

Russell Group Teacher Conference 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018

# The impact of Widening Participation initiatives

Alison McKenzie, University of Sheffield  
James Pickering, King's College London  
Angela Purdham, University of York



# Higher Education sector context

- Increase in outreach and access activity following rise in tuition fees in 2012
- Access Agreements / Access and Participation Plans
- Active WP research across all three universities represented today
- Research impacts directly on practice locally, regionally and nationally

# Widening Participation at The University of Sheffield

- Sheffield Access Agreement on Office for Students (OfS) website
- Whole lifecycle approach: getting in, on and through
- Annual Sheffield WP Outreach report [www.sheffield.ac.uk/outreach](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/outreach)
- Key Performance Indicators focus on numbers of students admitted to Sheffield from Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN) backgrounds but also on broader collaborative and partnership objectives

# WPREU

(Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Unit)

- WP research and evaluation across a range of institutional and sector WP areas, locally and nationally
- Large scale longitudinal projects: Sheffield Student 2013, Equality Challenge Unit Black and Minority Ethnic and Disability Projects, Access to Medicine
- Input to design of impact programme at Sheffield Y7/8

# Impact at The University of Sheffield

- Higher Education Achievement Tracker (HEAT)
- Full report on tracked student journeys by 2020
- Meeting Key Performance Indicators - progression to HE and partnerships
- Longer term / more complex outcomes evaluated by WPREU research and evaluation projects
- Student journeys: Pre 16 - Post 16- Higher Education- employment

# Widening Participation at King's College London

- KCL Access Agreement on Office for Students (OfS) website
- Annual WP Yearbook
- Milestones focus on Greater London state school students, LPN, BAME students, K+
- London issues with POLAR3 data
- Collaborative targets - Realising Opportunities

# What Works Unit at KCL

- Behavioural Insights
- Randomised Control Trials
- Implementation on pre-16 scheme - King's Scholars

# WP Impact at KCL

- Hajira Mushtaq - K+ student 2012, studied Law at KCL, now on the Civil Service Fast Stream

*‘ The K+ programme gave me a great insight into Law as a degree...it’s been a life changing experience for me’*

# Widening Participation at the University of York

- Access and Participation Plans with the Office for Students
- KPIs focus on proportion of entrants from LPN and BME backgrounds, increase retention rates for mature students and increase percentage of students disclosing a disability.
- Additional targets focusing on engagement with pupils in secondary school and sixth form through in-house progressive and collaborative

# Collaborative work at York

- The Excellence Hub ([www.york.ac.uk/excellencehub](http://www.york.ac.uk/excellencehub))
- Opportunity for schools across the region to engage with three RIUs, providing challenging hands-on activities for high achieving pupils
- Enables partner universities to engage with schools and students they might not be able to reach through long term sustained programmes
- Provides schools with exposure to a wider range of universities for a larger proportion of their students

# The Impact of WP

- [Rob Millthorpe](#) - RO student at York, undergraduate at Kings, postgraduate at Sheffield, joined KPMG on their graduate scheme 18 months ago  
*“Being one of the first members of my family to attend university, the prospect of entering the unfamiliar world of academia was a little daunting. Realising Opportunities was fantastic in introducing me to the culture of university, from meeting academics and students to engaging in campus life. It was this insight and experience that enabled me to move forward into university with confidence.”*
- [Rich Winter](#) - Shine and Next Step York student at York, now works as a trainee accountant in Leeds

# Support at University

- Welcome lunch for students from WP programmes
- Raise awareness of the opportunities available alongside their studies to help enhance experience and employability
- Guaranteed interview for Student Ambassador Scheme
- Signposting to study support (Academic Skills Office, Maths support, Writing Centre)