Supporting Disadvantaged Learners to Progress to University

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Coming up

- Understanding the Widening Participation (WP) agenda

- Different measures of disadvantage

- How can you support your students?

- Contextual Admissions and Supported Entry Routes
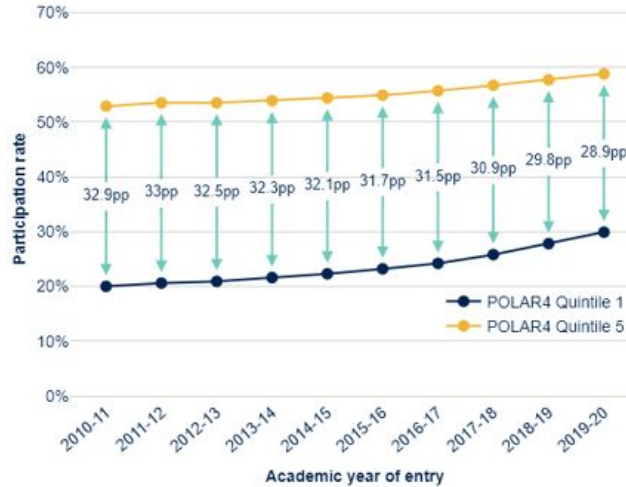
- Question and answer session

Are we making progress on WP?

Participation rate chart by Academic year of entry:

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Gap	32.9pp	33pp	32.5pp	32.3pp	32.1pp	31.7pp	31.5pp	30.9pp	29.8pp	28.9pp

- POLAR4 Quintile 1
- POLAR4 Quintile 5

Source: individual student data HESA, ILR, POLAR classification of postcodes

Impact of covid on WP progression to HE

- A fifth of university applicants (19%) have changed their mind about their university attendance this autumn or have yet to decide. Working class students were more likely to have changed their mind.
- Almost half (48%) of applicants feel the COVID-19 health crisis will have a negative impact on their chances of getting into their first-choice university. Working class applicants were more likely to be worried about the negative impact (51%, compared to 43% from middle class homes).
- Applicants from working class backgrounds were twice as likely to have insufficient access to internet access, devices for learning or a suitable place to study, compared to those from middle class homes.

Sutton Trust report: COVID-19 and Social Mobility
Impact Brief #2: University Access & Student Finance

Impact of covid on WP progression to HE

What have we done to support students?

Newcastle:
- Increased offering of virtual information and guidance events
- Increased opportunity to speak to current students
- Virtual supported entry routes
- Admissions support
- IT support scheme
- Hardship funds and rent rebates

Sheffield:
- Live virtual Open Days & campus tours
- 'Chat to US' online forum & 'Talk to Sheffield' bookable live chats with current students
- 'Sheffield Live' university life & online subject taster sessions
- Admissions, IT & financial support
- Increased range of outreach content for schools & colleges

Different Measures of Disadvantage

Conversation between schools and universities about disadvantage can get complicated:

Schools –Pupil premium
- Free school meals (Ever 6)
- Adopted from care/care experienced students
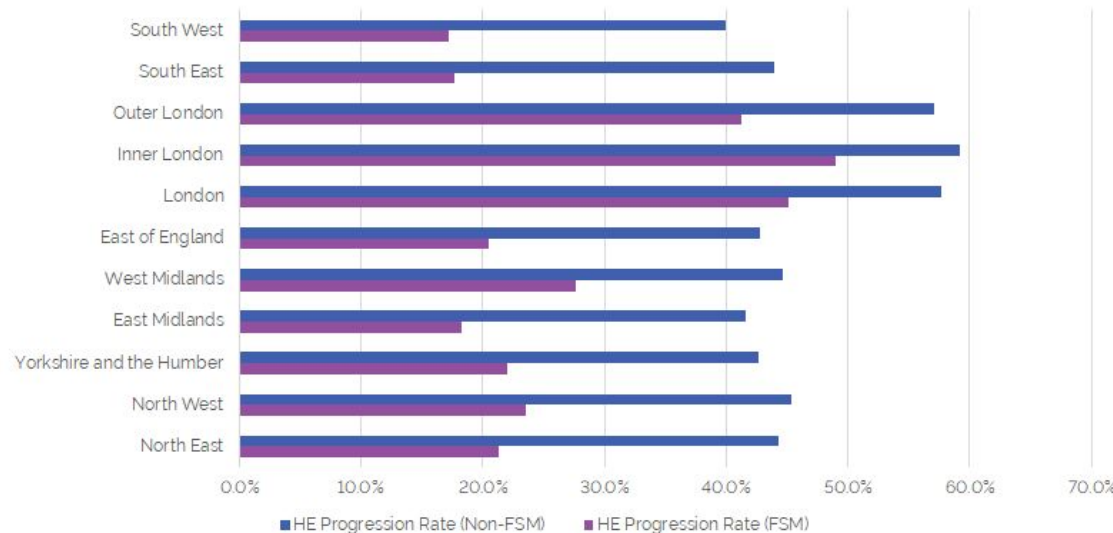- Service child (Ever 6)

Universities
- This varies hugely between institutions:
- "POLAR" geographical –looks at participation rate in the census ward in which the pupil lives
- These kind of geographical measures tend to correlate with socio-economic background

Regional Variation in University Access

Regional Variation in University Access

Region	HE Progression Rate
South West	
South East	
Outer London	
Inner London	
London	
East of England	
West Midlands	
East Midlands	
Yorkshire and the Humber	
North West	
North East	

0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0% 60.0% 70.0%

■ HE Progression Rate (Non-FSM) ■ HE Progression Rate (FSM)

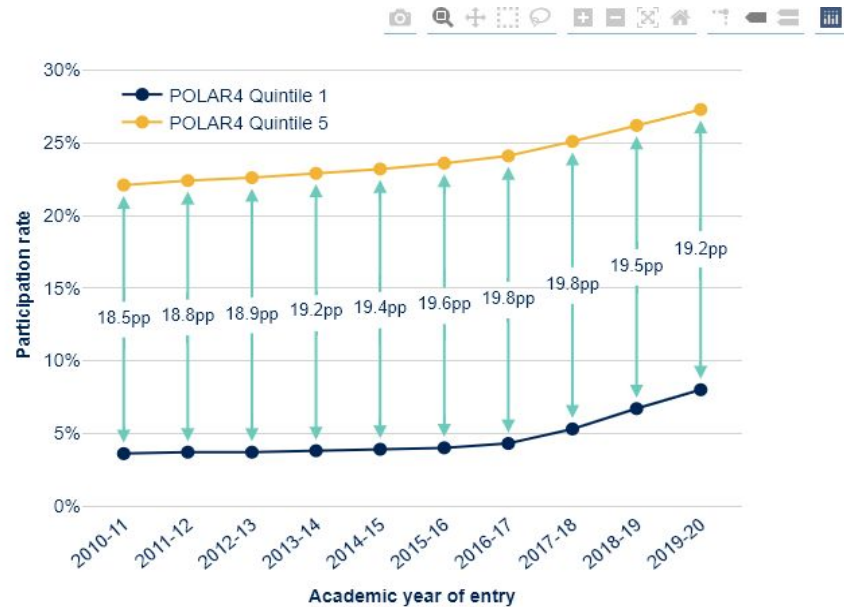**HE Progression Rate (Free School Meals)**

26.3%

The progression rate for Free School Meal pupils is unchanged since 2017/18. The progression rate gap between non-Free School Meal and Free School Meal pupils has increased to 18.8 percentage points

Source: Department for Education (2018/19)

Determinants of University Access

- Researchers agree that the best way to enable young people to progress to university is to attain well at school
- The correlation between attainment (including at KS4) and university access is very strong, and this correlation is even stronger for certain subjects
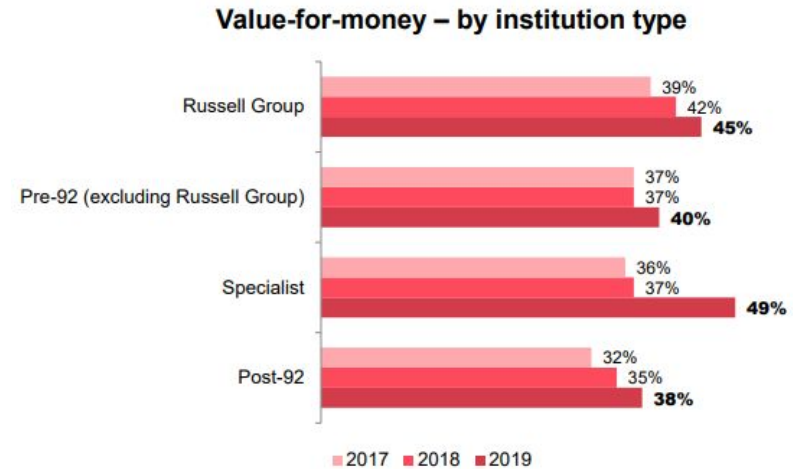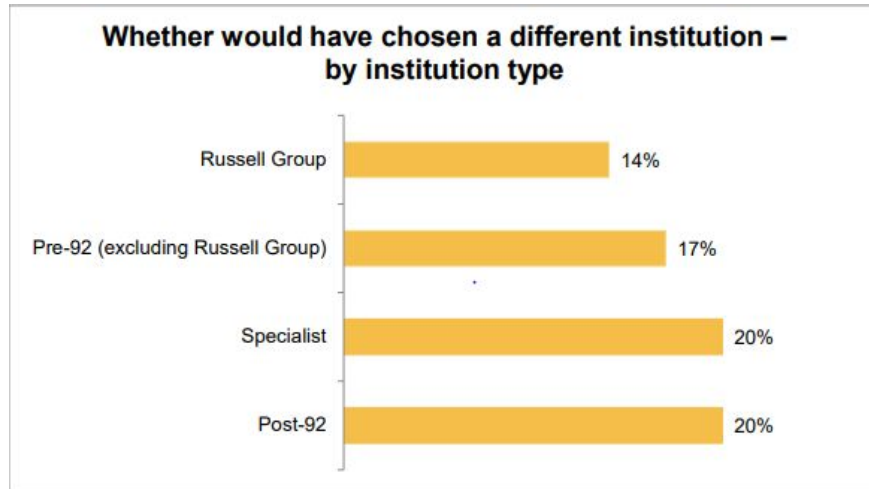

Source: individual student data HESA, ILR, POLAR classification of postcodes

Challenging Misconceptions about Competitive Universities

Whether would have chosen a different institution – by institution type

Russell Group — 14%
Pre-92 (excluding Russell Group) — 17%
Specialist — 20%
Post-92 — 20%

Value-for-money – by institution type

Russell Group — 39% / 42% / 45%
Pre-92 (excluding Russell Group) — 37% / 37% / 40%
Specialist — 36% / 37% / 49%
Post-92 — 32% / 35% / 38%

2017   2018   2019

The Guardian University Guide 2020, HEPI Student
Academic Experience survey 2020

Widening Participation and Social Mobility

The under-representation of disadvantaged students is slightly more pronounced at more competitive universities.

Research carried out by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), in 2020 shows that:

- Women's earnings increase by £100k on average with a degree and £130k for men over the course of their working life – after student loan payments and taxes are factored in
- Graduates will earn on average 20% more over their working life than those who did not go to university

Being a graduate is also associated with a wide range of other positive outcomes (e.g. better health, life expectancy and civic engagement)

Contextual Admissions

- Traditional Admissions Process
  - Predicted or actual performance in examinations
  - The quality of a candidate's personal statement, including work experience completed etc.
  - The teacher's reference
  - Performance in an interview or in an additional admissions test
  - Extenuating circumstances such as illness or bereavement

- "Contextual admissions" practices involve using the same factors as in the traditional process but with some extra factors included to build up a more holistic picture of a candidate

Contextual Factors

1. Individual level: First generation at university, in care or carer, household income, disability, refugee, asylum seeker, traveller
2. Area level: Postcode used to either estimate socio-economic status (Acorn, IMD etc.) or determine rate of HE participation in the area (e.g. POLAR4)
3. School level: Attainment at KS4 and/or KS5, school type, progression rate to HE, average economic circumstances of pupils
4. Participation in outreach Summer Schools, Widening Participation programmes linked to universities (not always transferrable)

Contextual Factors

These factors may play a role in determining:

- Whether an applicant receives an offer
- The grades asked for in a conditional offer
- Whether to invite a candidate for an interview
- Entitlement for scholarships and bursaries
- Entitlement to apply to certain courses (e.g. foundation years)
- Whether to provide further consideration at clearing / prioritisation for near misses

What can you do to support your students?

- Encourage students to start thinking about taking part in outreach activity at an early stage
- Encourage students to research their eligibility for WP/Access schemes at the universities they are interested in
- Challenge their misconceptions about Higher Education
- Highlight contextual admissions policies as a key piece of reading when researching a university
- Make sure students factor in potential grade reductions when making their five UCAS choices
- Students can mention contextual information in their personal statement
- Use the POLAR postcode checker

Contextual Admissions Policies

Russell Group

https://www.advancingaccess.ac.uk/cpd-resources/content/how-do-admissions-processes-work#collapse-19

Newcastle

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/applications-offers/decisions/

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/applications-offers/decisions/postcode-checker/

Sheffield

https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/assess

https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/contextual-data

Any questions?