

**Access and Participation Plan  
2020-2021 to 2024-25**

**INTRODUCTION**

WCG (the trading name of Warwickshire College) is a large mixed economy further education (FE) college operating across Warwickshire and south Worcestershire. The total student population of WCG has numbers approximately 13,000 including 1102 higher education (HE) students of which 234 are part-time students plus 204 part-time degree apprentices. We offer a range of provision with courses spanning 13 of the 19 principal subject areas. Warwickshire College has Foundation Degree awarding powers and offers a range of level 5 qualifications in addition to working with university partners to offer full degrees at level 6.

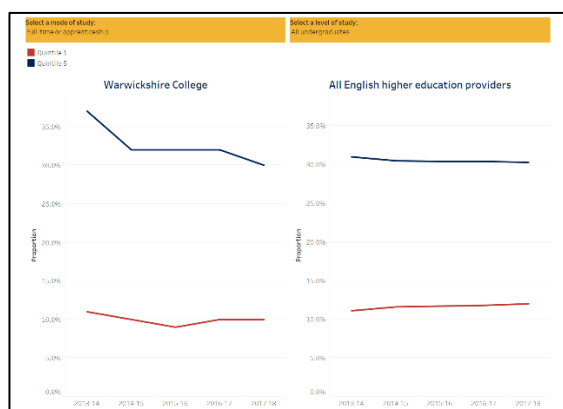
In response to planned growth, development of specialist provision and to meet the needs of local and regional students, WCG has grown to become a family of seven colleges, each with its own community identity. Notwithstanding the seven college brands, WCG is a single institution with one management team and one governing body. Policies and procedures are cross-college and operate across all college sites. The range of higher education subjects across WCG are shown below:

<b>Royal Leamington Spa College</b>	Digital film production, games art, business, computing, early years education, counselling and post-16 teacher training.
<b>Warwick Trident College</b>	Engineering
<b>Rugby College</b>	Engineering, business, construction, performing arts
<b>Moreton Morrell College</b>	Land-based curriculum: equine science, veterinary and animal therapies, veterinary nursing
<b>Pershore College</b>	Land-based curriculum: horticulture, agri-tech, veterinary nursing, arboriculture
<b>Evesham College</b>	Graphic design and photography
<b>Malvern Hills College</b>	Fine art and crafts

Table 1 subjects delivered at each WCG College

**1.0 ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE**

WCG has assessed its performance across the whole student lifecycle for the following groups; students living in areas of low higher education participation or from lower household income or socioeconomic status, black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students, mature students, disabled students and care leavers. The College has also assessed the performance of an intersection of characteristics for young, white male students from low participation areas. WCG used the OfS data dashboard, the CSV files forwarded by the OfS and converted to pivot tables (the 'dataset') plus WCG's own registry data for this analysis. In many instances, the numbers of students were too small to feature on the OfS data dashboard.



Source: OfS data dashboard showing full-time students

**Key Performance Measures**

In terms of access for under-represented groups, OfS data dashboard shows that in 2017-18, 30% of WCG's full-time undergraduates are from higher participation neighbourhoods, quintile 5 compared with 10% from the lowest participation area, quintile 1. This is broadly similar to all English higher education providers and there is a 20% gap in participation. The position for part-time undergraduates differs in that 25% are from quintile 5 and 10% from quintile 1 compared with 20.5% and 17.5% nationally, so there is a 15% gap in participation for part-time students at the College and this is much higher than the gap in part-time participation nationally.

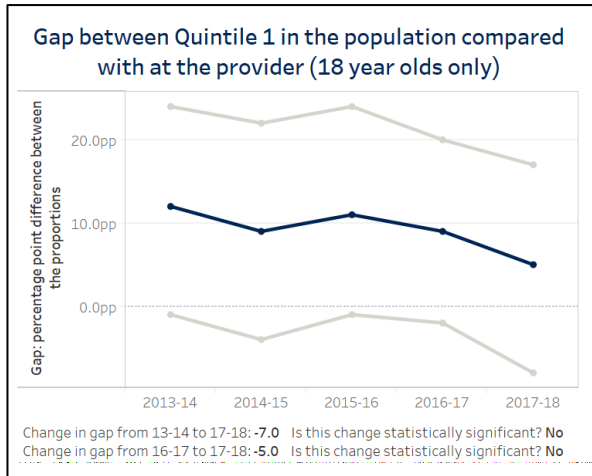
WCG does not have data identified for the remaining three key performance measures: continuation of under represented groups, degree outcomes of white and black students and degree outcomes of disabled students. Where College data is available, WCG has utilised this information in this assessment of performance.

## 1.1 Higher Education participation, household income or socioeconomic status

### 1.1a. Access

There are statistically significant gaps in WCG's 2017-18 data for 18-year-old students from quintile 1 in the deprivation indices (IMD), but the picture is improving for POLAR4.

#### POLAR 4 Quintile 1

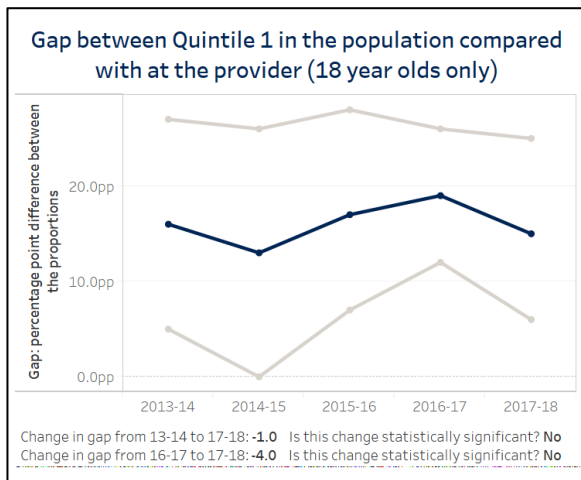


Source: OfS Data Dashboard

According to the OfS data dashboard, WCG is characterised by a pattern of recruitment that is improving for full-time, 18-year-old students (POLAR 4).

In 2014-15, 9% of the 18-year olds at WCG were from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas and this has increased to 14% in 2017-18. The national data set shows that 18.1% of 18-year olds are from POLAR4 quintile 1. Therefore, the gap is narrowing and is now only 5% points and is not statistically significant. This is shown by the graph from the OfS data dashboard.

#### Deprivation Quartile 1



Source: OfS Data Dashboard

In terms of participation in higher education in areas of deprivation, WCG has not performed as well. In 2017-18, the gap between quintile 1 in areas of deprivation for 18-year olds compared with the general population is 15% points and therefore is significant. WCG has 7% of 18-year-olds from the lowest quintile for deprivation, whereas the national picture is 22.1%.

WCG has 32% of 18-year-olds from the highest quintile (Q5) and therefore the gap between the lowest (Q1) at 7% and the highest is 25% and this is significant.

### 1.1b. Success

Continuation statistics, detailed in the OfS dataset files show that there has been significant improvement in performance between students from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2 quintiles and those from POLAR4 quintiles 3-5 quintiles. There is also compelling data to show strong continuation for those students recruited from IMD quintiles 1-2 compared to IMD quintiles 3-5. The asterisk denotes the figure for 2014 as this statistic is not available for 2012.

Metric	WCG in 2012/13	WCG in 2016/17	Change
POLAR4 1-2 vs POLAR 3-5	85%* vs 86%	93% vs 91%	+2% and improving
IMD 1-2 vs IMD 3-5	80% vs 87%	90% vs 90%	0% and improving

Table 3 to compare student continuation from POLAR quintiles and IMD from OfS dataset files

Student achievement for students hailing from areas of low participation is as follows, where a 'good degree' is taken as a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 at level 6 and a merit or distinction at level 5 when analysis is undertaken below degree level:

Student Achievement ('good degrees') POLAR 4					Gap
	Year of graduation	POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2	POLAR4 quintiles 3-5	All students	
<b>Level 5</b> Foundation Degree or HND	2017-18	44%	53%	50%	9%
	2016-17	69%	61%	63%	8% favourable
	2015-16	47%	43%	44%	4% favourable
<b>Level 6</b> Degree	2017-18	38%	43%	42%	5%
	2016-17	32%	45%	42%	13%
	2015-16	29%	42%	39%	13%

Table 4 to compare good degrees from POLAR 4 quintiles. Source: WCG own data.

The analysis of performance for level 5, Fd and HND students is disappointing having improved in 2016-17 and decreased last year. A number of our foundation degrees did not run in Rugby, a designated cold spot area in 2016-17 and therefore the outcomes for 2017-18 were impacted in terms of overall student numbers and consequently, POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2 as a proportion of our overall totals. However in 2017-18, students from POLAR4 quintiles 3-5 outperformed those from quintiles 1 and 2 with a 9% gap in performance.

The table shows improvement for degree outcomes across the last three years for students hailing from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2, and reassuringly, we have reduced the gap in the most recent year under comparison compared to those students from POLAR4 quintiles 3-5. However, in 2017-18 students from POLAR4 quintiles 3-5 outperformed those from quintiles 1 and 2 with a 5% gap in performance.

We have developed additional level 6 provision in creative disciplines (Games Art and Digital Film Production) which have been delivered for the first time in 2018-19 and will expand our level 6 numbers overall; this factor will also be considered when comparing performance. Students studying on these courses are in small groups that have mostly progressed internally from our level 5 provision at the College. These students have been supported to achieve well at level 5 meeting entry requirements for the top-up.

### 1.1c Progression

Students who enter highly skilled occupations from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2 have been variable across the last five years according to OfS dataset files and our own internal data. When comparisons are made to those from POLAR4 quintiles 3-5, the recent trend in the last three years, is upwards. As our pattern of recruitment of students from lower POLAR4 quintiles adjusts, as described earlier, this is therefore, an encouraging picture:

Progression to highly skilled employment by POLAR 4 quintiles		
	POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2	POLAR4 quintiles 3-5
2017-18	(67%)	(54%)
2016-17	35%)	50%
2015-16	(25%)	48%
2014-15	(60%)	43%
2013-14	(50%)	51%

Table 5 to compare progression to highly skilled employment by POLAR4 quintiles. Source: OfS dataset files. Figures in brackets are based on internal data.

WCG students from deprived social backgrounds (IMD quintiles 1 and 2) have lower progression rates to highly skills employment or further study at a higher level when compared to the national data. The

OfS data dashboard shows that the outturn for 2016-17 was 19.9% points below the national figures and this was a lower rate than five years previously. Improving the progression opportunities for this group of students is a priority for WCG.

## 1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

### 1.2a Access

The OfS data dashboard shows that in 2017-18, 86% of full-time, WCG students were white compared with 68.9% nationally. Proportionally, 7% were Asian compared with 13.7% nationally, 6% were mixed ethnicity compared with 4.8% nationally; 1% were Black compared with 10.5% nationally and there were no significant 'other' ethnicities at WCG. Therefore, there is a gap in participation between BAME students and white students at WCG compared with the national picture.

Participation Rates	WCG	All English higher education providers	Warwickshire demographics (ONS data*)
Black	1%	10.5%	1%
Asian	7%	13.7%	5%
Mixed ethnicity	6%	4.8%	2%
Total BAME	14%	31.1%	7.5%

Table 6 to compare participation rates by ethnicity at WCG with Warwickshire data. Source: OfS data dashboard

\*<https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-1014-120>

As we recruit locally for the majority of our students, except for our land based provision which has a national recruitment pool, this pattern must be compared to local Warwickshire and Worcestershire demographic statistics. According to ONS data from 2009, 7.5% of Warwickshire residents are from a non-white background, which is just below the percentage of BAME students studying at the college in 2018-19.

### 1.2b. Success

Withdrawal rates for students of particular ethnicities halved from 2016 to 2017 and have improved further in 2018 at WCG. In fact, over a five-year period, WCG has seen the gap between continuation of BAME students reduced to zero, having been 12% worse in 2014. This is encouraging given that, as noted earlier, our overall numbers of students in this under-represented group has also increased in recent recruitment figures. With regard to achievement for this group, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, the very low numbers (below 5 in some categories) means that there is a significant likelihood of individuals being identified and therefore we have not put this information in our plan, however we have included the percentage figures. We will monitor these students on an individual basis, checking for any patterns of disadvantage within any disaggregated groups and addressing them where appropriate.

### 1.2c. Progression

Our BAME recruitment numbers are very low, and in line with ONS statistics for the demographic area served by WCG. Neither the OfS data dashboard nor published TEF metrics provide any statistical information that can be meaningfully analysed for BAME student performance. We will be seeking to monitor the particular performance of these groups as they enter employment or further study. Where DLHE or LEO information is statistically difficult to draw firm conclusions, we will explore our own mechanisms for assessing student progression, particularly where level 5 students progress internally or externally to level 6 'top-up' awards.

## 1.3 Mature students

### 1.3a. Access

According to the OfS data dashboard, 67% of students in 2017-18 were under 21 compared with 33% mature students over 21. This compares with 72.2% under 21 nationally and 27.8% 21 and over. WCG offers higher education to its local community and has a number of courses that attract mature students both full-time and part-time. A closer examination of our student characteristics reveals that the number of part-time mature learners (31+ years) is disproportionately lower than full-time mature learners (21+ years).

### 1.3b. Success

It has been well documented that mature students in College HE are less likely to complete their studies than in the Universities sector. The Association of Colleges' report '*Action on Access*' states that this is on average around 21%. At WCG we are pleased to see a slightly lower non-continuation rate for this group, however we are not seeing an improvement over time. In 2014, according to the OfS dataset files, for degree students, mature non-continuation was 16% in 2014 and has reduced to 13% in 2018. This remained 4% higher than for our under 21 students. For mature students undertaking a level 5 qualification (Foundation degree/HND) the picture is similar, with a non-continuation rate of 23% in 2014 which has reduced to 20% in 2018. Compared to our under-21 students, a gap of 9% difference in non-continuation has increased to 10% over five years.

WCG's own data shows that the proportion of mature students that achieve 'good degrees' has increased from 45% to 60% between 2014 and 2018. This means that mature students are currently out-performing students under the age of 21 at WCG. According to our own internal data, mature students are matched with students under the age of 21 with regard to level 5 awards.

<b>Student Achievement ('good degrees') between mature students and those under 21</b>					
	Year of graduation	Mature	Under 21	All students	Gap
Level 5	2017-8	51%	55%	50%	-4%
	2016-7	50%	71%	62%	-21%
	2015-6	35%	51%	44%	-16%
Degree	2017-8	56%	28%	43%	+28%
	2016-7	43%	42%	42%	+1%
	2015-6	43%	35%	39%	+8%

Table 7 to show comparison of good degrees between mature students and those under 21. Source: WCG own data.

### 1.3c. Progression

The OfS data dashboard for progression provides data up to 2016-17. It shows that for full-time students under 21, the progression rates into highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level are 45% compared with the national rate for all English higher education providers of 72.3%. The change in rate from 2015-16 to 2016-17 was -9.0.

For full-time, mature students over 21, the progression rate is 58% compared with a national rate of 75.2%. The change in rate from 2015-16 to 2016-17 was -5.0. For part-time, mature students over 21, the progression rate was 54% compared with the national rate of 75.8%. The change in rate from 2015-16 to 2016-17 was -17.0.

The OfS dataset files for progression shows that mature students consistently outperform students under the age of 21 in their success obtaining highly skilled employment. This is the case for both full-time and part-time students.

<b>Mature students progressing into highly skilled employment or further study</b>					
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Mature - full-time	70/105 (67%)	60/85 (71%)	30/55 (55%)	35/55 (64%)	45/75 (60%)
U21 full-time	50/100 (50%)	40/100 (40%)	30/70 (43%)	55/95 (58%)	70/160 (44%)
Mature part-time	35/55 (55%)	45/60 (75%)	60/95 (63%)	45/65 (70%)	45/85 (53%)
U21 part-time	25/45 (55%)	35/50 (70%)	No data available	20/30 (67%)	No data available

Table 8 to show comparison of mature students with those under 21 progressing to highly skilled employment or further study. Source: OfS dataset files

When considering performance in terms of award type, analysis shows:

<b>Mature students progressing into highly skilled employment or further study by award</b>					
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Mature - Degree	20/40 (50%)	20/35 (57%)	15/30 (50%)	10/30 (33%)	15/35 (43%)
U21 - Degree	10/40 (25%)	10/40 (25%)	5/20 (25%)	5/25 (20%)	15/40 (38%)
Mature - Level 5	50/65 (77%)	35/50 (70%)	20/25 (80%)	25/25 (100%)	30/40 (75%)
U21 - Level 5	35/55 (67%)	30/60 (50%)	30/50 (60%)	45/70 (64%)	60/115 (52%)

Table 9 to show comparison of mature and under 21 students, progressing to highly skilled employment or further study by award. WCG own data.

This table shows mature students undertaking level 5 awards are highly likely to enter highly skilled employment or continue into further studies. Of course, as a College HE provider with our own Foundation Degree awarding powers, we have a significant roster of foundation degrees with associated top-up awards at level 6. We have a high proportion of students progressing to level 6 within WCG.

## 1.4 Disabled students

### 1.4a. Access

There has been an increase in the numbers of students declaring a disability, including those reporting mental health problems and specific learning difficulties, according to our 2018 recruitment figures. For those reporting a disability, WCG can identify 20% of its students compared to a national average of 14.6%. When considering the categorisation of particular attributes, WCG has recruitment data confirming it is above the national average for each of the OfS categories included in the OfS dataset file. According to our internal data, declared disability can be broken down into three attributes as follows:

<b>Disability</b>	<b>2015-6</b>	<b>2016-7</b>	<b>2017-8</b>
Mental ill health	24	35	49
Specific learning difficulties	82	89	98
Physical impairment	40	30	43
Total	146	154	190

Table 10 to show comparison of participation rates between students with different disabilities. Source: WCG own data

Students accessing DSA has increased threefold in the same period - to 35 students between 2015 and 2018. This is most likely due to the positive impact of our HE Inclusion Coordinator who has worked hard to make students aware of disability support, financial and otherwise, at WCG at key stages in the recruitment cycle and on commencement of studies with us. Plans to enhance this team, in addition to the HE learning support mentors, as detailed in the 2018-19 Access Agreement, with a further investment in a specialist Dyslexia Assessor for the HE students recognises that this is an area that is high on the national agenda, and evident in our own recruitment characteristics.

### 1.4b. Success

Students with a declared disability are retained on their studies as well as those without a declared disability at WCG. It is the case that disabled students on full degrees have a continuation rate of 89% compared to 90% for non-disabled students, while disabled students on level 5 awards have a continuation rate of 87% compared to 86% for non-disabled students. This is an improvement since

2014 where the OfS dataset file shows a difference of 7% for degree students in 2014. When analysed at subject level, there is no evidence to suggest any unexplained gap with regard to continuation.

According to our internal data, the proportion of students declaring a disability do not perform as well in terms of 'good degrees' as their counterparts.

<b>Student Achievement ('good degrees') between disabled and non-disabled students</b>					
	Year of graduation	Disabled	Non-disabled	All students	Gap
Level 5 HND, Foundation Degree	2017-8	<b>67%</b>	50%	54%	17% favourable
	2016-7	<b>61%</b>	63%	62%	2%
	2015-6	<b>50%</b>	43%	44%	7% favourable
Level 6 Degree	2017-8	<b>34%</b>	46%	45%	12%
	2016-7	<b>35%</b>	43%	42%	8%
	2015-6	<b>27%</b>	41%	39%	14%

Table 11 to compare the achievement of students with a disability with non-disabled. Source: WCG own data.

Analysis of our own data reveals that students on a level 5 programme, with a disability and achieving a merit or distinction is 67% compared with non-disabled students at 50%. WCG will monitor this to ensure that disabled students continue to achieve well.

However, students who are disabled and completing level 6 degree programmes do not achieve as many good degrees as students who are non-disabled. The gap in performance between disabled and non-disabled has increased from the previous year to 12%.

#### 1.4c. Progression

Students who declare a disability have tended to perform slightly less well than those who do not declare a disability over the last five years according to OfS dataset files. As noted earlier, we have had a significant increase in declarations in the last two years, and have not noted any unexplained gap with regard to continuation for these students. At this stage it would not be conclusive to hypothesise that there is a significant issue of inequality with regard to progression however WCG will assess its performance over the next two years to determine if a gap emerges when the dataset increases.

<b>Disabled students progression to higher skills employment or further study</b>					
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Non-disabled students	110/180 (60%)	90/160 (54%)	50/110 (48%)	80/130 (57%)	100/200 (51%)
Disabled students	15/25 (60%)	10/20 (50%)	10/20 (50%)	10/20 (50%)	20/40 (45%)

Table 12 to compare progression to higher skills employment or further study between disabled and non-disabled students. Source: OfS dataset files

#### 1.5 Care Leavers

WCG will continue to guarantee £1,000 per year bursaries to care leavers who are under 25 and studying a full-time course. During 2018-19, there were fewer than five care leavers on WCG HE courses. Where it is possible to identify care leavers studying Further Education within the organisation, these students will be offered an opportunity to discuss how Higher Education may be suitable for them, either at WCG or at any other provider. In accordance with GDPR we are unable to report on access, success and progression however we are keen to increase participation by care leavers and, anecdotally, it is our understanding that there may be students who currently do not declare their status. We will also follow practice of other HE providers, to encourage students who may be care leavers to disclose this information through specific reference to the status of care leaver in our communications regarding bursary support. With regard to improving access to care leavers, we can confirm that as a further education college, we currently have enrolled 42 care leavers from entry level to level three and this represents 1% of our further education students. These students are already advised of HE opportunities through our colleagues in FE. During this coming academic year, we will seek to discuss opportunities via a campaign of communications internally and externally which makes care leavers

aware of additional bursary options available to them so that we can work towards a 1% participation in our higher education by care leavers. Care Leavers in FE will also be introduced to the Career Launchpad platform to help them research opportunities suited to their situation. For care leavers who join our HE provision, we will measure their success and progression to ensure that they achieve as well as students who have not left the care sector.

### 1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

WCG has strong participation for the intersectional category of young white males (YWM) however this growth has largely been driven by students undertaking degree apprenticeships. For non-apprentices, the picture is of slight decline over the last four years. When analysed with the additional category of low participation POLAR 1 and 2 there is a mixed picture in recent years. Rugby College is within a 'cold spot' postcode (CV21). When comparing data for this group, a slight decline in participation for YWM in CV21 can be observed while there has been a slight growth in overall participation from this cold spot area. There is thus an emerging gap for this group when compared to overall participation totals for both YWM and for CV21. YWM numbers in Worcestershire are increasing.

*WCG will monitor the progression of young, white male students to close the gap in progression to highly skilled employment.*

Student type	Category	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Apprentices and non-apprentices	Young, white male (YWM)	228/1199 (19%)	259/1220 (21%)	352/1362 (26%)	361/1368 (26%)
Apprentices	YWM	79/1199 (6%)	126/1220 (10%)	218/1362 (16%)	239/1368 (17%)
Non-apprentices	YWM	149/1199 (12%)	133/1220 (11%)	134/1362 (9%)	122/1368 (8%)
Apprentices	YWM and POLAR 1 and 2	23	35	23	17
	YWM and CV21	Fewer than 5	Fewer than 5	Fewer than 5	Fewer than 5
Non-apprentices	YWM and POLAR 1 and 2	36	26	46	36
	YWM and CV21	16	11	13	13
All students	CV21	46	42	49	48
All students	YWM in Worcestershire - all postcodes	10	18	22	21

Table 13 to show participation in WCG HE by young white males in low participation neighbourhoods. Source: WCG own data

## 2.0 STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

WCG's overarching strategic aims are articulated within its five-year plan, *Delivering Successful Futures* which identifies five key priorities including student success – to deliver a dynamic and responsive curriculum designed to maximise student outcomes and economic impact and quality success – to be an outstanding provider of education and training delivering excellence in all activities. Within quality success, WCG has stated that it will meet aspirations by anticipating and responding to individual learning needs, creating a flexible, responsive and inclusive approach to learning and providing high quality welfare services to students.

The WCG access and participation plan has addressed the widest gaps in its performance and has taken into account national key performance measures and associated targets set by the OfS. The college has identified four targeted groups: disabled students, young white male students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, mature students and black, Asian and minority ethnicity (BAME) students.

WCG commits to reviewing progression outcomes for all groups of students as data capture improves and we will add progression targets to this plan should this data identify any gaps between now and 2024-25.

### **2.1 Targeted Group: Disabled students**

We actively encourage applications from disabled students, particularly those with mental health, specific learning difficulties and autism, and we regularly review our processes to best support these students. The College provides expert advice and guidance to HE applicants with disabilities to ensure they have access to the most appropriate support. The HE Inclusion Co-ordinator liaises with course teams, where appropriate, to advise on necessary reasonable adjustments that may be made to enable a disabled student to study at WCG. The role of the HE Inclusion Co-ordinator is also to support prospective students with their applications for DSA. The HE Inclusion Co-ordinator is part of a wider specialist Inclusion Team that has specialist support tutors for Dyslexia, Autism and Mental Health. In 2019 WCG has increased this support through the recruitment of a specialist Dyslexia Assessor, in addition to two new mentors outlined in the 2018 Access Agreement.

Since September 2015, the College has provided an enhanced HE induction to include a more appropriate 'screening' process for HE students that flags students with learning support needs. The HE induction includes an assessment of comprehension and a timed, free-writing assessment. The purpose of the enhanced screening is to determine whether there are students who may have not declared a learning difficulty or disability on their UCAS application, but subsequently show that they are showing indicators which will impair their studies.

The combination of these new support roles with enhanced induction activities has had a notable impact on the levels of declared disability and has allowed for a greater individualised focus on student support. In 2019-20 WCG will embed support for under-represented groups within its teaching and learning through the deployment of pastoral tutors. This will be based on a model of case-loading which prioritises students who declare a disability but will also make this support available to students in other under-represented groups. Many of our degree students who declare a disability are based at our land-based Moreton Morrell site, so a Pastoral Tutor will be based at Moreton Morrell to specifically address this constituency of students. This will entail a resource investment in advisors to cover each college that delivers Higher Education. The model is one derived from good practice in Further Education at the organisation.

WCG has the following targets to improve success for disabled students:

- *To eliminate the gap in degree outcomes (1st and 2:1) between disabled and non-disabled students by 2024-25 (Ref.PTS\_2)*

### **2.2. Targeted Group: Students from the least represented groups**

WCG has a focus on supporting students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, specifically in the low participation areas of Rugby (CV21) and Evesham (WR11) and the college is keen to raise aspirations of young, white males. The college will work to increase participation by students from the least represented groups and continue to reduce non-continuation rates while improving attainment via direct outreach work with schools providing taster events and information regarding the career possibilities; and by providing robust pre- and during course academic learning support especially in mathematics and literacy.

We are developing our higher education provision at Rugby College to provide employer-led, higher level and technology-focused skills with progression to University. This project will seek to encourage young people from the local schools in Rugby to progress to higher education programmes via their local college. We are currently in discussions for further partnership work with University partner based on progression based modes of study e.g. 2+2. Similarly, at Evesham College, the College is developing higher education provision with the local university to create pathways into higher education from early years educator and subjects allied to the health sector.

We will also continue to promote new engineering (Agri-tech) provision at our Pershore College where we are developing curriculum and drawing on our links with the Worcestershire LEP, Agri-Tech West Alliance and Grow Agri. We will be conducting outreach activity in local Worcestershire middle-schools to further promote exciting new HE opportunities for students who may not have considered this sector which is a specific priority for Worcestershire.

A recent strategic initiative is the development of an integrated Foundation Year model that commenced in September 2019. This project is a response to a recognition that many students, particularly those internal to the College, do not progress to HE at level 4 because they have low tariff points at level 3 or lack confidence to progress due to other factors that often correspond to those affecting under-represented groups particularly those that fall into POLAR 4 quintiles 1 and 2. Commencing initially at

our Moreton Morrell College, this model integrates non-credit bearing modules (level zero) with modules from level 4 to create a four-year degree structure. Students who require additional support with underpinning subject knowledge (in this instance the science of anatomy and physiology) and learning skills associated with degree level study, attend sessions across the year in order to scaffold them through level 4 studies in order to join level 5 study in their third year at normal course intensity. This model has the potential to widen participation and enhance student success through greater support at the key early stages of HE study. It is priced accordingly, below the basic fee cap, to ensure that students are not discouraged by financial considerations, particularly those from low participation neighbourhoods. This model, although currently under scrutiny across the sector, due to the recent Augar Review has been favourably reviewed by both Coventry University and Landex peer review. Unlike the fees in place at many providers, WCG is committed to offering additional HE education at virtually no additional cost with regard to academic study.

WCG has accepted the following national KPM as one of its targets as well as adding further targets to support students from least representative groups:

- *To reduce the gap in participation in HE between the most and least represented groups for full-time, undergraduates (Ref. PTA\_1)*
- *To reduce the gap in participation in HE between the most and least represented groups for part-time, undergraduates (Ref: PTA\_2)*
- *To reduce the gap in participation of 18-year-old students from the most deprived areas. (PTA\_3)*

*WCG commits to continue to improve progression rates for students from low participation neighbourhoods and especially for students from the most deprived areas into highly skilled employment or further study.*

### **2.3 Targeted Group: Mature students**

As described in the previous section, mature students' continuation has been improving for those studying degrees but not for those studying level 5 awards. Achievement of good degrees is a similar picture, where performance is better for degree students than level 5 students. While there has been an improvement in 2017-18 this is an area that needs to be monitored to ensure that progress made in 2017-18 is not lost in future years. The same milestone targets are committed to for both priorities.

Part-time study can enable mature students in particular to participate and succeed in HE. At WCG we timetable part-time provision strategically to enhance flexibility for students who are working. We offer evening classes and a pattern of study that includes extending the period of study weeks in popular disciplines such as business, care and early years educator. We also ensure that students are advised of the intensity of study and how this must be considered alongside their other commitments. Small group sizes help provide a personalised approach to learning for all of our students. This approach is particularly suited to mature students for whom university study is not appropriate for their first HE experience and for those students who need a little extra support to help develop their study skills and build confidence as independent learners.

WCG has targets in relation to mature students:

- *To eliminate the attainment gap for mature students completing level 5 qualifications (PTS\_3)*

*WCG commits to continue to improve and maintain high progression rates for mature students into highly skills employment or further study.*

### **2.4 Targeted Group: BAME Students**

WCG intends to continue to increase numbers of BAME students studying at the college, to reflect HE more widely. Due to the nature of activities planned, this group should be positively affected by initiatives focussed on other target groups. WCG has relatively low numbers of BAME students according to our internal data. It is difficult to draw any strong conclusions regarding characteristics of this group as these small numbers are even smaller when mapped to particular disciplines and College sites. We have identified an increase in students joining our FE provision and will be monitoring the success and progression of these students into Higher Education ensuring that we have a clear and flexible offer ourselves to attract students from specific ethnic backgrounds.

The development of a focussed provision in engineering, construction and digital at our Rugby College, with clear links to FE curriculum, together with and an integrated foundation year, notably with regard to our land-based provision, is an opportunity to encourage students who may not have engaged with STEM based subjects during their level 2 and 3 studies. These changes in our offer will provide an opportunity for students to consider other routes through their higher education, thus potentially widening participation amongst non-traditional students who have not traditionally gravitated towards

these subject disciplines. We seek to provide further analysis of this group, broken down into disaggregated ethnic groups going forward.

- *To increase participation by BAME students at WCG from 14% over the next five years to 27% (Ref: PTA\_4)*

*WCG also commits to monitor BAME students on an individual basis and check for any patterns of disadvantage within aggregate groups and address where appropriate.*

### **3.0 STRATEGIC MEASURES**

#### **3.1 Whole provider strategic approach**

WCG has a published Higher Education strategy (2019-2023) that links to the overarching college strategy, *Delivering Successful Futures (2017-2022)*. WCG's *Delivering Successful Futures* strategy builds on five areas of success: student success, economic success, financial success, people success and student success.

The HE strategy refers directly to access and participation in its indicators relating to student success, stating that in order to *"Create a culture that supports learning as a transformational experience for HE students, the wider College community and its local environment"*. Among other objectives the College will: *"Ensure WCG HE remains compliant with the terms of its Access and Participation Agreement, by widening participation, monitoring progress and implementing strategies for under-represented learners"*.

WCG has ensured its aims and objectives from the Access and Participation Plan have been aligned and embedded in its other strategies including its Equality and Diversity Strategy which incorporates inclusion. The resulting equality and diversity action plan is monitored regularly at equality and diversity committee and updated each academic year. The Access and Participation Plan is always presented and discussed at the Equality, Diversity and Values Committee which is a cross-institutional committee attended by colleagues from HE, FE, SEND, WBL in addition to College Governor representatives.

WCG's teaching, learning and assessment strategy is also aligned with the key performance indicators identified in the Access and Participation Plan, specifically relating to success. Access and participation is an item presented and discussed at the Higher Education Teaching, Research and Enterprise Committee (HETREC) where there is a focus on teaching and learning and its intersection with research and transferable employability skills. This committee monitors the action research projects described in the APP programmes described in section 3.3. At WCG, HE staff often work directly with FE students, with a significant proportion having dedicated teaching hours for FE as part of their academic contract. A number of these staff are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (Advance HE). Currently, six of the ten HE subject areas include Fellows who also have some direct teaching contact with FE students. This not only brings pedagogic expertise aligned with the HE professional standards framework to the FE classroom but also provides a conduit for FE students to gain information and an appreciation of the requirements for further study.

The College's careers strategy also includes reference to access and participation targets. The Careers Leadership Committee operates in a similar manner with members drawn from across HE, FE, SEND and WBL. This committee plans and monitors employability and careers strategies for all students and receives updates on the relevant progression aspects of the APP.

The whole provider approach for WCG includes the strong links between HE and FE across the whole organisation. The Dean of HE is a member of the College Leadership team working alongside FE assistant principals and directors and is therefore able to feed into and propose joined-up strategies that can directly impact access to HE among a significant constituency of learners studying at level 3 and below.

The APP is increasingly embedded within the student experience via involvement at central HE committees through the role of the Students Union representative, and at individual course consultative committee level where access and participation has been added as an agenda item for discussion commencing in 2019-20. To ensure that a range of students can contribute to access and participation planning, focus groups are conducted with selected student course groups where there is a mix of students including those from under-represented groups. The agenda for these focus groups is based on the APP programmes (detailed in section 3.3) where students are consulted about the suitability of these programmes and how these relate to their studies in terms of subject discipline and academic level of study. Section 3.3 below details how this has been implemented for this current plan.

**The theory of change for WCG can be summarised as follows:**

<b>Ultimate Goal</b> <b>“Create a culture that supports higher education learning as a transformational experience for all students, the wider College community and its local environment”</b>	
<b>Strategic objectives across all lifecycle stages:</b>	<b>Theory of Change Model</b>
Increase <b>access</b> and participation from under-represented groups enrolling on WCG HE courses (Ref. 3.1a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Input:</b> BAME students, students from low participation neighbourhoods in the locality, young white male students and care leavers;</li> <li>• <b>Activity:</b> Access and Participation updates at cross-College fora leading to the development of enhanced systems, processes and cultural engagement</li> <li>• <b>Output:</b> Leading to an enhanced institutional culture that recognises and promotes the opportunities for all students including those post-16 students who are studying at WCG at level 3 to access HE, especially those who face systematic or cultural barriers</li> <li>• <b>Impact:</b> Measured by an increased proportion of students from under-represented groups enquiring, and applying to HE at WCG – meeting the targets in Table 2a Access.</li> </ul>
Provide a supportive learning experience for individual students throughout their time at WCG to increase levels of <b>continuation</b> (Ref. 3.1b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Input:</b> Students who are full-time, part-time, those who are parents/carers and those with disabilities.</li> <li>• <b>Activity:</b> The deployment of HE Pastoral Tutors with case-loads that both monitor the experience and performance of students from under-represented groups and encourage further engagement with support services if issues arise.</li> <li>• <b>Output:</b> Leading to an increased support for under-represented students through close monitoring and prompt support</li> <li>• <b>Impact:</b> Measured by maintaining or closing statistical gaps in student success (continuation) for all student groups and gaining direct feedback from students on the quality of their learning experience – meeting the targets in Table 2b Success relating to continuation.</li> </ul>
Improve <b>attainment</b> for all students, but particularly those from target under-represented groups enrolling on WCG HE courses (Ref. 3.1b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Input:</b> Including students who are full-time, part-time, those who are parents/carers and those with disabilities.</li> <li>• <b>Activity:</b> Action research projects by members of teaching staff</li> <li>• <b>Output:</b> Leading to improvements to curriculum delivery, enhanced pedagogy and inclusion support for all students, particularly for under-represented students through close monitoring and prompt support</li> <li>• <b>Impact:</b> Measured by maintaining or closing statistical gaps in student success (attainment) for all student groups and gaining direct feedback from students on the quality of their learning experience and feedback from the action research projects undertaken by members of teaching staff – meeting the targets in Table 2b Success relating to attainment.</li> </ul>
Improve <b>progression</b> for all students, but particularly those from target under-represented groups enrolling on WCG HE courses (Ref. 3.1c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Input:</b> Including BAME students, students from low participation neighbourhoods, young white male students and care leavers;</li> <li>• <b>Activity:</b> The provision of student symposiums and the online platform, Career Launchpad.</li> <li>• <b>Output:</b> Leading to improvements in the number of students who enter employment that is categorised as ‘highly skilled outcomes’.</li> <li>• <b>Impact:</b> Measured by monitoring graduate outcomes locally and monitoring student engagement with careers activities arranged by the College – meeting the targets in Table 2c Progression.</li> </ul>
Continue to provide <b>financial</b> support for under-represented groups. (Ref. 3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Input:</b> Including under-representative groups of students: care leavers, students who find themselves in unexpected financial hardship and students from low income households;</li> <li>• <b>Activity:</b> Bursaries and the hardship fund.</li> <li>• <b>Output:</b> Leading to improvements in continuation and attainment of the students, plus a reduction in the stress and anxiety that monies issues can cause;</li> <li>• <b>Impact:</b> Measured by monitoring the continuation and attainment of students who are in receipt of financial support, plus feedback from the students, where possible, identifying how valuable the support is to them; - meeting the targets for continuation and attainment in Table 2b for Success</li> </ul>
Assess <b>progress over time</b> for all under-represented groups and ensure that meaningful data is collected and utilised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Input:</b> All under-represented groups of students</li> <li>• <b>Activity:</b> The development of new data reporting tools for college managers and subject leaders.</li> <li>• <b>Output:</b> Leading to improved reporting via meaningful, robust data.</li> </ul>

<b>Ultimate Goal</b> “Create a culture that supports higher education learning as a transformational experience for all students, the wider College community and its local environment”	
<b>Strategic objectives across all lifecycle stages:</b>	<b>Theory of Change Model</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Impact:</b> Progress over time is reported for all underrepresented groups to determine any patterns so that improvements can be put in place based on effectiveness.</li> </ul>

The written narrative for the theory of change utilises the assessment of WCG’s performance to describe why the change is expected to happen within the context of HE in FE.

### 3.1a. Access

At an institutional level WCG is committed to a number of initiatives that seek to encourage access and participation in HE more generally. WCG engages in a wide range of activities to inform, raise aspirations and help both young and mature people progress to higher education. WCG offers a range of provision including alternative provision programmes for 14-16 year olds, full-time provision for young people aged 16-18 years, adult learning, funded by the ESFA for those 19+ and higher education courses for 18+ years. WCG has worked to raise aspiration and attainment amongst its own further education students and to promote higher education to young people attending local schools. WCG is also a very large college with sites in two counties: Warwickshire and Worcestershire. As such, WCG is not sponsoring one single school, but works with a number of schools across two counties to raise aspiration and awareness of the higher education programmes it offers. These include higher apprenticeships in addition to traditional degrees, foundation degrees and higher national qualifications.

The WCG schools services and independent advice and guidance offers local schools a number of activities to raise awareness of future progression for young people including college visits and tours, mock interviews and assemblies, school careers events, taster sessions and there are two dedicated STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) centres to encourage young people (year 9 and below) to engage with a STEM career. At Pershore college there is the 'Agri-tech' themed STEM centre which focuses on careers in agriculture and horticulture. Leamington college has an established STEM centre based around 'Games' technology as Leamington Spa has a hub of games developers.

The College works in partnership with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). WCG is an HE provider linked to two consortia: Think Higher led by University of Warwick covering 7 wards in Warwickshire including Rugby; and Aim Higher West Midlands led by University of Birmingham covering 4 wards in the Wychavon district of South Worcestershire.

The following provides examples of activities undertaken by WCG that support access and participation in its local communities:

#### **Pre-16: School links - raising aspirations of young people**

WCG provides a range of events to raise the aspirations of young people to progress into HE including specific events to inform pupils about rural and land-based careers for which the College (and other land-based colleges) can support skills development through level 3 and into HE. Further links will be made with schools in the Rugby and South Worcestershire areas to engage and raise aspirations particularly for employment areas such as construction, engineering, agricultural-technology and digital technologies; all of which are Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) strategies for growth in the region. The College also supports and participates in HE awareness raising at school and college open events.

#### **Post 16: College internal progression - raising aspirations of further education students**

WCG has established practice in supporting internal progression to higher education both at the College and other HE providers. The Careers and Guidance team have embedded the Gatsby benchmarks into our normal practice so that every WCG student has encounters with employers to support their career progression. The Careers and Guidance team guarantee a one-to-one careers interview with every 'leaver' and provide support with UCAS applications, Student Finance and alternative higher education such as higher and degree apprenticeships. The FE pastoral team ensure every student has the opportunity to discuss their destination following the completion of their course and act as a sign-posting guide to support for progression via the Careers and Guidance and apprenticeship teams. The HE Subject leads will further enhance current practice by ensuring students on all level 3 programmes have the opportunities for taster sessions and meeting HE lecturers.

### **Adults: Community education and Access to HE links - *raising aspirations of adults***

WCG actively promotes the ethos of lifelong learning. Through the delivery of skills and training including English and maths, the College enables adults to improve their skills and knowledge, and achieve qualifications that were not achieved when in secondary education. These achievements enable adults themselves to access HE and to support their children and relatives in their homework and encourage them to access higher education. The College's vibrant adult GCSE English and mathematics classes and its increased range of Access to HE programmes attract a significant number of new students each year and provide real opportunities for local adults to develop skills and knowledge to enable them to progress to higher education. New role of Head of Adult and Community created.

### **Other: Employer engagement – HE opportunities for adults in employment**

WCG delivers education and training to organisations wholly on-site (bespoke training and apprenticeships) and a combination of at College and at the workplace, including HNC and Foundation degree programmes. The College interacts closely with industry to ensure its HE programmes deliver the skills and knowledge needed by employers. The College currently works with approximately 1,200 employers to deliver apprenticeships to over 2,500 employees. The College also uses a flexible range of delivery methods to enable employee participation on HE, including day release, afternoon release combined with evening study, evening only study and blended delivery.

### **3.1b. Success**

Continuation rates are high amongst WCG HE students, and there is no appreciable difference in this metric when comparison is made with students that are categorised with under-represented attributes. There are institutional systems and processes in place that ensure a focus on equal opportunities for all. Class sizes at WCG are generally small, while subjects are supported by a rolling system of quality review that monitors student attendance and performance. These forums will continue to allow HE subject leads to address and concerns relating to individual student engagement. Typically, students who are vulnerable in terms of early withdrawal are those whose personal lives makes study difficult, such as those who are in full-time or substantial part-time employment, those who are parents/carers and those with disabilities. The College provides a wide range of services to support these students as described above. The College maintains 'At Risk' registers to facilitate identification and support of students most at risk of failure or withdrawal. The registers identify students who are care leavers or have declared disabilities who may require additional support. Monitoring of the register allows appropriate intervention with personal tutorials, for example. WCG maintains registers to monitor attendance and use these as a proxy for engagement at regular Quality Review Meetings.

From September 2019, the academic teams will be supported by an enhanced provision of student pastoral support via a team of pastoral tutors that will report directly into the Assistant Dean. This will allow for ongoing reflection on the support required for students, and how this corresponds to those with under-represented attributes, and of course, monitors any issues that may arise from any students at any stage of their learning journey. While we recognise the need for student information on enrolment to an HE course, it is also imperative that we have support systems in place that pick up any emerging concerns students may have during their time with us. The theory of change underpinning this initiative is borne out by the positive impact we witnessed on introducing a dedicated Inclusion team into HE. In the last two years we have seen a significant increase in declarations of disability, from 10 disclosures in 2015 to 37 disclosures in 2018.

Action Research will be key to our access and participation agenda. The Teaching, Research and Enterprise committee will prioritise research-informed teaching, and applied curriculum. Our action research programme will be driven by the agenda of this committee, as we develop research questions to address gaps in access and participation and ensure that we are regularly evaluating the impact of our activities.

### **3.1c. Progression**

The most recent graduate outcomes information for WCG shows that the numbers of those students entering employment or further study is above benchmark however we are below benchmark for highly skilled outcomes. The profile of WCG is typical of College HE with a greater proportion of students studying level 4 and level 5 awards than those studying for an undergraduate degree at level 6. WCG is preparing students for technician level roles at levels 4 and 5, particularly in engineering and veterinary nursing and this is completed well. We are specialists in preparing for vocational and

technician level roles. There is an encouraging growth in numbers of students opting to stay with WCG after they complete their level 5 awards to 'top-up' to level 6 study delivered at WCG and validated by one of our University partners.

Furthermore, it is possible to measure the distance travelled by many of our students from entry to the institution at level 4, or even earlier for those who progress internally. This provides a richer picture of outcomes and learning gain, revealing both personal success for students and additionally, significant contribution to the local economy for students, many of whom live and work close to their College of study. Where we deliver degree top-up awards this is particularly striking. Analysis shows us that those who enrol for Business, Computing, Counselling, and Early Years typically enter level 6 having started with us at level 4, progressing immediately from level 5, or taking a study break due to personal or work commitments before returning a year or two later. The opportunity to study in full or part-time modes enables a flexibility of study options for students to progress through to degree level, often bringing their professional experience to bear on their studies.

The provision of a *student symposium* will continue to be a feature of our provision in 2020 and beyond. This event, noted above, now incorporates a greater focus on the student journey particularly as it sits at this early stage of HE learning at level 4. In addition, we have established a *Student Conference* into the annual academic calendar which is attended by level 5 and level 6 students. This event features presentations from both research academics and industry guests, and focusses opportunities for interdisciplinary working within research and professional sectors.

Following student feedback in surveys and from course consultative committees requesting that careers advice could be improved, from 2018-19 WCG made available to all students, an online platform – *WCG Career Launchpad* – that gathers together advice, instructional videos, contemporary industry news and a job-search facility. The platform is a customised space which will also be available to alumni who leave in 2018-19 and 2019-20, helping them practically as they launch their career in that crucial first year after academic study. The HE Careers team are heavily involved in this initiative and will use the platform to help students understand their opportunities, and with the increased connections with alumni, we will be able to gather more qualitative data to feed into activities supporting progression going forward.

### 3.2 Financial Support

WCG will continue to offer financial support, allocated strategically to target under-represented groups. The College acknowledges that it has to date insufficient evidence on the impact of financial measures, but will start collating this information during 2019-20 to determine effectiveness. Key measures will include the monitoring of continuation rates during 2019-20, level 5 achievement at the end of 2020-21 and level 6 achievement rates at the end of 2021-22 for students who are in receipt of financial support compared with those that do not receive support. Financial support mechanisms are recognised as a somewhat blunt instrument so will be deployed consistently and surgically, to allow for investment in other strategically bold measures to increase resource spend through the enhancement and investment in dedicated support roles in both the areas of student services support and teaching and learning.

**Care leavers** remain the most under-represented group in higher education. This bursary, available in every full year of study at the College, is intended to be a 'stable' and known financial support for this vulnerable group of learners throughout their HE course. £1000 bursaries will continue to be made available to Care Leavers who are under 25 and studying a full-time course. The bursary is available for each year of study. This aspect of financial support links directly to enable more care leavers to participate in higher education at the college. Through the College's *'At Risk Register'* and programme of academic and pastoral tutorials care leavers will be supported while on course. The WCG Care Leavers Bursary is available to students who have been in full-time care for three months or longer at any time over the last five years.

The **hardship fund** is a discretionary fund to support students who find themselves in unexpected, financial hardship and this has a detrimental impact on their studies. Up to £40,000 will be made available to support HE students in financial need in 2020-21 and this will increase over the five year period to 2024-25. The Fund will be managed by the Student Services department. The hardship fund is linked to student success targets (Ref: PTS\_1 through to PTS\_4) plus any individual whose personal circumstances cause them to be in financial hardship and at risk of not being successful on their course. Students are eligible to apply for the hardship fund if they are:

- a home student OR an EU student in receipt of a maintenance loan from Student Finance;
- enrolled on a full time or part time course that is a minimum of 1 year in length; and/or

- have first taken out their full assessed entitlement of the student loan.

Awards from the HE Student Support Fund do not need to be repaid. Typically awards are up to £1,000. Any student who is eligible to apply to the fund can submit an application if they are able to demonstrate that they are experiencing financial difficulties.

**Bursaries** will be targeted to students from low income households and those that support widening participation namely students from low participation neighbourhoods, mature students and young, white male students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds. The bursaries are available for each full year of the student's study and are linked to access targets (Ref: PTA\_1 through to PTA\_3) and student success targets (Ref: PTS\_1 through to PTS\_4). Bursaries are managed by the Student Services department who follow specific eligibility criteria. The WCG Residential Bursary (up to £1,000) is available to students who: are in their first year; are living in WCG owned accommodation; and are in receipt of the Full Rate Maintenance Loan, with an assessed household income of £25,000 or less. The WCG Book Bursary (£150) is available to students who are in receipt of the Full Rate Maintenance Loan, and with an assessed household income of £25,000 or less. Bursaries are available to full-time higher education students who are eligible to pay EU tuition fees. The WCG Support Bursary (£250) is available to students who: are in receipt of the Full Rate Maintenance Loan, and with an assessed household income of £25,000 or less. Bursaries are also available to full-time higher education students who are eligible to pay EU tuition fees.

WCG has formulated a strategy to offer integrated foundation year programmes. Students complete level 4 modules interwoven with study skills and scaffolded-support over two years at a cost of £4,500 per year. The integrated foundation year programmes are available to all students; the student would complete level 4 over two years at the reduced rate of £4,500 per year and then progress internally to the level 5 programme which they would complete at the usual fee and within the normal duration. Fee waivers will be promoted and available to groups of students from low income households and those that support widening participation namely students from low participation neighbourhoods and care leavers. The WCG fee waiver (£500) is available to students who: are enrolled on the integrated foundation year programme; and are in receipt of the Full Rate Maintenance Loan, with an assessed household income of £25,000 or less; and can demonstrate that they reside in POLAR/IMD quintiles 1 and 2. The fee waiver is also available to care leavers who meet the criteria above.

### 3.3 Student Consultation

The College has well-established structures to allow student representatives to be involved in decision making processes. The HE Student Council engages directly with students on responses to key decisions and issues relating to higher education. The President and Vice President of the Student Union are members of our HE committees where views from student focus groups have helped develop the strategy for access measures, in particular the College's approach to providing financial benefits. The HE Student Experience Committee has standing items to review all comments, compliments and complaints received to enable the College to learn and improve.

Representatives of the Students Union who attend committees were invited to feedback on student views and undertook to discuss the identification of under-represented groups and initiatives such as the availability of financial support. For example, at the HE Student Experience Committee held in April 2019, discussion of the plan included an item on bursary support. Following analysis of uptake for the variety of opportunities and mindful of the need to encourage targeted groups to avail themselves of these opportunities, SU input to the discussion resulted in a change to the terminology of 'hardship' for the coming year as it was felt that this discouraged those students in coming forward for significant support.

In order to ensure that a range of students were involved with the preparation of the APP WCG held focus groups as a forum for discussion of the programmes included within the plan. For this current plan, a cross-section of students including those from under-represented groups including mature students, students with a disability, BAME students, young white males and students studying at a 'cold spot' College have discussed the schedule of programmes, and have agreed all of these as suitable approaches for addressing access and participation. During these discussions, additional ideas have been raised to enhance the rollout of this forthcoming plan. These suggestions include:

- amendments to our institutional bursary support policy for mature students

- innovations that link APP programmes to teaching and learning and extra-curricular opportunities in Rugby

The SU representatives fed back at the Access and Participation sub-committee regarding the soundness of this analysis and agreement with strategic initiatives such as the new Pastoral Tutor role which was recognised as a key intervention to support students particularly those from under-represented groups.

Student feedback from HE specific course surveys are completed annually with a typical response rate of approximately 65%. The Assistant Dean has a remit to engage more fully with students at each of the colleges to facilitate feedback into key decisions via targeted focus groups.

### 3.4 Evaluation Strategy

WCG is continually developing its approach to evaluation and monitoring. We are confident that we have strong systems in place that enable initiatives to be developed and delivered in line with our overarching strategy for both HE itself, and the opportunities for whole institutional approaches that are particularly relevant for our strategy for widening participation for those students from under-represented groups studying at levels 2 and 3. [*The list of WCG Access and Participation programmes/activities are detailed below.*]

The OfS self-evaluation tool has been a useful prompt to help us recognise where we have developmental work to undertake within the organisation over the coming twelve months ahead of the launch of this 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan. The focus is on embedding established strategic priorities within a community of practice and culture that will enable us to take forward, and meaningfully evaluate a suite of programmes to address access, student success and progression.

WCG evaluates the suite of programmes, via reports detailing the progress being made with each of the activities at the HE Quality and Academic Standards Committee and the impact via the HE Student Experience Committee. Throughout the duration of the APP, WCG will review the quality of these reports and the underpinning data. Impact will be measured using participant feedback and the targets set in the targets and investment plan. The HE committees all have annual reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the information and subsequent decisions made. This is all documented.

The theory of change described in the last section is an overarching driver for enhancement. The programmes described below will support this theory of change, with many of them already based on evidence of tangible positive impact. It is our intention to allocate 'action research' projects that will seek to provide narrative, empirical and causal impact evaluations.

WCG uses evidence and evaluation findings to inform its programme design and has existing evidence that has informed the selection of access and participation programmes and activities proposed. Activities introduced previously, such as 'Let's Talk...' and the integrated foundation year, have further increased student recruitment in the most recent recruitment cycle. There is therefore a good baseline for further empirical analysis, longitudinally, over the duration of the AAP (2020-2024). The creation of an 'HE centre' in Rugby is clearly a major commitment and will allow us to undertake both empirical and causal impact evaluation.

There is evidence from within WCG that shows the introduction of *personal learning advisors* made a significant, positive impact on the 16-18 student experience, and it is on this basis that the role of *HE pastoral tutor* has been created with access to similar learner analytics tools, systems and processes. The additional investment in the inclusion team, which has already demonstrated its worth by encouraging students to take up additional support, will, like the pastoral tutor role, be monitored for its continued success. Financial support is an area where WCG will need to more effectively differentiate between financial hardship per se and how this intersects with under-represented groups. It is anticipated that we will be able to generate datasets and define the terms of action research projects that will draw on both qualitative and quantitative findings for all of the above, to enable narrative and empirical impact evaluation.

Finally, the programmes below which focus on progression, are impacting increasing numbers of HE students year on year, and it is anticipated that students, and our progression statistics, will benefit from increased provision of conferences, symposia and planned programmes of masterclasses and employability advice. Again, WCG will capture student responses to these activities and over the duration of this AAP will monitor intersection with under-represented groups, and of course, the impact on graduate outcomes.

## WCG Access and Participation Programmes/Activities:

WCG AAP Activity	Link to Strategic Priorities	Summary of Activity	Measure/Impact
School Links Programme	Access	Develop and deliver outreach activity to schools that can be targeted (to raise awareness for HE and the support available) to 'hard to reach' under-represented groups	Increased numbers of engagements with young people analysis of postcode, age, ethnicity and disability. Impact will be an increase in participation from the least representative groups and feedback from young people involved.
STEM Centre Programme	Access	Continue to offer opportunities for schools to visit and engage with the WCG STEM Centres and laboratories at Leamington Spa and Pershore Colleges	Increased numbers of attendees to these events with analysis of postcode, age, ethnicity and disability. Impact will be an increase in participation in STEM subjects and feedback from young people involved.
Let's Talk... Programme	Access	Regular conferences focussed on specific subjects that are aimed at post-16 students, including internal WCG students that offer inspiring insights into current industries and professions. The first 'Let's Talk Games' was very successful.	Increased numbers of attendees to these events with analysis of postcode, age, ethnicity and disability via booking system. Impact will be an increase in participation by post-16 students and feedback on the conferences.
Integrated Foundation Year Programme	Access	Deliver an Integrated Foundation Year at a reduced concessionary fee, making HE study accessible for under-represented groups with low tariff scores at level 3 especially as these correlate to lower quintile POLAR 4 and IMD categories..	Increased recruitment to this mode of study year on year with analysis of postcode, age, ethnicity and disability. Impact will be an increase in participation from the least representative groups and student feedback.
HE Open Events	Access	Dedicated HE Open Days on Saturdays that are supported by significant marketing activity across all Colleges offering HE within WCG	Increased numbers at each of the 4 annual events, year on year.
HE 'cold spot' Programme	Access	Raise aspiration and attainment in the CV21 postcode district and South Worcestershire WR11 postcode area through the creation of a higher education centre at Rugby College, and increased HE curriculum opportunities at our Worcestershire Colleges	Increased recruitment to HE provision from targeted postcodes in Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Impact will be an increase in participation from the least representative groups.
Pastoral Tutor Programme	Success	Embed a HE Pastoral Tutor role within teaching and learning activities, case-loaded to recognise challenges experienced by under-represented groups.	Increased interactions with identified targeted students through ongoing monitoring leading to individual action plans designed to improve student success metrics where necessary. Impact will be an increase in success and feedback from students via questionnaires and focus groups.
ASSET module Programme	Success	Ongoing development and delivery of this key level 4 module included in all WCG HE courses, which aims for outcomes that prepare students for HE study in relation to writing, research and reflective practice.	Improvement in module assessment scores and decreasing number of non-submission or fail grades. Impact will be an increase in success and feedback from students.
Inclusion Programme	Success	Further investment and development of the work of the HE Inclusion team particularly focussing on issues of	Maintain or improve continuation and achievement performance as compared to non-disabled students.

WCG AAP Activity	Link to Strategic Priorities	Summary of Activity	Measure/Impact
		mental health, specific learning difficulties and physical disabilities	Impact will be an increase in success for disabled students.
Action Research Programme	Success	Task and finish scholarly projects, based on research questions that explore the impact of A&P initiatives. Published and presented at WCG HE Teaching and Learning Conference	Increased number of academic staff engaging with action research projects driving cultural awareness of A&P imperatives
Student Symposia and Conferences Programme	Progression	Further develop the wider employability behaviours of all our higher education students to support career progression by expanding the level 4 student symposium model to level 5 and level 6, by developing a series of student conferences and events that encourage networking and provide opportunities for encounters with industry.	Student attendance numbers at these events across the year analysed by subject discipline, and feedback, with particular focus on age, ethnicity, postcode and disability. Impact will be an increase in positive destinations for students and feedback from students.
Careers Advice Programme	Progression	WCG has a dedicated HE careers advice team who run regular advice sessions at all of our Colleges, including regular presentations for student groups relating to specific disciplines and professional sectors. Our careers support is underpinned by ongoing subscription to Abintegro Ltd to maintain our careers advice hub 'WCG Careers Launchpad'. This is also available as a resource for our alumni to support them with their employability after they leave WCG.	Numbers of students engaging with careers support in person and online with Launchpad, and by analysis of engagement by age, ethnicity, postcode and disability. Impact will be an increase in positive destinations for students.
Financial Support Programme	Access, student success	Bursaries will continue to be offered for students from low income households and for care leavers. The integrated foundation year will offer discounted fees over two years and the College will continue to provide student support via its hardship funds.	Analysis of numbers of students from target under-represented groups accessing this financial support. Impact will be an increase in student success for those from low income households and care leavers.

### 3.5 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

This Access and Participation Plan is part of the College's commitment to widening access and participation to higher education. Within the College, responsibility for the Access and Participation Plan will be as follows:

Body	Responsibility	Lead
WCG Accountable Officer	Accountable Officer to sign-off Access and Participation Plan prior to submission	Chief Executive Officer
WCG Governors – devolved to Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee (ASQA)	To monitor the performance of targets and commitments of the Access and Participation Plan for WCG via HE Quality Monitoring Report at each meeting.	Chair of Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (ASQA) committee
Higher Education Academic Board (HEAB)	To receive reports from HEQAS and HESEC regarding progress and impact against the WCG Access and Participation Plan and report to the senior leadership team.	Group Principal (Chair)
Higher Education Student Experience Committee (HESEC)	To <b>evaluate the impact</b> of the Access and Participation Plan programmes of activity to inform future programme design.	Group Principal (Chair)

Body	Responsibility	Lead
Higher Education Quality and Academic Standards Committee (HEQAS)	To <b>monitor progress</b> of the Access and Participation targets and report to HEAB.	Group Vice Principal Quality (Chair)
HE Student Council	To monitor performance and provisions of the Access and Participation Plan	Student Engagement Officer
Access and Participation Group  (Sub-group of Higher Education Student Experience Committee)	Operational group with cross-College representation from Academic departments, Student Recruitment, Student Services & Inclusion and Finance to evaluate the operation of the programmes that contribute to the Access and Participation Plan.	Dean of Higher Education (Chair)

WCG has included the APP targets within its annual key performance indicators demonstrating that the APP is embedded fully within College processes. WCG creates an annual quality improvement plan for its higher education provision. This detailed document identifies all the areas of improvement and enhancement planned per academic year. Targets are set within the plan and it is monitored each term with updates presented at HE Academic Board and to Governors. The plan is also risk-rated so that further actions can be put in place should progress worsen. In the case of worsening progress, the quality improvement plan will be reviewed to put in additional measures to meet the targets.

#### **4.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

In preparing this Access and Participation Plan the College has taken into consideration its responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Targets included in this plan are replicated within the College's Equality and Diversity objectives and action plan. These equality actions are reviewed at Equality and Diversity Committee which meets six times per year. WCG strives to ensure fair and equal access to HE courses for all those who wish to, and are able to, benefit from this level of study, in line with the College's Admissions and Progression and Equality and Diversity Policies.

The College's Admissions and Progression Policy focuses on entitlement and equality of opportunity. The College is not discriminatory and provides access to all applicants who meet minimum academic requirements regardless of ethnicity, religion/belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment or age. Looked after children and care leavers have priority in awarding bursaries. This is a differential impact but is seen as beneficial given that this is one of the most under-represented groups in HE. The College has undertaken a satisfactory equality impact assessment of this Agreement.

Warwickshire College Group has fair and transparent admissions policies and procedures that encourage applications from those who are capable of studying at HE level and have appropriate subject pre-requisites. Entry requirements are set at levels that will provide admissions tutors with confidence that students will have a high chance of success, and not to attract the most academically able students. All applications are treated fairly and equitably. There is no advantage for any applicant on the basis of previous place of study, home address, family income or background, ethnicity, religious belief, gender, age or sexual orientation.

#### **5.0 PROVISION OF INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS**

WCG is committed to ensuring that students have timely, accurate and transparent information regarding the content and pricing of the total cost of their course for its entire duration. Details of fees and financial support for students are published on the College's website as soon as they are approved. Information is provided to UCAS and the Student Loans Company for the purposes of informing other user groups. All information is available in print, electronic and face-to-face form including at open days. Any additional costs are available to see on the website and all publicity advises prospective students to seek this information.

WCG conforms fully to the requirements of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to enable prospective students have the information they need to make an informed decision before they consider applying. The College has a CMA Panel that reviews all published information for students.

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

Provider name: Warwickshire College

Provider UKPRN: 10007859

**Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees**

\*course type not listed

**Inflationary statement:**

There will be no inflationary increase for students commencing their studies in the 2020-2021 academic year as they progress through their course. Fees will remain the same for these students year on year.

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Arts, Business and Care	£7,975
First degree	Engineering and Land-based	£8,735
First degree	Veterinary Nursing (Level 4/5)	£7,250
First degree	Veterinary Nursing (Level 6)	£7,465
Foundation degree	Arts, Business and Care	£7,975
Foundation degree	Engineering and Land-based	£8,735
Foundation degree	Veterinary Nursing	£7,250
Foundation year/Year 0	Arts, Business and Care	£4,500
Foundation year/Year 0	Engineering and Land-based	£4,500
HNC/HND	Arts	£7,975
HNC/HND	Engineering and Construction	£8,735
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 entrants**

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	Art, Business and Care	£6,935
First degree	Engineering and Land-based	£6,935
Foundation degree	Art, Business and Care	£6,935
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	Engineering and Construction	£4,500
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

# Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Warwickshire College

Provider UKPRN: 10007859

## Investment summary

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

### Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£170,000.00	£180,000.00	£190,000.00	£200,000.00	£210,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£40,000.00	£45,000.00	£50,000.00	£55,000.00	£55,000.00
Access (post-16)	£50,000.00	£55,000.00	£55,000.00	£60,000.00	£65,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£55,000.00
Access (other)	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£35,000.00	£35,000.00	£35,000.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£100,000.00	£107,000.00	£123,000.00	£138,000.00	£145,000.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£50,000.00	£60,000.00	£75,000.00	£90,000.00	£105,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HF1%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HF1)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HF1)</b>	£1,660,525.00	£1,741,165.00	£1,864,725.00	£1,959,010.00	£2,062,455.00
<b>Access investment</b>	8.1%	8.6%	8.8%	9.2%	9.5%
<b>Financial support</b>	6.0%	6.1%	6.5%	7.0%	7.0%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	3.0%	3.4%	4.0%	4.6%	5.1%
<b>Total investment (as %HF1)</b>	17.1%	18.1%	19.4%	20.8%	21.5%

