

Access, Retention and Success for BME Learners

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Overview

- National Education Opportunities Network
- Rationale behind survey
- Interim results
- Conclusions

National Education Opportunities Network

- Founded 2012
- Network for education professionals concerned with widening access
- 60 HEIs are members plus 25 other organisations
- NEON Summer Symposium – 2017, 220 delegates at Leeds Beckett University.
- NEON Access Academy – 2017 – Nearly 1000 attended NEON training events.
- NEON Summits
- Research – “Does Cost Matter?”, “About a Boy”, “Against All Odds”

Rationale

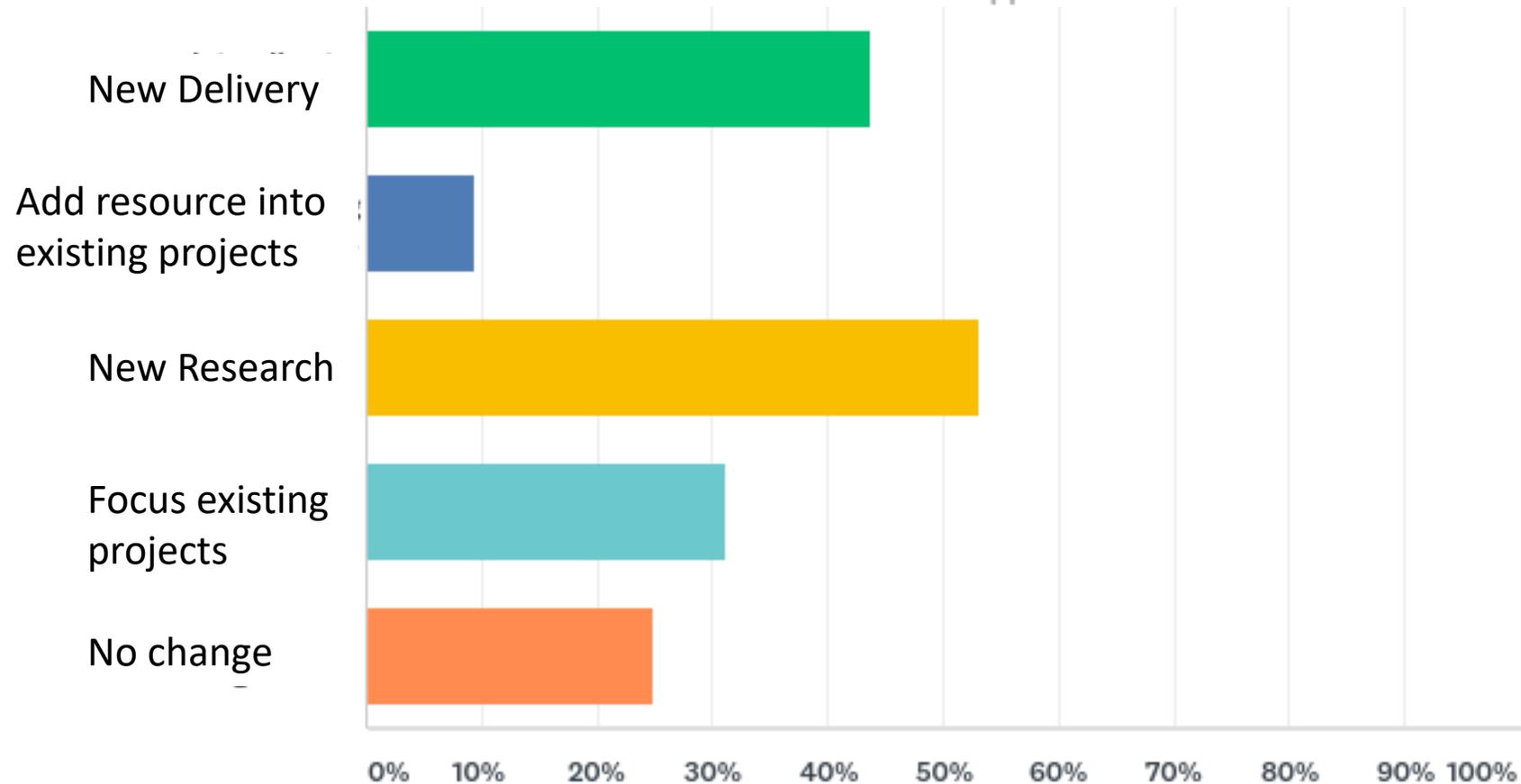
- Analysis of entry rates by UCAS shows significant differences in higher education entry rates between ethnic groups. There are also significant differences between BME and white students when it comes to both retention and student success.
- We were interested to find out what the sector is doing with BME learners throughout the student lifecycle. We are keen to identify examples of best practice that can form part of a report and be shared with the wider sector to help improve existing practice.

Results

- 32 respondents to the survey
- Variety of roles responding
- Distributed through NEON membership
- Broadened to non-members via BME Jiscmail and UCU.
- Heads of Widening Access, Equality and Diversity practitioners, Heads (or Assistant Heads) of Recruitment, Principal or Senior Lecturers.

Q6 What is your institution(organisation) doing to increase participation of BME learners?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0

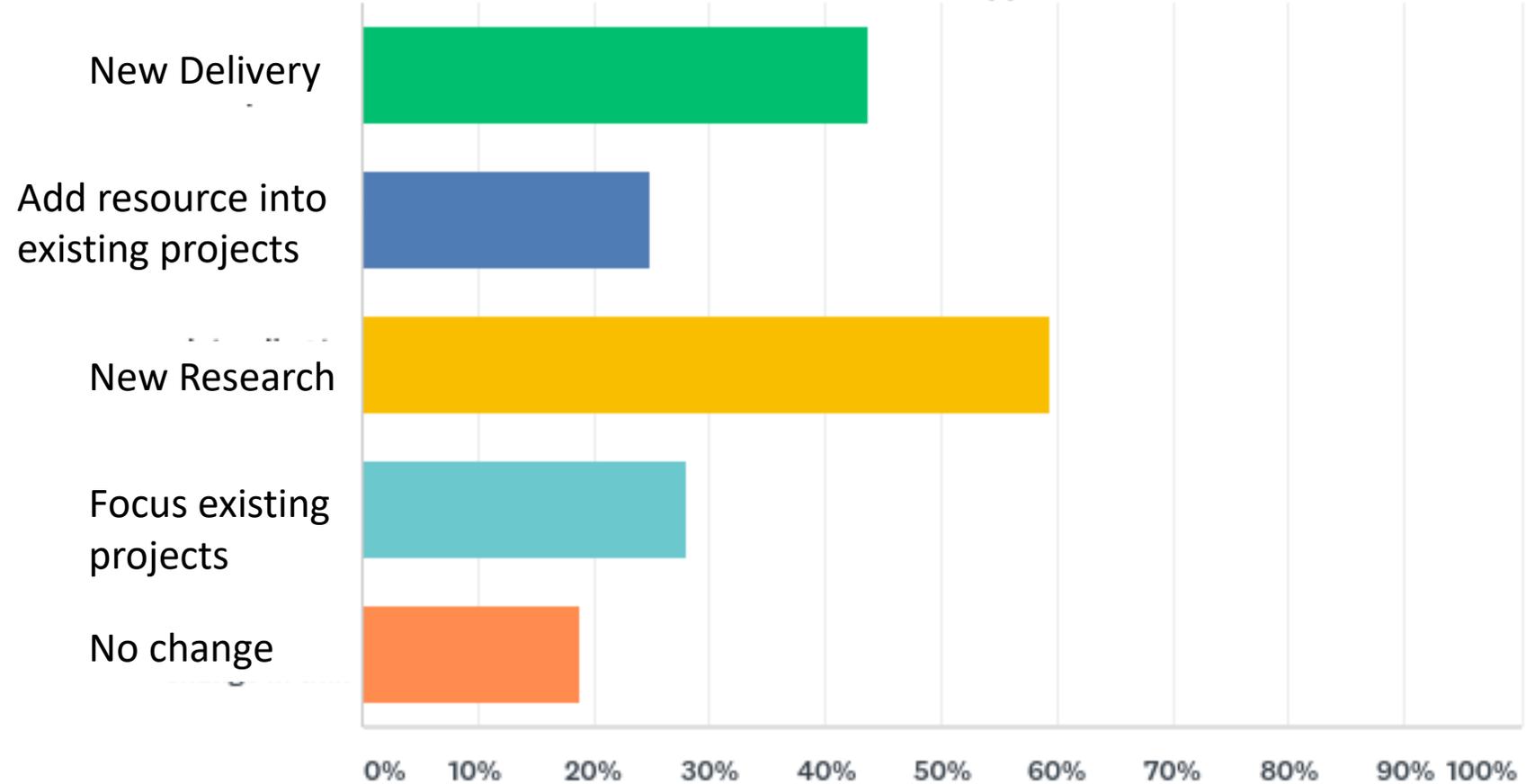


Increasing participation

- Understanding the needs of the particular groups - research
- Specific targets around recruitment of BME
- Work with parents
- Targeted interventions (annual conference for black females)
- Working with schools/colleges with high numbers of BME learners (both an inclusive approach and more targeted work)
- Video case studies to be used in schools
- Equality impact assessments on recruitment process

Q8 What is your institution(organisation) doing to improve the retention of BME learners?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0

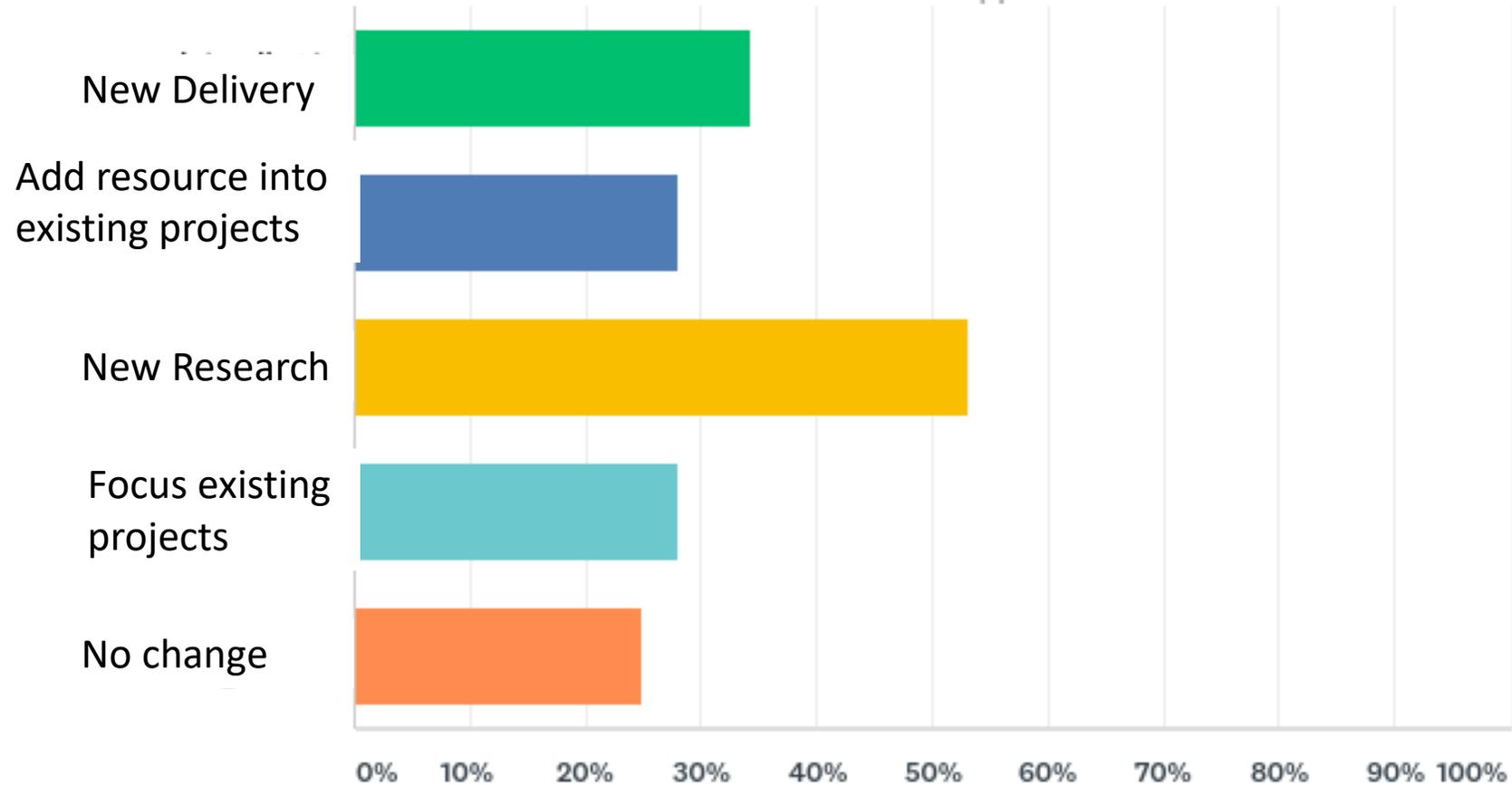


Retention

- Summative assessment
- Research
- Access agreement targets
- Mentoring
- Targeted interventions
- Increasing student belonging through events that celebrate BME achievement
- Tension with targeting activities? - Treat all students the same

Q10 What is your institution(organisation) doing to improve the outcomes of BME learners?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0

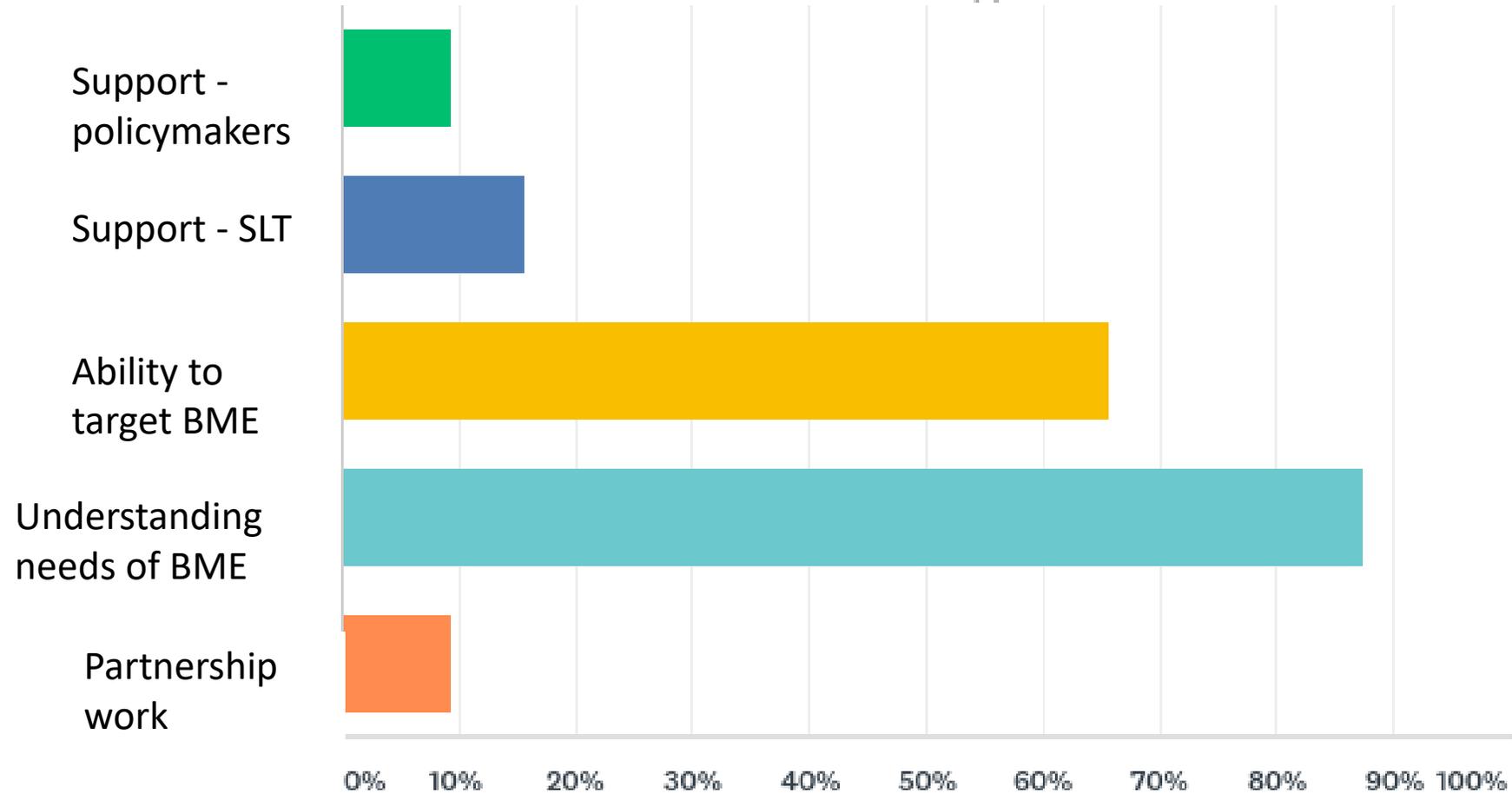


Outcomes

- Targeting internships, study abroad, PGCE recruitment at BME communities
- Team responsible for retention, progression and success of WP learners.
- Research into poorer outcomes
- Targets to reduce attainment gap
- Staff training

Q12 What do you see as the major challenges in working with this group?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



Major challenges

- Understanding the diversity of the BME group
- It's not all about access
- Targeting – a sensitive issue
- Doing things without consulting the people who we are aiming to help
- BME less likely to access support sessions – how to we encourage greater participation?

Impact/evidence

The University's Mosque Project which provides English and Maths tuition to local students every week in the mosque. Since beginning in 2012, the project has engaged 150 students. 80% of students were from areas of low participation (Polar 1 and 2), 60% of students came from families with no parental experience of Higher Education and 70% of students attended at least 90% of the sessions. More than 50% improved their Maths or English grade. The Pioneers Conference targeted local Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls in 10 with the aim of increasing awareness of Higher Education and raising aspirations. Participants completed a pre-event and post-event evaluation form. This highlighted that there was a 45% increase in students' understanding of what Higher Education and is, and a 24% increase in students intending to apply to university in the future.

Impact/evidence

“According to value added scores, over the last two years the BME attainment gap has reduce significantly on our Biomedical Sciences course. Across this period we have reviewed and revised the curriculum to make it more inclusive and we have put effort into rewriting exam questions so that they are easier to understand.”

“Our institutional KPI is to raise the BME Value Added score to 1.0 by the end of the 2017/18 academic year and we have made strong progress against this (current score is 0.97).”

Conclusions

- Inclusive vs targeted approach?
- Lots of research at all stages of the student lifecycle to understand BME needs
- If BME communities have specific needs will we not need to develop specific targeted interventions?
- Needs will differ from HEI to HEI according to their particular student population
- Eagerness from respondents to see a possible NEON working group.