

NCG 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan

NCG is a £170 million organisation which brings together over 60,000 learners and 2,900 staff across eight divisions in over 60 locations, to form one of the largest educational, training and employability organisations in the UK. Its stated purpose is to “Unlock Potential Through Learning”

We believe that NCG transforms lives through learning, we are a forward looking organisation who is learner and customer focussed aiming to always provide an outstanding service. We are able to support entry level learners through our pre-employment programmes such as Study Programmes and Traineeships upwards.

NCG comprises: Newcastle College, West Lancashire College, Newcastle Sixth Form College, Kidderminster College, Lewisham and Southwark College and Carlisle College as well as two training providers being The Intraining Group and Rathbone Training.

Our vocational HE curriculum is developed with employers and student needs at its core. Students and employers play an integral part in the development, assessment and validation of all new programmes offered within NCG. We feel that this approach to curriculum development supports our organisational purpose of “Unlocking Potential through Learning”.

In 2016-2017 the HE provision was delivered in the Colleges only, with 89% studying at Newcastle College, 5% in Carlisle College, 4% in Lewisham Southwark College and West Lancashire College and Kidderminster College contributing the remaining 2% combined.

Since September 2016 NCG has operated with a central HE Registry and five local HE Operations deployed to cover the operational management of HE sitting within each of the divisions Newcastle, West Lancashire, Kidderminster, Carlisle and Lewisham Southwark Colleges

Assessment of current performance

NCG merged with a further two new Divisions in March and September of 2017 which contribute almost 10% of the HE student cohort. One of these Divisions is based in Carlisle in the North West of England and the other in Lewisham and Southwark in London. The characteristics of students at both of these new divisions has contributed to a change in student characteristics at NCG. Lewisham Southwark College, for example, has high numbers of BME students compared with the rest of NCG.

1.1 Access of students from underrepresented groups

All data relating to access, success and progression covers from 2014-15 to 2017-18. Lewisham Southwark and Carlisle College are not included in this analysis as merged into NCG in 2017. They will be included in future assessments of performance

NCG's record on access for underrepresented groups does continue to demonstrate noteworthy success in 2017-2018 being:

Newcastle College

- The percentage of full-time mature students from 2014 to 2018 starting on programmes within Newcastle College has increased from 39.5% in 14/15 to 43.1y% in 2017-18. Full time mature males has seen steady recruitment at 19.86% of the overall cohort, marginally up from 19.51 in 2014-15 whereas mature females over the same time period have increased up to 23.3% from 20.0%
- The percentage of part-time mature students over the same time period starting on programmes within Newcastle College has increased from 83.07% in 2014-15 to 85.16% in 17/18. Similarly to the full time picture, mature males on part time programmes at Newcastle College over the same time period has increased from 44.16% to 48.86% whereas the mature female picture shows a decline of over 2% from 36.3 to 38.91
- The ethnicity of our full-time Newcastle College HE student cohort is similar to the regional average of 13.46% for Non UK born residents at 13.2% down from 14.7% in 2016-17. When

we look at our BME cohort and exclude students from Chinese and Indian backgrounds as per guidance from the OfS this demographic makes up 13.2% of our full time cohort which is an increase from 12.7% in 2014-15.

- When we compare this to Newcastle Colleges part time student cohort for students from these ethnicity groupings we can see a reduction in 2017-18, down to 6.6% from 7.5 in 2014-15.
- Students studying full-time with Newcastle College from low participation post codes has increased from 48.2% in 2014-15 to 53.51% in 2017-18. This relates to students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2. White British males from this cohort represent 20.3 which is also an increase from our 2014-15 19.15% position by just over a percent. When looking at white British females from the same POLAR quintiles we see a similar increase but a larger proportion of students at 23.8% in 2017-18 up from 22.14.
- Students studying part-time with Newcastle College from low participation post codes has also increased from 46.30% in 2014-15 to 50.0% in 2017-18. This relates to students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2. White British males from this cohort represent 26.9% over a 4% increase from 2014-15 being 22.5%. Adversely females from these POLAR quintiles has seen almost a 2 percent decline down from 19.46 to 17.81%.
- The proportion of students who disclose a disability or difficulty has decreased from 13.04% in year 2014-15 to 11.49% in 2017-18 for our full time cohort and our part time position sees a similar decline down from 8.17% to 5.48%.

Kidderminster College

- Kidderminster College only offers full time programmes on a small selection of Higher Nationals.
- As a percentage of the overall cohort at Kidderminster College we can see that there is a decline in several areas compared to 2014-15. Students accessing Higher Education programmes from low participation wards is down just over 6% from 50.0% to 43.90. Worryingly the percentage of white British males from the same POLAR wards has also reduced from 24.4 to 12.20% where as White British females from the same wards has increased from 18.89% to 26.83%.
- Mature entrants at Kidderminster College have also declined by almost 10% as has students from BME backgrounds excluding Indian and Chinese down from 15.5% to 9.7%.

West Lancashire College

- Student numbers at West Lancashire College have decreased from 2014-15 to 2017-18 and as a result of this a review of their offer and a change in strategy has taken place for 2018-19 intake. The change has been to move away from NCG foundation degrees to a Higher National Offer.
- West Lancashire College has had both full time and part time students and we have notable improvements in recruitment from students from low participation wards on full time programmes up to 55.5% from 52.6% and white British males from these wards too up to 28.4% up from 22.3%.
- Likewise, in the part time cohort we note a similar increase in students from these wards, up to 37.5% for students from POLAR 1 & 2 with white British males making up 12.5% up from 7.14%
- The BME cohort for full time students but excluding Indian and Chinese students has remained around the 3% mark currently at 3.7% which is marginally over the regional demographic at last census point which was 3.37%
- On full time programmes at West Lancashire College there has been a decline in our mature cohort from 40.7% to 34.5% with mature females reducing in numbers from 30.2% to 22.2% but mature males marginally increasing up from 10.5% to 12.3%. The part time picture is greatly different with mature females making up almost 90% of the cohort from 2014 onwards.

1.2 Retention of students from underrepresented groups.

Assessing current retention of students in year from underrepresented groups being:

- Students from low participation wards (LP)
- White British males from low participation wards (WBMLP)
- Mature students (mat)
- Students with disclosed disabilities and difficulties (DD)
- NCGs black and minority ethnicity cohort, excluding Chinese and Indian students (BME)
- White British females from low participation wards (WBFLP)
- Mature Males (MM)
- Mature Females (MF)

Source data: Internal ILR records for all of NCG

Newcastle College

Full Time	Total Withdrawals	LP	WBMLP	DD	BME	Mat	WBFLP	MM	MF
2014-15	8.78%	9.20%	9.93%	10.42%	8.54%	10.08%	8.59%	11.37%	8.82%
2015-16	7.81%	8.32%	10.24%	6.25%	7.47%	7.02%	7.50%	7.39%	6.68%
2016-17	6.54%	6.44%	6.99%	7.69%	6.75%	7.83%	5.86%	7.59%	8.04%
2017-18	7.64%	8.65%	11.99%	7.24%	7.45%	8.92%	5.90%	10.47%	7.59%

Part time	Total Withdrawals	LP	WBMLP	DD	BME	Mat	WBFLP	MM	MF
2014-15	11.09%	10.50%	10.34%	11.90%	23.08%	12.65%	10.00%	14.54%	10.50%
2015-16	10.28%	11.82%	8.85%	19.44%	10.71%	10.48%	16.28%	8.95%	12.09%
2016-17	10.12%	8.64%	4.90%	16.13%	18.18%	10.50%	8.33%	8.51%	12.64%
2017-18	4.57%	5.48%	4.24%	0.00%	6.90%	4.83%	6.41%	3.27%	6.92%

Retention performance at Newcastle College – Full and Part-time

Positive position compared to 2014-15 for full and part time students in low participation, students with disclosed disabilities or difficulties, students from BME backgrounds and mature students in year retention.

- At Newcastle college we have seen the percentage of students from low participation wards leave in year increase on full time programmes from 9.93% to 11.99%

Kidderminster College

Full Time	Total Withdrawals	LP	WBMLP	DD	BME	Mat	WBFLP	MM	MF
2014-15	33.93%	35.56%	31.82%	30.77%	14.29%	30.00%	52.94%	23.08%	42.86%
2015-16	5.88%	10.34%	6.25%	9.09%	16.67%	14.29%	9.09%	16.67%	0.00%

2016-17	3.64%	4.00%	8.33%	0.00%	20.00%	16.67%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%
2017-18	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

At Kidderminster College we see a positive in year retention picture, this is partially supported by the small size of cohort in 2017-18 and how they didn't lose anyone in year.

West Lancashire College

The data used for West Lancashire does not include 2017-18. This is because as previously mentioned with diminishing numbers at this College, in 2017-18 we only had two cohorts of a level 5 Foundation degree running out so it was not a useful data set to include in a comparison. Similarly for the part-time provision, the comparisons and student numbers on those programmes, none in 2016-17 have meant we have excluded them from the analysis.

Again we see a positive picture compared to 2014-15 compared to 2016-17 which is supported by a much smaller cohort at the College.

Full Time	Total Withdrawals	LP	WBMLP	DD	BME	Mat	WBFLP	MM	MF
2014-15	9.21%	7.50%	5.88%	9.09%	0.00%	19.35%	9.52%	25.00%	17.39%
2015-16	9.88%	6.67%	4.35%	8.33%	0.00%	10.71%	10.53%	10.00%	11.11%
2016-17	3.28%	2.63%	6.25%	9.09%	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%

Reasons for withdrawal

The following information shows the main reasons students have given for withdrawing from their programmes in 2016-17 comparing data with 2015-16.

Source data: Internal ILR records for all of NCG

Reasons for withdrawals	2016-17	Number	2015-16	Number
Poor attendance	8.9%	17	18.9%	46
Course unsuitable	14.6%	28	13.47%	33
Family/Personal issues	9.95%	19	11.02%	27
Health reasons	9.42%	18	8.9%	22

The data shows whilst 'course unsuitable' continues to be one of the main reasons why students withdraw from their programme the number withdrawing has reduced compared to 2015-16. Withdrawals due to poor attendance have fallen by 29 compared to the previous year.

The majority of students enter NCG higher education with a BTEC qualification grade profile at MMM and below. In 2016-17 this meant that they had an 21% likelihood of not continuing in higher education after year one. Compared to 6% of students with 3 A-levels of CCD (equivalent to BTEC MMM) (OfS). This demonstrates the need for Newcastle and NCG divisions to invest in substantial support and facilities for students in order to support greater retention.

In February 2017 we received notice that our continuation data was over 3% below benchmark. As a consequence of this we were required by HEFCE to produce an action plan demonstrating how we were addressing this issue. An action plan was produced and HEFCE's Quality Committee was satisfied that we are making sufficient progress in this area.

Headlines from the plan include:

- Agreed set of institutional KPI targets to monitor in-year and cohort retention
- 'Are our Students Happy' meetings between students (separate meetings for L4 and L5) undertaken by Newcastle College HE team
- Course improvement meetings with Newcastle College Principalship and Newcastle College Head of HE focusing on 'at risk programmes' from NSS
- HE only spaces provided – students informed as part of induction
- Higher Education Support Team widening their remit from students with identified disability and support needs to include all HE students
- 'Tell Us Now' – this is an email address available to students to raise any issues, concerns, etc. This has been marketed via the HE Induction process and posters across campus
- Additional staff and roles to support HE within Newcastle College which include:
 - Academic Achievement Coach
 - Careers and Employability Coach
 - Future Me coach x 4 plus a co-ordinator
 - Additional HE Development Manager

1.3 Awards and Progression for students from underrepresented groups

Awards

These tables illustrate the success at the level of the underrepresented groups within NCG for both full and part time programmes across all of the Divisions of NCG.

Full time	NCG	Low participation	WBMLP	DD	BME	Mature	WBFLP	MM	FM
14/15	90%	79.63%	73.09%	74.82%	78.72%	79.54%	86.03%	77.31%	81.75%
15/16	87%	78.71%	72.37%	80.84%	83.09%	81.31%	82.13%	79.25%	83.33%
16/17	86%	81.17%	75.61%	80.70%	78.46%	83.40%	86.42%	80.33%	86.19%

Part time	NCG (full and part time)	Low participation	WBMLP	DD	BME	Mature	WBFLP	MM	FM
14/15	90%	75.44%	77.78%	68.75%	65.00%	72.06%	75.51%	73.21%	70.65%
15/16	87%	78.90%	87.04%	64.71%	46.15%	77.01%	73.33%	79.00%	74.71%
16/17	86%	75.00%	75.00%	52.63%	71.43%	73.01%	75.00%	75.90%	70.00%

Whilst we can see positives in student attainment against 2014-15 it is clear that all of our underrepresented groups are below the average success rates at NCG.

Progression

Due to the small sample size of some Colleges within NCG we have created the below progression statistics at institutional level. The data is from NCG's 2015-16 and 2016-17 Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Surveys.

Year	Activity	NCG Average	LP	WBMLP	DD	BME	Mature	WBFLP	MM	MF
2015-16	Engaged in full-time study, training or research	49.72%	39.04%	31.03%	43.16%	50.65%	27.67%	43.29%	20.40%	34.60%
	Unemployed	8.57%	10.96%	11.72%	21.05%	14.29%	12.38%	8.54%	13.93%	10.90%
	Working full-time	28.03%	35.11%	42.76%	16.84%	31.17%	44.66%	29.27%	54.73%	35.07%
	Working part-time	8.23%	8.99%	10.34%	13.68%	2.60%	9.47%	10.37%	6.97%	11.85%
	Engaged in part-time study, training or research	3.11%	2.53%	4.14%	2.11%	0.00%	2.43%	1.83%	2.99%	1.90%
	Doing something else (e.g. retired, looking after home or family)	2.34%	3.37%	0.00%	3.16%	1.30%	3.40%	6.71%	1.00%	5.69%
2016-17	Engaged in full-time study, training or research	32.01%	39.27%	36.29%	34.26%	35.44%	25.25%	41.46%	22.63%	27.57%
	Unemployed	3.85%	3.67%	4.84%	9.26%	6.33%	4.70%	2.44%	6.32%	3.27%
	Working full-time	32.45%	32.77%	39.52%	25.93%	26.58%	44.80%	31.10%	47.37%	42.52%
	Working part-time	17.27%	12.71%	11.29%	16.67%	15.19%	14.85%	13.41%	15.26%	14.49%
	Engaged in part-time study, training or research	5.72%	3.95%	2.42%	4.63%	8.86%	2.48%	2.44%	3.16%	1.87%
	Doing something else (e.g. retired, looking after home or family)	8.69%	7.63%	5.65%	9.26%	7.59%	7.92%	9.15%	5.26%	10.28%
2015-16	Full time work or study	77.75%	74.16%	73.79%	60.00%	81.82%	72.33%	72.56%	75.12%	69.67%
2016-17	Full time work or study	64.46%	72.03%	75.81%	60.19%	62.03%	70.05%	72.56%	70.00%	70.09%

We are aware that we have not included any specific review of care leavers or care givers as we do not have robust enough data to analyse the performance of these characteristics. We are committed to including these in future plans.

Ambitions and Strategy

2.1 Strategic Ambitions

From reviewing our performance data, we have produced the following strategic priorities for all areas of the student lifecycle.

Access

Our analysis of student performance shows us a positive picture with the access of many of our underrepresented characteristics however areas of focus will be on:

- Access for students who disclose a disability or difficulty at Newcastle College
- Access for students who are from BME heritage at Kidderminster College
- Access for students of all underrepresented characteristics at West Lancashire College.

Success

Firstly, NCG has an ambition to improve the continuation rate of students studying with us. This applies to all students at NCG including those from the underrepresented groups. We have highlighted a concern with students studying at Level 4 and progressing onto Level 5

Whilst most of the underrepresented groups are performing above the NCG overall in year retention figure, white British males are not and all categories fall below internal key performance indicators (KPIs) for progression to level 5 which is currently benchmarked at 85.1% by HEFCE / OfS in the TEF and our internal key performance indicator sits at 90%.

To support this improvement NCG has developed new reporting and monitoring techniques as well as KPIs for cohort retention, in year retention and attendance. These KPIs are set by Registry with consultation from divisional leads and are monitored through monthly meetings and HE quality review meetings.

Secondly, the tables in our assessment of performance section highlight that whilst all underrepresented groups have an improving picture against 2014-15 in terms of student awards, all groups are below average NCG performance and white British from low participation postcodes and our cohort of students from BME heritage have to be an area of focus for us.

Progression

Our review of our Destination of Leavers from Higher Education data within the assessment and performance area has highlighted that although most of the underrepresented groups that we have analysed are performing better or around the average of students at NCG we need to focus activity on two areas:

- Students with disclosed disabilities or difficulties have a higher unemployed rate and lower rate of carrying on into further study or employment.
- Students with BME heritage also have a higher rate of unemployment as well as a lower rate of progression to study or employment.

2.2 Targets and Milestones

NCG has established milestones and objectives in relation to its higher education provision falling under this access and participation plan. These are included in the resource plan and cover the following areas:

- Part time recruitment – student access
- Mature entrants in HE – student access
- Recruitment from low participation postcodes (POLAR) – student access
- Recruitment from BME groups – student access
- White British males representation – student access
- BME success – student success
- Success from learners from low wards of participation (POLAR) – student success

Many of these have been institutional targets for some time and whilst they still fit with our institutional strategy and current agenda for increased representation from underrepresented groups we will conduct a review of these for 20-21.

NCG also has other targets which have a positive effect on access, success and progression of students from underrepresented groups WP but will not be monitored as part of WP which relate to recruitment, retention, internal progression from level 3 and curriculum development.

As an institution we are confident that disadvantaged student access to NCG programmes is strong and shows growth in all of the WP demographics bar a marginal decline in part time recruitment which is in line with national trends.

2.3 How we will monitor performance

To support our strategies to improve student retention NCG has developed additional reporting as well as KPIs for cohort retention, in year retention and attendance. These KPIs are set by Registry at Divisional level and are monitored through monthly meetings and HE quality review meetings.

We have embedded analysis of these metrics at all levels of delivery from programme, school, divisional SLT, executive and corporation.

Reports on key metrics such as starts, withdrawals and success by underrepresented groups are also produced termly in line with the HE reporting cycle. Here we identify the characteristics of our cohort and how they are performing against both the internal KPIs we have set, and also the targets set in the resource plan.

Retention for all NCG students is monitored monthly. These reports identify both the in-year position in terms of withdrawals but also our non-continuation rates.

High-level data is presented to highlight any patterns and trends and low-level data is made available so that HE Managers can investigate whether withdrawals are affecting any particular type of student, especially those from a WP background.

The institution will also undertake annual monitoring and evaluation of this access and participation to confirm compliance and progress towards the achievement of the milestones it has established. Responsibility for the monitoring report will rest with the Director of Higher Education. NCG produces an annual monitoring report that outlines:

- Financial data summarising recruitment levels, payment of bursaries, and other financial support made available to students;
- Outreach activities that have been undertaken during the year
 - Number of open days held
 - Number of schools/colleges visited
 - Proportion of schools/colleges in Low Participation Neighbourhoods (as a proxy for WP pupils/students)
 - Enquiries from those with a postcode from a Low Participation Neighbourhood
 - Progression against targets
- Progress made in meeting institutional milestones and objectives.

As well as the institutional-level reporting HE Registry conduct a HE quality review twice a year for their Divisional HE programmes.

As part of these meetings, colleagues will be asked to assess their performance against the access, success and progression targets.

On an annual basis and at the HE quality review meetings, colleagues are provided with high-level and low-level data on progression and achievement. HE Managers are asked to investigate whether any particular type of student, especially those from a WP background, have significantly different outcomes. To review the effectiveness of our outreach activity reports on student access that identify what school our students have come from are produced and reviewed against our activities in the previous year. In March this year the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee received a report with a historic review of the performance of under-represented groups with NCG these being:

- Students from low participation wards (POLAR3 data)
- White British Males from low participation wards
- Students with disclosed disabilities or difficulties
- Students from BME heritage excluding Indian and Chinese
- Mature students

Statistics on starts, retention achievement and cohort progression were provided with comparative data from the whole NCG cohort. As we move into our calendar of reporting for 2018-2019 we will break this down by college to enable a more detailed contextualised analysis which can be used to evaluate our performance. This will help us understand impact of interventions and inform our future direction.

Students have representation on the committee where the data is looked at. In 2018-19 we will conduct a series of focus groups with students seeking their ideas on which of our interventions have had the biggest impact on the student journey.

2.4 Equality

The NCG Equality Strategy 2014-18 builds on our Single Equality Scheme 2010-14 providing evidence of the strong commitment to achieving an organisation which values diversity, advances equality and eliminates bias and discrimination from the way in which it operates. This strategy is at the time of writing being actively refreshed and updated.

As an organisation our commitment to Equality and Diversity is at the core of our values and is embedded in all of our activities. This includes our approach to widening access and participation in which is inclusive and supportive, particularly when dealing with students with protected characteristics. We aim to redress inequality in relation to access and outcomes and promote social mobility.

Each Division is responsible for taking action to support progress towards meeting the equality aims, ensuring compliance with legislation, relevant quality standards and funding body requirements. NCG has also set specific and measurable equality objectives in relation to staff across the organisation and for each Division. Progress is monitored and published on an annual cycle.

The development of learning and teaching is integral to the institution and as such the organisation has adopted an approach to Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) which is designed to eliminate discrimination and promote equality through identification of actions for development and maintenance through the higher education committee structure. The process examines programme design and approval processes and frameworks associated with admissions and assessment.

2.5 Student Engagement

The NCG Higher Education Partnership Strategy enables higher education students to actively participate in shaping their learning experience and contributing to the future direction of the institution. The strategy includes all higher education students at undergraduate and postgraduate level, irrespective of location, mode of study, teaching delivery, or discipline. The college aims to provide an inclusive environment for student engagement which anticipates the varied needs of learners and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities.

NCG engages with students on an on-going basis. They are active participants in HE committee meetings where the content of this agreement has been discussed. There is also a cross college

student forum for HE where issues are discussed and reported through the HE committee structure. These discussions have included fees, student financial support and issues from underrepresented groups in general.

Student Fora, Surveys and Opportunities

Student views are also canvassed in a variety of ways throughout the academic year using internal surveys, NSS survey results, and school and programme student fora.

Schools and curriculum areas within the Colleges organise HE learner fora and focus groups provide a platform for students to comment on their teaching and learning experience, raising issues or concerns relating to their specific course. Newcastle College also has a specific Tell Us Now email address which provides a response to students' questions and suggestions within 3 working days.

An action plan is created as a result of the fora. The plan is shared with students to communicate the progress the school is making to resolve any actions agreed as a result of the meetings.

Since September 2015 the HE Directorate in Newcastle College have advertised opportunities for undergraduates and postgraduates to apply for the HE Student Fellowship Programme. It reflected a revised approach to the former offer of student internships. The Fellowship Programme is designed to provide HE students to undertake funded projects in partnership with the College to enhance the student experience and support the development of Seven Bridges, our student-led academic journal.

In 2017-2018 the Newcastle College Fellowship Programme has 50 students engaged, the highest total of fellows since internship opportunities were first offered in 2013.

2.6 Commitment and approach to collaborative work

NECOP

As part of the North East Collaborative Outreach project (NECOP) we are working with 16 colleges and 5 universities to deliver a programme of activities to our Level 2 and 3 learners to improve our progression rates to higher education. The all of the colleges in the consortium meet quarterly to share best practice.

The NECOP project is branded as FutureMe and the team within the college work with all Level 2 and 3 students with a specific focus on cold spot students. Activities include visits to other HE institutions, motivational speakers, visits to key employers, attendance at events as well as engagement with parents and mentoring and support for students in completing applications. As a result of the project applications from our students for 18/19 higher education places have increased 10% in comparison to 17/18.

Employers

Throughout the academic year NCG Divisions continue to engage with employers and industry to ensure the programmes we deliver are fit for purpose and equip our graduates with the employability skills required for the workplace.

The following is a selection of organisations and employers who have engaged with staff and students across the organisation during this academic year:

- School of Education offers bi-annual employer events ('Talk to our teachers') with 17 local employers, teaching agencies and the Education and Training Foundation.
- The School of Creative and Digital Arts - Digital Arts_department boasts its affiliation with the Association of Photographers, Association of Illustrators, and D&AD. Students from this curriculum area were also Royal Television Society regional finalists, and Association of Photographers student awards finalists.
- The School of Creative and Digital Arts - L4 and L5 students across the section had live briefs from organisations and companies such as Gospelware, Wonderstuff, Barbour, Loop de Loop, Live Theatre, Cargo Creative, Orangebus, The Side Gallery,

Jump, Trilife, and NELove Magerzine, Hedgehog Lab, Drummond Central, Newcastle Council, Newcastle Airport, Juice Festival, NUFC, Tree Motion, Kuro Dragon, Studio Moo, Arcus Studio Real Concept, and Beamish.

- The School of Health Childcare Business and Science linked with Barnardo's, Skills for Care, Proctor and Gamble, Northumbrian Water.
- The School of Construction Leisure and Sport - Elemis industry update training for Beauty Therapy team.
- The School of Construction Leisure and Sport - **Beauty:** Elemis, Environ, Jane Iredale, Ramside Hall, Advanced Nutrition Programme, Clarins, Steiner, 3D Lipo, Instertute of Skin Technology, CACI, Laser. **Hospitality and Tourism:** Newcastle and Gateshead Initiative, Virgin On-Board, Ken Ellington General Manager of Copthorne Hotel, North East Hotel Association, Hayes Travel, Crowne Plaza, Sandman, Jury's Inn, Marriot, Hilton and As You Like It, **Sport:** Newcastle Falcons, Paul Blake owner of Newcastle Eagles; Newcastle Eagles; Newcastle United Foundation. PSRB accreditation from BASRaT, The Gym Group.

Validation events during academic year also demonstrated important NCG places on links with employers and industry in development of our HE curriculum. Qualifications are created in consultation with employers to ensure we provide programmes for our students which are fit for purpose and meet the demands of industry.

Educational Partnerships

The Education Partnership team represents Newcastle College at a range of meetings and planned activities throughout the academic year. We have representation as collaborative partners with Newcastle City Council's Progression Forum, Newcastle Schools Careers Network, NE1 Can Stakeholder Group as well as on the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) Schools Careers Guidance Network. Attendance at these meetings has resulted in the college being an active and recognised contributor to the success of student progression and widening participation access of young people across the region.

The Education Partnerships team have conducted 203 separate Further Education activities during 17.18 including working with North East organisations such as Connexions and Job Centre Plus, Newcastle, Northumberland and North Tyneside Council as well as employers such as Azure Garden Centre in Cramlington working with students with learning support needs.

We have also worked with Sixth Form Centres across the region delivering 42 separate Higher Education presentations in schools and providing taster activities within the college promoting our Degree offer. These occasions have provided excellent opportunities for us to showcase our vocational facilities, offering awareness of the unique alternatives for students as options when choosing to progress into Higher Education.

3. Access, Student Success and Progression Measures

3.1 Activity to support to increase student success and progression from underrepresented groups

Pre-enrolment support

Personalised support begins before the start of a student's programme of study. Effective initial advice and guidance (IAG) will help ensure students from disadvantaged groups are on the right course based on their career aspirations, they will be invited to summer schools before their programme begins in September helping to support with the transition from FE to HE and allowing students to tailor the support they feel they may need to access, by giving them choices at the start of their journey with us.

Summer Schools

Academic Summer schools will be held to help support students from disadvantaged groups who have reassessment opportunities over the summer or for those students who are on an alternative assessment plan (AAP).

Bridging summer schools will be held to help prepare students for the transition from L3 to L4, L4 to L5, L6 to post grad.

Study related support – Newcastle College

This support framework helps students from disadvantaged groups to excel in achieving their academic goals by providing tailored support through;

Academic support- A team of 5 Academic Support Coaches based centrally, one of which will be research focused. To help support students from all backgrounds, particularly white British males from low participation postcodes with their academic study skills.

Academic tutorials with teaching staff - These will take place 3 times throughout the academic year, with the programme leader for students from disadvantaged groups particularly white British males from low participation postcodes

Vocational/Technical support - A team of 6 graduate teaching assistants will be based within subject disciplines to help support students from disadvantaged groups with vocational and technical knowledge.

Careers/Employability support - Two employability coaches will help support students from all disadvantaged groups particularly those who have disclosed a disability or difficulty and students who have BME heritage with sourcing work placements and preparing for graduate employment through preparing for interviews, mentoring and C.V. building.

Each of the above positions provide bespoke support that tackles barriers to learning that are as a result of the students' background, closing gaps in inequality, the roles provide the student with every opportunity to succeed.

They all offer drop in tutorials (academic/vocational and careers), study skills workshops, bookable 1:1 tutorials (academic/ vocational and careers), all of which will be available throughout the academic year including reassessment windows throughout the summer. Beyond level 4 students are able to access support with preparing for graduate employment, helping to develop their soft skills, C.V. build and interview preparation.

Lecture capture – A lecture capture service will give staff a suite of tools that make it easy for them to produce video content for their students to access. This includes audio recordings of their lectures along with anything they present on screen. Lecture capture will enable students to access their lectures after the sessions to help support understanding and consolidation and to catch up on sessions which may have been missed.

Within our Equality and Diversity Annual Report we have an organisational equality aim to provide a hospitable and multi-cultural environment that welcomes respects and protects diverse people.

Through this approach of respect and consideration for others, a zero tolerance stance on bullying and harassment, specific space provided where possible for prayer rooms and catering facilities which meet a wide range of dietary needs including Kosher and Halal (where possible) we are able to promote an organisation and subdivisions that are welcoming to people of all ethnicities and hope to see an increase and increased retention of our BME representation across all levels, modes and divisions going forward.

We provide support for students with a disclosed disability or difficulty, or for those who require academic or pastoral support with a team to help Higher Education students feel welcome, inspired and supported as they learn. The support is there for all students and we would expect everyone to have some contact with the team throughout their time at NCG.

Learning Mentors who work with students from disadvantaged groups particularly (but not exclusively) white British males from low participation postcodes on a 1:1 or small group basis on a variety of topics including:

- Study and personal organisational skills
- Low level mental health issues
- Organisation and time management
- Personal issues

Higher Level Learning Support Assistants who work with students who have:

- a disability or mental health condition
- Study Skills Support on 1:1 or small group basis
- Dyslexia 1:1 Specialist Study Skills Tuition
- DSA advice and guidance
- Alternative Assessment Plans
- Exam Access Arrangements

Assistive Technology Team who support students who have a disability with:

- Laptops / Dictaphones / loop systems, etc.
- Transcription services (braille / alternative formats)
- Assistive technology training
- Specialist software

Libraries Team that offer group workshops and 1-1 academic support on a drop in basis. Topics available include:

- Plagiarism and copyright
- Essay writing and structuring dissertations
- Harvard referencing
- Literature review, research methods and research skills
- Revision and exam preparation including late and weekend opening.

NCG has a process that ensures a consistent practice in the support of assessment arrangements for HE students who have disclosed a disability or specific learning need. The Higher Education 'Alternative Assessment Arrangements' (AAA) process offers students an alternative assessment agreement which, in partnership with staff and support teams, allows students to plan and manage their assessment effectively.

Over the last 5 years students' awareness of the process and support available to them has increased and as a result Central Support Services have seen an increase in the number of students taking advantage of the opportunity the AAA process can offer to support them in their studies. The team continues to improve the system for recording student outcomes at the end of each academic year which results in the data offering a more accurate analysis of the impact the support has on our students.

3.2 Activity to support increased access

General outreach activity

We believe that all young people should be fully informed of the range of opportunities available to them regarding their progression through education and into the world of work.

We aim to provide a consistent approach to support the promotion of vocational progression from schools in their locality. We encourage awareness of the many career opportunities available to young people and the vocational qualification route they may need to take to succeed in their chosen career.

Our Education Partnerships Team based in Newcastle College assists and works with schools to:

- Provide vocational advice and guidance
- Collaborate during Careers Events and Parents Evenings
- Arrange visits to College for individual pupils and/or groups
- Organise workshops at Newcastle College and in schools for specific subject areas allowing pupils to get 'hands on'

- Work with young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET) or are in danger of becoming NEET

The team tailor support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and schools in low participation wards, by working in collaboration they inspire young people to progress to the next level of study, whether that is into further or higher education, an apprenticeship or into employment.

The range of activities that all NCG Divisions cover includes:

- Providing outreach activities, summer schools, taster days/master classes, talks and workshops for students, parents, staff and community to prepare students with a disclosed disability or difficulty for higher education;
- Working with applicants in specific subject areas to ensure they meet the entry requirements by providing help such as information and guidance, diagnostic tests, Maths and English literacy sessions and study skills;
- Activities to promote successful induction and integration of WP students and on-going provision of information and guidance for students;
- Developing a flexible innovative curriculum that meets the needs of learners in the workplace and supports employers;
- Developing curriculum and projects to improve the employability of all students;
- Providing a coherent service through counselling and learner support services;

Raising Attainment in Schools and Colleges

Primarily outreach activity engages learners who come within widening participation and intervention categories which are targeted at students in the 16-30 range. The targeted groups are students studying within the North East in sixth forms, colleges of FE including the institution's own students and work based learners.

Activities at Newcastle College include:

- Arts in Partnership is an initiative that aims to develop the personal, social and creative talent of young people in the region by providing exposure to working artists in practice. The initiative delivers a range of hands-on workshops that link to key stage levels as part of a school day. The aim of this project is to raise attainment and encourage young people to pursue a career in arts.
- Open days aimed at the wider local population and for our own internal FE students.
- A monthly Information, Advice and Guidance event will be held which encourages applications to HE from a wide range of people.
- Targeted visits, organised by our dedicated HE Progression Coach, by College staff to schools across the North East, especially those which serve low participation neighbourhoods, to promote the benefits of a vocational HE route.

Also at Newcastle College we have the "Achieve More" programme which is a personal development and work experience programme that raises attainment and the higher education aspirations of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The programme is designed to help students:

- Understand how higher education can make a difference to their future
- Consider their future options
- Learn about educational pathways available to them
- Enhance their health and wellbeing
- Participate in exciting adventurous activities
- Work cooperatively and support others in challenging situations
- Develop improved communication problem solving and decisions making skills
- Improve confidence, overcome fears and develop greater independence

- Connect with nature and the environment

Newcastle College will conduct focus groups with the young people attending these programmes as well as recruiting an independent body to conduct market research. We will also monitor attendees on this programme to review how many end up on HE programmes within NCG.

At West Lancashire College the following activities are undertaken:

- Monthly advice and guidance evenings on the first Wednesday of each month for all students particularly focusing on students from underrepresented groups.. During these evenings applicants and members of the community are welcome to visit the college to get advice on HE courses. HE applicants have access to IAG staff who could advise on fees, loans and bursaries, they would also be able to speak to tutors about course specific information.
- 2 open events a year, one in November and one in March. In a similar way to the advice and guidance evening the community are welcome to visit but more of the college is accessible to them. So they are able to tour around the campus and watch learner demonstrations, see displays and speak to current learners.

At Kidderminster College the following activities are undertaken:

- Group and personal visits to the college where BME students and parents will be able to speak with tutors and learners and find out about the facilities and services available at Kidderminster College.
- 1 open day and 2 open evenings

Activities at Lewisham Southwark College include:

- Open days aimed at the wider local population and for our own internal FE students.
- Fortnightly 'Meet the teacher' events throughout the Spring and Summer terms to which potential applicants and applicants are invited.
- Targeted visits organised by our Marketing and Student Services Departments: College staff address students in schools across the South-East area (especially those which serve low participation neighbourhoods) promoting the benefits of vocational HE routes.
- Potential applicants can make an appointment with a College Progress Coach who can guide them through progression, entry requirements, career opportunities, student finance, housing etc.
- The College produces a comprehensive guide aimed at helping applicants cope with the practical challenges of living and studying in London

3.3 Financial Support

Divisions of NCG are all offering financial support in the form of bursaries. Each division of NCG has the autonomy to decide what financial package and distribution best suits the needs of their students.

We strongly believe that by offering an increased level of financial support specifically to students from low income housing and those from the lowest wards of participation will increase access and enable success and progression for our students.

The bursary proposals are based on evidence from different sources. These include:

- Feedback from the student forums
- Knowledge of local market and its need.
- Feedback from recruitment staff
- Feedback from employers

For full-time students, a consistent theme was that some level of financial support was more important than the level of the fee. It was therefore decided that a higher fee should be introduced to fund a bursary for students facing financial hardship.

We are committed to the continual evaluation of the effectiveness of our financial support packages and will hold forums with students, staff and employers periodically to ensure our offer matches local need.

We also have a hardship fund available to students at Newcastle College who are experiencing financial difficulty.

4. Investment

4.1 General commitments

As we have a high proportion of students from underrepresented groups we are aiming for a percentage spend of 55% of our OfS countable expenditure.

This will be areas such as but not restricted to:

Our work ready guarantee ensures that students from all underrepresented groups are ready for the workplace by the time they graduate. This will be achieved by committing to spend on the following areas which will be specific to the needs of each programme

- Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship
 - professional memberships,
 - guest speakers,
 - trips
 - secondments
 - placement mentors
- Support
 - Careers and employment staffing
 - Academic achievement support
 - Progression coaches

The institution also directs additional revenue to support access measures in the following ways:

- Enhancing the students' HE experience by maintaining dedicated HE facilities.
- Forge local partnerships with institutions that are located in disadvantaged postcode areas.
- Through outreach activities, involving road shows, transport, and promotional materials;
- Through funding to provide additional support for academic tutors in relation to assessment of students and the provision of work based learning;
- Through capital spending to ensure that appropriate facilities are available.

From 2018-19 we commit to using the OFFA toolkit to evaluate the impact of this activity.

4.2 Expenditure

Our planned OfS countable expenditure for 19/20 is:

Area	Value (as a %)	Value (as £)
Access	4%	£200,758
Student success	13%	£652,464
Progression	6%	£301,137
Financial support	32%	£1,608,000

With 51% of our cohort coming from low participation postcodes we feel it is imperative to provide a financial support packages that lessens the financial burden of accessing HE within our institution. We also realise that students who may not attend our institution from these wards still require a level of financial support and are committed to maintaining a bursary for all students.

Part of our mission as an HE provider is to provide vocational programmes that empower our students to go into full time employment once they complete. We feel that the levels of expenditure on success and progression are sufficient to fulfil this mission. We have a work ready guarantee to provide students with the skills, memberships and experience they need to progress, as well as a Higher Education Support Team which supports the day to day activities of our students to enable success.

We note that reduction in student success expenditure compared to previous years access arrangements this is largely due to an improved method of how expenditure is being counted along with some restructure work taken within one of our Divisions.

We anticipate that this financial support to students will represent up to a further 30% of our higher fee income, with the total expenditure variable as it is driven by recruitment and retention of our full time cohort.

The rationale for this split is evidenced through our NSS results and our desire to ensure the most appropriate students within our institution receive the financial support and all learners are supported in their efforts to succeed by providing excellent tutors and facilities.

5. Provision of information to students

5.1 Fees

The fee levels for all franchised (indirectly funded) courses are those determined by the franchising institution and contained in their own access agreements. These are students registered with other institutions but taught at NCG.

Each Division of NCG has the autonomy to charge fees up to the maximum fee limit agreed by Corporation that will support student access, success and progression in their locality.

The level of tuition fee set by this institution takes account of the policy considerations which it has adopted to guide its thinking in relation to fee income. These considerations are:

- That the cost of full time higher education to students should not act as an entry barrier and there is no evidence or research to suggest a maximum fee of £9000 will act as one;
- That income from tuition revenue should be managed to provide financial support, improve experience, enhance learning, and to encourage progression and achievement.

The maximum fee for Full Time students at any NCG institution in 2019-2020 has been set at £9000

The maximum fee for Part Time students at any NCG institution in 2019-2020 has been set at £4625

5.2 Fees by division

New students studying and those returning to study after more than a year out will be charged:

Division	Full Time Fee	Part Time Fee
Newcastle College	£9000	Not over the basic fee of £4625
Kidderminster College	£7900	Not over the basic fee of £4625
West Lancashire College	£7900	Not over the basic fee of £4625
Carlisle College	£6165	Not over the basic fee of £4625
Lewisham Southwark College	£7900	Not over the basic fee of £4625

These fees relate to all HNs, Foundation Degrees, First Degrees and Top Ups.

Students should expect to pay tuition fees for every year in attendance and also be aware these fees may increase annually.

On the basis of current Government guidance any increase is will not exceed the increase in inflation by reference to the Retail Price Index (RPI).

5.3 Financial support

Financial support for students differs between the Divisions of NCG and is as follows.

Division	Financial Support available
Newcastle College	New students (Full Time ONLY): £1000 for students from POLAR 1&2 postcodes and those with household income under £25,000 assessed via SLC means tested process only. £400 for all other students This will be for all years the students study at Newcastle
Kidderminster College	New students (Full Time ONLY): £1000 for students from POLAR 1&2 postcodes £400 for all other students This will be for all years the students study at Kidderminster
West Lancashire College	New students (Full Time ONLY): £1000 based on attendance for all full time students 1 st Payment £400 – 95% attendance to Nov 2 nd Payment £400 – 95% attendance to Feb 3 rd Payment £200 – 95% attendance to May This will be for all years the students study at West Lancashire
Lewisham Southwark College	A bursary of £1,000 for every F/T undergraduate student. Payable automatically, subject to confirmation of attendance at 85% or above. Payment point 1 - Dec 7th. Point 2 - 16th Feb. £500 per payment.

5.4 How to apply for financial support

Newcastle College

Newcastle College will assess the student's bursary automatically based on information we receive from HE Registry and the Students Loan Company. Newcastle College will then contact the student advising them that they are entitled to the specific bursary and ask them to come to Student Services to provide their bank details and sign a declaration form.

Kidderminster College

Kidderminster students will need to apply for financial support via the Discretionary Learner Support Fund.

West Lancashire College

WLC students complete an internal college application for HE bursary and submit to Student Services.

Lewisham Southwark College

Payable automatically, subject to confirmation of attendance at 85% or above. Payment point 1 - Dec 7th. Point 2 - 16th Feb. £500 per payment.

5.5 Public Information

NCG is committed to providing clear and accurate information to students on Fees and Financial support via our own website and any external data sources that also hold this information.

The NCG Access and Participation Plan will be published on the NCG website and each college will provide a link to the document. The link will be accessible to potential as well as existing students.

* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

Fees may change in line with inflation

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	NCL 19/20 Entrants, 3 Year programme	£9,000
First degree	NCL 19/20 Entrants, Top Up	£9,000
First degree	Kidderminster 19/20 Entrants	£7,900
First Degree	LSC 19/20 Entrants, 3 Year programme	£7,900
Foundation degree	NCL 19/20 Entrants	£9,000
Foundation degree	LSC 19/20 Entrants	£7,900
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND	NCL 19/20 Entrants	£9,000
HNC / HND	WLC 19/20 Entrants	£7,900
HNC / HND	Kidderminster 19/20 Entrants	£7,900
CertHE / DipHE	NCL Cert HE	£9,000
Postgraduate ITT	NCL 19/20 Entrants	£9,000
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise 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		*
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		*

Table 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body													
Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	Part-time	Other statistic - Part-time (please give details in the next column)	Increase part time recruitment utilising vocational Foundation Degrees and working with employers	No	2014-15	19%	21.4	21.7	22			
T16a_02	Access	Mature	Other statistic - Mature (please give details in the next column)	Maintenance / increase in mature entrants to Higher Education	No	2013-14	52%	54%	54.5%	54.5%			
T16a_03	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Other statistic - Location (please give details in the next column)	Recruit from low participation neighbourhoods	No	2013-14	30%	34%	35%	35%			
T16a_04	Access	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Increase in recruitment from BME groups	No	2014-15	12.5%	14.9%	15.1%	15.3%			
T16a_05	Access	White economically disadvantaged males	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Increased representation from white British men from disadvantaged backgrounds	No	2014-15	13.9%	16%	16.5%	16.7%			
T16a_06	Student success	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Increase in success from BME groups - to be completed in next years agreement	No	2016-17	78.05	78.7	79	79.5			
T16a_07	Student success	Socio-economic	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Increase in success from learners from disadvantaged backgrounds - to be completed in next years agreement	No	2016-17	80	80.4	80.6	80.8			
T16a_08	Progression	Multiple	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase progression to Level 7 from students from WP backgrounds	No	2018-19	15%	15%	16%	17%	18%		
T16a_09	Access	Attainment raising	HESA T1a - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase the number of students attending the Achieve more programme	Yes	2016-17	40	80	90	100	110		
T16a_10	Access	Attainment raising	HESA T1a - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase the number of students who attended the Achieve more programme who enrol onto HE within NCG	No	2018-19	5	5	10	15	17		

Table 8b - Other milestones and targets.													
Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Provide taster/masterclass days for internal and external students	No	2013-14	4 taster/masterclass days	6 taster/masterclass days	7 taster/masterclass days	7 taster/masterclass days			
T16b_02	Access	Socio-economic	Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	Target secondary and schools within the Group with high proportions of non-traditional students.	No	2013-14	15 Schools	17 schools	17 schools	17 schools			