

Middlesbrough College

Access and Participation Plan

2026-27 to 2029-30

Introduction and strategic aim

Middlesbrough College is a regional community-based college which is situated in the heart of the Tees Valley, a region that makes up 1.2% of England's population. This area is highly urbanised, with 93% of the population living in built-up areas. Deprived areas, specifically those classified as 'left-behind' wards, constitute 18.5% of the total Tees Valley population, a stark contrast to the national average of just 4.0%. Approximately one-third of the total population is concentrated in the five main town centre areas, with the remainder residing in suburbs, smaller settlements, or rural areas. The Tees Valley is also home to the newly established Teesside Freeport, the UK's largest low-tax customs zone. This expansive zone stretches across the region, encompassing key sites like Teesworks, Teesport, the Port of Middlesbrough, the Port of Hartlepool, Liberty Steel, LV Shipping, Wilton International, and Teesside International Airport. [\[TVCA Economic Assessment, 2022\]](#)

A significant portion of the Teesside population resides in areas identified with high indicators of multiple deprivation [\[Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government English: English indices of deprivation 2019\]](#). Many of the Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) wards, which are key recruitment areas for the College, are also classified as TUNDRA MSOA quintile 1 and 2 areas, thus demonstrating the lowest Higher Education participation rates. The Tees Valley is not only one of the most deprived parts of the country but also exhibits a highly polarised distribution of deprivation. It ranks as the second most deprived Local Enterprise Partnership area in England, with all five Tees Valley districts falling within the most deprived 15% of local authorities nationally. [\[TVCA Economic Assessment, 2022\]](#)

Given its context, Middlesbrough College is strategically dedicated to developing its Higher Education curriculum to address the economic and social needs of the Tees Valley. As a result, over 90% of Higher Education students enrolled at Middlesbrough College are from the Tees Valley. The College collaborates with both public and private sector organisations to design and deliver vocationally oriented programmes that enhance the employability of its graduates. This strategic approach aligns with the Government's Opportunity Northeast initiative. [\[Opportunity North East \(ONE\), Delivery Plan Update, 2022\]](#).

Middlesbrough College is driven by socio-economic factors to address inequality, profoundly shaping its Access and Participation Plan. By understanding Tees Valley's unique challenges, including regional deprivation, the College actively widens participation in higher education. The College focuses on creating an environment where students thrive and go on to contribute to the region's economic and social prosperity.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Middlesbrough College has used the Office for Students (OfS) Equality of Risk Register (EORR) to identify which groups of prospective and current students are most likely to be affected by risks to equality of opportunity. This methodology has enabled the College to assess the likelihood and

severity of risks across its student population and to determine where targeted action is required. Groups identified as being most at risk include students in TUNDRA Quintile 1 and Quintile 2, students with disabilities and young white males from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2.

Following the identification of these risks, the College considered how it could contribute to reducing them through strategic planning, targeted interventions, and continuous monitoring. This includes setting measurable objectives, implementing inclusive support strategies, and enhancing data-informed decision making.

In the academic year 2024/25, the Higher Education student population at Middlesbrough College totalled 468 students, enrolled across a range of first degree and sub-degree programmes. These programmes are delivered in full-time, part-time and apprenticeship modes. When data is disaggregated by mode of study, age, ethnicity, gender and level of study, the resulting datasets are relatively small. Consequently, minor variations in student numbers from one year to the next can result in significant percentage changes, which may present a misleading picture if not interpreted with caution.

The College's analysis and assessment of performance take these limitations into account. Where appropriate, explanations are provided to ensure that the data is contextualised and accurately interpreted.

The primary source to inform this plan is the Office for Students (OfS) dataset, which offers a robust and comparable foundation. To ensure the information is as current and comprehensive as possible, the College has also drawn on internal datasets. This combined approach enables a more up to date evaluation of performance across the institution.

A detailed analysis of the data used to identify risks to equality of opportunity is included in Annex A.

Risk 1 – Declining Continuation Rates – Particularly Among Q1 Students

Analysis of data (Annex A) indicates a decline in continuation rates, most notably among students in TUNDRA Quintile 1 and Quintile 2, with a consistent downward trend across three of the five quintiles. Despite thorough analysis, no single causal factor was identified. However, the disproportionate impact on students within this quintile suggests barriers related to socio-economic disadvantage, this may include factors such as financial pressure (EORR Risk 10), digital exclusion (EORR Risk 10), or limited academic preparedness (EORR Risk 1 and 2).

Risk 2 – Progression Gap for Students with Disabilities

Institutional data sets indicate that students with disabilities are 14.4% less likely to progress to highly skilled employment or further study compared to their non-disabled peers. Whilst the dataset is relatively small when disaggregated, the gap is consistent enough to warrant targeted action. Without action it poses a risk to equality of opportunity and long-term social mobility. A range of causal factors identified, include limited support for transition into employment (EORR Risk 12), inadequate access to specifically tailored careers advice (EORR Risk 2) and potential barriers in workplace accessibility and employer perceptions. Although the gap had started to narrow in previous years, the period during COVID appears to have adversely impacted progress, resulting in a wider disparity than was observed pre-pandemic. This regression highlights the need for renewed and focused intervention to prevent further entrenchment of inequality.

Risk 3 – Continuation Rates – Young, White Males from IMD Q1&Q2 Studying Full-time.

Enhanced analysis of intersections of risk indicates that young, white males from IMD quintiles Q1 & Q2 (the most social-economically disadvantaged groups) show lower continuation rates compared to their peers from higher quintiles (IMD Q3-Q5). Following the previous Access and Participation Plan the gap narrowed in 2021/22, the target to close the gap has not been fully achieved. Although student engagement from this particular group is limited the following factors pose risk, lower levels of engagement and belonging (EORR Risk 7), cultural and social-economic factors impacting motivation and retention (EORR Risk 10), and limited access to role models or tailored support (EORR Risk 7).

Objectives

This section sets out the measurable objectives that Middlesbrough College will pursue to address the indications of risk identified through its assessment of performance. Each objective is linked to a specific risk and is designed to be timebound, measurable and impact driven.

The objectives respond to key challenges affecting student groups most at risk, including those from TUNDRA Quintile 1 and 2, students with disabilities and young white males from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. Each objective is supported by a corresponding intervention strategies, which outlines the specific activities that will contribute to achieving the desired outcomes. These strategies have been informed by both internal and external data supported with a robust evidence base and are designed to address the underlying causes of inequality, such as socio-economic disadvantage, limited access to tailored support, and barriers to progression.

In addition to detailing the planned interventions, this section also includes information on the financial and human resources required to deliver each intervention, ensuring that the objectives are both achievable and sustainable. Progress against each objective will be monitored and evaluated to inform future planning and continuous improvement.

Indication of Risk 1 – Declining Continuation Rates – Particularly Among TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 Students

Objective 1.1

Middlesbrough College will increase the continuation rate for student in TUNDRA Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 by five percentage points by 2030. This will be achieved by implementing targeted support strategies that address barriers related to socio-economic disadvantage, including financial pressure and limited academic preparedness.

Indication of Risk 2 – Progression Gap for Students with Disabilities

Objective 2.1

Middlesbrough College will reduce the progression gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers by 10% by 2030. This will be achieved by improving access to tailored careers advice, strengthening transition support into employment and further study, and collaborating with employers to address barriers in workplace accessibility and perceptions.

Indication of Risk 3 – Continuation Rates – Young, White Males from IMD Q1&Q2 Studying Full-time.

Objective 3.1

Middlesbrough College will reduce the continuation gap between young white males from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and their peers from IMD Quintiles 3-5 by five percentage points by 2030. This will be achieved by implementing tailored support initiatives that address lower levels of engagement, enhance feelings of belonging, reduce cultural and socio-economic barriers to motivation and retention, and increase access to role models and personalised support.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes.

Each objective identified in this plan is supported by a corresponding intervention strategy designed to address specific risks to equality of opportunity, as identified through the College's assessment of performance. These strategies outline the targeted activities that will contribute to achieving the overall objective, including details of the student groups involved, the scope of the delivery, and whether the activity is new or existing.

Each strategy includes an overview of the financial and human resources required for delivery, ensuring feasibility and sustainability over the duration of the plan. Evaluation methods are also detailed, specifying how each activity and the strategy as a whole will be assessed for efficacy.

Intervention strategy 1.1: Increasing Continuation Rates for Students in TUNDRA Quintile 1 and 2.

Objectives and targets

Middlesbrough College will increase the continuation rate for students in TUNDRA Quintile 1 and 2 by five percentage points by 2030. This strategy is designed to address the gap in continuation rates for students from the most socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. (FIT target reference number - PTS_1).

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risks to equality of opportunity addresses by this intervention strategy include: EORR Risk 1 – Knowledge and skills, EORR Risk 2 – Information and guidance, EORR Risk 7 – Insufficient personal support and EORR Risk 10 – Cost pressures. These risk to equality of opportunity can contribute to lower levels of engagement, retention, and success.

Related objectives and targets

The intervention strategy outlined above is also relevant to the objective concerning white males from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 (PTS_2), as there is a significant overlap with individuals from TUNDRA Quintiles 1 and 2. This intersection suggests that some of the same structural and socio-economic barriers may be affecting both groups, particularly in relation to access to tailored support, transition pathways, and perceptions of opportunity. Recognising this overlap allows for a more inclusive and targeted approach to addressing disparities in progression and outcomes.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Financial Guidance Workshops</p>	<p>A series of workshops for TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 students focused on budgeting, financial planning, and accessing additional funding streams.</p> <p>The target group will be students identified as from TUNDRA Quintile 1 and Quintile 2.</p> <p>This will be a new activity delivered in collaboration with external financial support agencies and the College's Student Service and Wellbeing Team.</p>	<p>Staff time from the Student Support and Participation Officer, Student Services and Wellbeing Team.</p> <p>Workshop materials</p> <p>External financial support services.</p> <p>Estimated Cost: £7040</p>	<p>Strengthened financial literacy and reduced financial stress among students, leading to improved confidence in managing personal finances and greater stability during their studies. These improvements are expected to contribute directly to increased retention and continuation rates for those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>	<p>The intervention strategy will also contribute to the intervention strategies in place to reduce the continuation gap for white males from IMD Q1 and Q2.</p>

<p>Academic Preparedness – Study Skills Workshops</p>	<p>Targeted academic study skills workshops.</p> <p>The target group will be students identified as from TUNDRA Quintile 1 and Quintile 2.</p> <p>The study skills workshops are an existing activity, albeit not specifically targeting any particular student cohort. These sessions will specifically target the identified cohort of students. This activity will be delivered in collaboration with the LRC Team,</p>	<p>Academic and LRC staff time, learning support resources. Estimated Cost: £11520</p>	<p>Increased academic confidence and preparedness, resulting in greater confidence, stronger engagement with course content, and increased ability to meet academic demands. These developments are expected to lead to higher continuation rates, particularly among students facing socio-economic disadvantage and limited prior educational support.</p>	<p>The intervention strategy will also contribute to the intervention strategies in place to reduce the continuation gap for white males from IMD Q1 and Q2.</p>
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<p>Academic Preparedness – Transition Programme</p>	<p>Tailored transition programme to enhance academic confidence and preparedness for the next academic study level.</p> <p>The target group will be students identified as from TUNDRA Quintile 1 and Quintile 2.</p> <p>This will be a new activity delivered in collaboration with the College’s wider Careers Team and Department Academic Staff and the Student Support and Participation Coordinator.</p>	<p>Student Support and Participation Coordinator, Academic staff and Careers Team staff time, peer mentoring programme.</p> <p>Estimated Cost: £18336</p>	<p>Improved academic confidence and preparedness through a structured transition programme designed to support students progressing between levels of study. By equipping students with the skills, expectations, and support needed to navigate academic progression, this intervention aims to reduce withdrawal during key transition points and contribute to higher continuation rates, particularly among those from TUNDRA Q1 and Q2.</p>	<p>The intervention strategy will also contribute to the intervention strategies in place to reduce the continuation gap for white males from IMD Q1 and Q2.</p>
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

Activity	Cost
Financial Guidance Workshops	£7040
Academic Preparedness – Study Skills Workshops	£11520
Academic Preparedness – Transition Programme	£18336
Evaluation	£6000
Total	£42896

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Financial Guidance Workshops

Students from TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 often face acute financial pressures that can undermine their ability to persist in higher education. Research consistently shows that financial literacy is not only low among disadvantaged groups, but that improving it can significantly enhance financial wellbeing and reduce stress. Research by [Lusardi and Messy \(2023\)](#) supports the initiative by identifying that financial literacy improves decision making and resilience and furthermore contributes to greater stability in education. The financial guidance workshops directly address EORR Risk 10 – Cost pressures, by equipping TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 students with budgeting and financial planning skills. This is expected to reduce the financial pressures and improve continuation rates.

Academic Preparedness – Study Skills Workshops & Transition Programme

Academic under preparedness is a key barrier to retention for disadvantaged students. Evidence demonstrates that enhanced study skills interventions can improve academic confidence, engagement, and resilience ([Oxford Centre for Teaching and Learning, 2024](#)). Academic literacies play a critical role in enabling students from underrepresented backgrounds to succeed in higher education. Students from TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 frequently face additional challenges, such as unfamiliarity with academic convention. In their report entitled [The Hidden Curriculum of Higher Education](#), Advance HE (2020) highlighted that many students encounter unspoken norms and expectations – “hidden Curriculum”; these can act as a barrier to inclusion and success if not made explicit. The targeted academic Study Skills Workshops and Transition Programme directly address these challenges by developing academic literacies and demystifying the hidden curriculum. These interventions support EORR Risk 1 – Knowledge and skill and Risk 7 – Insufficient personal support, helping student from TUNDRQ Q1 navigate academic expectations and succeed in the higher education environment.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Financial guidance workshops	Improved financial literacy and reduced financial stress, Contribution to increased retention and continuation.	Evidence will include a comparative analysis of continuation rates for TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 students, triangulated with participation data and qualitative feedback. Hardship applications will be analysed to evidence any particular challenges faced.	Findings will be shared annually, starting September 2026. Annual monitoring reports will be presented to Academic Board, Board of Governors, and Student Council.
Targeted study skills workshops	Improved academic confidence resulting in more effective engagement and ability to manage academic challenges resulting in higher continuation rates.	Evidence will include a comparative analysis of continuation rates for TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 students, triangulated with participation data and qualitative feedback. Thematic analysis of extenuating circumstances application will be conducted to consider any common themes, if any themes are identified focused sessions will be put in place the following academic year.	Findings will be shared annually, starting September 2026. Annual monitoring reports will be presented to Academic Board, Board of Governors, and Student Council.

Academic transition workshops	Improved academic confidence and preparedness will reduce withdrawal during key points, increasing continuation rates.	Evidence will include a comparative analysis of continuation rates for TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 students, triangulated with participation data and qualitative feedback.	Findings will be shared annually, starting September 2026. Annual monitoring reports will be presented to Academic Board, Board of Governors, and Student Council.
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Intervention strategy 2.1: Reducing the Progression Gap for Disabled Students.

Objectives and targets

Middlesbrough College aims to reduce the progression gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers by 10% by 2030. This objective will be achieved through targeted intervention strategy focused on improving access to tailored careers advice, strengthening transition support into employment and further study, and collaborating with employers to address barriers in workplace accessibility and perceptions. The strategy is designed to address key risks to equality of opportunity identified (FIT target reference number - PTP_1).

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risks to equality of opportunity addresses by this intervention strategy include: EORR Risk 2 – Information and guidance, and EORR Risk 12 – Progression from Higher Education. These risk to equality of opportunity can contribute to levels of progression to further study, lower earning employment roles, or a narrowing of progression options for students with disabilities.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Inclusive Careers Coaching</p>	<p>A series of workshops for students with disabilities providing tailored careers advice tailored to individual needs, taking into account the diverse range of disabilities and the unique barriers students may face in planning and pursuing their career goals.</p> <p>The target group will be students who have identified that they have a disability at point of enrolment or at any point during their time on their programme of study.</p> <p>This will be a new activity delivered in collaboration with external employability services, the College's Student Service, Careers, and Wellbeing Team.</p>	<p>Staff time from the Student Support and Participation Officer, Student Services and Careers and Wellbeing Team.</p> <p>Workshop materials</p> <p>External employability services.</p> <p>Estimated Cost: £7040</p>	<p>This activity is expected to deliver a range of impactful outcomes that directly support the progression gap for student with a disability. By providing personalised, accessible careers guidance, the activity will increase engagement with careers services and empower students to make informed decisions about their future. This activity aims to increase students' confidence in career planning, with data demonstrating improved progression into employment or further study.</p>	

<p>Transition Pathways Programme</p>	<p>This is a structured, personalised programme for students entering their final year of study (final year of a Foundation Degree or final year of BA/BSc). The programme will offer tailored guidance, practical resources, and facilitated connections with inclusive employers. It will include career planning workshops, mock interviews, workplace visits, and mentoring opportunities.</p> <p>The target group will be students who have identified that they have a disability at point of enrolment or at any point during their time on their programme of study.</p> <p>This will be a new activity delivered in collaboration with external employability services, the College's Student Services, Careers and Wellbeing Team.</p>	<p>Staff time from the Student Support and Participation Officer, Student Services, Careers and Wellbeing Teams.</p> <p>Workshop materials</p> <p>External employability services.</p> <p>Sector specialist advisors.</p> <p>Estimated Cost: £4800</p>	<p>The Transitions Pathway Programme is expected to significantly improve outcomes for students with a disability by providing structured, personalised support during the critical transition periods in their education life cycle. Through targeted guidance, employer engagement, and collaborative activities, students will gain greater clarity and confidence in post-graduation plans. Over time this activity will contribute to narrowing the progression gap and enhancing the overall student experience for student with disabilities.</p>	
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<p>Employer Accessibility Partnership</p>	<p>This activity will develop a partnership programme with local and national employers to improve workplace accessibility and perception to promote inclusive recruitment practices for disabled students. This initiative will also facilitate direct engagement between employers and disabled students through inclusive careers fairs, networking events, and work-based learning opportunities. Fostering a mutual understanding and collaboration aims to challenge misconceptions about disability in the workplace and build a network of employers committed to inclusive hiring. Students will be provided with greater visibility of accessible career pathways and increase their confidence in navigating the job market.</p> <p>The target group will be students who have identified that they have a disability at point of enrolment or at any point during their time on their programme of study.</p> <p>This will be a new activity delivered in collaboration with the College's wider Careers Team, Department Academic Staff, the Student Support and Participation Coordinator and external employers.</p>	<p>Staff time from the Student Support and Participation Officer, Student Services, Wellbeing, and Careers Team.</p> <p>Workshop materials</p> <p>External employability services.</p> <p>Sector specialist advisors.</p> <p>Estimated Cost: £16128</p>	<p>This activity will support students with disabilities navigating the critical period from education into employment or further study. By providing structured, personalised guidance and fostering engagement with inclusive employers, the programme aims to reduce anxiety rates associated with transition and increase progression rates. This activity will play a key role in narrowing the progression gap and promoting long term success for disabled graduates.</p>	
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

Activity	Cost
Inclusive Careers Coaching	£7040
Transitions Pathways Programme	£4800
Employer Accessibility Partnership	£16128
Evaluation	£6000
Total	£33968

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The intervention strategy to reduce the progression gap for student with disabilities at Middlesbrough College is grounded in a robust body of research, policy guidance, and sector-wide recommendations. These sources consistently highlight persistent inequalities in progression outcomes for students with disabilities.

Inclusive Careers Coaching

Evidence from both the Office for Students (2019) and Disabled Students UK (2024) identify a stark gap in access to tailored careers advice for disabled students. The TASO Summary Report: What works to reduce equality gaps for disabled students (Evans and Zhu, 2022) highlighted that inclusive careers advice can improve student confidence, career planning, and engagement with employability services. The Disabled Students Commission (Advance HE, 2023) also advocates for embedding inclusive careers advice across the student lifecycle, reinforcing the strategic value of this activity.

Transition Pathway Programme

It is recognised that students with disabilities often experience heightened anxiety and uncertainty during the transition from education to employment or further study. The House of Commons Library Briefing: Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England (Lewis and Bolton, 2024) highlights that disabled graduates are more likely to be unemployed 15 months after graduation and less likely to enter highly skilled employment. Structured transition programmes, such as those reviewed by TASO, have shown positive impact in improving outcomes. The emphasis on selfadvocacy, mentoring and employer engagement aligns with the design of Middlesbrough College's Transitions Pathway Programme.

Employer Accessibility Partnership

Employer perceptions and workplace accessibility remain significant barriers to progression for students with a disability. Research from Disabled Students UK and Advance HE points to widespread misconceptions about disability in the workplace and a lack of inclusive recruitment practices. The Employer Accessibility Partnership is designed to address these gaps by building

relationships with local employers, promoting inclusive practices, and creating accessible pathways into employment. This activity directly responds to Risk 12 (Progression from Higher Education) and Risk 2 (Information and Guidance) in the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register, which highlight the need for improved employer engagement and better information for student with disabilities.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Inclusive Careers Coaching	Increased engagement with careers service and improved confidence in career planning. This will lead to a reduction in the gap in progression for students, with disabilities when compared to their non-disabled peers.	Evidence will include a comparative analysis of progression rates for student with disabilities compared to their nondisabled peers. This data will be triangulated with participation data and qualitative feedback from student focus groups.	Findings will be shared annually, starting September 2026. Annual monitoring reports will be presented to Academic Board, Board of Governors, and Student Council.
Transition Pathways Programme	Improved progression into employment of further study and reduced transition anxiety through structured support, mentoring and employer engagement. Students with disabilities will demonstrate increased confidence, clearer direction, and stronger preparedness for progression opportunities.	Evidence will include a comparative analysis of progression rates for student with disabilities compared to their nondisabled peers. This data will be triangulated with participation data and qualitative feedback from student focus groups. Employer feedback will also be sought as a way of further enhancing the programme each academic year.	Findings will be shared annually, starting September 2026. Annual monitoring reports will be presented to Academic Board, Board of Governors, and Student Council.

<p>Employer Accessibility Partnership</p>	<p>Increased employer inclusivity and improved perceptions of graduates with disabilities. Collaboration will ensure employers have greater awareness of inclusive recruitment practices, and students will report improved confidence in engaging with employers. This activity will lead to more accessible work-based learning opportunities and stronger studentemployer relationships.</p>	<p>Evidence will include a comparative analysis of progression rates for student with disabilities compared to their nondisabled peers. This data will be triangulated with employer engagement and qualitative feedback from student focus groups. Employer feedback will also be sought as a way of further enhancing the partnership each academic year.</p>	<p>Findings will be shared annually, starting September 2026. Annual monitoring reports will be presented to Academic Board, Board of Governors, and Student Council.</p>
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Intervention strategy 3.1: Improve Continuation Rates for Young White Males from IMD Q1 and Q2.

Objectives and targets

Middlesbrough College aims to reduce the continuation gap between young white males from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and their peers from Quintiles 3-5 by five percentage points by July 2030. This will be achieved through a targeted intervention strategy focused on increasing engagement and belonging, addressing cultural and socio-economic barriers to retention, and improving access to relatable role models and personalised support. This intervention is designed to respond to identified risks to equality. (FIT target reference number - PTS_2).

Risks to equality of opportunity

Risks to equality of opportunity addresses by this intervention strategy include: EORR Risk 7 – Insufficient personal support, and EORR Risk 10 – Cost Pressures. These risk to equality of opportunity can contribute to lower mental wellbeing and sense of belonging, and reduced continuation rates.

Related objectives and targets

This objective is also relevant for students from TUNDRA Quintiles 1 and 2, as there is notable overlap with white males from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. Many of the challenges faced by these groups, limited access to tailored support, lower levels of social capital, and reduced exposure to professional networks are shared. Recognising this intersection enables a more cohesive and inclusive intervention strategy, ensuring that efforts to improve progression and outcomes are effectively targeted across multiple dimensions of disadvantage.

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Peer Mentoring and Role Model Network</p>	<p>This activity will establish a structured peer mentoring programme aimed at supporting white males from IMD Q1 and Q2. The aim will be to connect these students with relatable role models (including current students and alumni from similar backgrounds). Mentoring relationships will be built around shared experiences, fostering trust, motivation, and a sense of belonging.</p> <p>The target group will be young white males from IMD Q1 and Q2.</p> <p>This will be a new activity delivered in collaboration with alumni, the College's Student Service, and Wellbeing Team.</p>	<p>Staff time from the Student Support and Participation Officer, Student Services and Wellbeing Team.</p> <p>Alumni</p> <p>Workshop materials</p> <p>Estimated Cost: £11760</p>	<p>This activity is expected to foster a sense of belonging, motivation, and academic engagement among young white males from IMD Q1 and Q2. By connecting participants with dependable role models, the programme will help reduce feelings of isolation and increase confidence in academic life. Overtime it is anticipated to lead to improved continuation and retention rates, as well as the development of sustainable peer support networks.</p>	

<p>Personalised Retention Support</p>	<p>This activity expands the College’s existing retention support by introducing a more targeted and proactive approach for students being at risk of withdrawal – particularly young white males from IMD Q1 and Q2. Using predictive analytics and early warning indicators (attendance, engagement, extenuating circumstance applications), students will be identified form personalised interventions with the Student Support and Participation Coordinator. The Student Support and Participation Coordinator will coordinate regular check-ins, academic support, and referrals to wider wellbeing services, if required.</p> <p>The target group will be young white males from IMD Q1 and Q2.</p> <p>This in an existing activity which will be expanded to employ a more targeted and proactive approach. This activity will be delivered in collaboration with the Student Support and Participation Coordinator, the College’s Student Services, and Wellbeing Team.</p>	<p>Staff time from the Student Support and Participation Officer, Student Services, and Wellbeing Teams.</p> <p>Estimated Cost: £9600</p>	<p>This activity expands existing retention support by offering targeted, early intervention for students at risk of withdrawal, reducing the gap in continuation rates between young white males from Q1 and Q2 and their peers by five percentage points by 2030. Collaboration with academic departments and wider student services ensures a holistic approach. The activity aims to improve continuation and academic success by addressing challenges proactively, strengthening student-staff relationships and fostering a supporting learning environment.</p>	
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Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

Activity	Cost
Peer Mentoring and Role Model Network	£11760
Personalised Retention Support	£9600
Evaluation	£6000
Total	£27360

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The intervention strategy is informed by a plethora of research that highlights the educational disadvantage faced by young white males from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. These students show lower continuation rates compared to their peers, attributed to lack of belonging, limited access to relatable support, and socio-economic pressures.

Peer Mentoring and Role Model Network

Evidence from HEPI (Raven, 2024) recognises the importance of identity, representation, and cultural relevance in improving engagement among white working-class males. Research indicates that students from these backgrounds often struggle to see themselves reflected in higher education environments, contributing to feelings of isolation and disengagement. This activity directly responds to this by connecting students with relatable role models (peers and alumni) who share similar lived experiences. This approach is supported by TASO's findings on the effectiveness of peer-led interventions in fostering belonging and motivation, which are key predictors of retention.

Personalised Retention Support

It is recognised that students with disabilities often experience heightened anxiety and uncertainty during the transition from education to employment or further study. The House of Commons Library Briefing: Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England (Lewis and Bolton, 2024) highlights that disabled graduates are more likely to be unemployed 15 months after graduation and less likely to enter highly skilled employment. Structured transition programmes, such as those reviewed by TASO, have shown positive impact in improving outcomes. The emphasis on selfadvocacy, mentoring and employer engagement aligns with the design of Middlesbrough College's Transitions Pathway Programme.

Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
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Peer Mentoring and Role Model Network	By creating dependable mentoring relationships, the activity is expected to reduce feelings of isolation and increase confidence in academic life. Over time, this will lead to improved continuation and retention rates and the development of sustainable peer support networks.	Evidence will include a comparative analysis continuation and retention rates for the target group compared to their peers. This data will be triangulated with participation data and qualitative feedback gathered through focus groups and surveys with both mentees and mentors.	Findings will be shared annually, starting September 2026. Annual monitoring reports will be presented to Academic Board, Board of Governors, and Student Council.
Personalised Retention Support	This activity expands existing retention support by offering targeted, personalised interventions, informed by predictive analysis and early warning indicators such as attendance, engagement and extenuating circumstance applications. The activity aims to improve continuation and academic success by addressing challenges proactively, strengthening student-staff relationships and fostering a supporting learning environment.	Evidence will include a comparative analysis of continuation rates for the target group against their peers, supported by qualitative feedback from students receiving interventions. Referral and support service usage will also be monitored to assess the reach and impact of the activity.	Findings will be shared annually, starting September 2026. Annual monitoring reports will be presented to Academic Board, Board of Governors, and Student Council.

Whole provider approach

Oversight of Higher Education at the College rests with the Academic Board, operating under the authority delegated to it by the Board of Governors. The Chair of Academic Board reports to the full Governing Body and its sub-committees throughout their meeting cycle. Key HE activities, including the implementation of this Access and Participation Plan, are included in these reports.

The College HE Strategy is a sub-strategy of the College Strategic Plan and focusses upon addressing the specific needs of the region, including the socio-economic issues outlined in the introduction to this plan. Central to this strategy is to create a portfolio of programmes of study that are designed to support student progression into higher education and successful progression to further study or employment.

Given the socio-economic structure of the Tees Valley, and the profile of the higher education student body at the College, the strategy supports students throughout the student lifecycle. The investment

outlined in this plan is designed to continue to underpin the strategy and support all students, particularly those from under-represented groups.

The overarching strategic aim of this plan in respect of the delivery of equality of opportunity, is embedded in the College equal opportunity policy. Central to this approach is the College commitment to continuously reviewing and learning from past performance as it ensures that all students are supported to access higher education and achieve a positive outcome. The infrastructure to achieve this is described below as well as referenced throughout the plan.

The size of the HE student population at the College means that when data is disaggregated by protected characteristic as well as level of study, datasets become relatively small. While this represents a challenge when identifying patterns of performance across disadvantaged groups, it does allow the College to target support for student continuation and attainment at individual students rather than groups. Individual targeted support is a key strategy in the delivery of this plan, and performance will be monitored against the targets set to ensure that the strategies employed are effective.

The staff expertise in providing individual student support, is based on an extensive cross-College CPD programme which both academic and support staff are required to undertake, ensuring that all staff are aware of the implications of dealing with specific protected characteristics. Underpinning this broad-based knowledge are key personnel in Student Services and Additional Learning Support, who provide specialist expertise targeted at individual protected characteristics as well as tapping into a network of specialist external agencies. Engagement with professional networks and sector representative bodies such as the AoC and the OfS, as well as regular liaison with other HEPs, has been used to enhance the level of understanding and range of strategies that can be employed to support students further. Consequently, the College is able to provide a full range of tailored support to individual students regardless of disadvantage. Specific issues are identified either during weekly 'at-risk' meetings between the Director of Higher Education, Student Support and Participation Coordinator and the Mental Health and Deputy Safeguarding Lead, or, informally by the programme team. Any support needs are flagged with the appropriate in-house or external agency to provide intervention support as soon as possible.

The explanation in the previous paragraph illustrates how the College's overarching strategy towards providing student support to maintain or improve equality of opportunity for all students, has been built on experience gained over many years. The range of activity described in the remainder of this section of this plan is based on this foundation and illustrates how the College has developed mechanisms to support access, success, and progression.

In response to the new priorities for access and participation and the governments agenda to provide more flexible pathways into and through higher education, the College took the decision to reduce the number of 3-year full-time degrees in its portfolio, with only one remaining. In their place, the College has focussed attention upon foundation degrees plus top-up programmes as well as Higher Technical Qualifications. With the majority of the College's Higher Education portfolio scheduled for revalidation from 2025/26, the introduction of greater flexibility, including the development of standalone, single registerable modules is being actively considered. This approach is expected to reduce some of the barriers to participation for the priority groups identified within this plan, thereby supporting the College's commitment to widening access and participation. Further coupled with the introduction of the Lifelong Learner Entitlement, a positive impact is anticipated.

Relationship between the Access and Participation Plan and other College strategic measures

a. Higher Education Office

The College established the Higher Education Office (HEO) in 2015 to work with academic departments and cross-College functions such as registry, data, quality, and finance, to ensure that HE is embedded centrally. In addition to data analysis, the HEO employs a range of qualitative approaches to monitoring student performance and satisfaction to ensure that the College is supporting students effectively and meeting their needs.

The HEO also operates a network of Higher Education Working Groups, each of which provides a forum for students and the HEO to raise any issues with the manager responsible for that specific business support department. The benefits are that any lessons learned from the escalation of the issues raised, inform policy and process moving forwards.

Opportunities for the qualitative analysis of areas of disadvantage experienced by students at the College that are provided by the mechanisms outlined above, are critical to informing understanding of the effectiveness of measures in place to support student access, success, and progression.

The HEO has taken the lead in developing the strategies outlined in this Access and Participation Plan, aimed at enhancing the College's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts in promoting access, student success and progression. Good progress has been made towards the planned strategic measures stated in the previous plan. Specifically:

- The college has undertaken a review of its financial support mechanisms in response to the evolving and increasingly complex financial challenges faced by students. These circumstances have necessitated a more flexible and responsive model, with a current emphasis on hardship support as a priority over traditional forms of assistance. In addition to existing provisions, an enhanced bursary payment has been introduced for eligible students, further strengthening the support available. An additional £500 per academic year is accessible to any student with a household income below £30'000. The college remains committed to maintaining a financial support model that is both adaptable to emerging needs and is aligned with its ongoing commitments to students' success and wellbeing.
- The appointment of a full-time Student Support and Participation Coordinator within the Higher Education Office has significantly strengthened both data analysis (specifically focusing on those students from underrepresented groups) and the delivery of targeted student support. This role has improved the College's understanding of student needs and enhanced the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of support measures implemented. Crucially, the presence of a dedicated Student Support and Participation Coordinator has also enabled a timely, often immediate, response to emerging student challenges, ensuring that interventions are both relevant and responsive.

The outputs and effectiveness of the measures outlined above are reported into Academic Board via the HE Working Groups to ensure that there is oversight of the outputs of the Access and Participation Plan. In addition, The Director of Higher Education submits termly summary reports directly to Governors via the Standards Committee, which includes reference to the Access and Participation Plan and progress towards meeting stated objectives.

b. Supporting participation by aligning HE curricula with students and the jobs market

The College has demonstrated positive outcomes in terms of raising participation in higher education, particularly amongst the target groups identified in this plan and targeted by the Office for Students. This activity will continue to be a key element of the annual cycle of activity undertaken by the central College Admissions and Schools Teams. These teams ensure that information and guidance is provided to both prospective students and appropriate gatekeepers (e.g. schools and advisors) on the range of support available to students with protected characteristics. Included in this activity are:

- An annual programme of outreach visits to local feeder institutions is delivered to build early connections and inspire ambition and goal setting among prospective students.
- An annual programme of Discovery Days targeted at supporting and encouraging application.
- Open events at which target students have the opportunity to visit the College and speak to academic staff and employers to explore the range of career opportunities available through specific study paths.
- Taster events at which target students can gain valuable insight into the alternative offer of HE study in a College environment.

The College Strategic Plan is designed to meet the needs and expectations of all students regardless of background or profile. The plan is also designed to address the specific concerns raised by prospective students when considering the relative merits of choosing further study over seeking employment. This plan reflects these values and is underpinned by the College Higher Education Strategy, which uses employability outcomes as a tool to remove barriers to participation in the region.

A key contributor to supporting progression to employment, is an ongoing programme of investment in relationship building with employers through a range of initiatives, including:

- payments to secure high quality workplace mentors to ensure positive outcomes for students in work-based learning settings.
- aligning programme development to labour market intelligence to support student progression into graduate employment.
- embedding professional qualifications into higher awards to support direct progression to employment upon graduation. Where a professional qualification is deemed key to employment, the College covers the cost of accreditation and/or membership.

c. Supporting student attainment and continuation with effective teaching and academic support

A consequence of the College's successful history in widening participation in higher education amongst disadvantaged and under-represented groups, is that a higher proportion of the student population require higher levels of additional support in order to continue in education. The barriers faced by many of the students from under-represented groups to continuing in education are for the most part not academic. To address this issue, the College offers a broad range of immediate support measures to promote student continuation (see below) all delivered through a flexible, personalised approach tailored to individual needs. In order to achieve this flexibility, the curriculum is designed to allow students to step in and out of study at different levels. In addition, the Extenuating

Circumstances Committee uses its authority to extend periods of study to support students who are struggling to balance often conflicting priorities of study, work, family, and home life.

To ensure that all students are supported effectively, the standard HE teaching model is built around a combination of formal scheduled teaching and academic support. The benefit of this model is that the academic support sessions ensure that students receive the level of support that they need and require, irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic group, background, or another characteristic. For those students who occasionally have difficulty attending taught sessions, particularly those in work and studying part-time, the same level of academic support is provided via the College VLE, as a minimum. A key benefit of this approach is that it facilitates support to those students with identified within the plan by removing additional barriers to success.

Installation of lecture capture technology in all teaching rooms significantly enhances accessibility and inclusivity for students. By having access to recorded sessions, if required, students who face barriers to in-person attendance, are able to engage with learning materials at a time and pace that suits their individual needs. This approach promotes equity of access, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

The delivery model is underpinned by a range of additional support and resources, provided by specialist teams across the College business support areas, including Student Services; Disability Support Services; Finance and the Learning Resource Centre.

The College HE Teaching and Learning process, which is a sub-set of the College Teaching and Learning Policy, is designed to reflect the dimensions of the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (UKPSF). Underpinning this process is a requirement for all staff to hold PgCE qualifications. From 2019, an additional requirement was added, supporting staff to apply for HEA Fellowship.

The Head of Teaching and Learning will continue to be involved in the Working Group tasked with addressing the objectives outlined in the APP Strategy. The lessons learned from the outcomes of the Working Group activity, will be used to inform future development of the HE teaching and learning process.

All of the measures outlined above will be maintained moving forwards. Any specific areas of disparity in continuation performance not addressed by the measures already employed, will be identified and addressed.

The College is confident that the measures outlined above support the strategic aims of this plan.

d. Ensuring equality of opportunity and outcome for all students

All College services, programmes and operations, reflect a commitment to, and implementation of, equality, diversity, and inclusion. This commitment is reflected in the College's core values of *driving inclusion* and *promoting mutual respect* and wellbeing for all and is a key factor in shaping this access and participation plan. Consequently, the College believes that its current overarching strategic aims in respect of the delivery of equality of opportunity are sufficient to apply to and cover, the 2026-27 to 2029-30 access and participation plan.

The approach to the management of equality and diversity is monitored and reported upon by the Vice Principal (Students). All College reports relating to equality and diversity are reported to the Governing Body through the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. The VP (Students) is part

of Academic Board and so will represent the views of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee in the oversight of the strategies included in this APP. This activity will ensure that the actions identified in the strategy - to review and improve the mechanisms for support for underrepresented groups - are embedded in cross-College reporting mechanisms.

The College aims to be a leading organisation in the promotion of equality and diversity and acknowledges that equality of opportunity and the recognition and promotion of diversity, are integral to its success.

Middlesbrough College recognises its legal and moral obligations to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Promote positive relationships between individuals who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Key to meeting these obligations and supporting student success, is the removal of barriers to engaging with the support and expertise outlined previously. The range of additional financial support provided through this plan, will assist in facilitating this action by removing some of the barriers to attendance that students face because of financial hardship. This activity includes:

- Bursaries
- Hardship payments.
- Professional accreditation/membership fees.
- Payment of costs associated with trips and visits.
- Standard minimum levels of academic support for all students which are above the sector average regardless of subject.
- The provision of loan laptops to student on entry, available for the duration of their studies.

The size of the HE student population at the College is relatively small and some of the sub-groups are therefore very small. Consequently, the measures being put in place to support the attainment of the targets outlined above as well as maintaining the successful outcomes in terms of Access, Success and Progression as identified in the critical evaluation of performance will be individualised rather than aimed at generic groups. To individualise support in the way described above, requires a flexible approach to the provision of the support mechanisms included in this section of the report as well as a responsive approach to addressing need wherever it arises. The creation of the HE Student Support and Participation Coordinator (SSPC) has significantly enhanced the College approach to designing tailored individual student support as well as the process for monitoring its effectiveness. The SSPC attends the Access and Participation Working Group along with the Mental Health and Deputy Safeguarding Lead and the Director of Student Services. The Working Group has created, introduced, and monitors a series of mechanisms to ensure that the tailored support process is effective, this includes.

- A collaborative pre-enrolment process to identify any barriers to access and continuation that may be encountered by individual students. This has led to enhanced early assessment processes for student with disabilities to ensure that support is in place prior to enrolment.
- An adapted 'At Risk' student monitoring process, which has enhanced the mechanisms for identifying barriers to progression as well as the frequency of when monitoring is conducted. Previous 'at risk' assessments were conducted termly and focussed primarily on academic performance. The new process includes a weekly formalised mechanism to report nonacademic issues to the SSPC and Deputy Safeguarding Lead, including the impact on academic performance. As well as improving the timeliness of intervention, the new process also links directly to all other support processes, including Extenuating Circumstances, Reasonable Adjustment, and financial support assessment, to ensure that a holistic programme of targeted support is provided quickly.
- The SSPC and Director of Student Services both attend Academic Board and have standing agenda items to report on the effectiveness of the measure in place and to review resource allocations. Academic Board are monitoring the efficacy of the process and ensuring that the approach to providing tailored support remains fit for purpose.
- In line with recent case law developments and the EHRC's updated guidance on reasonable adjustments in higher education, the college has introduced new processes to ensure compliance with the anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010. The He Student Support and Participation Coordinator will convene individual student needs meetings involving the Director of Higher Education, the Deputy Safeguarding Lead, and the relevant Programme Lead. These meetings ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered and implemented in a way that supports student wellbeing while ensuring competency standards are achieved. This approach ensure that the College proactively identifies and addresses barriers to learning particularly for students with disabilities and ensured that assessment methods do not disadvantage students due to their protected characteristics.

e. Supporting Progression

A key focus of the College higher education portfolio is to ensure that there is a vocational theme throughout the student lifecycle. Consequently, the message that a higher education award at Middlesbrough College is part of a journey into employment is central to all activity. This focus influences and includes:

- the content of advertising and promotion campaigns.
- programme design and development/redevelopment.
- programme structure and delivery models (fitting around employment).
- professional accreditation/membership fees.
- embedded work-based learning in all programmes including paid mentors.
- free or subsidised vocational trips and visits.

All of these activities are the responsibility of the academic faculties and are embedded in curriculum planning. The HEO oversees this embedding process and monitors that all stated aims linked to student support are embedded across the student lifecycle.

The measures outlined above support the stated objectives of this plan to support progression to graduate employment or further study.

Student consultation

The College Student Union is an independently elected body comprising both FE and HE students. The student body has also elected a HE student representative to sit on Academic Board. The role of this individual is to engage in discussion on policy and procedure relating to higher education and feedback/feedforward, student views from the cross-college student representative group.

To ensure that HE students have every opportunity to engage with College activity, the College has a Head of Student Engagement who provides a mechanism to support continuity and an administrative infrastructure to support the activity of the Student Union. Key to this role is the guidance and support provided to students to ensure that they are able to engage with the range of fora available to them to present their views, share opinions and consult on College plans and policy.

To ensure that HE students at the College have a distinct voice, the College provides a series of HE specific platforms for student engagement and input. These platforms ensure that student representation is meaningful and regular. Platforms include HE Student Council (organised by the Head of Student Engagement and attended by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Director of HE), Programme Boards, HE Working Groups and Academic Board and the Higher Education Governor's Committee.

The HE Working Groups run at least termly and provide the opportunity for students from all subject areas to engage with and present their views to key managers of both academic and student support services. The HE Office administers these groups and ensures that student views from all other formal and informal fora are represented. Direct response is provided to all HE Students and their representatives via the VLE. This approach ensures that all students have a voice and also allows specific focus for students with protected characteristics.

The key approach to gathering student views in the development of this APP were as follows:

- All data used to inform this plan were approved by Academic Board. The inclusion and use was approved by the student representative on Academic Board.
- In approving this plan, Academic Board asked the student body to comment and identify any areas being overlooked by the College. The students agreed that the content of the Plan was appropriate.
- In addition to the approach outlined above, the HE Student Support and Participation Coordinator engaged with individual students from under-represented groups, particularly those within the intended scope of the activity, to ensure that they felt that the stated aims represented their views. Feedback was extremely positive in all cases.

- The College has developed further collaboration in the form of 'Student Consultants,' with roles varied in focus. Specific Access and Participation Student Consultants will play a vital role moving forward, particularly in the evaluation of the plan. The Student Consultants will work closely with the Student Support and Participation Coordinator to co-design and deliver targeted focus groups, peer mentoring, and feedback forums. This collaborative approach ensure that all strategies are shaped by lived experience and remain responsive to evolving student needs.

The College will ensure that this engagement continues during the implementation and evaluation phase. Given the length of time it will take to fully implement the plan, the approach to ensuring the whole student body receives and understands the feedback on outcomes, is as follows:

- The student body is briefed on all key documents, policies and processes pertaining to their time as a student at the College. A key element of this induction is an annual review of the Essential Information page of the College website. This page includes the Access and Participation Plan.
- The Student Representative body will receive an update at the beginning of each year on the activities that Student Representatives are asked to engage in, comment upon, or contribute to. For new Student Representatives, this activity is covered during the Student Representative induction process. The Access and Participation Plan is included in this annual update/induction.
- Developments in (and progress towards) attainment of objectives of the Access and Participation Plan will be shared with students in-year via the feedback mechanisms and channels described above.
- The Higher Education Office will support the dissemination of information on progress towards meeting objectives via the College VLE.

All students will have the opportunity to raise any specific questions or concerns about the Access and Participation Plan as well as any other aspect of College activity through the fora described in this section.

During the 2021-22 academic year, the College conducted a consultation with student representatives regarding the nature of financial support provided to students. Feedback indicated a willingness to accept an increase in tuition fees, if necessary to sustain the laptop loan scheme initially introduced during the pandemic. In response, the College rolled out an experimental laptop loan initiative to all new students, which received positive feedback. As a result, the scheme will continue to be considered on an annual basis as an element of student support. Furthermore, from the 2025-2026 academic year, an additional £500 bursary has been introduced for eligible students with household income of less than £30000 per annum, further enhancing the financial support package and reinforcing the College's commitment to widening participation and supporting student success.

Evaluation of the plan

Middlesbrough College recognises that effective evaluation is essential to understanding the impact of its access and participation activities and ensuring that those from underrepresented and

disadvantaged backgrounds have equitable opportunities to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education. The College's evaluation strategy is designed to be proportionate, evidence-informed, and embedded across the lifecycle of its Access and Participation Plan (APP).

Strategic Approach to Evaluation

The College's evaluation strategy is grounded in a framework that ensures all access and participation activity is assessed for its effectiveness, relevance, and impact. The strategy is shaped by four interrelated principles:

- **Proportionality** – Evaluation activities are scaled appropriately to the size, complexity, and level of risk associated with each intervention. The College balances quantitative rigour with qualitative insight, generating robust evidence while remaining sensitive to small cohort dynamics, particularly given some of the smaller intersections of students identified within the APP.
- **Evidence Informed Design** – The College will use theory of change frameworks to map the sequence of inputs, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes. This will enable a clear understanding of how and why specific interventions are expected to improve equality of opportunity.
- **Continuous Improvement** – Evaluation will be embedded throughout the lifecycle of each intervention. Formative evaluation will be conducted annually to refine implementation, while summative evaluation will assess overall impact. This cyclical process informs strategic planning, resource allocation, and future iterations of the APP.
- **Transparency and Accountability** – Evaluation findings will be routinely disseminated to stakeholders including students, Academic Board and Governors. This open approach supports shared responsibility and reflective practice.

Evaluation Structures and Governance

The College has a strong history of monitoring performance and evaluating strategies to support student recruitment, success, and progression. This approach feeds into the annual reporting and monitoring cycle. As part of embedding the APP into this process, the College is advancing its evaluation strategy to be more evidence-led and strategically aligned with sector-wide expectations. To ensure that this plan remains effective and fit for purpose, its delivery will be evaluated annually over the next five years, incorporating the following mechanisms:

- Student performance data and at-risk reports will be monitored and provided to the Student Support and Access and Participation Working Groups. Further analysis will inform the effectiveness of measures used to tackle inequality and maintain progress toward targets.
- Termly outputs from the Working Groups will be used by the Higher Education Office (HEO) to monitor progress against APP targets. Any performance gaps will be highlighted and reported to Academic Board to determine whether strategic adjustments are needed.
- Emerging themes or patterns of inequality identified by the Student Support Working Group or other fora will be monitored by the HEO and reported to Academic Board. New targets may be introduced to address these inequalities.
- Interventions will be reviewed with students through Working Groups, Programme Boards, and the Cross College HE Student Council. Student feedback will be used to refine and improve activities.

Lessons learned through this process will feed back into the evaluation strategy design, ensuring it evolves in response to evidence and remains aligned with institutional priorities.

Monitoring Progress Against Delivery

The Governing Body receives termly reports on progress against the College's Higher Education Strategy, including the APP. Academic Board, which includes student representatives, has reviewed and commented on the APP during its creation and will maintain a standing agenda item to monitor progress.

Minutes from Academic Board are submitted to the College Management Team, and any items requiring further action are escalated. The Chair of Academic Board, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), reports bi-weekly on matters requiring SLT intervention.

The HEO has operational oversight of HE quality management and reviews progress against APP targets in bi-weekly team meetings. The HEO convenes and chairs working groups involving students and key managers from business support areas. Each group includes APP progress as a standing item, and all actions are reported to Academic Board.

The Cross College HE Student Council, chaired by the HE Student Engagement Officer and attended by the Principal and Director of Higher Education, provides a less formal forum for student representatives to raise concerns. Feedback from these meetings informs working group discussions and contributes to the evaluation of College HE policy and practice.

Capacity and Sector Contribution

Middlesbrough College is committed to building internal capacity for evaluation through staff development, cross-functional collaboration, and student co-creation. The College aims to contribute to sector-wide understanding of effective access and participation measures by sharing evaluation findings and engaging in collaborative research initiatives.

This comprehensive and compliant evaluation strategy ensures that Middlesbrough College remains accountable, responsive, and committed to reducing equality gaps in higher education.

Provision of information to students

Middlesbrough College is committed to ensuring that all information provided to students is accurate, timely, and compliant with consumer protection legislation. The College recognises its responsibilities under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance and has embedded these principles into its operational and governance structures.

The Higher Education Working Group (Marketing) oversees the management and monitoring of all student-facing information. This group includes student representatives and ensures that all communications, both web-based and printed, are reviewed for accuracy, clarity, and legal compliance. Specifically, the group ensures that students are provided with:

- Clear information on the total cost of their course, including tuition fees and any additional essential costs.
- Details of bursaries and financial support, including eligibility and payment arrangements.

- Access to relevant policies and procedures prior to application and after enrolment, including those explaining what students will be charged for.
- Transparent arrangements for payment, cancellation rights, and complaints handling.

All staff involved in advising prospective students are trained to provide accurate and complete information in line with CMA guidance. Students are informed of their rights as consumers and what they can expect from the College in terms of contractual obligations and service delivery.

The College maintains a fixed fee policy, committing to uphold the fee levels advertised at the time of application and enrolment. Fees are not subject to annual inflationary increases. This is clearly outlined in the Fees and Charges Policy, which is publicly available on the College website and includes information on fees payable for the duration of each course. Fees are updated annually on the website and are also provided in writing to students individually as they apply. The offer letter directs students to the full terms and conditions, which are aligned with CMA guidance. Students also receive a separate letter regarding student loans, confirming their financial arrangements.

The College's approach to financial support includes a £500 bursary per academic year for students from households with an income below £30,000. This support is targeted at students most likely to fall into two of the targeted groups within the plan3, including those in TUNDRA Quintiles 1 and 2 and white males from IMD Quintile 1 and 2. This targeted bursary reflects the College's commitment to reducing equality gaps and supporting underrepresented groups.

In addition, the College offers hardship support, which is individually assessed and applied with discretion to support access, participation, achievement, and progression. Applications are managed by Student Services and the Higher Education Office, ensuring students can access support through their preferred channel.

Middlesbrough College does not subcontract any of its higher education provision, ensuring consistency and transparency in the delivery of its programmes.

All relevant information is made available on the College website and can be accessed by students at any time. In-year enquiries regarding fees or financial support are directed to Student Services or the Higher Education Office for resolution.

Annex A: Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity.

1. Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

1.1 Access

College recruitment to higher education courses, is primarily drawn from the Tees Valley. College data shows that 89.8% of HE enrolments in 2024/25, were from Tees Valley postcode areas (table 1). The remaining students were recruited from postcodes bordering the Tees Valley region. Over 64% of College HE enrolments progress from current College based level 3 programmes. Internal studies show that many of these internal progression students had not considered higher education as a viable progression pathway after level 3 and they cited direct progression to study a degree or sub-degree course at the College and its associated benefits, as a key reason for application. A key motivating factor is the familiarity of the environment, which helps reduce uncertainty around progressing to higher education, particularly for student without prior family experience of higher education to guide them.

Table 1 - Percentage of HE Enrolments by Postcode (Analysis of College records 2024/25)		
Enrolments by postcode	Tees Valley postcodes	89.8%
	Other postcodes	10.2%

Postcode analysis of all HE enrolment in 2024/25, shows 53% were from IMD Q1 areas and 15.8% were from IMD Q2 areas, compared to 31.2% from IMD Q3-Q5 areas. The data illustrates the effectiveness of the College's work in addressing local inequality by driving recruitment from IMD Q1 and Q2 areas, with an increase of 13.8% from 2018/19.

Alongside the high concentration of areas classified under the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the Tees Valley also contains a significant proportion of neighbourhoods falling within TUNDRA Q1 and Q2. Table 2 shows that 25.1% of all HE enrolments are from TUNDRA Q1 classification areas, an increase of 5% from 2018/19. 17.7% are from TUNDRA Q5 classification areas. Internal datasets demonstrate a further increase in HE enrolments from TUNDRA Q1 classification areas in 2024/25 with a figure of 31% which illustrates the College's success in widening participation in higher education.

Table 2 - Percentage of HE enrolments by TUNDRA Classification (Analysis of OfS dataset)					
		Proportion of total enrolment			
		Apprentices	Full-time	Part-time	Total
TUNDRA Quintile	1	0.0%	22.3%	2.9%	25.1%
	2	1.1%	24.0%	4.0%	29.1%
	3	1.1%	14.3%	2.9%	18.3%
	4	1.7%	5.7%	2.3%	9.7%
	5	2.9%	12.6%	2.3%	17.7%
	Total	6.9%	78.9%	14.3%	100.0%

1.2 Success

Comparison of continuation and attainment rates for students from TUNDRA areas

Table 3 - Comparison of continuation rates between students from TUNDRA Quintile areas (Analysis of OfS data set 2020/21)				
		Apprentices	Full-time	Part-time
		Continuation	Continuation	Continuation
TUNDRA classification	Q1 & Q2	30.8%	68.3%	77.8%
	Q3, Q4 & Q5	44.4%	79.8%	100.00%

Table 4 - Comparison of continuation rates between students from TUNDRA Quintile areas (Analysis of OfS data set 2021/22 – no PT data available)				
		Apprentices	Full-time	Part-time
		Continuation	Continuation	Continuation
TUNDRA classification	Q1 & Q2	-	75.3%	-
	Q3, Q4 & Q5	100.00%	83.10%	-

Table 5 - Comparison of continuation rates for FT students from TUNDRA Quintile areas (Analysis of OfS data set 2018-19 - 2021/22)					
		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
		TUNDRA classification	Q1 & Q2	77.8%	87.1%
Q3, Q4 & Q5	81.3%		83.6%	79.8%	83.1%

Continuation

As shown in Table 3, continuation rates amongst full time students in the Q1 and Q2 classification are lower than those amongst students in the other three classifications. A similar pattern is repeated amongst part time students with 77.78% continuation.

The academic year 2018/19 marked the first instance in which Middlesbrough College had access to segmented continuation data for full-time students by TUNDRA quintile. As shown in Table 5, the data reveals a fluctuating pattern in continuation rates over the four-year period from 2018/19 to 2021/22, with notable disparities between students from TUNDRA Quintiles 1 & 2 and those from Quintiles 3, 4 & 5. O

While continuation rates for Q1 & Q2 students peaked in 2019/20, a sharp decline followed in 2020/21, dropping to 68.4%, the lowest across all quintiles and years. Although there was a partial recovery in 2021/22, the rate remained below that of students from more advantaged quintiles. In contrast, students from Q3–Q5 maintained relatively stable continuation rates, consistently above 79%, with a modest increase in the final year.

Despite thorough internal analysis, no single causal factor was identified for the decline in Q1 continuation rates. However, the data clearly indicates that students from TUNDRA Q1 and Q2 are disproportionately affected, justifying the need for targeted intervention.

The College recognises the challenges associated with recruiting a high proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Where existing strategies do not sufficiently address disparities in performance, targeted remedial actions are implemented.

Attainment

Positive attainment is measured by the number of students obtaining a first or upper second-class degree. The majority of HE provision delivered by the College is at sub-degree level. Consequently, the data for attainment by TUNDRA quintile is not reportable. The relatively small numbers in each category make statistical comparison of limited value. The disparity in group sizes makes further meaningful comparison difficult. Consequently, the focus moving forwards is to maintain high levels of attainment for TUNDRA Q1 students and monitor the attainment trend over the next two to three years to identify whether the gap between quintiles is a cause for concern. Should a consistent performance gap emerge, the plan will be reviewed and updated to include specific targets aimed at closing the gap.

1.3 Progression

Internal data sets indicate no disparity in progression to further study or graduate employment between the TUNDRA quintile groups, with evidence showing the position changing between the quintiles year on year. This position will continue to be kept under review. Given the relatively small size of the data when sub-divided into groups, a reliable picture is difficult to ascertain. Should a consistent performance gap emerge, the plan will be reviewed and updated to include specific targets aimed at closing the gap.

2. Asian, Black, Mixed and Other students

Table 6 - ABMO Students as a percentage of HE (Analysis of OfS data set 2018/19)					
Ethnicity		Apprentices	Full-time	Part-time	Total
	White	17.0%	58.2%	19.9%	95.1%
	ABMO	0.2%	3.9%	0.8%	4.9%
	Total	17.2%	62.1%	20.7%	100%

Table 7 - ABMO Students as a percentage of HE (Analysis of OfS data set 2022/23)					
Ethnicity		Apprentices	Full-time	Part-time	Total

	White	4.1%	66.1%	17.6%	87.8%
	ABMO	1.6%	9.7%	0.9%	12.2%
	Total	5.6%	75.9%	18.5%	100%

2.1 Access

As illustrated in Table 7, 12.2% of Higher Education students at the College identify as being from ABMO communities, an increase of 7.3% since 2018/19. While further disaggregation of this group into individual ethnic communities has been considered, the relatively small cohort sizes render such analysis statistically unhelpful. Notably, the proportion of students from ABMO backgrounds exceeds the representation of the ABMO population within the Tees Valley, which currently stands at 7.9% (Tees Valley Economic Assessment). This indicates a positive outcome in terms of promoting equality of access and reflects the College's commitment to inclusive recruitment practices.

The College recognises it is important to ensure that students continue to apply to and access higher education, regardless of ethnicity. As the ABMO population of the Tees Valley is so small, even a slight shift in recruitment patterns can have a significant impact on the proportion of ABMO students studying at the College.

2.2 Success

Table 8 - Comparison of continuation rates by ethnic groups (Analysis of OfS data set 2021/22)	
	Continuation
White	83.5%
Asian	73.3%
Black	100%
Mixed	50%
Other	100%

Continuation

As presented in Table 8, continuation rates among students vary across different ethnic subgroups. It is important to acknowledge that, in some cases, the number of students within specific subgroups is too small to yield statistically significant conclusions. Nevertheless, this pattern of variation has remained consistent over recent years and tends to fluctuate annually. In 2019-20, for example,

students identifying as Asian had a continuation rate of 92.9%, compared to 85.9% for students identifying as White. Whereas, in the table above this position has shifted with a continuation rate of 83.5% for students identifying as white, compared to 73.3% for student identifying as Asian. The College remains committed to identifying and addressing any barriers to continuation for students from ABMO communities and will continue to take proactive steps to ensure equitable outcomes.

Attainment

Positive attainment is measured by the number of students obtaining a first or upper second-class degree. The majority of HE provision delivered by the College is at sub-degree level. The data for attainment by ethnicity for students on sub-degree courses, is not reportable because of the small group sizes. However, there is no significant attainment gap between white and ABMO students evident. The disparity in group sizes makes meaningful comparison difficult however, while historic patterns show that ABMO students have a higher attainment rate than white students the differences in attainment between the two groups can move significantly from one year to the next. Consequently, the focus is to maintain high levels of attainment for students from all disadvantaged groups.

2.3 Progression

OfS data sets shows that full time ABMO student progression to employment or further study was higher than of students who identified themselves as white. This position will continue to be kept under review. Due to the relatively small data set when further broken down into subgroups, it is challenging to draw reliable conclusions about progression among AMBE students until further data is available to support the development of an aggregated benchmark.

3 Mature students

3.1 Access

Table 9 – Student enrolment by age group (Analysis of OfS data set 2022/23)				
Age group	Apprentices	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Young	3.7%	42.9%	7.8%	54.3%
Mature	2.2%	32.3%	11.2%	45.7%
Total	5.9%	75.2%	18.9%	100%

Table 10 – Student enrolment by age group (Analysis of College data set 2024/25)				
Age group	Apprentices	Full-time	Part-time	Total

Young	4.3%	44.7%	4.1%	53.0%
Mature	6.4%	27.4%	13.2%	47.0%
Total	10.7%	72.0%	17.3%	100%

Table 10 shows that mature student recruitment is 47% compared to 53% of students classified by the OfS as young. The split between young and mature full and part time students is representative of typical annual recruitment patterns in recent years, as can be seen in the OfS data set from 2022/23 (Table 9). A higher proportion of mature students than young students seek part time study options as many of them are in full or part time employment or have caring responsibilities.

The data in Table 10 reflects the College's commitment to providing a second chance to students who may have not succeeded in education at their first attempt. Consequently, by the time that they have successfully completed level 3 and enter higher education, many of them are over 21.

The college recognises that achieving its strategic aim of improving the region's economic outlook, relies on ensuring continued access to higher education for all age groups, with a particular focus on encouraging applications from mature learners.

3.2 Success

Table 11 – Continuation rate by age group (Analysis of OfS data set 2018/19 – 2021/22)				
	All students			
	Continuation 2018/19	Continuation 2019/20	Continuation 2020/21	Continuation 2021/22
Young	77.5%	87.0%	71.8%	79.2%
Mature	78.9%	85.5%	73.6%	86.3%

Continuation

As shown in table 11, the OfS data set shows the continuation rate amongst mature students is 7.1% higher than that amongst young students. This pattern has been consistent with the exception of the 2019/20 academic year, with the gap widening in 2021/22.

This pattern is a reflection of performance in previous years and illustrates the positive outcome for support for mature students across the College. The College will continue to monitor continuation rates across all age groups and, where necessary, will review and adapt the support strategies. If required, an additional target will be incorporated into this plan to address and emerging issues.

Attainment

Table 12 – Attainment rate by age group (Analysis of OfS data set 2018/19 – 2022/23)					
	All students				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Young	41.7% *	30.8% *	54.2%	50.0%	41.4%
Mature	58.3%	63.5%	55.6%	67.1%	45.5%

Positive attainment is measured by the number of students obtaining a first or upper second-class degree. The majority of HE provision delivered by the College is at sub-degree level. Mature students have a 4.1% higher attainment rate than young students on sub-degree courses. Historic trends show that this pattern is fairly consistent. Consequently, the ongoing priority is to sustain high levels of attainment among mature students recognising their vital contribution to the College’s widening participation and regional development goals.

3.3 Progression

Table 13 – Progression rate by age group (Analysis of OfS data set 2018/19 – 2021/22)				
	All students			
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Young	51.3%	45.4%	45.1%	48.2%
Mature	61.5%	64.5%	59.9%	58.0%

The data set demonstrates progression for young students continue to increase, mature students continue to have a higher progression rate which is in line with historical data sets. Given the high incidence of deprivation in the Tees Valley coupled with lower than average rates of employment, and the fact that the overwhelming majority of graduates remain in the area, the data represents a positive outcome. This position will continue to be kept under review as more recent data becomes available and if necessary, additional targets will be added to this plan.

4 Disabled students

4.1 Access

30.4% of HE students in 2022/23, declared a disability, internal college data indicates that this increased to 38.9% in 2023/24 and to 42.5% in 2024/25. This percentage is significantly higher than the proportion of residents in Middlesbrough (31.2%) who were identified as ‘Equality Act Core or

work-limiting disabled' (Middlesbrough Council Annual Equality and Inclusion report). This is significantly higher than the national average of 24.3% and the regional average of 28.6% (ONS Annual Population Survey). The relatively high participation rate reflects the Colleges positive action in encouraging applications from students with a disability. The number of students declaring mental ill health at enrolment has increased in recent years. This increase reflects national reported trends across the sector. The relatively low number of part-time students who declared a disability (6.6%) makes disaggregation on mode of study statistically limited.

It is important to ensure that students with disabilities continue to apply to and access higher education. Although currently an area of success for the College, it is essential that continues investment in support for access is maintained.

4.2 Success

Table 14 – Continuation rate of students with a stated disability (Analysis of OfS data set 2018/19 – 2021/22)				
	All students			
	Continuation 2018/19	Continuation 2019/20	Continuation 2020/21	Continuation 2021/22
Yes	83.2%	84.4%	73.7%	78.4%
No	77.1%	86.8%	72.1%	84.8%

Continuation

The OfS data in Table 14, shows that the continuation rate (2021/22) of students with a declared disability was 78.4% compared to 84.8% amongst students with no declared disability. Although the gap has been closed in recent years, following an identified target in the previous iteration of the Access and Participation Plan. In 2020/21 students with a stated disability have a higher continuation rate than students without a stated disability. This represents positive progress, despite the OfS data set from 2021/22 indicating a 6.4% gap in continuation between students with a disability and those without a disability, internal data from 2023/24 indicates a much smaller gap of 0.2%.

The direction provided by the Student Support and Participation Coordinator has ensured that effective support mechanisms are initiated from the point of application and monitored throughout the student life cycle. By working collaboratively across college departments, where appropriate the Student Support and Participation Coordinator has facilitated the timely implementation of necessary support prior to enrolment thereby supporting a smooth transition into Higher Education. This includes supporting Disabled Students' Allowance applications, integration with wider support services, and the identification and planning of reasonable adjustment to meet individual needs.

The College will continue to monitor the continuation rates amongst students with a disability over the next two to three years and if necessary, revisit the approaches taken to support student continuation and add an additional target to this plan.

Attainment

Table 15 – Attainment rate of students with a stated disability (Analysis of OfS data set 2018/19 – 2022/23)					
	All students				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Yes	40.0% *	37.5%	57.1% *	52.9%	48.8%
No	58.0%	66.7%	54.4%	68.3%	40.4%

Positive attainment is measured by the number of students obtaining a first or upper second-class degree. The majority of HE provision delivered by the College is at sub-degree level. All students who declared a disability had a positive outcome in terms of attainment.

The disparity in group sizes makes meaningful comparison difficult and historic patterns show that the differences in attainment between the two groups can move significantly from one year to the next. Most recent data demonstrates that students with a stated disability have an attainment rate 4.4% higher than those students without a stated disability. The focus moving forwards is to maintain high levels of attainment for students with a disability, while recognising the influence of group size on this student population.

4.3 Progression

Table 16 – Progression rate of students with a stated disability (Analysis of OfS data set 2018/19 – 2021/22)				
	All students			
	Progression 2018/19	Progression 2019/20	Progression 2020/21	Progression 2021/22
Yes	55.6%	54.1%	50.7%	44.4%
No	57.7%	55.8%	53.1%	58.8%

The data set shows that progression to highly skilled employment or further study for full-time and part-time students with a disability was 14.4% lower than that for students without a disability in the 2021/22 academic year. Notably, while the gap had shown signs of narrowing in previous years, the period during the pandemic appears to have reversed this trend, resulting in a wider disparity than

was observed pre-pandemic. While the relatively small size of the HE student population, and the even smaller size of subgroups, limits the reliability of yearly comparisons the disparity warrants response with the Access and Participation Plan to prevent further regression and ensure equitable outcomes. Although, a more reliable picture of progression amongst students with a disability will become available when we have additional data over which an aggregated benchmark can be calculated, it is essential to continue to support progression to higher skilled employment or further study for students with disabilities.

A specific intervention will be introduced with the aim of reducing this gap and improving progression outcomes for students with disabilities.

5 Care leavers

According to data from the Tees Valley Combined Authority, the number of all care leavers aged 17-21 across the Tees Valley in 2018 represented 0.19% of the population. The proportion of care leavers on HE study programmes at the College in 2023/2024 was 1.3% which is significantly above the proportion of the Tees Valley care leaver population, but in line with the number of 16-19 yearold students at the College recorded as being in care, who were studying at Level 3 and below, (1.1%). The number of care leavers has increased over the last 7 years, with only a slight decrease (2 students) in 2024/25.

Of those HE students studying at the College that declared they were care leavers between 2018/19 and 2024/25, all were enrolled to full-time study programmes. According to the [National Network For the Education of Care Leavers](#) 15% of care experienced students drop out in the first year, compared to 10% of non-care experienced students. The percentage of care leavers who achieved their learning aim in recent years, has fluctuated, the very low numbers of students (between 1-8) make it difficult to draw meaningful comparisons.

The data shows that the College has a good record across the student life cycle in supporting care leavers.

Based on the care leaver population across the Tees valley it will be challenging to significantly increase care leaver recruitment beyond current levels, however, the College is committed to continuing to encourage and support care leaver progression to higher education.

6 Intersections of disadvantage

6.1 Access

The evidence shows that the College has a good record of encouraging and supporting access to higher education across all disadvantaged groups. Consequently, although specific targets to improve Access have not been set, the College will continue to focus on maintaining positive performance and ensure that planned levels of investment to support and encourage Access are maintained.

6.2 Continuation

The continuation rate amongst young full time IMD Quintile 1 and 2 white males continues to be relatively low when compared to full time white males from other IMD classifications. The relative difference in continuation rates between IMD Q1 and Q2 (combined), when compared with IMD Q3 to Q5 (combined), provides a representative picture of the performance between the lowest and

highest quintiles (see Table 16). Although the numbers are relatively low overall, it is recognised that the gap illustrated in Table 16 is a pattern that is repeated nationally. The pattern of performance was also identified as a target to be addressed in the last iteration of the plan. The gap shown in Table 16 represents a decline in performance in meeting the target to close the gap in performance, although there was a narrowing of the gap in the 2021/22 academic year. The College is committed to ensuring that all students are supported to complete their chosen course of study and will work towards reducing this gap.

A specific intervention will be introduced with the aim of increasing the continuation rate for young white males from IMD Q1 and Q2, reducing the gap when compared to white males from IMD Q3-5.

Table 16 – Continuation of Male Students by IMD Quintile (Analysis of OfS data set 2018/19 – 2021/22)			
	IMD Quintile	Proportion of male enrolment	Continuation
2018/19	Q1&Q2	21.2%	72.6%
	Q3, Q4&Q5	23.3%	83.8%
2019/20	Q1&Q2	22.3%	84.0%
	Q3, Q4&Q5	23.7%	89.2%
2020/21	Q1&Q2	26.2%	84.0%
	Q3, Q4&Q5	23.7%	89.2%
2021/22	Q1&Q2	26.6%	80.3%
	Q3, Q4&Q5	26.3%	86.2%

A further sub-set of this intersect described in Table 16, are the number of students in this group declaring mental health issues as a reason for non-continuation, which has increased in recent years. Given the socio-economic profile of the region, the issue is of particular interest to the College. In the last two academic years there has been an increase in this sub-set of students accessing support from the Student Support and Participation Coordinator. It is recognised, however, that not all students would necessarily declare this information and as a result statistical data is not reliable.

Although the College does not intend to set a separate target, targeted support sessions have been introduced in an attempt to reduce stigma and encourage engagement with support services. This approach will remain under review.

The data on other ethnic groups by IMD quintile is unreportable because of the small student numbers involved. There is nothing to suggest however, that performance by ethnicity is affected by socioeconomic groupings.

6.3 Progression

Despite relatively positive rates of progression into highly skilled employment or further study in general for graduates, there are some minor intersections of data for groups of part-time young students and students from disadvantaged wards. Given the low number of students in the group the College does not intend to set a specific target at this point. However, the attainment of this group will be monitored closely to ensure that the existing strategies are effective in addressing any disadvantage.

Fees, investments and targets

2026-27 to 2029-30

Provider name: Middlesbrough College

Provider UKPRN: 10004344

Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

Notes about the data:

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.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OFS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£51,000	£53,000	£55,000	£57,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£153,000	£153,000	£156,000	£156,000

Table 6b - Investment summary

Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
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Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£45,000	£47,000	£49,000	£51,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£51,000	£53,000	£55,000	£57,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (as % of HFI)	6.1%	6.4%	6.4%	6.5%
Access activity investment	Total access investment funded from HFI (£)	£51,000	£47,000	£49,000	£51,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£128,000	£128,000	£131,000	£131,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£153,000	£153,000	£156,000	£156,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)				
		18.4%	18.4%	18.2%	17.7%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Research and evaluation investment	<i>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</i>	2.4%	2.4%	2.3%	2.3%

