''we have all been given the power to voice our opinions''

THE BEDFORD COLLEGE GROUP
STUDENTS' UNION

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President

The Bedford College Students' Union is passionate about participation and supporting a college that delivers access to education for all. This Access and Participation Plan is another great example of the commitment, dedication and hard work the Bedford College Group puts into enabling students from underrepresented groups gain a meaningful education and progress. The work the Students' Union has undertaken and the student voice captured this year shows that the groups and communities in this Plan are the correct groups to be targeted. The Students' Union Vice President spoke at a recent Conference expressing the importance of acceptance saying ''to feel part of the group and regardless of differences everyone was equal no matter what, is key to a successful education'' a value that is clearly demonstrated here.

Bedford College

Access and Participation Plan

2020-21to 2024-25

1.0 Assessment of Performance

1.1 Higher Education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

1.1a Access

The College's Campuses at Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough are located in areas where there is lower participation in Higher Education than the national rate (see Table 1).

Table 1: % of local residents with Level 4 qualifications or above

Area (Local Authority)	% of residents with Level 4 qualifications or above	England %
Corby	14.9%	27.4%
Kettering	23.3%	27.4%
Wellingborough	20.4%	27.4%
East Northamptonshire	24.2%	27.4%
Bedford	28.1%	27.4%
Central Bedfordshire	27.2%	27.4%

Source: 2011 Census. Office for National Statistics (last updated 30 January 2013).

In addition, Corby and Wellingborough have 3 wards in the POLAR 4 Quartile 1 indicating the lowest participation rates in Higher Education, whilst Bedford has no wards in Quartile 1.

The College has an under-representation of POLAR 4 Quintile 1 in our Higher Education student population (see Table 2). This access gap is statistically significant and has been the case for the last five years. This will be the main focus for our access and participation intervention over the next five years.

Table 2: Access proportions by POLAR4 quintile.

POLAR4	Full time			Part time		
	Bedford College	National	Difference National-Bedford College	Bedford College	National	Difference National-Bedford College
Quintile 1	6%	12%	6%	5%	18%	13%
Quintile 2	24%	16%	-8%	20%	21%	1%
Quintile 3	19%	19%	0%	5%	21%	16%
Quintile 4	30%	23%	-7%	40%	21%	-19%
Quintile 5	22%	30%	8%	25%	21%	-5%
Gap1-5	-16%	-18%	-2%	-20%	-3%	17%

Source: Access and participation dashboard, Office for Students, UK, 2019. Based on 5 year average data to 2017/18

Analysis of the data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation also identifies a Quintile 1 to 5 gap of 8% for full time courses and 21% for part time courses. Whilst these access gaps are not statistically significant, and appear to be decreasing, this has also been added as a target group in this Access and Participation Plan.

1.1b Success

<u>Non-continuation</u>

There is no significant non-continuation gap for students from POLAR 4 Q1 or Q2. This has been identified in our access and participation dataset and in our Office for Students (OfS) provider metrics (see Table 3). Analysis of intersects of disadvantage has identified a success gap for BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic students) from POLAR 4 Q1 and Q2 areas and this is a group we plan to target for Access and Participation activity.

Table 3: Continuation rates according to POLAR 4 quintile

	Full time other undergraduate	Part time other undergraduate
POLAR 4 Q1 or Q2	78.4%	73.6%
POLAR 4 Q3,4,5	77.1%	79.8%
Overall	79.1%	75.2%

Source: OFS provider metrics 24/9/2018. Based on 5 year average data to 2016/17 for full time students and 2015/16 for part time students

<u>Attainment</u>

Due to the College merger we have only been able to analyse pass rates by IMD decile for 2017/18. Pass rates overall are high at 95.5% and the analysis does not identify any significant gaps in pass rates between students who live in the most deprived or least deprived areas.

1.1c Progression to employment or further study

There is no significant gap in progression to employment of further study for those from areas of low participation in Higher Education (see Table 4). Over the last five years (up to 2016/17) there has been an overall reduction in the gap of progression to professional employment or further study of over 34 pp.

Table 4: Progression to employment or further study for students according to POLAR 4 quintile

	Full time other undergraduate Progression to employment or further study	Part time other undergraduate Progression to employment or further study	Full time other undergraduate Progression to professional employment or further study	Part time other undergraduate Progression to professional employment or further study
POLAR 4 Q1 or Q2	92.6%	100%	72.3%	76.0%
POLAR 4 Q3,4,5	96.3%	99.1%	75.0%	69.1%

Source: TEF Year 4 metrics. Based on 3 year average data to 2016/17

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

1.2a Access

When looking at the ethnic profile of our student profile we have used our own enrolment data rather than the data for the whole group that is available in the Access and Participation dataset. This is because The Bedford College Group operates across both Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire and each area has a very different ethnic profile. The majority of our students live locally to our campus. The Bedford Campus has a more ethnically diverse Higher Education student population than Bedfordshire Borough (see Table 5). The Higher Education student population at Tresham campus is less diverse but this reflects the local ethnic profile. This distribution has not seen significant change over the past 5 years. In terms of BAME groups our data shows under-representation of white other students at Tresham College (compared to the Corby ethnic profile).

Table 5: Enrolments by ethnicity, Bedford & Tresham 2017/18

Ethnicity	Bedford College	Bedford Borough Ethnic Profile 2011	Tresham College	Corby Ethnic Profile 2011	Kettering Ethnic Profile 2011
Asian	7.3%	7.7%	1.5%	1.4%	3.2%
Black	9.2%	3.4%	3.8%	1.7%	1.1%
Mixed	4.8%	2.2%	2.0%	1.4%	1.4%
White British	69.8%	79.8%	86.7%	85.0%	89.3%
White Other	7.2%	5.9%	4.3%	10.5%	4.6%
Other/Unknown	1.7%	1.0%	1.5%	0.1%	0.4%
Grand Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Ethnic profile information: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright 2012
3 year average data, Bedford College Proachieve & Prosolution

We have not identified this as a target area for Access and participation activity as the profile identified above does match our local communities. In some categories we do have a gap between our full time and part time courses, for example there is a gap in access of Black and other category students on our part time programmes. This gap is not statistically significant. We will continue to closely monitor this profile and were it to significantly change we would add this our target groups as part of our evaluation strategy.

1.2b Success

Non-continuation

Whilst not statistically significant there has been a persistent gap in continuation rates for both full time and part time BAME students over the last 5 years. This has been identified in our access and participation dataset and in our OfS provider metrics (see Table 6). Reducing this for part time students has therefore been identified as a priority in this Access and Participation Plan.

Table 6: Continuation rates by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Full time other undergraduate	Part time other undergraduate
BME	75.4%	62.4%
White	79.9%	78.5%
Overall	79.1%	75.2%

Source: OFS provider metrics 24/9/2018. Based on 5 year average data to 2016/17 for full time students and 2015/16 for part time students

Due to the small cohort size more detailed analysis by ethnic group is not possible for part time students. For full time students our access and participation dataset has identified that there is a gap in continuation rates for full time black students. We will continue to closely monitor this profile and were it to significantly change we would add this our target groups as part of our evaluation strategy.

Attainment

Attainment levels across the group are high and over the last 3 years Attainment levels of BAME students have been consistently above those for white students.

1.2c Progression to employment or further study

There is no significant gap in progression to employment or further study for BAME students (see Table 7). Over the last five years (to 2016-17) there has been significant progress in reduce the gap with improvements of over 17pp on both progression indicators.

Table 7: Progression to professional employment or further study by ethnicity

	Full time other undergraduate Progression to employment or further study	Full time other undergraduate Progression to professional employment or further study
BME	92.4%	79.8%
White	95.7%	77.2%

Source: TEF metrics. Based on 3 years data to 2016/17

When progression is further analysed by type there appears to be a gap on the progression for Asian students. The sample size is very small. We plan to closely monitor the progression of this group of students and were this to persist we would add this our target groups as part of our evaluation strategy.

1.3 Mature students

1.3a Access

The Bedford College Group have much higher levels of mature learners on their full time courses than the national average (see Table 8). The proportion of mature students on our full time courses has remained fairly static whilst the proportion of mature students has increased on our part time courses.

Table 8: Access by age

Age	Full time			Part time		
	Bedford College	National	Difference National-Bedford College	Bedford College	National	Difference National-Bedford College
Mature (21 and over)	37%	28%	-9%	63%	87%	24%
Young (under 21)	63%	72%	9%	37%	13%	-24%

Source: Access and participation dashboard, Office for Students, UK, 2019. Based on 5 year average data to 2017/18

1.3b Success

Non-continuation

Overall over the last 5 years the continuation rates of our full time mature learners has generally been above that of our young students. This has been identified in our access and participation dataset and in our OfS provider metrics (see Table 9).

Table 9: Continuation rates

Age Category	Full time other under graduate	Part time other under graduate
Young	77.3%	75.4%
Mature	82.2%	74.4%
Overall	79.1%	75.2%

Source: OFS provider metrics 24/9/2018. Based on 5 year average data to 2016/17 for full time students and 2015/16 for part time students

Attainment

There is no significant achievement gap between the performance of our mature and younger learners. Over the last 3 years attainment of mature learners has been consistently above that of our younger learners.

1.3c Progression to employment or further study

Overall there is no significant gap in progression to employment or further study from our courses. There remains a gap for progression to professional employment or further study for young part time students (see Table 10). This situation has not significantly changed over the last 5 years (to 2016/17).

Table 10: Progression to professional employment or further study

Age category	Full time other undergraduate Progression to employment or further study	Part time other undergraduate Progression to employment or further study	Full time other undergraduate Progression to professional employment or further study	Part time other undergraduate Progression to professional employment or further study
Young	95.0%	98.7%	74.1%	70.2%
Mature	95.0%	97.8%	82.4%	84.3%

Source: TEF Year 4 metrics. Based on 3 years data to 2016/17

1.4 Disabled students

1.4a Access

Our proportion of disabled students accessing our full time Higher Education provision is in line with national levels (see Table 11). There is a gap of 5.6% on our part time courses, however, this gap is not statistically significant. This gap has remained fairly static since 2014/15. This gap is mainly due to an under-representation of students with mental health conditions. As the gap is not statistically significant we have not identified this as a target group. We will monitor this gap over the period of the plan and will also increase the visibility of our support for students with mental health conditions on our website.

When disaggregated by disability type Bedford College has a higher proportion of students with cognitive and learning difficulties and social or communication impairment on our full-time courses than the national average.

Table 11: Access proportions by disability type

	Full time			Part time		
	Bedford College	National	Difference National-Bedford College	Bedford College	National	Difference National-Bedford College
Cognitive or learning difficulties	7.0%	5.5%	-1.5%	3.0%	3.9%	0.9%
Mental Health condition	2.0%	3.5%	1.5%	0.0%	3.6%	3.6%
Sensory or medical impairment	2.0%	2.3%	0.3%	3.0%	2.7%	-0.3%
Social or communication impairment	3.0%	0.8%	-2.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
Not known disabled	86.0%	85.5%	-0.5%	91%	85.4%	-5.6%

Source: Access and participation dashboard, Office for Students, UK, 2019. Based on 5 year average data to 2017/18

1.4b Success

<u>Non-continuation</u>

Bedford College has a small gap in continuation rates between both full time and part time disabled students looking at data for the last 5 years (see Table 12). This small gap has persisted over the last 3 years. Whilst not identified as a gap on the access and participation dashboard we have identified this as a priority for this Access and Participation Plan as in our single Equality Scheme one of the measures is to reduce achievement gaps at the College to below 1%.

Table 12: Continuation rates

	Full time other undergraduate	**Part time other undergraduate**
Disabled	72.0%	69.7%
Non-disabled	80.3%	75.5%
Overall	79.1%	75.2%

Source: OFS provider metrics 24/9/2018. Based on 5 year average data to 2016/17 for full time students and 2015/16 for part time students

Having undertaken a more thorough analysis the gap in continuation rates is due to retention rather than achievement rates. In 2017-18 the retention gap was no longer in existence. However in-year retention for disabled students was greatest for dyslexic students and those identifying mental health concerns (although small cohorts).

There has been a 3 year improving trend in continuation (retention) of those in receipt of DSA. Although a very small cohort this has increased by 33pp between 2015/16 and 2017/18. The cohort we will therefore focus our efforts on are disabled students not in receipt of DSA.

<u>Attainment</u>

There has been considerable improvement in reducing the attainment gap between those with and without a declared disability since 2015/16. This has increased by 5.4pp since 2015/16.

1.4c Progression to employment or further study

There is no significant gap for progression to employment or further study. Whilst there is a gap for progression of part time students to professional employment or further study this is well above the national benchmark. Whilst a relatively small cohort this gap in progression has widened by 11.5pp over the last 5 years (to 2016/17).

Table 13: Progression to professional employment or further study

	Full time other undergraduate Progression to employment or further study	**Part time other undergraduate Progression to employment or further study**	**Full time other undergraduate Progression to professional employment or further study**	**Part time other undergraduate Progression to professional employment or further study**
Disabled	94.3%	95.1%	79.3%	63.4%
Non-disabled	95.2 %	98.7%	77.6%	75.6%

Source: TEF Year 4 metrics. Based on 3 years data to 2016/17

Our access and participation dataset has identified that in the latest year of data (2016/17) the progression rate for full time disabled students has a gap of 13.2 pp. As part of our evaluation process we will need to closely monitor this to ensure that this gap does not persist. If this is the case we will need to amend our measures to ensure that any gap is reduced.

Whilst progression rates are high when we disaggregate this progression rates to employment or further study are lowest for those students with dyslexia (80%) and mental health conditions (71.4%). Due to

the small cohorts we have not identified this as a target group for this plan but will continue to monitor these cohorts.

1.5 Care leavers

The very low number of care leavers (of which our Student Services team are aware) on our Higher Education courses is so low that any analysis of this data would lead to disclosure. It is therefore not currently possible to assess performance.

We believe that the numbers of care leavers of which we are aware is an underestimation of the actual number due to non-declaration by students. Nationally there is a significant gap with data from the DFE[1] from 2017-18 shows that around 6% of all care leavers between the ages of 19-21 were in Higher Education in 2018. Assuming that this gap is also reflected in our own student population we have identified care leavers as a target group with the key measure being to introduce a new bursary. The aim of this is to increase the rate of declaration of students so we can track their outcomes throughout the student life cycle.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Detailed analysis of our TEF continuation metrics led us to complete a full analysis of the intersections of disadvantage for continuation rates. This analysis has identified that the gap for continuation rates is mainly with BAME students from areas of low participation in Higher Education. Whilst a small cohort for this group there is a 17.4 pp gap in retention (based on 3 years data to 2017-18). This group has been included as a target group. In our previous Access and Participation Plan young white males from areas of low participation in Higher Education had been a target gap. In 2017-18 this gap in retention has been closed.

There remains a slight gap in progression of part time students to professional employment or further study. Further analysis of intersections of disadvantage has identified that this is for young part time students. This has also been identified as a target group for this Access and Participation Plan.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education- LGBT learners

In line with our priorities and work with our Further Education students we have decided to focus some of our Access and Participation resources on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans students (LGBT) Research by the National Union of Students[2] identified that the group are at much higher risk of non-continuation. Their survey of more than 4,000 respondents identified that LGB+ identified that more than half of respondents cited the feeling of "not fitting in" as the main reason for dropping out. The report also identified that the lack of data available to monitor access, success and progression of this group of students means that we do not fully know the extent of the barriers they face in Higher Education. We have targeted this group of students in this plan.

2.0   Strategic aims and objectives

2.1 Target groups

We have selected our target groups based on our assessment of evidence. We have identified the gaps which are significant or which we believe that we can have the biggest impact on closing. We have discounted some smaller gaps or those gaps that have not been sustained over a number of years. We

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2017-to-2018

[2] Education beyond the Straight and narrow. LGBT students' experience in higher education. NUS. 2014

will continue to review and evaluate these target groups through our self-assessment process. We propose to target the following groups in our access and participation work:

Access

1. Students living in areas with low participation in Higher Education (Polar 4 Quintile 1)

2. Students living in deprived areas (Index of Deprivation Quintile 1)

Success

3. Disabled students on full and part time courses (not in receipt of DSA)

4. BAME students from areas of low participation in Higher Education (Polar 4 Quintile 1&2)

5. Part-time BAME students

Progression to employment and further study

6. Young part time students

Data collection

7. Care leavers

8. LGBT students

2.2 Aims and objectives

2.2a Access

Target group 1: Students living in areas with low participation in Higher Education (Polar 4 Quintile 1)

Target PTA_1: To reduce the gap in participation in Higher Education for students from POLAR 4 Quintile 1 postcodes to 8pp for full time students and 10pp for part time students by 2024

Timescales and yearly milestones:

Baseline data	Yearly Milestones				
	2020-21	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
16pp for full time students & 20pp for part time students	14.4 pp for full time students & 18pp for part time students	12.8pp for full time students & 16pp for part time students	11.2pp for full time students & 14pp for part time students	9.6pp for full time students and 12pp for part time students	8pp for full time students & 10pp for part time students

This is a stretching and challenging measure as achieving this measure would lead to a 50% reduction in gap over a 5 year period. We aim to eliminate this gap by 2030.

Target group 2: Students living in deprived areas (Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1)

Target PTA_2: To reduce the gap in participation in Higher Education between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 to 4pp for full time students and 10.5pp for part time students.

Timescales and yearly milestones:

Baseline data	Yearly Milestones				
	2020-21	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
8pp for full time students & 21pp for part time students	7.2pp for full time students & 18.9pp for part time students	6.4pp for full time students & 16.8pp for part time students	5.6pp for full time students & 14.7pp for part time students	4.8pp for full time students and 11.9pp for part time students	4pp for full time students & 10.5pp for part time students

This is a stretching and challenging measure as achieving this measure would lead to a 50% reduction in gap over a 5 year period. We aim to eliminate this gap by 2030.

2.2b Success

Target group 3: Disabled students on full and part time courses

Target PTS_1: To reduce the non-continuation gap for disabled students to 4.15pp for full time students and 2.9pp for part time students by 2024

Timescales and yearly milestones

Baseline data	Yearly milestones				
	2020-21	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
8.3 pp for full time students and 5.8 pp for part time students	7.5pp for full time students and 5.2pp for part time students	6.6pp for full time students and 4.6pp for part time students	5.8pp for full time students and 4.1pp for part time students	5.0 pp for full time students and 3.5pp for part time students	4.2pp for full time students and 2.9pp for part time students

This is a stretching and challenging measure as achieving this measure would lead to a 50% reduction in gap over a 5 year period. We aim to eliminate this gap by 2030.

Target group 4: BAME students from areas of low participation in Higher Education (Polar 4 Quintile 1)

Target PTS-2: To reduce the non-continuation gap for BAME students from areas of low participation in Higher Education to 8.7pp by 2024

Timescales and yearly milestones

Baseline data	Yearly milestones				
	2020-21	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
17.4pp	15.7pp	13.9pp	12.2pp	10.4pp	8.7pp

This is a stretching and challenging measure as achieving this measure would lead to a 50% reduction in gap over a 5 year period. We aim to eliminate this gap by 2030.

Target group 5: Part time BAME students

Target PTS-3: To reduce the non-continuation gap for part time BAME students to 8.1pp by 2024

Timescales and yearly milestones

Baseline data	Yearly milestones				
	2020-21	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
16.1pp	14.5pp	12.9pp	11.3pp	9.7pp	8.1pp

This is a stretching and challenging measure as achieving this measure would lead to a 50% reduction in gap over a 5 year period. We aim to eliminate this gap by 2030.

2.2c Progression to employment and further study

Target group 6: Young part time students

Target PTP_1: To reduce the progression gap into professional employment or further study for young part time students to 7.1pp by 2024

Timescales and yearly milestones

Baseline data	Yearly milestones				
	2020-21	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
14.1pp gap between young and mature part time students	12.7pp	11.3pp	9.9pp	8.5pp	7.1pp

This is a stretching and challenging measure as achieving this measure would lead to a 50% reduction in gap over a 5 year period. We aim to eliminate this gap by 2030.

Target group 7: Care leavers

Target: To fully determine the proportion of care leavers within our Higher Education provision with the aim of replicating the FE Level 3 Care proportion ratio by 2024

Target group 8: LGBT students

Target: To determine the non-continuation gap for LGBT students at Bedford College Group

Timescales: To collect data for all new students entering the organisation in September 2020. This will enable us to have a complete dataset across all of the student lifecycle by 2024-25.

3.0 Strategic Measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

3.1a Strategic commitment to Access to Higher Education

The College's mission is to support the local and national economy through the promotion, development and delivery of excellent skills training and education, and, as such, promotes itself as a genuine alternative to university through its Higher Education programmes and seeks to promote social inclusion and personal advancement in the local communities. To achieve this mission the College needs to attract under-represented groups, particularly those who are mature students, carers, students with disabilities, ethnic minorities and people from non-traditional Higher Education backgrounds.

The Bedford College Group adopts a whole provider approach to achieving this mission looking at all stages of the student life cycle. As outlined above we have a commitment to access, success and progression. This includes:
- Staff and students from all areas of the College have been consulted on, and involved in, the production and approval of this plan and will be involved in the evaluation approach. Our student involvement strategy outlines our approach to student engagement across the organisation.
- Widening participation is an integral part of our college policies and procedures. For example our Teaching, learning and assessment policy specifically links to the HE Quality Code and focuses on high quality teaching to improve student success and the development of high level technical skills required for progression to employment. Our Community Strategy outlines our work with local communities to improve access to our programmes.
- This plan has been prepared by a member of the College Executive who, together with the senior member of staff responsible for Quality & Equality and Diversity, promotes the widening participation agenda. The organisation's Diversity and Inclusion Advisor oversees a number of cross organisation forums such as the Equality & Diversity forum.
- Our commitment to access, success and progression is embedded across the organisation. For example, our CPD and staff development approach includes a range of issues relevant to access and participation. Recent whole College staff conferences have included a wide range of workshops and events on a range of Equality and Diversity topics enabling our staff to develop the skills and expertise to fully engage with our strategic measures.

3.1b Our strategic aims

The Bedford College Group aims to be one of the best Higher Education providers within Further Education providers in the country, offering a wide range of courses at Level 4 and above to enable students to progress to higher level skills and knowledge in their chosen vocational and academic subject.

3.1c Our Strategic Objectives to 2021

The Corporation has identified and agreed four key objectives for the new plan:

1. Educational Leadership
2. Educational Sustainability
3. Financial Sustainability
4. High Quality provision

Educational Leadership

- to be perceived as an authority locally and within the sector on matters educational, not just further education
- to maintain our position as market leader by number of students locally on 16-18, apprenticeships, part-time provision and higher education
- to be perceived by local employers as highly responsive and an expert in work based and work-related learning

Educational Sustainability

- to maintain full-time 16-18 numbers of at least 5,200 over the plan period
- to grow The Bedford Sixth Form to 600 over the plan period
- to develop high quality, high level direct 14-16 provision in technical subjects for > 100 students by the end of the plan period
- to grow our higher education by 30% over the plan period
- to grow our non-subcontracted apprenticeship provision by 20%-30% over the plan period

Financial Sustainability

- to return to Outstanding financial health rating within three years of the Tresham merger return to surpluses of at least £1m by 2019
- to maintain capital investment at an average of at least £3.5m p.a. over the plan period
- to make like-for-like productivity improvements of at least 10% over the plan period
- to create new subsidiary companies that enable us to compete better with private competitors

High Quality Provision

- to achieve key performance measures in the top 10% nationally by the end of the plan period
- to continue to raise the curriculum "centre of gravity" upwards during the plan period so more of our activity is at levels 3 and above
- to achieve key A Level performance table results that at least match the best local state schools by the end of the plan period
- to improve student outcomes in terms of employment and higher education, and progression to levels 3 and above, with < 7% unemployment levels overall
- to invest a minimum of 3% of income in staff development to support improvements in staff quality and staff productivity

3.1d Key strategic plan performance measure relating to Higher Education

Increase Higher Education recruitment by 30%.

3.1e Alignment with other strategies

The following Bedford College policies and procedures support the strategic measures identified in this Access and Participation Plan:
- Our commitment to Equality & Diversity and particularly reducing achievement gaps is identified in our Single Equality Scheme (linking with our student success measures)

- Our commitment to high quality teaching and assessment is outlined in our Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy (linking with our student success measures)
- Our commitment to improving internal progression is identified in our Progression guarantee policy (linking with our access measures)
- Our approach to improving our curriculum offer at Tresham College is identified in our Curriculum Strategy (linking with our access measures)
- Our approach to working with our local communities is identified in our Community Strategy (linking with our access measures)
- Our commitment to student voice is identified in our Strategic Plan and our student engagement strategy

The Bedford College Group's Strategic Plan 2021

This Access and Participation Plan supports the College's Vision and Strategic Plan for Higher Education, 2016-2021, which outlines our clear commitment to widening participation and increasing access to our Higher Education programmes and is aligned to the College Strategic Plan 2021. The Higher Education Strategic Plan builds on the findings of the Higher Education Research commissioned in 2015/16. In addition, the Strategic Plan responds to the Higher Education Review January 2016 outcomes, the Higher Education Student Annual Conference recommendations and recent Government White Paper - *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice.*

The College's Strategic Plan 2021 highlights our commitment to promote social inclusion and personal advancement within the local communities we serve, and that we seek to achieve a high quality learning experience for every student.

The College's commitment to employability and higher level skills was supported by our January 2016 QAA report:

> *"The College has a strategic focus on employability which is highlighted in the College Strategy for Working with Employers. The College has developed strong links with local employers which have contributed to embedding employability skills and opportunities in much of the College's Higher Education provision. Opportunities for students include work experience, work placements and live briefs and there are higher apprenticeship schemes available to College students with local employers. The College recently commissioned a research report which touched on how employability informs student decision making when it comes to choosing courses."*

Student employability is enhanced by our excellent relationships with over 1000 local employers. This plan therefore links closely with our employer strategy.

Single Equality Scheme

The College is committed to the advancement and promotion of equality and diversity. We aim to provide learning and working environments which value individuals equally. As an organisation, we are aware that discrimination exists in many forms. We encourage all our staff and students to ensure that their behaviour is not discriminatory and does not make any person feel uncomfortable. The College will not tolerate harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination, and has procedures in place to deal with, and provide support for, individuals involved in such incidents.

The Bedford College Group has a Single Equality Scheme that sets out its equality priorities to 2022 and the manner in which it assesses its performance in this area. This Access and Participation Plan directly links with priority 1 from the College's Single Equality Scheme which aims to improve headline achievement rates for disability and ethnicity.

Each of the priorities is underpinned by specific and timely actions outlined in our Single Equality Scheme Action Plan which is reviewed every half term. The impact of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan is monitored by the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which is chaired by a Vice Principal and has cross-college representation.

The Equality and Diversity Annual Report, which demonstrates how the College is meeting the public sector equality duties and the progress on the objectives in the Single Equality Scheme, is scrutinised by

the College's Board of Governors at a full Board meeting when recommendations are made for further development.

3.1f Strategic relationships and work with schools to raise attainment

Over the last decade the College has gained a reputation as a leading provider of education to those under the age of 16, including two successive Ofsted Outstanding grades for that work. The College has also project managed the setting up of the Bedford Free School. The College's approach to raising attainment pre-16 is through the work of the Bedford College Academies Trust (BCAT). The BCAT mission is to support students to achieve their absolute best whatever their ability or background. BCAT aims to:

1. Work collaboratively to deliver an inclusive and outstanding education to all students, thereby driving up local standards.
2. Maximise social mobility and life chances, through the highest expectations of and aspirations for all students.
3. Encourage and support a range of high performing and distinctive educational establishments for local communities.

Bedford College will work closely to develop an outreach programme with academies within BACT including Wixams Academy. We will continue to work collaboratively with our Higher education partners to support their NCOP (National Collaborative Outreach Programme) programmes. The measures included within the Access and Participation Plan are in addition to these programmes and the NCOP objectives will support our own targets, particularly for students living in areas of low Higher Education participation

3.1g Collaborative partnerships

The Bedford College Group will continue to work in partnership with our Higher Education partners as part of the National Collaboration Outreach Project (NCOP) in both Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. This work has supported our own access and participation work and our Careers Strategy. The NCOP regional meetings have also been a great source of networking and sharing best practice supporting our work in meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks. We plan to further strengthen our partnership working with our local Universities and schools. For the 2019-20 academic year the college will be hosting a School Coordinator for one day a week as part of the NCOP project allowing closer working with NCOP to support learners.

3.1h Strategic measures

Access, student success and progression measures

We have adopted a range of measures that are informed by research and evidence and which we believe will have the biggest impact on access, student success and progression and that also fit within the framework of our overall College Strategic Plan and our ambitions to increase our Higher Education recruitment by 30% between 2016 and 2021. As all of our measures area based on an evidence informed theory of change model we believe that these measures have the best chance of meeting our challenging targets. Our revised evaluation approach will also enable us to closely monitor and amend our approaches if required. Whilst the measures outline our approach until 2024 we aim to close any gaps by 2030.

The Bedford College Group is committed to evidence based decision making throughout the organisation. For example, our staff have developed their own research network which enjoys a national reputation and which was shortlisted for a national TES Award for Best Teaching and Learning initiative in 2018. As an inter-department, collaborative group, the Network supports staff from both teaching and professional services departments to pursue their research interests. Members of the Network have presented their research at various conferences, including the international Association of Research in Post-Compulsory Education (ARPCE) conference at Oxford University. As well as the research undertaken by our own staff the College also commissions research. As well as our own commissioned research we also use a range of externally available research and guidance to inform our proposals.

The College's commitment to evidence based decision making is evident in how we have identified our Access and Participation Plan measures. Each proposed measure is informed by an evidenced theory of change model. These are included in the next section of the plan alongside specific details of the evidence that has informed the theory of change model.

Access measures identified from the assessment of progress:

Target PTA_1: To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from POLAR 4 Quintile 1 postcodes to 8 pp for full time students and 10 pp for part time students by 2024

Target PTA_2: To reduce the gap in participation in Higher Education between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 to 4pp for full time students and 10.5pp for part time students

OfS KPI supported

Key Performance measure 1: Gap in participation between most and least represented groups

Proposed measures

This will be achieved through:

Strand 1- Curriculum

We have fully reviewed our Curriculum Strategy and we are planning to:
- Develop and increase our Higher Education Curriculum Offer, particularly at Tresham College where there is a concentration of POLAR 4 Quintile 1 areas, to ensure that courses are provided which employers need and students want to do. We will ensure we have flexible and multiple modes of study and that courses are aligned with our existing Level 3 courses to provide progression opportunities. We aim to add 2 HE programmes a year between 2019 and 2024
- Develop our Level 2 and Level 3 Access to Higher Education provision to provide an alternative route to Higher Education for mature students so that every HE programme we offer has an Access to Higher Education course feeding into it by 2022

Theory of change model

| Low participation in Higher education from students living in POLAR 4 Q1 & Q2 and areas in IMD Quintile 1 areas | → | Increase local Higher Education offer | → | Increased convenience and ease of accessing Higher Education | → | Increased local enrolments and participation in Higher Education |
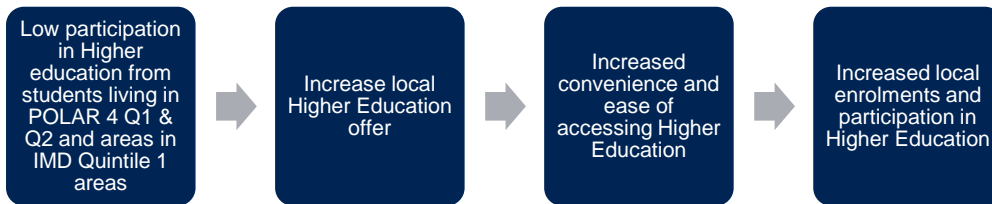
Evidence informing theory of change model

The measures identified to close the gaps is informed by a piece of externally commissioned research reviewing the Higher Education provision at Bedford College. Our research identified that the majority of our students live within a 10 mile radius of the campus they attend. In addition our research has identified that our students at our Northamptonshire campuses are less likely to travel to learn. This was supported by our Student Focus Groups this year. This explains our measure to extend the curriculum at our Northamptonshire sites (where there are a number of POLAR 4 quintile 1 areas).

Strand 2- Progression from FE programmes

- Implementing our Progression Guarantee policy for students successfully completing a full-time Study Programme at Level 3 and increasing engagement between the Higher Education delivery teams and Level 3 learners from September 2019.

Theory of change model

| Low participation in Higher education from students living in POLAR 4 Q1 & Q2 and IMD Quintile 1 areas | → | Increased awareness of local HE offer by our own internal students who are not planning to apply for University | → | Increased convenience and ease of accessing Higher Education | → | Increased local enrolments and participation in Higher Education |
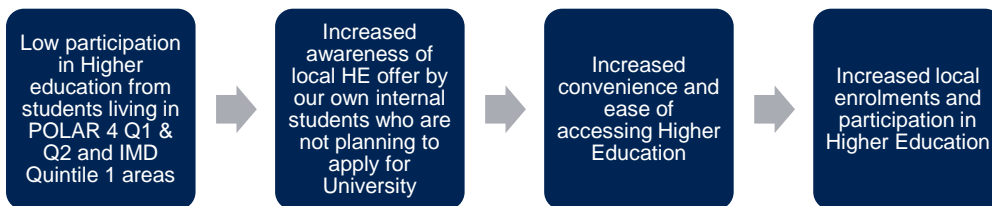
Evidence informing theory of change model

Strand 3-Outreach work

- Working with school pupils at Key Stage 4 to promote progression into Higher Education. This activity includes attendance at secondary school/upper school events, UCAS events and university events, Higher Education information events, targeted marketing campaigns, the use of media stories and case studies published through the full range of communication channels, one-to-one independent advice and guidance through the College's IAG team and campus visits. This activities continues work undertaken in previous years. As well as working in collaboration with local schools we are committed to continue working collaboratively with our local Higher Education partners as part of the NCOP programme.

Theory of change model

| Low participation in Higher education from students living in POLAR 4 Q1 & Q2 areas | → | Increase awareness of the local HE offer with school pupils at Key Stage 4 and 5 | → | Increased awareness of local HE offer with parents | → | Increased local enrolments and participation in Higher Education |
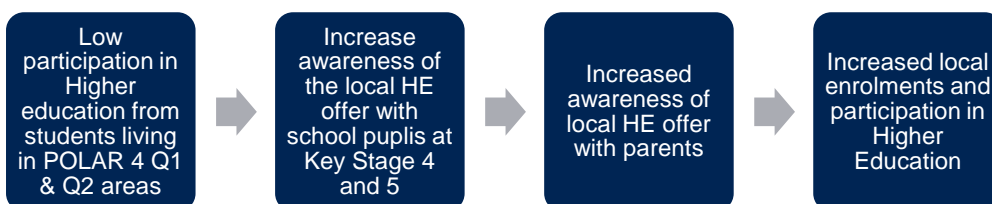
Evidence informing theory of change model

As part of our quality improvement cycle we review the effectiveness of our marketing approach, including our school engagement work, on an annual basis to ensure that the activities we completed have the most significant impact on our enrolments and participation. The approach taken builds on our evaluation of activities in previous years. Under our proposed evaluation approach we will provide this specifically for our HE Access and Participation strand.

<u>Strand 4-Financial support</u>

Progression bursary

Providing £500 progression bursaries for our own FE students progressing onto our HNC/HND or Hons Degree programmes. This is an inclusive cross cohort policy to increase access to, and participation in, our HE courses. Whilst an inclusive policy this bursary targets the following groups within our existing FE student body:

- Students from low participation HE areas (POLAR Quintile 1 and Quintile 2) at Kettering and Corby as a number of our FE students who are eligible for this bursary live in these postcodes.
- Students with household residual incomes up to £25,000
- Students from other under-represented target groups identified in our assessment of progress

Eligibility criteria for progression bursary

All Further Education students at The Bedford College Group progressing onto our HNC/HND programmes from any of our Level 3 courses will be eligible for this bursary. This bursary is a one off payment in year 1 of a one year HNC or two year HND programmes. This bursary will be in place for all years from September 2019.

Care leaver bursary

Providing additional £500 bursaries for care leavers. The aim of this bursary is to increase the number of students who disclose that they are care leavers so that additional support can be provided.

Eligibility criteria for care leaver bursary

All applicants and students who provide evidence of being a care leaver will be eligible for this bursary. Eligible students will receive this bursary in each year of full time study. Part time students will be eligible on a pro-rata basis. This bursary will commence for student's entering in September 2020.

Hardship fund

This fund is available for all students. Applications are assessed on a case by case basis according to need. Discretionary hardship bursaries will be awarded where a student demonstrates exceptional hardship which may be a barrier to learning and participation. This hardship bursary is set aside for those in greatest financial hardship; to support them with the ongoing costs of being at College.

Theory of change model

Low participation in Higher education from students living in POLAR 4 Q1 & Q2 areas and IMD Quintile 1 areas → Additional financial support available for students to access HE → Increased local enrolments and participation in Higher Education

Evidence informing theory of change model

Overall our decision to introduce progression bursaries and hardship bursaries has been informed by our student voice and student engagement. We are fully aware that we need to build up an evidence base to ensure that this intervention is effective. Building up this evidence base is a key part of our evaluation strategy.

Our approach to our care leaver bursary has been informed by our approach to our Further Education student bursaries, where we have a vulnerable learner bursary and this has increased disclosure of those students who are care leavers.

Student success measures identified from the assessment of progress:

Target PTS_1: To reduce the non-continuation gap for disabled students to 4.15pp for full time students and 2.9pp for part time students by 2024

Target PTS_2: To reduce the non-continuation gap for BAME students from areas of low participation in Higher Education to 8.7pp by 2024

Target PTS_3: To reduce the non-continuation gap for part time BAME students to 8.1pp by 2024

OfS KPI supported
KPM3: Gap in non-continuation between most and least represented groups

Proposed measures

This will be achieved through:

Strand 5- Monitoring of targeted students

- In-year monitoring of the retention and predicted success via Performance Management Meetings with individual programme areas and quality Information Packs for the senior management team from September 2019 onwards
- In-year monitoring of the retention of 'at risk' students with intervention as required from September 2019 onwards
- In-year quality interventions in individual programme areas when the attendance, retention and predicted success rates are below target or there are significant achievement gaps for one of the target groups identified in the measures from September 2019 onwards

Theory of change model

Non-continuation performance gap → Identify at risk students from target groups → One to one intervention put in place for all at risk students → Reduced achievement gap

Evidence informing theory of change model

The targeted intervention approach identified in the theory of change model above is based on both our own extensive experience of improving performance of our Further education students and is also informed by other educational research such as the Attainment Gap report published by the Education Endowment Foundation[3]. This report identified that "targeted small group and one to one interventions have the potential for the largest immediate impact on attainment".

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[3] The Attainment Gap, Education Endowment Foundation, January 2018

Strand 6-Student support

- Pre-course and in-course Study Skills support. This has been devised to provide face-to-face workshops on key Study Skills Themes and is an opportunity to apply new knowledge and obtain feedback and guidance in areas which will enhance their level of confidence in progressing to higher level study. The study skills programme will continue throughout the first year of study with a framework of workshops and one-to-one Study Skills support. This will be offered from September 2019 onwards.
- Tutorial strategy to ensure all students have early and timely tutorials. This will be offered from September 2019 onwards.
- Trial a mentoring programme for students encouraging our targeted group to take this up from September 2020
- Review and improve the level of support for Dyslexic students with the revised approach being implemented from September 2020

Theory of change model
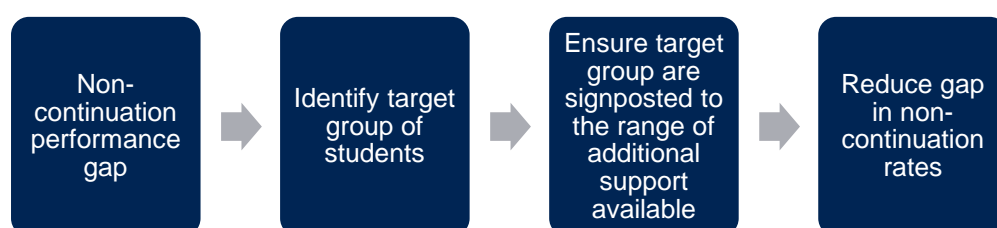
Evidence informing theory of change model

The Causes for differences in student outcomes report [4] informed a number of our strategies to reduce non-continuation including our Higher Education Welcome Days and induction approach and our Tutorial Strategy which have been designed to improve relationships and to build students' contacts and networks.

The College has a Student Engagement Strategy which identifies student focus groups as the preferred approach to engage with our Higher Education learners. This plan is also informed by evidence which emerges from these Student Focus Groups. For example, students have requested additional study skills support and programmes and believe this will help the success measures. This year our Student Focus Groups have identified the personal tutoring and also mentoring as having the biggest impact on helping improve continuation rates and this is evident in this theory of change model.

Progression measures identified from the assessment of progress:

Target PRP_1: To reduce the progression gap into professional employment or further study for young part time students to 7.1pp by 2024

Proposed measures

This will be achieved through:

Strand 7-Curriculum design

We have reviewed our Curriculum Strategy and are aiming to:
- Increase the range of full Degrees offered locally at the College so that part-time and full time students have a local progression route. When doing this we will ensure we are responding to Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) priorities, using LMI and employer feedback to inform curriculum planning for both full and part time study options and engaging employers in the

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[4] Causes of differences in student outcomes. Report to HEFCE by King's College London, ARC Network and The University of Manchester, July 2015

development of all new courses to maximise employability of our graduates and ensure our Higher Education provision is sustainable. We aim to increase the number of full Degrees offered locally by 10 courses for entry between September 2019 and 2024.

Theory of change model

| Progression gap into professional employment or further study for young part time students | → | Review the HE strategic plan to ensure that LEP priorities are met and employers are engaged in curriculum dveelopment | → | Increase the number of full degreees offered locally so there are more local progression opportunities | → | Ensure that all HE programmes embed employability | → | All students well prepared for future employment |

Evidence informing theory of change model

This theory of change model is informed by our own internally commissioned research has identified that our Foundation Degree and Higher National Diploma full time and part time students would like increased options for studying for a top up degree in close proximity to our campuses. This research has informed The Bedford College Group HE Strategy.

Other measures identified from the assessment of progress:

Strand 8-Care leavers

- Provide additional bursaries for Care leavers (see financial support section) for students entering in September 2020
- Improve information for Care leavers on our website by end December 2019
- Engage with our current care leavers within our FE provision to review how best to improve progression to Higher Education by end summer 2020 and feed this into the Access and Participation Plan evaluation process
- Commit to signing the Care Leaver covenant by December 2019

Theory of change model

| Lack of robust data on care leavers within our Higher Education student body | → | Provide incentives for this group to declare that they are care leavers | → | Increased cohort size of care leavers |
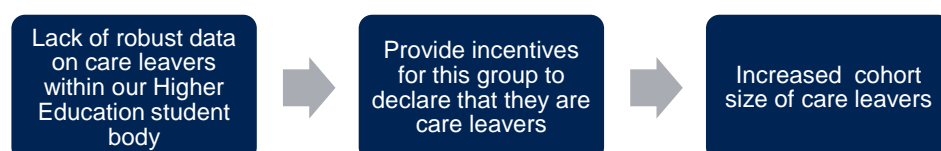
Evidence informing theory of change model

Our measures to increase access for Care leavers are informed by the DFE guidance document[5] Principles to guide HE providers on improving care leavers access to Higher Education.

Strand 9- LGBT

- Collect information on sexual orientation from all students and identify if there are gaps in continuation rates from September 2020 onwards
- Work with LGBT student groups to agree appropriate measures during the 2020-21 academic year with any access measures being implemented by September 2021, Success measures by 2022 and progression measures by 2024

Theory of change model

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[5] Principles to guide HE providers on improving care leavers access to Higher Education, DFE, 14 March 2019

Lack of data in LGBT students within our HE population	→	Ensure that data is collected on all protected characteristics	→	Work with LGBT student groups to agree appropriate measures

Evidence informing theory of change model

Research by the National Union of Students[6] has identified that the group are at much higher risk of non-continuation.

3.2 Student consultation

The actions included within this Access Agreement are informed by externally commissioned research. This research included focus groups with both students and employers.

We provide students with the opportunity to express their views on our plan during our Student Rep Conferences. Information/feedback was also obtained from our Student Rep Conference in April 2017, 2018 and 2019. Areas of the plan which have been introduced following feedback from our learners includes:

- Changes to the induction process for students
- Development of pre-course and in-course study skills support
- Development of full Degree programmes

The College's approach to Student Reps from every course allows students from a range of backgrounds to engage in learner voice activities and be involved in our consultation and delivery of the plan. Our Lead Higher Education student representative sits on the Higher Education Steering Group where the Access and Participation Plan is implemented, monitored and evaluated. Two student Governors sit on the Corporation, which approves this plan, and also on the Quality and Standards Committee. To inform this plan we have also undertaken Student Focus Groups with groups, including under-represented groups.

Higher Education Student Reps receive face to face training and are provided with a Student Representative Handbook which is also available via the College's Virtual Learning Environment. Student representatives are informed via the Student Handbook and training of all opportunities available to them of collating and providing feedback from their peer groups.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

The College's evaluation strategy is informed by the OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment Tool. This has identified that we need to make considerable improvements over the period of this plan. As a starting point the self-assessment tool has identified that whilst we have strengths in both using evidence and evaluation to inform programme design and also in learning from evaluation we need to improve our practice in evaluation design and implementation. We are planning to increase the investment in research and evaluation so that by the end of the plan period we have made considerable progress in this area. We believe that the improvements required to the plan can be implemented within our existing evaluation strategy framework.

The evaluation strategy for this plan follows The Bedford College Group approach to evaluation and quality improvement. We plan to evaluate all the strands of intervention/measures on an annual basis in the autumn term. Evaluations will be informed by our regular monitoring of performance and also by our annual self-assessment of performance. This self-assessment will inform future Access and Participation Plan programme design, both within the 5 year plan period and informing new plans. Any quality improvements required will feed into our annual Higher Education Quality Improvement plan, which is

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[6] Education beyond the Straight and narrow. LGBT students' experience in higher education. NUS. 2014

approved by our Corporation. This will ensure that Access and Participation measures are reviewed and may change during the duration of the plan. This will ensure that the plan continues having a positive impact on reducing gaps in access, success and progression. The aim is that by 2024-25 we have made all the required improvements to our evaluation strategy and we will be focusing on the measures/interventions that have the most significant impact on reducing gaps in access, success and progression.

The strands of intervention activity to be evaluated will include all of our areas where we are heavily investing:
1. Curriculum development and design
2. Progression from FE programmes
3. Outreach work
4. Financial support
5. Personalised student interventions
6. Student support
7. Care leaver measures
8. LGBT measures

The section below identifies each strand of our evaluation strategy and the approach we will take from September 2020 onwards and any proposed improvements.

3.3a Strategic context

We already have a culture within the organisation of engaging with evaluation activity and widening participation throughout the organisation and we are committed to improving the quality of our evaluation strategy. To enable this we are increasing the senior Management and administrative resource allocated to oversight and evaluation of Access and Participation activities from September 2019. This will ensure that we have the capacity to make the necessary improvements required.

3.3b Programme design

When designing our access and participation plan interventions/measures we have used an evidence based approach. We take the following approach to inform our programme design:
1. We undertake an assessment of performance to identify the appropriate target groups
2. We undertake internal and external research to identify the measure that will have the most significant impact on the identified target groups. This includes holding focus groups with students
3. We look at our own self-evaluation of previous approaches and what has worked previously within our own local context
4. We propose interventions that we believe will have a positive impact and consult on these
5. We regularly evaluate the impact of our plans (at least annually) and make changes/improvements as required. These changes are included in our HE Quality Improvement Plan.

The evidence we have used within this plan to target under-represented groups is included earlier on in this plan. We will continue ensuring that we have clear rationales for each programme/intervention and defined and agreed deliverables. To improve this area of our work we need to ensure that we fully plan for evaluation during the planning stage of our interventions. We will ensure that this is in place during the autumn term of 2019-20. These plans will be reviewed annually, in line with our evaluation strategy, so that we can ensure that they are continually reviewed and amendments are made as required. By 2024-25 we would expect that the plans would have been improved so that we have credible plans in place to collect a robust and complete set of data.

3.3c Evaluation design

This is an area where we need to make significant improvements by 2024-25. Having completed the self-assessment tool we have already started to make progress by ensuring that we have an outcomes change diagram for each proposed strand of intervention. We now need to ensure that each strand of intervention has a clear evaluation plan to collect the required data to enable a full and robust evaluation of impact. We will prepare these plans in the autumn of the 2019-20 academic year so that they are in

place for September 2020. These plans will be reviewed annually, in line with our evaluation strategy, so that we can ensure that they are continually reviewed and amendments are made as required. By 2024-25 we would expect that the plans would have been improved so that we have credible plans in place to collect a robust and complete set of data.

3.3d Evaluation implementation

This is an area where we need to make significant improvements by 2024-25. The Bedford College Group already has a commitment to evidence and research based decision making, however, we need to ensure that we have all of the reliable and robust data sources required to effectively analyse the impact of our proposed Access and Participation activities. To ensure that we improve the data we use during our evaluations we will ensure that we implement the plans developed in section 3.3c of this plan and that for each strand of intervention we set up systems to track the outcomes of our participants over the medium to longer term and produce a detailed evaluation work plan specifying resources required. By 2024-25 we would expect that we have fully implemented our evaluation plans and routinely collect the data needed to complete our evaluations. We would also expect that this data would be live data and would be available on a data dashboard so that it can be easily monitored in year.

3.3e Learning to shape improvements

This was identified as a strength when we completed the Self-Assessment Tool. We will continue to ensuring that when evaluating our performance we acknowledge the limitations of the research design approach we use. We already use student feedback and focus groups, employer feedback, assessment results and Ofs data metrics to review our progress. To improve this element we will ensure that all of our annual evaluation of our interventions is fully informed by scholarly literature. From September 2020 we are aiming that a detailed report will be produced on an annual basis for each strand of intervention, including a wider range of evidence to inform the reviews. We plan to discuss our evaluations with our College HE networks. By the end of the plan period we would aim that these would be of sufficient quality to share with a wider range of partners through the OfS Evidence and Impact Exchange.

We will also ensure that our evaluation of activity leads to continuous improvement by changing our measures within the period of the plan if they are not having the desired impact or if evidence suggests that other measures would have a greater impact on reducing the achievement gaps. Any proposed amendments to the measures used would be included on our annual Higher Education quality improvement plan, which is agreed by our Corporation.

3.3f Evaluation of Financial Support

As well as our overall evaluation strategy we will also evaluate the impact of any financial support offered using the Toolkit resources provided by the OfS. We have not yet been able to use this toolkit as we have only recently introduced our Progression bursary. Financial Support will be evaluated annually in the autumn term from September 2019. This evaluation will be completed by an independent to the Access and Participation Plan team and will look beyond solely gathering opinions from students to focus on demonstrable changes in behaviour (such as improved access, continuation, attainment and progression). The outcomes of this evaluation will inform future policy and approaches.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The monitoring of this plan is fully embedded in the College's quality processes and is part of the College's commitment to continuous quality improvement. This is important so that we can:

- Understand what works well for our students and what we could improve
- Judge whether and how planned activities are effective
- Inform future plans
- To ensure that our plans have the biggest impact and are value for money
- To provide us with information which we can share with others across the sector

The College's Higher Education Steering Group Committee monitors the progress against targets and milestones set out in the Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan and Higher Education Marketing

Plan. The Higher Education Quality Procedures incorporate the close monitoring of applications, recruitment, progression, access, retention, success and curriculum development.

In addition the Executive monitor and review progress against wider college targets and milestones including Higher Education through a monthly performance monitoring activity.

The Governing Body monitor and review progress through the Quality & Standards Committee which meets termly. The Higher Education Steering Group will have responsibility for the monitoring of the Access Agreement through inclusion within the College's HE Quality Process structure and reports its findings to the Executive and Governing Body through the Quality & Standards Committee.

To ensure robust evaluation of the measures set out in our plan we will undertake a detailed annual review of the impact of our access, success and progression activities and financial support. This will focus on impact and will look at continuation, attainment, access and destinations. This will be added as an annex to our HE SED. This will be reviewed, discussed and agreed by the HE Steering Group (which includes our lead HE student rep). The review will also be scrutinised by a panel including members of our Corporation during the self-assessment process. In following years the review will build on outcomes from the previous year. This annual review will be informed by our regular evaluation of our progress towards our HE Quality Improvement Plan (which is discussed at the HE Steering Group). This annual review will be used to inform subsequent plans and Quality Improvement Plans and the overall HE strategy and approach. If progress against the plan is worsening then the College's quality intervention policy will be implemented.

The College's approach to Student Reps from every course allows students from a range of backgrounds to engage in learner voice activities and be involved in our consultation and delivery of the plan. Our Lead HE student representative sits on the HE Steering Group where the Access and Participation Plan is implemented, monitored and evaluated. Two student Governors sit on the Corporation, which approves this plan, and also on the Quality and Standards Committee.

4.0 Provision of information to students

The College publishes all information regarding its Higher Education provision, support and fees on its website and in the Higher Education prospectus. The fees are transparent and informed by consultation with students and employers to minimise barriers to participation and progression. The Higher Education offer process is managed by specialist teams who have direct links with UCAS and the SLC and it is the responsibility of these teams to ensure that information within the Access Agreement and fee information is regularly checked for accuracy and updated accordingly.

As well as being available on our website, pre-contact information is sent to all students to ensure that prospective students are provided with information about the fees they will be charged for the duration of the course before they commit to undertaking the course. This information is based on the CMA's best practice guidelines and written in plain English to ensure it is transparent and clear. Our Privacy Policy will be available on our websites which sets out what student information we collect, why we collect it and how we use it. A hardcopy is given to students at enrolment. Our terms and conditions, which include rules and regulations, are made available to students at enrolment and are included on our enrolment forms which are signed by students and are included in our pre-contract information. The pre-contract information also provides students with a link to our refund and compensation policy which will be available on our website. We ensure that our terms and conditions and regulations are clear and understandable to students by getting their feedback on these at our Annual Higher Education Student Conference held in April each year. We will also ensure that all are provided with information about the financial support that students are entitled to and the eligibility criteria in each year of their studies (as outlined on page 14 of this plan).

5.0 Appendix

The OfS will append the following items from the fees and targets and investment documents when an access and participation plan is published:

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)

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

Provider name: Bedford College

Provider UKPRN: 10000610

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPI-X

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£8,000
Foundation degree		£6,165
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£5,895
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£6,250
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	Diploma in Education and Training (Level 5 City & Guilds)	£2,563

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	Stella Mann College of Performing Arts Limited 10047049 - Performing Arts	£6,000
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		£4,000
Foundation degree		£4,623
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	Diploma in Education & Training (Level 5 City & Guilds)	£1,283

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

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: Bedford College

Provider UKPRN: 10000610

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 investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. 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 (£)	£217,000.00	£222,425.00	£227,983.00	£233,680.00	£239,521.00
Access (pre-16)	£70,000.00	£71,750.00	£73,543.00	£75,381.00	£77,265.00
Access (post-16)	£63,000.00	£64,575.00	£66,189.00	£67,843.00	£69,539.00
Access (adults and the community)	£22,000.00	£22,550.00	£23,113.00	£23,690.00	£24,282.00
Access (other)	£62,000.00	£63,550.00	£65,138.00	£66,766.00	£68,435.00
Financial support (£)	£13,000.00	£14,000.00	£15,000.00	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£5,000.00	£11,606.00	£18,346.00	£18,362.00	£18,590.00

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)	£87,715.00	£124,400.00	£160,835.00	£160,917.00	£162,155.00
Access investment	5.9%	4.3%	3.4%	3.4%	3.3%
Financial support	6.8%	4.8%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%
Research and evaluation	5.7%	9.3%	11.4%	11.4%	11.5%
Total investment (as %HFI)	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%

Targets and investment plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Bedford College

Provider UKPRN: 10000610

Targets

Table 2a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from POLAR 4 Quintile 1 postcodes to 8pp for full time students and 10pp for part time students by 2024	PTA_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Ratio in entry rates for POLAR4 quintile 5: quintile 1 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	16pp for full time students & 20pp for part time students	14.4pp for full time students & 18pp for part time students	12.8pp for full time students & 16pp for part time students	11.2pp for full time students & 14pp for part time students	9.6pp for full time students & 12pp for part time students	8pp for full time students and 10pp for part time students	This target supports the OfS Key Performance Measure 1. We believe that this is a stretching target for us over the next 5 years. On our baseline data we are already performing better than the national picture for our full time programmes. The baseline data is based on a 5 year average with 2017/18 as latest year. Targets are based on prescribed Higher Education programmes only. We aim to eliminate the gap by 2030.
To reduce the gap in participation in HE between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 to 4pp for full time students and 10.5pp for part time students by 2024	PTA_2	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Gap between Q1 participation and Q5 participation	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	8pp for full time students and 21pp for part time students	7.2pp for full time students and 18.9pp for part time students	6.4pp for full time students and 16.8pp for part time students	5.6pp for full time students and 14.7pp for part time students	4.8pp for full time students and 11.9pp for part time students	4pp for full time students and 10.5pp for part time students	This target supports the OfS Key Performance Measure 1. We believe that this is a stretching target for us over the next 5 years. The baseline data is based on a 5 year average with 2017/18 as latest year. Targets are based on prescribed Higher Education programmes only. We aim to eliminate the gap by 2030.
	PTA_3												
	PTA_4												
	PTA_5												
	PTA_6												
	PTA_7												
	PTA_8												

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the non-continuation gap for disabled students to 4.15pp for full time students and 2.9pp for part time students by 2024	PTS_1	Disabled	Percentage difference in non-continuation rates between disabled and those not known to be disabled	No	Other data source	2016-17	8.3 pp for full time students and 5.8 pp for part time students	7.5 pp for full time students and 5.2pp for part time students	6.6 pp for full time students and 4.6 pp for part time students	5.8 pp for full time students and 4.1 pp for part time students	5.0 pp for full time students and 3.5 pp for part time students	4.2 pp for full time students and 2.9 pp for part time students	This target supports the OfS Key Performance Measure 3. We believe that this is a stretching target for us over the next 5 years. The baseline data is based on OFS provider metrics provided on 24/92/018. They are based on a 5 year average with 2016/17 as latest year. Targets are based on prescribed Higher Education programmes only. We aim to eliminate the gap by 2030.
To reduce the non-continuation gap for BAME students from areas of low participation in Higher Education to 8.7% by 2024	PTS_2	Multiple	Percentage difference in non-continuation rates between young male students from areas of low participation in Higher Education	No	Other data source	2017-18	17.4pp	15.7pp	13.9pp	12.2pp	10.4pp	8.7pp	This target supports the OfS Key Performance Measure 3. We believe that this is a stretching target for us over the next 5 years. The baseline data is retention based on a 3 year average with 2017/18 as latest year. The data source is our own retention data. Targets are based on prescribed Higher Education programmes only. We aim to eliminate the gap by 2030.
To reduce the non-continuation gap for part time BAME students to 8.1pp by 2024	PTS_3	Multiple	Percentage difference in non-continuation rates between BAME students and white students	No	Other data source	2016-17	16.1pp	14.5pp	12.9pp	11.3pp	9.7pp	8.1pp	This target supports the OfS Key Performance Measure 3. We believe that this is a stretching target for us over the next 5 years. The baseline data is based on OFS provider metrics provided on 24/9/2018/ These are based on a 5 year average with 2016/17 as latest year. Targets are based on prescribed Higher Education Programmes only. We aim to eliminate the gap by 2030.
	PTS_4												
	PTS_5												
	PTS_6												
	PTS_7												
	PTS_8												

Table 2c - Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the progression gap into professional employment or further study for young part time students to 7.1pp by 2024	PTP_1	Part-time	Percentage difference in progression to professional employment or further study for young part time students	No	Other data source	2017-18	14.1pp gap between young and mature part time students	12.7pp	11.3pp	9.9pp	8.5pp	7.1pp	We believe that this is a stretching target for us over the next 5 years. The baseline data is based on a 3 year average with 2016/17 as latest year. The data source is the TEF Year 4 metrics run on the 12/11/2018. Targets are based on prescribed Higher Education programmes only.
	PTP_2												
	PTP_3												

PTP_4										
PTP_5										
PTP_6										
PTP_7										
PTP_8										