

# Greater Manchester Higher: A Case Study



# Introduction

- Potential Barriers
- Greater Manchester Higher
- Who we've worked with and how
- Challenges we've faced
- Evaluation and further resources

# Recognising the Barriers

- Students with known disability up 56% since 2010-11:
- Students reporting mental health conditions up 220% since 2010-11.
- Retention rates up, but not as much as for other students- Gap in retention has widened.
- HEFCE identified issues in 2015 research
  - Transition issues
  - Late disclosure as barrier to effective support
  - Students with mental health problems least likely to feel their needs are met
  - Pressure on resources
  - Changes to funding



# Our Partners



Teaching Intensive, Research Informed



The University of Manchester




# Who We Support

- Learners with disabilities:
  - Learning difficulties
  - Long-term health conditions
  - Mental health conditions
  - Physical disabilities
- Parents and Carers
- Teachers and Advisors

# Discussion Point:

What issues could you anticipate arising when planning events for learners with disabilities and/or their supporters?



# Our events

| Event  | Attendees   |
|--|---|
| <b>HE Visit for ASC learners: At Manchester Metropolitan University in May 2017</b>                              | 107 learners<br>35 Teaching Staff<br>20 Local Schools       |
| <b>Pre-16 Wellbeing visit: At Manchester Metropolitan University in May 2017</b>                                 | 51 learners<br>6 Local Schools                              |
| <b>Post-16 Wellbeing visit: At Manchester Metropolitan University in May 2017</b>                                | 13 learners<br>6 local Schools/Colleges<br>3 Teaching staff |
| <b>Post-16 prospective learner and parent/carer event: Held at the University of Manchester in February 2017</b> | 61 disabled learners<br>70 Parents/Carers                   |
| <b>Breaking Barriers CPD: Held at the University of Bolton in June 2017</b>                                      | 21 Teaching/Support staff                                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | 232 Learners<br>70 Parents/Carers<br>59 Key Influencers     |

In-school presentation for disabled learners and parents  
Offered to local schools and colleges

# Promotion and communication

- In addition to promoting events to existing schools and colleges:
  - Important to identify SENCOs, SEND and LLD leads within schools and colleges
  - School ring-around
  - Specialist schools
  - University contacts

# Training

- Compulsory training for student ambassadors
- Training usually scheduled at least a week before the event
- Input from colleagues who work directly with learners
- Disabled student role models – no obligation to disclose but encouraged
- Appropriate terminology

**“You are so  
brave”**

**#EndTheAwkward**



# Adjustments and additional needs

- Documents in braille
- Specific coloured handouts/powerpoints
- Interpreters and note-takers
- A spare room available if students require 'time out'
- Pre-event information pack
- Awareness of triggers
- Lunch room
- Adapted accommodation

# Who we've worked with

## Internal:

- University disability support services
- University counselling services
- Student Unions
- Accommodation office
- Money advice service
- Careers Service
- Multi-faith chaplaincies

## External:

- Other Higher Education Institutions
- Student Finance England
- Access Summit
- Local and National Charities
- Support Agencies

# Discussion point:

What issues could you anticipate arising when collaborating with different partners?




# Working with external and internal partners

## Internal

- Availability of disability support service colleagues
- Academics
- Well-being rooms
- Awareness of welcome week and SU facilities and support

## External

- Local charities and youth branches of charities
  - Assistive software/technology companies – check with disability support service
  - Specialist tutors can provide unique insight into support but focus should be as general as possible
  - Student ambassadors from a broad range of HEIs
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# Evaluation

- During pre and post 16 visits including the parent/carer event, the same evaluation forms are used with core GMH questions
- HEAT
- A further selection of 'event-specific' questions were asked to inform future events
- Of the 253 disabled learners who attended these events, 164 completed evaluation forms were received

# Evaluation

| Question  |                          | Pre 16<br>ASD | Pre 16<br>SpLD | Post<br>16<br>ASD | Post 16<br>parent/<br>carer | Average |
|---|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| Before the event pupils had had already thought about going to university | Strongly agree/<br>agree | 55%           | 60%            | 89%               | 94%                         | 74.5%   |
|   | Undecided                | 33%           | 28%            | 11%               | 6%                          | 19.5%   |

# Evaluation

| Question   | Pre<br>16<br>SpLD | Pre 16<br>ASD | Post 16<br>parent/ carer | Post 16<br>ASD | Avg. |
|--|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|------|
| I am now more likely to consider going to university                                     | 81%               | 85%           | 89%                      | 83%            | 85%  |
| I now know more about the benefits of university   | 90%               | 88%           | 100%                     | 72%            | 88%  |
| I now have an understanding of how university is different from school                   | 95%               | 93%           | 94%                      | 78%            | 90%  |
| I now have a better idea of what students need to do if they want to study at university | 88%               | 75%           | 89%                      | 61%            | 78%  |
| I enjoyed the visit  | 90%               | 90%           | 100%                     | 94%            | 94%  |
| I am now more aware of the facilities that can be found on a university campus           | 77%               | 73%           | n/a                      | 83%            | 78%  |
| I am now more aware of the different types of courses you can study at university        | 81%               | 75%           | n/a                      | n/a            | 78%  |
| I am now more aware of what student life is like at university                           | 78%               | 78%           | n/a                      | 78%            | 78%  |

# Resources and further info

- [HEFCE Autism video resources](#)
- [Supporting students with Autism](#)
- [Student Loans Company](#)
- [Disabled Students' Allowances overview](#)
- [Disability Rights UK HE Factsheets](#)
- [HEFCE Mental Health Research \(2015\)](#)
- [HEFCE Specific Learning Difficulties Research \(2015\)](#)
- [NUS Disabled Learners Campaign toolkit](#)

# Upcoming events

- Pre 16 Autism event: Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April, Manchester Metropolitan University
- Pre 16 well-being event: Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April, Manchester Metropolitan University
- Post 16 well-being event: Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May, Manchester Metropolitan University
- Post 16 D/deaf learner event: Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June, University of Salford
- Breaking Barriers for teachers and advisers: Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June, The University of Bolton

# Questions?

