



The All-Party Parliamentary  
**University Group**

**1 March 2016**



## Agenda

**The subject of the meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group is BME students and social mobility in the higher education sector**

- 8.30am**      **Roberta Blackman-Woods MP**, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group, welcome and introductions.
- 8.35am**      **Professor Anna Vignoles**, Professor of Education and Director of Research, University of Cambridge
- c8.45am**      **Professor Geoff Layer**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton
- c8.55am**      **Anne-Marie Canning**, Director of Widening Participation, King's College London and **Niaomi Collett**, Deputy Director of Widening Participation, King's College London
- c9.05am**      **Rt Hon David Lammy**, MP for Tottenham
- c9.15am**      Questions, comments, and discussion with university leaders, MPs and Peers.
- 10.00am**      Speaker meeting concludes.

## Speaker biographies



### **Professor Anna Vignoles**

Anna Vignoles is Professor of Education and Director of Research at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge and a trustee of the Nuffield Foundation. Anna has extensive experience of using large scale administrative data to study factors relating to pupil achievement and students' outcomes from education. She has published widely on widening participation into higher education and on the socio-economic gap in pupil achievement. Her research interests include issues

pertaining to equity in education, school choice, school efficiency and finance, higher education and the economic value of schooling.

Anna has advised numerous government departments, including the Department for Education, the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and HM Treasury. She provided advice to the Browne Review of Higher Education Funding, the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee investigation of higher education funding, the House of Lords Economic Affairs Select Committee, as part of their inquiry into education and training opportunities for young people, and Lord Leitch's Review of Skills. Anna is also a member of the ESRC Research Committee.

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### **Professor Geoff Layer**

Geoff Layer is the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton and has been at the University since 2012. Geoff is a member of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, a Board member of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, a Board member of the Equality Challenge Unit and the Higher Education Academy, a member of the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group, a member of the QAA Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers, a trustee of the Open College Network West Midlands, and a trustee of the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning.



Geoff has previously held senior roles at Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Bradford where he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor. He was the founding Director of Action on Access through which he worked with HEFCE in developing its widening participation approach. He is a member of the Universities UK Social Mobility Advisory Group and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He was awarded the OBE for services to Higher Education in 2003.

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## **Anne-Marie Canning**

Anne-Marie Canning is the Director of Widening Participation at King's College London. In this role she provides leadership and strategic direction for full lifecycle widening participation across the institution. Anne-Marie is currently leading a project with the Cabinet Office examining whether behavioral insights can improve the experience and outcomes of non-traditional learners at university. Anne-Marie is a member of the Universities UK Ministerial Advisory Group and recently served as Chair of the Russell Group Widening Participation Association.

In 2008 Anne-Marie was appointed as the first full-time Access Officer at University College, Oxford and her work there earned her a University of Oxford Teaching Award. Anne-Marie has a degree in English and Related Literatures from the University of York and served a sabbatical term as the president of the students' union. Anne-Marie has served as a local councilor and is now a community governor at the Archer Academy. You can follow her on Twitter @amcanning.

## **Niaomi Collett**

Niaomi Collett is Deputy Director of Widening Participation at King's College London and oversees the delivery of the department's strategic aims and objectives. Niaomi is responsible for faculty liaison, donor stewardship and corporate sponsorship, as well as building strategic relationships to support the department's work with key target groups.



Niaomi also supports on the annual institutional monitoring return to the Office for Fair Access. Niaomi's particular area of interest is in increasing the percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students that apply to and attend Russell Group universities. In 2007 Niaomi started an annual Black Achievement Conference at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), which was awarded at the House of Lords in 2012. Niaomi sits on the BME Student Success Committee and the BME staff network steering group. Niaomi is also a peer mentor on the Amos Bursary Programme for high achieving black students and a member of the Education Committee for the Powerlist Foundation's Leadership sixth form college.



### **Rt Hon David Lammy MP**

Rt Hon David Lammy is an active backbench MP representing the constituency of Tottenham. He served 9 years as a Minister in the last Labour government, his last post being Higher Education Minister in the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. He was made a Privy Councillor in 2008 and in 2015 David stood to be Labour's candidate for London Mayor. Today's discussion of education and social mobility is of particular importance to David. He continues to actively campaign to ensure that his young constituents in Tottenham have access to higher quality higher education.

David feels very strongly about the life-changing impact that higher education can have on the lives of our students country-wide. David has recently been appointed by the Prime Minister to lead a review of racial bias and BAME representation in the Criminal Justice System.

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# **Briefing: BME students and social mobility in the higher education sector**

**Prepared for members of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group**

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues.

This briefing document has been produced by Universities UK which provides the Secretariat for the University APPG.

## Government goals on widening participation

In April 2015 the Prime Minister stated that, “[In the last parliament] the number of Asian, black and mixed race students increased to its highest level ever. In the next five years, I want us to go further, with an ambition for 20 per cent more students from diverse backgrounds in university”. The Prime Minister also committed to ‘double the proportion of disadvantaged young people entering higher education by 2020 from 2009 levels’.

### What does this mean for the sector?

The entry rate goal is to double the proportion of 18 year olds from POLAR3<sup>1</sup> quintile 1 (those from the areas with lowest participation in higher education at the moment) from 13.6% in 2009, to 27.2% in 2020. To achieve such goals by 2020 represents a significant challenge for the sector, not least given the significant changes to widening participation funding following the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Universities UK analysis shows that this will mean an 8.01% increase annually from the 2016 cycle onwards, or 1.52 percentage points a year. The average of increases over the past nine years is 6.0% or not quite 1 percentage point. The goals set by the Prime Minister are very ambitious. Just the goal alone to increase UK black and minority ethnic full-time students by 20% equates to 50,000 students – around a 3% increase in the population annually. The average growth over the past 7 years has been 3.8%.

### Social Mobility Advisory Group

On Thursday 21 January Universities UK announced the launch of a new group to provide advice to government and support for English universities to improve access and long-term success for under-represented groups in higher education. The Social Mobility Advisory Group, which was set up following an invitation from the government, will publish a report in the summer and will be given to the Minister for Universities and Science Jo Johnson MP. Recommendations in the report will also be fed back to the Prime Minister.

In addition to looking at the Prime Minister’s goal, Jo Johnson MP requested that the group also explore how to increase the social mobility for young people from Caribbean heritage, white British boys from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and how to ensure that disabled people are able to fully participate in higher education and achieve strong outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> POLAR (Participation of Local Areas) is a widening participation measure which classifies census wards five groups, based on the proportion of 18 year olds who enter higher education aged 18 or 19 years old. The groups range from quintile 1 (areas with the lowest young participation) to quintile 5 (areas with the highest young participation). POLAR3 is the latest iteration of the measure, with 2015 the first year that UCAS have reported on it.



The group has a unique opportunity to identify practical solutions and provide ambitious recommendations to government. The group will consider the current evidence, explore what universities in England are doing that works, and address what more could be done. In its work, the group will look at the entire student journey, from aspirations at school, to the process of applying to university, through to career progression once students graduate. The group will also consider the options available for people later in life, such as those who need to develop their skills as their job changes or those who were unable to attend university when they were younger. Expanding the remit to cover older learners isn't just important for social mobility but also supports the productivity agenda, as issues of social mobility go hand-in-hand with the development of high level skills.

To reflect this distinctive opportunity the group has looked to ensure the widest representation of interested parties including, vice-chancellors, schools, colleges, government, employers, third sector organisations and widening participation academics and practitioners. In addition there are three reference groups that have been created to support the work of the main group: practitioners, academics, and employers.

#### ***Full membership of the Social Mobility Advisory Group***

- Nicola Dandridge (advisory group chair), Chief Executive, Universities UK
- Shirley Atkinson, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Sunderland
- Gaenor Bagley, Head of People, Community and Sustainability, PwC
- Anne-Marie Canning, Director of Widening Participation (Student Lifecycle), King's College London
- Professor Joy Carter, Chair of GuildHE and Vice-Chancellor, University of Winchester
- Charlotte DuBern, Deputy Director of Higher Education, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Megan Dunn, President, National Union of Students
- Professor Les Ebdon, Director, Office for Fair Access
- Allan Foulds, President, Association of School and College Leaders
- Nicholas Glossop, Head of Inclusion and Learning Support, BPP University
- Gerry Godley, Principal and Managing Director, Leeds College of Music
- Peter Horrocks, Vice-Chancellor, The Open University
- Omar Khan, Director, The Runnymede Trust
- Professor Geoff Layer, Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton
- Chris Millward, Director (Policy), Higher Education Funding Council for England
- Mike Nicholson, Chair of the Higher Education Liaison Officers Association, and Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, University of Bath
- Professor Sir Steve Smith, Chair of UCAS, and Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Exeter
- Professor John Storan, Director of Continuum, Centre for Widening Participation Policy Studies, University of East London
- Professor Mary Stuart, Vice-Chancellor, University of Lincoln
- John Widdowson, Principal and Chief Executive of New College Durham, and President of the Association of Colleges.

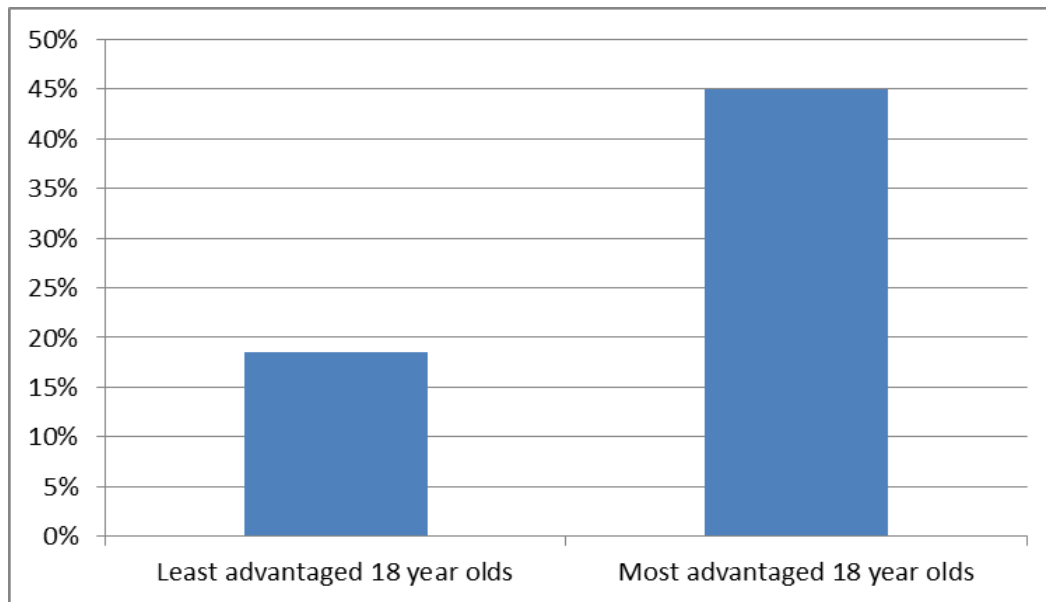
## What are the problems?

Social mobility in the higher education sector is complex. There are lots of disparate pieces of research which are mostly identifying and outlining the issues. To mitigate the problem the sector will need a variety of different solutions which will need to work across both a diverse student body and a diverse sector. The problems fall broadly across the student life cycle: access, retention, degree attainment, and employability and progression. Therefore when looking for solutions and methods to encourage social mobility for BME students within the sector, it is important to take into account the wider policy landscape.

## Access

There is a variation in the rates at which different groups participate in higher education on the basis of socio-economic status, ethnicity, region and gender. The biggest gaps are for white students from the lowest socio-economic groups, with part of the reason for the gap explained by low pre-higher education attainment. However rates of participation in higher education vary across different ethnic and socio-economic groups, with the interaction between these two differing for different ethnic groups.

Entry rates for disadvantaged pupils as measured by POLAR3 are lower than those for advantaged pupils. In 2015 18.5% of 18 year olds from England in quintile 1 (the least advantaged) accepted offers to study full-time undergraduate programmes at a UK university via UCAS, compared to 44.9% in quintile 5 (the most advantaged). The entry rate for those in quintile 1 has risen in recent years and the gap between these two rates has fallen, but it remains high. Those in quintile 5 are 2.4 times more likely than those in quintile 1 to accept an offer to enter full-time higher education via UCAS.



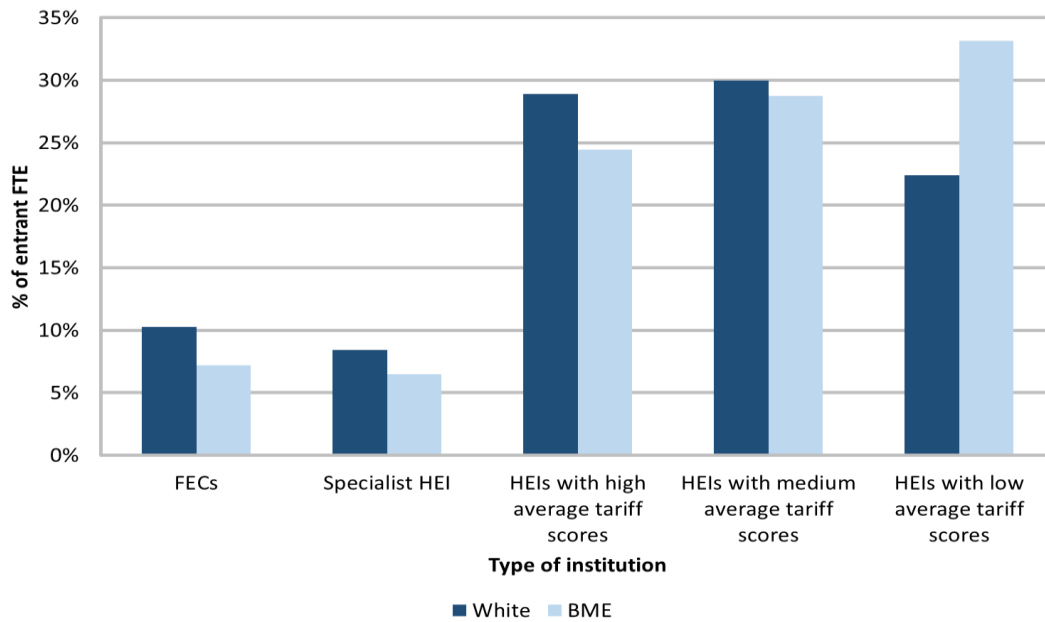
### ***Ethnic Minorities***

Using the 2011 census data on the proportion of 18 to 29 year olds in each ethnic group in the population, students from ethnic minority groups are well represented in English and Welsh higher education institutions. UCAS analysis of the proportion of 18 year old former state school students entering full-time higher education through UCAS suggests that the entry rates are lowest for pupils from the white ethnic group<sup>2</sup>. The IFS's research also suggests that pupils from all other ethnic groups are significantly more likely than white British pupils to go on to higher education.

However, the representation of students from ethnic minorities does vary across ethnic groups (those with black other, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, and other Asian heritage are underrepresented across all institutions when mapped back to 2011 census proportions, and Chinese former state school students have much higher entry rates than all other ethnic groups under UCAS's analysis) and by institution type (all but those with Indian and Chinese heritage are overrepresented at lower tariff institutions, and those with black Caribbean, black other, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage are underrepresented in Russell Group institutions). It is also worth noting that [BIS research](#) suggests there may be a slightly higher proportion of black and minority ethnic students at alternative providers than at publically-funded providers.

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<sup>2</sup> Because these entry rates only cover former state school pupils and require UCAS to match up their data with another database (the National Pupil Database), they are likely to underrepresent the rate for white students, who (with students of Chinese, Indian and mixed heritage) have amongst the highest rate of private school attendance and, as the largest group, are most likely to be affected by the conservative matching between the databases.



### ***Selective institutions***

The entry rate for those from all disadvantaged groups is lowest at the most selective institutions (those in the top third of institutions by average entrant tariff points). Although there have been large headline increases in the entry rate to the most selective institutions for those from POLAR3 quintile 1, they only rose above 3% in 2014 (reaching 3.3% in 2015) and remain 84% (17 percentage points) lower than the entry rates for quintile 5 to the same institutions. [OFFA](#) has also examined this issue, using a different measure of disadvantage (the proportion of young people who have a parent with a higher education qualification at census ward level, with wards grouped into quintiles) and found that participation by the most disadvantaged has remained broadly similar since the 1990s.

The IFS research mentioned previously also suggests that pupils from all ethnic minority groups are more likely than white British pupils to attend a selective institution (though white British students make up a much larger proportion of students at these institutions because of the larger numbers in the population at large), and that this gap has grown to become significant over time. The gap between white pupils and those from ethnic minorities at selective institutions is smaller, however, than for overall participation in higher education, suggesting that pupils from ethnic minorities are more likely to attend less selective institutions.

Both OFFA and the IFS acknowledge the role of prior attainment in the low participation of disadvantaged pupils at selective institutions, with the IFS finding that has an even greater role than participation generally (particularly when key stage 4 attainment is considered). OFFA argue that other factors, like encouraging highly qualified applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds to apply to more selective institutions, may also be important. In terms of ethnicity, however, the IFS found that the gap between participation for white pupils and those from all other ethnic groups remain once prior attainment and background characteristics are controlled for, suggesting that other factors are at play here.

Another consideration is offer-making by institutions. UCAS examined the higher tariff institution offer rate for different applicant characteristics by grade profile and course applied to against the average offer rate for those grade profiles and courses at the October and January deadlines. In most cases the offer rate was in line with the range of variation which would be expected. However, there were some exceptions: the offer rate to BME applicants at the October deadline was below what would be expected for eight of the highest grade profiles (and four when just black applicants were considered); the offer rate for men was below what would be expected for four grade profiles at the January deadline and seven at the October deadline; and the offer rate for applicants who had received free school meals was below what would be expected for three grade profiles at the January deadline and six at the October deadline. In most cases these gaps were small, but for applicants receiving free school meals who were predicted A\*A\*A and A\*A\*A\*A\* the offer rate was over three percentage points below what normal variation from the average would suggest.

There are variable higher education participation rates by *place*, with 2015 UCAS 18 year old entry rates varying by over 10 percentage points between English regions (from 38.6% in London to 27.6% in the South West) and by far more between parliamentary constituencies (from 14.5% in Bristol South to 56.4% in Richmond Park). Research by the [Sutton Trust](#) and analysis by [HEFCE](#) in 2013 suggest that place can compound the issues of disadvantage, with entry rates for those in the most disadvantaged groups varying depending on where they lived. HEFCE found that the young (18 and 19 year old) entry rates for those in quintile 1 varied across the UK regions, with differences between the quintile 1 regional entry rates and the total regional entry rates<sup>3</sup>. For all 18 year olds and for 18 and 19 year olds in quintile 1 specifically, London has higher entry rates than the rest of the country<sup>4</sup>. However, although for all 18 year olds, the South East and East of England have the third and fourth strongest entry rates in the nine English regions, they have the lowest entry rates for those in quintile 1.

### ***Disadvantaged pupils by ethnicity***

Entry rates also vary by ethnicity within socio-economic groups. The same [IFS research](#) suggests that white British pupils in the two lowest socio-economic groups (using their own rich measure of socio-economic group, though similar results were produced when POLAR2 was used as a proxy) have lower rates of participation in higher education than any other ethnic group. Once background characteristics and prior attainment were controlled for in the lowest socio-economic group this gap remained, although it was slightly smaller, and it appears to be growing over time. This suggests that lower prior attainment on the part of white British pupils from the lowest socio-economic group was part of the reason for the gap, but that there are

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<sup>3</sup> HEFCE (2013), Trends in young participation in higher education; Sutton Trust (2015), *Background to Success: Differences in A-level entries by ethnicity, neighbourhood and gender*.

<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of what is happening in London please see The higher education journey of young London residents, published in 2015.

other factors which are increasing. The research also suggests that the gap in higher education participation between socio-economic groups is largest for white pupils.

There has been some suggestion that there is a specific problem with white working-class boys, or white boys more generally, accessing higher education. UCAS have undertaken analysis of higher education participation by ethnicity, sex and socio-economic group, looking at 18 year old state school pupils in the POLAR3 quintile 3 by sex, ethnicity, and free school meal status; and at 18 year old state school pupils who received free school meals by POLAR3 quintile<sup>5</sup>. Their analysis suggests that under both measures white boys from the most disadvantaged groups have the lowest entry rates to higher education (below 10%). In both cases however, they are closely followed by disadvantaged white girls and mixed race boys, who make up the second and third lowest entry rates. The absolute difference between disadvantaged white boys and girls is also lower than the difference between the sexes for any other ethnic and socio-economic group (the proportional difference is larger, but this is largely because of the very low bases in both cases).

The caveats on the data used by UCAS notwithstanding, it is clear that there is an issue with the participation rate of white boys from the lowest socio-economic groups. But there is also an issue of a similar magnitude with disadvantaged white girls and mixed race boys. In all three cases, part of this issue will be driven by low prior attainment: all three groups have low average performance at GCSE, with GCSE performance a strong predictor of entry to higher education.

However, it is not solely prior attainment which impacts here: black boys from a non-African background in the free school meals group also have very low GCSE attainment, and higher (though not high) entry rates. IFS researchers found that when participation was looked at by ethnicity alone, there was a positive association between higher participation and having English as an additional language. This could suggest that more recent migrants have higher aspirations for their children. There was also a positive association with living in London (outside of the additional attainment of London pupils due to the 'London schools' effect'), which could be linked to the number of universities in London and the tendency of students from ethnic minorities to go to local universities.

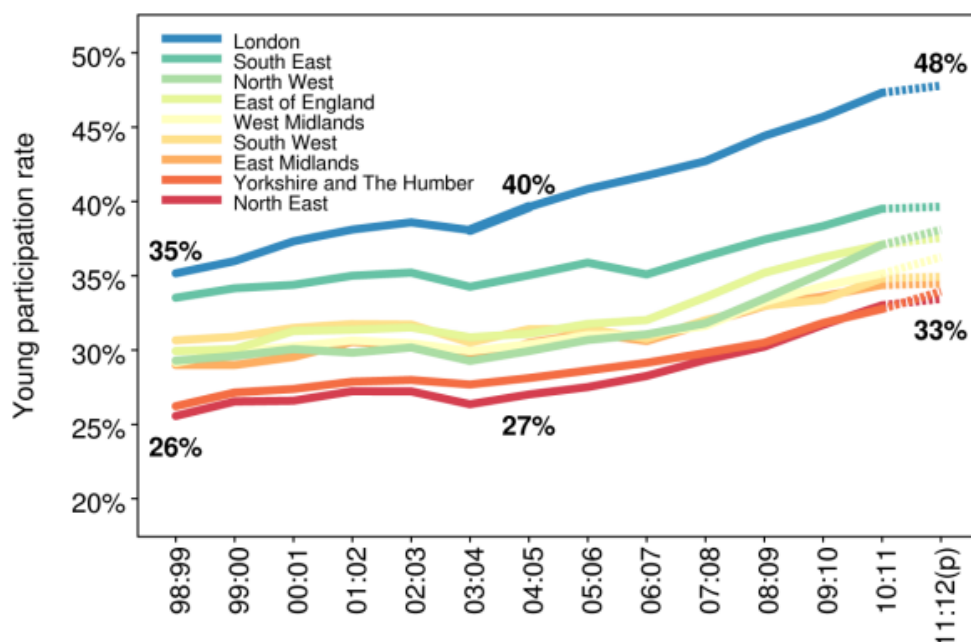
### ***Place***

There are variable higher education participation rates by place, with 2015 UCAS 18 year old entry rates varying by over 10 percentage points between English regions (from 38.6% in London to 27.6% in the South West) and by far more between parliamentary constituencies (from 14.5% in Bristol South to 56.4% in Richmond Park). Research by the [Sutton Trust](#) and analysis by [HEFCE](#) in 2013 suggest that place can compound the issues of disadvantage, with entry rates for those in the most disadvantaged groups varying depending on where they lived. HEFCE found that the young (18 and 19 year old) entry rates for those in quintile 1 varied across the UK

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<sup>5</sup> The analysis uses the same database as their analysis of entry rates by ethnicity alone discussed earlier so remains likely to be underreporting white participation.

regions, with differences between the quintile 1 regional entry rates and the total regional entry rates<sup>6</sup>. For all 18 year olds and for 18 and 19 year olds in quintile 1 specifically, London has higher entry rates than the rest of the country<sup>7</sup>. However, although for all 18 year olds, the South East and East of England have the third and fourth strongest entry rates in the nine English regions, they have the lowest entry rates for those in quintile 1.



This is partly a legacy of differences in attainment at school in different parts of the country. The [Social Market Foundation](#) has recently released research showing that inequalities between English regions in pupil performance in exams at age 16 have, in some cases, worsened since the 1980s, with Yorkshire, the Midlands and the North East performing worst and London and the South-East performing best<sup>8</sup>.

However, it is not solely an issue of participation. [HEFCE analysis](#) has found that in some areas participation is below what would be expected given the level of GCSE attainment (a key indicator for going on to higher education). These include areas in South and East London, West Yorkshire and the West Midlands, suggesting that in some cases these gaps are also not a result of a lack of local higher education institutions. It is also worth noting that there are considerable differences in the proportions and numbers of young people in quintile 1 across the regions, with the largest proportion (a third) in the North East.

<sup>6</sup> HEFCE (2013), Trends in young participation in higher education; Sutton Trust (2015), *Background to Success: Differences in A-level entries by ethnicity, neighbourhood and gender*.

<sup>7</sup> For an analysis of what is happening in London please see The higher education journey of young London residents, published in 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Social Market Foundation (2016), *Educational inequalities in England and Wales*.

### ***Mature students***

Participation by mature students is important because those from POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2 are more likely to be mature undergraduates. Mature undergraduates are also more likely to be from ethnic minority groups, particularly of black heritage, have non-traditional or no entry qualifications, and to have a known disability. The number of mature students are likely to have been affected by the falling number of students on 'other undergraduate' courses (e.g. foundation degrees and certificates and diplomas), as over-25s make up a higher proportion of these students. <sup>9</sup>

However, it is less easy to produce accurate entry rates for older learners as the proportions of those taking up undergraduate study each year will not reflect the proportion of the population already holding higher education qualifications. From the HESA student record we know that the number of full- and part-time undergraduates aged over 25 fell by 37% between 2009–10 and 2014–15 so this is likely to be a change in mature applicant behaviour rather than an increase in the number. Data from the 2015 UCAS cycle suggests that both the number of mature applicants for full-time undergraduate education through UCAS and the proportion who are accepted is rising; it is too early to say whether this will impact on the numbers of mature undergraduates starting courses.

### ***Part-time students***

The HESA student record also shows a fall in the number of part-time undergraduate entrants between 2009–10 and 2014–15 of 50%. This is important because part-time undergraduates are more likely to have no or low entrance qualifications, meaning that part-time provision opens up access to those who have been left out of higher education by prior attainment at school. Part-time students are also more likely to be mature (although mature students are only more likely to be part-time over the age of 30) reinforcing the widening participation associations listed above under mature students.

Analysis by the independent Student Funding Panel established by Universities UK in 2014 has shown that a number of factors have converged to create a particularly challenging environment for part-time study in England<sup>9</sup>. The number of students entering part-time study in recent years has been affected by the removal in 2008–09 of funding for students taking qualifications equivalent to or lower than ones which they already had, and by reforms to undergraduate funding in 2012–13, including an increase in fees following cuts to teaching grants and issues around eligibility for tuition fee loans. At the same time the economic downturn has also caused a reduction in the number of students able to self-fund part-time study, and a reduction in the number of employers willing to support employees through part-time study.

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<sup>9</sup> Student Funding Panel (2015) *An analysis of the design, impact and options for reform of the student fees and loans system in England*



## Retention and Completion

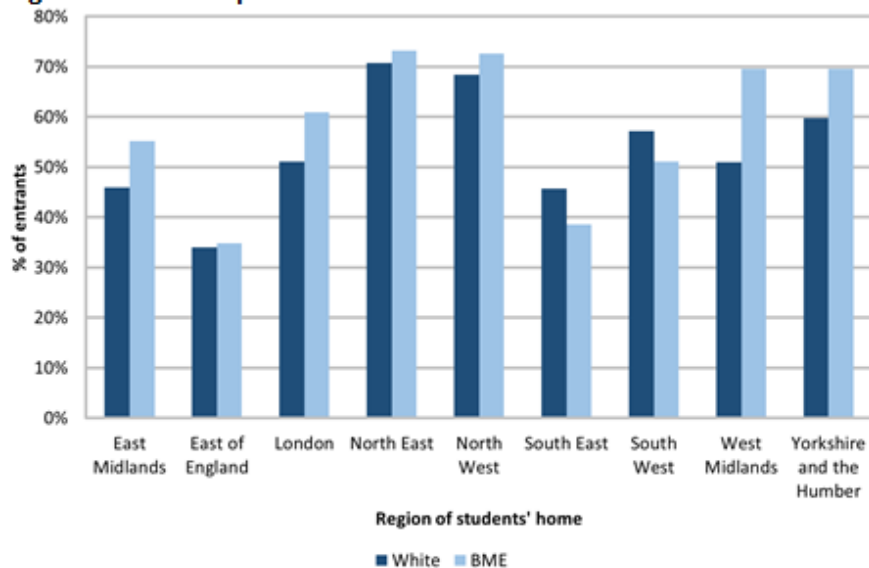
Along with degree attainment these are areas which are more clearly within university control. Whilst at university there are differences in the completion and success rates of students on the basis of socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, disability, and type of study. These remain when adjusted to take account of entry qualifications, age and subject of study. The biggest gaps are for students of black and other Asian (that is, not Chinese or Indian) heritage and those from the lowest socio-economic groups as measured by POLAR3.

HEFCE's England-only non-continuation rates show that of UK-domiciled entrants white entrants and those of Indian and Chinese heritage had the lowest non-continuation rates, with entrants with black Caribbean, black other and black African heritage having the highest rates. Once controlled for entry qualification, subject of study and age this changes slightly with the non-continuation rates for entrants of Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian and other Asian heritage lower than would be expected given these other characteristics, and white entrants having non-continuation rates in line with what would be expected. However, the non-continuation rates for entrants in all three black groups are all above what would be expected and rising, as are those for entrants in the mixed/other and Pakistani groups.

[HEFCE research](#) has also shown differences between the proportion of entrants from each ethnic group going on to obtain degree qualification, with the highest proportions coming from white entrants and those with Chinese and Indian heritage, and the lowest proportion coming from entrants with black and other Asian heritage. Once controlled for entry qualification, subject of study and sex, entrants with Chinese and Indian heritage are more likely than would be expected to achieve degree qualification, given their age, subject of study and entry qualifications. However, those with black heritage are significantly less likely than would be expected to obtain a degree, given these other characteristics, suggesting that there is something specific in the experience of being a black student which discourages completion. White entrants and those with other Asian heritage have completion rates in line with what would be expected, given their other characteristics.

One possible factor is that students from black and minority ethnic groups are more likely than white students to live at home, affecting the social relationships they build within institutions. The chart below shows the proportion of entrants to higher education who stay in the same region as their home postcode.

### Proportion of full-time first degree entrants to English institutions who study in the same region as their own postcode in 2014-15



Source: Analysis of the HESA standard registration population at English HEIs, and the equivalent population at English further education colleges.

## Degree attainment

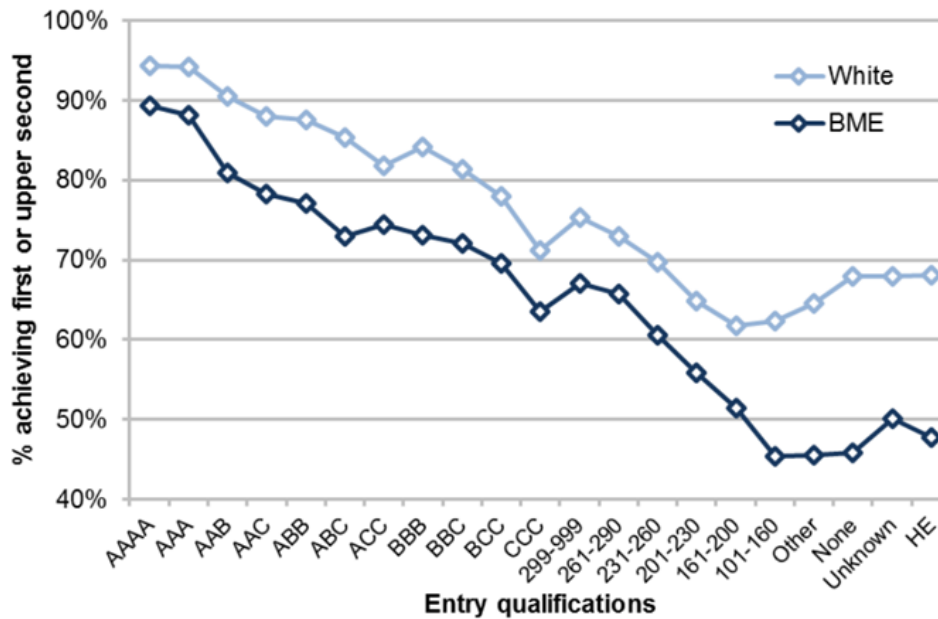
There are also gaps in students' outcomes from university study, with differences in the degree classifications received by students on the basis of socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender and disability. Again, these gaps remain when adjusted to take account of other characteristics and are biggest for students of black and other Asian heritage.

Across the UK's higher education sector in 2013–14 57% of black and minority ethnic qualifying students obtained first or upper second class degrees compared to 71% of white students doing the same. In England the gap rose, with 60.3% of black and minority ethnic qualifiers obtaining firsts or upper seconds compared to 76.3% of white qualifiers.

Once controlled for entry qualification, subject of study and sex, HEFCE analysis suggests that entrants from all ethnic minority groups are still less likely than would be expected given their other characteristics to obtain first or upper second class degrees<sup>17</sup>. Despite entrants of Indian and Chinese heritage being more likely than the sector-adjusted average to obtain degrees, they are less likely than would be expected, given their background characteristics, to obtain first or upper second class degrees. Entrants with other Asian and particularly black heritage are significantly less likely than would be otherwise expected to obtain first or upper second degrees<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Although HEFCE did not control for differential participation rates across ethnic groups, separate analysis by Universities UK suggests that the gap remains even when these are controlled for.

## 2013-14 graduates by ethnicity, entry qualification and degree classification



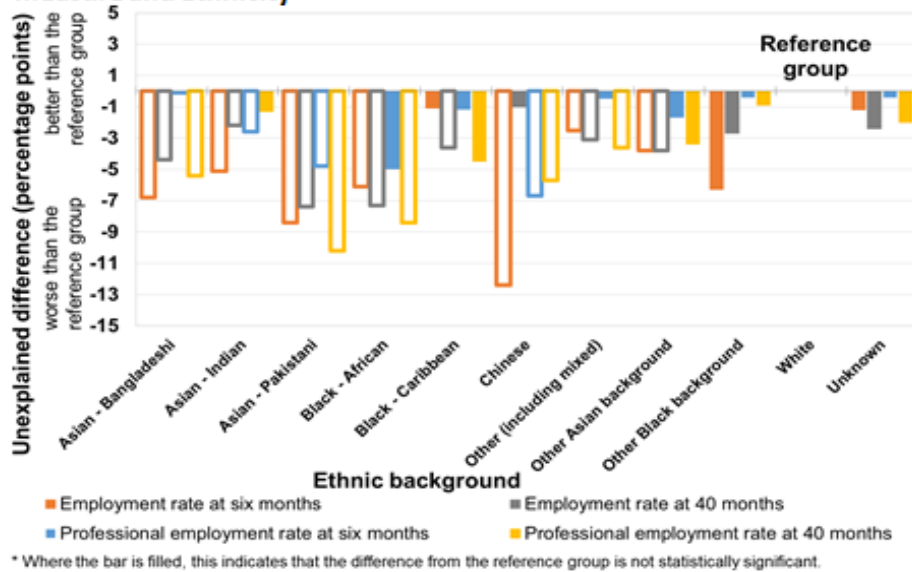
The attainment rate has improved across all ethnic groups, but the gap between white and ethnic minority student attainment remains wide, particularly for students of black heritage. [HEA research](#) suggests that BME student outcomes are lower across the higher education sector, including at Russell Group institutions, but that black and minority ethnic students do achieve higher grades at Russell Group institutions.

## Progression

There are also gaps in students' outcomes from university study, with differences in the rates of students going on to employment and further study on the basis of socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender and disability, and particular differences in graduate employment. Again, these gaps remain when adjusted to take account of other characteristics and are biggest for students of black and other Asian heritage.

The proportion of entrants who obtain degree qualification and go on to employment or further study differs by ethnicity, with white entrants most likely to do this (72.8% of them) and black entrants least likely (60.5% of them).

**Unexplained percentage point difference in employment rates, by employment rate measure and ethnicity**



This changes when the outcome considered is obtaining a degree and going on to *graduate* employment or further study, with entrants of Chinese and Indian heritage most likely to do this (53.2% and 51.1% respectively) and black entrants and those of other Asian heritage least likely to (37.7% and 42.6% respectively).

Again, however, the results change once they are controlled for entry qualifications, subjects of study and sex. White entrants are more likely than would be expected, given their background characteristics, to go on to both employment or further study and graduate 21 employment or further study. Entrants of Indian heritage are also more likely than would otherwise be expected to go on to employment or further study (though the difference is not statistically significant) and are significantly more likely to go on to graduate employment or further study. All other ethnic groups are less likely than would be expected to achieve either outcome (though in the case of Chinese entrants the gap between those going on to employment or further study is not significant), with a particularly large gap between the proportion of black entrants expected to go on to graduate and enter employment or further study, given their other characteristics, and those who go on to do so. These gaps persist, and in some cases widen in the Longitudinal Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) survey, which is conducted 40 months after graduation rather than 6.

HEFCE analysis has also shown that, as with disadvantaged students, although a higher proportion of black and minority ethnic students than white students intend to move on to postgraduate study, a lower proportion of them go on to do so (45% of those who intend to, compared to 55% of white students who intend to).

The earlier HEFCE analysis on transition to postgraduate study suggests that black and minority ethnic students are more likely than white students to go on to postgraduate taught study but are less likely to go on to postgraduate research or other

postgraduate study. This gap is closing, and may in part be due to the higher numbers of black and minority ethnic students from London, as students from London are more likely to go on to taught masters study; it may also be affected by the larger numbers of black and minority ethnic students taking STEM subjects, as transition to postgraduate study is more common in these subjects. The analysis also showed gaps by ethnic groups within the BME grouping, with students of Chinese origin consistently most likely to progress to taught masters study and black students least likely to, with their progression consistently below that of white students.

















# The All-Party Parliamentary **University Group**

## **Future meetings**

### **12 April 2016**

Flexible pathways: part-time, adult education and lifelong learning

*8.30am-10am, Dining Room B*

Speakers to include Peter Horrocks, Vice-Chancellor, The Open University and Martin Doel, Chief Executive, Association of Colleges

### **25 May 2016**

Students as consumers in their education: where student fees go and how universities explain their financial decisions to students, the public and government

*6-7.30pm, Committee Room 2a, followed by dinner*

Speakers to be confirmed

### **28 June 2016**

University APPG Summer Reception

*6-8pm, Churchill Room*

For more information about the group please email [appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk) or visit [www.universityappg.co.uk](http://www.universityappg.co.uk)