The University of Liverpool

Access Agreement - Entry 2017-18

Contacts for Enquiries:

Claire Brown
Director of Marketing
cbrown@liverpool.ac.uk

Patrick Hackett
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
phackett@liverpool.ac.uk
Contents

Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 4

The 2017-18 University of Liverpool Access Agreement ........................................................................ 4

1. Fees, Student Numbers and Fee Income ............................................................................................ 7
   1.1 Fees for new fee-regulated part-time entrants in 2017-18 ............................................................ 8
   1.2 Estimated number of entrants at each fee level .............................................................................. 8
   1.3 Real term rises in the fee for 2017-18 onwards .............................................................................. 8

2. Access .................................................................................................................................................. 8
   2.1 Assessment of Access Record ....................................................................................................... 8
   2.2 Local participation and setting the scene ...................................................................................... 9
   2.3 Outreach at the University of Liverpool ....................................................................................... 9
   2.4 Liverpool Scholars Programme .................................................................................................... 11
   2.5 Strategic relationships with target Schools and Colleges .............................................................. 12
   2.6 Looked After Children and Care Leavers .................................................................................... 13
   2.7 Mature Students ............................................................................................................................ 13
   2.8 Enhancing community and schools outreach .............................................................................. 14
   2.9 Collaboration and Partnerships supporting Access ..................................................................... 14
   2.10 Fair Admissions and Contextual Data ........................................................................................ 16

3. Student Success and Retention ........................................................................................................ 17
   3.1 Student Support ............................................................................................................................ 18
   3.2 Peer Mentoring .............................................................................................................................. 18
   3.3 Disabled Students .......................................................................................................................... 19
   3.4 Diversity and Equality ................................................................................................................... 19

4. Progression ......................................................................................................................................... 20
   4.1 Graduate employability ................................................................................................................ 20
   4.2 Progression to postgraduate study .............................................................................................. 22

5. Expenditure on Financial Support, Retention and Success .............................................................. 22

6. Bursaries and Fee Discounts ........................................................................................................... 23

7. Targets and Milestones ..................................................................................................................... 23

8. Monitoring and evaluation ............................................................................................................... 24

9. Provision of information to prospective students ............................................................................ 25

Appendix 2 Widening Participation – an Overview ............................................................................. 29
Tables and Figures

Table 1 University of Liverpool fee structure, 2017-18 6
Table 2 University of Liverpool WP rankings 2016 6
Table 3 University of Liverpool Retention Performance 15
Figure 1 Model of Provision for the Wellbeing Framework 16
Introduction

‘The University values diversity; we are an inclusive institution, committed to the provision of opportunity for those with the capacity to benefit as individuals but also as members of a wider community dedicated to a sustainable and just society. …. We will provide opportunities for all our students, irrespective of background, to become highly employable and well-connected global citizens.”

University of Liverpool Strategy 2026

Widening Participation has been a key Strategic Aim at the University of Liverpool within previous and the most recent Strategic Plan and the University’s record in this area is exemplary. In the English Russell Group, the University is currently ranked:

- 1st for the recruitment of students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods;
- 2nd for the recruitment of students from State Schools and Colleges;
- 3rd for the proportion of students recruited from Lower Socio-Economic Groups (NS-SEC 4-7)

The University of Liverpool’s Strategy 2026 has recently been finalised following a period of review and consultation. In drafting the University’s 2017-18 Access Agreement, we have focused our approach on targeting groups of students underrepresented in our institution, reviewing our financial support offer, as well as strengthening our commitment to developing an evidence base and enhancing success rates for all students.

Within the past year we have also done much to implement learning from an appreciative inquiry undertaken by Dr Mark O’Brien (Widening Participation and Fair Access at The University of Liverpool: Realistic Evaluation for an HE setting): https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/cll/reports/Widening-Participation-and-Fair-Access-at-the-University-of-Liverpool.pdf ). Research also revealed a positive impact of financial support upon progression and noted that this interacted with other ‘inclusivity factors’ within academic schools and departments. In line with OFFA’s call for HEIs to share their findings this research was published in a leading academic journal. (O’Brien, M., ‘Student finance, progression and ‘inclusivity’: indicative data from the University of Liverpool’, Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, Volume 17, Number 3, October 2015, 74-88 (15).

The 2017-18 University of Liverpool Access Agreement

This Access Agreement represents the University’s overarching Widening Participation Strategy. Contained in the Agreement is a restating of the University’s commitment to extending widening participation, an overview of the institution’s performance against a range of WP indicators, and an ambitious list of future targets and milestones.

Underpinning the Access Agreement is a direct collaboration between our three faculties, professional services departments (Widening Participation, Careers and Employability, Strategic Planning, Student Administration and Support, and Marketing and Communications) and the Guild of Students. Each faculty has a Widening Participation action plan which is developed in consultation with professional services, following the submission of the Access Agreement. The Guild of Students
is represented in all groups that relate to the Access Agreement and collaborates closely with the University to ensure the Access Agreement reflects the views of our students.

In particular, the 2017-18 Access Agreement has been developed around an understanding of our current performance in the sector, our own local picture, as well as the strategic guidance published recently by OFFA and highlighted by the government in their recent Green Paper. Our long term priorities for widening participation are:

- A student lifecycle approach
- Greater collaboration and partnership at every level
- Evidence based practice
- Monitoring and evaluating the success and retention rates for all student groups
- Ensuring Access Agreement expenditure supports all areas of need within access, student success and progression.

Monitoring of the Access Agreement will be undertaken by the Widening Participation Working Group via a detailed implementation plan, which in turn will report to the Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation Committee. Each January, a detailed Monitoring Report is submitted to HEFCE and OFFA which provides a statistical update on the University’s performance against its targets and milestones.

**Diversity and Equality**

The University of Liverpool is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment for all students. The University recognises its responsibilities to eliminate discrimination and promote equality or opportunity in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, for people with the protected characteristics of:

- Age,
- Disability,
- Gender reassignment,
- Pregnancy and maternity,
- Marriage and civil partnership,
- Race (including nationality),
- Religious belief and non-belief,
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation.

The drafting of this Access Agreement has been done in accordance with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 for the need to have due regard for the impact of our policies, criteria and practices on different equality groups, and has been informed by the analysis of key student demographic data sets, in particular those relating to student age, disability, gender and race.

This Access Agreement is a key enabler of the implementation of the University’s Equality Framework 2016-2026 which identifies 6 student Strategic Equality Objectives, to:

1. Make significant and sustained improvements in the participation rates for the most disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, and in the diversity of the student population,
2. Improve student retention and progression rates for the most disadvantaged and underrepresented groups,
3. Improve degree attainment outcomes and reduce any unexplained degree gap differentials for different student groups,
4. Improve progression to postgraduate study for people from disadvantaged groups and narrow the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged groups,

5. Reduce inequalities in graduate level employment outcomes from different groups and narrow the gap in employment outcomes between advantaged and disadvantaged groups,

6. Foster good relations between different communities by providing opportunities to come together, learn and understand one another.

This Access Agreement sets out how we will work towards achieving these strategic objectives in the academic year 2017-2018.

The University collects student demographic data at enrolment on the protected characteristics of

- Age,
- Caring responsibility (parent etc.),
- Disability,
- Gender Reassignment
- Race (including nationality),
- Religious belief and non-belief,
- Sex,
- Sexual orientation.

Explorer, the University’s Data Warehouse is available to all departments and provides the key data sets on applications, new starters, all enrolments, progression and degree attainment. The highlighted equality categories (above) are provided through these Explorer spaces with additional reports produced by the Diversity and Equality Team.

These data sets will be used to inform and report on progress to the Widening Participation Group, the Equality Working Group and other relevant committees. Additional data may be collected as and when required in order to evaluate specific projects where data is not centrally available. This may include conducting equality analysis/impact assessment processes.

The Widening Participation Working Group is responsible for the implementation of relevant equality objectives and actions that relate to access, outreach and widening participation. The Diversity & Equality officer is a member of the Widening Participation Working Group as part of a linked up approach to the implementation of the equality objectives.

The University is a Bronze Athena SWAN award holder; in addition 9 Schools and Institutes hold department level Athena SWAN awards. Addressing gender imbalance within the student population is a key area of activity within these departments, and a new Gender Equality Officer was appointed in 2015 with the aim of supporting this activity and further developing the Athena SWAN charter within Humanities and Social Sciences.

Currently, data is routinely collected regarding the numbers of young people with disabilities, and also ethnic origin, for many of the WP-specific programmes and activities run by the University.

From 2015-16 the University also began implementing an additional target to increase the number of full time degree entrants from ethnic minority groups. We will also continue to fund the ‘Fast Trackers’ mentoring project for local Somali and Yemeni students, raising aspirations and attainment. This specific project was commended within the Widening Access Initiative section at the 2015 National Education Opportunities Network awards in London.

All following sections of this Access Agreement have been developed in accordance with this equality statement and objectives.
**Student Lifecycle**

The University has continued to follow the three stage cycle for its Widening Participation activities:

1. **Access - Ensuring that students from disadvantaged background can access HE**

   Sustained outreach from primary onwards: pre-16 Outreach focuses on awareness-raising/progression to higher education as both an option and a choice (ages 9-16)

   Post-16 and Community Outreach: focus on good IAG and attainment-raising activities linked directly to choice and attainment as well as preparation to apply (age 16+)

   Fair Admissions: Scholars, Realising Opportunities, Go Higher and Year 0/2+2 schemes, which allow for well-articulated progression routes for learners (16+ years and adults returning to education)

2. **Student Success and Retention - Activities to support students in achieving their potential**

   Student Success and Retention: Peer Mentoring programmes, transition and induction events, financial support to support retention

   Student Support: established range of universal, targeted and specialist support services for students, Wellbeing framework to provide information and structures for all students, Mental Health First Aid training, Education Strategy

3. **Progression - to further study and/or employment suited to their qualifications and potential**

   Placements and internships: employer engagement links, targeted support for WP groups

   Mentoring: mentoring from alumni and relevant professional links for second years

   Financial support: employability bursary for students from low income households to attend interviews, support with internships, postgraduate HEFCE bursaries

1. **Fees, Student Numbers and Fee Income**

   The average fee charged by the University in 2017-18 will be £8,998. When adjusted for all types of financial support, this figure stands at £8,374. The maximum fee charged will be £9,250. The University’s fee structure for the academic year 2017-18 for new system students is as follows.

   **Table 1 University of Liverpool fee structure, 2017-18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Type</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First degree</td>
<td>£9,250 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Year (of specified courses based at Carmel College, St Helens and Birkenhead 6th Form College)</td>
<td>£5,140 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year in Industry</td>
<td>£1,850 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Abroad</td>
<td>£1,385 p.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   7
1.1 Fees for new fee-regulated part-time entrants in 2017-18
For all eligible undergraduate programmes, students studying on a part-time basis will be charged pro-rata to the maximum allowable fee of £9,250. No part-time student will be charged more than £6,935 in an academic year, in line with the fees regulations. Financial support for these students will be available on a pro-rata basis.

1.2. Estimated number of entrants at each fee level
The predicted numbers of entrants by fee level is presented in Table 1 of the OFFA spreadsheets.

1.3. Real term rises in the fee for 2017-18 onwards.
We will apply annual increases in line with the amount set by the Government.

2. Access

2.1. Assessment of Access Record

The University recruits a greater proportion of its students from low participation neighbourhoods than any other English Russell Group university (HESA PI’s Table 1a 2014-15). Students at Liverpool are also more likely to be from households with below-average incomes, where few if any relatives have ever attended higher education.

Table 2 provides a summary of the University’s performance in terms of the recruitment of students from underrepresented social and economic categories.

Table 2 University of Liverpool WP Rankings 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Liverpool</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Russell Group</td>
<td>5.91%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

English Russell Group Ranking (proportion)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard benchmark</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: 1, 2, 3: HESA PI’s Table 1a, 2014-15: Young FT first degree entrants.

Sources: 1, 2, 3: HESA PI’s Table 1a, 2014-15: Young FT first degree entrants.
In the past year, progress has continued to be made against the University’s WP benchmarks. For example, for the academic session 2014-15:

- We continue to see an increase in the percentage of full-time entrants from low participation neighbourhoods to the University – benchmark: 9.1%; achieved: 10.2%
- Recruitment for those state schools and colleges has been maintained at 87.7% (exceeding a benchmark of 85.9%)

### 2.2 Local participation and setting the scene

HEFCE reports on trends in young participation show that there are large differences in the participation rates of young people across the different regions of England. While participation rates have increased in all regions the increase has been particularly strong in London, the gap in participation between London and the rest of the country has therefore widened. This participation gap is widest between young people in London and the North East, with the former being +43 per cent more likely to participate in HE than the latter. In the North West young participation has increased steadily with a noticeable increase in 2008 onwards. We saw a similarly large increase in overall student numbers at the University of Liverpool from 2008 onwards. In fact around 50% of our undergraduate intake is recruited from the North West region showing that we as an institution have had a significant role to play in increasing overall participation rates in the North West.

#### Table Trends in Young Participation in Higher Education (HEFCE 2013)

![Graph showing participation rates across regions](image)

#### 2.3 Outreach at the University of Liverpool

The University of Liverpool’s outreach activities target the following under-represented groups:

- Those living in low participation neighborhoods
- Those attending schools located in areas identified as within the Index of Multiple Deprivation and with high percentage of students on free school meals
- Young people who have been in local authority care
- Inclusion of students who may have a disability, those that come from specific ethnic minority backgrounds and gender underrepresentation in specific programme areas
Pre-16 Outreach: Target Audience: Ages 9-16

At the University of Liverpool we have seen the positive impact in the community and on our students of engaging with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds from a young age. Our outreach activities begin in year 5 primary and continue up until post 16 and with other targeted groups of learners.

Objectives at Pre-16:

- Ensure a strong progression from our pre-16 activity onto the Liverpool Scholars programme
- Ensure there is gender balance within outreach programmes
- Expand opportunities for young people from the care system and those young adults with caring responsibilities
- Track the educational attainment and progress of participants within outreach activities through the use of the Higher Education Access Tracker
- Embed diversity and equality consideration within all outreach activities.

The University continues to work with the feeder primary schools to our partner secondary schools in order to provide early awareness raising programmes targeted at Year 5/6 (Key Stage 2) children, and then continue with partner/associate schools with Year 7 (Key Stage 3), and Year 8 (Key Stage 3) interventions. In addition, subject-specific summer schools are offered for Year 10 students (Key Stage 4).

Long term/Sustained Outreach with a focus on the professions

Merseyside Young Medics is a pilot three-five year programme that began in 2015 aimed at groups of students from University of Liverpool partner schools which highlights and promotes careers in Medicine. Medicine is a subject area in which students from disadvantaged groups are typically under-represented and evidence shows that there are significantly lower proportions of state school students within medicine than the overall cohort. The young people enrol in Year 9 and are taken through to Year 11 with the option of an additional two year programme depending on grade success at GCSE. They are also signposted to the University of Liverpool Scholars programme. The students take part in a mixture of hands-on workshops and career focused lectures delivered by current Medical students at the University. Merseyside Young Medics works in collaboration with the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences and The Guild of Students. This pilot derived from a long term outreach programme that we ran with students in year 9-11. This had proven to have good success rates in raising aspirations in local young people, but we have re-purposed the programme to better utilize the expertise of our School of Medicine as well concentrating our efforts on a profession and degree programme where there is under-representation. This development of this pilot coincided with the Medical Schools Council Selecting for Excellence Report which highlighted the need for long term outreach starting in primary schools. As such as we have worked closely with our School of Medicine to develop this pilot as well as working with our Guild of Students so that a core part of the programme is student-led. EdMed, a student society of medical students leads on many of the workshops and this year EdVet and EdDent have also been established. Alongside this three year programme we are also running a Year 12 Medical Summer School this year for the first time and we have begun a series of primary school workshops run by medical students.
Academic support and mentoring

We work in partnership with local schools and colleges to raise attainment and to support school performance. There is extensive mentoring and academic support offered to all our partner schools. This focuses on students in year 9-11 and is predominantly delivered by undergraduate and postgraduate students in appropriate degree programmes. This will be expanded further to a larger number of schools in 2017 by providing lunchtime mentoring. We also offer similar evening mentoring sessions for Liverpool Supplementary Schools, Saturday sessions for key stage 3-4 young people who have been in care, as well as GCSE-revision classes at the University for students from the local Yemeni and Somali community (the award-winning Fast Trackers programme). This year we have also run a PhD student into schools programme to provide further interaction for our schools with our researchers. We have enhanced this programme this year by working on a pilot with the Brilliant Club – to place additional postgraduate researchers into a wider net of schools and also to give school students the chance to work with these researchers on an academic assignment.

Post-16 and Community Outreach: Target Audience: Ages 16-18, vulnerable groups of students

- Potential applicants to HE living in low participation neighbourhoods
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) Students
- Care leavers
- Disabled students
- Young Carers
- Refugee students and their parents/carers
- Target schools and colleges
- Realising Opportunities Group and Liverpool Scholars

Objectives for 2017-18:

1. Assess and re-balance the gender and ethnic diversity within all our outreach programmes, in particular the Liverpool Scholars programme and to support target areas within the academic departments at The University of Liverpool (where there is underrepresentation)
2. Build upon the application and entry rates to the University of Liverpool for local partner schools
3. Work with targeted groups of learners who are marginalized in HE with particular focus on disabled learners and young adult carers
4. Expand academic and attainment mentoring programmes

Young Carers

There are estimated to be 375,000 young adult carers (YAC) in the UK aged between the ages of 15-25 (Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities, Carers Trust, 2014). Representatives from the Student Support Services (SSS) and Widening Participation (WPO) are represented on the ‘Liverpool Universities and College Steering Group for Young Adult Carers in HE and FE’ (LUCS) facilitated by the charity Barnardo’s, on behalf of the Local Authority. SSS and WPO have now established an internal working group and from initial meetings an action plan for this area of work has been developed. Key actions include running an awareness session for staff at the University (working with a number of local universities) as well as supporting a residential for young carers via the Merseyside Network for Collaborative Outreach.

2.4 Liverpool Scholars Programme

The University of Liverpool Scholars programme aims to support students from traditionally under-represented backgrounds with applications and entry to the University of Liverpool and the wider higher education sector. The programme consists of a range of academic activities, including skills workshops, lectures and seminars designed to help prepare students for university life. Each student
is supported by an academic tutor. Evidence suggests that the programme is highly effective in terms of building students’ confidence and enhancing their UCAS application.

In addition, for those students who complete the programme, Scholars provides:

- A guaranteed conditional offer of a place at the University of Liverpool (this offer is reduced by the equivalent of 40 UCAS points);
- A non-repayable University of Liverpool financial bursary of £3000 per year to help towards tuition fees and living expenses.

One of the key initiatives of the University for 2017 onwards is an enhanced focus on the transition, completion and employment rates for those undergraduate students who have entered the University of Liverpool via the Liverpool Scholars scheme.

2.5 Strategic relationships with target Schools and Colleges

The University has a strategy for working with partner and target schools and colleges. The University also has three main Associate Colleges – Carmel College, The Sixth Form College, Birkenhead and Wirral Metropolitan College. These three institutions deliver part of the University’s programmes, including a Year 0 route to enable access to Dentistry, Medicine, Health Sciences and Veterinary Science for students from non-traditional backgrounds. In addition the University co-sponsors the North Liverpool Academy and the Liverpool Life Sciences University Technical College (UTC).

The implementation of the strategy supports the University’s ethos that the most effective way of working with schools and colleges to improve access to HE, is to support capacity building at school level and to achieve lasting culture change in schools, particularly where HE participation rates are low. The core activity of the strategy is delivered in a joint approach by the UK Recruitment Team and the Widening Participation and Outreach Team, with wider support from the faculties and other professional service areas, who also report in figures on their outreach activity. This approach ensures that all work with schools and colleges across the University are managed in a more integrated and effective way. This year we are also scoping out the feasibility of establishing a Schools Governors initiative to support our local schools and to engage a wider range of staff (with a wide range of skills) in our strategic relationships with these schools.

The UK Recruitment Team has a list of 345 target schools and colleges. The team engages with these schools and colleges through support in school with progression to Higher Education. The team is represented at HE fairs and offers a number of talks and workshops on topics such as UCAS and student finance. Schools and colleges are encouraged onto campus for a visit/residential; throughout the year a number of masterclasses and subject specific events and lectures are available. The team also delivers a range of events and conferences for teachers and HE Advisors.

In order to raise awareness of the University of Liverpool in schools and colleges in London and the South East of England, additional target schools and colleges have been identified in these regions. The University’s London campus is being used as a base for recruitment activities for Year 12 students and teachers and HE Advisors.

The Widening Participation and Outreach Team have a growing target list of local partner and associate primary and secondary schools on which it focuses its wide range of outreach activities. This focused approach to targeting aims to provide disadvantaged pupils with a long-term and sustained programme of activities throughout their school career that raises aspirations and awareness of HE, as well as supporting attainment and access. Between 2012 and 2015 the number
of applications to the University of Liverpool from partner and associate schools increased by 41%, highlighting the success of this model.

Schools are targeted on the following basis:

- Schools which have an above average proportion of pupils who are in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM); and
- Schools which have a high percentage of pupils living in one of the 13,000 most deprived lower super output areas (LSOA) in England, as identified by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

This year the University of Liverpool is host to the Russell Group universities’ teachers and advisors conference for the North of England. This will see around 200 teachers and advisors from across the country visit the University to work together with colleagues at these institutions to support more of their students into selective institutions. WP partner schools as well as schools with low progression to Russell Group institutions have been targeted for this conference.

2.6 Looked After Children and Care Leavers

The University continues to build on previous success in the support of care leavers. We have developed tailored communications to care leavers and enhanced the way that learners who have spent time in care are supported during the application process and in their progression to the University. Care leavers are contacted when their application is received to highlight the support available from the University and to provide applicants with the opportunity to give context to their application by adding a statement that will be considered alongside academic qualifications. Admissions staff liaise with Academic Admissions Tutors as appropriate to take account of personal circumstances during the admissions process and when results are received. Applicants who receive an offer can also access financial support to attend a post-offer Discovery Day to visit the University or to attend an interview and we use this opportunity to remind applicants of the support available to them and to signpost the Care Leavers’ Opportunity Bursary (£3000 per student for every year of their degree) available for our students. The Admissions Team, WP and Outreach and Student Support Services work closely to ensure that key contacts and support are clearly signposted and accessible to applicants, with pleasing results. In 2014/15 there was a 12% conversion rate from application to acceptance for care leavers compared to approximately 10.6% for Home/EU students for the University as a whole. Care leavers are also automatically given a WP flag as part of our work on contextual data, helping to ensure that they are given appropriate consideration during the admissions process. The University is continuing to focus on support for offer holders and at opportunities for intervention for applicants by exploring the reasons that applicants are given unsuccessful decisions.

2.7 Mature Students

We plan to bring further clarity and strength to our offer for mature and adult learners by bringing all pathways together into a coherent offer. We offer excellent pathways for adult learners, we value students with non-traditional qualifications and we wish to grow the number of students on programmes such as the Year 0 and 2 + 2 courses that we deliver jointly with local FE colleges on faculty-wide courses.

The University of Liverpool attracts a high number of mature learners when compared to the Russell Group of institutions, but when compared with local universities the proportion of mature learners is lower and we wish to ensure we are more representative of our community and that we are responsive to the needs of those groups. To increase the awareness of our courses amongst mature students we have developed a mature student’s action plan. Key actions include:

- Increase marketing and access for mature students (website, events etc)
• Ensure the learning and pastoral needs of adult learners are adequately met
• Promote evidence based practice in adult learner provision

2.8 Enhancing community and schools outreach
As part of our ongoing drive to increase outreach, we have sought to make the University’s considerable arts, museum and heritage collections more accessible to groups of school pupils (pre and post-16). As a leading Russell Group university, Liverpool has an extensive arts and heritage collection within the Victoria Gallery & Museum (VG&M) which we have been promoting effectively and visibly to local schools and the community. This has involved encouraging schools to make use of the VG&M learning sessions, its artworks and historical artefacts, and encouraging more school groups (and parents) to visit our campus-based museums. The VG&M has a large informal learning programme for families and adult learners, which can be promoted to schools also. Other areas of the institution such as our Libraries also carry out extensive outreach with schools and we intend to work towards capturing the scope and impact of this activity.

Close collaboration with the Guild of Students has resulted in an enhanced understanding and range of outreach activity. Through the various volunteering programmes run in the Guild (Green Schools, Societies in Schools, and Science in Schools) we are able to target jointly, share good practice and deliver widening participation work most effectively. Access Agreement targets include the outreach carried out in the Guild and we target schools institutionally so that we are building relationships with local schools across the whole institution. The Guild plays an active role in the construction of the University’s Access Agreement, offers free room usage for the Widening Participation and Outreach team and is a driver for widening participation in the University.

Liverpool Guild’s project ‘Green Schools’ sees students from the University visit schools across Merseyside and champion the importance of environmental sustainability. As part of this project, students work with school children to help them develop sustainability projects in their local community. In the Liverpool Guild’s Societies in Schools programme (run in conjunction with Widening Participation and Outreach) students visit local schools to deliver lessons usually based on the expertise in their society. Students use this opportunity to talk about the importance and value of University education, as well as developing their own skills which will help them gain future employment.

2.9 Collaboration and Partnerships supporting Access
At the University of Liverpool we work in partnership with other universities and providers to widen participation most effectively and to bring about national and local change more quickly. By 2017-18 we will be involved in five or more major partnerships, four national and one local. All have ambitions around widening participation and increasing opportunities for disadvantaged groups at their core.

Realising Opportunities
The University of Liverpool is a member of Realising Opportunities (RO), a unique collaborative partnership of research intensive universities developing and delivering a national fair access scheme which promotes social and geographic mobility for students from under-represented groups. RO has a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the longitudinal tracking of students through the HEAT database and UCAS.

The award-winning Realising Opportunities programme, developed through shared best practice, provides support for students through interventions designed to raise aspirations, develop skills and enable them to demonstrate their potential to succeed at a research intensive university. These interventions are offered locally and nationally and include a National Student Conference, ongoing
support and encouragement from a trained student e-mentor and an assessed academic element. Successful completion of RO will result in additional consideration given to applications through UCAS from all Partner universities, and the potential for an alternative offer worth up to 40 UCAS points.

Each participating institution has committed future funds to ensure the on-going delivery of RO to 31st July 2019. For 2017 – 2018 this will be a maximum of £37,000 per Partner.

In October 2015, UCAS undertook analysis of applicant data for RO students. The results demonstrated that RO is robust in its dual targeting of high attaining students from disadvantaged backgrounds; provided evidence of elevated application, offer and entry rates for RO students applying to HE against a UCAS-identified control group; highlighted that RO seems to ‘neutralise’ background differences across the different measures of disadvantage, and suggests that RO participants are more successful at getting offers from research intensive universities.

The Merseyside Network for Collaborative Outreach
The University of Liverpool is a member of MNCO (Merseyside Network for Collaborative Outreach). The network was established via HEFCE’s NNCO initiative and provides schools and colleges within Greater Merseyside with a Single Point of Contact (SPoC) to signpost teachers and advisors to relevant outreach activities at each of the partner organisations. In addition to developing a web portal (www.mnco.org.uk), the network has developed a series of projects targeted at disadvantaged groups and supporting resources for teachers, parents and carers.

The University of Liverpool is committed to continuing to deliver collaborative outreach beyond the initial funding period of December 2016, and will endeavour to work with other providers in the region to ensure schools in identified ‘cold spots’ are prioritised for outreach projects in order that those groups significantly under-represented in HE are targeted. The network will ensure those groups most in need of Information, Advice and Guidance pertaining to the accessibility, affordability and benefits of HE will be engaged with significantly in an impartial manner. Collaboration between partners will support efficiency of provision from institutions across the region, through development of a shared strategy focusing on key groups such as young white males from lower socio-economic groups, and those from specific black and minority ethnic communities.

Advancing Access
The University of Liverpool is a partner in Advancing Access, a national collaboration of 24 selective universities. We are working together with schools and colleges to develop and deliver continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers and advisors that supports student progression to selective universities and courses. Advancing Access has a particular focus on schools with low levels of progression to such universities. We are delivering the majority of CPD events and resources online to allow easy access for all schools, regardless of their location. Advancing Access complements the excellent work already carried out at the University of Liverpool and other partner institutions by engaging those areas that have historically been hard to reach and may be in geographic ‘cold spots’. It is a cost-effective approach to equipping teachers and advisors with the information they need to advise students with confidence. Initially funded through HEFCE’s collaborative outreach network scheme, further funding options are currently being explored.

National Education Opportunities Network (NEON)
The National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) is the professional organisation for access to HE in England with over 60 Higher Education Institution (HEI) members. In 2017-18 NEON will be providing opportunities for professional development and collaboration in the government key priority areas of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) learners, supporting those with disabilities, enabling greater progression for white disadvantaged males, as well as in the ensuring improvements in the
evaluation of access to higher education work. Membership of NEON allows the University of Liverpool to improve the quality and range of its access work by being part of a collaborative national community of practice. NEON will be extending its work through to 2017-18 providing its members the opportunity to draw on the strength of collaborative working to strengthen their work across the student lifecycle encompassing success, retention and progression work as well as outreach.

**Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT)**

The University of Liverpool is a new member of the collaborative Higher Education Access Tracker Service (HEAT) which assists members in the targeting, monitoring and evaluation of both their individual and their collaborative Fair Access activities. It allows member universities to demonstrate outreach participation in relation to success at key transition point, collectively explore best practice in combining qualitative and quantitative research on outreach and in the future, perhaps, facilitate the development of collaborative targets.

Membership of the HEAT service will assist the University of Liverpool in fully understanding patterns of participation in outreach and the effectiveness of different types and combinations of outreach, something which is made possible by the collaborative nature of the service. Individual members use the HEAT database to record outreach activity and can see where individuals have engaged in activities with more than one HEAT university. Collectively this allows the central HEAT service to analyse the timing and combinations of activities that show most impact on enrolment in HE.

It can take some time for data about young participants in outreach to mature to the point of understanding their patterns of enrolment in HE as well as their retention and success rates. In the meantime the HEAT service has developed a model of matching a number of different administrative datasets to the HEAT database which will afford the University of Liverpool a better understanding of the relationship between outreach and key educational outcomes at both pre and post 16, before any enrolment takes place. The collective size and diversity of the database will mean this relationship can be explored against multiple participant characteristics, contributing to the University of Liverpool and the sector's understanding of outcomes for different underrepresented groups and recognising that widening participation students are not a homogenous group.

Where HEAT data has matured it allows the University of Liverpool to understand the relationship between outreach participation and HE enrolment, retention and success. The University of Liverpool will be able to see if and when its outreach participants enrol in Higher Education. Crucially this data will show enrolment not only to the University of Liverpool but to all other HEIs. This will allow the University to demonstrate its contribution to the sector as a whole. Furthermore, as data further matures, the University of Liverpool will be able to build a picture of the retention and degree classification of its outreach participants, as well as seeing destination and postgraduate enrolment data.

**2.10 Fair Admissions and Contextual Data**

Research work on the validity of contextual data is ongoing. The University has two students who are undertaking PhDs in the area of WP. The first study is examining the impact of socio-economic status on university performance using a retrospective cohort design; the second is seeking to distinguish how contextual data can practically be incorporated into the admissions process. Contextual data is already used to prioritise unsuccessful applicants for year 1 entry who are referred to the foundation science and engineering programmes at Carmel College but, as a result of the research work currently being undertaken, the University has now agreed a formula to enable it to allocate a flag to applicants who fulfill a range of WP criteria.

Development work on the University’s IT systems is now complete and a Contextual Data system is now in place which identifies the WP cohort using a series of agreed indicators. The system was piloted during the 2015 entry cycle. The pilot sample included applicants aged 18 from England.
Additional consideration was given to flagged applicants who failed to meet the entry requirements at confirmation. Due to the success of this pilot it has now been agreed that contextual data will be considered during all non-clinical application cycles in future. The system will now be expanded to include applicants from the other three devolved nations of the UK. It is anticipated that a similar pilot study will be undertaken during the 2016 application cycle for clinical applications.

3. Student Success and Retention

The University’s retention record is strong and one of the best in the sector. Our rate of retention for students from low participation neighbourhoods has improved and is again much closer to that of the overall cohort. However we wish to bring this closer to the performance of the overall cohort and as such have set a target to support this aim. We are monitoring our non-continuation rates for mature students as this is always slightly higher than that of the overall cohort, although it is still not poor in comparison within the sector. However we are pleased to see an overall improvement and decline in non-continuation across all student groups in 2013/14 so we hope the student success and retention measures we have implemented will continue to contribute to this strong performance.

Table 3 University of Liverpool Non-Continuation Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>4.2% (5.2)</td>
<td>3.8% (4.4)</td>
<td>4.1% (4.2)</td>
<td>4.5% (4.3)</td>
<td>3.8% (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Group</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>3.4% (4.3)</td>
<td>3.6% (3.7)</td>
<td>3.4% (3.5)</td>
<td>4.2% (3.7)</td>
<td>3.3% (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Group</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>9.6% (10.4)</td>
<td>5.3% (9.0)</td>
<td>9.4% (9.1)</td>
<td>6.9% (9.5)</td>
<td>7.9% (10.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Group</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPN (POLAR 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>5.6% (5.5)</td>
<td>5.0% (4.9)</td>
<td>4.5% (4.9)</td>
<td>8.0% (5.1)</td>
<td>5.0% (6.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Group</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) HESA PI’s Table 7, 2013-14, FT first degree. Please note: figures above relate to the proportion of students who left their courses prematurely. Benchmark figures in brackets.

2 HESA PI’s Table 7, 2013-14, FT first degree.
3.1 Student Support

The University of Liverpool provides support for all students, but provides particular focus for those more vulnerable groups such as disabled students and care leavers. The Wellbeing Framework, which was established in 2014, sets out how the University will meet its ambition to support and promote the wellbeing of its staff and students in their research, work and study until 2020. The framework identifies four key priorities: Healthy Lifestyles; Mental Health; Supporting Key Transitions and Supporting Diverse Cultures and Communities. The Wellbeing Board is responsible for the implementation of the Framework and the associated action plan. Membership of the Board includes representatives from each of the Faculties; Student Administration and Support; Human Resources; Corporate Communications; Legal, Risk and Compliance; Residential, Sport and Commercial Services and the Guild of Students.

Figure 1 Model of Provision for the Wellbeing Framework

Mental Health First Aid

We consider the wellbeing and in particular the mental health of our students of particular importance. In 2015 the University Mental Health Adviser qualified as a Mental Health First Aid Trainer and began delivering the full two day Mental Health First Aid Training in 2015 and the half day Mental Health First Aid Lite training in 2016. Our adviser has also been involved in piloting the HE specific one day Mental Health First Aid course. To date 61 staff across the University have attended the full two day course with a further 16 attending the one day and 48 the half day courses. A staff training plan has been developed to identify which staff groups require which training programme and we will continue to run these sessions each academic year. We are currently considering training another trainer to increase our training capacity in this area.

3.2 Peer Mentoring

The University operates a number of peer mentoring schemes. Peer mentoring for first year students is embedded across the University. This scheme provides incoming first year students with a peer mentor from the second of third year of their own programme to act as an informal support during the early weeks of their programmes. In some departments the peer mentor relationship
extends into the second semester of first year and into the second year. We also have enhanced peer mentoring provision in a number of departments to address identified needs. For example, in Computer Science a department with a large number of international students home and international student peer mentors work in pairs to support a mixed group of home and international mentees. This provides mentors and mentees with valuable experience of working in an international environment and enhances the skills of home and international students.

In our Vet School we have an enhanced Peer Support Scheme which provides intensive training supervision and support to Peer Supporters who in turn provide support to Vet students. This initiative has received national recognition as good practice from the British Veterinary Association.

3.3 Disabled Students
We have been pleased to see an increase in the percentage of students entering the University who are registered as disabled (7.7% in 2014/15 compared with 6.1% in 2013/14). However we recognise that the University still has progress to make in terms of the numbers of disabled students coming onto our programmes. This year we have done some analysis to better understand the barriers that disabled students face and also to understand where we need to target our efforts. We have found that our disabled students have a positive experience at the University and in general perform as well as the overall cohort in terms of degree attainment. We have done some sector analysis and due to our findings we are going to focus our efforts on increasing awareness among disabled students of the courses we offer as well as the extensive support they will receive. We are also going to provide targeted employability support for disabled students and include them as a priority group for a number of employability initiatives. We also intend to develop links with relevant local charities and bodies to understand better the local context for disabled learners in the North West so that we can establish and support progression into the University.

The University has spent significant time on establishing an appropriate response to the proposed DSA changes. A working group reviewed current provision and developed a Policy Regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Support for Disabled Students which clearly articulates the support which is available to disabled students. We have built on established working practices to articulate inclusive approaches to teaching and learning and agreed anticipatory adjustments which can be delivered on all programmes. Anticipatory adjustments are agreed on an annual basis by Heads of School to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the University. This enables us to provide clear information to disabled applicants about approaches and adjustments which they can expect at the University. For example, the roll out of lecture capture across the institution has particular benefits for disabled students who experience barriers with note-taking. Individual reasonable adjustments are also offered on an as needed basis.

The University has invested additional resource in the Disability Support Team in anticipation of increased demand; a new Disability Advisor was appointed in November 2015 and an additional £270k has been allocated to meet the increased costs of support workers from 2016/17. We are currently out to tender for a support worker service which will provide greater flexibility for students and the University for students requiring Band One and Two support.

3.4 Diversity and Equality
The University recognises the continuing degree outcome differentials between different equality groups, in particular between White and Black African/Caribbean, and Women and Men. We will
work in 2017/18 to formulate what the underlying issues are at the University and what plan of action could be adopted.

Since 2013 the proportion of staff who have completed diversity and equality training has increased from 20% to 70% and we aim to increase this further to 80%. Building on this success we have begun rolling out Unconscious Bias Training and aim to have 50% of staff involved in student recruitment trained by the end of 2017/18. By doing this we aim to give our staff the relevant competences to support a diverse student cohort.

4. Progression

This year we have spent time analysing the progression rates for our students both in terms of progression to further study and progression into graduate employment. Our performance in terms of employability is strong and we have seen most under-represented groups achieving employability outcomes close to that of the overall cohort. As part of preparation for the HEFCE match-funded scholarships this allowed us to consider the levels of under-representation at postgraduate level and this is something we intend to invest more time and resource into in future years.

4.1 Graduate employability

The University achieves some of the highest levels of graduate employment and study in the sector, and in 2013-14, 89.9% of our first degree graduates were either employed or enrolled on further study and training courses within 6 months of graduation. This figure is 88.7% for students from socio-economic groups NS-SEC 4-7, 88.6% for those from ethnic minority backgrounds and 88.4% for those from low participation neighbourhoods.

As with other universities in the sector, students’ social and economic background can influence access to graduate career opportunities. To work towards addressing this issue, a senior Careers Adviser has strategic responsibility for the Careers and Employability Service’s employability initiatives for students from Widening Participation backgrounds.

The University’s pioneering Student-Alumni mentoring programme, which was introduced in 2012-13, has been extended every year to encompass higher numbers of students. Our targets for the numbers of students being mentored is 80 for 2015-16, and will be 100 for 2016-17. The past two years have demonstrated that not all students from Widening Participation backgrounds want to have a mentor or are ready to choose a career area from which to choose a suitable mentor.

We will address this in three ways:

a) Launched, in 2015-16, an ‘Ask the Expert’ Service, using our many alumni who have not been matched with a mentee, to respond to careers-related questions from students from Widening Participation backgrounds. This has engaged with a greater number of students than mentoring, but also demonstrates to students the benefit of having a mentor and therefore leads to a mentoring relationship.

b) Engaging with students in year one, before they have to make a decision about having a mentor. We will actively target our communications towards first year students from under-represented groups.

c) Ensuring automatic registration onto e-mentoring for those who have enrolled at the University via the Scholars’ Programme, with an opt-out facility for those who choose not to participate.

In 2017-18, the impact of e-mentoring in building confidence, developing resilience and expanding employer networks will be explored, by conducting focus groups with students and graduates who were participants on the e-mentoring programme, prior to 2015-16.
Employability Bursary

A new initiative to assist WP students to overcome financial barriers to developing their employability began in 2014-15, with the establishment of the Employability Development Bursary. The Bursary offers the opportunity for students to apply through a competitive process for up to £1,000 to help with the costs such as that of travel or accommodation of undertaking a work experience opportunity they have found, or other activity which they intend to pursue, to enhance their employability. 51 students were successful in being awarded the Bursary last year, and the Bursary has continued in 2015-16 under the new name of the Employability Support Award.

The upReach Programme is a further initiative with which the University has become involved this year. upReach is a programme of support for a group of first year students (25 in this pilot year) from under-represented groups which offers employability workshops, and exclusive access to employer events as well as opportunities to meet other students from similar backgrounds who can share their experiences.

We intend to place a particular emphasis in 2017 on working with disabled students. As well as ensuring that these students have opportunities to apply for the e-mentoring programme, and to apply for the Employability Support Award, we work closely with the Disability Support Team at the University to communicate effectively with disabled students; as well as liaising with organisations such as EmployAbility, Employment Opportunities and Blind in Business to improve their employment outcomes.

Supporting local and student employability:
Alongside many employability-focused initiatives for our current undergraduates and alternative provision for mature learners, we have also developed a number of training and work-based pathways within the University for younger students without traditional qualifications. Students aged 14-17 years old can enter into short term work experience at the University which can in turn lead to certified traineeships. These traineeships are prioritised for those students falling into the category of Not in Employment, Education or Training. This group is a priority area for the Liverpool city region authority and so Human Resources colleagues work collaboratively with local council colleagues to develop the provision and target learners appropriately. Beyond traineeships which last between 12-24 weeks, the University also offers pre-apprenticeships for 16-17 year olds (funded by the Liverpool City Council) as well as apprenticeships for students aged 16 or over (funded by the University of Liverpool). All these routes are accredited and can ultimately lead onto undergraduate study at the University as well as graduate training routes.

Student Development:
The University of Liverpool Student Advocate scheme is successful in supporting outreach work with schools and colleges and with specific student groups as identified by feedback from prospective students and applicants from non-traditional backgrounds. We will be further expanding this scheme to deliver: a programme of one-to-one shadowing with local students; e-mentoring for local students and first year students; mentoring programmes with groups such as the Wirral leaving care service and provision for looked after children. A package of training and development is being enhanced at present for the Student Advocates which we will continue to deliver. The Student Advocate scheme will also be working with the Liverpool Women in Science and Engineering Society (LivWISE) on the development of LivWISE student ambassadors with the aim of promoting and encouraging women to study engineering.
4.2 Progression to postgraduate study

The University of Liverpool awarded scholarships worth £10,000 to UK and EU students studying a Masters qualification in 2015 as part of the Postgraduate Support Scheme. The scholarships were part of the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s (HEFCE) initiative aimed at removing the barriers to postgraduate education for students from under-represented groups. The scholarships provided students with an excellent opportunity to progress to postgraduate study without the financial worry. Twenty of the scholarships were reserved for applicants to University’s London campus and additional support is offered to these students. This includes personalised support with career planning, including help with identifying and approaching appropriate industry contacts for advice, placement opportunities and employment. Students will also be teamed up with a graduate mentor who is working in London and can offer them support.

To be eligible to apply, students needed to have studied their undergraduate degree at a UK university and paid the higher undergraduate tuition fees introduced in 2012, and have met at least one of the following under-represented criteria:

- Been in care as a looked-after child prior to university;
- Be disabled and have previously received, or would be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances;
- Be in receipt of carer's allowance;
- Come from one of the most deprived areas of the country as defined by the government’s Index of Multiple Deprivation database;
- Come from an area where there is low progression to university, as defined by the government’s classification called Polar 3;
- Have been in receipt of a Maintenance Grant as an undergraduate;
- Be from an Ethnic Minority Group.

The scholarships were split with £5,000 towards tuition fees and £5,000 towards maintenance costs and the University was pleased to offer 105 scholarships in 2015.

Analysis of the award beneficiaries showed that the vast majority of students who took up the award were from low income households (having received the maintenance grant as an undergraduate). Overwhelmingly the beneficiaries demonstrated multiple criteria and this evidence will enable us to target future postgraduate support schemes most appropriately and to be aware of the need to target students using multiple indicators of disadvantage.

5. Expenditure on Financial Support, Retention and Success

In the English Russell Group, the University of Liverpool is consistently in the top quartile of those universities in terms of recruiting students whose household income falls below £25,000. In recognition of this, the support packages we have developed are designed not only to attract students to the University but, crucially, to support them during their studies. In doing so, our funding directly aids retention and progression.

For 2017-18, we broadly intend to maintain the current percentage of new fee income devoted to Widening Participation activities. We will continue to place emphasis on activities designed to boost student success and will be consulting with students to identify better the areas of support needed, as well as researching the issues behind the gaps in attainment between specific groups of students. We will also increase our expenditure on activities that support progression, specifically in terms of employability.
The University plans to maintain a strong investment in Access related activities at £1,130,000.

At the same time, our expenditure on activities and resources aimed at Student Success and Progression will be increased overall to £737,000 (in total) in 2017-18. This continued investment reflects the priority placed by the University on a range of initiatives designed to ensure that students from all social and economic backgrounds achieve their goals and aspirations – both during and after higher education.

To ensure our students receive an equitable financial experience at The University of Liverpool we will be opening up the Liverpool Bursary to all NHS-funded students who are no longer eligible for NHS funding and are instead entitled to tuition fee and maintenance loans.

Following the disestablishment of the Access to Learning Fund the University established the University Hardship Fund. The assessment process follows that used by the Access to Learning Fund. The criteria have been amended to ensure funds are targeted at students experiencing most financial hardship. The University intends to pay 100 per cent of assessed need based on these criteria whereas under the Access to Learning Fund we had only been able to pay 75 per cent of need for students in priority groups and 50 per cent of need for students in non-priority groups. Current indications are that these changes will result in an increase in the average award of about £450 per student.

Such expenditure will see the University’s total overall investment in Widening Participation at 25.6% of its Higher Fee Income in 2017-18.

6. Bursaries and Fee Discounts

In 2017-18, the University aims to provide a total of £9,788,388 in bursaries and scholarships. For 2017-18, all students with a household income of up to £25,000 will receive a £2,000 bursary. Students whose household income falls between £25,000 and £35,000 will receive a bursary of £750.

In addition to these bursaries for students from low income households we also offer the following bursaries for disadvantaged groups:

- Care Leavers’ Opportunity Bursary (£3000 each year of study) for UK students who have spent a minimum of 6 months in Local Authority care and are under 26 years of age
- Scholars/Realising Opportunities (£3000 each year of study) for UK students who enter University of Liverpool as part of the University of Liverpool Scholars Scheme/Realising Opportunity Programme

In 2017-18 we also intend to introduce new financial awards for those students who are classified as estranged and those who are young adult carers.

7. Targets and Milestones

The University has altered and added new targets this year in particular focusing on completion, non-continuation and progression outcomes for different groups of students. We wish to ensure that the outcomes for the Liverpool Scholars graduates are comparable with the overall cohort. We also wish to set targets regarding the non-continuation of students from low participation backgrounds as we are aware their rate of non-continuation has been higher than the overall cohort. We will be
researching the degree outcomes of different groups of students over the next academic year and considering this in future Access Agreements once we have further evidence to base this practice on.

8. Monitoring and evaluation
The Widening Participation Working Group steers and monitors the Access Agreement to ensure that the targets and milestones are met. The Widening Participation Working Group is chaired by the Head of Widening Participation and Outreach and its membership includes Faculty Widening Participation Directors, representatives of appropriate professional services and the Guild of Students. In turn, the group reports to the Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation Committee, which takes a continual reflective review of the University’s Fair Access Agenda. The group receives reports on planned activities to support access, retention and success, the annual Faculty and professional services plans in these areas, and monitoring data. The Group also has responsibility for identifying areas for evaluation and receives reports on this activity. The University continues to invest in a dedicated resource to support evaluation in the form of a senior researcher acting as ‘evaluation-lead’.

Significant engagement with the UK Evaluation Society has been beneficial to the Access Agreement evaluation work. The evaluation efforts have modelled an innovative approach based upon a feasible ‘realist-informed’ model that seeks to embed evaluation into the University’s normal work cycles for WP and Fair Access, so moving the institution towards an evaluation culture for these purposes. Through this model the University can improve on specific targets by generating evaluation intelligence for the relevant activities, policies and programmes.

The ‘first-phase’ evaluation report:

- captured improvement for many areas of the University’s work by historical data analysis of a range of measures;
- linked these with relevant activities;
- made recommendations for future policy, professional practice and evaluation;
- ‘positioned’ evaluation strategically for a cross-institutional, whole student life-cycle approach based upon engagement by academic schools and departments and professional teams.

A ‘second phase’ strategy for evaluation aims to:

1. establish priority University-wide programmes and innovations for focused inquiry;
2. develop a model of ‘inclusivity-review’ intended to focus upon various kinds of student support (e.g. for students who are disabled, mature, part-time, vocational route, etc.) and to move academic schools and departments towards greater inclusivity for all types of student;
3. systematically identify gaps in attainment and progression for Access Agreement cohorts across faculties, schools and departments, with the aim of informing the prioritisation of supportive activity and resourcing at each of those levels;
4. Establish the HEAT system to capture longitudinal impact of outreach work (partially in place).

During this phase, resourcing for discrete evaluation activities will be sought from within teams and academic schools and departments. This phase will also produce reportable case studies for areas of
work that are identified as having strategic importance for the University and for OFFA. This second phase also aims to achieve improvements in the alignment of evaluation outputs with the design of the Access Agreement and other internal reporting cycles for policy development. Staff engagement remains central to the University’s evaluation strategy.

9. **Provision of information to prospective students**
The University of Liverpool is committed to providing relevant and timely information, including articulation of progression routes, to all prospective students. We evaluate the impact of communications to ensure they meet evolving student needs.

We use a range of feedback and evaluation from applicants to continuously develop and improve our communications. In particular, financial communications are produced with the specific objective of ensuring students fully understand the student finance arrangements and the range of financial packages currently available to them.

We have a range of printed materials detailing student finance, including a communication which is posted to offer holders in their Applicant Information Pack. The University’s Prospectus is used to signpost students to a dedicated area of our website which contains timely and detailed fees and finance information (www.liv.ac.uk/money).

Financial information is shared using a range of digital media to reach a wider audience and increase our accessibility. This includes webinars (which are offered outside school/working hours and targeted at prospective students and their supporters), an online student finance calculator, emails that link in with National Student Money Week and the use of social media channels.

We pro-actively work with target schools and colleges to provide face to face advice, information and guidance on finance in higher education. In addition, finance workshops and presentations are offered as part of on-campus visits. Prospective students, offer holders and parents and supporters are also offered presentations on student finance and funding at the University-wide Open Days and subject-based Applicant Discovery Days. A number of the University’s main presentations at Open Days, including the finance talk, also have a sign language interpreter available.

We have a dedicated resource committed to providing timely and accurate information to UCAS so that they can populate their course database in good time to inform applications. We maintain a good relationship with our regional SLC representative to ensure all staff are fully aware of the most up to date information.
Consultation with Students (Statement from the Liverpool Guild of Students)

This year we have encouraged the University to set challenging targets in the Access Agreement 2017/18 in order to deliver the maximum benefit to our current and future members. We welcome the student lifecycle approach through which these have been set, with focus on access, success and support, as well as progression in recognition of the impact Higher Education can have on individuals as well as society more widely.

We recognise that Liverpool has remained in a leading position in the Russell Group when it comes to recruiting students from state schools, lower socio-economic groups and low participation neighbourhoods; although this must take into context the fact that the University is located in one of the most economically deprived cities in the country.

At Liverpool Guild of Students we are encouraged that the University of Liverpool has sought to engage us at all levels on the development of this year’s Access Agreement. Whilst our feedback is regularly taken into account in the University’s widening participation activity more widely, we are disappointed that we have been advised of some significant last minute changes with this year’s agreement. This has resulted in a lack of meaningful consultation and little time to consider the full potential impact of these changes.

In particular, we have significant concerns about the removal of the £750 bursary for students whose household income ranges between £35,000 and £42,620, a move which will remove support for 40% of incoming students who would have previously qualified. Whilst it has been suggested that this funding might be redistributed towards student success, there are no clear plans as to how this might be implemented, or what impact this aims to have on WP students. As such, we are concerned that this may result in both a detrimental impact and funding deficit for the year 2017/18. We would strongly encourage the University to ensure that the redistributed funds go directly towards supporting WP students, and that any new initiative that these funds support has the same, or more positive impact on WP students than the current offer of the £750 bursary does.

We believe that the result of the last minute changes detailed above have resulted in reductions in the University’s widening participation funding and the positive impact it has on WP students. We are seriously concerned that the impact of these changes is not understood and that there is potential for them to be severely damaging to our future members. We hope that the University can recognise that the communication of these last minute changes falls short of the consultation we have had and valued in the past. We look forward to working positively and constructively with the University to make up this shortfall in both funding and impact, and in ensuring full and meaningful consultation is carried out.

We are aware that currently the University of Liverpool offers a more substantial contribution to funding WP activity than many in the sector, however we are concerned that the changes outlined above undermine this. We would ask the University to ensure that they do not seek to make further reductions in funding to bring it in line with some comparators in the sector. We believe the University could always offer more funding, and should offer a generous and flexible range of bursaries at a level which provides significant financial support for students.

We are encouraged to see renewed focus on diversity and equality within outreach activity; the progress on communication to care leavers; and the work the University is undertaking on Mental Health First Aid training. We would also like to commend the effort the University has put into
collaborative work both locally and nationally with institutions and partners to ensure our WP agendas can be effective at all levels. We believe that if good work such as this is developed and expanded upon, that the University of Liverpool could aspire to become leaders in widening participation not only in the Russell Group, but in the entire Higher Education sector.

We hope the University will continue to set ambitious targets that are stretching in terms of widening participation and that the focus on underperforming areas is maintained. In particular, we would support further access work for disabled students in light of changes to the disabled students’ allowance, and our performance position within the Russell Group. We welcome the proposed work on progression to further study for WP students and hope that in future this research can also be expanded to cover retention. We would also encourage the University to look further at the provision of information available to WP students throughout their student lifecycle.

We will continue support the Widening Participation and Outreach team’s objectives with our volunteer-led outreach programme and promotion of financial support through our Advice team. We hope that the University continues to consult the Guild on its widening participation agenda and that we can work positively and in partnership to ensure maximum positive impact for our current and future members.

Emma Sims
Vice President
Appendix 1: Internal University of Liverpool Governance Structure for monitoring the Access Agreement

| **Senate** | Senate oversees the teaching and research of the University and, along with Council (the University’s governing body), carries the ultimate responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the University’s Strategic Plan. Within the Strategic Plan, extending widening participation is one of the key aims, along with increasing the proportion of students entering the University from underrepresented groups. |
| **Senior Executive Group** | SEG is an executive body and will take decisions on major operational matters that have institutional reach, and strategic issues where doing so is time critical. It will also review issues and proposals, to ensure a coordinated management response. It will review relevant papers to ensure they are fit for submission to the formal governance structure. |
| **Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation Committee** | The role of RAWPC is to oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of all the University’s policies and practices relating to the Access Agreement, including recruitment and admissions of students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Each faculty has an RAWPC which provides regular reports to the university RAWPC. RAWPC consists of representatives from each of the academic faculties, the President and VP of the Student Guild, and senior representatives from key professional services. Chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education. |
| **Widening Participation Working Group** | The role of the Widening Participation Working Group is to lead on the Access Agreement, the University’s overarching strategy for widening participation. Key priorities of the group include the evaluation of monitoring of the University’s performance in terms of widening participation and how we can continuously improve and maintain this. The group consists of academic staff from all three faculties as well as relevant professional services staff and representation from the Guild. This group reports into the Admissions and Widening Participation Committee. Chaired by the Head of Widening Participation and Outreach. |
## Appendix 2 Widening Participation – an Overview

### Learning Outcomes

The employability strategy offers tailored support on a school/department and individual basis so that students gain knowledge and information regarding career options available to them, and support in making applications. WP students are offered the opportunity to have an e-mentor.

| Students gain knowledge about career options available to them, including further study, and advice and support. | Advice and Support from the Careers & Employability Service in accessing internships |
| Some students have the opportunity to be matched to an employer in a career area of their choice in order to gain specific information about a particular career and the skills needed to be successful in that career. | 1-2-1 careers and PG qualifications advice and guidance from qualified careers advisers |
| Faculty Employability consultants who offer tailored activities to departments/schools | 

### Illustrative Activities and Initiatives

| Students receive financial support to enable them to complete their programme of study. | Range of financial bursaries available, together with advice and support for accessing these bursaries |
| Students also receive individual support through the roll-out of the peer mentoring programme, and the development of an enhanced personal tutoring system. | Peer mentoring programme |
| Students receive financial support to participating students and throughout the programme. | Employment bursaries |

### Sources of Evidence

| DLHE statistics | Usage statistics for the Careers & Employability Service |
| Feedback from students and employers |

### Financial Support Retention

Targeted bursaries are made available to offer tailored financial support. Programmes such as peer mentoring, and the development of a new academic advisor/student support system provide individual support for students.

| Students receive financial support to enable them to complete their programme of study. |
| Students also receive individual support through the roll-out of the peer mentoring programme, and the development of an enhanced personal tutoring system. |

### Student Success

| Fair, transparent admissions process identifies appropriately qualified students from all educational backgrounds with the potential to succeed. |
| Students are identified as part of the admissions process. |
| Students on specified programmes receive opportunities to demonstrate their potential. |

### Illustrative Activities and Initiatives

| Students receive financial support to enable them to complete their programme of study. |
| Students also receive individual support through the roll-out of the peer mentoring programme, and the development of an enhanced personal tutoring system. |

### Sources of Evidence

| UK |
| Take up of DSA Evidence of take-up of financial bursaries |
| Evaluation evidence from peer mentoring programme |

### Fair Admissions Post-16

The aim of these activities is to identify students who have the academic potential, and encourage and support these students in completing a programme of activities to support their application to HE.

| Students will have the opportunity to participate in dedicated programmes which will provide opportunities for them to demonstrate academic potential. |
| Students will also receive information on courses/options available in Higher Education, and will develop the skills and knowledge to make informed choices. |
| Scholars/ ROG students receive support for university applications process. |

### Illustrative Activities and Initiatives

| Students will have the opportunity to participate in dedicated programmes which will provide opportunities for them to demonstrate academic potential. |
| Students will also receive information on courses/options available in Higher Education, and will develop the skills and knowledge to make informed choices. |
| Scholars/ ROG students receive support for university applications process. |

### Sources of Evidence

| M'side/NW |
| Evaluation of individual programmes |
| Longitudinal tracking of progression of students |
| Numbers of students on programmes |

### Outreach Post-16

The aim of the range of programmes is to raise aspirations of local students to progress into HE, by working through a three stage development curriculum.

| The programmes offered are designed to: |
| Provide young people (and teachers) with knowledge and understanding of different university courses/universities as well as the language of HE. |
| Help young people gain experience of HE through visits by HE staff/students to schools, and also visits to HE by the young people. |
| Help young people (and teachers) with understanding the impact of choices made from Yr8 onwards on university opportunities. |
| Help young people understand costs of university education and the financial support available. |

### Illustrative Activities and Initiatives

| The programmes offered are designed to: |
| Provide young people (and teachers) with knowledge and understanding of different university courses/universities as well as the language of HE. |
| Help young people gain experience of HE through visits by HE staff/students to schools, and also visits to HE by the young people. |
| Help young people (and teachers) with understanding the impact of choices made from Yr8 onwards on university opportunities. |
| Help young people understand costs of university education and the financial support available. |

### Sources of Evidence

| M'side/NW |
| Evaluation of individual programmes |
| Longitudinal tracking of progression of students |
| Numbers of students on programmes |
| NW/Cumbria/Lanc |

### Outreach Pre-16

| The programmes offered are designed to: |
| Provide young people (and teachers) with knowledge and understanding of different university courses/universities as well as the language of HE. |
| Help young people gain experience of HE through visits by HE staff/students to schools, and also visits to HE by the young people. |
| Help young people (and teachers) with understanding the impact of choices made from Yr8 onwards on university opportunities. |
| Help young people understand costs of university education and the financial support available. |

### Illustrative Activities and Initiatives

| The programmes offered are designed to: |
| Provide young people (and teachers) with knowledge and understanding of different university courses/universities as well as the language of HE. |
| Help young people gain experience of HE through visits by HE staff/students to schools, and also visits to HE by the young people. |
| Help young people (and teachers) with understanding the impact of choices made from Yr8 onwards on university opportunities. |
| Help young people understand costs of university education and the financial support available. |

### Sources of Evidence

| M'side/NW |
| Evaluation of individual programmes |
| Longitudinal tracking of progression of students |
| Numbers of students on programmes |
### Table 7 - Targets and milestones

#### Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference number</th>
<th>Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)</th>
<th>Target type (drop-down menu)</th>
<th>Description (500 characters maximum)</th>
<th>Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T16a_01</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Other statistic</td>
<td>To increase the number of registrations from students with disabilities (full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8.5% 8% 9% 9.5% 10% 10.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_02</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Other statistic</td>
<td>To increase the number of full-time first degree entrants from ethnic minority groups</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.5% 14.8% 15.1% 15.4% 15.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_03</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>HEA T1a - (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>To maintain Liverpool's performance relating to this benchmark</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>15.2% 15.2% 15.2% 15.2% 15.2%</td>
<td>To maintain our current proportion of mature students within a range of 14-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_04</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>HEA T1a - State School (Youung, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>To maintain Liverpool's performance relating to this benchmark</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>87.7% 87.7% 87.7% 87.7% 87.7%</td>
<td>To maintain our current proportion of state school students within a range of 85-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_05</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>HEA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (FGRA3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>To improve Liverpool's performance relating to this benchmark</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>10% 10.2% 10.4% 10.6% 10.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_06</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>HEA T1b - No longer in HE after 1 year &amp; in low participation neighbourhoods (FGRA3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>To improve Liverpool's performance relating to this benchmark</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>4.8% 4.8% 4.8% 4.8% 4.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_07</td>
<td>Progression</td>
<td>Other statistic</td>
<td>To improve the employability outcomes of disabled undergraduate students at the University of Liverpool</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
<td>83.5% 84.0% 84.5% 85.0% 85%</td>
<td>Relates to employment or further study 6 months after graduation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference Number</th>
<th>Select stage of the lifecycle</th>
<th>Please select target type from the drop-down menu</th>
<th>Description (500 characters maximum)</th>
<th>Is this a collaborative target?</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T16b_01</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Increase proportion of Liverpool Scholars progressing onto HE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75% 75% 75% 75% 75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_02</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Increase numbers of Liverpool Scholars progressing onto the University of Liverpool</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>55 55 55 55 55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_03</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)</td>
<td>Increase applications for entry to the University of Liverpool from Partner/Associate schools</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>new target</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_04</td>
<td>Other/Multiple stages</td>
<td>Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)</td>
<td>Maintain network of Partner/Associate schools/colleges.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>40 40 40 40 40</td>
<td>Maintain number of partner schools at 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_05</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Realising Opportunities - collaborative target for % of RO participants to a research intensive university</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Other (please give details in Description column)</td>
<td>New target</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_06</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Realising Opportunities - collaborative target for % of RO participants reaching an RO partner university</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Other (please give details in Description column)</td>
<td>New target</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_07</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Bespoke service of outreach activity for Looked After Children and Care leavers. Target relates to number of learners engaging</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_08</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Number of pupils in primary schools who take part in 'Professor Fluffy' and related primary curriculum</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>2482</td>
<td>3150</td>
<td>3150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_09</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Delivery to primary and secondary schools using the Guild student volunteering model and curriculum delivery within UG modules</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_10</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Year 7-11 activities on campus and in Central Teaching Labs for local Partner/Associate and other WP schools</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_15</td>
<td>Progression</td>
<td>Operational targets</td>
<td>Number of students being mentored by alumni or employers, in support career development</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>