

# Addressing barriers to student success



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**July 2017, London**

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## Student characteristics

This section analyses entrant numbers, non-continuation rates, and degree and employment outcomes for different types of undergraduate student.

[Ethnicity](#)[Sex](#)[Age](#)[Disability](#)[Social background](#)

### Ethnicity

The number of UK-domiciled black and minority ethnic (BME) students starting full-time first degrees increased by 9.1 per cent in 2015-16 compared with the previous year. This makes an increase of 34 per cent since 2010-11; by contrast the number of white students increased by 5.5 per cent over the same period.

#### Key facts

**29% of all entrants** were BME students

**Chinese students** have the lowest rates of non-continuation

**BME students** are less likely to gain a first or 2:1

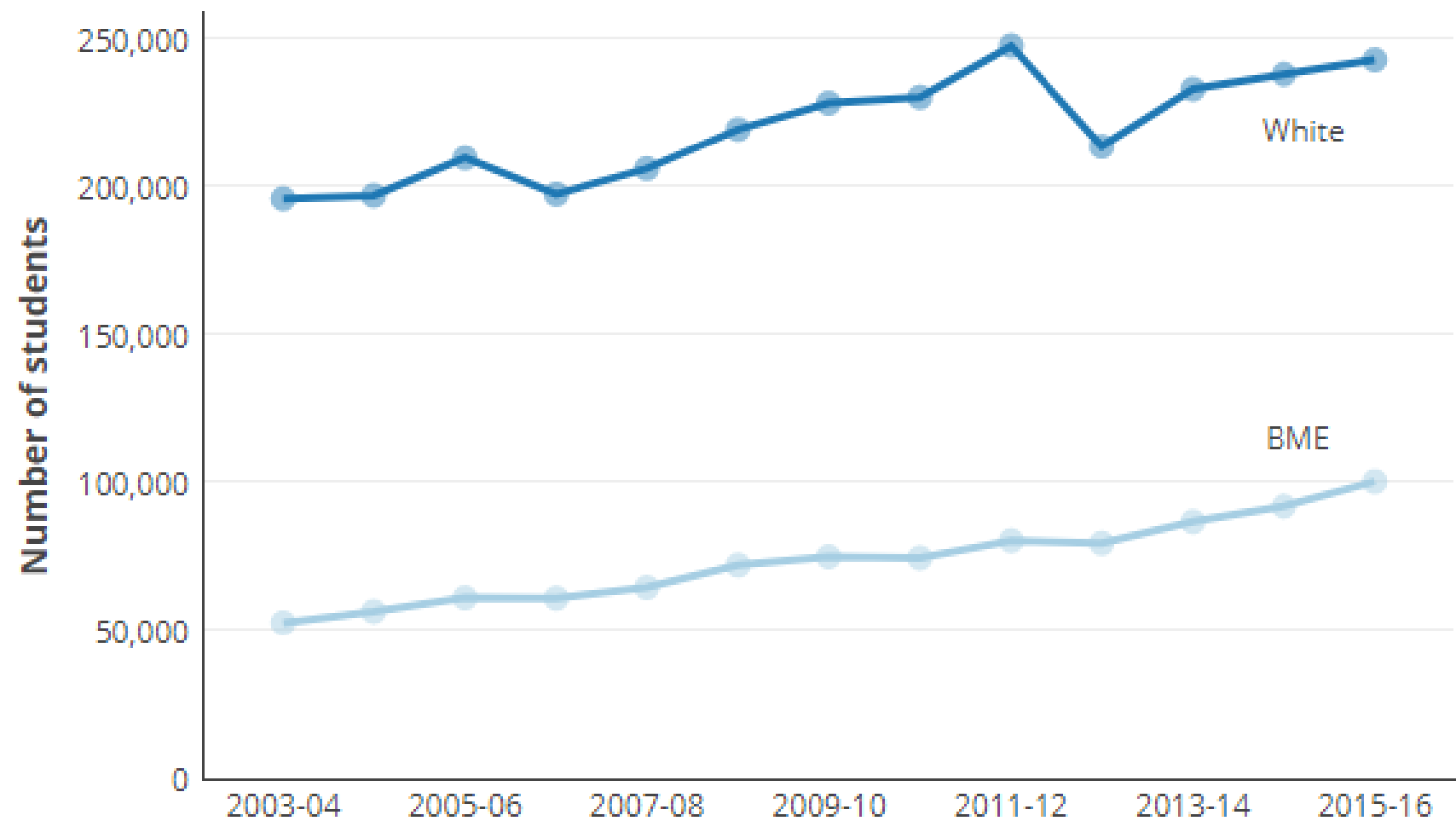
See also

[Staff employed at HEFCE-funded HEIs](#)[The geography of higher education](#)

Archive

[See the archive of data for higher education in England](#)

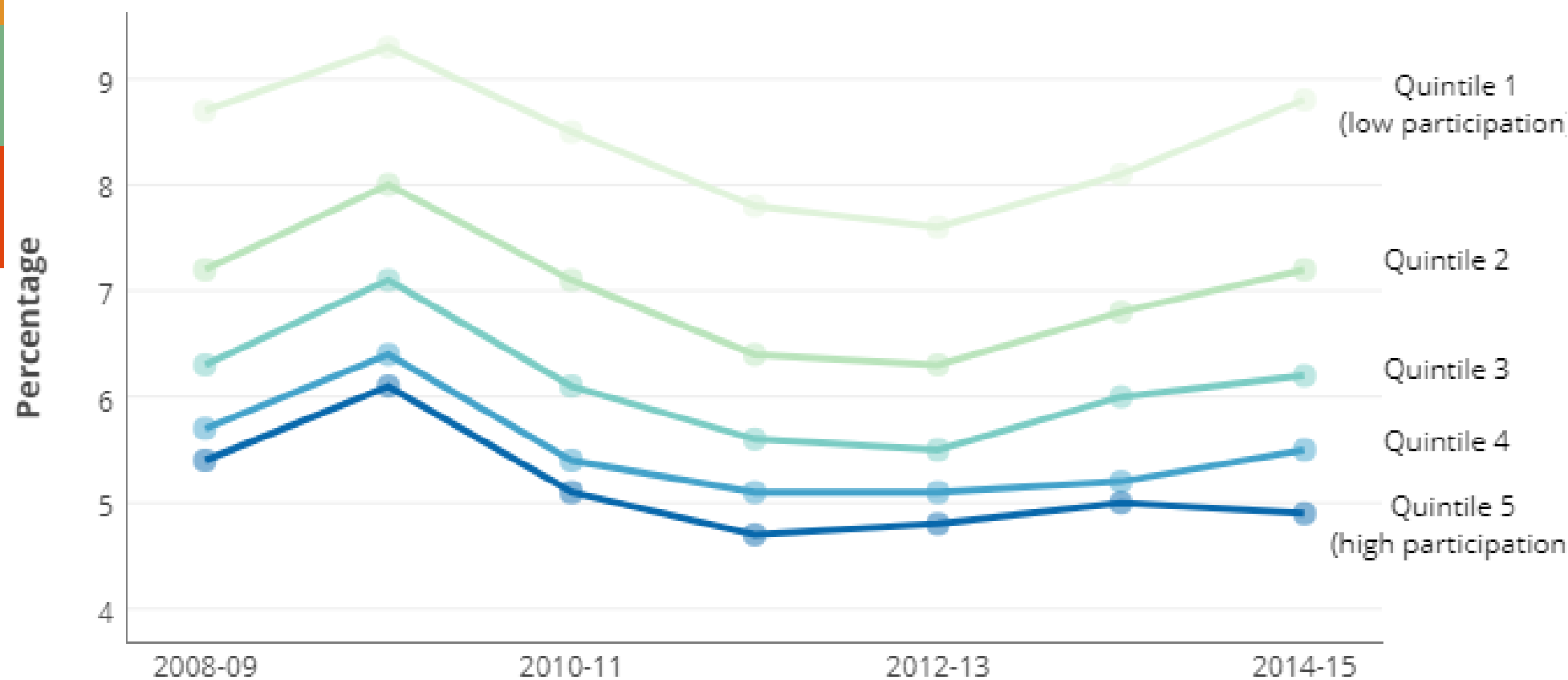
## Full-time first degree entrants by ethnicity



Source: HESA Student Record.

Note: UK-domiciled students  
at HEPCE-funded HEIs only. Students  
of unknown ethnicity not shown.

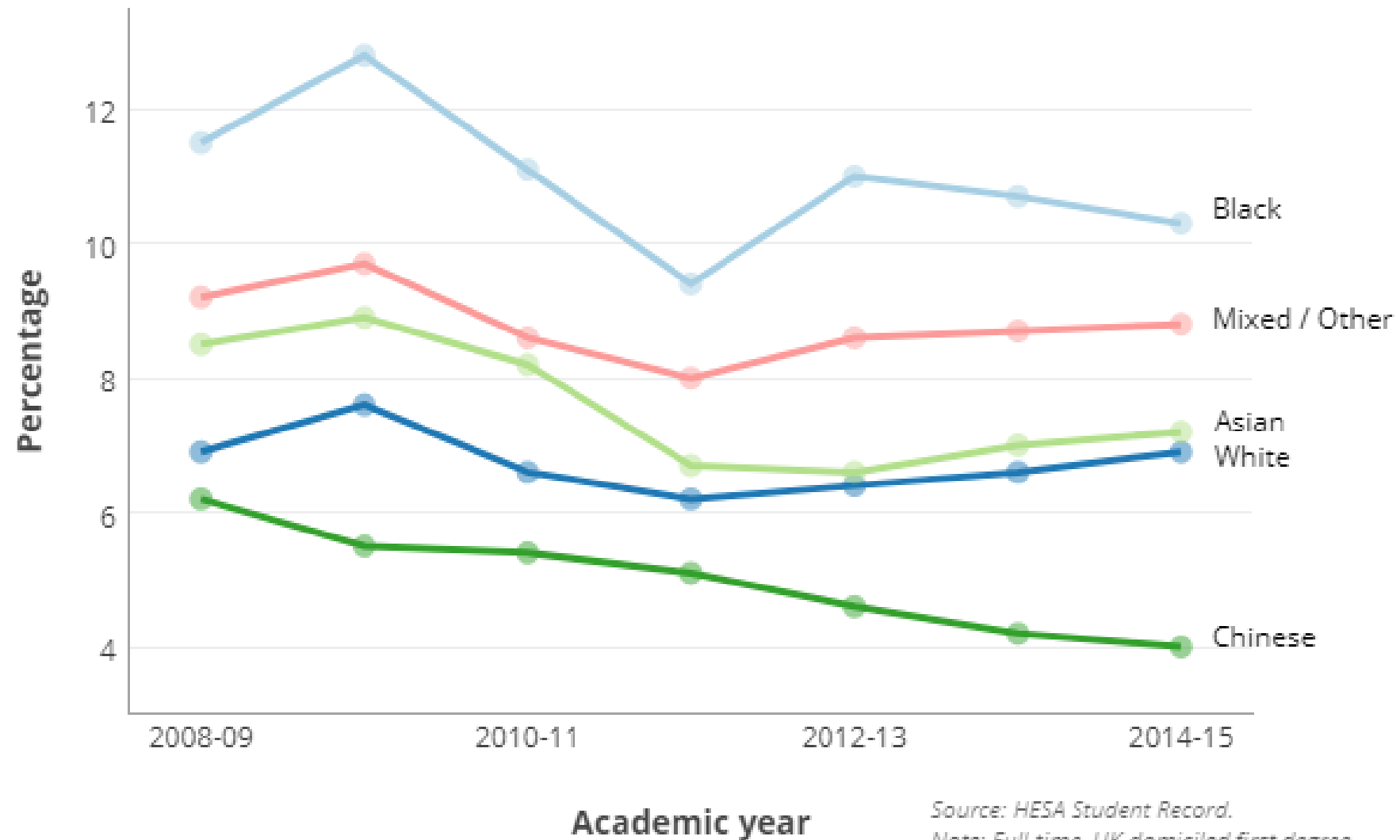
## Non-continuation rates by POLAR quintile



Source: HESA Student Record.

Note: Full-time UK-domiciled first degree entrants at HEFCE-funded HEIs only.

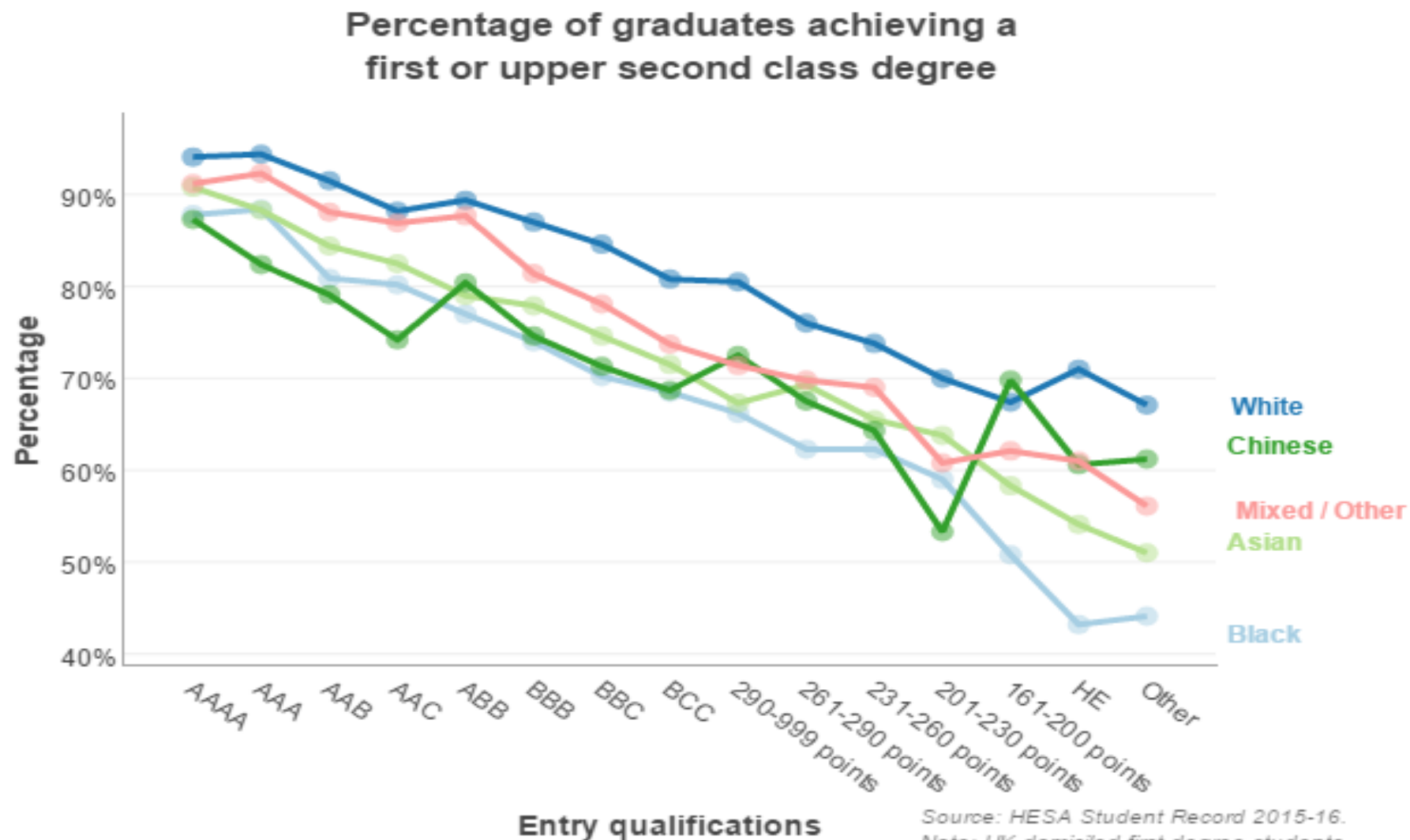
## Non-continuation rates by ethnicity



Source: HESA Student Record.

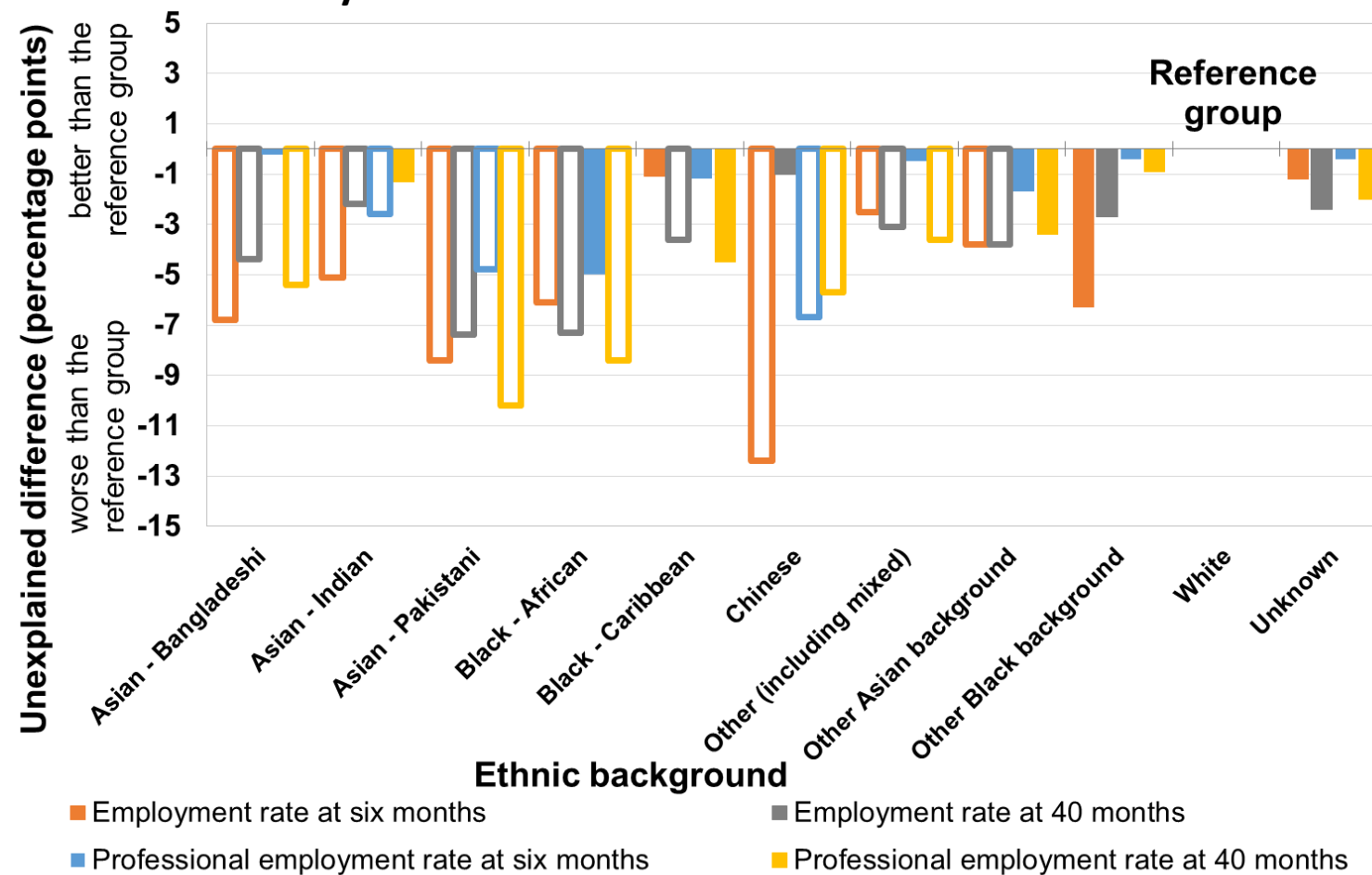
Note: Full-time, UK-domiciled first degree students at HEFCE-funded HEIs only.

# Degree outcomes by ethnicity



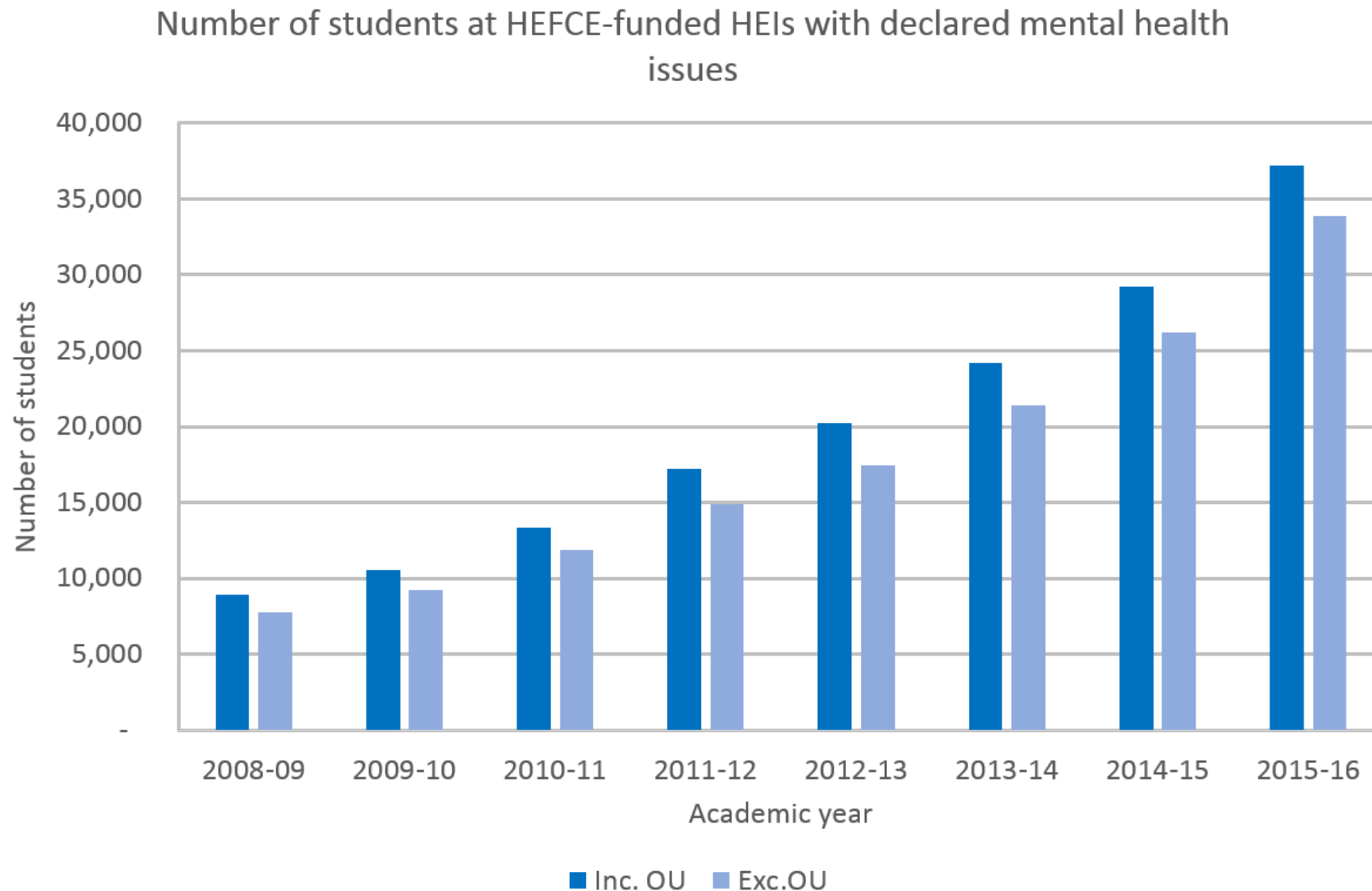
# Employment outcomes by ethnic group

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



\* Where the bar is filled, this indicates that the difference from the reference group is not statistically significant.

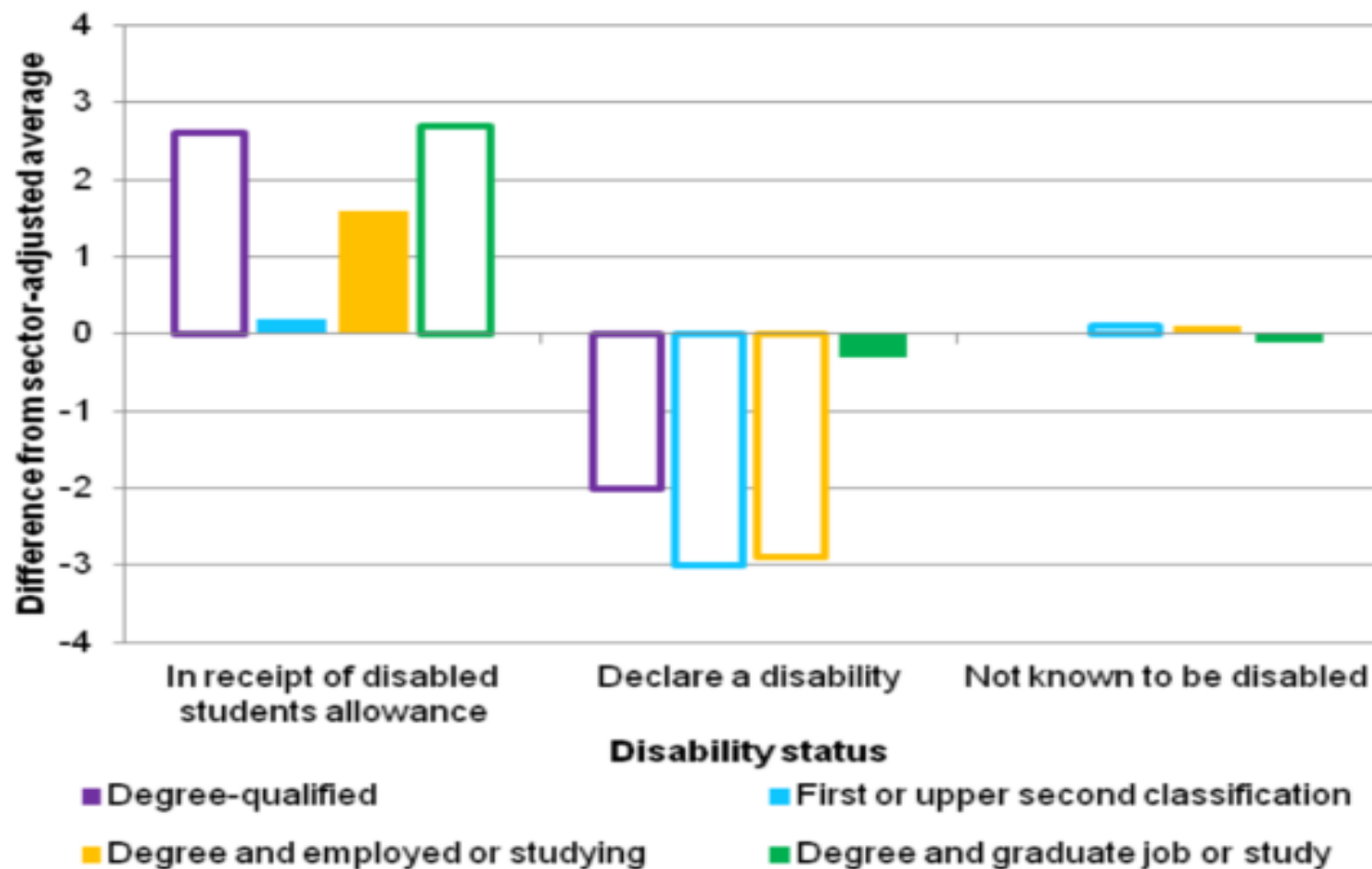
# Number of students with mental health issues





# HE outcomes by disability status

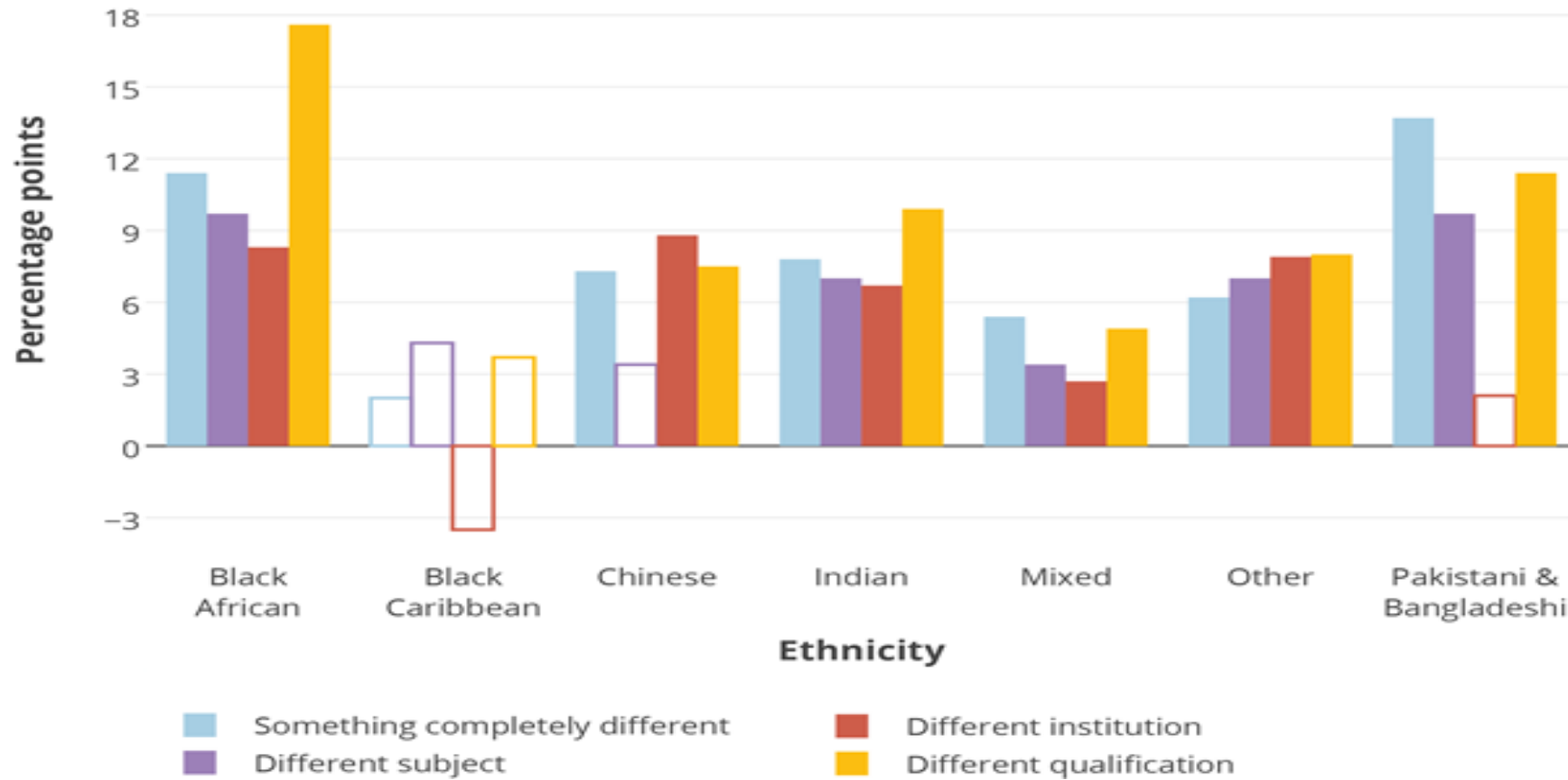
Percentage point difference of the outcome from the sector-adjusted average for the four outcomes, by disability status



Source: HEFCE 2013/15 'Higher education and beyond – Outcomes from full-time first degree study'

# A sense of regret?

Likelihood of making different HE choices: Percentage point differences relative to white graduates



Source: Longitudinal DLHE

# Differential outcomes critical review

## **Explanatory factors:**

- Curricula and Learning
- Relationships
- Cultural, social and economic capital
- Psycho-social and identity factors

## **Effective Interventions:**

- Improvement to student learning
- Inclusive learning and curricula
- Deconstructing assessment
- Meaningful interactions
- Role models and mentoring
- Engagement with institution



# Addressing barriers to student success

- Systematic and strategic approaches
- Scaling up of successful interventions
- Identify how interventions can be validated, replicated, transmitted and embedded
- Collaborative



# Three stage assessment process

**Stage 1:** 48 Expressions of interest received in September 2016

**Stage 2:** 31 projects attended two-day development workshop: explored project concepts, robust evaluation methodology, student engagement, strategic engagement

**Stage 3:** 30 full business cases submitted December 2016. Reviewed by expert panel and approval by Catalyst Fund Panel

## Outcomes:

- **17 successful projects received £7.5 million HEFCE catalyst funding**
- **15 HEIs and 2 FECs leading projects / 64 HE providers involved overall / 23 additional organisations also involved**





# Project themes

## Project themes

- Transitions in HE
- Student attainment
- Learner analytics
- Inclusive practice
- Mental health
- Employability



THE PROJECT

# LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

THROUGH  
WORK  
BASED  
LEARNING

## ADDRESSING DIFFERENTIAL GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

CLOSING THE EMPLOYMENT RATE GAP

Our institutions' analysis supports HEFCE's findings on differential outcomes



TEN PERCENT DIFFERENCE IN GRADUATE LEVEL  
EMPLOYMENT FOR WP VS. NON WP GRADUATES;  
WITH THE LATTER UP TO THREE TIMES MORE  
LIKELY TO BE UNEMPLOYED

Up to **12%** difference in graduate level employment for BME vs. non BME graduates

**THE ACADEMIC BIT!** "Recent research at Aston University  
has shown the moderating impact of work placements on  
differential outcomes" *Birdi, Moores & Higson (2016)*



SO THIS IS WHAT WE FIGURE...







# Raising Awareness, Raising Aspiration



RARA is a Targeted Personal Tutoring Support Programme for Narrowing Gaps in Student Achievement.

## ➤ What is the project objective?

To redevelop personal tutoring to realise its potential as a means to help close the attainment gap for students from BME groups or lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

- We know the gap remains even after controlling for attainment and other relevant factors (Broecke & Nicholls, 2006).
- We know access is important – but increasing access to create more diverse student bodies doesn't seem to automatically reduce the gap.
- **This suggests the issue goes deeper and relates to the quality of pedagogical relationships students have with staff once they enter university.**

### We know also that...

- Non-traditional students "struggle to learn the rules of the HE game" (Stuart et al, 2011)
- Positive relationships (with staff, with peers) is a factor known to influence student outcomes (Cousin & Cuerton, 2012)
- What Works? report notes that students want to get to know their Faculty, and
- "Staff are agents of change" for students

A diverse coalition of universities dedicated to closing their attainment gaps and sharing their practice.

University of Sheffield

10%





# Support Tutor –

## *additional support to address barriers to student success*



New College Durham

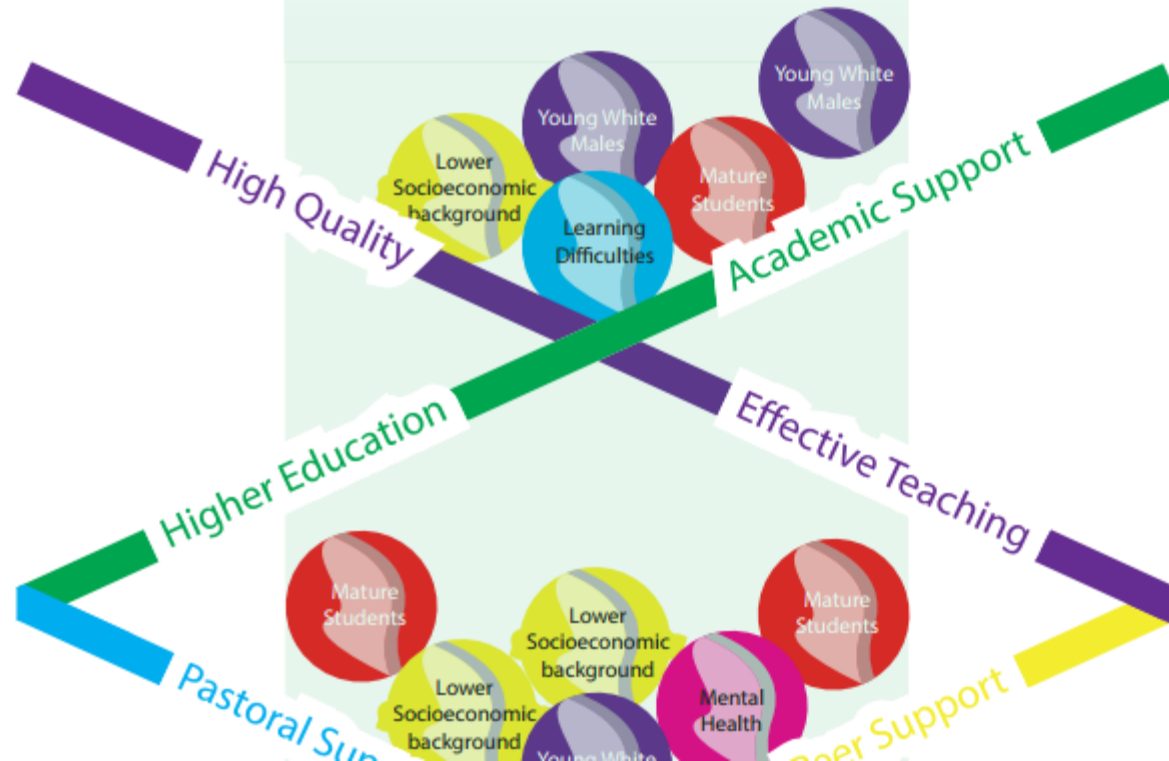
This project provides an excellent opportunity to develop academic support in the college-based higher education (HE) sector, led by a group of local colleges with shared aspirations (New College Durham, Darlington, and Sunderland). The development, enhancement and evaluation of this unique model will produce an evidence-based rationale for the adoption of similar principles and practices that can be shared and implemented widely across HE provision in the further education (FE) sector. The aim is to improve outcomes for HE learners within FE colleges by making improvements to their learning, boosting engagement with course content, enhancing the learning experience, and raising confidence and resilience. Specifically focusing on students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and those with learning difficulties or mental health issues, the project will provide specific academic support to learners via a dedicated HE Academic Support Tutor. This support will include one-to-one support sessions, group tutorials and access to a wide range of IT based learning resources.

Providing an opportunity for the three partners to work collaboratively, the project intends to improve retention, achievement, attainment and progression rates for HE students. This will be achieved by sharing resources, knowledge and learning to develop a proactive, holistic, responsive and sensitive service to meet the needs of HE students. All project partners provide HE for students living in North East England, and students on foundation degrees and higher national programmes are predominantly young white males and in POLAR quintiles 1 and 2. The additional resources created by this project will enable the three partners to support a combined total of 3000 students across the lifetime of the project, with the aim of achieving a 10% improvement in retention, achievement and attainment rates, and a 15% increase in the proportion of students progressing into L6 and 7 qualifications.

The focus of the project is on HE students enrolled on foundation degrees and higher national programmes. While recruitment and retention rates on these programmes across all three partners are good, attainment and progression to L6 and postgraduate study is low. Furthermore, data indicates that attainment, achievement and progression are particularly low amongst students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, in particular young, white males, as well as for students with learning difficulties or mental health issues.

In England, a slightly lower proportion of working age males have degree level qualifications than females. These proportions are similar in Durham and Darlington, but in Sunderland only 14.8% of working age males have degree level qualifications, compared with 20.1% for females. DLHE (2016) data identifies high numbers progressing into employment or further study but the majority earn less than the average graduate salary. This project aims to address this inequality by helping students to access higher quality, better paid employment opportunities by improving levels of attainment, achievement and confidence.

*Working age population with degree level (or equivalent) qualifications.*



# DRIVER Data Response Initiatives as a Vehicle for achieving Equity in Results



## Objectives

- Test the predictive modeling to highlight students at risk/not achieving their full potential
- Test the intervention: Do the conversations help?
- Evaluate the process (call volume/workload planning). Identify issues.
- Develop a toolkit – linked to, and informed by, the conversations
- Deliver a model of institutional change

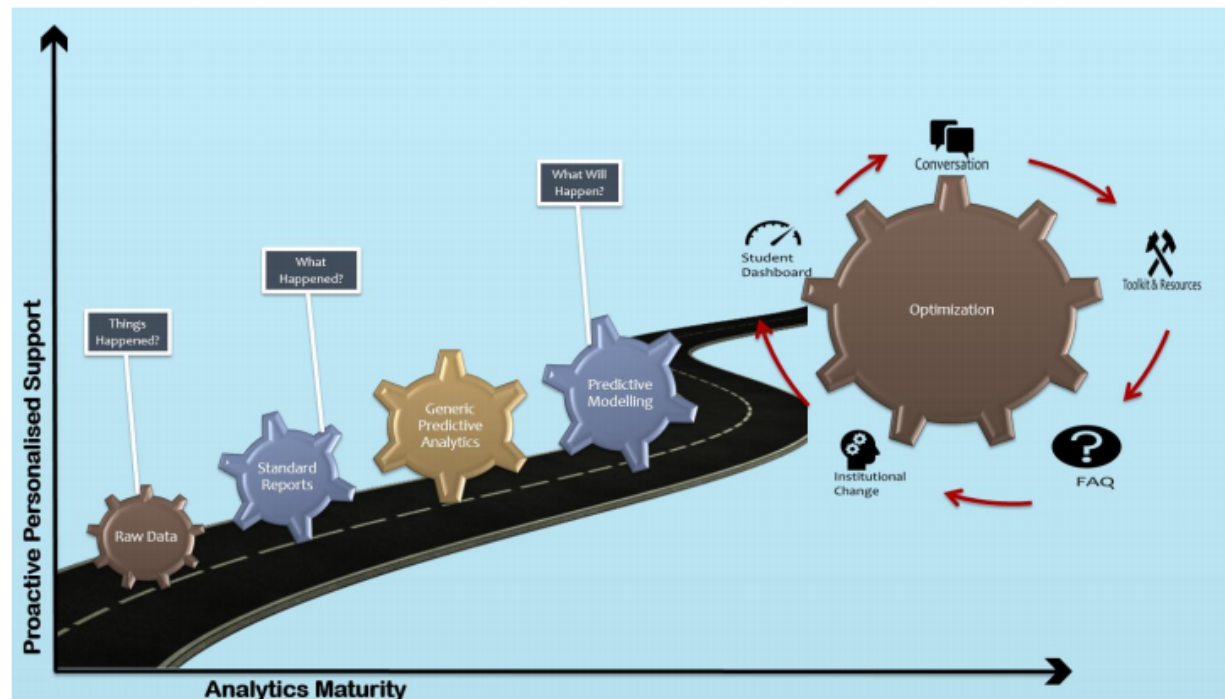
## Project Overview

- DRIVER is a partnership project between 4 colleges and 4 universities to address barriers to student success. Our focus is on the transition between colleges and universities where students from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. BME, commuter, mature and those from low socio-economic backgrounds) are highly represented yet less likely to achieve a good degree. The colleges and universities will collectively create actions that will benefit all students and, in particular, address the intersectionality of factors affecting student success.
- Importantly DRIVER will address the student as an individual, rather than someone who possesses certain demographic characteristics. Literature on the subject of differential degree outcomes highlights a critical tension i.e. institutions typically categorise students into groups rather than seeing them as individuals with a complex and often inter-related set of underlying factors which influence their engagement and attainment. Through this project we wish to refocus the unit of analysis from 'demographic groups' to the 'individual', which, we believe, will address the cause of the differential observed rather than the symptoms.
- Anticipating a multi-layered process of micro-adjustments within each institution, DRIVER will utilise learner analytics to inform learning conversations between staff and students which will encourage students to engage in support activities. Crucially, the issues raised during these conversations will be noted and analysed to support institutional learning such that good practice and interventions are appropriately identified, resourced and then shared as good practice with other institutions nationally.

## A regional approach with Universities and Colleges working together

Knowledge exchange events
Students as partners
Sharing best practice
Supporting the transition

## The Process



## The Work packages

<b>Workpackage 1</b> Lead: University of Wolverhampton  Establishing the	<b>Workpackage 2</b> Lead: Staffordshire University  Learning from	<b>Workpackage 3</b> Lead: Birmingham City University  Developing an	<b>Workpackage 4</b> Lead: Coventry University  Achieving Institutional
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## Challenges/Risks

- Sharing data across institutions
- Ethics of targeting student cohorts
- Quality of the data in the model
- Being able to contact students
- Quality of the conversations
- Usage of the Toolkit
- Adoption of whole of institutional approach

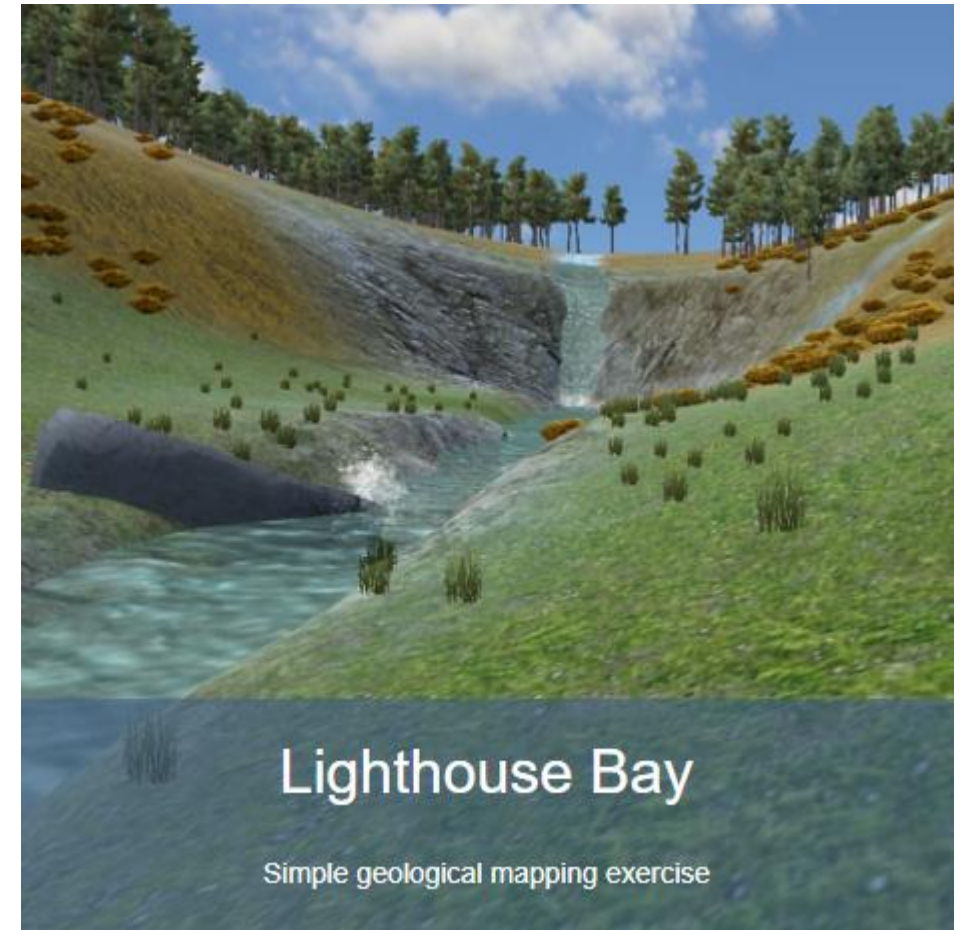


Maximising  
Student  
Success  
through the  
development of  
Self-Regulation





“This project will scale up *inclusive educational practices within STEM module design and delivery* to benefit all students, while lowering and removing barriers impeding particular groups, notably *students with disabilities*, including students with *mental health issues* and *specific learning difficulties*”





**BUILDING ROUTES  
INTO DEGREES WITH  
GREATER EQUALITY**

**BRIDGE**



# Addressing barriers to student success

## Programme timeline

- March 2017 – February 2019

## Evaluation

- External programme evaluation
- Formative evaluation
- Capacity building

## Programme network

- Sharing best practice
- Linking with other related programmes





Thank you for listening  
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