



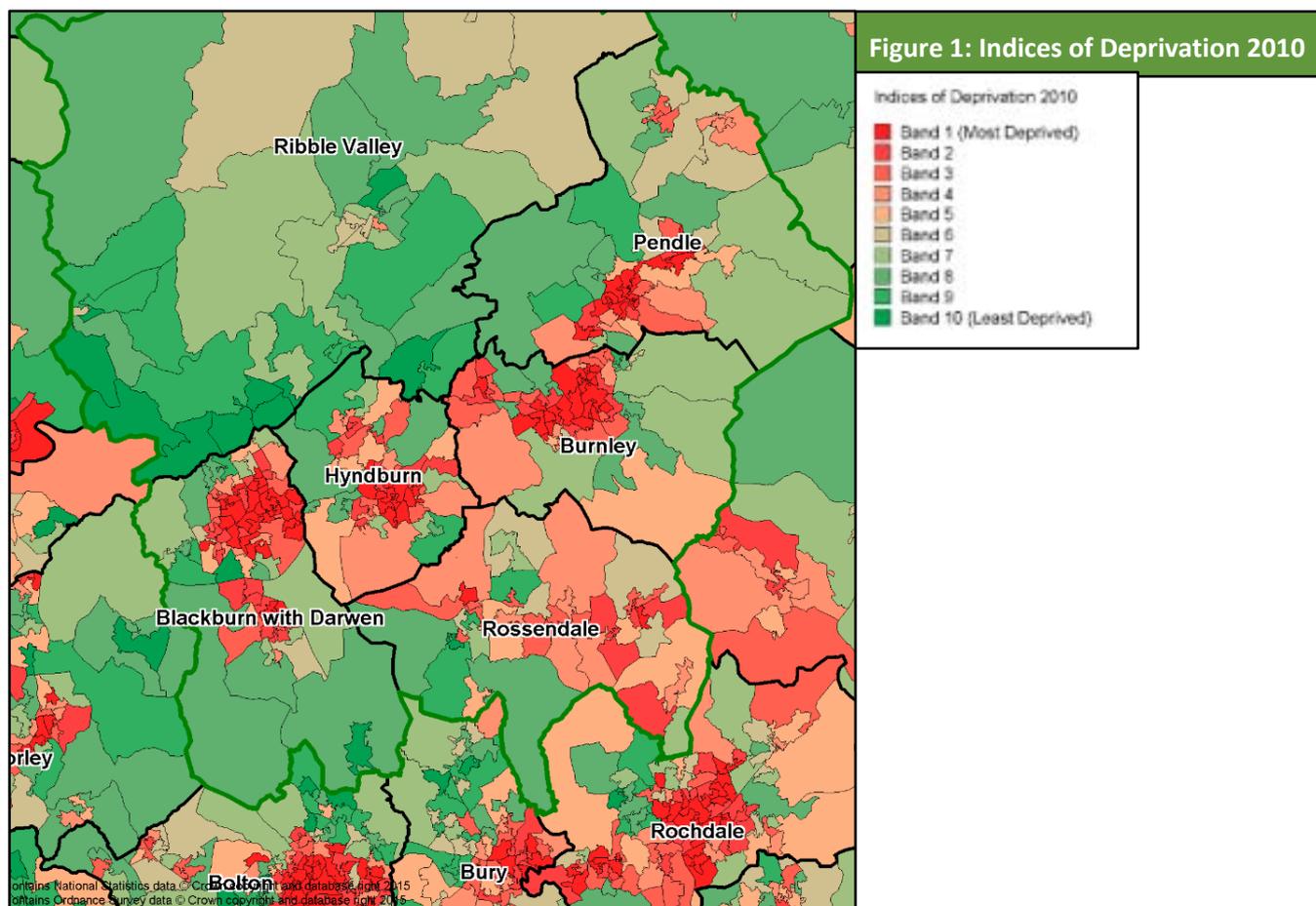
**Burnley College**

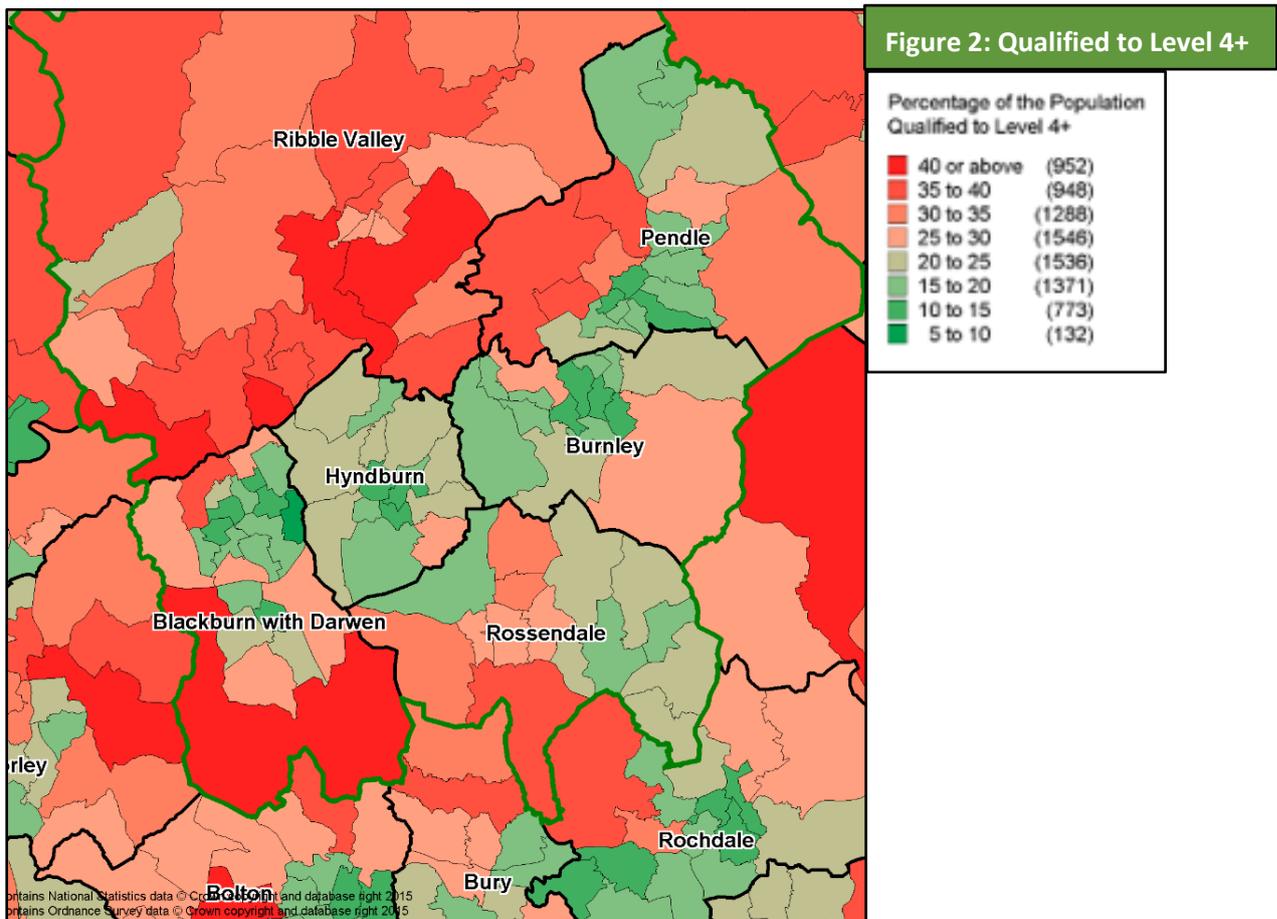
**Access and Participation Plan  
2019/20**

## Provider Context

Burnley College is committed to strategies for widening access to higher education as well as ensuring student success which in turn improves the progression opportunities for all of our students. The College's stated purpose is to 'build futures and change lives' (Burnley College Strategic Plan 2017-20) and this is supported by seven strategic objectives, including 'to significantly expand the range of local opportunities for university-level study whilst maintaining high standards' and 'to maintain outstanding equality of opportunity'. Widening participation was at the heart of the bid to build the new 'Burnley' joint university and College campus in 2009 we provide access to Level 4 education and above in an area of significant deprivation with historically low levels of participation in higher education.

Burnley College is a long established Further Education College in the Pennine (or 'East') Lancashire area of the north west of England. Whilst the area has some pockets of affluence, much of Pennine Lancashire's urban areas are recognised as experiencing significant levels of deprivation. Burnley is amongst the most deprived areas in the country – the most recent Government Index of Deprivation (September 2015) places Burnley as the 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived area out of 354 local authorities in England and the comparative position has deteriorated since the previous index (2010)<sup>1</sup>, see Figure 1. A significant factor in this is the continued decline in the traditional manufacturing industry which was, for so long, the key source of employment in the area.





Over 80% of the students enrolled on our higher education courses live in East Lancashire<sup>ii</sup> and over half within widening participation postcodes<sup>iii</sup>, the average wage of Burnley residents is 87% of the national average and 90% of the Lancashire average. Pennine Lancashire is an area of low educational attainment. The educational attainment of Burnley school leavers, whilst improving, is comparatively low – in 2014/15 47.2% of school leavers gained the equivalent of five A\* to C (including Maths and English), which is 11.6% below the Lancashire rate (58.8%). The secondary schools in the area have a recent history of being in special measures and with results consistently below the Government floor target. Participation in higher education is more than 10% below the national average, see Figure 2.

Higher Education provision is a well-established part of the curriculum offer of Burnley College. Recruitment is vibrant and there has been a steady and sustained increase in both student numbers and FTEs over the period 2009 to 2017 with numbers increasing by 24%. Students are recruited from broad academic backgrounds but it must be noted that typically 50% of our higher education students access courses on a 'non-tariff' entry.

Burnley College currently has 56 HE courses on offer in its prospectus, both full-time and part-time, covering subject areas including computing, engineering, education, creative and performance arts, construction, health and social care, law, sociology, English, criminology, and, business and management studies. These subjects are offered through a range of foundation degrees (including HNC/HNDs), bachelor degrees, bachelor 'top up' degrees and Post-Graduate certificates. The last ten years have seen a significant growth in the number of Foundation Degrees (FdA/FdSc) in line with government policy, the College has worked to introduce new Degree Apprenticeships in Chartered Management and also in Digital and Technical Solutions. The higher education course offer is informed by multiple factors which include student and employer demands. This responsive offer makes a

significant contribution to widening the participation of the local community.

## ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

The demographics of the current Burnley College 2017-18 HE cohort are detailed in Tables 1 to 4. The tables broadly illustrate our access demographic in relation to age, gender and ethnicity demonstrating our success at widening access to underrepresented groups such as mature students and those from significant areas of deprivation with low levels of participation in higher education. The TEF data for 16/17 evidences that over 60% of our university cohort are drawn from IMD Q1 and Q2.

Mature students reflect the majority of our full-time cohort making up 64% of the full-time undergraduate population (as illustrated in Table 1). As referenced earlier 50% of our students enter with “non-tariff” entry with many mature students utilising our Foundation route programmes to re-enter education. The offer we provide enables this under-represented group to access Level 4 provision within their locality meaning they do not have to relocate, they can continue to fulfil their family responsibilities and it is financially beneficial. Our overall student demographic is almost a 50/50 split with respect to access for younger and mature students.

**Table 1: Access - Age and Gender**

		Young <sup>iv</sup>			Mature			All Ages		
		Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
<b>Full-Time</b>	316	41	71	112	138	66	204	179 (57%)	137 (43%)	316
<b>Part-Time</b>	247	48	124	172	41	34	75	89 (36%)	158 (64%)	247
<b>Combined</b>	563	89	195	284	179	100	279	268 (48%)	295 (52%)	563

( ) % by cohort

The female/male split, Table 1, for all ages and combined attendance modes closely reflects the gender split for the local postcode area as outlined in the 2011 census.

The ethnic breakdown of the local population as identified in the 2011 census is predominantly White English and Pakistani. For the postcode area from which 80% of our HE students are drawn 10% are from a Pakistani ethnic background and 79% from a White English ethnic Background which closely resembles the ethnic split for all ages and combined attendance modes from Table 2.

**Table 2: Access - Ethnicity and Age**

	Young		Mature		All Ages	
	White	Pakistani	White	Pakistani	White	Pakistani
<b>Full-Time</b>	80 (71%)	20 (18%)	168 (82%)	21 (1%)	248 (76%)	41 (13%)
<b>Part-Time</b>	160 (93%)	3 (2%)	67 (89%)	6 (1%)	227 (92%)	9 (4%)
<b>Combined</b>	240 (86%)	23 (8%)	235 (84%)	27 (1%)	475 (84%)	50 (9%)

() % by cohort

In order to be able to assess our performance in relation to access of groups such as care leavers and disabled students we recognise that we must make a significant investment in our data infrastructure for 2019-20. In order that we can more robustly assess our access performance we are strengthening our admissions process investing £25,000 for UCAS Admissions. This investment will give us access to their data analytics capturing target group data which will ensure we are in a strong position to provide a clear data driven analysis of our access performance across all the underrepresented groups in our plan for 2020 – 2021.

Success data provides evidence that overall females and males have the similar positive continuation rates 88% but there is an issue to address concerning the continuation of mature males which is 13% below that of females as confirmed by the latest TEF metrics which when further analysed by ethnicity (see Table 5) is confirmed to be an issue for both white and Pakistani mature males.

Tables 3 – 5 continuation and achievement ILR data for the latest cohort of students (16-17)

**Table 3: Age and Gender - Success for 16-17 Cohort**

	Young <sup>v</sup>			Mature			All Ages		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued
<b>Full-Time</b>	87.5	83.6	85.0	87.5	74.0	82.4	87.5	78.5	83.3
<b>Part-Time</b>	90.6	97.1	95.1	87.2	91.7	88.7	89.2	96.3	93.5
<b>Combined</b>	89.4	92.8	91.6	87.4	78.2	84.1	88.2	88.0	88.1

**Table 4: Ethnicity and Age - Success for 16-17 Cohort**

	Young <sup>vi</sup>		Mature		All Ages	
	White	Pakistani	White	Pakistani	White	Pakistani
	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued
<b>Full-Time</b>	83.3	86.4	82.4	82.6	82.7	84.4
<b>Part-Time</b>	95.8	87.5	89.2	100.0	94.1	90.0
<b>Combined</b>	92.1	86.7	84.2	84.0	88.4	85.5

On a more detailed examination of the gender breakdown of the Mature Pakistani students evidence demonstrates that the success rate (continuation) for mature Pakistani females is 92% in comparison to mature Pakistani males at a rate of 70%. It is demonstrable from this data that whilst access is reflective of the demographic of the local population Pakistani population there is a success gap in respect of continuation to address.

**Table 5: Mature Male and Ethnicity - Achievement and Continuation for 16-17 Cohort**

Mature Male			
	White	Pakistani	Combined
	% Continued	% Continued	% Continued
<b>Full-Time</b>	75.0	70.0	74.3
<b>Part-Time</b>	95.5	-	95.5
<b>Combined</b>	80.2	70.0	79.2

When compared against the sector TEF data would confirm that we are above sector benchmarks in respect of the student experience of teaching, learning and assessment however below sector benchmarks in in respect of continuation. It is evident from the TEF metrics that we need to address a success gap in respect of the non-continuation of mature students from more deprived socio-economic backgrounds.

TEF metrics would indicate that progression of our full time mature and BME students into employment is within sector benchmarks as there are no indicative flags in respect of these groups. DHLE data for 2017 indicates that 96% of our leavers obtain employment six months after leaving with the median salary at £20,000 which is more than that of the local area from which most students originate. Reinforcement of our data infrastructure as outlined earlier will allow for a more detailed breakdown of these headline figures so we are able to evidence our performance at each stage of all underrepresented groups in our subsequent plan for 2020-2021.

**Table 7: Students Receiving Bursaries - Achievement and Continuation for 16-17 Cohort**

	% Continued of those receiving Bursaries	% Continued of overall Cohort
16-17	88.9	88.1

The data in Table 7 provides a headline figure to demonstrate that those students accessing bursaries are succeeding at similar rates to the general cohort. In our plan for 2020-21 we would be looking to provide much more detailed analysis of those students from underrepresented groups or subgroups that are accessing the bursary, how it is used, its impact on the student thereby allowing us to change the offer as needed to further improve success.

**Table 8: Students Declaring themselves as having a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem - Achievement and Continuation for 16-17 Cohort**

	Learner considers himself or herself to have a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem.	Learner does not consider himself or herself to have a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem.
Cohort Size	52	53.5
% of Cohort	8.9	91.1
% Achieved or Continued	80.8	87.3

In respect of students with disabilities there are no flags within our 16/17 TEF data regarding success or progression into employment against the sector benchmarks. Our view of this group at all stages of the lifecycle would benefit from greater focus which we recognise hence our investment in the UCAS

admissions service which is one element that will strengthen the assessment of our performance of the access stage of student lifecycle in subsequent plans.

The assessment of our performance has highlighted that there are improvements needed in respect of success for mature students (both White and Pakistani males) The overall picture in terms of progression to employment or further study is slightly below the sector benchmarks at -1.4 but there are no flags according to our TEF data. The TEF supplementary metrics do indicate that students from Polar quintiles 1 and 2 are below benchmark in respect of above median earnings however the DLHE data provides a more a more positive context for this as outlined in the assessment of our progression performance for students from low participation neighbourhoods.

## **AMBITIONS AND STRATEGY**

Burnley College's strategy and direction of travel regarding university education has not changed significantly between the production of our first Access and Participation plan in 2015, and the most recent 2018-19 Access and Participation plan, however our ambition has continued to grow. We remain extremely committed to strategies for widening access to university level education and delivering student opportunities that lead to successful outcomes. To date these objectives have been achieved in conjunction with a sole university partner, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), with whom the College has had a strong and mature relationship. Widening participation was at the heart of the bid to build the new 'UCLan Burnley'/Burnley College joint university and College campus in 2009. Together we have developed and implemented a range of initiatives over a period of years at the unique joint campus in Burnley which both organisations share. Going forward, the College is seeking to broaden its links to include delivery of courses validated by other like-minded universities to enable it to provide even more opportunities to people within Pennine Lancashire, as in the same way Office for Students (OfS) we believe it is equally important to improve the lives of people who want to study at home and to live and work within the community where they grew up (OfS 2018). As the previous section shows, the College has been very successful in this with over 80% of current students coming from the Pennine Lancashire (East Lancashire) area, and the vast majority continue to live and work within the area, thus helping fulfil the College's strategic objective 'to make a contribution to the local and national economy through employment and enterprise of students' (Burnley College Strategic Plan 2017-20). We aspire to further support the College's and the Office for Students' core aim to enable everyone 'to build a good life for themselves and to reach their potential, regardless of their background and identity' (OfS 2018)

Following the transfer of all our higher education provision to our direct funding contract with HEFCE in August 2015 a separate Burnley College Access and Participation plan for 2015 - 2017 was approved by OFFA. This plan continues and consolidates many of the activities and initiatives introduced in those agreements and builds on this and the work previously completed regarding our indirectly funded provision under the UCLan Access and Participation plan. Whilst the impact of the 2015-16 agreements is still partly to be felt, the monitoring in January 2018 of the first agreement showed positive progress towards goals. This agreement allows for further improvements, enabling investment into substantial resources to maximise student engagement, performance and attainment for all students during their degree studies and beyond. Following discussion with the HEFCE and UCLan in Spring 2017, some provision (up to 200 students) returned to indirect funding via UCLan from September 2017. Like UCLan, we recognise that academic and support staff are the cornerstones of students' success and Burnley College is making significant investment in the development of its people as well as its undergraduate courses.

Access to innovative interactive learning spaces and latest technologies will create an environment which enhances students' achievement and progression. Ongoing staff development will equip our

team to draw on best practice in designing and delivering professional learning to raise levels of student attainment and employability. A key strand of our strategy moving forward for improving access, success and progression is to define clear responsibilities and measures for all our higher education teams, so that we are able to ensure performance is closely monitored against the nominated targets, that there is appropriate challenge at all levels and that actions to meet (or exceed) targets are implemented in a timely fashion. Alongside this, we continue to make significant investment in all aspects of student support.

**Target Groups** - our Assessment of Current Performance in Section 1 highlights that the College continues to make a significant contribution to addressing issues of inequality of access to higher education opportunities for all the first 4 groups identified by the OfS, namely:

\* Those living in areas of low higher education participation, household income or socioeconomic status

\* Students of particular ethnicities (and in particular those from Asian/Pakistani minority ethnic backgrounds)

\* Mature Students and

\* Students with Disabilities

It was our ambition that the long-standing positive contribution the College had made in these areas would not be lost when we increased our tuition fees above the standard £6000 threshold in 2016, and we are pleased that the evidence shows this to be the case; indeed 2017-18 has seen a further increase in the number of FT students commencing HE courses with the College. Overall, we aspire to continue our successful strategies to work with all these groups, and further improve the contribution we make in relation to these cohorts. As up until this point all our higher education provision has been delivered through a single HEI (UCLan) we have been able to rely quite heavily on their reporting mechanisms and data capture and analysis. Going forward, as we begin to also work with other HEIs, we are further developing the College's own systems and processes for data capture and analysis along with greater utilisation of nationally produced data and analysis. We have utilised HESA data and opted in to this year's TEF evaluation

The group where we are not able at this moment in time to assess our performance at any stage of the student lifecycle is in relation to Care Leavers which is a key ambition for us to address in this next academic year. The higher education participation rate in the North West for care leavers is around 2% we would be aiming to move to 5% within a two year period and 10% within a four year period. The rationale for a longer term goal is that we aim to increase access through work within our FE provision and with local schools. We have offered a specific cash bursary plus support to students in this category, to date we have been unsuccessful in any care leavers coming forward who met the OFFA/DfES criteria for this category. However, we are aware of the national picture regarding significant under-representation of care leavers studying in higher education and aspire to improve our outreach and recruitment work in this area to attract care leavers to access places with us in what we believe would be an environment very conducive to successful study. Alongside this we have allocated a member of our student services team to liaise with our Safeguarding team who will be tracking the progress of all students identifying as Looked After or Previously Looked After across the organisation working in close liaison with Virtual Schools. The Safeguarding team will liaise with the divisional teaching teams who work successfully across our FE and HE provision to ensure this underrepresented group are tracked, supported and successful in accessing a university course as a next step. The aim initially will be to improve access to HE as we can work with our FE cohort of care leavers to ensure they are provided with relevant touchpoints (to be determined by the students in conjunction with student services) so they feel equipped to consider a progression into higher education viewing it as part of their post 16

portfolio of options. Establishing a robust system that will involve a range of support, safeguarding and teaching specialists will enable us to build a picture of the experiences and challenges faced by this group thereby leading to greater clarity when assessing our own performance and the additional strategies needed to then deal with success and progression.

This more sophisticated analysis of data, considering the 'intersection of characteristics' such as age and gender within the data for different factors in line with OfS guidance, has enabled us to identify a gap in success outcomes for mature males. Further analysis indicated that when correlated with ethnicity this holds true for both White British and Pakistani mature males. We currently have a range of mechanisms by which the student voice informs our teaching and support with students completing evaluation questionnaires for each module alongside representing their views at minuted staff student liaison meetings. A key strategy going forward will be to ensure that the voices of these student groups are captured and being aware if they are not adequately represented in these forums, this also needs to be the case for other students from the 5 key underrepresented groups. Successful assessment of our performance in relation to the success stage of the lifecycle will be the articulation of these voices and the actions taken as a direct result to improve success rates.

Regarding the other student groupings identified by the OfS for whom there are equality gaps nationally, the size of our student cohort each year makes valid statistical analysis difficult. However, we are seeking to refine our data capture processes so we are more able to explore potential issues with our College or local population. Those students with mental health problems, specific learning difficulties and/or who are on the autistic spectrum' is one which may be of particular relevance and for which we may be able to collate statistically significant data. Whilst we have a level of support available for students within each of these groupings, consideration of the 'reasons for withdrawal' data suggests there is some evidence that there may be slightly lower success rates (continuation) for students with mental health difficulties. It is our intent to investigate this further this coming year, and if found to be the case to implement further strategies to mitigate against this factor.

**Collaborative Working** - in line with OfS guidance, the College intends to continue with collaborative activities with employers . A focus will be placed on ensuring this does contribute to improved success for those mature students where we are working towards meeting sector benchmarks. Equally these key relationships we have with employers due to our successful and extensive FE apprenticeship provision can also be utilised to target the progression gaps for our students from LPN as is indicated by the TEF data. The student support team will again be fundamental to leading on this ambition ensuring that positive links are made and that those students previously discussed where success and progress is seen to be an issue are actively engaged in meaningful and substantial contacts with employers as part of their university experience.

**Collaboration with Primary and Secondary Schools and other Colleges** - the College have a history of working with local primary and secondary schools to raise aspirations to progress through further education and into higher education, and through this to promote improved attainment. The College will continue to increase investment in both time and resources to enable the development of strategically targeted long-term outreach activities that will continue to broaden the pool of applicants. It will seek to raise the aspirations of children and young people and more mature applicants from under-represented groups and encourage them to apply for university education, either at the College or elsewhere. HEFCE data shows that the participation rate of young people into HE for the ward in which the College is situated is below 20% compared to the national average (provisional) HEIPR of 48% and that it is in the bottom quintile. Almost all the wards in which local feeder primary and secondary schools and 6th forms are situated within the East Lancashire corridor are in the bottom 2 quintiles. (HEFCE 2016). The application of further access measures through the increased funds available seeks to address this imbalance.

The College invests in a Schools Liaison Team who deliver a range of internal and external activities to local schools. The aim is to develop the model that has worked effectively for FE (and implicitly for future progression to HE) to give a parallel focus on HE, and work has already begun establishing stronger connections with schools with 6th forms and other post 16 providers where an expanded programme of liaison activities can be promoted. Each curriculum area within the College's teaching Divisions has developed a programme of Master Classes and Guest Lectures that support the achievement of their current qualifications; these will be offered to pupils in local schools and 6th forms. We currently work with over 45 local secondary schools and over 20 primary schools on a regular basis delivering sessions in school and hosting sessions on campus. For example the campus sessions are harmonised with the Primary curriculum such as a day studying the Great Fire of London which involved the university teaching team from Art, History and Science. This year we have further developed our primary links and run more on-site sessions than ever before with 4 Primary schools accessing our Science Hub spaces to take part in practical science sessions that they are unable to run in school such as dissection sessions led by the A Level STEM team. There are 5 targets set for the schools activity for 18/19 all designed to promote engagement with education within LPN areas:

- Outreach activities with at least 40 secondary schools covering 90% of our travel to study areas including schools in Lancashire Blackburn with Darwen and West Yorkshire
- Taster sessions/outreach activities with at least 12 primary schools
- School Science festival involving 20 primary schools
- Outreach activities with at least 7 FE/Sixth Form providers
- 10 Open events across the year with over a 1000 people attending

Alongside this activity other events which have proved popular and successful in recent years include:

- Enjoynearring – an annual event for secondary schools to compete in an Engineering competition providing meaningful contacts with universities and academic staff as part of the event. In 17/18 Year 11 students from the secondary schools who attended the competition took part in a 6 month Engineering Academy programme in College many of whom then proceeded to enrol on a Level 3 course upon completion of their GCSE's which provides a direct pathway to Level 4 study.
- Employability Conference – Annual event for Year 10 students to take part in a range of 'business and employability' related activities over a week. Target set for this year are for all 5 Local secondary schools to be involved in this activity to provide meaningful contact with at least 15 different employers who all offer graduate opportunities.
- Lancashire Science Festival – this started in 2016 for years 4-8 and was extended in 2017 to include year's 9-13. It also features a 'Community Day' on the Saturday where local families can come along free of charge engaging with our College academic and support teams. The contact this provides to families from East Lancashire is access focused in that many of the families are from areas with low participation in Level 4 education, they engage in STEM activities within a College environment that provides progression pathways into university education.

A post to co-ordinate this work was funded for the first time in 2015-16. This will represent a key plank in the strategy to improve outreach to and access of disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

**Collaboration with HEIs/other Formal Collaborations** - The four universities covering Cumbria and Lancashire (University of Cumbria, University of Central Lancashire, Edge Hill University and Lancaster University) continue to liaise post-Aim higher to share ideas and best practice for outreach activity, to minimise the risk of duplication, and to make the most effective use of the resource available across the four institutions. Although there are practical limitations in the ability to share resources and facilities where institutions are not closely co-located, collaborative working has continued, mainly in relation to

re-directing requests for activity from 11-16 schools to Universities more closely located to their geographical locations about primary activity. As we begin to offer courses run by other HEIs, regionally and nationally, this will provide further synergy and opportunities for a collaborative approach to widening access and participation in university education.

Burnley College is working collaboratively with UCLan as part of the locally established network under the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) initiative for Lancashire – Future U. Edge Hill University and Lancaster University are also supporting the programme alongside a broad range of other FE Colleges and organisations such as STEM 1st from within the county. NCOP staff have been appointed, including two outreach officers based here at the Burnley Campus. The College have students who live in 10 of the NCOP wards. We are active members and attend the monthly operational management group. We have had two successful bids to Future U so far – to produce a Parents' Guide to Higher Education for distribution in schools in target wards, and to run a Future U Careers Week both on campus and in the community.

These collaborations across a range of organisations should enhance our own work in improving access in the first instance, certainly the school-based collaborations will be looking to provide sessions for children in schools located in LPN areas. The student support team as part of their strategy aim to liaise with the HEI's to collaborate on improving access for care leavers alongside the continuation of our Growth Mindset catalyst project which will focus on success for our mature students this year with a emphasis on our mature males. The tracking of the impact of these collaborations with a specific view on our targeted groups within these collaborations (care leavers, LPN and mature males) will enable us to identify areas of success and areas where the targeted activity requires change in order that it is effective in closing access and success gaps as identified.

**Monitoring and Evaluation** - the Access and Participation Plan is monitored through reports to the University Management Group which is chaired by the Assistant Principal responsible for University Studies, who is a member of the College's Senior Management Team (SMT). The student voice is well represented on this group. Overall responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of the Access and Participation Plan resides with this member of the Principalship and the Dean of University Education/Head of Higher Education. Operational management and delivery of outreach activity is delegated to the Strategic Marketing Manager and responsibility for meeting course-level recruitment, retention and progression targets lie with the Heads of Division and their Curriculum Managers overseen by the Dean of University Education, reporting in to the College Academic Board and Governing Body.

Monitoring of the targets and milestones identified within the Access and Participation Plan will be addressed on an on-going basis through the use of the College's management information system, which is updated as new data becomes available (overnight in some cases) and presents key performance data for use by the College Governing Board and its sub-committees, Academic Board and other College committees, the Senior Management Team via Divisional Reviews with the Divisional Management teams, Teaching Divisions and Service Areas. In addition, they integrate the nationally gathered data such as that from DLHE (and its successor), NSS and HESA/TEF/OfS data on both College and Sector performance. This comprehensive monitoring enables timely responses where metrics are indicating that our activities are not effective in closing gaps. Monthly meetings held by the Dean will be utilised to monitor tracking data in relation to the plan where the Teaching Divisions and the Student Support team will be accountable for the impact of their activities. Actions will be amended and agreed within this setting so that improvements in practice are timely and data driven.

Now that we are working towards becoming more independent in our collection and analysis of data, and less reliant on our partner HEI, this year we are intending to trial use of the OFFA Toolkit to assist in our approach to evaluation, particularly that of our Burnley Bursary financial support package. The

OFFA toolkit will be utilised to provide an institutional health check in October 2018 alongside this will be the use of a reflective tool to prompt strategic consideration of the appropriateness of interventions as well as a framework to capture improvements made in the softer skills such as study resilience and engagement. Monitoring will take place on a monthly basis at University Management meetings, chaired by the Assistant Principal who would then report these outcomes to the Senior Management Team.

**Equality and Diversity** - The College is strongly committed to its equality and diversity responsibilities across the full range of its activities as a provider of further and Higher Education. Throughout the student study cycle we actively promote equality and diversity by providing diverse entry routes to our degree courses and a suite of interventions and support tailored to ensure students achieve their full potential regardless of prior attainment. Our Access and Participation plan is closely linked to our equality and diversity work. For example, we are expanding the suite of foundation entry year courses to provide non-standard access to more of our undergraduate degrees at a fee significantly below that of degrees at level 4 and above. The study skills and learning to support the transition to higher education embedded within the curriculum is designed to further strengthen, and ensure, student success. Our Access and Participation plan and equality and diversity focus are both intended to fulfil our key commitment of enabling access and providing equality of opportunity to all those who can benefit from higher education.

We will closely monitor and evaluate activities to consider the impact on protected equality groups in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that we are meeting all sector benchmarks. The most recent inspection of the College by Ofsted stated that equality and diversity permeated the organisation We have included a strategic objective in our Strategic plan for 2017-20 'to maintain outstanding equality of opportunity', and our strategic goals state that we must demonstrate equality of opportunity in meeting all other goals. It is anticipated that this, or a similar goal, will continue in any updated version of this plan in operation in 2018. We believe this is a significant strength and an indication of our commitment to ensuring that equality and diversity issues are at the centre of the College's core priorities.

## **ACCESS, SUCCESS AND PROGRESSION**

The University pastoral services support individuals from underrepresented groups to access University Study with most of our university students stating that they believe their current course of study will enhance their career prospects. Holding true to "Changing Lives" and empowering them to "Build their Future through; academic achievement, development of skills and self-actualisation, opening doorways to employment whilst breaking down stereotypes on access within the underrepresented student groups. Holistic support services and activity empower our students from the most deprived socio-economic groups to make the choice to access university education as evidenced within the assessment of current performance. Services were praised through IQER inspection, inspectors observing "*that there was excellent all-round support for students provided, which leads to enhanced student achievement*" This level of service is integral to our 2019/20 plan and forms a fundamental element in improving access, success and progression.

**Careers and Progression** - information, Advice and Guidance is an essential component in supporting individuals to make realistic informed choices according to their circumstances. The university support team have been trained to Level 6 Information, advice and guidance officers and hold the Matrix standard. Matrix evidenced that "*learners and partners spoke in extremely positive terms about the support they had received, commenting on how it had helped them move forward in their personal and career development.*" (Burnley College Matrix report 2016). As illustrated but the Table 1 in the contextual information we serve a population that is significantly below the average in terms of access to Level 4 education, so our careers provision is a key starting point for improving access in the first

instance. Our activity in 19/20 will place an emphasis on ensuring our FE Looked After and Previously Looked After Children access the careers services as an ongoing activity with a long-term goal of entry into higher education for these students. It will be expected that all our students in this group will access this service leading to success in their current course of study to enable a progression route into higher education. This activity will require tracking over the course of the next year, so we are better able to articulate the impact on access, success and progression for our underrepresented groups paying attention to mature students and care leavers.

Customers, applicants and students will have access to independent advice services throughout their journey. We work collaboratively with the National Careers Services (NCS) who target socioeconomic groups across the spectrum as part of the Government KPI's to help individual progression into learning and work. Given the predominance of mature learners from areas of significant deprivation as evidenced in section 1 of this report impartial careers advice is fundamental to ensuring the success and progression of students. The approach is informed through student feedback -when we discussed with students their needs with respect to careers guidance we found that nearly 60% of our current university students return to study to 'improve their career chances'. Our careers services are being shaped with this feedback in mind to build confidence and develop employability skills including skills gapping.

CIAG activity feeds into and compliments Personal Development modules for 2019/20 which ensures students, particularly those on a non-tariff entry are given the skills needed to succeed and progress. 91% of students' progress into employment with 2.7% in unemployment with the remaining students undertaking 'something else'.

**Admissions and Enquires** - applicants are contacted on receipt of application to ensure a proactive response to support individual needs inclusive of learning support, disability or health (mental health), applicants with low level prior attainment will be identified and provided with targeted support. Students not successful on entry, are signposted to the National Careers Service to receive independent further guidance. Often further studying is required to provide so a key strength of our university offer sitting alongside our outstanding Further Education offer is that applicants can access through our referral to pathway courses such as numeracy and literacy and level 2 access courses.

Applicants are invited to attend an applicant day to gain further information with the activity repeated during the day and evening to ensure that part-time applicants and those mature applicants with wider responsibilities can access an appropriate session. 91% of students confirmed that they received enough information on service prior to the course starting, student feedback indicated a need to provide more information on operational matters such as parking and these factors are considered within our access strategy as wider commitments to child care can impact access, success and progression. Parking allocation is assessed against needs which support students with wider commitments including single parents.

**Access to Learning Fund** - means tested matrix and awards payments according to students residual income and expenditure. Discretion is applied to support students who are at financial risk where it could impact their continued study. Assessment processes seek to identify poor budgeting skills and to ensure sustained solutions mandatory budgeting support is conditioned within certain awards. This activity is focused particularly on maintaining success of those students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

**Advanced payment** - advanced payment supports students who have not received an award or payment from Student Finance at the beginning of a semester. A high proportion of application are received late in the cycle which means Student Finance payments are received later in the semester. The provision of this service is designed to promote access for those students from a low socio-economic status and mature students who may otherwise decline their place due to financial constraints.

As part of our evaluation of both aspects of these payments funds we will be looking to analyse access to these in 19-20 on a gender basis to ensure mature males are accessing this service provision as finance could be one aspect of the gap in their success. An increase in males accessing this support alongside an increase in their success rate is the outcome sought.

## **Bursary**

As part of our commitment we introduced a Burnley Bursary for all higher fee-paying students who had household incomes of over £25,000, those with incomes below £20,000 receive a higher rate bursary as outlined below. The bursary offer was intended to improve access for students from lower income households in 16-17 all but 2 of the eligible students were on incomes of £20,000 which meant that 147 of 149 recipients received the higher rate bursary. In 2017/18 over 90% of bursaries were allocated at the higher-level equating to 68% of our higher fee-paying students. This is a direct reflection of level of socio-economic deprivation within our primary catchment area making a significant contribution to widening access for this underrepresented group.

Current bursary is split into three packages going forward we will be evaluating the components of this offer with our students to ensure we are meeting their needs:

- 2k includes a £500 digital package, £250 campus credits, £250 health and wellness package and £1000 cash payment split between the 3 semesters. Student are eligible if they are on their first year of studying for a 9K courses and have a household income less than 20 K
- 1 K includes a £500 digital package or £250 campus credits and health care package alongside £500 cash payment
- Health and wellbeing package is open to all students and includes gym membership and access to advice and support on health lifestyle. This supports both research connected to healthy living and learning and mental health.

82% of applicants accessing the higher bursary were from band 1-4 area of deprivation with 88.9% of individuals receiving the bursary achieving. One student commented that the bursary was “a godsend.” 18% of students accessing the higher award were from ethnic minority backgrounds and 12% stated they have a learning difficulty, disability or health conditions. The positive impact of the bursary on continuation is evidenced in Table 7 in the assessment of current performance showing that 89% of students in receipt of a bursary achieve and continue on course.

90% of students found the finance support they received good or outstanding. Of the 10% students wanted more flexible support and wider research with students as part of this plan has shown the need to create a more flexible bursary offer going forward.

**Inductions** - clear communication is essential to ensure that students understand the support available to them. Communication is available on the website, through events, admission and enrolment processes. IQER documented that “*All students take part in an induction programme which is made up of two parts. The first part is a generic university and college induction which provides students with welcome introductions, campus tours, library and virtual learning environment introductions. The welcome introduction involves a presentation delivered by key members of the college and university senior managers detailing the process of induction. The second part is a course specific induction where, among other things, students are talked through their course handbooks, are given information on relevant policies and procedures and, if appropriate, equipment inductions. Returning students have an abridged induction delivered through the tutorial system. Students confirmed to the team that the overall college induction process is both comprehensive and highly effective.*”

87% of our university students that attended the induction found it useful as a significant number of our students are mature, non-tariff entry this induction process provides reassurance building initial support contacts from both the academic and pastoral perspective.

Through the first stage of the induction process student support is integral. Workshops supporting individuals with Finance application, awareness on access to careers support and wellbeing. Induction is followed up at Fresher's where students gain access to both internal and external partners, with over 100 organisations from a wide range of organisations split into Health and wellbeing sectors, careers, Support Services and events.

A range of activities are in place during the induction. Student's comments are captured in the response that during the welcome they felt "well cared for and treated with respect" comments for development were individualised in theme and focused on needs of a few students but students would welcome more information and as a development for the new academic year the induction will be planned with current students being part of the planning and delivery.

**Wellbeing** - our holistic pastoral services ensure that students with wider support needs receive appropriate and professional support either through internal or external services. A vastly experienced team of specialised experts support advice staff and support students with both mental health and emotional conditions. Awareness of mental health support has seen an increase nationally and demand on services continues to grow. Over the last 3 years University students accessing the services has grown by 100% with 88% of those students accessing the service completing their course. Less males currently access support services compared to females which suggests potential links to 'male' notion that males are less likely to ask for support. To counter this induction relating to support will be tailored to ensure a message of asking for help as this could be another factor contributing to the gap in success for mature male students.

Evidenced indicates the connections between regular exercise and supporting both learning and mental health condition in reducing stress and supporting achievement which was the rationale behind including the Health and Wellbeing package within our bursary offer. 72% of students found the health and wellbeing outstanding but some commented on both our Burnley survey and within research activity that there needed to be a greater awareness of the support services available. Moving forward we will be making greater use of student innovators to raise awareness of support services for current and prospective students.

Further work will be undertaken in 2019/20 to ensure a clear understanding as to what students identify as 'support'. Involving students from traditionally underrepresented groups ensures they continue to take an active role in shaping their services. Over the next academic year, students from the underrepresented groups will take roles within our student council, within our student voice programme as well as taking on roles as student mentors. Their insight will ensure that we continue to provide support and services that engage hard to reach groups whilst supporting the continual review processes to refine activity ensuring that our services continue to serve those that need it most.

## Investment

In the context of over half of our students coming from mature backgrounds, our location within an area of East Lancashire which has significant levels of deprivation alongside significantly low levels of educational attainment our investment remains high to ensure we continue to provide an outstanding end to end university experience. The College currently re-invests a larger proportion of its HFI than many providers due to a range of factors. These include: we are only 2 years in to providing support and still have set-up costs of some systems and services; the lack of economies of scale compared to large HEIs; the reduction in Student opportunity funding (with a smaller amount gained back through bids for NCOP funding than was removed); the large proportion of HFI students who meet the criteria for the higher amount bursary; and of course the ambition to support our core mission to provide opportunities to disadvantaged communities in Pennine Lancashire to 'build futures and change lives'.

The overall Access and Participation investment made for 19-20 is £650,500 which represents a 66.3% investment of our higher fee income. This is disaggregated in the following way; the access investment is £88,000 (9% HFI), success investment is £237,000 (24.2% HFI) and progression investment is £14,500 (1.5% HFI). The investment in financial support is £311,000 (31.7% HFI) a significant proportion of which (£257,000) is invested in the Burnley Bursary offer the remaining investment being £19,000 focused on under-represented groups and £25,00 invested to support hardship funding.

The activity investment goes beyond that which is countable for Access and Participation with an additional £583,500 being invested with £411,000 of that being invested in success activity the focus being on reducing non-continuation. There has already been a significant investment made in staffing for our Student Support team where we have allocated staffing specific to meet the prospective and current university students support needs. Our Safeguarding team has an additional member specifically focused on our university students, we have invested in Big White Wall to provide 24/7 mental health support for our university students. Alongside this we have allocated specific academic and pastoral support within the teaching divisions and continue to invest in small class sizes. As we move forward and our partnerships evolve organisationally we must have access to data systems that enable us to track our student cohort to ensure we further improve success and progression for underrepresented groups. These data systems alongside the OFFA toolkit will enable us to look in more detail at the intersectional nature of the challenges faced by students from underrepresented groups in relation to access, success and progression.

Significant further capital investment is also being made within our student study areas we intend to invest in staffing so we are able to provide 24 hour access to study spaces. This investment is a direct result of feedback from our mature students, many of whom have family responsibilities, and require a more flexible campus so they can access study spaces without incurring additional childcare costs. Alongside this each curriculum area develops projects to support retention and achievement, including enhanced induction activities, enhanced tutorial support including group and 1:1 programmes, a series of academic support skill sessions, 1:1 academic advice sessions, group building initiatives such as residential and away days. Increased provision of dedicated teaching facilities for our students on our university programmes, especially those on strongly vocational programmes in areas such as engineering, construction and computing/digital media should further strengthen identification with the university student cohort, and this will particularly support retention of one of our key target groups, white working class males. We are also developing our attendance monitoring schemes as we recognise early investigation and follow up of potentially problematic attendance can have an impact on retention. We are specifically targeting white working-class males as we have recognised that retention for this group is slightly lower than average, and students from minority ethnic communities. These groups, plus those in financial hardship, will also benefit from the continued expansion of our range of Foundation Entry Year 0 programmes, for which we have held a lower fee of £6000. Students with disabilities are offered 1:1 guidance and support where appropriate, equipment loans, training on the use of learning technologies, and adjustment to learning and/or assessment materials as appropriate; we have a dedicated disability support manager who co-ordinates this work. We are introducing a new Health and Wellness package for HE students, recognising that physical and emotional health is a significant factor in the retention of many of our key target groups, especially those for low socio-economic backgrounds. We are continuing to explore ways to further develop our careers and employability support, including new VLE based materials.

### **Provision of Information to Students**

Students will be able to access this plan via the website where it is clearly displayed alongside our policies and procedures.

The financial support available is accessible on the website where it is clearly signposted under fees and finance. The information is also provided for students at interview, as well as applicant days and induction events by specialist course teams as well as student support teams. The support team also provide guidance on finances at advice and support sessions in schools, information is pushed to students during the admissions process and during careers guidance sessions.

Establishing our presence within the UCAS admissions system will also allow us to highlight our offer to prospective applicants as well as clearly outlining our fees for the courses offered.

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<sup>i</sup> The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 (Department for Communities and Local Government) September 2015

<sup>ii</sup> ILR Postcode Analysis Report (students with a BB postcode)

<sup>iii</sup> 55% of Current HE students are in the 3 lowest deciles using the governments Index of Multiple Deprivation <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

<sup>iv</sup> Mature and Young as defined in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework Specification, October 2017, page44.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/658490/Teaching\\_Excellent\\_and\\_Student\\_Outcomes\\_Framework\\_Specification.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658490/Teaching_Excellent_and_Student_Outcomes_Framework_Specification.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> Mature and Young as defined in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework Specification, October 2017, page44.

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<sup>vi</sup> Mature and Young as defined in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework Specification, October 2017, page44.

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