

St Helens College

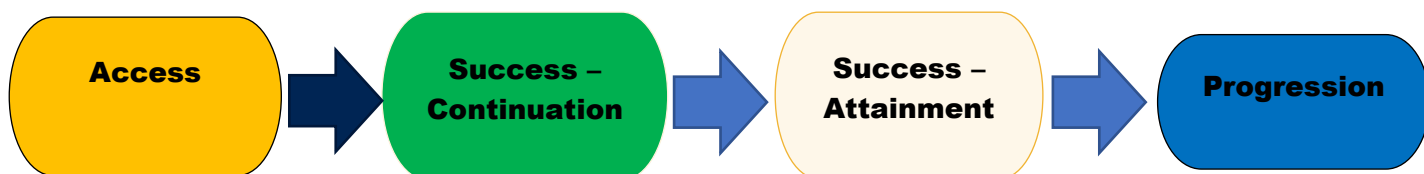
Access and participation plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

1. Assessment of performance

St Helens College continuously monitors its performance, against a range of metrics and key performance indicators. For the purpose of preparing our Access and Participation Plan (APP), 2020-21 to 2024-25, we have reviewed our performance, as reported on the OfS Data Dashboard, against the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR4) classification groups, which shows the proportion of young people in the population that participate in Higher Education. It addresses how likely young people are to participate in higher education across the UK and how this varies by area. Across the Merseyside region, there are many areas of low participation, represented by POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2, with higher participation classed as being within quintiles 3, 4 and 5. All graphs, and associated commentary, have been prepared using the OfS Data Dashboard and relate to all Undergraduate Full Time or Apprenticeship students, unless otherwise stated.

Performance at each stage of the student lifecycle is assessed and presented against each of the identified target groups as follows:

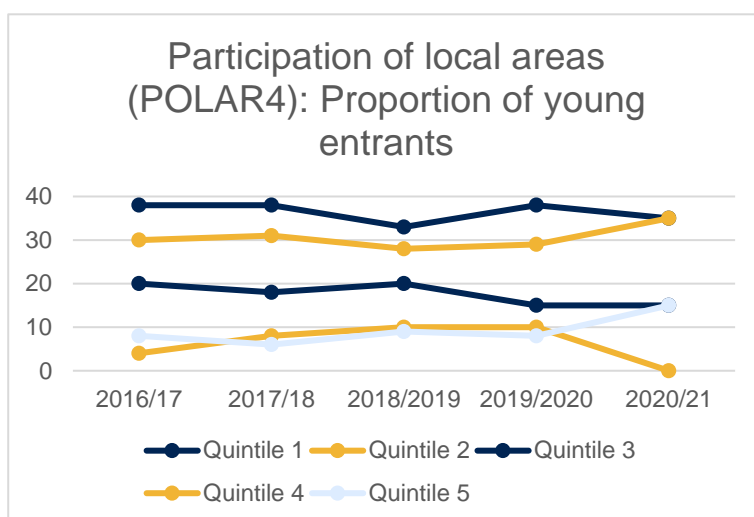


Our priority student groups:
Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status
Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, Mature students
Disabled students Care Leavers
Intersections of disadvantage/Other under-represented groups

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

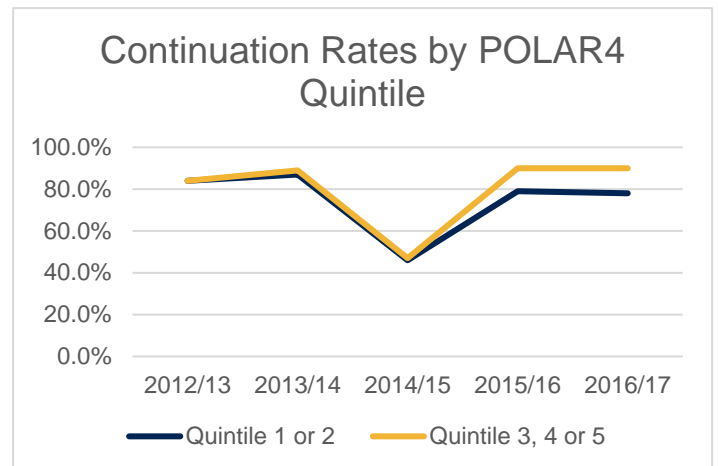
Access

Over the five-year period, from 2016/17 to 2020/21, the proportion of 18 year olds from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 has been significantly higher than Quintiles 3, 4, 5 and has increased from 68% in 2016/17 to 70% in 2020/21. On that basis, we do not see access for students from low participation areas as a priority for our 2020/21 to 2024/25 access and participation plan.



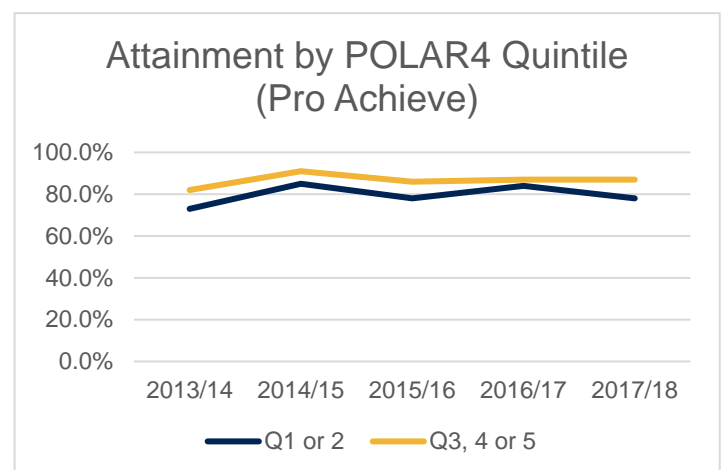
Continuation

Continuation rates for students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 or 2 have been variable over the period 2012/13 to 2016/17 and show a net decline of six percentage points over the period. Furthermore, for the last two years of the period being reviewed, the gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2 students and POLAR4 quintile 3, 4 or 5 students, has been 11% and 12% respectively. Therefore, through our access and participation work, we will aim to close the gap in continuation rates between these student groups.



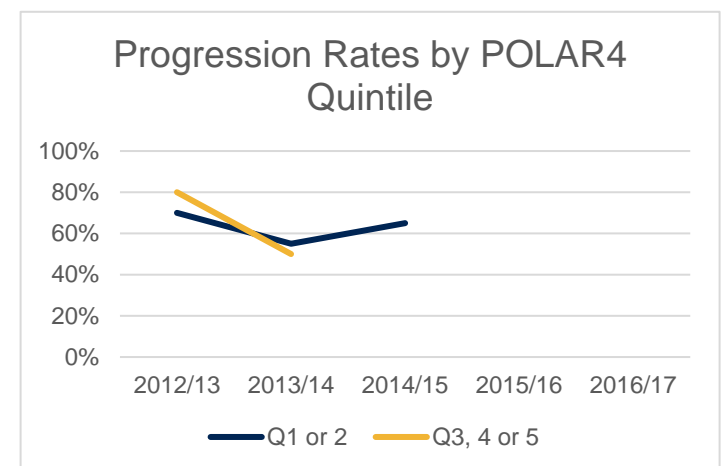
Attainment

Attainment rates for students from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 are slightly below those for students from POLAR4 Quintiles 3, 4 and 5. Whilst the gap had closed slightly in the middle of the five-year review period, the difference was nine percentage points in the first year and the last year. As part of our access and participation work, the College will do more to understand why this gap exists, and work to close the gap.



Progression to employment or further study

There is no available data for progression rates beyond 2014/15. However, the data for 2012/13 to 2014/15 shows that since 2012/13 POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2 students have progressed at a higher rate than POLAR4 quintile 3, 4 or 5 students. On that basis, this will not be an area of significant focus in our access and participation plan for 2020/21 to 2024/25.

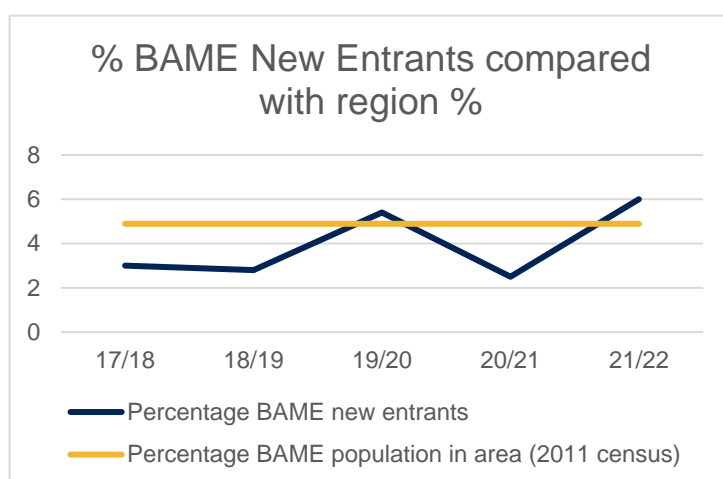


1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Over the last five years, the College has recruited very small numbers of BAME students to its HE courses, which is a reflection of the local communities from which the College recruits; i.e. St Helens has a population that is 98% white, whilst the wider Merseyside region is 94.5% white. Consequently, even when using a five-year rolling average (as per the APP guidance), the numbers are too low to report on in detail, as this could potentially lead to the identification of individual students. Given this, it is not currently possible to report on Continuation, Attainment or Progression for BAME students, with the level of detail for which we are able to report on the lifecycle stages of other students. Likewise, we are unable to disaggregate the BAME groups for reporting purposes, due to the very low numbers, i.e. <10 students in each BAME group in any of the last five years. However, the College has a suite of internal reports, providing detailed data in relation to its BAME students, which it monitors through various committees, including the Marketing, Recruitment, Access and Widening Participation Group, which reports to the HE Strategy Committee. The College is fully committed to reporting on all lifecycle stages for its BAME students, as soon as the numbers reach a reportable level.

Access

The proportion of BAME students has increased over the 5-year period 17/18 to 21/22 and is currently percentage point above the population percentage. This has not been consistent of that time period. Therefore, through our access and participation work the College will continue to focus on reducing this gap.



Success

Continuation

Because the number of BAME students at the College is so low, the College is unable to report on continuation rates for BAME students, as it could potentially identify individual students.

Attainment

Because the number of BAME students at the College is so low, the College is unable to report on attainment rates for BAME students, as it could potentially identify individual students.

Progression to employment or further study

Because the number of BAME students at the College is so low, the College is unable to report on progression rates for BAME students, as it could potentially identify individual students.

1.3 Mature students

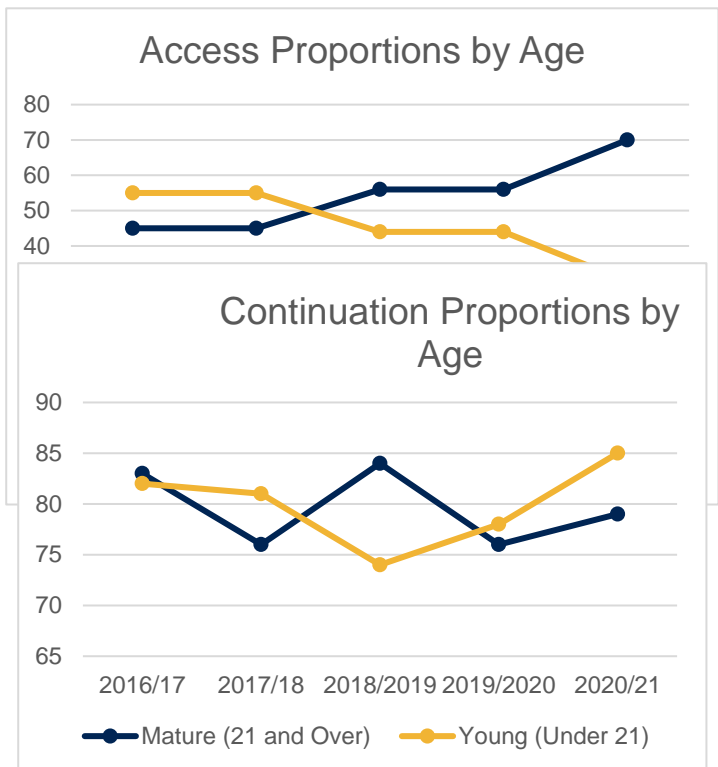
Access

The proportion of Mature students studying on full time courses has increased over the five-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/2021, but with an overall increase of 25 percentage points. On this basis, we no longer see the access of mature students as a priority for our 2020/21- 2024-25 plan.

Success

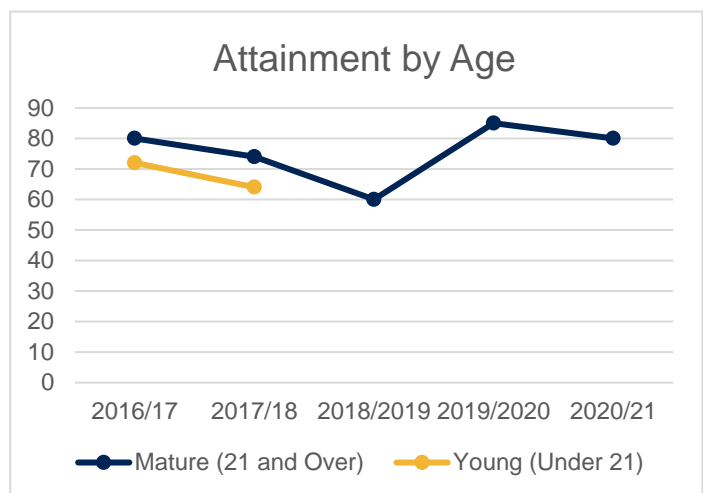
Continuation

Continuation rates for mature students, studying on full time courses, have declined over the five-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21, by 4 percentage points, and in 2020/21 were 6 percentage points below the continuation rate for young students. On that basis, we consider continuation rates for mature students a priority for our 2020/21 to 2024/25 access and participation plan.



Attainment

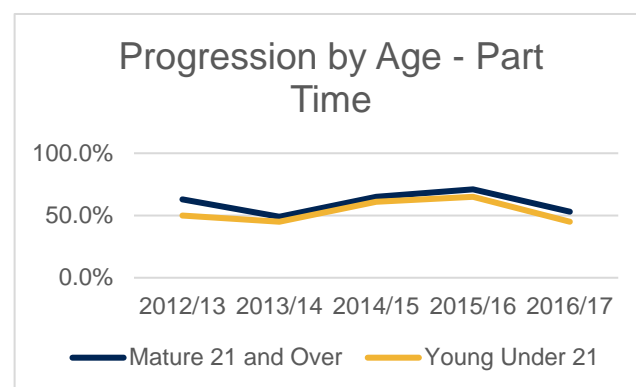
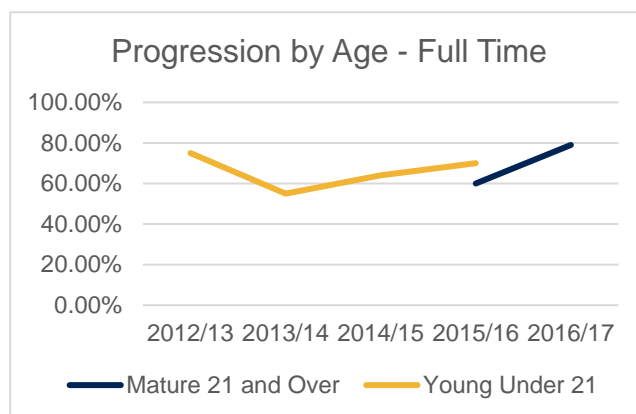
Attainment rates have fluctuated somewhat over the five-year review period. Whilst mature students' attainment is higher than that for young students, we consider raising attainment levels for mature students as a priority for our access and participation plan 2020/21 to 2024/25.



Progression to employment or further study

Over the five-year period, 2012/13 to 2016/17, there is limited data for full time students. At 79%, the 2016/17 progression rate, for full time mature students, is 19 percentage points above that for the previous year, and 9 percentage points above the most recent figure for young students (2015/16).

For mature students studying part time courses, there is available data for all of the five years, from 2012/13 to 2016/17. Over this period, progression rates have been variable, with the 2012/13 rate being 63% and the 2016/17 rate being 53%, there is a net drop of 10 percentage points. Therefore, it is our aim, through our access and participation work, to improve progression rates for our mature students.



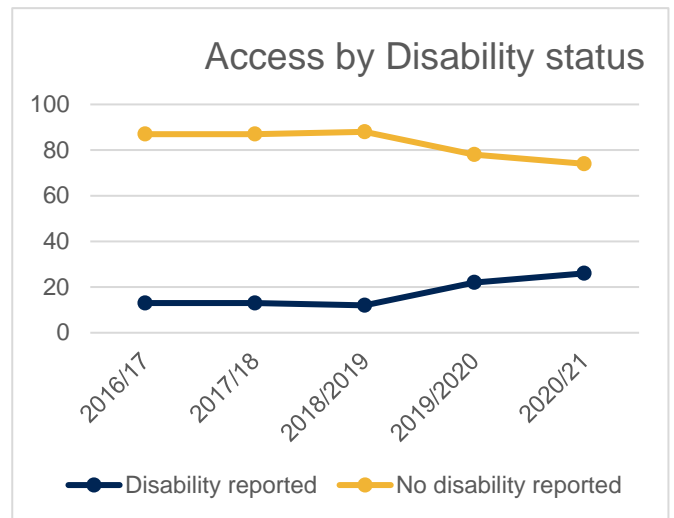
1.4 Disabled students

Over the last five years, the college has recruited very small numbers of disabled students to its HE courses. Consequently, even when using a five-year rolling average (as per the APP guidance), the numbers are too low to report on in detail, as this could potentially lead to the identification of individual students. Given this, it is not currently possible to report on Attainment or Progression for disabled students, with the level of detail for which we are able to report on the lifecycle stages of other students. Likewise, we are unable to disaggregate the disabled groups for reporting purposes, due to the very low numbers, i.e. <10 students in each disabled group in any of the last five years. However, the College has a suite of internal reports, providing detailed data in relation to its disabled students, which it monitors through various committees, including the Marketing, Recruitment, Access and Widening Participation Group, which reports to the HE Strategy Committee. The College is fully committed to

reporting on all lifecycle stages for its disabled students, as soon as the numbers reach a reportable level.

Access

The proportion of disabled students, studying full time courses, over the five-year period from 2016/17 to 2020/21, has increased. For full time students, the proportion, at 26%, is higher than that across all providers. Given that access for disabled students shows an upward trend over the five-year review period and is above the average for all providers, we do not consider access for disabled students to be a priority for our 2020/21 to 2024/25 access and participation plan.

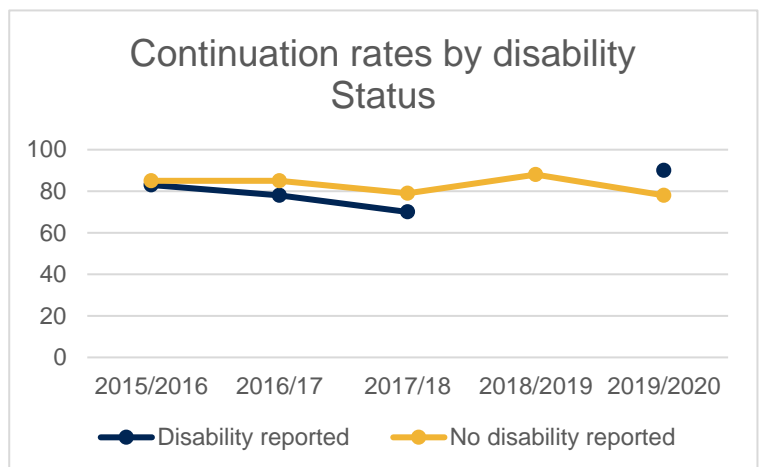


Success

Continuation

Continuation rates for disabled students were 83% in 2012/13 but declined to 70% by 2017/18. For 2018/19, there is no available data, but in 2019/20 there is a significant improvement, to 90%, which is 12 percentage points above the continuation rate for non-disabled students.

The gaps between continuation rates for disabled and non-disabled students have fluctuated somewhat over the five year review period but are not statistically significant in any of the five years, due to the very low number of students who are known to have a disability. On that basis, we do not consider continuation for disabled students to be a priority for our 2020/21 to 2024/25 access and participation plan.

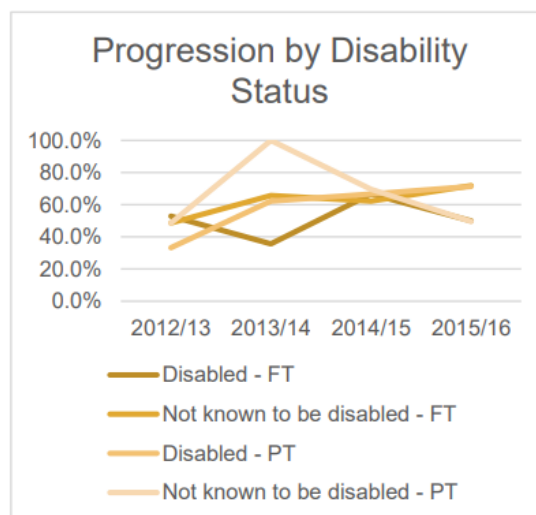


Attainment

Because the number of disabled students at the College is so low, there is no statistically significant data to report on in terms of attainment rates for disabled students, as this would potentially identify individual students.

Progression to employment or further study

As can be seen in the adjacent graph, there is some inconsistency in progression rates between disabled students and those not known to have a disability. As part of our access and participation work over the next five years we will aim to remove that inconsistency and close the progression gaps between disabled and non-disabled students. Because the number of disabled students at the College is so low, there is no statistically significant data to report on in terms of progression rates for disabled students, as this would potentially identify individual students.



1.5 Care leavers

St Helens College collects information on access, continuation, attainment and progression for Care Leavers against the student lifecycle. As part of our approach to student support, these individuals are known to relevant teams who are able to address their needs and any emerging issues at each stage of the lifecycle.

Whilst we acknowledge that the APP should measure gaps between target groups and their peers, with regard to Care Leavers, we believe that our initial target must be to encourage declarations which will help us to evaluate the activity of care leavers and carers in order to fully support them moving forward.

The College has signed up to the Care Leaver Covenant, and will adopt 'Principles to guide higher education providers on improving care leavers' access and participation in HE'. As part of this APP the College will use the widening participation budget to support care leavers through taster days, summer schools and study support; and will provide care leavers with priority access to year-round mentoring.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Over the last five years, the College has recruited very small numbers of students in most of the underrepresented groups being considered as part of the APP. Consequently, the College is unable to report in detail with regard to intersections of disadvantage for the Access, Success and Progression lifecycle stages of its HE students. However, the college has, through its well-developed internal reporting mechanisms, a meaningful understanding of the impact of the various intersections of disadvantage and is committed to reporting on this, once the numbers of students reach a level at which such reporting would not present the possibility of individual students being identifiable.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

Carers: From 2019/20 the Learning Agreement has included a self-declaration for 'a young or full time carer (age 14-25)' as per the Carers Trust definition. This will allow for reports to be created along with disaggregated data to inform the monitoring of these students in terms of access, success and

progression. We will continue to monitor the data capture and reporting systems to ensure that we are able to identify the impact of our work with this group.

Estranged students: From 2019/20 the Learning Agreement has included a self-declaration ‘Are you estranged from your family?’ The availability of this data is dependent upon self-declaration; however, this data will allow reports to be created along with disaggregated data to inform the monitoring of these students in terms of access, success and progression. We will continue to monitor the data capture and reporting systems to ensure that we are able to identify the impact of our work with this group.

Children from military families: From, 2019/20 the Learning Agreement has included a self-declaration ‘Are you: a child from a military family?’. The availability of this data is dependent upon self-declaration; however, this data will allow reports to be created along with disaggregated data to inform the monitoring of these students in terms of access, success and progression. We will continue to monitor the data capture and reporting systems to ensure that we are able to identify the impact of our work with this group.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (GRT): The 2018/19 Learning Agreement allowed for the self-declaration of students from Gypsy or Traveller communities. The Learner Agreement for 2019/20 onwards includes the additional option to self-declare ‘the Roma community’ which will allow for reports to be created along with disaggregated data to inform the monitoring of these students. It will also allow for future comparisons with the planned inclusion of Roma community data in the 2021 Census.

Refugees: From 2019/20 the Learning Agreement included the self-declaration ‘Are you: a refugee?’. The availability of this data is dependent upon self-declaration; however, this data will allow reports to be created along with disaggregated data to inform the monitoring of these students in terms of access, success and progression. We will continue to monitor the data capture and reporting systems to ensure that we are able to identify the impact of our work with this group.

There have been only two self-declarations in the above categories in the year the data has been available and not included here due to data suppression.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

2.1 Target groups

St Helens College’s overarching strategic APP mission is to improve access and participation outcomes for key groups of underrepresented students. To this end we have set an overarching Strategic Aim of: **“Developing an environment in which all students can enjoy their learning, be ambitious, achieve academically, and personally and be able to progress to the best of their abilities.”**

Our Access and Participation Plan, 2020/21 to 2024/25, focusses on how we can support underrepresented groups, and developing clear targets for improving access, success and progression. This is core to our mission and is expressed through the following strategic aims:

Ref	Target Group	Life Cycle Stage	Aim(s)
A1	BAME	Access	Increase BAME population to equal to that found in the local area by 2025
A2	Mature students	Access	Reduce the gap in access for Mature Students compared to young Students
S1	POLAR4 Q1 or 2	Success - Continuation	Reduce the gap in Continuation between POLAR4Q 3, 4 or 5 students and POLAR4 Q1 or 2 students
S2	Mature Students	Success - Continuation	Improve the continuation rates for Mature Students studying full time
S3	Mature Students	Success - Attainment	Improve attainment by Mature Students by 9% by 2025
P1	Disabled Students	Progression	Improve progression by Disabled Students by 10% by 2025

By adopting these 6 Strategic Aims based around Access, Continuation, Attainment and Progression we believe that this APP will lead to improved performance for disadvantaged, BAME, disabled, and Mature students.

2.2 Aims and objectives

In order to achieve the six overarching APP targets, aims and objectives have been created and provided in the table below. The broad aims directly align with the targets detailed in the supporting

Aim	Ref	Target Group	Description	Collaborative	Data Source	Baseline data	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Reduce the gap in access for BAME students to that found in the local population.	A1	BAME	Reduce the gap in recruitment of BAME students enrolled from below that found in the local population to that found in the local population by 2025	No	College Pro-Achieve Data set	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	Zero
Reduce the gap in Access for Mature Students compared to Young Students	A2	Mature Students	Reduce the gap in Access for mature students compared to Young students by 6% by 2025	No	Access and Participation Data set	12%	10%	8%	4%	2%	Zero
Reduce the gap in Continuation rates between POLAR4 Q3, 4 or 5 students and POLAR4 Q1 or 2 students	S1	F/T students from POLAR4/ Q1	Reduce the gap in continuation rates between full time students from POLAR4 Quintile 3, 4 or 5 and POLAR4 Quintiles 1 or 2, by the end of the plan	No	Access & Participation Data Set	12%	10%	8%	4%	2%	Zero
Reduce the gap in continuation rates between young students and mature students studying full time	S2	Mature Students	Reduce the gap in continuation rates between Young students and Mature students, by 4% over the life of the plan.	No	Access & Participation Data Set	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	1%
Reduce the attainment gap between Young students and Mature students by 9% by 2025	S3	Mature Students	Improve attainment rate by mature students by 9%.	No	College Pro-Achieve Data Set	80%	82%	84%	86%	88%	89%
Reduce the progression gap for Disabled Students by 10% by 2025	P1	Disabled Students	Reduce the percentage difference in progression between Disabled students and non-disabled 10%	No	College Pro-Achieve Data Set	10%	8%	6%	4%	2%	Zero

Targets and Investment Plan.

The measurable objectives indicate the position the College intends to reach over the life of the APP together with yearly milestones.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

Developed in consultation with our staff, students The College's corporation and external stakeholders, the strategic plan set out our high-level objectives and commitments until 2025, **as we aspire to be one of the every best technical and vocational colleges in the country**

Our strategic Goals are

- **Outstanding Student Experience** – Delivering an outstanding student experience, placing students and apprentices at the heart of everything we do
- **Exceptional Curriculum** – Developing an innovative, agile curriculum that meets the needs of our students and communities
- **Growth** – Achieving growth through strategic partnership and relationships with key organisations and employers
- **Transformed estate** – Transforming the college's estate to inspire outstanding teaching and learning.
- **Employer of choice** – Attracting and retaining skilled staff through reputation, recognition and a strong sense of community
- **Anchor Institution** – Building upon our role as an anchor institution in Knowsley and St Helens and contributing to the leadership of education and skills ecosystem,

We deliver these through a whole-institution approach, which includes:

- A HE Strategy that is the catalyst for supporting all HE students to access HE provision which meets the needs of both their academic and career aspirations
- Approaches to teaching, learning and assessment that are inclusive and enable all HE students to meet their full potential
- A supportive student-centred environment for all students including those from backgrounds with no history of HE, adults returning to education and those in employment needing to balance study with work and other commitments.
- A comprehensive range of support services for students to access from the point of first enquiry and throughout their HE journey at the College e.g.
 - financial advice and guidance;
 - careers advice in choosing and applying for undergraduate and postgraduate study; discussing progression routes and career option; support for CV writing, searching for jobs and preparing for interviews;
 - additional learner support services for students with additional support needs.

Alignment with other strategies

Achievement of the aims and objectives in this Access and Participation Plan will be supported by the following strategies and policies:

Equality and Diversity Policy

St Helens College strives to build a culture that values equality, diversity, openness, fairness and transparency for its staff and students. The College believes that by embracing equality and diversity we are providing a sound foundation on which to build a successful and vibrant environment whose cultures and values are respected by both our students and the community as a whole. To this end the College

Group is committed to produce, implement, review and monitor policies which promote equality and diversity for all those who study and work within the institution.

University Centre St Helens Student Admissions Policy

The College has long-established practice for admission to HE programmes. All applications are received centrally and logged by the Admissions Team. They are then forwarded to the relevant programme team. All applicants are considered on their individual merits. Programme teams invite appropriate applicants for interview, following which, offers can be made. Applications for full time places are made through UCAS, and for part time courses through the University Centre St Helens application process. This practice is in line with the recommendations and good practice guidelines provided by the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) programme, details of which can be found at www.spa.ac.uk.

University Centre St Helens Marketing Plan

Higher Education provision at St Helens College recruits under the specific 'University Centre St Helens' brand.

The annual marketing plan has been devised with both primary and secondary objectives in mind. The main aim of the plan is to support the attainment of key recruitment targets, whilst meeting and supporting key aims and priorities of the wider St Helens College Strategic Plan.

This plan details the wider national context for Higher Education, as it falls against what is, quite possibly, it's most challenging backdrop of recent years, before detailing the local context. The latter half of the plan outlines key periods of recruitment activity, in the form of detailed campaign action plans, which, once fully executed, aim to raise the profile of University Centre St Helens, whilst also improving recruitment figures onto the range of degree courses offered at University Centre St Helens.

The marketing plan aims to strengthen University Centre St Helens' brand, in terms of brand values and public perceptions of the brand and reputation, whilst also enhancing and strengthening brand visibility and recognition. In addition, it will encourage alumni, friends, parents, students, prospective students and staff to take pride in University Centre St Helens. It will inspire those who are not directly connected with University Centre St Helens to take notice of both academic reputation and offer, whilst making a positive contribution to the local and wider communities.

The annual plan has a budget of circa £50k specifically allocated to University Centre St Helens, in order to execute and achieve aims and objectives outlined in this plan. This budget will cover all design, print, event and media costs. The rationale for this spend is to ensure University Centre St Helens student recruitment figures increase, as the Higher Education audience provides St Helens College with a valuable income stream.

Information learning technology strategy

Our ILT strategy has a clear focus on the use of technology to improve access and inclusivity, reflecting our college-wide approach and commitment to equality of opportunity. The key priorities of this strategy are to facilitate staff and students collective use of ILT to:

- Equip students with the digital literacy and specialised skills required in the modern workplace
- Enrich and extend learning opportunities
- Encourage innovation in the classroom
- Support independent study, collaborative working and problem solving
- Develop innovative, engaging and differentiated digital materials
- Develop digital literacy in staff and support them to build confidence in their abilities

Risk management strategy

Our approach to risk management is well embedded within college practice. Potential risks and associated risk controls are reviewed, and their effectiveness closely monitored by the senior leadership team on a monthly basis. The associated risk register has a clear focus on recruitment and retention of students, quality of provision, recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled staff, equality and diversity, physical resources and national policy changes. Many of the risk controls support the implementation of this APP.

All of the above strategies contribute to our strategic objectives for access and participation. By creating a whole college approach in which inclusivity and accessibility are embedded within our practice at every stage of the student journey, we aim to create a learning environment within which all students, including those within our target groups, have equity in opportunity and realise their full potential.

Strategic measures

The College has identified 13 Activities and Outcomes which will support the achievement of the 5 Aims and Objectives set out in Section 2 of this APP. These are set out below:

Ref	Target Group	Desired Change	Activities & Outcomes	Lead	Deadline
A1	BAME	Reduce the gap in recruitment of BAME students to equal to that found in the local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The College will review the advertising and course information to reduce any perceived barriers for BAME students Provide additional progression sessions specifically aimed at BAME students; provided specific progression events for parents/carers. 	Director of Marketing, Commercial & Customer Relations	July 2023
A2	Mature Students	Reduce the gap in Access for Mature Students compared to Young Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target increased progression from Access Programmes. Further use of bursaries to encourage access by Mature Students 	Deputy Principal	July 2025
S1	POLAR4 Q1/2 students	Reduce the gap in Continuation between POLAR4Q3/5 students and POLAR4Q1/2 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional support sessions to develop academic reading, writing and research skills; Provision of dedicated HE learning mentors for students from POLAR4 Q1 and Mature Students; 	Director of Adult & Higher Education	Oct 2024
S2	Mature Students	Reduce the gap in continuation rates for mature students studying full time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of additional weekly tutorials and study support sessions for students from POLAR4 Q1 and Mature Students. 		
S3	Mature Students	Reduce the gap in attainment by Mature Students by 4% by 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional staff development sessions on teaching and strategies for Mature Students and Disabled Students; 	Director of Adult and Higher Education	July 2025
P1	Disabled Students	Reduce the gap in progression by Disabled Students compared to their peers by 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of communities of practice for staff engaged with Mature students and Disabled Students. 		

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of specialist support/ equipment for Disabled students 		
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The achievement of these outcomes will require a number of key resources/inputs. It will also require significant input through the College committee structure including through the HE Monitoring and Compliance Group, the Student Experience and Achievement Group, the HE Teaching, Quality and Standards Group, the HE Student Forum, and the Product Development, Recruitment and Access Group.

To support the APP the College will provide additional staff time for tutorial support and progress monitoring, we have put in place dedicated Quality Management support and Learning Resources support. We will also put in place Personal Progress Coaches and additional Mentoring Support, together with Staff Development activities which are targeted at teaching staff involved in the delivery of Higher Education. We will also allocate a member of the Finance Team to specifically support the achievements of the financial elements of this APP.

The key assumption within our Plan is that whilst a number of elements of this APP are targeted at specific groups of students, it is clear that the majority of activities will impact on all areas of the Plan. It is also assumed that all the Activities and Strategic Measures support the wider College and OfS Key Performance Indicators. The APP also assumes that there will be targeted campaigns for BAME students, Mature students, Disabled students and Care leavers. A further key assumption is that monitoring of the APP will be undertaken through the College Committee structure, with regular reports.

Financial Support

St Helens College provides financial support for students in the form of a Study Enhancement Gift, up to the value of £400, for each Year 1 Higher Education student. It should be noted that this is not a cash award, but is used to provide students with a range of other benefits, including, course related resources, IT equipment, software, educational trips, etc. In addition to this, the college has allocated monies to a hardship fund for HE students.

Bursaries will also be available throughout the year under the Student Opportunity Fund. This can include additional course related resources, IT equipment, software, educational trips in addition to the Study Enhancement Gift received in year 1 of study. This package of financial support will enable students to concentrate more on their studies without the worry of additional study related pressures on home life, time management etc. whilst also providing a package of support aimed at helping them continue on their course, to achieve the course aim, and to progress to the best of their ability. This fund is primarily aimed at students from POLAR Q1/2, BAME, Mature and disabled students.

The college Senior Leadership Team will continue to recommend fee levels and bursary arrangements and other elements of the Targets and Investment Plan to the Governing Body. The Governing Body includes a student governor, who attends regular meetings, and represents the HE student body. The impact of the financial support will also be monitored through the Governing Body HE Committee and the Higher Education Quality and Standards Committee.

3.2 Student consultation

The College has embedded a number opportunities for students to be fully engaged with all aspects of the operation of the higher education curriculum. We see it as imperative that the student voice is a key component in the success of HE within the college in order to continually improve the student experience throughout their period of study with us. Students are formally engaged in enhancing and approving College HE policies and procedures including this Access and Participation Plan. This is undertaken via student inclusion on all HE groups, regular meetings of the HE Student Forum, together with regular Student surveys and focus groups. In addition we have consulted with students through face-to-face meetings and an electronic survey. These considered:

- Issues of common interest and joint solutions to enhance all aspects of the HE provision within the college;
- How the student body could provide further advice the HE Quality and Standards Committee on quality enhancement;
- How the student body could advise the HE Quality Enhancement Group on the progress against the APP targets.

Through these forums student representatives reviewed the draft Access and Participation Plan and have expressed their satisfaction with the Plan, and suggested that termly progress reports be presented to the HE Student Forum and the HE Quality and Standards Committee, and the HE Committee. This has now been actioned and the first progress reports will be submitted in the Autumn term 2019.

A student governor represents the student body on the Governors' HE Committee and on the full Governing Body. At committee and board meetings, the Governing Body undertakes a strategic role in approving, monitoring and evaluating the College's APP. This ensures that the Institution has a clear focus on achieving its objectives as set out in the APP. Training and development on the APP aims, objectives and college targets will be planned into the Committee's and Governing Body schedule of activities.

We will continue to listen to our students to ensure that their views are considered in our planning for the future of College HE. In addition we will continue to look for opportunities to develop partnerships with the students in order to further enhance their experience.

In response to the new sector requirements in terms of OfS registration conditions and the new QAA UK Quality Code, the College has updated its HE Regulatory and Governance Structure. As part of its Student Engagement Strategy, student involvement at each of the HE meetings including the HE Strategy Committee and Marketing and Recruitment Group will be sought. This will allow for the student voice to

be a key part of the monitoring of performance targets process for Access and Participation performance measures.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

The College has identified 13 key outcomes which together will lead to the achievement of the strategic APP targets. The outcomes result from consideration of the change that is desired for each target group across the relevant stages of the student lifecycle. These activities have been planned to effect change and the identified outcomes will enable structured evaluation of the activities that have taken place and the extent to which change has been achieved.

The actions and outcomes cover a range of activities across the College and, accordingly, responsibility for achieving the outcomes is spread over multiple senior managers supporting the whole-college approach to WP and underpinning the College's strategic commitment to its APP targets.

We are committed to ensuring that financial issues do not present an obstacle for Students to access the full experience at the college. Therefore, in order to evaluate the impact of the package of financial support, the college is introducing a formalised interview schedule in addition to the personal tutoring system where the students will be asked to describe how the bursaries and other financial support offered by the College has helped them, and whether the measures have contributed to greater or lesser degree to their programme.

The intention is for St Helens to conduct these interviews so that early interventions can be put into practice if additional needs are identified, and financial support arranged from other budgets when the evaluation recommendations are scrutinised at the College's Higher Education Quality and Standards Committee and Governing Body Meetings.

The development of approaches to foster a sense of community and belonging has previously been shown to significantly reduce early withdrawal from courses within our FE provision, and this will be extended to cover our HE provision. This was shown within the College's Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 FE provision where, by creating a sense of community and belonging through the development of extra-curricular activities, clubs, and visits has contributed to reduced student drop out, improved student attendance, improved retention, and improved student satisfaction. The Student Experience and Enhancement Working Group and the HE Student Forum will be tasked with building on the activities which have been developed for the FE students to make them relevant for the HE Community, whilst the Data Working Group will build the evaluation of the impact of the approach into the data dashboard.

The OfS evaluation self-assessment has highlighted that the College's current evaluation processes are limited and require further development. The areas where the College is particularly looking to improve its evaluation processes relate to Care Leavers, Carers, Estranged Students, Children from Military Families, Gypsy Roma & Traveller Communities and Refugees. We have now put in place systems to collect more information on these groups of students in order that we can evaluate their performance against their peers. The use of an evidence-based approach to develop its theory of change approach combined with outcomes enable each stage of the plan to be separately tracked, monitored and evaluated.

The College has also set aside £10,000 for an external evaluation of the APP. This will provide the Governing Body with an independent assessment of the progress against the strategic aims and objectives of the APP together with the impact of the package of financial support for students. The reports on the evaluation of the APP will draw upon direct feedback from student representatives, feedback from Student Focus Groups, and a review of the quantitative data within the data dashboard. The evaluation reports will provide an overview of the effectiveness of the measures employed. Where the measures are deemed to be ineffective or it is likely that the milestones and/or strategic targets may not be achieved in the given timescales set out in the APP, the reports will include recommendations of how the actions are to be revised with clear timescales and responsibilities set out for any changes. These actions will be tailored in response to which target may be in danger of not being met. A typical action may be to bring together a task and finish group to analyse evaluation of progress to date and identify potential solutions. These may include collaboration with other providers to explore successful strategies. The task and finish group will be chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and will report to the Principal and Chief Executive and the Governing Body HE Committee.

Programme Design

Good programme design is essential to the success of our HE provision. Programmes are designed to meet local need, taking into consideration the diverse needs of our students, including modes of attendance, academic starting points and personal and financial needs. Learning outcomes are set to ensure the best possible outcomes for our students, within the context of their planned next steps in either education or employment.

The termly reports produced for our HE Student Forum, Student experience and achievement group, HE Teaching, quality and standards group, together with the external evaluation reports will be used by Curriculum Delivery Teams to influence our Programme Design, and to inform a rigorous self-assessment process.

A thorough annual review of the APP will also be carried out by HE Quality & Standards Committee, and actions required to address any areas requiring further improvement will be fed back to the relevant curriculum teams in order to improve the overall programme for the students.

Evaluation Design

Our Access and Participation aims and objectives are clearly measurable and will be monitored through our HE Data Working Group, reporting to the HE Strategy Committee, via the Product development, recruitment and access group. The main areas monitored by the group are:

- Student recruitment
- Monitoring participation of underrepresented groups
- Continuation, progression and attainment in HE
- Student surveys
- HE student destinations
- Sharing best practice, both internally and across our HEI partners

This rigorous self-assessment process will also feed into our evaluation design and evaluation approach. This combined with the work of our other groups and the external evaluation will provide a robust basis for evaluating the design of our programmes to ensure that they are meeting the aims and objectives of the APP, that student feedback is being taken into account, that the outcomes of the monitoring of the APP targets feeding through to curriculum plans, that the results of the Colleges' own quality monitoring are being used to enhance programme design, and the results of any external quality visits from our HE partners, QAA etc. are being used to enhance the overall student experience.

Evaluation Implementation

The College is cognisant on the extreme importance of effective approaches to evaluation and impact in terms of assessing whether its evaluation plans and methodologies are sufficient to generate high quality evidence in relation to the impact of activities in our Access and Participation Plan. It is the intention to use the APP Evaluation Self-assessment Tool to support a comprehensive appraisal of our existing planned evaluation methods. This activity will be steered through the Product development, recruitment and access group with termly updates being provided to the senior leadership team. The College is keen to ensure robust and informative evaluatory mechanisms are in place in association with its Access and Participation Plan and is committed to this self-assessment activity.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

In cognisance of the new regulatory framework for HE, including the OfS ongoing registration conditions and the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education, from 2019/20 the College has set in place a new HE Regulatory/Governance meeting structure. The APP planned activity will be monitored by the Product development, recruitment and access group that meets termly. In line with the regulatory responsibilities now placed on the College Governing Body, a reporting schedule for HE updates to the Governors Quality & Outcomes Committee and Full Board is agreed annually between the HE Quality Manager and the Clerk to the Governors to allow for the Governing Body to have full oversight of the College's Access and Participation activity. It should be noted that there is student representation across all of the regulatory/governance meetings.

All of our HE provision is reviewed quarterly at Curriculum Area Level against key performance indicators set at the highest level of the college, to cover widening participation, access, continuation, progression (internal and external), attendance, achievement, attainment, student feedback and course/module evaluations. In particular, the Director of Adult and Higher Education and the HE Quality Manager are responsible for monitoring the APP through the termly meetings of the HE Quality and Standards Committee and, the HE Strategy Committee, and for providing advice to the Governing Body HE Committee.

Evaluation of progress against the targets expressed in this plan, are standing items for the HE Quality and Standards Committee, and the cross-college Marketing, Recruitment Access and Widening Participation Group. If gaps in progress towards targets are identified, the College will take to action to address any deficiencies. These actions will be tailored in response to which target may be in danger of not being met. A typical action may be to bring together a task and finish group to analyse evaluation of progress to date and identify potential solutions. These may include collaboration with other providers to explore successful strategies. The College is an active member of a number of HE provider networks and is confident appropriate support will be available if needed. The task and finish group will be chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and will report to the Principal and Chief and the Higher Education Quality and Standards Committee.

The Director of Adult and Higher Education is responsible for the compilation and dissemination of reports. The Principal and Chief Executive will take overarching responsibility for the APP. Each member of the Senior Leadership Team accepts collective responsibility for the actions and targets set out in this Plan. Using a range of evaluative information and input from relevant groups as described above, reports to the Committees and Working Groups will provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the activities, the likelihood of the milestones and strategic aims and objectives being achieved in the given timescales.

The APP planned activity will be monitored by the Product, development, recruitment and access Group that meets termly. Update reports from these meetings will be received by the HE Strategy Committee that also meets on a termly basis. In line with the regulatory responsibilities now placed on the College Governing Body, a reporting schedule for HE updates to the Governors Quality & Outcomes Committee and Full Board is agreed annually between the HE Quality Manager and the Clerk to the Governors to allow for the Governing Body to have full oversight of the College's Access and Participation activity. It should be noted that there is student representation across all of the regulatory/governance meetings.

3.5 Partnerships with schools

In addition to the Aims outlined above, the College will also work in collaboration with Shaping Futures outreach hub to provide information, advice and guidance to Liverpool City Region schools in order to increase access and participation across a range of student groups. The college also carries out its own engagement activities across 15 schools in the region to improve access to HE, raise attainment and inspire participation.

3.6 Supporting Achievement of High-quality Outcomes

The college tracks the progress of all APP target students at regular intervals throughout their course to enable early intervention and support to ensure they achieve good quality outcomes. This is reported termly through the college committee structure.

The HE Success Coach, as well as the support outlined above, supports all APP target students.

3.7 Flexible Provision

The college offers a 2+1 model in several curriculum areas allowing students to pause and restart their learning journey after the completion of a foundation degree and allow a greater flexibility.

The college offers L4 and L5 qualifications in technical subjects and expects to expand this provision from 2022/23 onwards. The college also offers six Higher and Degree level apprenticeships with plans to expand this delivery in 2022/23 onwards.

4. Provision of Information to Students

Clear information about the tuition fees that apply to St Helen's College's higher education provision and the financial support available to students is, and will continue to be, publicised on the College website at www.sthelens.ac.uk.

This Access and Participation Plan (and other documents) is published on the College website in an accessible format, with other formats such as Braille produced on request and sent to current or prospective students by our Student Services Team. The Student Services Team can be contacted by telephone and/or in writing for additional guidance, and to respond to questions or requests for supplementary information, Individual advice is always provided at course interview prior to any offers of a place.

We provide information to UCAS and to the Student Loans Company in a timely fashion for incorporation in their databases for each academic year and ensure compliance to the mandatory information required in relation to Key Information Sets and Wider Information Sets as required for OfS, Unistats, and other bodies to whom we report as part of our normal college operating procedures.

The College is committed to providing full financial information, including information on fees and financial support to current and prospective students using the following means and methods:

- UCAS – all full time provision is listed and advertised on UCAS, this includes all information regarding tuition fees, loans and grants. Timely and accurate information is provided to UCAS and the Student Loan Company (SLC) in good time and to deadline to ensure these platforms are populated so as to inform prospective students early on in their decision making process.
- Websites – the College website has separate areas and individual programme information that clearly indicates fees per year and course duration. The website also provides information on any additional programme costs that may be incurred. This is provided via the programme specific student handbooks.
- The website provides information on all student support services and signposting that is available, including who to contact for financial IAG and support with the SLC and loan applications, study support, access arrangements and additional learning support etc.
- The website clearly signposts and easily navigates browsers to the financial support section and promotes these services and the accessibility to independent financial IAG. This service is available from our specialist Finance Advice and Guidance Manager, and is available via email, telephone or face to face.
- All course literature and the prospectus includes information on fees, support and IAG available and signposting to the SLC portal.
- All applicants are provided with the tuition fee policy along with all other relevant terms and conditions and College policies as part of their "offer" communications, in a durable format, this includes all other alternative payment methods available other than SLC loans and grants.
- Face to face IAG is provided at school assemblies, careers events, UCAS exhibitions, College open events, interviews and careers events etc. whereby school liaison staff and programme tutors provide face-to-face and 1:1 IAG.
- In-College IAG activity for current level 3 students and Access to HE students takes place in individual classes, as requested by tutors, and includes careers and finance IAG.

5. 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: St Helens College

Provider UKPRN: 10006174

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

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

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£7,750
Foundation degree		£7,750
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£7,750
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£3,750
Foundation degree		£4,950
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	Business	£3,750
HNC/HND	Engineering & Science	£3,250
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£3,750
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

Targets and investment plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: St Helens College

Provider UKPRN: 10006174

Investment summary

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

Note about the data:

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
Access (post-16)	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Access (other)	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
Financial support (£)	£75,000.00	£75,000.00	£75,000.00	£75,000.00	£75,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£598,500.00	£598,500.00	£598,500.00	£598,500.00	£598,500.00
Access investment	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Financial support	10.9%	10.9%	10.9%	10.9%	10.9%
Research and evaluation	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%
Total investment (as %HFI)	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: St Helens College

Provider UKPRN: 10006174

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	
Reduce the gap in access for BAME students, to that found in the population, to 0% by the end of the plan	PTA_1	Ethnicity	Reduce the gap in recruitment of BAME students, from below the proportion found in the population, to that found in the local population by 2025.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	From a baseline of 2% difference in access between BAME students in the college and in the population, we aim to reduce the gap, year-on-year, to 0% by the end of the plan.
Reduce the gap in access for mature students, compared to young students, to 0% by the end of the plan	PTA_2	Mature	Reduce the gap in access for mature students, compared to young students, to 0% by the end of the plan.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	6%	4%	3%	2%	1%	0%	From a baseline of 6%, we aim to reduce the gap in access between young and mature students, year-on-year, to 0% by the end of the plan.
	PTA_3												
	PTA_4												
	PTA_5												
	PTA_6												
	PTA_7												
	PTA_8												
	PTA_9												
	PTA_10												
	PTA_11												
	PTA_12												
	PTA_13												
	PTA_14												
	PTA_15												
	PTA_16												
	PTA_17												
	PTA_18												

Table 2b - Success

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	
Reduce the gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 Quintile 3, 4 or 5 students and POLAR4 Quintile 1 or 2 students.	PTS_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	To increase continuation rates for full time students from low participation neighbourhoods	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	12%	10%	8%	4%	2%	0%	From a baseline of 12%, we aim to reduce the gap in continuation rates between students from the lowest participation areas and the highest participation areas, year-on-year, to 0% by the end of the plan.
Reduce the gap in continuation rates between young students and mature students, studying full time, to 1% by the end of the plan	PTS_2	Mature	Reduce the gap in continuation rates between young students and mature students, studying full time, to 1% by the end of the plan	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	1%	From a baseline of 5%, we aim to reduce the gap in continuation rates between young students and mature students, year-on-year, to a sustainable 1% by 2023-24.
Reduce the attainment gap between young students and mature students, by 9% by 2025	PTS_3	Mature	Reduce the attainment gap between young students and mature students, by 9% by 2025	No	Other data source	2017-18	10%	7%	5%	3%	2%	1%	From a baseline of 10%, we aim to reduce the attainment gap between young students and mature students, year-on-year, to 1% by 2024-25. Note, we have used the college's validated ILR for the collection of this data.
	PTS_4												
	PTS_5												
	PTS_6												
	PTS_7												
	PTS_8												
	PTS_9												
	PTS_10												
	PTS_11												
	PTS_12												
	PTS_13												
	PTS_14												
	PTS_15												
	PTS_16												
	PTS_17												
	PTS_18												

Table 2c - Progression

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	

