# Riverside College:  UKPRN 10002863

# Access and participation plan (2020-21 to 2024-25)

## 1       Assessment of performance

The submission of this access and participation plan and Riverside College's commitment to widening participation is underpinned by its vision which is, "through the excellence of the education we provide, we will enhance and transform lives". This agreement seeks to build on the College's experience, success and reputation to ensure that students from a low socio-economic and/or low participation background are able to have access to an affordable and cost effective higher education curriculum that reflects the needs of the local community, the labour market and personal aspiration.

Riverside College is a medium-sized general further education college located in Cheshire. It is one of the highest performing colleges nationally.  The College serves the towns of Widnes and Runcorn (the borough of Halton) which have a combined population of 127,518 (2018) as well as attracting learners from outside of the Borough.  Halton is now part of the Liverpool City Region.  The College is a member of the Liverpool Local Enterprise Partnership.

We have a small Higher Education provision with currently 83 full-time students and 207 part-time students who have chosen to study with us.  We also have 15 students following a Higher Apprenticeship route in Engineering.  In June 2019, the College was awarded TEF Gold status. It was reported by the panel that levels of student satisfaction with assessment and feedback, teaching and academic support are exceptionally high. The provision of extensive and sustained opportunities and challenges for ensuring that students from non-traditional backgrounds achieve their full potential was considered to be a particular strength.

In line with the requirements of this Access Plan and Participation Agreement, the College has assessed its current performance against the five under-represented groups which are recognised nationally as priority target groups:

## 1.1  Higher education participation, household income, or socio-economic status

According to the Department for Education's index of multiple deprivation, the College is located in the 27th most deprived borough and the 3rd most deprived in the Liverpool City Region. Around 26% of Halton's populace live within the top 10% most deprived areas in the country. According to Public Health England, 21.7% of children in Halton live in poverty compared with 18.7% regionally and 16.8% nationally. Nearly 22% of Halton's population are classed as economically inactive and the number of people claiming out of work benefits is higher than the national average. 16% of households are classed as workless (NOMIS 2018).  47.6% of the Halton population are qualified to level 3 compared to a national average of 57.7%. Our strategic direction is therefore shaped by the unique and challenging context in which we operate.

Whilst recognising that it must have a deep understanding of the Borough's many complex and challenging needs, the College has high ambitions and expectations of all its students, staff, parents and employers. Numerous pro-active strategies are in place to address and support the varied and complex needs of the students it serves.  The College has made a significant contribution to the improvements in the standards of education in the Borough in recent years. Higher Education is a transformational experience and, for many of our Higher Education students, it continues to be the catalyst for social mobility, personal growth and greater employment opportunities.

Our TEF 4 metrics indicate 49% of our part and full-time Higher Education students are recruited from POLAR quintile 1, 16% from POLAR quintile 2, 12% from quintile 3, 10% from

quintile 4 and 13% from POLAR quintile 5.  TEF 4 metrics reported 52% of our full-time students and 44% of our part-time students were from Polar Quintile 1. Therefore, almost half of our students come from backgrounds of the lowest participation rates in Higher Education.  The majority of students are consistently drawn from areas of least participation in Higher Education. 65% of our total Higher Education cohort come from quintiles 1 and 2.

The OfS dashboard shows that in 2016-17 and in 2017-18, Riverside College recruited a higher percentage of full-time learners from Polar Quintile 1 (compared to all English Higher Education providers).  It also shows that there is a 0% pp gap for both part and full-time students for quintiles 1, 2 and 3) in the population compared with Riverside College over the period 2013-14 to 2017-18).

| 2016-17 (full-time) | Quintile 1 | Quintile 5 |
|---|---|---|
| Riverside College | 55% | NA |
| All English HE providers | 11.8% | 30.4% |
| 2017-18 (full-time) | Quintile 1 | Quintile 5 |
| Riverside College | 50% | 15% |
| All English HE providers | 12% | 30.3% |

The OfS dashboard shows that in 2013-14 Riverside College recruited a higher percentage of part-time learners from Quintile 1 (compared to all English Higher Education providers).

| 2013-14 (part-time) | Quintile 1 | Quintile 5 |
|---|---|---|
| Riverside College | 60% | 15% |
| All English HE providers | 17% | 20.3% |

A review of both the OfS dashboard and our TEF 4 metrics for continuation, success and progression has shown that the data for POLAR is too small to be reportable for these stages of the life cycle.  However, the College will commit to analysing data for POLAR continuation, success and progression when numbers reach reportable levels.

Riverside College has been hugely successful in increasing year on year the number of Higher Education students from a widening participation postcode **(based on IMD, 2105)** as outlined in the table below.   It is, a continuing aim of the college to attract local residents onto its Higher Education provision and in doing so help to increase the number of Halton residents who enter into higher education.  However, no target is needed for this metric.

| Academic Year | 2015-16 | | | 2016-17 | | | 2017-18 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | % WP | Y | N | % WP | Y | N | % WP |
| Access for students from a WP/non-WP | 69 | 88 | 44% | 78 | 72 | 52% | 86 | 74 | 54% |

Analysis of continuation rates for widening participation and non-widening participation students show that there are no gaps in continuation with a greater number of widening participation students being retained on programme over the past 3 academic years.

| Continuation | 2016-17 | | 2017-18 | | 2018-19 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | Y | N | Y | N |
| Continuation for WP/non-WP | 100% | 69% | 83% | 81% | 88% | 81% |

In terms of enrolled students who reside in widening participation postcodes (IMD, 2015) ie low household income and/or low socio-economic status, pass rates over the past two years have been as follows:

| Widening participation postcode | 2016-17 starts | 2017-18 starts | +/- on previous year |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of starts | 76 | 109 | +33 |
| Successful completion | 96.8% | 97.9% | +1.1% |

An analysis of College data for attainment rates for top-up degree students from widening participation postcodes shows that in 2016-17, due to very low numbers the data is not reportable. In 2017-18, there was a 13% gap in students from widening participation backgrounds achieving a 2.1 or above. It is therefore a target of the College to improve attainment rates for students from low socio economic backgrounds on our top-up degree programmes.

| Degree Classification (WP /non-WP) | 2015-16 | | 2016-17 | | 2017-18 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | Y | N | Y | N |
| 1 | NR | 28% | NR | 46% | 28% | 31% |
| 2.1 | 0% | 21% | NR | 32% | 36% | 46% |
| 2.2 | 0% | 42% | NR | 18% | 36% | 18% |
| 3rd | 0% | 9% | NR | 4% | 0% | 5% |

Our TEF 4 metrics show that 94.5% of students who successfully complete their programme of study gain employment or progress to further study. However, only 71.6% achieve highly skilled employment or further study. Due to financial background and family circumstances, the majority of our part-time undergraduate students are in employment when they enrol. Our graduates are often fundamentally disadvantaged in the labour market due to restricted opportunities for geographical relocation because of family commitments. For some graduates, they may not yet be in a position to apply for managerial positions or promotion outside of the locality until such a time when their dependents are less reliant upon them. This was addressed in our TEF 4 provider submission and recognised by the panel who awarded the College a gold award. Similarly, TEF 4 metrics show that on graduation, our full-time students who are employed 6 months after graduation are not at that point in a position to secure above median earnings.

The Destination of Leavers from Higher Education report (2018) shows that 90% of Riverside College's graduates were in work or work/study 6 months after graduation. With 8% engaged in other activities and 1% unemployed. The median salary achieved was £29,000. The majority of our HNC Engineering graduates are under 25, and may be required to obtain further work related and vocational experience within their field before applying for higher level positions. This could feasibly take longer than 6 months for graduates to achieve their career aspirations of highly skilled roles. The College will take active steps to support both its full and part-time students at Level 5 and Level 6 to consider the benefits of geographical and social mobility on their future earnings' potential.

All four of our one-year Level 6 top-up degrees provide a local and cost effective route to obtaining a full-honours degree for students progressing from level 5 qualifications to level 6.

| Riverside College Level 6 top-up degree (2018/19) | Nr of students who progressed from Level 5 to Level 6 | % number of students from this cohort from a widening participation post code. | % BAME students | % students with a disability or learning difficulty | 100% mature |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BA (Hons) Education | 12 | 25% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| BSc (Hons) Counselling | 17 | 58.8% | 25% | 6% | 100% |
| BSc (Hons) Health & Social Care | 11 | 45.5% | 18% | 9% | 100% |
| BA (Hons) Sports Coaching and Sport Development | 12 | 85.7% | 0% | 29% | 100% |

Our students not only achieve the outcome of a highly reputable qualification, but in turn influence members of the community in which our graduates reside by encouraging friends and family to seek similar opportunities for themselves

## 1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

The numbers of Higher Education BAME students are small at the College. In terms of ethnicity, our TEF 4 metrics demonstrate that 98.4% of our full-time students declared their ethnicity as white and 1.7% (3% TEF 3 metrics) of part-time students declared their ethnicity as Asian or 'other', which is broadly representative of the local community with approximately 2.2% of the population drawn from ethnic groups other than white British.

| Ethnicity | Full-time % of headcount | Part-time % of headcount | Total % of headcount |
|---|---|---|---|
| White | 98.4% | 98.8% | 98.3% |
| Black | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Asian | 1.6% | 1.2% | 0.4% |
| Other | 0% | 0 | 1.3% |

There is no reportable data on the OfS dashboard for statistically significant gaps in Access either between 2013-14 and 2017-18 or between 2016-17 and 2017-18 for full or part-time learners of a particular ethnicity. However, despite small reportable numbers, an analysis of College data over the past 3 years for access shows a gradual increase in the % number of BAME students who enrol onto full and part-time programmes.

| Academic Year | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Access for BAME students | 1.9% | 4.9% | 5.6% |

An analysis of College data for continuation, shows that continuation rates for BAME students are very good compared with continuation rates for all students. In 2016-17 and 2017-18, the continuation rates for BAME students were 100%. Due to small reportable numbers in 2018-19, and to protect anonymity the data is not reportable. The College is committed to analysing data year on year for BAME students and supporting them to remain on programme and to be successful.

| Continuation | 2016-17 | | 2017-18 | | 2018-19 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | Y | N | Y | N |
| Continuation for BAME/non-BAME students | 100% | 81% | 100% | 84% | NR | 85% |

Over the past 3 academic years (2015-2018), 100% of students of particular ethnicities enrolled onto Higher Education programmes at Riverside College, that have been retained, have

successfully completed their qualification. The table below shows a further analysis of success rates by ethnicity and by widening participation postcode for our 2017-18 graduates.

| 2017-18 Graduates | % number of students who successfully completed their undergraduate study | % of students who successfully completed their programme from a WP background. |
|---|---|---|
| White graduates | 92% | 46% |
| Black graduates | 100% | 50% |
| Asian graduates | 100% | N/A |
| Other | 100% | 100% |

An analysis of College data for attainment rates for BAME students from shows that they achieve as well as those students who are not BAME:

| Degree classification for BAME students/non BAME | 2015-16 | | 2016-17 | | 2017-18 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | Y | N | Y | N |
| 1st class | 100% | 30% | 0% | 46% | NR | 26% |
| 2.1 | 0% | 20% | 100% | 32% | NR | 43% |
| 2.2 | 0% | 41% | 0% | 18% | NR | 22% |
| 3rd class | 0% | 9% | 0% | 4% | NR | 9% |

It should be noted that due to very low numbers (under 5 graduates in each academic year) analysis of this data cannot be considered statistically significant. In 2015-16 and 2016-17 a greater percentage of BAME students attained a classification of 2.1 or above than white students. In 2017-18, the data for attainment for BAME has not been reported to protect the anonymity of the significantly low number of BAME graduates.

As our Higher Education provision is relatively small with under 300 students in 2018-19, graduates share with us regular updates about their next steps after graduation. Over the past 3 years, our small cohort of BAME students have been successful in progressing onto further study and employment with some examples being setting up own Counselling practice, employment with prestigious football club and progression onto Masters programmes. When compared with the total College population, the proportion of Further Education students categorised as Black Minority Ethnic is 7% which is higher than the Borough of Halton's average of 2.2% and approximately 2% for our Higher Education provision. It is, therefore, a target of the College to increase the number of students of particular ethnicities (other than white) onto its Higher Education courses (either progressing students or students new to the College).

## 1.3 Mature students

Higher Education cohorts at Riverside College are predominately mature (70% are 21 or over: TEF 4 metrics) with the majority mode of delivery for students aged 21 or over being part-time (83%: TEF 4 metrics). A significant majority of our part-time students progress internally from our Level 3 provision. Several of our part-time students (with the majority being over 21) have caring responsibilities and to stay close to home for their higher education is important to them.

| Academic Year | 2015-16 | | | 2016-17 | | | 2017-18 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | % Mature | Y | N | % Mature | Y | N | % Mature |
| Access for students who are mature (ie over the age of 21/ <=21 | 28 | 37 | 43% | 110 | 47 | 70% | 110 | 40 | 73% |

The OfS dashboard does not show any data for mature continuation for full-time.  However, part-time does return two results for 2011-12 and 2013-14 where the gaps are -10 pp.  This indicates that during this period, mature students were outperforming young students in relation to continuation.   However, despite a positive double flag for continuation for part-time learners (with over 90% over the age of 21), in our TEF 4 metrics, an analysis of the College's own data (see table below) shows that there was a gap in continuation rates between mature students and those aged 21 or under in 2017-18 and, although reducing, there still remains a small gap of 3 % in continuation for mature learners in 2018-19.  No target is needed for this metric.

| Continuation | 2017-18 | | 2018-19 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | Y | N |
| Continuation for Mature (ie over the age of 21 / <=21 | 76% | 84% | 86% | 89% |

An analysis of College data for attainment rates for mature students shows that in 2016-17 and in 2017-18, a greater % of mature students achieved a 2.1 or above compared with those aged 21 or under (therefore no gap in attainment rates for mature students).  The College will continue to support both those 21 and under and mature students to achieve a classification of 2.1 or above.

Outcomes of the July 2018 DHLE report and our own data analysis shows that mature students performed as well as younger students, with 93% of mature students surveyed, in employment or further study 6 months after graduation.  This is supported by TEF 4 metrics which report 95.5% of full-time and 94.5% of part-time graduates in employment or further study.  No target is needed for this metric.

| Degree Classification for mature (ie over the age of 21 /<=21 | 2015-16 | | 2016-17 | | 2017-18 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | Y | N | Y | N |
| 1 | 35% | 15% | 62% | 0% | 37% | 0% |
| 2.1 | 10% | 46% | 14% | 67% | 53% | 0% |
| 2.2 | 52% | 15% | 19% | 22% | 5% | 67% |
| 3rd | 3% | 23% | 5% | 11% | 5% | 33% |

Whilst continuing to attract mature students to study Higher Education at Riverside College, the College does not consider mature students to be under represented within its provision.  However, the College will continue to implement marketing strategies to promote community re-generation by improving accessibility for non-traditional Level 7 learners into Higher Education programmes.

## 1.4  Disabled students

In our assessment of performance of disabled students, it has not been possible to disaggregate data due to small numbers.  However, the College will commit to analysing this data when numbers reach reportable levels.  That aside, the OfS dashboard identified a 7.8% gap in part-time access for disabled students in year 2017-18 compared with all English Higher Education providers.  It is, therefore a target of the College to reduce this gap.

| Academic Year | Number of students in receipt of DSA |
|---|---|
| 17-18 | 10 |
| 18-19 | 10 |

Riverside College's TEF 4 metrics indicate 10% of Higher Education students with a declared learning difficulty or disability in 2017/18, thus showing a slight increase of 1% on 2016/17 and 3% on 2015/16.  Riverside College's enrolment data shows that there has been a 29% increase in the number of new start students declaring a difficulty /disability in 2018/19, with 43% of this group of students coming from widening participation postcodes.

| Academic Year | Number of new start students with disability/learning difficulty | % of students with a disability/learning difficulty from a WP background |
|---|---|---|
| 2018/19 | 14 | 43% |

| Academic Year | 2015-16 | | | 2016-17 | | | 2017-18 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | % D/LD | Y | N | % D/LD | Y | N | % D/LD |
| Access for students who have a disability or learning difficulty (D/LD) | 10 | 147 | 6.4%% | 12 | 138 | 8% | 14 | 146 | 9% |

However, an analysis of our College data shows that there was a gap in the continuation rates for students with a disability /learning difficulty in 2016-17 and again in 2018-19 and the College will work consistently to address this gap over the duration of the Access and Participation Plan.

| Continuation | 2016-17 | | 2017-18 | | 2018-19 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Y | N | Y | N | Y | N |
| Continuation for students with a disability/learning difficulty. (D/LD) | 66% | 83% | 82% | 76% | 70% | 83% |

The very small number of students with a disability who graduated from one of our one-year top-up degrees between 2015-16 to 2017-18 all achieved a degree classification of 2.1 or above. Furthermore, an analysis of grades for graduates of our Foundation Degree/HND and HNC shows that those students with a disability have achieved more distinction grades between 2015-16 and 2017-18 than those without.

| | 2015-16 | | 2016-17 | | 2017-18 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pass/Merit/Distinction for Foundation Degree/HND/HNC graduates (mature / those who are less than or equal to the age of 21 with a disability or learning difficulty | Y | N | Y | N | Y | N |
| Distinction | 40% | 26% | 50% | 32% | 43% | 37% |
| Merit | 10% | 33% | 50% | 37% | 14% | 26% |
| Pass | 50% | 40% | 0% | 32% | 43% | 37% |

According to the OfS dashboard, there is no available data for progression for disabled students. However, our own analysis shows that in 2017/18, 78% graduates with a disability progressed into employment /further study. The College has set a target to improve progression rates for disabled students to align with outcomes of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education report issued in 2018, which showed that 90% of Riverside College's graduates were in work or work/study 6 months after graduation. Furthermore, the College will commit to further analysing data for progression for disabled students when numbers reach reportable levels.

Riverside College works hard to ensure that all students with a disability or mental health issues receive the support they need to progress through their qualification. We monitor each student's progress through the DSA application process aiming to ensure that they receive timely support and equipment needed to meet the challenges of study at Level 4 and above.

## 1.5   Care leavers

Achievement rates in 17/18 for looked after children within our further education provision were 87%. Significant time and resources are used to effectively support care leavers in College. Within the Higher Education provision at Riverside College, numbers of care leavers have been low resulting in data for this target group to be not statistically significant.  However, we need to do more to formally capture more information about care leavers who apply and enrol onto our Higher Education programmes.  An analysis shows that in both 2017-18 and 2018-19, the College recruited very low numbers of care leavers into its Higher Education provision. In order that no students can be identifiable from the data reported, specific numbers have not been included in this Access and Participation Plan.   However, in both academic years 100% of care leavers graduated with a merit or 2.1 and progressed into employment or further study. That aside, care leavers are an under-represented group and a target is, therefore, to address this gap by raising awareness of local Higher Education provision and support for success during 1:1 tutorials for progressing students and also through our admissions procedures for new students to the College.

## 1.6   Intersections of disadvantage

An analysis of data of the five priority groups has identified that there are no statistically significant intersections of disadvantage.  We have very small numbers of students with a declared learning disability or difficulty.  We have small numbers of students of particular ethnicities or who are a care leaver.  Most of those students who we do enrol from these priority groups reside in Halton and are drawn from Polar quintile 1.  Due to low numbers the comparative analysis of data relating to intersections of disadvantage cannot be considered significant.    However, the College will commit to analysing this data when it becomes available.

## 1.7   Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

Analysis of our enrolment data shows that we have no students known to us in our Higher Education provision who are from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community.  We also have no students known to us in our Higher Education provision who are children from military families. However, we do seek to identify during the admissions procedure, interview and tutorials, students who fall into both of these categories.

Research demonstrates that estranged students are more likely to encounter financial, accommodation and wellbeing difficulties and, as a College, we are always reviewing the ways in which we can support this group of students.  Each year, we have a very small number of students (adults) who are estranged from their families.  Due to low numbers in our Higher Education provision, the comparative analysis of data relating to these groups cannot be considered significant.  However, Riverside College will continue to take active steps at interview, induction and during tutorials to identify students who may face challenges associated with their caring responsibilities or because they are estranged from their families.   Time and resources will continue to be used to support these students to be retained on programme and to succeed.  We have excellent and proven levels of pastoral and academic support   In the TEF (2018) panel's review of our provision, special recognition was given to the College's "institution-wide approach to supporting widening participation students to ensure they continue in their studies".  Research tells us that disadvantage at entry/access continues whilst on course, and that a single or a combination of underrepresented group characteristics can affect attainment, retention and progression.   We will continue to use and evaluate our MIS systems to evaluate our data to support intersectional analysis. We will also continue to increase our investment and resources in access, success and progression to achieve growth and success for our students.

## 2    Strategic aims and objectives

Our students decide to stay local for their higher education and are attracted, not only by the lower course fees, but by the specialist pastoral support services, welfare, counselling and 1:1 support that the College provides for all students including those who experience emotional, mental health and financial barriers.  The College has established and proven systems in place to support students to develop personally, professionally and academically.  These can be students from a more vocational educational background who may lack confidence to engage in traditional Higher Education or come from backgrounds where there is no history of engagement in Higher Education.  Riverside College fully recognises that progressing into Higher Education is about student choice.  We are increasingly taking active steps to ensure that all of our Level 2 and 3 students progressing students have a wide choice of where they can go and the confidence and qualifications to apply.  We are also ensuring that we invest in supporting pupils in the most disadvantaged schools with knowledge and support to increase the chances that they have to access and succeed in Higher Education.

### 2.1  Target groups

Riverside College will be targeting the following under-represented groups as part of this Access and Participation Plan:  students from areas of low higher education participation, low household income and/or low socio-economic status, BAME, disabled students and students with particular learning difficulties, care leavers, young carers and those who are estranged from their family.

### 2.2  Aims and objectives

Riverside College aims to achieve its targets in the five priority areas through strategies outlined in paragraphs below.  We are aware that students may fall into one or more of the priority areas.

<u>Aim (Priority 1)</u>:  **To improve access, success and progression for students from areas of low household income and/or low socio economic status or low higher education participation.**

| Priority 1: Objectives / Stage of Student Life Cycle | By When |
|---|---|
| to reduce the gap for IMD Q1-Q5 from 10% to 3% for students accessing a top-up degree programme **(Access) (PTA_1)** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| to reduce the gap in attainment between IMD Q1-Q5 students from 13% to 0% **(Success)  (PTS_1)** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| to increase to from 17.5% to 22% the percentage point of part and full-time HE students that progress from Level 5 to Level 6 study **(Progression).** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| to enhance our hardship fund increasing the support to assist with any short fall and seek to ensure that no student is forced to leave their course for reasons of genuine financial hardship **(Success)** | 2020-21 |
| to introduce a travel bursary for full-time students, who attend on 3 or more days per week from low household income, to support them with their travel costs, (subject to evidence of need). **(Success)** | 2020-21 |
| to improve the provision of targeted careers advice and support for our graduating students to maintain or improve  levels of progression into employment or further study **(Progression)** | 2020-21 |

**Aim (Priority 2):** **To improve access, success and progression for students of particular ethnicities**

| Priority 2: Objectives | By When |
|---|---|
| to increase from 5.6% to 8%, the percentage point of yearly intake of students from BAME background **(Access) (PTA_2)** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| to increase from 17.5% to 22% the percentage point of part and full-time HE students that progress from Level 5 to Level 6 study **(Progression).** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| to continue to analyse recruitment, retention, achievement, and attendance rates by ethnicity to ensure that access opportunities, continuation and pass rates are in line with the overall College rate (including year-on-year improvement) and that students of particular ethnicities continue to be in no way disadvantaged whilst at the College. **(Access and Success)** | 2020-21 |
| to monitor the experiences of students of particular ethnicities through focus groups or 1:1 tutorials and introduce a peer mentoring scheme (where appropriate) **(Success)** | 2020-21 |
| to improve the provision of targeted careers advice and support for our graduating students to maintain or improve  levels of progression into employment or further study **(Progression)** | 2020-21 |

**Aim (Priority 3):** **To improve access, success and progression for mature students**

| Priority 3: Objectives | By When |
|---|---|
| • to increase to from 17.5% to 22% the percentage point of part and full-time HE students that progress from Level 5 to Level 6 study **(Progression).** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| • to evaluate delivery models/demand for new pathways/programmes, modes of study and flexible delivery options, and to introduce new pathways/programmes as appropriate in response to community and employer need. **(Access)** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| • to continue to improve accessibility for non-traditional Level 4 mature learners into Higher Education programmes **(Access)** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| • to consider and address the specific and additional needs of mature students who may also have caring responsibilities and who work part time through forums,1:1 tutorials and individual learning plans. **(Success)** | 2020-21 |
| • to introduce peer mentoring schemes for 2020/21 for mature students with support from a network of their peers who have similar experiences and who have been closely matched to offer bespoke support. **(Success)** | 2020-21 |
| • to improve the provision of targeted careers advice and support for our graduating students to maintain or improve  levels of progression into employment or further study **(Progression)** | 2020-21 |

**Aim (Priority 4):** **To improve access, success and progression for disabled students and students with specific learning difficulties**

| Priority 4: Objectives | By When |
|---|---|
| • to reduce the gap in access for disabled part-time students (compared with all UK HE providers) from 7.8% to 0%. **(Access). (PTA_3)** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| • to reduce the gap in continuation rates between disabled and non-disabled students for both part-time and full-time from 17% to 5%. **(Success). (PTS_2)** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |

| | By When |
|---|---|
| • to reduce the gap between disabled and non disabled students that progress into highly skilled employment or further education from 17% to 0%. **(Progression) (PTP_1)** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| • to develop a student support plan for all disabled students including those with health/mental health conditions to continue to ensure that this priority group continues to be in no way disadvantaged whilst at the College. **(Success)** | 2020-21 |
| • to seek feedback from focus groups or 1:1 tutorials, so that we are able to identify any emerging additional needs and to ascertain the support we need to provide and how we can address any barriers **(Success)** | 2020-21 |

**Aim (Priority 5): To improve access and success for care leavers/young carers and those estranged from family**

| Priority 5: Objectives | By When |
|---|---|
| • to increase the number of care leavers who progress from Level 3 study to the Higher Education provision at Riverside College **(Access)** | 2020-21 to 2024-25 |
| • to seek feedback from focus groups or 1:1 tutorials, so that we are able to identify any emerging additional needs of care leavers/young carers and those estranged from family and to ascertain the support we need to provide and how we can address any barriers **(Success)** | 2020-21 |
| • to introduce a bursary for care leavers/young carers and those estranged from their family **(Access and Success)** | 2020-21 |
| • to undertake research both internally and with external agencies to explore and consider what services we need to provide to support young carers, care leavers and those estranged from their family with issues that arise as a result of having to balance responsibilities with studying at Higher Education level. **(Success)** | 2020-21 |
| • to provide a dedicated contact in Programme Management for Higher Education students who are care leavers/young carers and those estranged from family. **(Success)** | 2020-21 |

## 3    Strategic measures

### 3.1  Whole provider strategic approach

The College will adopt a whole provider strategic approach to ensure that the aims of this access and participation plan are achieved.  Staff at all levels within the College are, as a community, committed to the practice of widening participation to raise aspirations so that anybody who has the potential to benefit from engaging in Higher Education has the opportunity to do so.  Our Higher Education students are attracted, not only by the lower course fees, but by the specialist pastoral support services, welfare, counselling and 1:1 support that the College provides through its Programme Management team who within a small Higher Education provision work very closely with curriculum tutors to ensure that students are supported to remain on programme.

Our Higher Education Marketing strategy is agreed annually by SMT and has a defined focus on attracting students from across the range of priority groups; aspiring those that would not have previously progressed into Higher Education, to consider it as an accessible option. The number of students progressing from our level 3 programmes into Higher Education at Riverside College increased in 2017-18 and again in 2018-19. These students wish to stay local for their higher education.  Many of our part-time Level 3 progressing students have dependents, live in area of low socio-economic income/status and for some, caring responsibilities. To stay close to home for their higher education (from Level 4 to Level 6) is important to them.  **(Aim: Priority 1) (Targets:  PTA_1, PTA_2 and PTA_3).**

Riverside College's Senior Management Team (SMT) and Governors continue to annually set tuition fees for all of its Higher Education programmes at a reasonable level, in order to promote progression from Level 3 and to provide a local and value for money Higher Education provision to meet the needs of mature learners who prefer to work and study closer to home. Over recent years we have taken active steps to ensure that we offer accessible routes into Higher Education and where our part and full-time students can succeed and achieve their potential. We have also introduced three further one-year Level 6 top-up degree programmes to offer internal progression opportunities. Riverside College's SMT, Higher Education and curriculum managers annually review the curriculum offer to ensure that there are progression routes into an accessible and more local Higher Education alternative, which will lead directly into job opportunities locally and further afield. **(Aim: Priority 1 and 3) (Targets: PTA_1).**
In 2019-20, we will launch the Higher Opportunities Programme. The Higher Opportunities Programme (HOP) will be a bespoke programme delivered to a maximum of 40 Riverside College students who have chosen a vocational course of study which is, or leads to a level 3 qualification that enables progression into Higher Education through either full or part time study, or alternatively a Higher and Degree Apprenticeship. The programme which will be coordinated by the College's Advice, Careers and Employability Team and will comprise bespoke activities to raise the aspirations of vocational students in line with Liverpool LEP priorities, to access higher education opportunities whilst maximising their learning potential and future career prospects. **(Aim: Priority 1)**

We are increasingly engaging in collaborative work with schools both within Halton and in the wider Liverpool City Region. Our Principal is Vice-Chair of the Halton Association of Secondary Head teachers and Vice-Chair of the Merseyside College Association which regularly meets with the Liverpool City region

We invest time and resources in supporting the most disadvantaged schools with knowledge and support to increase the chances that those pupils will succeed through activities, for example working with Year 9 and above female pupils to develop skills/knowledge required for work within STEM areas. The College supports the development of maths and science with eight local schools as part of the Mond Trophy for maths and Science. We work with pupils in Key Stage 2 (through our Tomorrow's Teachers programme) to develop their reading skills and maths and science competency in order to prepare them for progress into Further and Higher Education. We also offer a programme of support to secondary schools to develop pupils' revision skills. Furthermore, the College leads on the Prestigious University Programme with local schools which is aimed at supporting widening participation pupils to access higher education **(Aim: Priority 1)**

Riverside College is a collaborative partner in the Wade Deacon Academy Trust and our Principal, Head of Curriculum and Quality and Head of Higher Education attend strategic and operational meetings where the needs and aspirations of pupils within the Borough are an important focus. In 2019-2020, we aim to increase the number of Riverside College staff performing school governor roles in schools within targeted/widening participation post codes and low participation areas to raise awareness of progress opportunities within schools that are under-represented in Higher Education. **(Aim: Priority 1)**

For our work in the areas of success and progression, we recognise that data is only part of the story and that students must continue to be at the heart of what we do. We will be working closely with all our students across the priority areas to ensure we fully listen to their voice to understand the barriers that they encounter which will support us to identify beneficial measures that will help them to realise their ambition. Change can only be achieved by understanding our students' backgrounds, their experiences and needs, and personalising our academic and pastoral support to help them to reach their potential. We do this very well. Key to this success is the dedicated and committed team of Higher Education pastoral support staff and teachers who work to help students with the increasing levels of academic challenge as they progress through their programme(s) of study. **(Aim: Priority 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)**

As a College community, we will work strategically to ensure that this success continues and improves whilst at the same time, focusing renewed efforts on supporting BAME students, care leavers, care givers, people estranged from their family and other under-represented groups to engage and be successful.  Our Programme Management team will be working closely with national organisations such as Stand Alone, The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers and Barnados to help to advise and support us with their knowledge and expertise so that we are more fully informed about how we can attract onto programme and support whilst on programme, those from a BAME background, with a disability or learning difficulty, care leavers, young adult carers and estranged students.  The introduction of bespoke peer mentoring schemes (for students of particular ethnicities/students with caring responsibilities) and specific bursaries (care leaver/estranged from family) for under-represented groups are measures which will impact on continuation and success on programme).  We will also develop support plans for all disabled students including those with health/mental health conditions. **(Aim:  Priority 2, 4 and 5)  (Targets:  PTA_2, PTA_3, PTS_2 and PTP_1)**

In 2018, Riverside College hosted the first annual Halton People's Health Forum Student Conference; an event organised in collaboration with the Halton Clinical Commissioning Group.  It provided a valuable opportunity for students to learn first-hand about future careers in the NHS and health care sectors.  **(Aim: Priority 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) (Target: PTP_1)**

In addition, the College has well-established systems in place to support students to develop personally, professionally and academically.  These can be students who may lack confidence to engage in traditional Higher Education or come from backgrounds where there is no history of engagement in Higher Education.  Our student services, academic tutorials, pastoral support and welfare teams will continue to support learners through the transition into Higher Education and to achieve success. **(Aim:  Priority 1)**

We continue to welcome refugees into the College community to study at different levels within Riverside College and, in due course, it is anticipated that the students will be prepared and sufficiently supported to progress onto our Higher Education provision.  Riverside College's Marketing and Admissions team, pastoral tutor and the Higher Education Ambassador work closely with this group of learners to make them fully aware of the opportunities that are available to them to progress their studies within College in full or part-time mode of study. **(Aim: Priority 2) (PTA_2)**

Within the College we have a dedicated Equality and Diversity Action Group. This group focuses on the whole lifecycle approach and brings together colleagues working in the areas of Access, Success, Progression, Financial Support and with academic colleagues. Its work will focus all aspects of the widening participation agenda and will use data driven evidence, and effective evaluation to ensure that our plans are delivered. **(Aim: Priority 1, 2, 3,4) (PTA_1, 2, 3 and PTS_1, 2 and PTP_1)**

Stakeholder partnerships and widening participation are central to its key goals of efficiency, quality and growth.  By putting the student at the very heart of what we do, we are able to demonstrate improved learning gain, a safe and collaborative learning culture and a learning environment which is inclusive, dynamic and where staff drive improvement through a willingness to be the best they can be.  We have a strong sense of community, where students and staff are collaborative partners within the learning journey.

At Riverside College we believe that Higher Education is a transformational experience and for many, the catalyst for social mobility.  Riverside College plays a key role in the sector in addressing the participation deficit amongst underrepresented groups in Higher Education (and this is supported by our TEF Gold panel feedback).  Further detail on our Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-2025 main areas of focus are detailed in Section 2 (strategic aims and objectives) in Section 6 (Evaluation Strategy) and in our Investment Plan.
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## 3.2 Alignment with other strategies

### 3.2.1 Alignment of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy with our Access and Participation Strategy

Riverside College is committed to promoting the practice of inclusivity and fairness in all services provided by the College as well as to countering any attitudes and behaviour which deny people opportunities, simply or primarily because of factors considered in the Equality Act 2010 to be protected characteristics.   In line with the duty set out in the Equality Act 2010, the College continues to take positive steps to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.  The College continues to take positive steps to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.   The College also recognises the fact that students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds are also statistically at greater risk of not achieving their full educational potential and will endeavour to take steps to redress this imbalance, for example, through the availability of bursaries and hardship fund for specific students that fall into this category.

Throughout the student life cycle stages of the Access and Participation plan, the College has considered the impact of its activities on students with protected characteristics, for example, through close analysis of recruitment, retention, achievement and attendance rates by widening participation postcodes, by gender and by ethnicity by learning difficulty/disability.  This is to ensure that students who share these characteristics continue to be in no way disadvantaged. All College marketing materials reflect the College's commitment to equality and diversity and are made available in public places throughout the community. The College's admission systems are free from bias and equally accessible to all.   Any assumptions that only certain types of person will be able to undertake certain types of learning will be challenged. **(Aim: Priority 1,,2, 3, 4) (Targets:  PTA_1, PTA_2 and PTA_3).**

Through annual monitoring, age, disability, ethnicity, gender and widening participation recruitment data on all programmes is scrutinised and, where appropriate, strategies devised to address imbalance. Teaching materials are audited to ensure there is no discrimination, and to promote equality and diversity wherever possible. Statistics about students on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age and disability are collected as are views of students via learner voice questionnaires.  These are monitored against key College performance indicators and are reported to the Equality and Diversity Action Group, Senior Management Team Monitoring and then to the Quality & Standards Committee of the Governing Body.  This level of close monitoring informs our evaluation strategy as we move forward.

### 3.2.2 Alignment of the College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy with our Access and Participation Strategy

Through its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy, the College is committed to continually increasing access and removing barriers to learning and utilising naturally occurring opportunities to promote equality and diversity and set levels of attainment that continually stretch and challenge.  Moreover, the policy promotes the development of student confidence, motivation and self-esteem through engaging teaching, learning and assessment practices. Embedded within our Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy is the concept of inclusive and personalised learning, using accessible modes of delivery which meet the learning requirements of all our students, and offering an environment which ensures inclusivity through its curriculum design and teaching and learning resources. **(Targets: PTS_1,  PTS_2, PTP_1).**   Central to the Policy are the high standards and expectations of all staff and students and the development of positive and professional working relationships at all times.

In 2017, we embraced pedagogical change through the launch our Digital Learning Strategy and there is, to-date, clear evidence that the strategy is harnessing technology and maximising access to learning through blended learning approaches.  Student attendance and engagement cannot always be guaranteed where there are personal and social barriers that, on occasion,

impact on the ability to attend a class.  Our Digital Learning Strategy is bringing classroom and online learning together which provides the necessary academic and study skills support that minimises the risk of withdrawal from programme for those that are most affected.

As theory of change forms part of this Access and Participation Plan, we will continue to seek feedback from students on the ways in which they like to learn and evaluate (through end of module surveys) students' feedback on the use of and impact of online learning /blending learning resources.  This will, in turn, inform further developments in teaching and learning approaches.  In addition, we will seek to explore what impact this strategy has had on student retention and achievement.  **(Targets: PTS_1, PTS_2).** That aside, the impact of our Teaching and Learning and Assessment Policy is clearly demonstrated by our TEF Gold Award, reflecting our outstanding performance in teaching, learning and academic support.  Feedback from Riverside College Internal Higher Education learner voice surveys in 2017-18 (and again in 2018-19), has demonstrated excellent feedback on the quality of teaching, assessment and feedback and academic support and these positive results are consistent with outcomes of the NSS 2018 survey which resulted in a 96.3 overall satisfaction rate.  Key contributors to this success have been the prioritisation of enhancement led activities for continuous improvement facilitated through stronger student engagement and decision making involvement through the Higher Education Learner Voice, end of module evaluations, annual monitoring and through our Student Partnership Agreement (co-authored with students).

### 3.2.3  Working in partnership with employers

The College works closely with local and regional employers and its employer base grows year on year.  The College makes a significant contribution to the local economy and has an important role in supporting local businesses, schools and health care settings.   Employer involvement in programme delivery consists of contribution to the design of our courses, educational visits, guest speakers and involvement in the setting of live assignments for students in employment or on work placement.   Employers host students where work placement or experience is an integral part of the curriculum.  Our students also benefit from extra-curricular placements, and part-time work which provide additional opportunities for the development of transferable and employability skills. Students are supported with job applications, CVs and interview preparation and employers contribute to a careers fair held on campus.   (**Aim: Priority 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 ) (Target: PTP_1).**

The College continues to grow its Higher Education provision.  It does by responding to external and internal business growth opportunities to achieve wider participation and by improving accessibility for non-traditional Level 4 learners into Higher Education programmes. The Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has given clear guidance on the skills areas which will grow and in response to this, the College continues to make every effort to make sure that our students are prepared with the work-ready, personal skills and knowledge they will need to be successful in employment in growth areas of employment.

At Riverside College we have an unrelenting passion to support all students to develop the knowledge and skills for success in life and employment.  For example, an improvement of accessibility for non-traditional Level 4 students into Higher Education programmes in Education, Counselling, Health and Social Care and Engineering, will continue to promote community re-generation by preparing students who are from the local community (and who understand its social and economic complexities) for work as teaching assistants, teachers, counsellors, health care practitioners and electrical /mechanical engineers. **(Aim: Priority 1).**

### 3.3.4  Working in partnership with Shaping Futures (NCOP)

Riverside College is part of Shaping Futures (NCOP), a collaboration of Higher Education providers based within / around Liverpool City Region that is supported by the OfS to aid Higher Education progression by providing impartial Higher Education information, advice and

guidance to local learners from target wards / under-represented groups. The programmes and activities are designed to align to the Gatsby benchmarks.

In doing this, Shaping Futures also contributes to our own strategic aim to improve access to Riverside College from across Liverpool City Region (which includes the Borough of Halton). The programme has its own evaluation plan, which uses the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation and uses longitudinal tracking of beneficiaries via the HEAT software system.  As part of this, a theory of change model is utilised. Based on our long-term aim to increase progression to HE, intermediate and short term outcomes have been identified and measured to ensure that the programme is impactful.  In the short term, a baseline aspirational survey with be completed by a sample of beneficiaries.  This will be repeated annually to assess attitudinal and informational changes, whilst teacher and student focus groups will be used to gauge broader impact (e.g. on informing HE choices) as an intermediate term goal.

The Shaping Futures (NCOP) consortium will also develop a Higher Education Outreach Hub for Liverpool City Region. Wherever possible, the activities of the Outreach Hub will be designed to complement partner access and participation plans and will be a forum for collaborative working / best practice sharing on issues such as disabled students, young people from military families and care leavers.   As part of its work within the Shaping Futures (NCOP) consortium, Riverside College is currently making very good progress against a set of key deliverables for outreach to schools within the priority wards within the region.  Through these deliverables we are focused on raising aspirations for Higher Education starting with pupils from as young as Year 9 and Year 10.

Through our Shaping Futures (NCOP) deliverables the College is focused on raising aspirations for Higher Education starting with pupils from as young as Year 9 and Year 10.  We do this through a series of sampling and taster days which provide a sound insight into progression paths towards Higher Education. The focus is on aspiration, not only to our own Higher Education provision but also to wider opportunities at Level 4, 5 and 6.  Through our Shaping Futures deliverables we work closely with parents/carers and our progressing Level 3 students/applicants to provide aspiration building for potential students including differentiated support and guidance about the Student Loan Company and DSA application processes.   This intervention is particularly important where the student is the first person in their family to progress into Higher Education.  This academic year, the College has been proactive in raising aspirations into Higher Education by producing and displaying posters within College and in local target schools highlighting case studies of students/pupils who have successfully progressed into Higher Education at Riverside College from our Level 3 provision (and in several cases from Level 2 programmes into our own provision).  The school based posters focus on the successes in Higher Education of the school's past pupils.

### 3.3.5  Working with other stakeholders to raise aspiration

Riverside College are a collaborative partner of the Wade Deacon Teaching School Alliance and the Runshaw College Teaching School Alliance.  Through collaborative partnership, the College promotes awareness of its Higher Education opportunities to potential students in local schools. This is through open events held in schools and College, a Higher Education Fair, an Apprentice Fair, school assemblies and year group tutorials.   In 2017, Riverside College Counselling Foundation and Degree students and staff partnered with USA charity Sidewalk Talk to create its first UK division and since 2017 have provided community listening events in the UK during Mental Health Awareness Week (including working with local residents in community settings).   Moreover, in December 2018, Riverside College hosted The World Health Innovation Summit (WHIS) Education Day which provided a platform for speakers to exchange knowledge on the healthcare industry and for communities to share ideas to help improve healthcare services.  The was an inspiring event designed to raise awareness of mental health issues.

### 3.4    Alignment of objectives to strategic measures

Riverside College has set out a series of aims (outlined in Section 2.2) which will support the organisation to achieve its ambitions and which are also fully reflective of our College vision and core values. For each of the identified aims there are associated objectives (outlined in Section 2.2) which cover the full student life cycle.  At Riverside College, we are committed to the practice of widening participation to raise aspiration so that anybody who has the potential to benefit from engaging in Higher Education has the opportunity to do so.    Our TEF Gold award (June 2019) is a symbol of this commitment and of our College vision which is "through the excellence of the education we provide, we will enhance and transform lives".  In addition to the objectives outlined in Section 2.2, we will continue with use the following interventions to support our strategy.

#### 3.4.1   Access interventions

- To increase the number of Riverside College staff performing school governor roles within Higher Education low participation areas to raise awareness of progression opportunities.
- To provide study skills support to enable students to achieve higher grades for progression into Higher Education.
- To work with and support pupils in Key Stage 2 (through our Tomorrow's Teachers programme) to develop their reading skills and maths and science competency in order to prepare them to progress into Further and Higher Education.
- To support GCSE pupils in local secondary skills to develop effective revision skills (and to raise attainment.
- To make links with a range of bodies that provide disability awareness and services eg The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers, Stand Alone and Barnardos to be more fully informed about how we can attract onto programme and support those with a disability or learning difficulty, care leavers, young adult carers and estranged students.
- To evaluate delivery models/demand for new pathways/programmes, and to introduce new pathways/programmes as appropriate in response to community and employer need.

#### 3.4.2   Success interventions

- To provide academic study skills support to all part and full-time Higher Education students to support them with the increasing levels of academic challenge.
- To provide responsive and effective pastoral care to all students across the 5 priority areas in order to develop confidence, and support achievement, personal development and independence.
- To monitor the effectiveness of student satisfaction through end of module evaluations, through HE learner voice questionnaires and through the National Student Survey to provide the best possible experience for our students.
- To continue to offer financial support through a bursary for our first year full-time students to support beneficiaries to remain on programme (see Section 4: Financial Support).

#### 3.4.3   Progression interventions

- To support students to develop their independence, team working and communication skills in preparation for employment, promotion or further study.
- To support both full and part-time students (through tutorial support and careers guidance) to consider the benefits of geographical/social mobility on their future earnings' potential.
- To develop Level 4 and 5 students as 'scholars' through a programme of study skills workshop sessions to support them to progress onto higher level programmes of study.
- To increase the number of part-time and full-time Level 5 students that progress onto Level 6 study and to provide full advice, guidance and support to enable them to do this.
- To increase the number of learners that progress from part-time HE programmes into post graduate study or employment.
- To improve the provision of targeted careers advice and support for our graduating students.

## 4    Financial Support

In order to increase and widen participation further on full-time programmes, the College is committed to providing cost effective and more accessible routes into Higher Education **(Access)** and helping full-time students within the first year of their study **(Success).**    The College acknowledges that some students are less likely to be able to afford course related equipment.  We know this because in 2018-19, a survey to evaluate the £500 bursary for full-time students (first year of study) confirmed that this invention is popular with students in order to be able to help with costs associated with study and to help them worry less about money, knowing that they can get the equipment needed for the course.  All first year full-time Higher Education students will, therefore, receive a £500 bursary towards equipment whilst studying. In 2017-18, 42% of students who received a bursary lived in widening participation postcodes, with others falling into one or more of the 5 under-represented priority areas).  In 2018-19, 48% of students who receive a bursary lived in widening participation postcodes.  Payment of the £500 bursary is subject to conditions:

- The student meets a minimum of 90% attendance during term 1, term 2 and term 3 to receive a bursary instalment at the end of each subsequent term.
- The student complies with all course related deadlines for submission of work.
- The student complies with the College's expectations on conduct and behaviour.

In addition, a hardship fund will continue to be available to assist any emerging students who are struggling financially to remain on programme.  The aim of the fund is to relieve financial hardship that might impact on a student's participation at College.  We will also introduce a bursary scheme to specifically support those who are carers, care leavers or estranged from their family.  The scheme will also include a travel bursary for full-time students from low household income, who attend on 3 or more days per week and a bursary for our first year full-time students to support beneficiaries to remain on programme.  A Bursary Policy will be written during 2019/20 to cover financial support with a clear outline of eligibility criteria.  This will be implemented in 2020/21.  The bursary amounts are to be decided as part of the policy.

Riverside College's overall levels of investment to support access, success and progression are outlined within the accompanying Fee Information and Investment Plan.  The balance between the investments allocated to access, success and progression activities and to financial support reflects the priorities identified through our assessment of performance and priorities to support under-represented groups into Higher Education.  The table below outlines the level of funding that the College will invest in its financial support package over the period of this access and participation plan.

|  | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Financial Support | £26,000 | £26,750 | £27,750 | £28,000 | £29,250 |

## 5    Student consultation

The College engages with Higher Education student representatives throughout the academic year during three Higher Education Learner Voice meetings and with all Higher Education students through individual learner voice survey monkey reviews.  In addition, all Higher Education students are required to complete end of module/unit feedback surveys.  Student feedback is analysed closely through assessment board and academic board reports.  Action plans are created in response to student feedback.   Students are consulted on: student satisfaction levels, curriculum offer and curriculum design, marketing, promotion of the Higher Education provision, access and induction arrangements, how prepared students feel for employment and progression into the next level of study, the usefulness and effectiveness of the academic study skills materials that support both success and progression, pastoral support arrangements, fee levels and bursaries.

In addition, a forum of Higher Education students has had the opportunity to give informal feedback on the plan before submission.  No changes were recommended.  Students will be involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this Access and Participation Agreement through the Higher Education Learning Community (to which student representatives are invited), through the Higher Education Learner Voice forum, through student surveys and also through annual monitoring at Academic Board (to which student represents are invited).  There is also student representation on the College's governing body.  As all Higher Education students will be invited to feedback on implementation, content and delivery of this Access and Participation Plan, a full range of student backgrounds will be included.

## 6    Evaluation strategy

## 6.1   Programme design

This evaluation strategy is underpinned by objectives outlined in Section 2.2 which give a clear intention of what we as College want to achieve in this Access and Participation Plan.   Where possible, our targets and objectives are set and will be evaluated against external benchmarks such as those used by the NSS, TEF and Graduate Outcomes Survey to ensure that what we are evaluating and monitoring internally meets, or exceeds, the benchmarks by which we are measured externally.  Riverside College's evaluation strategy will inform the monitoring and action planning of our access and participation plan objectives to help us understand to what extent we are meeting our ambitions and goals as well as providing evidence of impact on the identified under-represented group.

## 6.2   Evaluation design and implementation

At Riverside College, staff at all levels and programmes, understand the significance of evaluation.  The College will continue to use a number of quality assurance processes in its evaluation strategy.  Most important of these is the cycle of Senior Management Team (SMT) Monitoring, Quality and Strategy meetings, and Higher Education academic boards.  We will undertake evaluation of our specific access, success and progression initiatives (through SMT Monitoring reports, through reports to the Quality and Standards Committee of the Governing body and through the HE monitoring reports and enhancement plans presented at Academic Board).   Through SMT Monitoring, age, disability, ethnicity, gender and widening participation recruitment data on all programmes will be scrutinised and, where appropriate, strategies devised to address imbalance. Statistics about students on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age and disability will continue to be collected together with views of students.  We will supplement this evaluation by gathering opinions from students in the form of focus groups and learner voice surveys, the external NSS and Graduate Outcomes survey.

We will also continue to track applications by gender and disability/learning difficulty.  This will be further extended in 2021 -2022 to more formally track applications from all widening participation groups (including care leavers, care givers, estranged from family, children from a military background and from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities).   As our Higher Education students apply directly to the College and not through UCAS, we will use our internal tracking system to analyse the number of applications we receive from low socio-economic and low participation backgrounds (using IMD and POLAR) as well as the number of offers made to applicants.   Reports on continuation, attendance, progress and successful outcomes of all applicants will continue to be monitored and presented to SMT Monitoring and to the Higher Education Academic Board during the academic year.  This in turn will be reported on to governors on the Quality and Standards Committee of the Board of Governors.  There is an appropriate level of resource assigned to our evaluative methodologies.

Key student outcomes, including NSS, continuation and success, will continue to be analysed in our Higher Education annual monitoring reports to the Higher Education academic boards.  The annual monitoring report findings and enhancement plan are then taken forward to our Quality and Standards Committee of the Board of Governors.  This approach will provide a robust

mechanism to identify trends and any emerging variances for groups with different characteristics.  It will ensure consistent evaluation of activities and further promote continuous improvement across the student lifecycle.   For evaluation purposes, Riverside College will continue to undertake a full analysis of students in receipt of bursaries in terms of key performance indicators (including a new bursary to support care leavers, care givers and those estranged from their families).

In 2018-19, a survey to evaluate the £500 bursary for full-time students (first year of study) confirmed that this invention is popular with students in order to be able to help with costs associated with study.  Although 100% of those surveyed said that they would have still enrolled onto their Higher Education at the College if the bursary had not been offered, others stated that the bursary had been an incentive to remain on course, to attend regularly and to meet both informal and formal deadlines.  The findings of the survey also highlighted that the intervention supported students with costs associated with study (eg equipment needed for the course) and, helped them to worry less about money.  There is, however, further work to be done to specifically evaluate the impact the bursary has on under-represented groups (as opposed to the full cohort of students who are entitled to the £500 bursary).   Furthermore, reports on continuation, attendance, progress and successful outcomes of those that are in receipt of financial support will continue to be monitored and presented to SMT Monitoring and to the Higher Education academic boards.

## 6.3  Learning to shape improvements

Moving forward, Riverside College will continue to adopt a structured approach to evaluating interventions targeted at individuals from underrepresented groups. It will also address any emerging limitations in research design or evaluation methodology. All evaluation will continue to be used to demonstrate impact and inform changes, eg new and revised interventions, where appropriate.  Findings from our evaluation will continue to be shared through the Higher Education Academic Board, to our partner university through collaborative review and to Riverside College's SMT and governors.

## 7    Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Governors at Riverside College have been engaged with monitoring our previous Access Agreements and will continue to have oversight of this Access and Participation 5 Year Plan, (with due recognition to its strategic and longer-term vision and targets). This plan has been approved by Governors and, the Board will continue to receive reports to allow them to monitor progress and ask challenging questions if we are not delivering, to ensure that we achieve the targets set out in this plan.   In addition, the Access and Participation Plan priorities, milestones and objectives will be continuously monitored through the Quality and Standards Committee of the Board of Governors (3 occasions annually), and through Senior Management Team (SMT) monitoring reports. (3 occasions annually).  Reports will be prepared for governors, for Higher Education academic boards and SMT that will show progress against the targets identified in the Access and Participation Plan. The Higher Education academic boards will also provide student representatives with the opportunity to monitor performance and provisions of the plan on at least two occasions during each academic year.  If, for any reason, targets are not being met, a robust action plan will be put into place which will be monitored closely by SMT and governors.  The embedding of the targets into the College's Annual Monitoring Reports will give clear oversight of the work and monitoring of progress for academic staff and will also ensure we align these objectives with our NSS and TEF measures.   The impact of the work we undertake with Shaping Futures will continue to be monitored through NCOP project review meetings where progress against deliverables is assessed.  The outcomes of this review are subsequently reported to the College's SMT on a termly basis.

Widening participation recruitment and progress against the objectives outlined in this Access and Participation Plan will be also be monitored against key College performance indicators and will be reported to the Equality and Diversity Action Group.  This will help us understand the

impact of our interventions/strategies on our targets. Due the size of the Higher Education provision at Riverside College, we do not have a Students Union, however, we have a Higher Education Learner Voice forum consisting of course student representatives who, through termly meetings and attendance at the academic boards, will be fully engaged in the monitoring of performance and provisions of the plan. The College's Accountable Officer (the Principal) and its Governing Body have ultimate responsibility for monitoring the performance and provisions of this plan.

## 8    Provision of information to students

Riverside College is committed to providing timely, accurate and comprehensive information to to applicants to ensure they can make informed decisions about the Higher Education courses they may wish to apply for.   To ensure that prospective students from all backgrounds are confident and well informed about the costs of Higher Education and the financial support available, information will be specifically provided to students on our website and through open day/evening presentations. Riverside College will publish course related information on the Higher Education pages of our website (including entry requirements, fees per year, and total course fees (incurred over the full duration of the programme/award), costs, availability of bursaries and progression opportunities). The College will also publish the Access Agreement and Participation plan on the main College website.

# Access and participation plan
# Fee information 2020-21

**Provider name: Riverside College**

**Provider UKPRN: 10002863**

## Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

**Inflationary statement:**

We do not intend to raise fees annually

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

| Full-time course type: | Additional information: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|
| First degree | | £6,950 |
| Foundation degree | | £6,950 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * |
| HNC/HND | | £6,950 |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | * | * |
| Accelerated degree | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * |
| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * |
| Other | * | * |

**Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants**

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

**Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants**

| Part-time course type: | Additional information: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|
| First degree | BA Education top-up | £5,750 |
| First degree | BSc Counselling top-up | £5,750 |
| Foundation degree | Foundation Degree in Counselling | £4,500 |
| Foundation degree | Foundation Degree in Counselling Children and Young People | £4,500 |
| Foundation degree | Foundation Degree in Education | £5,250 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * |
| HNC/HND | HNC Engineering | £4,000 |
| CertHE/DipHE | Certificate in Education | £4,000 |
| Postgraduate ITT | Post Graduate Certificate in Education | £4,000 |
| Accelerated degree | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * |
| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * |
| Other | * | * |

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

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

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

**Provider name: Riverside College**

**Provider UKPRN: 10002863**

## Investment summary

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

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

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

**Table 4a - Investment summary (£)**

| Access and participation plan investment summary (£) | Academic year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| **Total access activity investment (£)** | £14,600.00 | £14,710.00 | £15,125.00 | £16,135.00 | £17,390.00 |
| Access (pre-16) | £3,500.00 | £3,500.00 | £3,500.00 | £4,000.00 | £4,250.00 |
| Access (post-16) | £9,000.00 | £9,100.00 | £9,250.00 | £9,500.00 | £10,000.00 |
| Access (adults and the community) | £2,000.00 | £2,000.00 | £2,250.00 | £2,500.00 | £3,000.00 |
| Access (other) | £100.00 | £110.00 | £125.00 | £135.00 | £140.00 |
| **Financial support (£)** | £26,000.00 | £26,750.00 | £27,750.00 | £28,000.00 | £29,250.00 |
| **Research and evaluation (£)** | £1,000.00 | £1,250.00 | £1,500.00 | £1,750.00 | £2,000.00 |

**Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)**

| Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI) | Academic year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| **Higher fee income (£HFI)** | £113,610.00 | £117,335.00 | £122,110.00 | £126,885.00 | £128,840.00 |
| **Access investment** | 5.5% | 5.5% | 5.7% | 5.9% | 6.2% |
| **Financial support** | 19.4% | 19.4% | 19.4% | 18.9% | 19.6% |
| **Research and evaluation** | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.8% |
| **Total investment (as %HFI)** | 25.3% | 25.5% | 25.8% | 25.5% | 26.6% |

# Office for Students

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

**Provider name: Riverside College**

**Provider UKPRN: 10002863**

## Targets

**Table 2a - Access**

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Target group | Description (500 characters maximum) | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Baseline data | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups | PTA_1 | Socio-economic | To reduce the gap for IMD Q1-Q5 from 10% to 3% for students accessing a top-up degree programme | No | Other data source | 2017-18 | 10% | 8% | 6% | 5% | 4% | 3% | College MIS data (IMD 2015) |
| To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups | PTA_2 | Ethnicity | To increase from 5.6% to 8%, the percentage point of yearly intake of students from BAME background over the 5 years | No | Other data source | 2017-18 | 5.6% | 6% | 6.5% | 7% | 7.5% | 8% | College MIS data |
| To reduce the gap in participation in HE for disabled part-time students | PTA_3 | Disabled | To reduce the gap in Access for part-time disabled students from 7.% to 0%. | No | The access and participation dataset | 2017-18 | 7.8% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 2% | 0% | The data source is OfS dashboard that shows a 7.8% difference in Access for part-time disabled students at Riverside College compared with all English Higher Education providers |
| | PTA_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table 2b - Success**

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Target group | Description | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Baseline data | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To improve the attainment rate for WP students | PTS_1 | Socio-economic | To reduce the gap in attainment between IMD Q1-Q5 students from 13% to 0% | No | Other data source | 2017-18 | 13% | 10% | 7% | 5% | 3% | 0% | College MIS data |
| To improve continuation rates for students with a disability or learning difficulty | PTS_2 | Disabled | To reduce the gap in continuation rates for both full-time and part-time students with a disabiity or learning difficulty from 17% to 5% | No | Other data source | 2016-17 | 17% | 15% | 10% | 7.5% | 6% | 5% | College MIS data. As the cohort consists of both full-time and part-time learners a baseline year of 2016-17 has been selected (see APP para 1.4). The data for part-time and full-time disabled students has not been disagregated due to small numbers. |
| | PTS_3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table 2c - Progression**

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Target group | Description | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Baseline data | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To close the gap for students with a disability | PTP_1 | Disabled | To reduce the gap from 17% to 0%, for disabled students that progress from Higher Education programmes into employment or further study. | No | Other data source | 2016-17 | 17% | 10% | 7% | 4% | 2% | 0% | College MIS data. The data for part-time and full-time disabled students has not been disagregated due to small numbers. |
| | PTP_2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |