

Barnsley College

Summary: Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

This document provides a summary of Barnsley College's Access Participation Plan for 2025-26 to 2028-29. The full Access and Participation Plan can be located [here](#)

Access and Participation Plan Overview

Barnsley College aims to widen access and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups, addressing challenges faced by students from low-income backgrounds, ethnic minorities, and other disadvantaged demographics.

The plan outlines strategic objectives and intervention strategies to enhance student experience and outcomes from 2025 to 2029.

Risks to Equality of Opportunity

The College identifies significant gaps in access, progression, and success rates among different student groups, indicating a lack of equality of opportunity. Key risks include socio-economic awarding and participation gaps, as well as lower graduate outcomes compared to national averages.

- **Indication 1:** Socio-economic awarding gap; lower achievement rates for students from low participation neighbourhoods.
- **Indication 2:** Socio-economic participation gap; wider progression rates for low-income students compared to peers.
- **Indication 3:** Graduate outcomes; lower rates of further study or graduate-level jobs than the national average.

Identified Underlying Risks

The College recognises six underlying risks contributing to the identified gaps in equality of opportunity. These risks include insufficient information and guidance, lack of knowledge and skills, cost pressures, insufficient academic support, inadequate personal support, and mental health challenges.

- **Risk 1:** Information and guidance; underrepresented students lack sufficient information about higher education.
- **Risk 2:** Knowledge and skills; unequal opportunities to develop necessary skills for higher education.
- **Risk 3:** Cost pressures; financial burdens affecting course completion.
- **Risk 4:** Insufficient academic support; lack of personalized support and inclusive curriculum design.
- **Risk 5:** Insufficient personal support; limited access to support services and extracurricular activities.
- **Risk 6:** Mental health; challenges in coping with daily life and studies.

Strategic Objectives for Access and Participation

The College has set three key objectives to address the identified risks and improve access and participation in higher education by 2030. These objectives focus on increasing access for low socio-economic backgrounds, improving high-grade outcomes, and enhancing employability skills.

- **Objective 1:** Increase access for low socio-economic backgrounds by 2030.
- **Objective 2:** Improve high-grade outcomes for students from high deprivation areas by 2030.
- **Objective 3:** Enhance employability skills leading to better graduate outcomes by 2030.

Intervention Strategies and Expected Outcomes

The college has developed six intervention strategies aimed at mitigating the identified risks and achieving the strategic objectives. Each strategy includes specific activities, targets, and expected outcomes.

- **Intervention Strategy 1:** Information and guidance; mentorship programs, financial literacy workshops, and community awareness campaigns to raise aspirations.
- **Intervention Strategy 2:** Knowledge and skills; tutoring services and skills bootcamps to develop necessary skills for higher education.
- **Intervention Strategy 3:** Cost pressures; bursaries and hardship vouchers to alleviate financial burdens on students.
- **Intervention Strategy 4:** Insufficient academic support; development of a digital platform for 24/7 academic support.
- **Intervention Strategy 5:** Personal support; enhanced induction programs and specialist careers advice for underrepresented students.
- **Intervention Strategy 6:** Mental health; a mental health buddy scheme to provide support and resilience training.

Whole Provider Approach to Equality and Diversity

Barnsley College emphasises a whole-provider approach to equality and diversity, ensuring that all staff and students are engaged in promoting inclusivity. The College's vision is to transform lives through education, supported by strong leadership and a commitment to equality and diversity principles.

- **Vision:** Transforming lives through education.
- **Commitment:** 97% of staff support the college's purpose and direction.
- **Governance:** Regular monitoring of equality and diversity initiatives by the governing body.

Student Consultation and Engagement

The College actively involves students in the development of the Access and Participation Plan through surveys and focus groups. Feedback from students has been integral in shaping the strategies and interventions outlined in the plan.

- **Consultation Activities:** Surveys and focus groups with HE students to gather opinions on proposed strategies.
- **Student Involvement:** Student Governor contributed to the plan's design and revisions.
- **Ongoing Engagement:** Student representatives will participate in monitoring and evaluating the plan's success.

Evaluation and Monitoring of the Plan

Barnsley College is committed to continuous evaluation and monitoring of the Access and Participation Plan to assess the impact of intervention strategies. A Theory of Change model will be utilised to measure success and inform future practices.

- **Evaluation Methods:** Surveys, feedback, data on attainment, retention, and progression.
- **Annual Reporting:** A comprehensive report will be published to communicate progress to stakeholders.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The college will respond to evaluations to enhance practices and interventions.