

Access restrictions: Closed

From: Sarah Wood, Head of Student Inclusion and Engagement
Subject: **City St George's Access and Participation Plan 2026/27 – 2029/30**
Status: For approval
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Executive Summary

To highlight the key issues in the paper and to cover:

The APP is a condition of our registration with the OfS and ability to charge higher fees. The plan is to be submitted to the OfS in the last week of June 2025.

Our Access and Participation Plan (APP) is a university-level, OfS-approved, and publicly available plan. It outlines our commitments, actions, and investments aimed at reducing inequality of opportunity at City St George's, as well as our contribution to reducing inequality within the wider sector. Interventions specific to Schools or at programme level are not included within APP, this will instead be incorporated into relevant School-based plans, such as Student Experience Improvement Plans and Awarding Gap Action Plans.

The biggest risks to equality of opportunity at City St George's fall across student attainment and the awarding gap, and progression from employment in to graduate level employment or study, with student of colour and those living in the most deprived areas being most at risk.

Agreed and approved strategic priorities for City St George's have informed the APP Intervention Strategies included within the plan to address these risks. As we are in a period of change and integration post-merger, and the combined Access and Participation Plan reflects this position. In the coming years, if significant changes are implemented and embedded across the university as part of the ongoing integration, strategic refresh, and PSTOM, a variation to the OfS to update the APP may be required. Plans are generally approved for 4 years, depending on the level of risk identified by the OfS.

Extensive student consultation was undertaken by both legacy City and St George's when developing their respective 2025/26 Access and Participation Plans, as this consultation was relatively recent it has been used to inform this new combined plan. However, to ensure ongoing and meaningful engagement with our students a series of focus groups has been conducted across campuses and feedback has been incorporated throughout the plan

Paper applies to the following campus(es):

All campuses

Action(s) required from the Committee:	1. To approve the City St George’s Access and Participation Plan for submission to the OfS.
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The table below outlines the paper’s governance route - which committees/groups have already seen the report and the resulting outcome/action from discussions.

Committee date	Committee title	Outcome/action	Action date	Paper version number
27 th April 2025	EEB	Update in April meeting with final plan circulated in May. Approved in June with minor updates	2 nd June 2025	1.2
3 rd June 2025	SLT	Approved with minor updates	3 rd June 2025	1.2
21 st May 2025	Access and Participation Planning and Investment Committee	Circulated for feedback and comment. No feedback received.	28 th May 2025	1.2
15 th May 2025	EDI Board	Noted	15 th May	1.2

City St. George's, University of London

Access and participation plan 2026-27 to 2029-30

Introduction and strategic Aim

Formed on 1 August 2024 through the merger of City, University of London and St George's, University of London, City St George's now educates over 27,000 students from more than 170 countries across its three campuses in Clerkenwell, Moorgate, and Tooting. Bringing together St George's world-leading specialism in health and medicine with City's excellence across a broad range of disciplines, including health, business, creativity & communications, global affairs & policy, science, technology and law has created significant opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration and meaningful change within healthcare and beyond. With a strong focus on business, practice, and the professions, this makes us one of the largest higher education choices for students in London and a key provider of the capital's health workforce.

Our student cohort reflects the vibrant diversity of our pan London locations, with students representing a wide range of cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. We are proud of this diversity and value what it brings to our university. Most of our home undergraduate students join us from London and the South-East, with many choosing to live at home and commute.

We are currently navigating the complexity associated with the integration of two distinct institutions, each with their own long history and identity. Over time we will realise the full potential of our combined strength as we create something new, in doing so we will continue the legacy of a strong commitment to addressing the persistent challenges in access and participation, including closing gaps in degree outcomes between different student groups, proactively supporting our student's mental health and wellbeing, working with local schools to support pupil achievement, and ensuring our graduates have fair access to fulfilling and successful careers.

Inclusive education principles actively shape our curricula, pedagogical approaches, and student support. We acknowledge that many of the barriers for our students are deeply rooted within societal and higher education's structures, and our approach is focused on providing an inclusive academic experience for all students, complemented by targeted provision for those most in need. Drawing upon sector best practice, our education strategy embeds innovative, student centred approaches across curriculum development, assessment and feedback, teaching delivery, policy development, employability, student support and wellbeing services, and quality assurance processes.

Building upon the considerable heritage, commitment and achievements of our founding institutions across widening participation, social mobility and equity, we are dedicated to creating truly inclusive learning environments where diversity is valued, potential is nurtured, and every student is supported to succeed and contribute positively to society.

Risks to equality of opportunity

To identify risks to equality of opportunity we undertook an assessment of performance combining the OfS supplementary data sets for the legacy institutes, conducted additional consultation with our students, and mapped indicators of risk against the Office for Students' Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR). The following table details the 12 identified risks impacting our students, along with their associated indicators.

Table 1 Risk to Equality of Opportunity City St George's

Risk	Detail	Indicator of risk
1. Knowledge and Skills Access	Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto	Local students face multiple intersecting indicators of disadvantage that have a direct

	HE courses that match their expectations and ambitions.	impact on attainment outcomes. We are in a strong position to tackle this sector wide risk present in the OfS EORR through attainment raising programmes.
2. Information and Guidance Access	Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the Information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choices about their higher education options.	Students facing multiple intersectional indicators of disadvantage may not have access to sufficient information, advice, guidance or career education to inform their future decisions. We are in a strong position to tackle this sector wide risk identified in the OfS EORR due to our Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) provision, which is delivered in local schools and embedded across our outreach.
3. Perception of HE Access	Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.	Lower % of students with disabilities accessing City St George's and lower proportion of Black male students starting than other ethnicities (Clerkenwell evidence internal data), the reasons for this are complex but perception of higher education is believed to be a contributing factor.
4. Academic support, teaching, and assessment not fully Inclusive Continuation, Completion & Attainment	Teaching, support, and assessment design may not be inclusive of diverse student needs, potentially leading to inequitable learning experiences and outcomes. Differences in educational experiences prior to joining City have not been sufficiently addressed through academic support, policy and regulations.	Lower completion rates and attainment levels for students of colour and those from IMD 1 compared to IMD 5 identified. Lower than average NSS scores for teaching on my course, academic support, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback.
5. Mental Health Whole lifecycle	Students may not experience an environment conducive to good mental health and wellbeing. An environment that does not support students' mental health and wellbeing will reduce the student's ability to cope with daily life, learning and studying.	There are no indicators present in the assessment of performance due to low number of students with a reported disability. We are still considering this a key risk as the sector evidence points to an ongoing mental health crisis amongst young people.
6. Ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic Continuation, Completion & Attainment	Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. Students' experiences during the pandemic varied widely and student behaviour has changed because of this worldwide event. Students may be less prepared for HE studies.	Attendance is low across some courses, there is a growth in the awarding gap and completion gap between a number of student groups. Evidence of a lack of student engagement in the School Sector will continue to filter upwards to HE providers. Student feedback flagged this as their second highest risk.

7. Financial Hardship and Cost of Learning <i>Completion, Attainment & Progression from HE</i>	Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course, obtain a good grade, or gain experience to support progress from HE. Students who have financial worries or constraints are not able to fully engage in their learning and higher education experience, such as the cost of travelling to campus or taking part in enrichment activities.	Lower levels of completion and attainment for students of colour compared to their white peers and IMD 1 compared to IMD 5. Students identified this as the biggest risk to equality of opportunity in our student consultation. Identified by SU check-in calls as key student concern. Evidence from the sector on the impact.
8. Progression from HE	Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience. There are systemic barriers within Industry such as classism and institutional racism that impact equality of opportunity to progress from higher education.	OfS data dashboard (GOS) shows a gap in progression from Higher Education between students of colour and their white peers, IMD 1 and 5. Students also identified this as the third highest risk to equality of opportunity in the APP student consultation.
9. Lack of opportunity to fully engage in HE. <i>Completion, Continuation, Progression from HE</i>	Students may not have equal opportunity to engage with higher education, or extracurricular activities. This can be due to commitments outside of studying, the impact of commuting, costs involved, a lack of belonging, or financial reasons.	Low attendance levels. Low completion rates. Low progression from HE. Identified as a risk in our student consultation interviews. Identified as a risk by the Student Union in their check in calls, and through the cost-of-living group (challenges traveling to uni).
10. Lack sense of belonging Whole lifecycle	Students may feel a sense of loneliness, isolation, and lack of belonging that impacts their ability and desire to engage fully in their studies.	High proportion of commuter students. Student feedback during Covid where our students of colour shared the challenges they faced throughout their studies.
11. Limited access to appropriate data <i>Continuation, Completion & Attainment</i>	Staff may encounter issues accessing comprehensive data or face challenges in locating relevant information. Additionally, they might lack the necessary data to proactively support students or consider equality of opportunity within planning cycles.	Identified through staff feedback as a challenge, it is also a key element in our approach to evaluation and impact assessment, and to understanding what works in a City St George's context for our students.
12. Impact of the Merger <i>Whole lifecycle</i>	The complex nature of integrating two well established HEPs could lead to unintended risks to equality of opportunity. This could link to campus specific lack of belonging, impact of the time taken to join up systems and processes. The loss of good practice as part of integration.	City St George's are treading new ground with a merger of this size, across multiple campuses. Monitoring student outcomes and gathering cross-campus feedback will be important to understand and limit this impact.

Objectives

- **Objective 1a: Access: Outreach and widening participation**

We will prepare pupils to access higher education, and to make informed choices about their future careers, by providing them with the knowledge and skills they need for success. This support will be tailored to the needs of those studying in the London boroughs near our Clerkenwell, Moorgate, and Tooting campuses, focusing on those who face multiple barriers to accessing higher education, including those eligible for free school meals, from areas of high deprivation, and Black male pupils.

- **Objective 1b: Access: Outreach and the Professions**

We will drive social mobility by increasing opportunities for underrepresented students to access higher education and progress into careers in the business and the professions, including in areas such as Healthcare and Medicine, where we can make a meaningful impact.

- **Objective 2: Access for Disabled Students**

We will improve the access rate for City St George's students who have a reported disability and ensure they successfully progress through their course of study.

- **Objective 3: Student Success**

We will enable our students of colour, those living in the most deprived areas, and mature students to succeed in their course of study by improving rates of on-course continuation, completion and attainment.

- **Objective 4: Student Progression**

We will enable our students of colour and those living in the most deprived areas to progress to highly skilled employment or postgraduate study.

- **Objective 5: Student Mental Health**

We will create an environment that proactively and pre-emptively supports our students' mental health and well-being, with a particular focus on students experiencing mental ill health, living with lifelong health conditions, disabilities, or personal circumstances that will make them more vulnerable to challenges with their mental health.

- **Objective 6: Targeted support** We will provide targeted support for students who face ongoing, persistent societal, cultural, educational, and personal barriers throughout their educational journey to succeed at City St George's, complete their course, achieve good grades, and progress on to graduate-level employment or further study. This includes students who have experience of local authority care, young carers, estranged students, asylum seekers, and refugees.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention strategy 1: Access, Outreach and Widening Participation

Objectives

1a: Access: Outreach and widening participation: We will prepare pupils to access higher education, and to make informed choices about their future careers, by providing them with the knowledge and skills they need for success. This support will be tailored to the needs of those studying in the London boroughs near our Clerkenwell, Moorgate, and Tooting campuses, focusing on those who face multiple barriers to accessing higher education including those eligible for free school meals, from areas of high deprivation, and Black male pupils.

1b: Access: Outreach and the Professions: We will drive social mobility by increasing opportunities for underrepresented students to access higher education and progress into careers in the business and the professions, including in areas such as Healthcare and Medicine, where we can make meaningful impact.

Target

There will be no numerical target attached to this objective due to the challenges of capturing the impact of this work in visible publicly available data. Instead, we will:

- Evaluate the impact initiatives and adapt them based on the evaluation outcomes.

- Set internal attainment targets for tutoring schemes to evaluate and monitor progress
- Monitor internal data on application to enrolment rates for Black male students.
- Monitor access rates for IMD Q 1 students and those who received free school meals to ensure gaps do not emerge

Risks to equality of opportunity

Knowledge and Skills, Information and Guidance, Perception of Higher Education

Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy
<p>Targeted Primary Outreach <i>Existing Activity</i></p> <p>Targeted multi-intervention programme to increase knowledge and experience of Higher Education from Primary Aged Children in Tooting, Morden, (Primary Practice – Healthcare Careers) and Islington, Hackney and Tower Hamlets (Primary Spotlight – Business and the Professions).</p> <p>Includes: campus visits, information sessions for parents and carers, subject specific workshops, summer school and graduations.</p>	<p>Widening Participation Team plus City St George’s WP student ambassadors</p> <p>Event deliver resources, including marketing, comms, catering, and materials.</p>	<p>Students introduced to Higher Education</p> <p>Increase knowledge and understanding of potential study options and future careers.</p> <p>Practice core study skills, increasing academic self-efficacy, confidence and motivation to study.</p> <p>Increased confidence to prepare for Secondary Transition</p>	<p>IS4</p>
<p>Attainment Raising Programmes <i>Existing Activity</i></p> <p>Multi-intervention Maths, Science and English tuition from Key Stage 2 to 4. Sustained, small group tuition delivered by trained student tutors. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Stars – Science GCSE • Primary – Maths and English KS2 • Secondary – Maths and English GCSE • Revision Days – focused revision sessions • Academic Mentoring – Bayes Business school students undertake credit bearing module, inc. optional Maths and English tutoring in secondary schools. 	<p>Widening Participation Team plus trained City St George’s Ambassadors and Tutors.</p> <p>Tutoring and mentoring subscriptions and resources.</p>	<p>Increased attainment at Key Stage 2 and 4 compared to school derived grade predictions</p> <p>Improved performance in school examinations</p> <p>Improved study skills, motivation to study and self-efficacy in English, Maths and Science</p>	<p>IS3</p>
<p>Targeted Secondary School Outreach <i>Existing Activity</i></p> <p>Targeted multiple interventions programme for 12–18-year-olds, varying in length and intensity to support specific school and student needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight to Healthcare – Multi-intervention programme for Y12 students interested in healthcare professions • UniFocus: Key Stage 5 focused support for students considering application to specific HE subject areas • UniTaster: Key Stage 4 week-long intervention programme on broad range of HE areas and professions 	<p>Widening Participation Team plus City St George’s WP student ambassadors</p> <p>Event deliver resources, including marketing, comms, catering, and materials.</p>	<p>Improved abilities, self-confidence and understanding of Higher Education</p> <p>Confidence in accessing Higher Education application processes</p> <p>Increased clarity and confidence in navigating decisions for the future</p>	<p>IS4</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus Visits – Key Stage 3 			
<p>Strategic Partnerships <i>Existing Activity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London Med – multi-intervention programme for Y12 students, supporting applications to Medicine. Collaborative with Kings College, UCL and Queen Mary. • Upward Bound – Student Tutors delivering Maths, English and Study Skills Collaborative with London Met University and Islington Council. • Brilliant Club Scholars Programme – Participation for Key Stage 3-5. • St Luke’s Community Centre – Islington Community centre-based collaboration to provide Careers events for Key Stages 2 and 4. • Future Professionals – Careers and Skills focused Summer School exploring emerging careers. Collaborative with Lord Mayor, City of London Corporation and Livery Companies. 	<p>London Med is funded by the General Medical Council. Widening Participation Team, plus City St George’s trained widening participation ambassadors.</p>	<p>Awareness of Career pathways, graduate outcomes and world of work Increased critical thinking, metacognition and self-reflection skills Increased confidence in applying to university Increased ability to connect academic knowledge to careers skills and potential pathways to the world of work.</p>	<p>IS3 and IS4</p>
<p>Careers Information, Advice and Guidance <i>Existing Activity</i></p> <p>Pre entry careers information, advice and guidance. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 Careers guidance interviews and action plans • Workshops on Career exploration, Student Finance, Course choice and Personal Statements • Parent and Student Influencer Workshops 	<p>Widening Participation Careers Adviser, teaching and delivery resources, City St George’s WP ambassadors.</p>	<p>Informed choices regarding HE and future career options Strengthen ability to reflect Understand and navigate application processes Parents and Carers increasingly able to support application processes</p>	<p>IS4</p>
<p>Targeted Intersectional Programmes <i>Existing Activity</i></p> <p>Medium term programmes aimed at specific intersections of disadvantage that present heightened risks to equality of opportunity in access. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EmPOWHer. Programme to boost self-image and confidence amongst primary aged girls experiencing intersectional disadvantage (Key Stage 2). • Ascend. Attainment raising and careers programme for Black Caribbean students KS3-5 • Unimentors. Mentoring for Key Stage 4 and 5 students experiencing multiple indicators of deprivation. 	<p>Widening Participation Team plus City St George’s WP student ambassadors Event deliver resources, including marketing, comms, catering, and materials.</p>	<p>Improved confidence and self-belief Positive interaction with HE Understanding of relevance of Study skills through active learning, academic self-efficacy and motivation Successfully transition to university Able to make well-informed decisions around HE</p>	<p>IS3 and IS4</p>

Total cost of activities: £992,000 annually

Summary of evidence base and rationale

City St George's outreach aims to address the identified risks to equality of opportunity through supporting students to improve their academic attainment, perception and knowledge of Higher Education and appropriately targeted information, advice, and guidance. Utilising sector-leading evidence to support planning and delivery of our outreach activities, including the Network Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions (NERUPI) framework. This framework consists of a multistage intervention, from Level 0 (Primary) to 6 (Graduate Employment), and targets the key areas students can explore their pathways to Higher Education. These consist of five aims to develop key areas:

- Know - knowledge of the benefits of higher education and graduate employment.
- Choose - capacity to navigate the HE and graduate employment, and to make informed choices.
- Become - ability to negotiate the challenges of university and graduate progression.
- Practice - study skills to support Academic attainment and successful graduate progression.
- Understand - understanding by contextualising student knowledge and supporting attainment raising.

Evaluation

All Access interventions are evaluated to, at minimum, Type 2 (empirical) standard, including:

- An Evaluation Plan and Schedule
- Pre and Post Intervention Surveys
- School derived attainment targets for attainment raising initiatives.
- At least an element of focus group research with students, student influences, schools, or City St George's students
- Use of appropriate tracking and data processing using HEAT and HESA returns.
- Evaluation practices are monitored on an annual basis for suitability, repeatability, and relevance to project aims.

High investment and intensity programmes are supported by underlying theories of change produced in the planning stage, including Science Stars, Primary Practice, Insight to Healthcare, ASCEND and Future Professionals. Theory of Change will be produced for all outreach initiatives under this plan. Science Stars (Secondary Science Tutoring) is evaluated to Type 3 (Causal) standard, via analysis of a control group of non-participants. Going forwards, all attainment raising activity will aim to move from Type 2 to Type 3 evaluation. Programme Evaluation across Access is compiled into an Annual Report which will be published internally and summarised for wider publication. Partnership programmes produce specific impact reports which will be appended to evaluation submissions. Outcomes will be shared through the sector through professional networks, conferences and meetings

Intervention strategy 2: Access – Disability

Objectives

We will improve the access rate for City St George's students who have a reported disability and ensure they successfully progress through their course of study.

Targets

PTA_1 - We will increase the percentage of students accessing City St George's with a reported disability from 13% to 16% by 2030.

Alongside this target, we will monitor outcomes for students with a reported disability to ensure they are successfully completing their course of study.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Perception of HE, lack of appropriate academic support and approach to teaching and assessment, limited opportunity to fully engage with HE, sense of belonging, lack of access to appropriate data, risks associated with the merger.

Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Autism Transition Event and Support <i>Existing Activity</i> Autism and Neurodiversity welcome. Small group pre-entry transition events designed with the needs of these students in mind. Autism & Uni Toolkit provides students with the tools they need to navigate their transition.</p>	<p>Staff time: Neurodiversity and disability advisers for coordination, delivery, and ongoing support.</p>	<p>Better prepared to start university with improved engagement with support services. Embodies a safe environment for students to report and discuss their SpLDs. Improved rates of continuation among students who attended.</p>	IS3
<p>Inclusive teaching, assessment, and policy <i>Enhanced activity</i> Supporting staff to deliver inclusive education and to design assessments that have inclusivity and choice embedded.</p>	<p>Staff time from academic learning support tutors and Disability and Neurodiversity Advisers.</p>	<p>Staff across the university understand challenges faced by students. Staff feel confident in supporting students in a timely manner. Increase rates of student completion.</p>	IS3
<p>Staff Training Supporting staff to support students. <i>Existing and new training.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurodiversity training • Disability awareness training • Academic induction & Personal Tutor module • Policy implementation guidance • Resources Development – toolkits <p>We are committed to being a nurturing, inclusive and diverse environment that is free from discrimination and anti-racist. Staff are trained in cultural competencies.</p>	<p>Staff time for planning and delivery</p>	<p>Understanding of the policy and when to make referrals to services. Provide advice for students on the available support services and feel confident in supporting students. Ensure that services meet the needs of the wide range of students who will access them. Students have an academic support network that is confident and competent</p>	IS2, IS3, IS5 & IS6
<p>Student routes to disclosure and data on reported disabilities</p>	<p>Student Health and Wellbeing Engagement</p>	<p>Developing a clearer understanding of the students who access the service and any</p>	IS5

<p><i>Existing Activity</i> Students can disclose disabilities or health conditions before or during their course via a simple online form. Dual systems across campuses will run concurrently, and we will work to integrate into a shared system over the duration of this plan.</p>	<p>Team with Data Analyst support as required.</p>	<p>barriers to sharing disabilities or long-term health conditions. More students report a disability early. Clear data to support decisions and plans around disability disclosure and support.</p>	
<p>Inclusive Campus <i>Enhanced Activity</i> Activities, design measures and campaigns make our commitment to inclusiveness visible; this will be tailored to the needs of specific groups, and campuses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Support Hubs at Tooting and Clerkenwell provide new accessible space in the heart of campus. • Visible Voices Campaign, Awareness days and celebration events • City Sport programmes and referrals • Sensory Room (explore expansion to other campuses) • Student Wellbeing Reps • Review of student communications 	<p>Cross team working and time to support implementation and training, including Student comm team, Senior Student EDI Officer, Disability and Neurodiversity team, Student Voice team and non-staff costs relating to marketing, events, and resources.</p>	<p>A sense of belonging through engagement with community- building activities and resources. Increased student satisfaction. Full understanding of where to seek support and opportunities available.</p>	<p>IS5</p>

Total cost of activities: £400,000 annually

Summary of evidence base and rationale

City St George's has a lower-than-expected proportion of students joining us with a reported disability, we need to develop a greater understanding of this to ensure a welcoming and accessible environment for students with disabilities so they can feel safe to access the full support available. We are working on the assumption that a significant contributor to the gap is lack of disclosure, there are numerous reasons for this in relation to culture, confidence, expectations and perceived implications. This is based on the geographical location in which we recruit from (greater London) and the proportion of the population who have disabilities. A disclosure safe environment is important in making students feel comfortable and confident in sharing their disability.

Evaluation

We will evaluate individual activities (Autism Transition Event, Sensory Room project, City Sport programme) to understand the correlation between engagement and students' access, continuation and success. This will include compiling Type 1 evidence to ensure each activity is based on robust evidence and has a documented Theory of Change. In addition, we will be using a mixture of participant surveys, usage tracking data, and smaller qualitative interviews and focus groups to generate Type 2 evidence. This will be supplemented by findings from the NSS and other internal surveys to triangulate evidence on student satisfaction. Interim reports on the progress of each intervention will be shared internally to support continuous improvement, and a cohesive report summarising all evidence relating to the overall intervention strategy will be published at the end of this plan. The complexity of integrating separate campus systems, may necessitate campus-based reporting and evaluation during the ongoing integration period.

Intervention strategy 3: Student Success – Continuation, Completion and Attainment

Objectives

We will enable our students of colour, those living in the most deprived areas, and mature students to succeed in their course of study by improving rates of on-course continuation, completion, and attainment.

Targets

- PTS_1 Remove the continuation gap between our Black and white students by 2030.
- PTS_2 Remove the completion gap between our Mature and Young students by 2030.
- PTS_3 Reduce the awarding gap between IMD Q1&2 and Q4&5 students from 8.7% to 4.3% by 2030.
- PTS_4 Reduce the awarding gap between our Black and White students from 15.1% to 8.7% by 2030.
- PTS_5 Reduce the awarding gap between our Asian and White students from 10% to 5% by 2030

Risks to equality of opportunity

Lack of appropriate academic support and approach to teaching/assessment, mental health, ongoing impact of coronavirus, cost pressures, lack of sense of belonging, limited opportunity to fully engage with Higher Education, lack of comprehensive access to data, university merger.

Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Financial Support and Wellbeing – <i>existing but to be reviewed as part of the merger integration</i></p> <p>Students from low-income households, who are most in need, will be eligible for a student support bursary. Details, including eligibility criteria, limits, and amounts, will be published on our website.</p> <p>This financial support package will be informed by consultations with staff and students to deeply understand the needs of our combined City St George’s student body. It will also draw upon our internal evaluations and sector evidence.</p> <p>Hardship Funding - Students from low-income backgrounds facing financial barriers to engaging with their education can apply for Hardship Funding.</p> <p>Financial education and wellbeing will also be provided to ensure students have the skills and support needed to manage the money effectively.</p> <p>A new level 5 optional module will be available to all level 5 students on holistic financial wellness as part of the new Study+ programme.</p>	<p>£3.7M</p> <p>Student funding team for processing applications, administration, and ongoing support and financial education for students.</p>	<p>Financial support enables students to dedicate sufficient time to their studies rather than paid work, and ultimately to remain on course.</p> <p>Students develop their financial literacy skills to enable skilled money management.</p>	<p>IS4 and IS6</p>
<p>Transition for Academic Success-</p> <p><i>New activity. Subject to a successful pilot this will be rolled out across all campuses</i></p> <p>Designed to support all undergraduate students during their crucial first year of university study and address the unique academic challenges faced by students when transitioning from secondary education or when returning to Higher Education from employment. This programme covers a core range of skills and competencies providing a consistent foundation for success, bridging gaps in knowledge and skills between students from differing backgrounds.</p>	<p>Staff costs for design, planning, delivery and implementation of the programme.</p>	<p>A standard level of competency will be achieved by students in core academic skills.</p>	<p>IS4, IS5 & IS6</p>

<p>Teaching Quality Improvement Programme <i>New initiative</i></p> <p>As part of our strategic commitment to improving student outcomes and reducing disparities, the university has launched the Teaching Quality Improvement Programme (TQIP)—a multi-year, institution-wide initiative designed to embed consistent, high-quality teaching practices and ensure equitable student experiences and outcomes.</p> <p>Directly addressing areas identified in our TEF and Ofsted assessments, this programme will re-shape the institutional environment and approaches to education oversight so as to improve consistency in teaching quality and academic experience.</p> <p>The focus is on embedding consistency in teaching standards through enhanced staff induction, probation, mentoring, and clarity of expectations. It will enhance the quality of teaching via a consistent approach to staff academic development, peer review, evaluation of practice, and sharing of good practice. It will incentivise high standards through revised promotion criteria and recognition of teaching excellence.</p> <p>Designed to ensure that all students, regardless of background, benefit from a consistently high-quality educational experience. It supports our strategic ambition to reduce continuation and degree awarding gaps, improve NSS and B3 metrics, and ultimately contribute to a more inclusive and successful academic community.</p>	<p>Senior leadership Assistant VP for Education Associate Deans for Education Learning Enhancement and Development Team Lecturers Quality Team</p>	<p>Develop the best institutional environment for teaching and learning Ensuring consistent standards across all delivery by developing support for all teaching staff and through effective performance management Raising the baseline of standards across all provision and supporting an excellent educational experience for all students Promote inclusivity and parity of outcomes Closing the degree awarding gap and ensuring students with protected characteristics experience equitable learning environments</p>	<p>IS5</p>
<p>Inclusive Education <i>Continuing activity.</i></p> <p>Our aim is for inclusive education to become standard practice. The Inclusive Education Framework and Curriculum Toolkit provides resources for educators to develop their practice around inclusivity, and access to specialist student-facing training in allyship and advocacy. Student equity champions provide consultancy on inclusion and accessibility, and an ongoing community of practice promotes discussion across the university.</p>	<p>Specialist staffing within Learning Enhancement and Development, relevant Associate Deans with Academic Schools, and academic staff.</p>	<p>Consistent supported delivery of a diverse curriculum. Inclusivity is a standard and integrated part of the developing curriculum consistently across all programmes. Enhanced community of practice contributes to inclusivity becoming a whole-institution priority</p>	<p>IS2, IS5 and IS6</p>

<p>Policy and Regulation Review and Update <i>Ongoing activity</i></p> <p>We will continue our focus on enhancing policies and regulations to ensure the best outcomes for students are prioritised. Policies will be accessible to students, and accompanying guidance will equip staff to implement them consistently across the institution and student cohorts.</p> <p>Where it has been identified, through evidence or staff and student feedback, that a policy or regulation could be a potential barrier to student outcomes and progress, the policy or regulation will be targeted for review. This will include, but is not limited to, the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extenuating Circumstances • Late Submission • Extension Requests <p>As part of the merger, a programme of policy and regulation integration has already taken place, building on existing work across both legacy institutions. There will be an ongoing review of policies and regulations to address systemic and structural barriers to equality, ensuring best available practice can support the student’s academic experience.</p>	<p>Cross university staff including Student Inclusion and Engagement, Senior EDI Officer and Quality and Academic Services, Learning Enhancement and Development, and Associate Deans for Education to review, update, publish and implement.</p>	<p>Policy will have equality of opportunity and EDI consistently considered and addressed</p> <p>Students will understand how policy impacts them.</p> <p>Staff will understand the role of policy implementation in reducing inequalities of opportunity.</p> <p>Improved student outcomes by ensuring fair and consistent policy, regulations and implementation</p>	<p>IS2, IS4 and IS5</p>
<p>Assessment for Learning Code of Practice <i>Ongoing activity</i></p> <p>All programmes are required to include varied assessments and at least two assessment points in order to cater for our diverse student population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing students with a range of assessment designs that better accommodate diverse strengths and preferences, allowing flexibility in assessment topics or questions in order to foster student engagement and ownership. • Ensuring assessments are inclusive, e.g. incorporating visual or auditory elements. • Provide clear instructions and support for students requiring adjustments, including differential assessments where appropriate and in line with our obligations under equalities legislation. • An Assessment Toolkit for staff to ensure assessment is authentic, relevant and purposeful. 	<p>Academic staff time for leadership, implementation and delivery of the code of practice. Training and support from Learning Enhancement and Development.</p>	<p>Authentic and inclusive assessment practices across City that cater to our diverse student needs.</p> <p>Students who require support identified</p> <p>Reduction in differential assessment outcomes for students of colour and those who live in areas of deprivation.</p> <p>Reduced resits.</p> <p>Improved NSS results in assessment and feedback.</p>	<p>IS5</p>
<p>Student partnership and co-creation. <i>Enhanced activity</i></p>		<p>Students initiate ideas, share experiences, and collaborate</p>	<p>IS2, IS5 and IS6</p>

<p>Embedding student engagement and co-creation through university initiatives is core to our commitment to being student-centered, accessible, and inclusive. We will build on the success of the legacy institutions' approach to Diversity Champions and Student Voice Ambassadors to develop an impactful cross campus framework.</p>		<p>in creating meaningful changes within their programmes of study and the wider university.</p>	
<p>Learner Analytics, including attendance and engagement. <i>Enhanced activity</i> Learner analytics will be used to identify indicators of student disengagement early so that proactive support can be implemented. We will look at a range of engagement indicators including VLE data and attendance to assess when to intervene with students and look at the relationship between engagement and successful assessment. Schools will be supported to use this data to proactively plan interventions and understand where changes to assessment are needed. Learner analytics will also be used to support inclusive curriculum design by providing data-driven insights into how diverse students engage with learning materials, their assessment of outcomes, and on-course continuation. This will be used to address barriers to success. We will also undertake demographic reporting on attendance linked to student outcomes to further understand the relationship between student groups, attendance and equity.</p>	<p>Student Success team and Learning Enhancement and Development staff. Student Engagement officers and Student Experience Associate Deans to support implementation of actions. Personal tutors to support interventions.</p>	<p>Barriers to success are identified on an individual level as early as possible. Personalised support targets barriers to success and improves feelings of belonging and connectedness. Continuation and attainment rates improve.</p>	<p>IS4, IS5 & IS6</p>
<p>EDI Data and Education Quality <i>Enhanced activity</i> The improved use of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) data to enhance education outcomes and student experience by routinely incorporating it into departmental strategic planning, decision-making, and quality processes. Detailed outcome data, disaggregated by student characteristics, will be made available at both School and Programme levels, and supported by training to ensure staff are equipped to use the data strategically and effectively. EDI data will be a consistent element considered in shaping continuous improvements to education. This includes integration within Annual Programme Evaluations and Periodic Departmental Reviews to ensure inequalities are highlighted and addressed. This work will commence over the course of the plan and is dependent on integration of IT and data systems across the newly merged institute.</p>	<p>Cross departmental resources from the Office for Institutional Equity, Student Records, Strategy and Planning, Student Success, Quality and Academic Development, and senior leadership and IT.</p>	<p>Data will be accessible to staff to inform planning and decision making. Confidence in interpreting and utilising data. Evidence based, data informed decisions re student support, interventions, and teaching.</p>	<p>IS4</p>
<p>Awarding Gap Action Plans by Academic School <i>New activity</i> Our overarching aim is to achieve holistic change, improving education and equality</p>	<p>Leadership and staff time within academic schools.</p>	<p>Improved outcomes for students. Reduction in identified gaps</p>	

outcomes across the entire university. To address the nuanced, granular details within different disciplines, each Academic School will produce an Awarding Gap Action Plan, detailing targeted actions to reduce the awarding gap and improve attainment outcomes. Evaluation and reporting on progress will be included within the City St. George's governance structures to ensure accountability and progress.		in student outcomes across continuation, completion and attainment.	
Course Buddies <i>Continuing activity.</i> Current students are trained to be mentors to new students and act as their personal guide to transitioning into university.	Student Development Team staffing to manage coordination, evaluation and events.	Students gain a network and sense of belonging. Course and study insights Supports academic and social confidence.	IS1, IS4, IS5
Progression Pathways <i>New Activity</i> A tailored programme of workshops, mentoring and engagement activities targeting 2 nd and 3 rd year Black and mixed students living in areas of high deprivation. Subject to a successful pilot, this will be expanded to include further targeted support, for example academic support.	Student Success officer and Digital inclusion Coordinator to plan, coordinate, recruit students and deliver the programme.	Able to interpret and apply the concept of resilience from their experiences. Feelings of inclusion, greater sense of belonging, visibility, and building a peer support network. Positive self-identity, increased ability to navigate and manage issues that might impact success.	IS4, IS5 & IS6
Student Success initiatives tailored to the needs of the newly merged City St George's <i>New activity</i> As a recently merged institute, a core element of our approach to reducing inequality is to develop a thorough understanding of our students, their experiences, and needs, with a particular focus on student success. This understanding will directly inform targeted interventions to measurably improve student outcomes in continuation, completion, and attainment, thereby reducing inequalities. We commit to this focused and evidence-based approach, ensuring that resource allocation throughout this plan supports students' success. At this stage, the specific form of these interventions is still under development.	To be defined based on assessment of need and resource required.	Improve student success and outcomes in relation to continuation, completion and attainment rates for the most at-risk students across City St George's.	IS2, IS4, IS5 and IS6

Total cost of activities: Including financial support for students £4,792,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Our assessment of performance identified clear gaps in our student outcomes for continuation, completion and attainment for the student groups identified. Whilst we focus on an approach that is embedded and universal, avoiding a deficit model so that no student feels stigmatised, there are varied and complex reasons for these gaps that necessitate targeted interventions to inclusivity and equity, addressing both individual and systemic challenges. Our success intervention strategy encompasses a range of work to develop education, elevate quality and ensure consistent standards across all programmes, addressing systemic and structural barriers that impact our student outcomes, alongside academic and personal support to enable our students to adapt quickly to the demands of higher education.

By focusing on a consistent foundation of inclusive teaching, fair assessment, and consideration of EDI factors across all programmes, policies and regulations will ensure students who have been identified at greater risk of inequality are not negatively impacted by inconsistent or unconsidered approaches. Instead, all students are supported directly and indirectly to achieve their full potential and succeed.

Evaluation

Aligning with the B3 Student Outcomes condition, effective initiatives must ultimately lead to positive continuation, completion, attainment and progression for all students, with a particular focus on addressing any identified gaps for our target groups

The evaluation methods for our targeted programmes, including Transition, Progression Pathways, and Peer Support, will differ depending on the scale and intended outcomes of each programme. Every programme is based on a clearly defined Theory of Change and will generate at least Type 2 evidence. Some programmes, such as Progression Pathways, will have individual impact reports. Others will contribute to a broader, holistic report that evaluates activities taking place across the whole provider approach. These wider activities will be supported by Type 1 narrative evidence, and an evaluation plan will be developed to explore how these projects, which are focused on addressing the awarding gap, influence outcomes for students of colour and those from IMD 1 backgrounds. Since the full impact of these programmes will take time to become clear, a comprehensive evaluation report will be published at the end of this plan's cycle. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor and assess the impact of our student success initiatives on an annual basis through internal reporting.

Intervention strategy 4 Progression from Higher Education

Objectives

We will enable our students of colour and those living in the most deprived areas to progress to highly skilled employment or postgraduate study.

Targets

- PTP_1 Reduce the gap between students from IMD Q1&2 and Q4&5 progressing onto a graduate level employment or post graduate study from 17.1% to 10% by 2030.
- PTP_2 Reduce the gap between our Black and White students progressing onto a graduate level employment or post graduate study from 8.3% to 4% by 2030.
- PTP_3 Reduce the gap between our Asian and White students progressing onto a graduate level employment or post graduate study from 9% to 4.5% by 2030.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Financial hardship and cost of learning pressures, progression from HE, lack of sense of belonging, limited opportunity to fully engage with higher education.

Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Careers Activation Programme <i>Ongoing activity</i> All UG programmes include credit-bearing modules on professional experience and career development. Students take a core module in each of these areas.</p>	<p>Staff time to plan, deliver, assess and evaluate the modules.</p>	<p>All students will gain professional experience and core career development learning relevant to their subject discipline and the future job market, enhancing their employability.</p>	<p>IS6</p>
<p>Micro-Placements (part of careers activation programme) <i>Existing Activity</i> Micro-Placements offer short, real-world work experiences to boost employability. This 15-credit module involves 140 hours over 4+ weeks, with prep sessions and resources provided. Means-tested hardship bursaries will be available to support students to engage with micro- placements.</p>	<p>Employer Engagement Team coordination and management of the programme, including recruiting employers and students.</p>	<p>Students get work experience undertaking employer projects. The financial constraints often associated with work experience are removed.</p>	<p>IS3</p>
<p>Financial Support for employability opportunities <i>Existing activity</i> Micro placements fund. A bursary of £500 for eligible students on low household income who undertake micro placements organised by the City Careers & Employability team. A limited number of bursaries will be available and advertised annually. Priority is given to students on low incomes or from groups with low progression into graduate level employment. Global Opportunities Fund covers costs and living expenses for UG Home students from low-income households to access opportunities to study abroad. Amounts will vary depending on opportunity, cost, and destination.</p>	<p>Coordination and student recruitment, advertising, and distribution of funding by the Global Opportunities Manager and Micro-placement teams. £30K Micro- placement Fund. * £30K Global Opportunities fund* *Tbc as part of the student financial support model development</p>	<p>Students have engaging and purposeful mobility experience. Increased independence, confidence, and ability to adapt to new situations. Participants are confident in how to progress in/navigate their careers, with clear plans for post-university destinations. Development of City St George’s Graduate Attributes such as leadership, relationship building, technical expertise, work experience for CV enhancement, and languages.</p>	<p>IS3, IS5 & IS6</p>

<p>IN-clusive Careers and Summer Speakers Series <i>Enhanced activity</i> Targeted at students of colour and those with disabilities. Organisations share practices on inclusive workplaces that attract and retain diverse talent. Includes speed recruitment, networking, 1-on-1 sessions, and employer fairs.</p>	<p>Employability team to coordinate and manage events and recruit employers and students.</p>	<p>Connect with and learn from leaders and recruiters within the field of diversity and inclusion. Understand how EDI is integrated into their hiring practices. Receive application advice. Empower our students to take inclusive leadership and recruitment practices into their future careers.</p>	<p>IS2, IS3, IS5 & IS6</p>
<p>Mentoring <i>Existing activity</i> A range of professional and career mentoring opportunities designed to support students across a range of professions, at different stages of their educational journey and professional development. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional mentoring • In course academic mentoring • Career specific mentoring 	<p>Staff time to deliver the programme, evaluate, recruit and training mentor and mentees. Expenses for mentor and mentees. Mentors to volunteer their time to support students.</p>	<p>Gain first-hand insights into professions and expertise from their mentor. The establishing and building of positive professional relationships. Increased self-efficacy, self-esteem, career confidence, commercial awareness. Improved knowledge and understanding of how to successfully articulate skills and experience in a CV, application, and interview for a particular profession.</p>	<p>IS3, IS5</p>
<p>Gradvantage <i>Existing Activity, Collaborative</i> GradVantage Academy and mock assessment centre target students of colour and those from disadvantaged areas, offering career prep and exclusive paid internships.</p>	<p>Annual cost for delivery of assessment centre and internship wages; and careers team members to coordinate.</p>	<p>Career development plans. Job search skills, Clarity of career choices. Experience of the graduate recruitment process and confidence in entering the graduate workplace. Participants are more likely to achieve positive graduate outcomes.</p>	<p>IS3 & IS6</p>

Total cost of activities: £1,125,000 annually

Summary of evidence base and rationale

There are clear differences in progression into highly skilled employment and postgraduate study between students from the most and least deprived areas, and some students from minoritised ethnic backgrounds. We need a proactive approach to support these students as they move on to their next career steps. While it is beyond the capacity of universities to influence the systemic discrimination that exists within the broader labour market, we can influence the confidence, resilience, and self-efficacy of students while they are with us. Students of colour and those from areas of high deprivation face unique circumstances that impact their transition into the world of work or further study. Despite their academic achievements, they may encounter additional challenges due to stereotypes, unacknowledged bias or limited exposure to professional networks. Other factors may include financial limitations or lack of confidence, which can negatively impact their career journey.

Evaluation

We plan to evaluate each activity to meet OfS Type 1 or Type 2 standards, assessing whether relevant APP Projects are achieving their intended outcomes for students and understanding student perceptions of these projects. Our evaluation methods will include pre- and post-activity questionnaires to measure learning gain, changes in confidence, capacity for action, and development of a positive self-identity. We will also use feedback surveys to gather feedback on students' experiences and satisfaction levels after each activity. Further to this, evaluation for some activities will be supplemented by focus groups to gain deeper qualitative insights into students' perspectives. Findings will be communicated through various formats, including reports, interim findings, and blog posts. These will highlight key statistics, insights, and potential case studies on student outcomes and the impact of our progression activities. Blog posts will provide concise summaries of these insights and will be promoted through our Careers Service communication channels. All research materials, including reports, findings, and blog posts, will be readily accessible on our Careers Evaluation SharePoint. To enhance visibility and engagement, we will collaborate with the University's Evaluation Team to also share our reports on their SharePoint platform. In the future, we will also share our findings externally with the OfS.

Intervention strategy 5: Student Mental Health

Objectives

We will create an environment that proactively and pre-emptively supports our students' mental health and well-being, with a particular focus on students experiencing mental ill health, living with lifelong health conditions, disabilities or personal circumstances that will make them more vulnerable to challenges with their mental health.

Targets

There is no numerical target, but this work will be monitored and evaluated through our regular student check ins and feedback mechanisms including relevant NSS scores, alongside evaluation of the core programmes to understand their impact.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Mental health, ongoing impact of coronavirus, financial hardship, and cost of learning pressures, lacking a sense of belonging, inconsistent and unreliable access to data /data collection, limited opportunity to fully engage with higher education, university merger.

Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>UniWellbeing and Togetherall Apps <i>Ongoing activity</i> The UniWellbeing app provides tools to start building healthy, positive habits to boost wellbeing. Weekly posts, a wellbeing programme, advice and support, self-help catalogue, tools to help manage wellbeing positively and effectively and online. Togetherall is free to students, providing an online peer support community, tools and resources including self-help courses. Moderated 24/7 by mental health professionals ensuring the safety and anonymity of all members.</p>	<p>Annual subscription costs, communicating with students and ensuring engagement.</p>	<p>Students have an academic and social support network. Students have coping strategies and increased ability to cope.</p>	<p>IS2, IS3, IS4 & IS6</p>
<p>Clinical Support <i>Existing Support</i> Targeted support for students with Mental Health conditions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised reasonable adjustments • Support for DSA funding and Student Support Plans • City’s Counselling Service is designed to meet the needs of students across different campuses. • Mental Health Mentoring 	<p>Student Health and Wellbeing Team to deliver provision.</p>	<p>Timely clinical support ensures students receive diagnoses, staff understand individual needs, and students feel empowered to share and manage their mental health, leading to improved academic motivation.</p>	<p>IS2, IS3, IS4 & IS6</p>
<p>University Mental Health Charter Award & integration plan <i>Enhanced activity</i> City St George’s have received the “award in progress” from the University Mental Health Charter. We will work to integrate our health and wellbeing services as City St George's with a particular focus on removing barriers to medical students accessing health and wellbeing support. As we integrate, we intend to ensure we put in place best practice and learning from both legacy institutions and ensure we have an equitable and accessible service.</p>	<p>Mental Health Advisors Student Health & Wellbeing Engagement Advisors and Student Comms Officers Senior leadership</p>	<p>Increased wellbeing and positive mental health for our students.</p>	<p>IS2, IS3, IS4 & IS6</p>

<p>Support and Wellbeing Services <i>Enhanced Existing activity.</i> A range of services are available including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Student Support Hubs, the new welcoming and accessible spaces at the heart of our Clerkenwell and Tooting campuses for students to access support. • Chaplaincy services are accessible to all students • School-based Student Welfare Officers • Report & Support tool • Emotional & mental health guidance • Follow-up Mental Health Advisor appointments • We are committed to addressing harassment and sexual misconduct and understanding and removing barriers created to students' equality of opportunity 	<p>Mental Health Advisors Student Health & Wellbeing Engagement Advisor Student Welfare Officers Report & Support</p>	<p>Students know where and how to seek support. Students feel able to disclose information about their mental health. Students have academic and social support network. Students have increased wellbeing</p>	<p>IS2, IS3, IS4 & IS6</p>
<p>Sports and Leisure <i>Enhanced provision</i> Enhanced activity based at the City Sport facility and across campuses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Checks identifying risk behaviour and signposting to further sport/medical provision • Exercise referral scheme to support those with long term conditions to improve their mental and physical health • Be Active, Feel Well programme, an introductory, accessible sport and fitness gym scheme consisting of 1:1 and group-based training • Wellness Wednesday's campaign provides weekly information and activation relating to mental health • Mental Health first aid training for key staff members • Rolling current provision to all campuses 	<p>Diploma training for Exercise Referral</p>	<p>Positive impact on students' health and wellbeing through engagement with sports and fitness activities. Improved sense of belonging and access to a wider peer and friendship group.</p>	<p>IS3, IS4 and IS5</p>
<p>Research & Evaluation <i>New activity.</i> Further evaluation and research is needed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate student records data capture and reporting for improved insights • Analyse service access patterns and student demographics and identify barriers to disclosure • Assess student perception of support effectiveness • Gather empirical evidence on intervention outcomes 	<p>Student Health & Wellbeing Engagement Advisor Senior Evaluation Officer Evaluation Officer Data Analyst</p>	<p>The institution has available data analysis and evaluation to support current interventions. Enable development of tailored activities to support specific demographics/cohorts.</p>	<p>IS2, IS3, IS4 & IS6</p>

Total cost of activities: £750,000

Summary of evidence base and rationale

The worsening mental health of students in higher education is a public policy concern and the impact of measures to reduce transmission of COVID-19 has heightened awareness of this issue. Preventing poor mental health and supporting positive mental wellbeing needs to be based on an evidence informed understanding what factors influence the mental health of students. Students at our Tooting campus identified ‘not experiencing an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing’ as the third most pressing risk impacting student success. Across the sector, we have seen increasing numbers of students with a mental health condition, and we are aware that the significant pressures facing young people and other student groups is impacting many students, beyond those with mental health diagnoses. The activities within this intervention strategy will enable us to proactively and pre-emptively support students’ mental health, welfare and well-being.

Evaluation

Phase one of this plan will initiate work to capture student usage and engagement across our current service provision and understand who is accessing these services via demographic reporting, how and when. This will need to be campus-based initially as we work towards an integrated service. Individual activities outlined in this intervention will be evaluated using participant surveys. We will produce an initial report and recommendations for tailored intervention in 2026, followed by yearly reporting on student engagement and satisfaction. We will then supplement this with in-depth qualitative data through student focus groups and surveys to understand both what is working well across the service, and where our gaps in provision or student uptake are. Using this report compiled of Type 1 and 2 evidence, we seek to build a service provision collaboratively with our students and will produce a final set of recommendations at the end of this plan. Clinical outcomes data will inform part of our evidence-led approach to addressing inequalities in students’ outcomes and a holistic approach to student wellbeing.

Intervention strategy 6 Targeted Support for those facing multiple barriers

Objectives

We will provide targeted support for students who face ongoing, persistent societal, cultural, educational, and personal barriers throughout their educational journey to succeed at City St George’s, complete their course, achieve good grades, and progress on to graduate-level employment or further study. Including students who have experience of local authority care, young carers, estranged students, asylum seekers and refugees.

Targets

There is not a numerical target, the ongoing progress of this intervention will be measured through evaluation and internal monitoring of outcomes of City Cares students.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Perception of HE, lack of appropriate academic support and approach to teaching/assessment, mental health, ongoing impact of coronavirus, financial hardship and cost of learning pressures, progression from HE, limited opportunity to fully engage with higher education, sense of belonging

Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
<p>Targeted Financial Support <i>Ongoing activity</i> Students who are care-experienced, estranged, or young adult carers will receive targeted financial support for the duration of their course. The exact amount will be reviewed and published on the CSG website.</p>	<p>Investment to be agreed as part of the student financial support model development.</p>	<p>Financial support enables students to focus on studies and community building rather than taking on additional paid work.</p>	<p>IS3, IS4</p>
<p>Targeted transition event for students facing intersectional disadvantage (<i>formerly Start@city</i>) <i>Expanded activity</i> Pre-entry transition to university programme for students with multiple indicators of educational deprivation. Targeting BTEC pathway students with a reported disability, experience of local authority care or refugee or asylum status.</p>	<p>Widening participation team staff time for planning and delivery, targeting and evaluation. Resources to support the events, including catering.</p>	<p>Confidence to enter and succeed in Higher Education. Knowledge of student support services and relevance to their university experience. Ability to access personal development and progression opportunities in HE.</p>	<p>IS2 and IS3</p>
<p>CityCares (<i>new title pending</i>) <i>Expanded activity to cover all campuses</i> Targeted Support for Young people (under 25) who are care-experienced, estranged from their families, have caring responsibilities, refugees and asylum seekers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides designated support contact. • Offers regular contact check-ins throughout the year. • Safeguarding to prevent homelessness and manage risks. • Priority access to university accommodation. • Provides priority access to mental health services, counselling, and careers services. • Prioritised for Course Buddies, WP ambassadors' scheme, mentoring programmes, and selected global opportunities. • Offers extenuating circumstances support letters and advocacy. • Includes free yearly membership to CitySport. • Provides affordable and free social activities with peers. 	<p>City Cares team plus funding for engagement and social activities.</p>	<p>Financial pressure will not be an excessive cause of stress and pressure. Ability to focus on studies and engage in academic and social life in HE. Reduce academic disruptions and risk of safeguarding and financial emergencies such as homelessness, especially during transition or stressor points. Students with minimal debt levels. Reducing time spent earning money and covering travel costs to increase study and revision time. Increased mental health and wellbeing, students are less overwhelmed, feel supported, feel less anxious and worried.</p>	<p>IS4 and IS3</p>
<p>Careers Ahead <i>Enhanced activity</i> A targeted program providing tailored career support to students with care experience, young carers, estranged students, disabled students,</p>	<p>Staff time provided through freelance careers advisers, staffing training,</p>	<p>Students have a plan for post-graduation and feel confident in their next steps. Increased Progression to further study/Employment.</p>	

refugees, and sanctuary scholars. It offers a dedicated contact, longer appointments, personalised coaching, exclusive events, and comprehensive support.	events resources, marketing and administration time.	Increase in students from targeted groups in graduate-level employment. Students report career satisfaction.	
<p>Private housing guarantor support and subsidised rent in hall of residence for care leavers and estranged students</p> <p><i>Enhanced activity</i></p> <p>Over the duration of this plan, we will explore how to best support care leavers and estranged students to access accommodation, this will include the potential roll out of subsidised rooms in our Halls of residence to all campuses (currently only available at Clerkenwell) and extending the private housing guarantor support to all campuses (currently only Tooting).</p>	Funding for the programme and staff to administer	Increased security, a sense of belonging and ability to focus on studies.	

Total cost of activities: £600,000 annually

Summary of evidence base and rationale

Sector evidence highlights that some groups experience consistent and persistent educational disadvantage, financial hardship, challenging personal and family circumstance and structural barriers to achieving positive outcomes throughout their educational journey. (See Annex B)

Evaluation

We will employ mixed-methods research, including small-n studies, to evaluate interventions across the student lifecycle, aiming to generate both Type 1 and Type 2 OfS evidence on intervention effectiveness and student experience. As a holder of the NNECL Quality Mark, we are committed to using monitoring and evaluation to shape support for students facing ongoing barriers, assess impact, and guide future development. Transition activities will be evaluated using the NERUPI framework to measure student confidence, awareness of support, and access. For enrolled students, baseline data will be collected during City Cares registration, with continuous insight gathered through surveys, post-event feedback, one-to-one sessions, and case management. Quantitative data analysis on continuation, completion, attainment, and academic engagement will be conducted annually. Graduation outduction interviews will assess impacts on finances, academic achievement, wellbeing, retention, and overall satisfaction. NSS and Graduate Outcome Surveys will be reviewed for long-term impact. The private housing guarantor support/subsidised rent activity will be monitored through annual uptake and qualitative feedback, and we will explore additional accreditation through the Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS). Annual reviews and impact updates will be shared internally and on SharePoint. A comprehensive report will be published before year three, including detailed outcome analysis, with relevant findings shared through relevant networks, TASO's HEEL repository, conferences, and publications.

Whole provider approach

At City St George's, we are committed to placing students at the heart of what we do. Recognising the diverse backgrounds and needs of our student body, we provide an inclusive educational experience that supports positive outcomes and prepares students for successful careers. The merger of our legacy institutions presents a unique opportunity to build upon our collective strengths, ensuring equality of opportunity for every student.

Governance and Strategic Alignment

As part of our ongoing integration as City St George's, there will be a comprehensive review of our governance structures related to Access and Participation. This establishes a clear, effective, and integrated model that makes positive use of data at all levels to actively address inequalities. By unifying our strong practices into a cohesive governance framework, we ensure that responsibility for access and participation is a shared commitment across the institution.

Strategy

Our strategy places strong emphasis on understanding and empowering students, delivering positive educational experiences, and providing relevant skills for career success. Our approach encompasses all institutional levers, from governance, to robust regulations and meticulous evaluation of all initiatives and monitoring of performance. Our focus on consistent, high-quality education, a positive student experience, well-being, and mental health creates an inclusive and supportive environment where all students can thrive.

Education, Teaching and Quality

Genuine inclusive education permeates every facet of our institution, extending beyond targeted initiatives. The educational objectives of the strategy commit to elevating educational quality at City St George's, ensuring consistent standards across all programmes and across all cohorts, addressing systemic and structural barriers that impact our student outcomes through the delivery of innovative curriculum and assessment strategy, scaffolded by high-quality student support. A strong commitment to compliance, continuous improvement, and our comprehensive Teaching Quality Improvement Programme are central to this systemic change.

We are actively working to ensure authenticity and consistency in assessment and feedback and are enhancing policy and practice in this area. We are also committed to providing better support for resit students; having surveyed our Schools to establish a full picture of current provisions, our plan is to establish baseline standards. Furthermore, our recent Portfolio Review introduces a more standardised curriculum model. By removing extra modules or credits often not accessible to all from most programmes, we aim to ensure a manageable workload and a fairer playing field for all students, particularly those who face financial or time pressures outside of higher education.

Student Experience

We continue to embed a culture of continuous improvement, consolidating and building on progress made to improve our student satisfaction. This includes the development of a consistent offer across the institution that recognises the needs of students on different campuses and offers seamless engagement with services to support their success. Digital technologies are used to tailor experiences, using learner analytics data to proactively identify students in need of additional support to succeed. To ensure we are successfully developing the academic skills of our students, equipping them for academic achievement, we will undertake a review of academic support provision to ensure it is meeting the needs of our combined cohort and to enable the strategic targeting of support to reduce awarding gaps.

An integrated, university-wide wellbeing framework complements this approach to inclusive education and academic support, ensuring our students are able to access the right help at the right time. Going beyond the narrow view of students' support delivered by specialised teams, the new framework encompasses all that City St George's offers, empowering students to develop healthy habits that support their lifelong wellbeing, encouraging them to proactively make use of the range of academic and professional support on offer and take part in extracurricular opportunities. By cultivating a robust wellbeing environment and a

positive study-life-work balance, our students are able to build the skills and support network essential for their studies and life beyond City St. George's.

Digital Innovation

Our Digital Innovation and Transformation Office is leading a university-wide vision to establish a learner- and research-centric, digitally empowered, and inclusive institution, structured around five core principles: digital by design, a personalised and inclusive student experience, a future-ready curriculum, digitally empowered staff, and cutting-edge research and enterprise.

This work advances equity, supports positive student outcomes, and promotes inclusivity, ensuring learning and support are accessible from the outset to remove barriers and offer flexibility, including for our commuters, carers, and those with disabilities. There is a focus on systematic upskilling of staff and students, embedding accessibility standards in all modules and resources. This directly supports our targets to reduce awarding gaps by ensuring improved access to learning resources and academic support.

All students should have the digital skills needed to successfully complete their course, therefore digital skills education is embedded throughout our extended student induction, including a self-assessment tool with tailored support recommendations, a digital skills community, one-to-one tutorials, and access to LinkedIn Learning resources.

Careers and Employability

Central to our embedded approach to employability are the City St George's Graduate Attributes and our career activation program (CAP). The Graduate Attributes articulate the bespoke set of skills we develop in our students to support them to become graduates with fulfilling careers, who can develop as leaders in the world of work. These attributes are implemented across all taught courses. The Career Activation Programme means that all undergraduate students complete a core and credit bearing employability education module and gain credit bearing professional experience as part of their course, including the opportunity to do year-long placements (Excluding Law students).

Our inclusive careers education is embedded into the curriculum, so all students can engage and benefit. We encourage and actively support students to seek enrichment opportunities outside of the classroom through our City Volunteering and the SkillsHub opportunity databases, where students can search for opportunities that match their personal circumstances, skill sets, and development needs. Additionally, Unitemps, our on-campus employment agency, enables staff to hire students, helping them to find flexible on-campus jobs that fit around their studies.

The introduction of Study+ provides Level 5 students with the opportunity to choose from a bespoke set of interdisciplinary modules covering a broad range of topics such as financial wellness, data analytics, programming, modern languages, media, and management. Aimed at those new to the subjects, they enhance students' educational experience and employment prospects, equipping them for the complex challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We uphold The Equality Act 2010, actively working to end discrimination based on protected characteristics such as race, gender, disability, and sexual orientation. We review and improve our policies on an ongoing basis to ensure they are actively supportive and contributing to equality, diversity, and inclusion for students and staff. We are committed to measuring our progress and ambitiously strengthening our inclusive culture. One way we do this is through our Race Equality Charter Action Plan.

The Race Equality Charter provides a framework for identifying and addressing institutional and cultural barriers that hinder race equality. We acknowledge the diverse experiences and intersectionality of identities amongst our student body, and we recognise that racial inequalities are a systemic issue within higher education. As such, we are aiming for long-term institutional change. To reduce race inequality, we have developed a REC Action Plan, and we resubmit our plan in 2026 with the ambition of gaining a silver award, from our current bronze status. The plan aims to reduce gaps in access, continuation, completion, and attainment for university students in the following ways:

- Targeted Support and Partnerships: Working closely with the Students' Union to support campaigns related to race equity. A collaborative approach, working with students to review and design initiatives, creates a more inclusive, supportive, and student-focused environment, leading to improved student retention and success.
- Decolonising the Curriculum and Embedding Inclusive Education: A focus on embedding inclusive practices in curriculum design and implementation, including resources and training for staff. This ensures that the learning experience is culturally relevant and accessible to all students.
- Addressing the Ethnicity Awarding Gap: Specific actions to address differential attainment outcomes, particularly for Black students. This includes research into the factors driving the gap and implementing systemic school-level structures to address local issues.
- Enhanced Support and Sense of Belonging: Improved support for the sense of belonging of students of colour and staff at the university. This includes initiatives such as creating targeted careers events, increasing the amount of real-world assessment, fair recruitment practices and representation within professional and academic services, and EDI training for staff and students.

Student consultation

Embedded Student Engagement There is a strong working relationship between City St George's and the Students' Union. Training on our Access and Participation Plan is included in all sabbatical officer inductions. The Students' Union have been involved with the development of this plan at all stages through membership of our Access and Participation Committee, engagement in the student consultation and feedback through Education and Employability Board.

The Students' Union run a termly 'Student Check-In' calls programme, to gather feedback from students directly, and works with the University to act on this feedback. Feedback and insights from these Check-ins have been incorporated into our risk identification and intervention strategies. Student voice is central to the development and delivery of our access and participation activity. Students have University-wide and School-level opportunities to engage and feedback; through the online 'Get Heard' platform, Student Staff Liaison Committees, Student Experience Committees, local surveys and focus groups and online module evaluations. Part time student roles have been established in the Student Communications team to ensure that we are communicating with students in an appropriate, accessible and student friendly way.

A series of focus groups have been conducted with students from across the City St George's campuses to build on the extensive student consultations that were undertaken by each legacy institution for their 25/26 APPs. Student Voice Ambassadors, Widening Participation Ambassadors, Inclusive Education Equity Champions and student representatives were consulted and given the opportunity to participate in these focus groups. Students have provided feedback on the risks to equality of opportunity identified through the Assessment of Performance, the draft objectives, and the suggested interventions. Students have also been asked to feedback their views on the overall tone and language used.

The top risk to equality of opportunity identified by students during all consultations is cost pressures, and subsequently we have conducted both an impact and a process evaluation of our financial support to students. This will support a full review of our overall financial support package for students. Graduate outcomes have consistently been a priority for our students, with particular emphasis on perceived return of investment. There is also a risk of inequality of experience across the different campuses, with historically different policies, investment in financial support, and procedures being integrated, this has been reflected by the addition of a risk related to the university merger to our equality of opportunity risk register and specifically and the continued inclusion of objective related our mental health and wellbeing, a review combined policies to ensure there are no unintentional negative impact for our students.

Evaluation of the plan

City St George's is committed to building a unified and strategic approach to evaluating our Access and Participation work. Over the coming years, integrating and embedding our evaluation practice will be a key area of focus. This will ensure that efforts are coordinated, resources are used effectively, and learning is shared across the institution. As part of this approach, APP interventions will be evaluated using a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, including our performance against the OfS's B3 student outcomes:

continuation, completion, and progression. This will help us to assess the impact of our work on closing equality gaps and improving outcomes for all students.

A dedicated Student Success Evaluation Team leads on evaluation design using methodologies informed by TASO and NERUPI frameworks and grounded in delivery best practice. Staff have also been upskilled on educational evaluation through professional training provided by the Quality Assurance Agency in 2023-24 (Tooting Campus). The Student Success Evaluation Team has introduced training available to all staff on core Evaluation principles, such as fundamentals to developing a Theory of Change and Evaluation Framework, building a shared culture of evaluation and reflective practice.

Progress will be monitored against objectives and targets, including reviewing each of the associated evaluations and ensuring that resulting actions are implemented. Annual summary reports will be presented to Education and Employability board and the Senior Leadership Team. Outcomes and best practice will be shared via the evaluation SharePoint page to support internal delivery teams.

Self-Assessment and Evaluation Plan

The OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment will be undertaken for City St George's to establish a shared baseline for evaluation practice and identify areas for development. Based on the outcomes, we will implement targeted improvements to achieve an overall "Good" rating by the end of the plan. To support this, training on Theories of Change, evaluation indicators, and data will be available to all relevant staff, supported by a SharePoint site with TASO-based tools and templates. Theories of Change and evaluation plans will be developed for all activities within our intervention strategies to ensure clarity of purpose, robust measurement, and continual learning.

Standards of Evidence

Where possible, we will produce Type 2 (empirical enquiry) evidence, where outcomes for participants are compared to a relevant control group. For activities involving small cohorts of students, we will use TASO's recommended impact evaluation methods. For whole institution activities, such as our Assessment for Learning and Inclusive curriculum work, where it is not attributing change to one specific activity, we will focus on Type 1 'Narrative' evidence. At this stage, Type 3 (causal) evidence is more challenging to produce given the need for comparator groups. However, we will engage with relevant TASO trials where appropriate and continue to review sector research to inform our practice.

Implementation of Evaluation Plan

The privacy notice for enrolled students states that data may be used, 'to conduct research and to identify ways to enhance learning, teaching, assessment and the broader student experience'. Therefore, we have authorisation to use student data to evaluate the activities included in this plan. Collaborative evaluation opportunities will also be explored within the sector, as City St George's is a member of a number of professional bodies and interest groups who have expressed a desire to engage in collaborative evaluation and sharing of best practice.

Dissemination of Findings

Evaluation findings will be disseminated through a range of internal and external channels to maximise impact. Internally, reports will be shared via a dedicated SharePoint site and the Inclusive Education blog. Key insights will be highlighted through internal events such as the Inclusive Education Forum and Learning at City St George's Conference. Externally, we will publish both internal and independent evaluations on our institutional website and contribute to the OfS's sector-wide repository, the Higher Education Evidence Library (HEEL), once it is fully operational. We will continue to engage with TASO's ongoing development of the HEEL and related resources, including attending webinars. A prioritisation cycle will guide which activities are evaluated and published annually, and staff will be supported to share best practice through professional networks, such as FACE, NEON, AccessHE, the University of London APP network and other professional conferences.

Provision of information to students

- Tuition fee information is included alongside course information on our website for all

courses. Please note that fees may increase as permitted by the government, which will typically be in line with inflation.

- Our Student Hub provides up-to-date information on financial support available to students, including eligibility criteria, application details, deadlines, and limits. Information on how eligible students can apply for tuition fee loans, maintenance loans, and additional support if they have a disability or dependents will also be included.
- Targeted information will be included in our welcome communication email series for new and returning students and on our Welcome Microsite. Updated information will also be available on our Cost-of-Living site.
- Continuing students eligible for the bursary are contacted annually with information to confirm the package they will receive, in line with the amount advertised at the time of application.
- Our Access and Participation Plan and an accessible summary are published on our website in a dedicated section. There will also be a link to information on our outreach offer, contextual admissions, and published evaluations of our Access and Participation activity.
- All information will be reviewed by our Student Communication Assistants to ensure it is accessible, clear, and student friendly.

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

Methodology

To support the development of the new combined APP (2026/27-2030/31), a cross-campus task and finish group was convened, overseen by the Access and Participation Committee and the Education and Employability Board. City St George's undertook a comprehensive assessment of performance to understand the greatest risks to equality of opportunity for our students, this comprised of data analysis, consultation with students, and consultation with staff through workshops and individual feedback. Unless otherwise stated, our assessment of performance data discussed below all relate to full time, undergraduate, UK domiciled students.

Data Analysis

Annually, the OfS constructs and publishes a standard set of student outcome and experience data measures, which higher education providers can use to monitor access and participation at their institution. The measures included in this paper have been derived from the 'individualised student data files' provided by the OfS to Legacy City and Legacy SGUL, following the process set out by the OfS in 'Technical algorithms for student outcome and experience measures' (Summer 2024) and 'Rebuilding student outcome and experience measures used in OfS regulation' (2024 rebuild instructions).

Historical data for the two legacy institutions have been aggregated providing an overview of access and participation outcomes for City St George's. This information has been used to identify any gap in student outcomes for students most at risk of inequality, these will form the Indicators of Risk within our student demographic.

City St George's undertook comparisons of student outcomes across the lifecycle stages institutionally and within our six schools compared with the sector. The sector comparison highlighted City St George's position as a diverse institution and sought to understand how each Academic School contributes to this overall performance. This work will enable us to target intervention strategies to improve overall performance. We completed an outcomes analysis for each student lifecycle stage for each Academic School, comparing this with the City St George's average. The purpose of this is to identify students at greater risk of inequitable outcomes, to inform the development of targeted and nuanced action plans. Due to small population numbers across characteristics, we have not included our analysis across schools within this Annex.

Before starting the analysis, the OfS tundra metric was discounted. City St George's recruitment is focused on London and the Southeast where there are very few low participation areas. City St George's is not able to make a significant difference either locally or to the national picture in terms of access for this group. This will be kept under review. Similarly, the ABCS metric was discounted as we are not able to identify these students within our current population and are therefore unable to create targeted programmes or success measures for these students.

There are some student groups where numbers are too small to see in our data, however they experience significant sector evidenced risks to inequality of opportunity, such as young people who have been in the care system, and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller students (see Annex B). We will still capture these students within our plan, using evidence from our Student Consultation, supported by sector evidence and research from across education.

Reporting Years

Our Assessment of Performance reviewed the most recent year percentage available for the Student Lifecycle Stage and a 6-year average measure (aside from Progression to employment which included a 5-year measure due to data availability). Both measures are derived from the 'individualised student data files' provided to legacy City and legacy SGUL. The most recent year information helps us to understand if this is a persistent, narrowing or emerging gap. We have included a 6-year average measure to build a more accurate average picture over the course of the pandemic. Certain stages of the student lifecycle were

impacted by interim measures put in place during the pandemic, impacting outcomes significantly for the years 19/20 and 20/21.

Target and Comparator Group Risk Summary

Potential risks to equality were identified by examining gaps in performance between specific student groups compared to both their sector counterparts and a comparator group or institutional average within City St George's. These indicators of risk, highlighting areas where disparities in equality of opportunity may exist, are further detailed in Table 1.

Table A below shows our most at risk groups of students are those living in the most deprived areas (measured by IMD) and our students of colour, particularly our Black students. The area where we see the most inequality and inequities evident in our students' outcomes is attainment, with large awarding gaps across a number of areas.

The student group most at risk of inequality at City St George's are:

- Those living in the most deprived areas
- Black Students
- Those who were in receipt of Free School Meals whilst at School

Are biggest areas of risk within the student lifecycle are:

- Attainment, there are large awarding gaps for many students' groups
- Progression to employment, key groups of students do not progress into graduate level employment at the same rate as their peers

In summary by Lifecycle Stage:

Access to higher education

We have a lower percentage of students joining us with a declared disability in comparison to the Sector.

We have a lower number of mature students in comparison to the sector, however, due to the current nature of our programmes and student body, this is a priority area to expand. However, this may change if future provision diversifies.

Continuation from year 1 to year 2

Students from the most deprived areas are less likely to continue than those living in the least deprived areas and our Black students continue their studies at a lower rate than our White students.

Completion

Whilst we perform in line with, or better than the sector across most of our target groups, our Black students do not complete their courses at the same rate as their White peers, we have lower completion rates for our mature students and for those living in the most deprived areas, although this is a small gap compared to other groups.

Attainment of a first or 2:1

At City St George's those from the most deprived areas, those who identify their ethnicity as Other, Black students, Mixed students, and Asian students are awarded 1st and 2:1's at a lower rate than those living in the least deprived areas and White students, respectively.

The gap is greatest for our Black students and those living in areas of high deprivation.

Initial analysis point to the awarding of 1st being the primary driver of this gap, therefore, future investigation into the reasons and impact of this is required to ensure our provision targets this specific gap.

Progression to graduate level employment or further study

Those living in the most deprived areas are the least likely to progress onto graduate level employment, the same is true for our Black and Asian students.

The table below provide a summary of our assessment of performance risk areas and students at risk.

- Green - Below 3% gap is considered low to no risk
- Amber - 3-5% gap is considered low to medium risk, where targets have been set this is due to the persistent or growing nature of the gap
- Red - 5% or above is considered high risk

Table A - Indicators of Risk to Equality at City St George's combining City and St George's Data – using most recent year available for each lifecycle stage

Latest APP Assessment of Performance Summary.							
Combined City St George's data using the latest 22/23							
Groups at Risk	Comparator group	Comparator is the sector Access	Continuation	Attainment	Completion	Progression	Risk rating by characteristic
Age 21+	Young	17% below	1.2%	-4.3%	4.7%	-10.6%	2
Disability	Non-disabled	5% below	1.6%	2.2%	0.8%	1.8%	1
Free School Meals	No- FSM	12.2% above	0.5%	9.7%	4.0%	9.9% gap	3
IMD Q1	IMD Q5	2.4% below	2.6%	12.8%	5.5%	18.8% gap	4
IMD 1&2	IMD 4&5		4.3%	8.7%	3.7%	17.1% gap	1
Asian	White	32.3% above	0.1%	10.0%	0.0%	9% gap	2
Black	White	6.7% above	4.7%	15.1%	2.8%	8.3% Gap	3
Mixed	White	0.9% below	2.7%	9.3%	2.1%	0.3%	1
Other	White	44.2% below	0.5%	9.3%	-2.1%	4.2% gap	2
	Risk rating by lifecycle stage	2	2	6	3	5	

Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan

Intervention Strategy 1 – Access Outreach

Subject-Specific outreach is a vital part of our Outreach intervention strategy. Students facing economic, educational or intersectional disadvantage are substantially less likely to consider high-tariff degrees. Conversely, they are more likely to consider healthcare careers (UUK 2024). This leads to a significant national access gap for Medicine and related high-tariff Healthcare careers (Woolf et al 2025), which can be addressed through specific, targeted, outreach programmes.

Tutoring in a small group environment is proven to be highly effective when consistent, peer or near-peer, and monitored. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation has shown that small group tutoring is highly effective in improving outcomes for students with low prior attainment and in supporting efforts to close the “achievement gap” between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Average “value added” for tutoring programmes results in four months additional learner progress over the course of a year-long tutoring programme (EEF 2021).

Outreach Our long-standing existing programmes have shown substantial positive effects on student attitudinal factors affecting access to Higher Education under the NERUPI Framework. Additional evidence from the TASO evidence toolkit shows small, but significant, impact from generalised Campus Visits and higher education outreach. As a result, our Access offer centres on the effectiveness of concrete skill outcomes and exposure to student role models (Baines et al 2022). Further evidence from the UniConnect evidence bank shows these effects are higher for specialist, targeted and subject specific outreach, positively impacting students’ ability to access HE, make informed decisions, improving confidence, self-efficacy and motivation to study. Under this plan we will: contribute evidence to the TASO bank, explore the possibility of Level 3 evidence in at least one Secondary or Primary outreach programme, move towards 100% subject specific, specialist and highly targeted outreach

Careers IAG has a strong evidence base to support a positive improvement in outcomes for participating students, including the TASO evidence bank and substantial academic research on efficacy and the role of Careers IAG in the school-Higher Education- career pathway.

Educational Disadvantage Socio-economically deprived students in any school system have lower attainment outcomes throughout and are less likely to continue after they leave compulsory education. The longer disadvantage lasts, the greater the effect on attainment, post-school options and further life opportunities (Gorard, 2023).

Key Stage 3 and 4 attainment has a widely understood range of predicting factors which show clear relationships between disadvantage and lower attainment.

These indicators of disadvantage are strongly correlated with GCSE attainment, and additionally indicate lower progress through secondary school more generally. Other clear correlations between GCSE attainment and potential target criteria for WP tutoring include

- Black African Ethnicity
- Black Caribbean Ethnicity
- Parental Attitude to University
- Young person aims/aspirations to not continue education Post 16
- SEN status
- Attendance of non-selective school

Where multiple indicators of educational disadvantage are present, effects are compounded, with substantial and long-lasting lower achievement (London Assembly 2020; Early, 2019).

Early Intervention Key Stage 2 attainment has a significant relationship to levels achieved at the end of Key Stage 4. Minor improvements in Key Stage 2 scores have a direct and substantial impact on Key Stage 4 attainment. Patterns of educational disadvantage are set in early education and persist throughout. Experience of poverty and intersectional area/ethnicity indicators affect achievement from entry into Primary school. By age 11, differential achievement negatively affects subject choice, engagement with secondary school and subsequent pathway options. Early intervention to support students to achieve national average levels in Maths and English is key to supporting early secondary success, particularly among pupils where progress over Key Stage 3 is negatively affected by educational disadvantage (Cook, 2020).

London Context London schools face highly varying levels of educational disadvantage and enrol a far higher proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds than the national average. 1/5th of pupils in London were eligible for free school meals in 2019 (London Datastore 2019), and this proportion has grown over the pandemic. London schools achieve higher KS4 attainment than in other regions. This attainment “boost” (13.1 points average) is insufficient to off-set the impact of other elements of disadvantage (e.g., Eligible for FSM -12.2, non-selective school -20.1, no biological parents in household -35.5) (Lessof & Ross, 2018). Students in London eligible for free school meals achieve an average of 10 points lower in Attainment 8 scores than non-eligible students (London Datastore, 2019). In effect, the “London boost” contributes to higher achievement among students where one or none of the indicators of educational deprivation exist. Targeting students where intersectional disadvantage exists will ensure tutoring has a significant impact.

London Borough Context Local boroughs face complex patterns of educational disadvantage within otherwise largely good school provision. City’s focus areas of Islington (Hayes et al, 2022), Tower Hamlets (Borough Profile 2024), Camden (Camden Education Strategy, 2022) and Hackney (Hackney, 2022) all share similar patterns of intersectional educational disadvantage, with lower than average/expected attainment amongst:

- Students eligible for free school meals
- Certain ethnic groups (e.g. Islington - Black Caribbean, Turkish and Cypriot communities, White Working-Class Boys)
- Care experienced students, Care Leavers and Young Carers
- Students living in more deprived areas

As shown above, where students experience two or more indicators of educational disadvantage, school and London “boosts” provide insufficient mitigation.

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Intervention Strategy 2 Access, Disability

Transition Activity Transition to university can be particularly challenging for autistic students due to changes in environment, alteration to routines, and the pressures associated with greater independence (Davies & Bagnall, 2024; Nuske, Arillotta, Bellon, & Richdale, 2019). Lambe, et al (2019) research with autistic students revealed that these students welcome early tailored support during the transition period as this could help them navigate the complexities of university life. Others have shown that specifically designed early induction programmes can help students build confidence, reduce anxiety, and connect with peers and staff who understand their needs (Lei et al., 2020). Further to this, TASO (2023) also highlights the benefits of transition programmes in supporting students' move to university.

Inclusive Teaching/Assessment The Higher Education Commission's 'Arriving at Thriving' report identified access to teaching and learning resources as the second most significant barrier faced by disabled students in higher education (Policy Connect, 2020). Research into students' experiences has demonstrated that core parts of the academic journey, such as accessing information in lectures, participating in learning activities, and completing assessments, are more difficult for disabled students compared to their non-disabled peers (Witham & Brewer, 2024; Brewer, Urwin & Witham, 2023; Nieminen, 2023). For this reason, we will be working with our academic schools to make teaching, assessment, and policies more inclusive. One way of implementing this will be by having liaisons within departments who advocate for and help establish inclusive methods. This mirrors a piece of sector good practice highlighted within the HEC's report, where Faculty Disability Liaisons worked with academic departments to offer support and guidance on inclusive policies and design (Policy Connect, 2020).

Staff Training Research has consistently shown that there is a link between staff knowledge and their confidence in supporting students with complex needs and disabilities in higher education (Lister, Pearson, Collins & Davies, 2021). For example, Carballo, Morgado, and Cortés-Vega's (2019) evaluation of a disability training programme for academic staff reveals a positive impact on staff attitudes and their approach to inclusive educational practices. Parallel to this, Kendall's (2016) exploration of disabled students' experiences reveals the negative implications that lack of staff awareness and knowledge about disabilities can have on students, highlighting the importance of training. Further to this, developing staff awareness and expertise through training is considered a crucial foundation for creating an inclusive environment for disabled students (Shaw, 2021).

Inclusive Campus The Higher Education Commission's report revealed that 26% of disabled students (N = 513) "always" or "often" feel excluded from social activities due to a lack of disability awareness (Policy Connect, 2020). To address this issue, we plan to implement a series of initiatives, including awareness days, celebration weeks/months, and the appointment of

Financial Support - Through our student consultation for our new Access and Participation Plan, students identified the cost-of-living crisis as the number one risk to equality of opportunity whilst at university. Sector research suggests that some of the groups covered by our Access and Participation Plan have been disproportionately affected by the cost-of-living crisis, while the efficacy of financial support in enabling students from disadvantaged groups to continue their programmes and attain a degree has been identified by both TASO and the OfS. Our internal evaluation of financial support demonstrated statistically significant positive impact on Attainment and Completion for students who received this support.

Transition for Academic Success Programme – see above IS 2

Inclusive Assessment. Assessment for Learning project will benefit all students but will support the needs of our disadvantaged or minoritised students, with research showing that improving students’ understanding of assessment processes is an effective tool in addressing awarding gaps. The QAA (2023) inclusive Higher Education Framework highlights the importance of structures and systems in developing a university that considers the needs of students through all policy and regulations, embedding a broad definition of inclusion to reduce inequalities.

Peer and Targeted Support Academic research supports the value of peer mentoring schemes in supporting new students’ socialisation and adaptation to university study. Targeted support approaches, like City St George’s Progression Pathways programme, reflect a wider sector shift aimed at improving outcomes for underrepresented groups, including as UK Black and mixed students, in response to persistent degree awarding gaps and regulatory expectations (McDuff, 2018; OfS, 2018; Stevenson, 2019).

Attendance and Engagement. We have developed a comprehensive theory of change which supports our attendance interventions. Through internal evaluation of our Attendance monitoring process, interviews with students have shown that 69% of students completely understood why they were being contacted regarding their attendance, with 89% reporting positive feelings and experiences with the contact being made. 62% of students also confirmed the contact changed the way they thought about their engagement. This is supported by a national study that suggests that students are in favour of learner analytics for the purpose of student support (Solution Path & WonkHE, 2023). There is causal evidence to show that early identification of student barriers using learner analytics can improve outcomes (TASO, 2014).

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Intervention Strategy 4 Progression from Higher Education

Global Opportunities Additional funding to supplement the Turing Scheme would therefore ensure that the opportunities, and the benefits to graduate outcomes that they bring, are far more accessible to students from underrepresented groups.

Professional Mentoring Youth Employment UK (2022) conducted a census report of young people aged 11-30, revealing that only 36% of those currently in education have access to work experience. Professional mentoring supports in addressing this issue at a university level by providing exposure to various career paths and industry professionals. Career-focused mentoring has been shown to enhance self-efficacy, and decision-making maturity, leading to more strategic and confident career planning (Nabi et al, 2024). It also helps develop essential soft skills, such as networking (Nabi et al, 2024).

Additionally, the one-on-one nature of mentoring fosters a clearer sense of identity and offers numerous psychological benefits (Lyden, 2020). TASO (2014) recognises these psychological and emotional support benefits, noting that mentoring provides role models to students and fostering a sense of belonging in Higher Education.

Volunteering Student volunteering can be an important contributor to student engagement, benefiting both students and wider communities. By undertaking voluntary work, either within the university or in the local area, students contribute to their environments while gaining invaluable personal and professional development (Resch, Knapp & Schrittmesser, 2021). Research within English Higher Education consistently highlights the role of volunteering in enhancing employability. It challenges students to step outside of their comfort zones, fostering personal growth, developing interpersonal skills, and expanding their networks (Holdsworth, 2010). To maximise the benefits of volunteering, students should be encouraged to participate freely and knowledgeably. This approach ensures that students perceive volunteering as a rewarding activity

while maintaining their agency and capacity to make a meaningful difference (Holdsworth & Brewis, 2013).

GradVantage Gaining work experience and exposure to graduate-level jobs is crucial for students aiming to secure such positions after university. Many graduate recruitment processes place a strong emphasis on skills-based assessments, which significantly favour candidates who can draw on relevant work experiences to demonstrate the required skills (Humburg & van der Velden, 2015). According to High Fliers (2023), a quarter of graduates were recruited through employers' work experience programmes, with more than half having studied at Oxford, Cambridge, or other Russell Group universities.

The GradVantage programme offers internships that are exclusively available to first-degree students and students from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, providing them with an excellent opportunity to gain valuable experience. Research by the UK's Department for Education into graduate career planning highlighted that graduate outcomes are notably better for students who undertake paid work while at university or within six months after graduation, as well as for those who have a clear career plan upon leaving university (Department for Education, 2017). The GradVantage programme supports both aspects through one-to-one career support and internship opportunities.

SG annex specific points on healthcare professions

Healthcare Professions Progression outcomes for students on our healthcare-focused programmes—each with clear routes into medicine or allied health professions—are consistently strong, with most securing highly skilled employment or further study. Differences between ethnic groups are small and often erratic. These outcomes are shaped in part by structural inequalities in the labour market, which disproportionately affect our students from minoritised ethnic groups and IMD 1 & 2 backgrounds. In response, we embed employability into the curriculum and offer targeted support to build students' confidence, resilience, and self-efficacy. This includes resilience resources, summer speaker events, and one-to-one careers coaching and mentoring. Our approach reflects AdvanceHE guidance and academic literature on progression and labour market inequality.

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Intervention Strategy 5 Mental Health and Wellbeing

There has been a steep increase in disclosure of mental health conditions at the point of application to HE over the last ten years (UCAS, 2021; Barkham, 2019). The proportion of HE students stating they had a mental health issue stood at 4.2% in 2020, but wider research suggests that the true rate of mental health issues in the student population is higher (Hubble & Bolton, 2021).

Clinical Support There is strong causal evidence that psychological interventions are linked to improved mental health outcomes for students. Interventions have been found to have a positive impact on depression, anxiety, eating disorders and emotional distress.

Mental Health Awareness raising and service promotion Internal research supporting our university mental health charter submission has highlighted the need facilitate a culture where individuals feel connected, supported and safe to disclose.

Throughout the year, campaigns and activities encourage healthy behaviours and disclosure to support services for those experiencing poor mental health. This includes opportunities for students to engage with their peers, campus, and local community through a diverse range of activities delivered in collaboration with the Students' Union, such as volunteering, faith communities and a host of sports and societies. It also includes timely communications, such as the Study Well campaign during exams. There is medium empirical evidence that settings-based

interventions such as policies, inclusive practice and teaching lead to improved mental health outcomes. Studies by OfS have shown that students prefer to engage flexibly, the UniWellbeing and Togetherall Apps provide clear signposting for students and access to resources to support good mental health as well as an online peer support network and crisis management support. There is emerging sector evidence that students who receive support from peers, rather than professionals is an effective intervention.

Sports and Leisure There is strong evidence that taking part in physical activity can have a positive impact on mental wellbeing. Being physically active can improve mood and sleep, decrease the chance of depression and anxiety and increased self-esteem. Sport provides peer networks within a university which increases shared identity and sense of belonging.

Student Welfare Officer support in Schools Internal reporting has found that students feel a greater connection to their programme and are most likely to reach out to their academic School for help and support initially. Welfare officers can provide timely wellbeing advice and triage students appropriately to internal and external support service. Alignment of Reasonable Adjustments processes across schools helps to ensure academics are aware of student's individual needs and that adjustments can be put in place quickly.

Report and Support Tool According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2019), harassment can have a profound impact on an individual's mental health, educational outcomes, and career. Further to this, the EHRC found through their research that there is a low likelihood of members of university communities coming forward to report harassment and recommends putting in place mechanisms to enable reporting.

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Intervention Strategy 6 Evidence City Cares

Some students experience consistent and persistent educational disadvantage, financial hardship, challenging personal and family circumstances and structural barriers to achieving positive outcomes throughout their educational journey. These include:

- Young people who have experienced local authority care.
- Young people estranged from their families
- Young adult carers
- Refugees and asylum seekers

The OfS has identified student groups who share these characteristics as underrepresented in higher education, with risks to equality of opportunity and support needs that can be addressed in access and participation plans. The best available sector-level evidence on these risks has been collected in the 1) OfS evidence base used to inform inclusion of student characteristics on the EORR, the 2) Resources pages of the OfS's Topic Briefings on effective practice, and 3) TASO's March 2023 Rapid Review supporting the development of the EORR Report. (OfS, 2023; TASO,

2023). These bodies of evidence highlight persistent challenges, including low levels of access, continuation, attainment, and progression rates, along with disparities in degree outcomes, for care-experienced and estranged students. Similar, though less conclusive, patterns are observed among the other underrepresented groups supported by this intervention

An overarching theme across this evidence is the intersectional and complex needs of these groups of learners and the nuanced, context-specific approaches that are required to support them (TASO, 2021). Common risks to equality of opportunity across these student groups are summarised below.

Young People in Local Authority Care These young people have significantly poorer educational and life outcomes than the general population and can encounter numerous barriers to higher education. They often face lower academic performance and continuation rates compared to their peers. Only 14% of these individuals access higher education, compared to 47% of all other pupils (Civitas, 2023). Key challenges include poorer school attainment, financial difficulties, difficulty securing accommodations, and insufficient information about higher education options. The lack of guidance and a stable support system can exacerbate these challenges, leading to reduced academic success and positive career outcomes.

Young People Estranged from Their Families These students face considerable challenges in higher education due to the absence of family support, which can occur before or during their studies. A 2015 survey found that 14% of estranged students had suspended or deferred their studies, and 27% had considered doing so, with financial stress as the main reason. Additionally, 33% had experienced issues of homelessness before starting their studies (Bland, 2015). The lack of designated support and funding in HE often forces estranged students to rely on more provisional measures such as discretionary hardship funding (Unite Foundation, 2020). This can leave them vulnerable to financial instability, contributing to increased stress, mental health issues, academic disruptions, and a higher risk of housing insecurity.

Young Adult Carers juggle demanding caregiving responsibilities alongside their academic commitments. Key challenges can include financial strain, health issues, and difficulties balancing their dual roles. Carers often report high levels of stress and mental health problems, making it more difficult to manage both their studies and caregiving duties. The lack of recognition and tailored support for their unique situation can exacerbate these difficulties. Research and advocacy by a social epidemiologist at City St George's, Dr Becca Lacey, has contributed to the addition of student carers into the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register in 2024, and we will use this expertise within our organisation to work towards the Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS) to enhance our support for students carers.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers face significant obstacles in accessing higher education. Key barriers include uncertainty over immigration status, challenges with language, and the recognition of previous qualifications. Financial constraints are also a major concern, as many are ineligible for student loans or scholarships, making it difficult to cover tuition and living costs. The limited availability of tailored support and resources further complicates their entry and success in higher education.

Legacy City responded to these sector-level challenges by launching City Cares in 2018, a multi-intervention outreach programme designed to support care leavers and care-experienced students, estranged students, young adult carers, and students who are refugees or asylum seekers in receipt of the Article 26 Sanctuary Scholarship. As shown below, total City Cares student numbers have steadily increased year to year. In its first year (2018/19), the programme supported only care-experienced students but expanded the following year to include all currently eligible groups.

Academic Year Number of Students Supported

- 2018/19 37 students
- 2019/20 80 students
- 2020/21 114 students
- 2021/22 125 students
- 2023/2024 156 students

Student Finance England data shows a similar increase in numbers for estranged and care-experienced students accessing education at City. A breakdown of 2023/24 figures show City Cares supported 41 care-experienced students, 47 young adult estranged students, 58 young adult carer students, and 10 Sanctuary Scholars (4 current and 6 previous recipients). Initial data from the Undergraduate Admissions team post-Clearing for 2024/25 indicates that these numbers are expected to continue rise.

City St George's approach to support aligns with the OfS's effective practices for access and participation for these discrete student groups, as supported by academic research and third-sector grey literature cited below. This is reflected in a multi-intervention approach with targeted intervention activities spanning the entire student lifecycle, offering designated financial support packages, pastoral care and case management from designated members of staff, on-course academic assistance, and peer engagement activities.

Whilst these common components of support have been widely recognised as beneficial to HE students, there remains limited casual evidence directly linking specific activities to improved outcomes, as most studies focus on broader student experiences rather than the impact evaluation of individual interventions (TASO, 2021). City Cares internal evaluations have similarly found that students feel well-supported, particularly valuing assistance with finances, 1-1 pastoral support, process navigation, accommodation, and peer community engagement. Yet this positive feedback, along with the observed outcomes such as a high rate of continuation, can only be attributed to the combination of interventions offered by City Cares, as it is difficult to causally link these outcomes to any single activity. Planned evaluation activities for this intervention, along with a broader emphasis on evaluation across the sector, should help generate stronger evidence for supporting these student groups.

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Annex C: Targets, investment and fees

To be added by the OfS