 85% |
| Ethnicity | BAME | 83% | 100% | 85% |
|  | Other White | 100% | 94% | 79% |
|  | White British | 95% | 97% | 85% |

Continuation rates for BAME students is in line with that of White British (see figure 11). There is a 6pp gap in continuation rates for White Other students who account for 11% of our student population.
We will continue to identify and monitor any emergent gaps in continuation of 'white other' where this intersects with data on other underrepresentation such as disability or deprivation, improving our internal data sets by 2023/24 to achieve this.

**Figure 12: Higher Education Attainment Data BAME Students**
**(Source: internal data)**

|  |  | Attainment Rate | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Group** | | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
| Total - All HE | | 46% | 59% | 63% |
|  | BAME | 0% | 0% | 50% |
| Ethnicity | Other White | 60% | 20% | 66% |
|  | White British | 50% | 54% | 64% |

**Attainment**

Internal data (see figure 12) shows attainment rate gap between BAME students and White British students is 14% and the gap between BAME and White Other students at 16%. There is a positive difference between White and White other of 2%. However, it should be noted that BAME student numbers are extremely low, accounting for just 7% of our total level 6 student population in 18-19 and 3% in 19/20 and subsequently supressed within the OfS data dashboard.

OfS data shows no areas for focus on attainment gaps for BAME in relation to attainment albeit with statistically highly sensitive data.

**Progression to employment or further study**

There is no updated and current OfS data available for progression as the data is historic representing the results of the DLHE survey up to 2016/17.

The sample size BAME enrolments is very small at 3% of the total student body, therefore internal data has also been suppressed. There are no identifiable gaps in progression for students from BAME backgrounds.
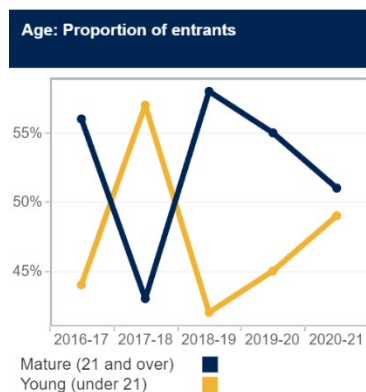
## 1.3 Mature Students

**Access**



**Figure 13: Proportion of entrants 2016/17-2020/21 (Source: OfS APP Dashboard)**

There is no OfS data available for access gaps by age.

The proportions of mature students and young entrants at the College have become more equally distributed over time (see figure 13) with current enrolments standing at 51% mature and 49% young (see figure 14). These proportions represent our commitment to offer HE to students from our local area, many of whom are returning to education to improve their life and employment opportunities.

**Figure 14: Higher Education Mature Student enrolments (Source: internal data)**

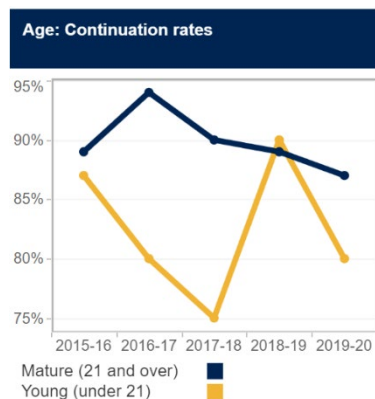| Enrolments | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| % Mature students enrolled | 61.5% | 61% | 59% | 51% |

## Success

### Continuation



**Figure 15: Age: Continuation rates: 2015/16-2019/20. (Source: OfS APP Dashboard)**

OfS data (see figure 15) shows a 7pp positive continuation gap in 2019/20 between young entrants and mature entrants. This correlates with internal data (see figure 16) which shows that the continuation rate for mature students is positive overall and out-performs that of young entrants. There is a current 10pp positive gap in continuation between mature students and young entrants according to our internal data.

**Figure 16: Higher Education Continuation Data by Age Group. (Source: internal data)**

| Group | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total - All HE | 95% | 97% | 85% |
| Mature students | 98.5% | 98% | 87% |
| Young entrants | 96% | 96.5% | 77% |

### Attainment

OfS data shows no areas for focus nor gaps in relation to attainment by age. Our internal data shows that the attainment rate for mature students is positive overall (see figure 17) and outperforming that of young entrants. There is a current 12pp positive gap in attainment between mature students and young entrants in terms of attainment.

**Figure 17: Higher Education Attainment Data by Age Group. (Source: internal data)**

| Group | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total - All HE | 46% | 58% | 63% |
| Mature students | 50% | 75% | 69% |
| Young entrants | 38% | 66% | 57% |

## Progression to employment or further study

There is no updated and current OfS data available for progression as the data is historic representing the results of the DLHE survey up to 2016/17. College data shows more mature students' progress to L6 than young entrants and there is currently a 47pp positive gap.

## 1.4 Disabled Students

### Access

**Figure 18: Proportion of entrants 2016/17-2020/21. (Source: OfS APP Dashboard)**
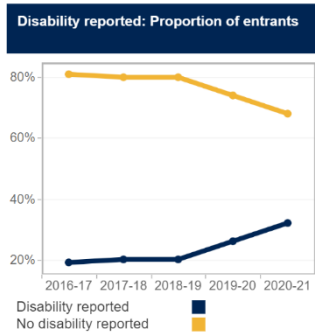


OfS data shows a steady, positive increase in the number of students accessing HE that have declared a learning difficulty, disability, or health problem and currently forms 27% of our student body (see figure 19). OfS data shows no gaps in access for students declaring a disability

**Figure 19: Higher Education Disabled Student enrolments. (Source: internal data)**

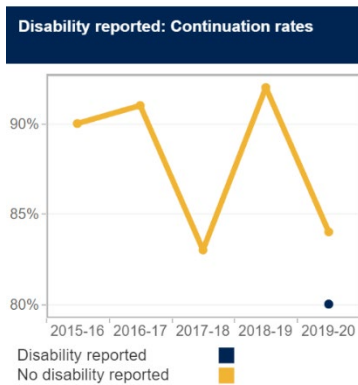| Group | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| % Students enrolled declaring a disability | 23% | 26% | 28% | 27% |

### Success

#### Continuation



**Figure 20 Disability: Continuation rates 2015/16-2019/20. (Source: OfS APP Dashboard)**

OfS data shows a 4pp gap in continuation rates for students with a disability compared to those without. Based on our own internal data, continuation rates for students declaring a disability have declined since 2018/19 with a significant decline during the pandemic. There is a current continuation gap of 5pp for students with a disability (see figure 21).

**Figure 21: Higher Education Continuation Data by Disability. (Source: internal data)**

| | | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total - All HE | | 95% | 97% | 85% |
| Disability | Yes | 96% | 91% | 81% |
| | No | 98% | 99% | 86% |

#### Attainment

OfS data shows no areas for focus nor gaps in relation to attainment by disability.

According to our internal data, there has historically been a positive gap in attainment for disabled students. However, in 20/21 a gap in attainment of 7pp for students with a disability has emerged (see figure 22).

**Figure 22: Higher Education Attainment Data by Disability. (Source: internal data)**

| | 2018/19 | | 2020/21 |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | 2019/20 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total - All HE | 46% | 58% | 63% |
| Disability Yes | 50% | 75% | 58% |
| No | 46% | 54% | 65% |

**Progression to employment or further study**

There is no updated and current OfS data available for progression as the "data is historic representing the results of the DLHE survey up to 2016/17".

Disabled students form 27% of our overall student body. College data shows positive progression to L6 for students with a disability. In 2020/21, 8 students with a disability progressed to L6 equating to 23.5% of total progressing students from level 5.

## 1.5 Care leavers

**Access, Success and Progression**

Since the College first held direct funding from HEFCE in 2012, there have not been any students studying HE courses at college who have declared as a care leaver. There is therefore no further data on success - continuation and attainment - or progression for this group.

The numbers of care leavers studying on level 3 programmes at the College remains very low (2% of the *whole* FE cohort at the College are students in care). In the first instance, the College aims to improve progression outcomes for students in or leaving care from level 2 to level 3 in further education to support subsequent progression into higher level learning. In 2022/2023, the College will commit to gathering information to inform our understanding of barriers to access for care leavers. From this information, specific actions to achieve improved access to HE for care leavers will be devised and trialled from 2023/24 to achieve entrants by 2024/25.

## 1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

As discussed under point 1.1, the College is situated within an area of high deprivation. The College therefore has a high proportion of students affected by the intersection of different aspects of disadvantage. For example, the vast majority (89%) of our students are White British, over 33% of the student body are from Quintile 1, suggesting higher support needs than would otherwise be anticipated. Likewise, OfS data exemplifies that across a 4-year trend, over 32% of young entrants are from deprived areas classified as Quintile 1.

Boston College has more POLAR4 Quintile 1 students compared to the population (32% of all young people studying HE at the college) and very few students from POLAR4 Quintile 4 or 5 (3% in 2020/21) 64% of young students are from deprived areas in Quintile 1 or 2 (2020/21). (See Figure 23)

The College has small student numbers in some categories such as BAME and whilst there is data available to consider the intersections of disadvantage across the stages of student lifecycle, percentages are misleading and exaggerated by small changes. Nonetheless, the college commits to improving data

sources to identify gaps for students from intersections of disadvantage by 2023/24. We are also committing to improve the collection and analysis of data for disability, and we will review our strategies if there are gaps of difference that are identified.

**Figure 23: POLAR4 data by postcode look up and College Ward**
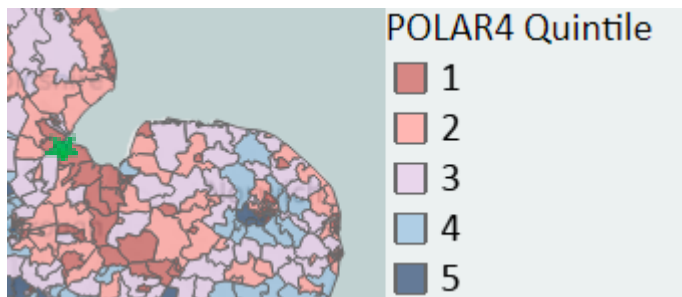


Boston College location

## 1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

**Carers**

In Lincolnshire over 10% (79,000) of people are registered as carers and of these, 4000 are young or young adults. It will be an objective of this plan to better understand our students who are carers to then define our strategies should there be any emergent gaps.

**Military Families**

In 2021, there were 198,940 UK Service Personnel, as identified by the quarterly service personnel statistics (2021). Lincolnshire has a high number of military families linked to a range of bases across the county. Historically, the College has not captured data on an enrolment form to identify how many students are from a service family studying with us although we do know that there are currently 1322 under-16s in education in the county. However, to understand this group further the College's enrolment form has been altered to ensure this data is captured from September 2022 and available to analyse by 2023/24 and over the lifetime of this plan be well-positioned to assess our performance to ensure there are no gaps in access or participation.

**People from the Gypsy, Roma Traveller community, people estranged from families, refugees.**

In a similar way to identifying military families and carers, it will be an objective of this plan to better understand our students from these under-represented groups to then define our strategies should there be any emergent gaps in terms of access, success and progression.

## 2. Strategic aims and objectives

## 2.1 Strategy

Boston College's vision is 'Brilliant Today, Better Tomorrow' reflecting our commitment to excellence through continual improvement and the highest standards. We consider that our mission is to ensure that

all our students achieve their brilliant 'best for themselves, their employers, their communities and for the future.

Our strategic plan is structured around five key areas or 'pillars'.
- To offer a brilliant curriculum that meets and exceeds the needs and aspirations of our students
- To initiate, maintain and maximise brilliant partnerships that benefit the college, business and our communities
- To recruit and retain brilliant people
- To achieve brilliant financial performance allowing us to continue to invest in our college
- To reflect the college's unique identity.

Flowing from the assessment of performance, this APP's work is aligned to these five key tenets with a key focus on delivering student success and to ensure that our provision meets the needs and aspirations of the local community. The strategic aims for this plan are derived from our overarching college strategy:

- We aim to continue to be a local provider of choice for all our students no matter what their background who want to undertake learning at a higher level leading to technical and professional roles.
- We aim to capture and fully utilise information on our student body to continuously monitor and review our measures ensuring that we make a positive impact on their lives.
- We aim to enable social mobility, working with employers and other key stakeholders to provide appropriately qualified people who positively contribute to the economic and cultural growth of our communities
- We aim to work closely and collaborate with other stakeholders including schools and colleges supporting young people with the skills, attitude and aptitude to equitably access higher education
- We aim to develop a curriculum offer in technical and professional qualifications to support the aspirations of the local and regional economy.
- We aim to offer a supportive, challenging and developmental environment that facilitates an excellent student journey from all starting points to progression.

## 2.2 Target Groups

From our assessment for performance of the lifecycle of students the College has identified key targets groups for this APP to 2026/27.  (See Figure 24.)

**Figure 24**. **Identification of underrepresented groups and targets within the student lifecycle**

| Underrepresented groups | Access | Success | Progression |
|---|---|---|---|
| Disabled Students | | ✓ | |
| Care leavers | ✓ | | |
| Children of Military Families | ✓ | | |
| Refugees | ✓ | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gypsy, Roma, Travellers | ✓ | | |
| Carers | ✓ | | |
| People estranged from families | ✓ | | |

**Access**

The college will continue to focus its work on the access and participation of students from our local communities. In retaining this remit, we will ensure that students from BAME backgrounds, mature learners, those from our deprived neighbourhoods and those with a disability, continue to be positively represented in our student cohorts. We will identify and support learners who are (or will become) 'care leavers', ensuring that they can successfully apply for higher education. Work will also take place to identify people from other underrepresented groups and ensure that they are supported to access higher education.

**Success**

The college will focus our work on the success of students who declare a disability to improve the likelihood of them continuing in their studies and their attainment of good quality degrees to at least the same rates as those without a disability. We will continue to focus on the success of students from IMD Q1 and Q2 for attainment and identify where other characteristics cross sect. Despite there being no sustained gaps in attainment or continuation, we will continue to ensure students from a BAME background are able to stay and succeed on HE programmes. The non-continuation rates of students from 'other white' backgrounds will be monitored where this intersects with priorities of under-representation.

**Progression**

Our data does not currently flag any gaps by characteristics for progression. However, the APP will also work on developing the opportunities for the high proportion of students from IMD Q1 and 2 and all students, regardless of background, to achieve high quality graduate outcomes for employment or further study. We will also focus on our data gathering of progression for all under-represented groups to inform our measures in the future. We will also continue to build opportunities for high-quality graduate roles in the local area and prepare students from all backgrounds to succeed in achieving high quality career outcomes.

## 2.3 Aims and Objectives

**Access**

Throughout the life of this plan, the college aims to continue be a local provider of choice for all our students, encouraging access to higher level learning for those living in our most deprived areas measured by IMD and POLAR4. We aim to focus on work to encourage access by care leavers and gather and use data to ensure we have equity of access to people from military families, carers, refugees, people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and those estranged from their families. We aim to maintain equitable access for all other underrepresented groups where there are currently no gaps.

By 2023/24 the college will effectively gather and proactively use accurate information on our students including intersections of disadvantage, to continuously monitor and further inform our measures to eradicate any gaps in access between students from differing backgrounds.

By 2026/27, the college will continue with its internal college and outreach work to continue to provide excellent support, education, advice and guidance to increase attainment and encourage applications to higher education from students of BAME backgrounds.

By 2022/23 the college will develop and by 2023/24 test measures to address access for care leavers.

By 2024/25, the college will increase care leavers engaging in higher education from 0% to 2.5 % of enrolments per year from 2024/25 rising to 5% of our HE cohort by 2026/27 with a view to continuing to improve access in the future.

By 2026/27, the college will continue to maintain high rates of access and participation of students from deprived areas measured by IMD and POLAR4 Q1 and Q2, remaining at or exceeding the current positive gap of +7pp for access by students from IMD Q1 and Q2 and +20pp for POLAR4 Q1 and Q2.

By 2025/26 the college will identify and set targets for access for children from military families, carers, refugees, people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and those estranged from their families, to access higher education based on our improved data.

**Success**

Throughout the lifespan of this APP, we aim to ensure that all students experience an inclusive, supportive, challenging and developmental environment that facilitates an excellent student journey from all starting points in preparation for progression.

We aim to eradicate the continuation gaps for students with a declared disability from a 4pp (OfS data) gap to 0pp.

We aim to eradicate the attainment gaps for students with a declared disability from a 7pp (internal data) gap to 0pp.

We aim to closely monitor our data and address any emergent gaps in attainment between students from disadvantaged groups.

By 2023/24, the college will effectively capture the data for students with a declared disability including the sub-categories of disability and use this to determine the specific measures required for positive impact on their continuation and attainment.

By 2024/25, our measures for support ensure that the gap for continuation is eradicated from 4pp to 0pp for all students with a disability.

By 2025/26, we will eradicate the 7pp gap between the attainment of students with a disability and those without.

By 2026/27, the college will sustain the equity of success indicators from under-represented groups including those from areas of deprivation and there will be no gaps in the continuation or attainment between students from different backgrounds.

**Progression**

Through the lifecycle of this APP and into the future, the college aims to provide our graduates with the skills, knowledge, attitude and aptitudes to equip them to achieve their goals in education or employment in highly skilled careers.

We will invest in our management information systems (MIS) to develop our internal data source, enabling us to better understand our performance gaps in progression for all underrepresented groups and for intersections of disadvantage.

We will continue to work with employers and key stakeholders to develop opportunities for highly qualified employment for our graduates and we will prepare students with the skills and attributes necessary to achieve high quality outcomes.

By 2023/24, the college will have useful data on the progression routes of our alumni to support the determination of measures to eliminate any defined gaps between under-represented groups.

By 2024/25 we will enhance support measures to prepare all students for progression to further study or employment in highly skilled careers.

By 2026/27, the college will set targets to ensure that there are no gaps for progression to highly skilled employment or further study for students from under-represented groups.

# 3.Strategic measures

The measures taken by the College described within this plan aim to contribute to the achievement of the objectives set out within.

Many of our strategic measures outlined below, are underpinned by our overarching mission. However, there are some areas where there is a need to further evaluate and or undertake further research to establish the most effective and appropriate way, to drive forward change and evidence each of the steps comprising the appropriate logic chain, regarding student achievement. Therefore, we intend to evaluate the individual activities throughout the lifecycle of the student journey, once we have implemented these.

Boston College's Corporation are designated with the ultimate responsibility for this plan, but this responsibility is delegated to the Standards Committee which includes the Principal and attended by the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, staff and student governors. A theory of change model has been applied to inform an evidence-based approach.

## 3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Boston College's Vision is "Brilliant Today, Better Tomorrow" and is committed in its mission to transforming people's lives through ensuring that "all our students achieve their brilliant best, for

themselves, their employers, their communities and for the future". The vision outlines our commitment to continual improvement with an expectation of the highest standards for all.

Higher Education is a strategic priority for Boston College and our approach to partnership working (including with our own FE departments), capital investment, curriculum growth, and staff development demonstrates the success of our ambitious plans and effectiveness of our strategy in widening participation, and going forward, developing opportunities for graduates from all backgrounds to be instrumental in driving the economy of our communities.

Our strategy for access and participation strategy is determined to achieve and maintain high quality engagement with students not only during and after they progress from study but also the entire lifecycle from primary school onwards with a recognition of our long-term commitment to removing any barriers to access, success and progress. This will be managed by our Schools Liaison team working in tandem with our HE outreach colleagues.

Working with both our curriculum and student support teams, we aim to prioritise activities that have demonstrable and sustained impact on student attitudes, behaviours and their positive outcomes.

We also consider that in order to achieve our targets, the collection of rich data and the evaluation of findings to enable us to realise our ambition of being truly insight driven and data led. This will involve our Information Services team to deliver on this enabling aspect of the plan.

The strategic management and delivery of this plan is designated to the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality and operationally led by the Head of HE who meets regularly with both curriculum leads and business support managers to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the activity measures to achieve its aims and objectives. The plan and its aspirations are developed via and communicated through the Student Council and HE student representatives.


## Alignment with other strategies

The Access and Participation Plan aligns with the College Strategic Plan as detailed which has been developed and updated by the Executive Team in collaboration with governors and college groups.


*Information Services Development Strategy*

It is recognised that Boston College student numbers are relatively low which results in some difficulties when using OfS and other data sources to accurately profile our student cohort to identify and plan to eradicate any gaps in terms of access, success or progression. The Information Services Strategy has been informed by an external review of our procedures for data capture and management and it details the plan to invest in this service over the next three years based on priority areas. One of these areas is the provision of accurate and detailed data on our HE student body, recognising the breadth of existing and new definitions for underrepresentation as well as the intersections of disadvantage.

*Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy*

The college's Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy outlines our overarching approaches to teaching pedagogy and staff development for both FE and HE. This strategy intersects with the HE strategy

in terms of its focus on evolving HE pedagogical approaches including the embedding of research, scholarship and scholarly activity. The TLA strategy is currently under review and will reflect and facilitate the commitments in this APP.

*HE Strategy*

Our strategy for higher education has at its heart, the vision of 'Brilliant Today, Better tomorrow' to describe our purpose which is to provide excellence in HE for the benefit of students, their employers and their communities. The HE strategy recognises that we serve a community which experiences high levels of deprivation and therefore considers it our unique responsibility to meet and exceed the needs of those for whom higher study can be considered unattainable without interventions. The strategy covers curriculum design including the planning and delivery of high-quality courses, with a focus on technical and professional subjects that lead to good graduate outcomes. It addresses the college's work towards diverse pathways into HE to encourage those who may not have been able to study full time or need other flexibilities. The HE strategy incorporates learning, teaching and assessment pedagogy that aligns to the identified needs of our student cohort to maximise their chances of sustained success. The strategy also outlines our approach to partnership and collaboration, access arrangements, student support, health and wellbeing including mental health, research and scholarly activity, planning and delivery of resources and student engagement and partnership etc. The HE strategy has been informed by our understanding of our gaps in achieving equality of opportunity and how we seek to address these within the lifecycle of the APP.

*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.*

There is a symbiotic relationship between the design and ultimately the implementation of this APP and the College's Equality and Diversity (EDI) Policy. Boston College is fully committed to the promotion of EDI and continues to be ambitious when advancing and embedding Equality and Diversity for all students, staff, stakeholders, contractors, and visitors and challenging all forms of discrimination based on the promotion of fundamental British values in line with the 2010 Equality Act.  The College actively encourages participation in education and training both internally and externally by staff/learners from all backgrounds and groups including those generally under-represented in Further and Higher Education. The EDI Policy defines the College's intention to ensure equality of opportunity for people with disabilities to access learning in line with our public duty under the 2010 Equality Act, and the APP has a strategic measure to eradicate the gap in success for students with a declared disability.

*Other Policies/Strategies*

Achieving the targets within this APP will involve handling and sharing data and this will follow our policy on Rights of Individuals. As this Plan progresses, the College may identify development needs, and this will be implemented in line with the Training and Professional Development Policy. This policy ensures staff have the knowledge and skills including the importance of research, scholarship and scholarly activity to perform their role and the College can deliver its corporate aims. The ethos of this APP is to prioritise student experience and progress and this APP will also align with the College's Quality and Assurance and Improvement policy and the Observation Policy which serve as the main drivers for quality assurance and continuous improvement to our provision.

## 3.2 Strategic Measures

*Governance:* The Vice Principal leads the reporting to the Standards sub-committee of the Corporation and reviews progress against the Department Improvement Plan (DIP) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) on a quarterly basis. The monitoring of the APP outcomes is reported to the Standards Committee with oversight by the Corporation.

*Operational*: The HE Group monitors the planning and delivery of the measures required to achieve the outcomes of the APP. The Head of Higher Education works across the College to coordinate the implementation of the key operational measures required to achieve the objectives of plan through its lifecycle and inform the future direction for access and participation.

The College has a holistic approach to strategy focussing on providing what is needed by the individual rather than a deficit approach which is based on assumptions of what the individual might need as a result of belonging to a particular group.

**Effective Data Collection processes and evaluation mechanisms**

- Ensuring capability of systems and processes to capture relevant data of underrepresented groups at relevant points in the student journey and lifecycle
- Support the improvement of admissions systems to capture, evidence and collate target group information from which KPIs track and analyse the performance of students including to identify any gaps in access or participation.
- Continuing to ensure data sharing agreements are in place with relevant partner organisations (schools, local authority, support stakeholders) and maintaining GDPR compliance.
- Developing an evaluation strategy that allows for longer term objective setting and impact measurement for interventions to eradicate gaps.

**Curriculum Planning and Pedagogy**

- Review and deliver an HE curriculum offer, with diverse pathways and flexible approaches into and through HE studies to meet the needs of the local economy and employers. For example, the College is part of the regional Lincolnshire Institute of Technology which has helped us to develop and promote courses that meet the needs of employers in engineering and digital automation.
- We intend to plan different routes into and through higher education including shorter programmes that increase flexibility for students wishing to continue to work whilst studying.
- Recent changes in pedagogy attributable in part to the impact of the pandemic as well as our commitment to digital learning technologies has led to better opportunities for students to access their learning online when they are no able to attend or would benefit from the access tools available for those with a disability. These shifts in teaching approaches support non-traditional learners and will be further developed as part of our measures to reduce and eliminate gaps in access and success.
- Review and develop the learning and teaching observation process, assessing the impact of pedagogical approaches within the College to identify best practice and areas of improvement to support the needs of students from all backgrounds. There will be a particular focus on approaches that can positively impact those from underrepresented groups (students with a disability) who are experiencing gaps in their ability to remain on programme and/or attain at the same rates as their peers.

**Student Academic and Pastoral Support and Financial Support**

From 2022/23, the Academic Achievement Coaches will work in direct partnership with academic staff to ensure that all students with a declared disability have meaningful early contact, identifying and implementing bespoke support strategies from the outset of study including support to apply for other wider support. Reporting from the Coaches will be reviewed at each Academic Board and HE QAC meeting to assess the impact of the support given. Reviews of attendance data will be undertaken at the Curriculum Leadership Group (CLG) to ensure there is a whole college approach to actions taken to support students with a disability to attend and succeed.

We recognise that finance is a potential barrier to entry for some student groups and therefore financial support is available and aligned to support our underrepresented groups and those whom the data shows are more likely not to continue with their course. This aims to reduce anxieties and eliminate barriers to participation, success and achievement. From our assessment of performance, it is evident that HE cohort is predominantly constituted by people from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 and who therefore more likely to have financial barriers to access, participation and progression. To support the aims and objectives of this plan throughout its lifecycle and importantly, tackle any emergent intersections of disadvantage identified through our focus on improved data source, our financial aid package will provide additional assistance through bursary and hardship funds reducing financial pressures to support success and progression. The financial support package has the goal of eliminating gaps for students with a disability, those leaving care and emergent gaps in continuation or attainment for all under-represented groups.

The financial support package will be communicated through all channels including directly by academic and support staff who are regularly briefed about the scheme and how to support students to apply for this assistance. It is our intention to evaluate the impact of our financial support package for students to succeed and progress with their studies in line with our aim to eliminate gaps for students with a disability and others in need. The evaluation of the financial support package is outlined within the College's Evaluation Strategy (Section 3.4)

Through the Assessment of Performance, our data has highlighted that the College currently does not have any students from a care background studying HE. Within this APP it is a strategic aim to support access into HE for this underrepresented group through a range of measures including (but not exclusively) a partial fee waiver of £2000 per care leaver per annum within our financial support package. Our intention is that by the end of this APP's lifecycle, this financial support package, alongside the trialled measures for identification and support of care leavers to apply to study higher education, will have helped us to improve our proportions of care leavers to 2.5% in 2025 and to 5% by 2026/27.

Bursaries: We have allocated £6,000 rising to £15,500 by 2026-27 for bursaries. The amount awarded per student per year is a flat rate of £500 (pro-rata for part-time students). Students are eligible to apply for bursaries each year of their study if any of the following applies:

- Household income is under £25,000 per annum, and the student cannot have their tuition fees paid nor part paid through a sponsorship arrangement.
- They are from one or more of our target underrepresented groups: a declared disability, care leavers, or other emergent groups where there are gaps in access and/or their continuation and/or success is at risk, as identified through our academic quality monitoring processes.

Hardship Funds: We have allocated hardship funds of £7,000 rising to £13,000 by 2026/27. Students are eligible to apply to uncapped hardship funds each year of their study if the following applies:

- They are from one or more of our target underrepresented groups (declared disability, Care Leavers, those from intersections of disadvantage as they are identified) and their continuation and/or success is at risk, as identified through our academic quality monitoring processes.

In addition to this, we have introduced an allocation of £10,000pa from 2024/25 up to £20,000 in 2026/27 towards partial fee waivers specifically for our underrepresented group of Care Leavers at the rate of £2000 per student per annum. We will invest in trialling activities, working collaboratively with stakeholders including schools and colleges to encourage applications from those leaving or who have left care.

Internal scrutiny shows that our financial support package has made a quantifiable impact on our previous HE students. Of the 28% of students that received financial support in 2020-21, 84% then went on to achieve their qualification and 14% progressed to the next level of study. This review of previous data has informed this APP and identified that there is a need for the College to continue to evaluate the impact of its Financial Support Scheme. This will be done within the HE Quality Assurance Committee (HE QAC) through an evaluation report from Learner Services looking at the students offered support, their qualifying reason and their subsequent success and progression and scrutiny will be applied to the whole student lifecycle through the Standards subcommittee and the Corporation. This evaluation will take place on an annual basis commencing from November 2022 (for 21/22 academic year).

**Collaboration and Preparation**

From 2022/23, the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality will chair a strategic working group which draws together key members of staff that have contact with students that are in or leaving care and other stakeholders to review the accessibility of our provision and develop trialling activities. By 2023/24, trialling activities will be in place to encourage applications from care leavers. The outcomes from the strategy working group will be reviewed at CLG to ensure the implementation for any changes are managed across the institution.

From 2023/24, the college will invest in tracking the progression of students from under-represented groups into post graduate study and high skilled employment to inform our reporting to Corporation, using the external company "Think Alumni".

We will continue to work in partnership with local HEIs to promote postgraduate learning opportunities and prepare students to apply for further study.

The work that has commenced with employers through the Future Skills Groups FSSG, will align to our curriculum development to ensure that meaningful employability skills to support progression are embedded within curriculum design and implementation.

The College will work in collaboration with Lincolnshire and East Midlands SCiP Alliance Hub to develop, enhance our knowledge and assess activities which have a sustained impact upon students from military families progressing into higher education.

The College will develop its strategy throughout 24/25 to work collaboratively with schools and other groups of stakeholders to promote and support access to HE through its outreach with a specific focus on people who are carers, refugees, from a Gypsy, Roma or traveller background or who are estranged from their families. By 2025/26, we will have set targets for all measures to ensure there are no gaps to access or progression for under-represented groups.

## 3.3 Student consultation

We engaged our student body in the design of this APP by using focus groups, individual meetings, and through wider consultation through our open online platform, Microsoft Teams. To support inclusivity, we are careful not to identify students by their background as this could result in skewed data as certain individuals could be disproportionately influential.

In the first instance, all HE students were consulted on our draft APP design by using the students' dedicated online Teams page. This was then followed up by focus groups with all cohorts via classroom visits. This enabled us to gather feedback from the broadest demographic that represents students from all backgrounds. We have used the feedback from our students to inform our financial support package of the Bursary and Hardship fund.

Student feedback is evidenced in the strategic measures table which articulates how we will work with employers and HEI partners to increase progression opportunities to further study and skilled employment as a key priority for our students.  Evidence from student feedback supports our view that the curriculum reflects and responds to the local employment market and should enable good progression to graduate level jobs.  Our target to improve the tracking of student progression will enable us to evaluate the success of our curriculum in this area, and support the data gathered from student feedback.

In response to the student consultation feedback, we have received support for our strategic targets for addressing the gap in success for students with a disability.

As a result of positive student feedback around the difference that Academic Achievement Coaches (AACs) make in helping to complete the course and achieve higher grades, we are increasing the number of AACs from September 2022 and promoting their mainstream involvement in courses to support engagement with their individual support offer.  This will support the targets to improve continuation and attainment across all of the underrepresented groups in our APP. However, the plan to strengthen the role of the AACs was not based solely on the feedback from student consultation. It was also informed by the Assessment of Performance which has contributed to the Strategic Aims and Objectives and Strategic Measures within the APP. Another aspect of the design of the APP that has not been informed directly by our student feedback is our commitment to understanding the lifecycle of students from newly defined under-represented groups such as children from military families and others noted throughout. It is our intention, once we are able to gather and analyse this data to identify gaps in access or participation, to consult on targets and measure proposed to deal with issues.

From the student feedback and focus groups, it was identified that consistent sharing of information through formal and informal channels - the website and Team Page and then during Welcome Events and Induction Events was important and, greater clarity from the College about financial support was noted as an important outcome for our APP.  Our financial support has been more clearly defined for academic year 2022/23, based upon our student consultation and the College will closely monitor the impact of this package for student success and progression.

Actions and Targets to eliminate gaps

| Situation | Input investment | Output activity | Outcomes Goals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Data outcomes highlight students with a declared disability are not as successful as students without a declared disability | Systems and processes for data gathering and analysis for sub-groups of disability will receive investment<br><br>Academic staff, the Learner Support Team and AACs will develop processes to produce individualised support plans for students<br><br>Academic Staff will work collaboratively with students to set up support meetings with an Academic Achievement Coach<br><br>Increase the number of focus groups to at least 3 each academic year with students that have a declared disability to gather qualitative data about their learning experience | 1. Identify students with a declared disability early in their learning journey to ensure there is a clearer picture about their support needs during the student lifecycle<br><br>2. Targets and subsequent measures will be implemented, tailored to individual definitions of disability<br><br>3. Deployment of Academic Achievement Coaches to be targeted to students with a declared disability<br><br>4. Qualitative data on barriers to continuation and attainment is gathered from students with a declared disability throughout their learning lifecycle | **Short term:** All students with a declared disability have been offered support by an Academic Achievement Coach<br><br>**Mid Term:** Achievement Coaches report into HE QAC about contact and support provided<br><br>Data is available for disability sub-groups by 2023/24<br><br>**Long term**: Gaps in continuation and attainment between students with a declared disability and those without has been eradicated |
| Data highlights that no care leavers have | Head of Higher Education and Head of Learner | 1. Devise a report which creates a clear picture about how students in | **Short Term:** Reports to Corporation articulate the |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| enrolled on a HE courses at the College | Services to explore historical enrolment data for students in care post-16 to understand their progression plans.<br><br>Explore the opportunities for a regional working group, with other providers of HE, and stakeholders to develop a greater understanding about supporting care leavers to progress into HE<br><br>Develop and offer a financial support package for care leavers | /leaving care are actively engaging with learning at the College<br><br>2. Review how information about HE at the College to students in care/ leaving care including financial and academic support is planned and presented<br><br>3. Work with LincHigher to establish a regional working group that focusses upon supporting students in/leaving care to progress with their learning<br><br>4. Promotion of financial support package availability to students takes place at application and enrolment stages. | specific measures required to attract care leavers<br><br><br><br>**Mid Term:** 1-1 meetings with students in care include information about financial and academic support<br><br><br>**Long Term:** regional engagement is raising the profile of learning post-16 for students leaving care, and the College aims to increase the population of care leavers to 2.5% by 2025, rising to 5% in 2026/7 |
| There is insufficient data about the life cycle of students from other under-represented groups. | Invest in changing the enrolment progress and reporting systems to gather data on children from military families, carers, Gypsy Roma and Traveller backgrounds, refugees and those estranged from families | 1. Senior MIS Analyst adapts enrolment and reporting processes<br><br>2. Reports about students from newly reported under-represented groups to feed into all quality monitoring processes<br><br>3. Head of HE to work with Lincolnshire and East Midlands SCiP Alliance Hub and engage in relevant research projects for military families. | **Short Term: by** the academic year 2023/24 the College has accurate data about students from military families, carers, refugees, those from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller backgrounds and those estranged from families.<br><br>**Mid Term:** We **i**dentify further actions within the student life cycle to support the target group of students from military families, working with our partners, the Lincolnshire and East Midlands SCiP Alliance Hub<br><br>**Long Term:** Military Families, carers, refugees, people |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | estranged from families and those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups access HE provision in line with demographic information and targets for gaps in participation are set. |
| There is insufficient data on the progression of students from under-represented groups | Invest in developing mechanisms to gather data on progression routes for under-represented groups. Invest in building networks with employers through skills groups as well as programmes for employability. Invest in support to develop access to further study | 1. The college has access to data on progression routes for HE students from under-represented groups<br><br>2. The college has strong network of employers to influence curriculum decisions and to support employability.<br><br>3. The college has a programme of support to build the necessary skills for further study or high-level careers. | We are fully aware of progression routes for students from under-represented groups and we have targets to address any inequalities<br><br>We have measures in place to support students from all underrepresented groups to support progression into further study or high-quality careers. |

## 3.4 Evaluation strategy

**Strategic context**

The College has completed the OfS Self Evaluation Toolkit to help the review our current practice and through this process of self-assessment, the College has identified clear and measurable objectives. We are continuing to improve our Management Information Systems and data collection processes to ensure readily accessible and accurate data is available to shape and measure improvement activities.  In line with the College's commitment to continuous improvement through evidence-based design, implementation and evaluation, we will be using the evaluation strategy that is outlined within this APP to ensure the focus is upon equality of opportunity for target groups within the student lifecycle, and to inform our collaborative work with LincHigher, other HEIs and stakeholders.  The College has a clear governance structure which will scrutinise the evaluation strategy as has been outlined in the Strategic Measures aspect of this plan (Governance and Operational).

**Programme Design**

The OfS Self Evaluation Toolkit has supported the College's approach to the design of the programme. To support this programme, this APP has committed budgetary targets and specific funds to resource the proposed evaluation activities. The College will be using both empirical and narrative data collection within

all its quality assurance processes because this will help us develop the richest picture possible about our student lifecycle.

As a result of the outcomes of the OfS Self-Assessment tool, during the 2022/23 academic year there will be three internal projects set up with clear terms of reference and objectives to evaluate the impact of the activities set up to meet the targets set within this APP.   We will be evaluating the whole student lifecycle from application to enrolment, continuation, attainment and progression and we will do this through the triangulation with qualitative evidence. Project designs are based upon a shared narrative and empirical data using a mixed methods approach.  This will include both primary and secondary research, inclusive of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to provide a rich picture about the impact access and participation initiatives have had on our students and to shape decision-making regarding potential changes. Institutional data will continue to be collected following improvements to our processes to define the performance of differing groups by our central MIS to support the evaluation strategy and enable the College to analyse data at individual, and cohort level. Data from our MIS will be used alongside the OfS dashboard to support the College's evaluation strategy, meaningful for the local context whilst aligning with the national picture.

The project designs will be framed by clear and measurable objectives, which are timebound to align with the HE Quality Calendar.  The evaluation process will be run internally, and the process overseen by the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality with support from the Head of HE. We intend to introduce formal evaluation of students' progression from the end of academic year 2022/23 in line with the APP targets. This will be evidence–driven through an external agency (Think Alumni) and will replace our current reliance on anecdotal information from the lecturers or informal feedback from the student or employer. Outcomes from the internal projects will be scrutinised by the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality and Head of Higher Education with an outcome report to Corporation. External and collaborative projects will HEIs and LincHigher will draw on the NERUPI framework.

Where we plan to introduce research methods (both qualitative and quantitative), we will strive to achieve a joined-up approach so a centralised data source can be maintained and to ensure that the evaluation process is objective and evidence-based. We recognise that our student numbers are too low to rely exclusively on OfS dashboard data and therefore we supplement this with our internal data to provide a more balanced and holistic view. The qualitative data that we will obtain from student surveys, focus groups and other engagement activity will provide additional evidence to corroborate the data and provide colour and depth to our reporting.  Policies relating to the processing of our students' personal data necessary to support and evaluate student success initiatives are GDPR compliant and any research is approved by the College's Ethics Committee.  Furthermore, as part of our institutional compliance with the data protection legislation, there are data sharing agreements in place with existing partners and this process will be extended to all new partnerships the college makes.

The Quality Improvement Management at the College will lead on APP student focus groups to ensure that all the evaluation strategy has clear student engagement and ownership.  The intention is to have a straight-forward, evidence-based approach that is appropriate to our context because of our small relatively numbers in HE.  The evaluation the impact of the financial assistance will be led by the Head of Learner Services and fed into the governance and operational structure.

**Evaluation implementation**

From these quality assurance processes we will be able to gather the quantitative and qualitative data which is needed to inform our robust and iterative evaluation cycle. There is a clear data driven evaluation process which consists of quarterly HE Performance Monitoring Review (PMR) meetings which are chaired by the Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality. Outcomes from the PMRs are then scrutinised through the termly HE Quality Assurance Committee (HE QAC) meeting. Reports, with both quantitative and qualitative data, are monitored at the Standards Committee (sub-committee of Corporation) and are tabled at the full governing body. The HE QAC is responsible for ensuring sufficient access and participation activity is taking place at each quarter, to enable year-on-year progress against the planned targets, as laid out in the targets and investment plan.

The extent to which progress is made against our plan will enable the College to use data rigorously and with integrity to inform the decision-making process at all levels of the institution for the short- and long-term driver of eliminating gaps in performance. The outcomes of our evaluations will continue to inform our strategic measures (outlined in section 3.1.). Through our evaluation strategy we will allocate greater investment to the activity which has most impact upon student experience and outcomes and reduce or remove investment from activity which is failing to have an impact. This will be articulated through the annual report about HE Performance, which is submitted to the Standards Committee, a sub-committee of the governing body in the Autumn term of each academic year. The outcomes will then also be incorporated into the budget setting process in the Spring term of each academic year, to ensure investment forecasts and planned activity can be changed or increased as deemed appropriate based on evaluation outcomes gained.

## 3.5 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The College's compliance with this APP forms part of our risk management framework which is overseen by the Executive team. During each academic year, this APP will be monitored at an operational and strategic level and this process is led by the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality as the Executive Lead. All our reporting and oversight feeds up to the College Corporation via the Standards Committee who have final oversight and accountability for all performance and provisions of the APP. The process starts with quarterly HE Performance Monitoring Review (PMR) meetings which are chaired by the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality. Outcomes from the PMRs are then scrutinised through the termly HE Quality Assurance Committee (HE QAC) meeting. The HE QAC committee is responsible for ensuring sufficient access and participation activity is taking place at each quarter, to enable year-on-year progress against the planned targets, as laid out in the targets and investment plan. Our HE Student Governor sits on this Committee to assist with its dual role of scrutinising the HE Group – which is an operational group of managers, lecturers and support staff, and feeds into reports for the College's Corporation (governing body). Wider student representation will take place through APP focus groups and the outcomes will feed into governance and operational processes and practice.

The College holds Academic Boards twice yearly and this will increase to three times yearly from September 2022, in order to provide dedicated time to review access and transparency data and financial assistance impacts and to review the success and progression of target groups within this APP. Our Academic Boards are focused on reviewing data and planning for improvements to meet the targets within this APP and quality standards within HE provision overall. This helps us to meet the needs of underrepresented groups and will feed into the topics discussed at the planned focus group sessions.

Further APP monitoring and evaluation is undertaken by the Standards Committee (a subcommittee of the Corporation) who meet 5 times per year. The Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality is the lead for reporting

to Standards Committee and Head of Higher Education has responsibility to monitor progress at an operational level. Each curriculum area completes a Department Improvement Plan (DIP) each academic year, and this aligns to the targets within the APP. The DIP feeds into the department's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and this is monitored at Performance Monitoring Reviews (PMRs) which take place quarterly and are chaired by the Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality. The College operates a RAG rating system to indicate progress against targets, and action plans are put in place where progress is not in line with expectations and the APP. Access and participation targets and criteria have been included in the college's SAR and QIP processes and this, alongside the regular ongoing monitoring described above, will ensure that awareness and monitoring of equality of opportunity is embedded across the College.

The assessment of performance has provided clear insight into where there are gaps evident in the performance of the college and its students across the student lifecycle. There are, however, areas where either insufficient data exists to inform this analysis or where gaps are present for a single year and are not yet established as a trend. These areas should provide an additional focus over the duration of this plan and beyond. Where gaps are identified these will be addressed and if necessary, added to the targets contained within this plan.

## 4. Provision of information to students

Sharing information with prospective and current students is important because there is a range of material within the public domain that students can access. The College acknowledges the importance of publishing information that is accurate and reliable. Public information on the College website, and within other published material, helps prospective students to make informed decisions about where, what, when, and how, they will study. This includes information on the fees they will be charged for the duration of the course. Information about the amount of and criteria for financial support is included on our dedicated HE webpage, along with our Fee Policy to help students make an informed decision about the support available and their own financial commitment. Policies are shared with students on the College website, and on the dedicated HE Student Team Page. The College strives to publish information in a timely manner, and to ensure information is accurate, fair, and reasonable. The APP and accompanying information such as the financial package to support students as identified, will be published on the college's website.

The College seeks to ensure that prospective, and current students have access to reliable information about HE courses. The Student Protection Plan is an important part of the information that it shares with students. It is accessible for prospective students on the College's website from the point of enquiry, and additionally is held on the HE Student Team Page for students to access once enrolled. It is signposted, along with other relevant HE policies, to all newly enrolled students as part of their induction to college. The College's Student Protection Plan is tracked and reviewed at the HE QAC and presented annually for review at a student forum. It is also reviewed annually as part of the annual review of HE Performance at the Quality and Standards Governors Committee.

Students will be informed about the College's Financial Support Scheme at interview as well as during their induction period. We will ensure this is also articulated on the HE Student Team Page and the careers team will advise students about fee waivers as appropriate.

# 5. Appendix (added by OfS on publication)

1. Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)
2. Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
3. Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document)