

Office for
Students



Differences in student outcomes: further characteristics

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NEON summit

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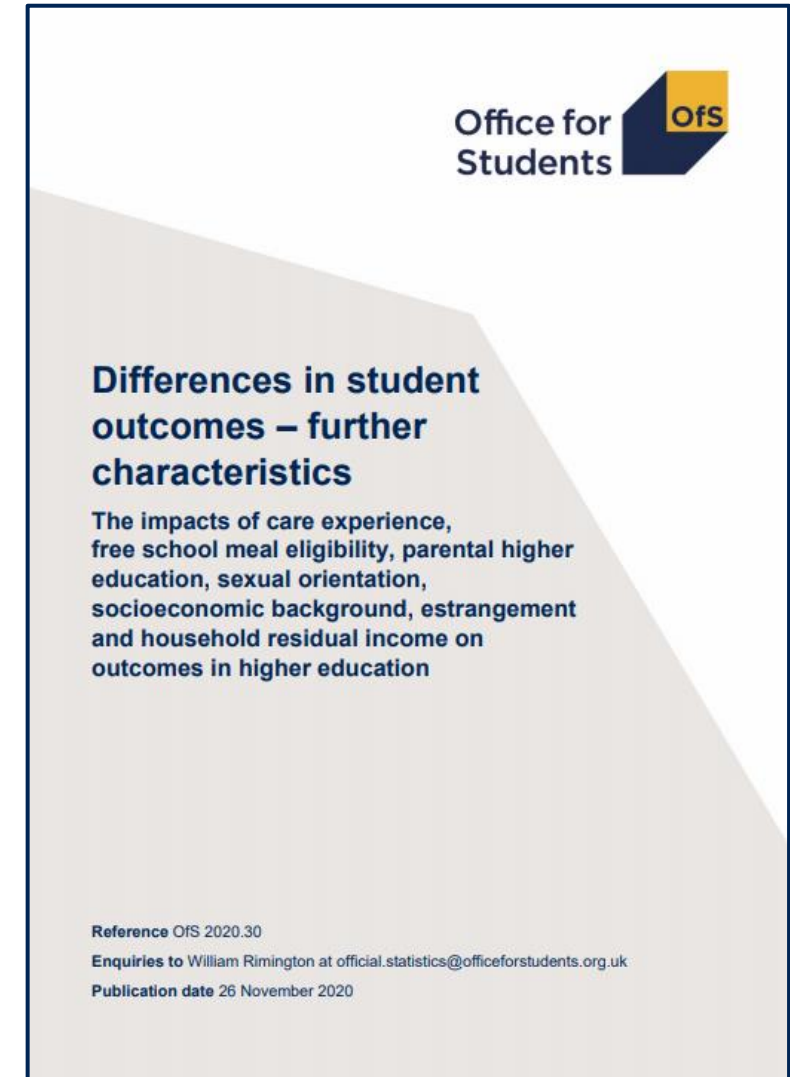
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Foresight and insight at the OfS

- Team of analysts primarily investigating sector-level trends in higher education.
- Support the translation of research findings into regulatory functions, evaluation of OfS activities and metrics.
- This includes investigations of degree classifications through time, unconditional offers, intersectionality and our area-based measures including TUNDRA and POLAR4.
- Contact us at official.statistics@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Summary of report

- Report '**Differences in student outcomes – further characteristics**', which can be found here:
www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/differences-in-student-outcomes-further-characteristics
- An investigation of differences in continuation rates, attainment rates and progression rates by various student characteristics.
- Characteristics we do not routinely use in analyses and publications.



Why you should be interested

- **New data:** In many cases this the first time we have published any outcome statistics by these student characteristics.
- **New understanding:** Find out about groups of students who are experiencing differences in outcomes.
- **New perspectives:** Change the way you think about the experiences of different groups of students?
- **Improved experiences and outcomes for students?**

Student characteristics investigated

- Seven diverse student characteristics investigated:
 1. Free school meal eligibility
 2. Care experience
 3. Parental higher education
 4. Sexual orientation
 5. Socioeconomic background
 6. Estrangement
 7. Household residual income
- We also investigated data available on gender identity and religion or belief. However, these failed our data quality framework so were not included.

Higher education outcomes investigated

- We investigated the differences in three higher education outcomes:
 - **Continuation rate** – the proportion of entrants who either qualified, transferred or continued their studies.
 - **Attainment rate** – the proportion of undergraduate degree students who received a first or upper second.
 - **Progression rate** – the proportion of leavers in highly skilled employment or studying at a higher level (or both) approximately six months after leaving.
- Same outcomes included in our access and participation data dashboard.
- NOT the result of a small survey of students. For continuation and attainment, we used administrative data to look at the outcomes for ALL students for which the characteristic data is available.

Student population these statistics apply to

- Rates apply to full-time, UK-domiciled undergraduate students at English higher education providers.
- Aligns with our access and participation data dashboard.
- Further population restrictions were applied where necessary. See report for more detail.

Summary of characteristics investigated

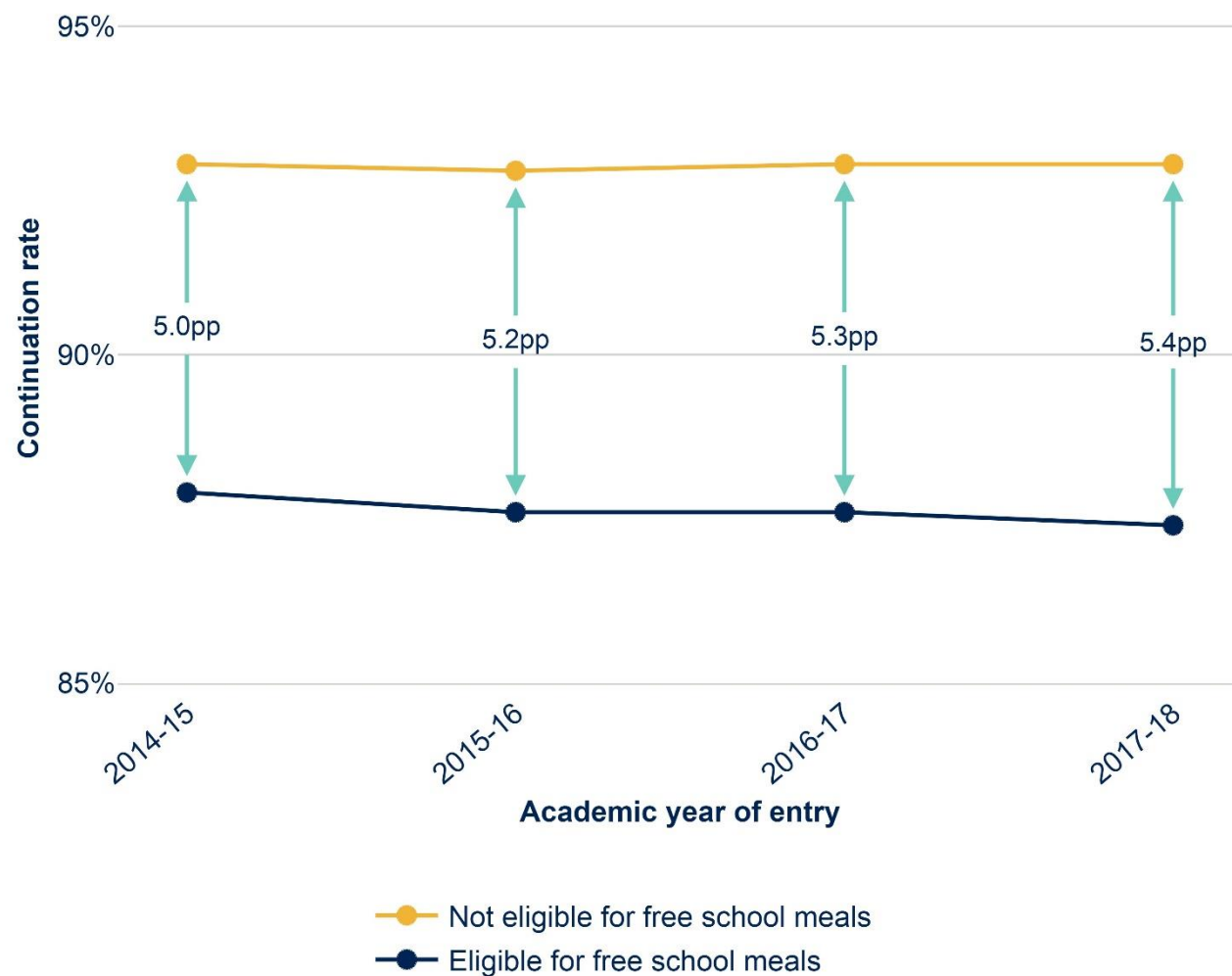
Characteristic	On average, do you have worse higher education outcomes?
1. Were you eligible for free school meals?	Yes
2. Do you have experience of care?	Yes
3. Do your parents not have a higher education qualification?	Yes
4. Are you lesbian, gay, bisexual or other?	Varies but mostly yes
5. Do your parents not work in a higher managerial, administrative or professional occupation?	Yes
6. Are you estranged from your parents?	Yes
7. Do your parents have a lower income?	Yes

Free school meal (FSM) eligibility

- Students who received free school meals are less likely to enter higher education than students who did not – in 2018-19, 26.3% entered higher education vs. 45.1% (DfE, Widening participation in higher education, 2020).
- We looked at whether a student was ever recorded as eligible for free school meals in the six years prior to their final year of Key Stage 4.*
- **Continuation, attainment and progression rates are all lower for students who were eligible to receive free school meals.**

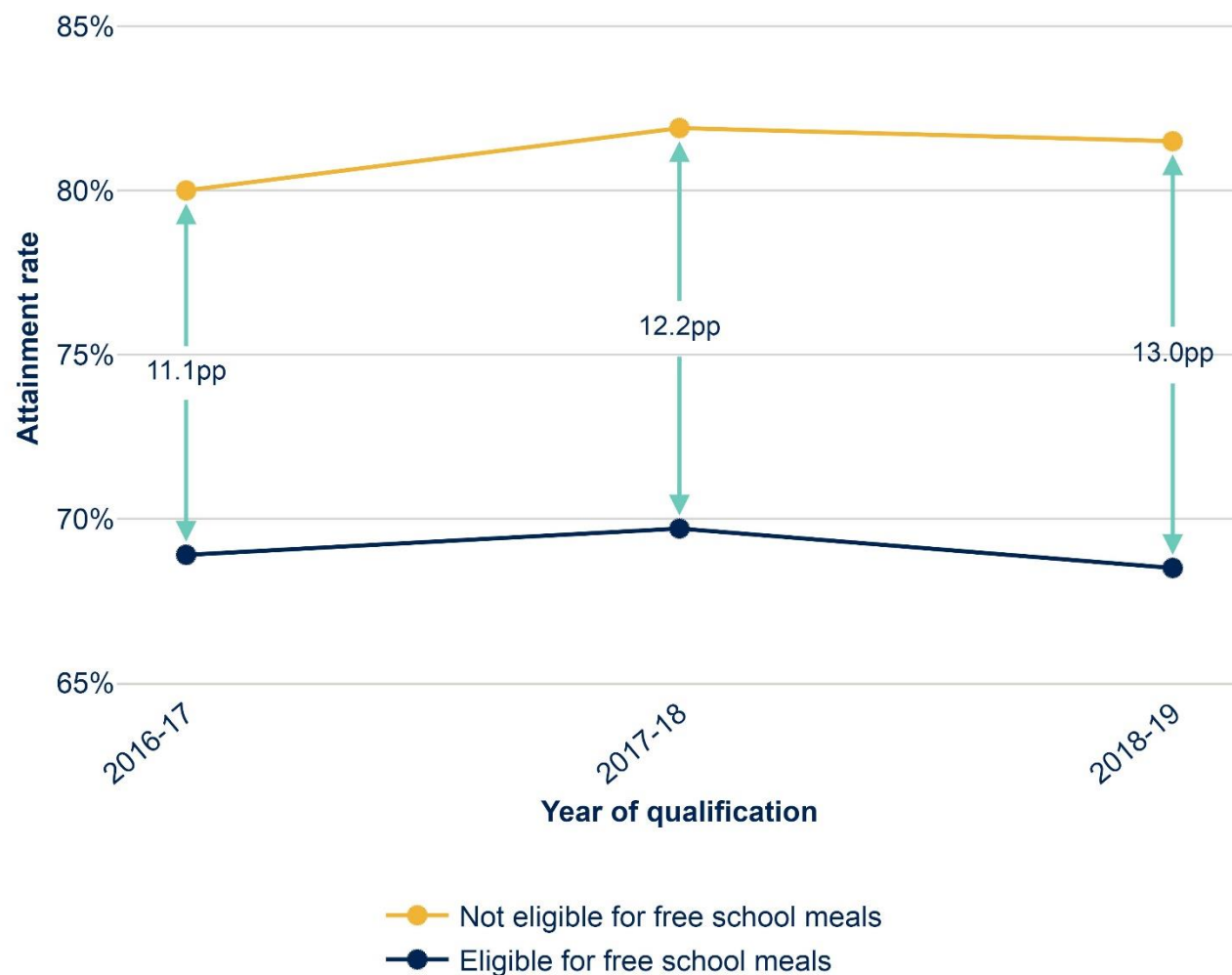
*FSM eligibility based on data produced by the DfE as part of the National Pupil Database (NPD). The DfE does not accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the NPD data by third parties.

Free school meal eligibility – continuation



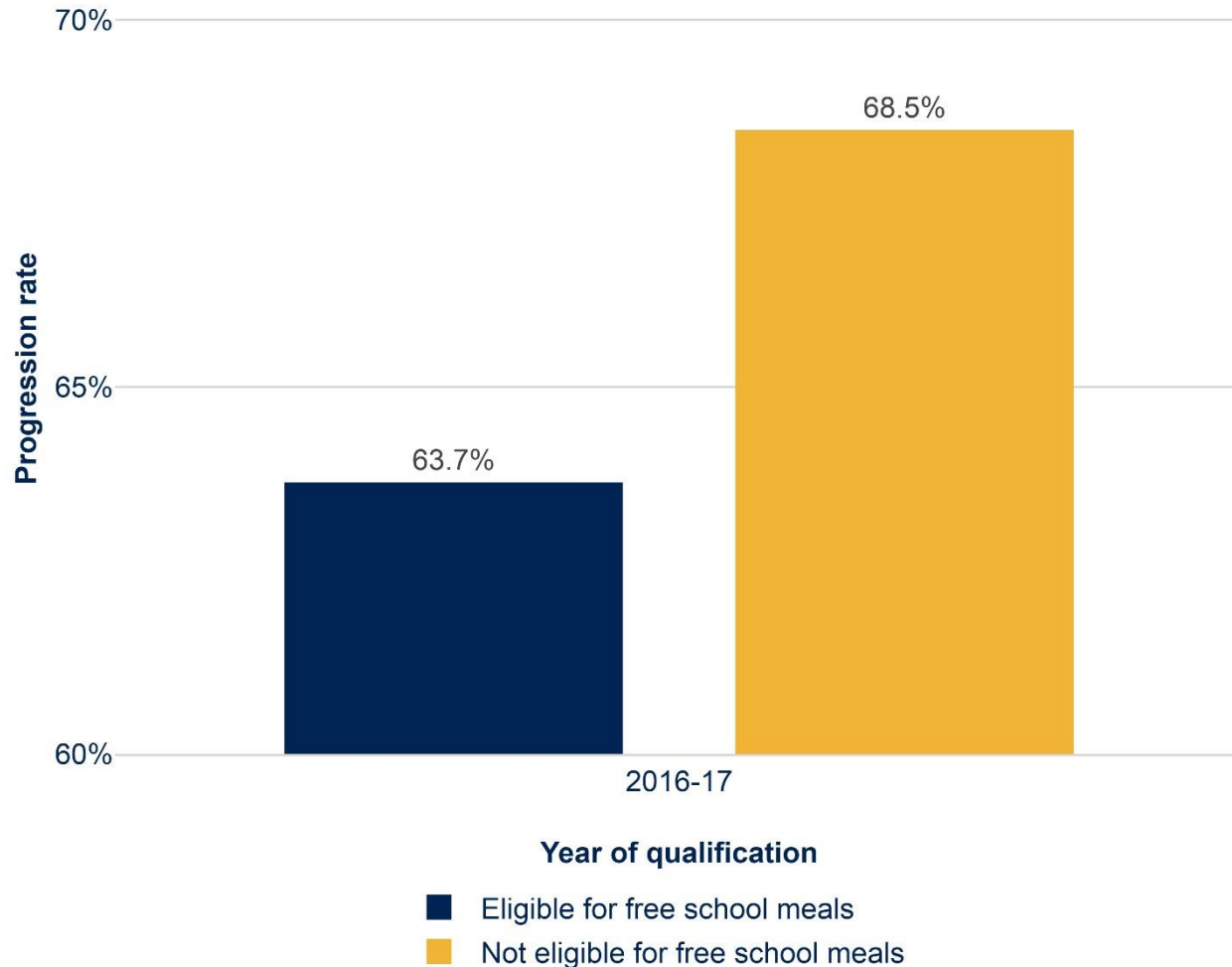
- Continuation rates are consistently lower for students who were eligible for FSMs.
- The continuation rate of entrants in 2017-18 who were eligible for FSMs was 5.4 percentage points lower.
- The difference has been slowly increasing.

Free school meal eligibility – attainment



- Attainment rates are consistently lower for students who were eligible for FSMs.
- Qualifiers in 2018-19 who were eligible for FSMs had an attainment rate 13.0 percentage points lower.
- The difference has been increasing.

Free school meal eligibility – progression



- The progression rate of qualifiers in 2016-17 was 4.8 percentage points lower for students who were eligible for FSMs.
- Only one year of data so further investigation required.

Care experience

1. Continuation rates are consistently lower (~6pp) for care experienced students.
2. Attainment rates are consistently lower (~12pp) for care experienced students.
3. Progression rates may be fractionally higher (0.4pp) for care experienced students, though caveats associated with this data.

Parental higher education

1. Continuation rates are consistently lower (~3pp) for students whose parents do not have a higher education qualification.
2. Attainment rates are consistently lower (~6pp) for students whose parents do not have a higher education qualification.
3. Progression rates are consistently lower (~3pp) for students whose parents do not have a higher education qualification.

Sexual orientation

1. Continuation rates are consistently lower for lesbian, gay or bisexual students (~1pp) and students who are not heterosexual or LGB (~5pp).
2. Attainment rates are higher (~2pp) for LGB students but lower for students who are not heterosexual or LGB (~7pp).
3. Insufficient data to calculate differences in progression rates.

Socioeconomic background

1. Continuation rates are consistently highest for students whose parents work in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations and lowest for students whose parents have never worked or are long-term unemployed.
2. Same pattern for attainment rates.
3. Insufficient data to calculate differences in progression rates.

Estrangement

1. Continuation rates are consistently lower (~8pp) for estranged students.
2. Attainment rates are consistently lower (~13pp) for estranged students.
3. Progression rates may be fractionally higher (0.3pp) for estranged students, though caveats associated with this data.

Household residual income

1. Continuation rates drop with parental household residual income (HRI). ~7pp difference between the highest (£42,601+) and lowest (£0) groups.
2. Attainment rates drop with HRI. ~15pp difference between the highest and lowest groups.
3. Progression rates drop with HRI. ~8pp difference between the highest and lowest groups.

The future

- This was an ad hoc experimental publication. We hope to publish this data as an official statistic in the future.
- Plan to update analysis in summer 2021. Will include differences in attainment rates in the time of COVID-19. New progression data using graduate outcomes data.
- Increase awareness and start a dialogue concerning these differences in outcomes and consider what can be done to close some of these concerning gaps.

Any questions?

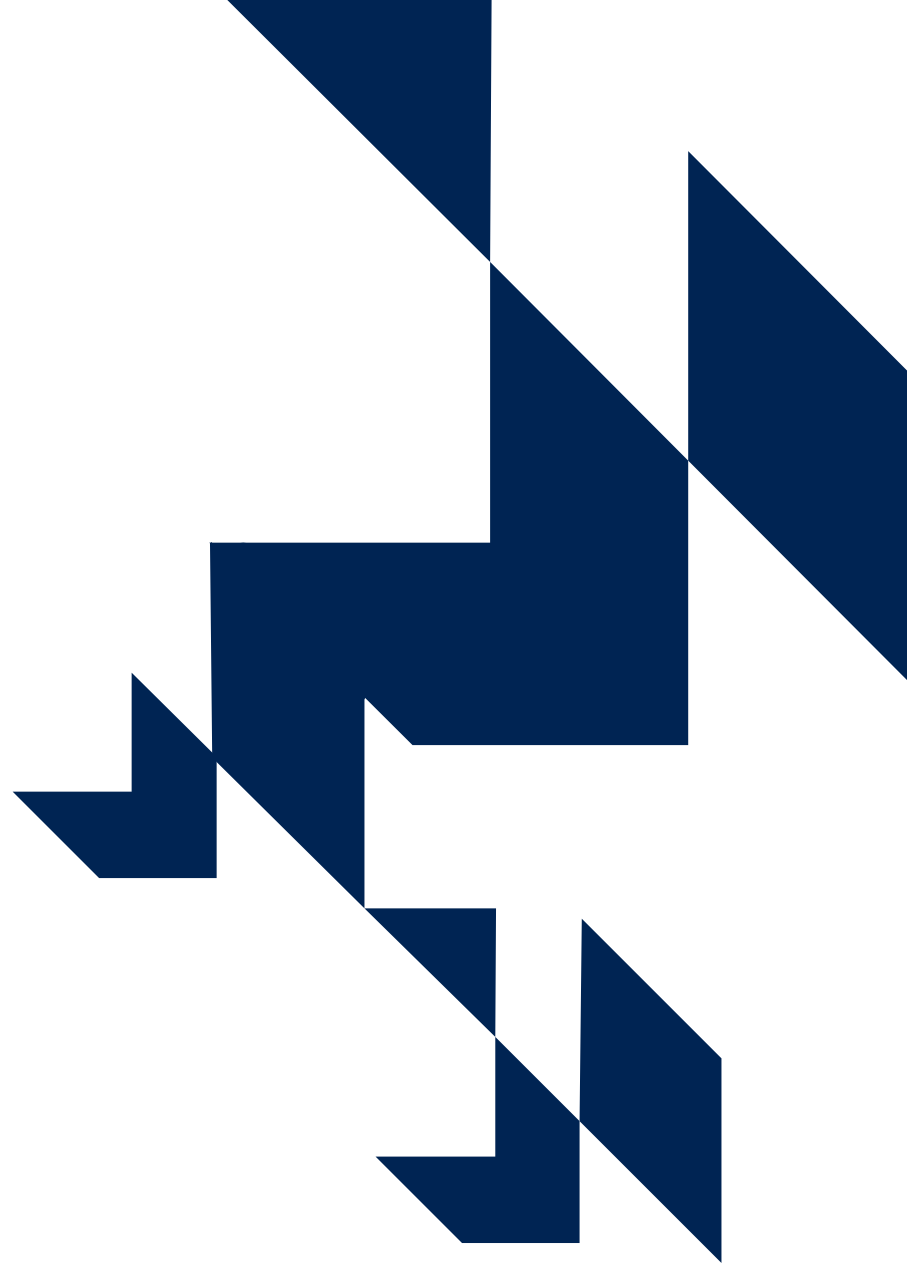
- Joined by Ruby Gatehouse, an Access and Participation Manager within our Access, Inclusion and Skills directorate, who will be able to answer any access and participation and effective practice related questions.
- Contact me at William.Rimington@officeforstudents.org.uk
- Contact Ruby at Ruby.Gatehouse@officeforstudents.org.uk

Thank you for listening

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Detailed slides



Data sources

Characteristic	Student characteristic data source	Student outcomes data source
FSM eligibility	National Pupil Database	ESFA's ILR and HESA's student record and student alternative record
Care experience	HESA student record	HESA's student record
Parental higher education	HESA student record	HESA's student record
Sexual orientation	HESA student record	HESA's student record
NS-SEC	HESA student record	HESA's student record
Estrangement	Student Loans Company	ESFA's ILR and HESA's student record and student alternative record
HRI	Student Loans Company	ESFA's ILR and HESA's student record and student alternative record

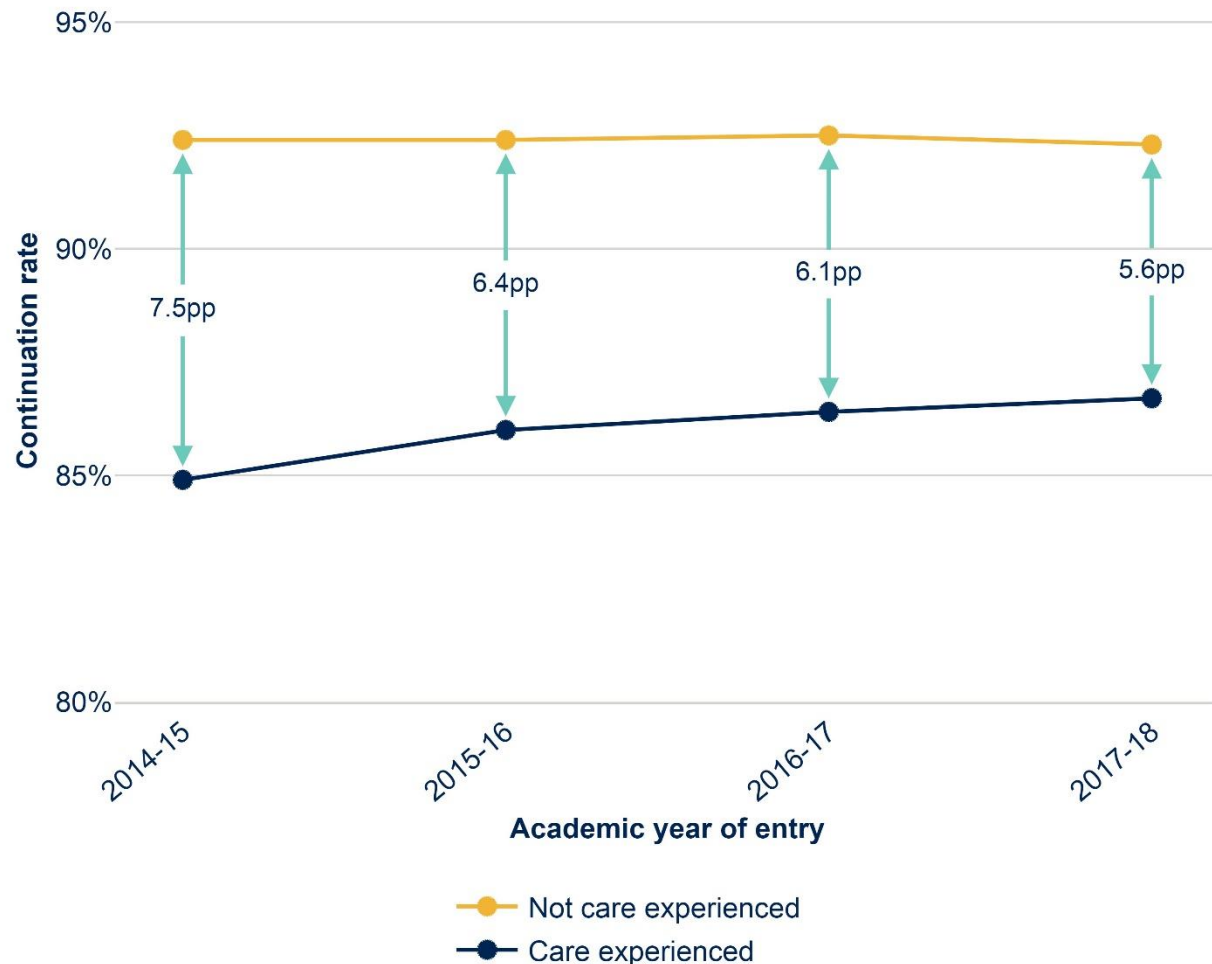
Detail of rates

- These are raw continuation, attainment and progression rates as observed in the available data. We did not use weighting or statistical modelling to account for other student characteristics that can impact these rates.
- Some of these characteristics apply to small numbers of students and we have not performed significance or sensitivity analysis – small differences may not represent statistically significant differences for students with those characteristics.

Care experience

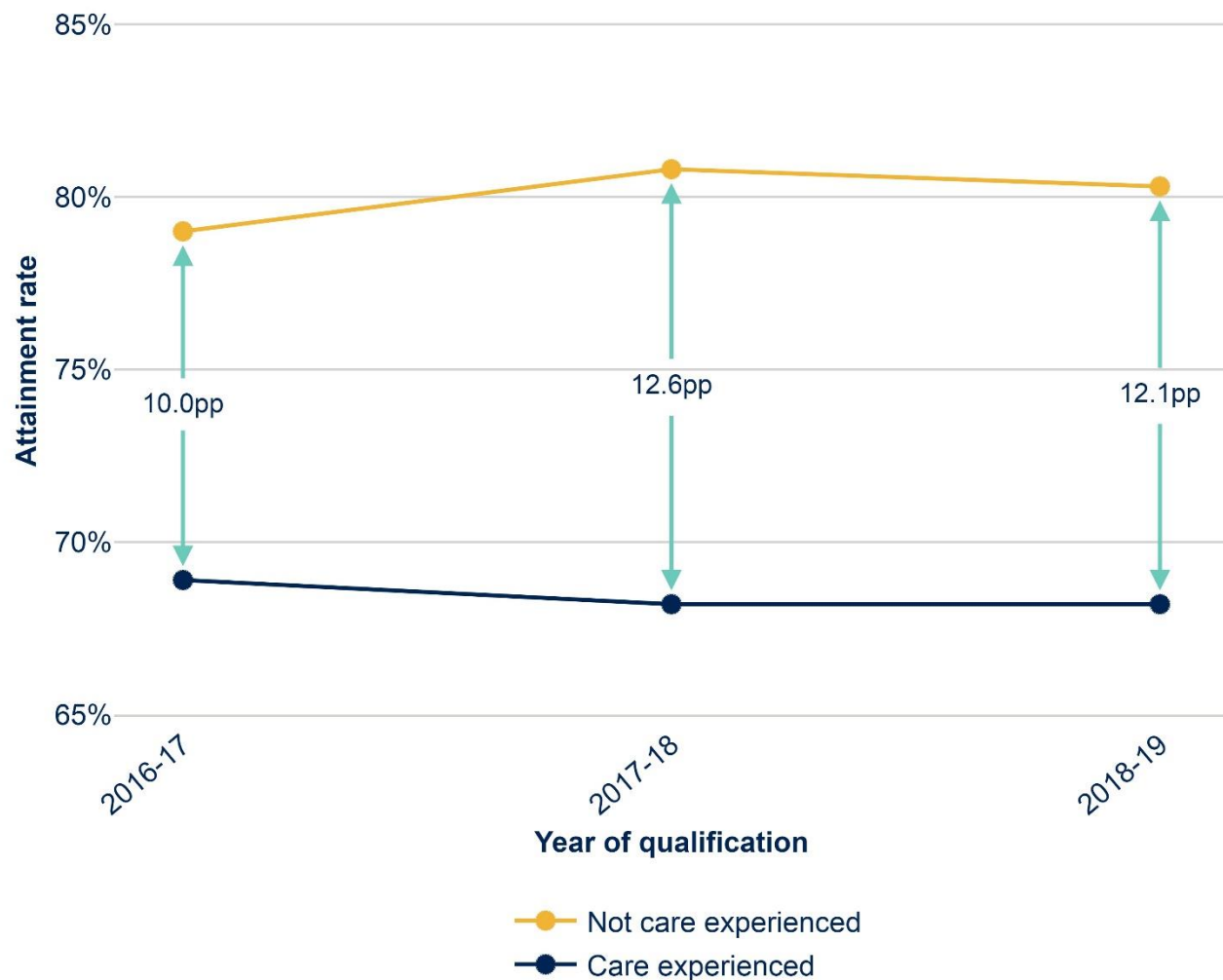
- Whether or not a student was in care prior to entering higher education.
- Access to higher education is much lower for young people who have been in care compared with those who have not – in 2018-19 ,13% entered higher education vs. 43% (DfE, Widening participation in higher education, 2020).
- Data from HESA and applies to students at providers that report data to HESA student record. Data considered useable for 2014-15 entrants and later.
- Continuation and attainment rates are both considerably reduced for students who were in care prior to entering higher education compared with those who were not.

Care experience – continuation



- Continuation rates are consistently lower for care experienced students.
- Care experienced entrants in 2017-18 had a continuation rate 5.6 percentage points lower.
- The difference in continuation rates reduced between 2014-15 and 2017-18. Continuation rates for care experienced students increased while those of students who are not care experienced did not.

Care experience – attainment



- Attainment rates are consistently lower for care experienced students.
- Care experienced qualifiers in 2018-19 had an attainment rate 12.1 percentage points lower.
- The difference in attainment rates reduced slightly between 2017-18 and 2018-19.

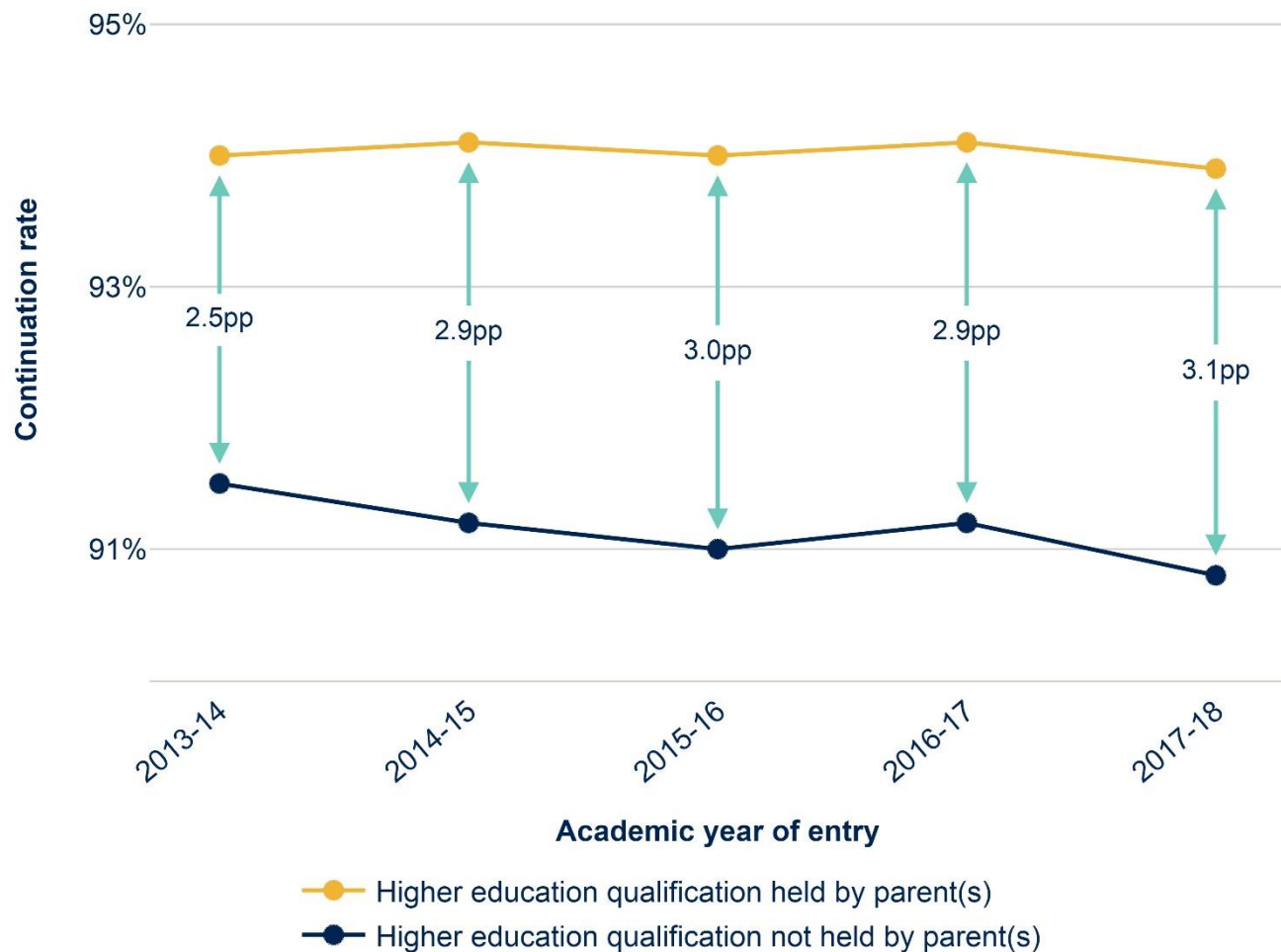
Care experience – progression

- Only one year of data.
- Care experienced students may have a slightly higher rate of progression into highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level compared with students who are not care experienced.
- The progression rate of care experienced qualifiers in 2016-17 was 0.4 percentage points higher than that of students who were not care experienced.
- These statistics apply to small numbers of care experienced students and a reduced population and further investigation is required to determine the extent to which this reflects progression rates for care experienced students.

Parental higher education

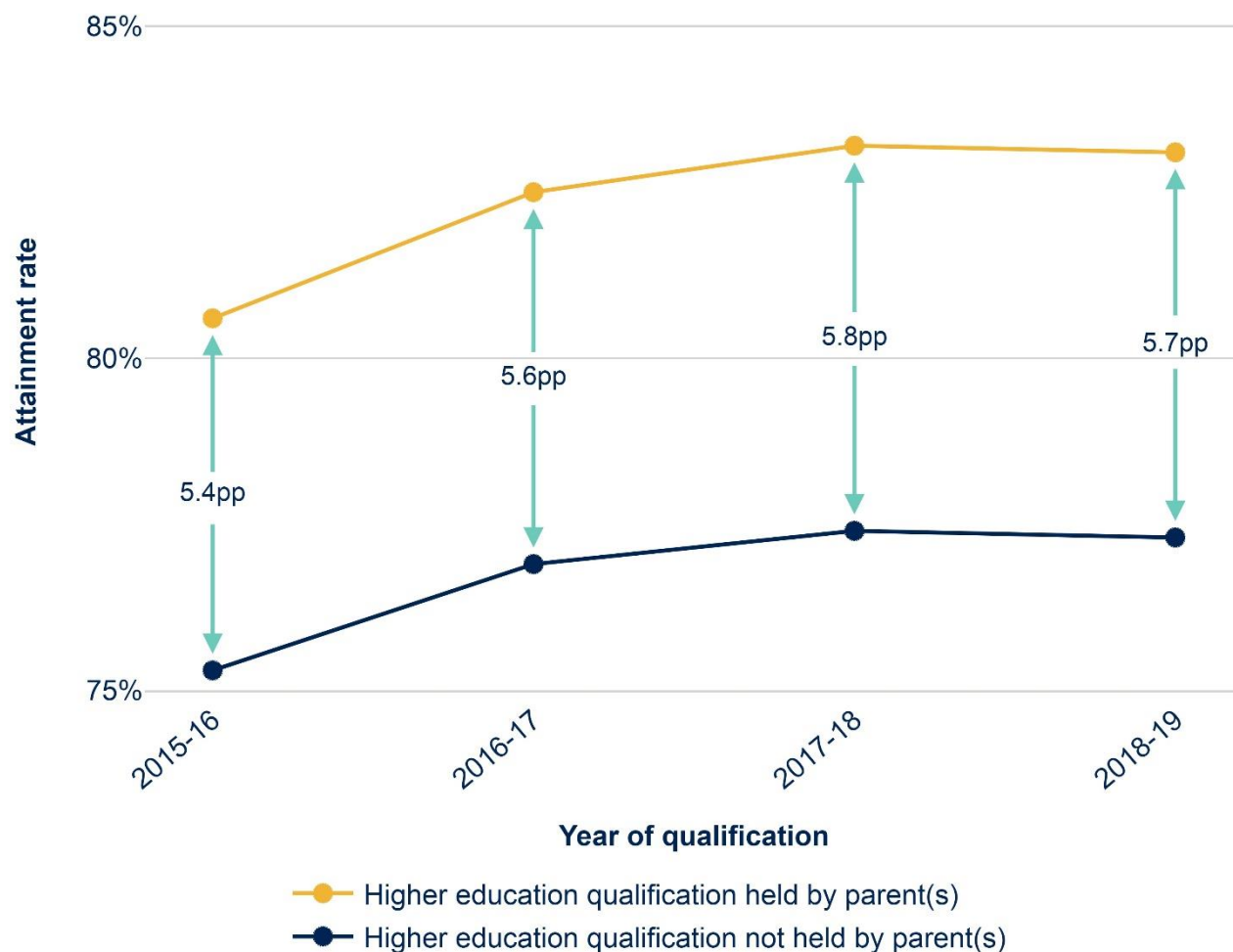
- Whether one or more of a student's parents have a higher education qualification. Attending higher education when your parents did not is sometimes referred to as being the 'first in family'.
- The proportion of full-time, UK-domiciled, undergraduate entrants who have a parent with a higher education qualification is similar to those who do not – 45.1% vs. 44.7% in 2018-19 (OfS, 2020).
- Data from HESA and applies to students at providers that report data to HESA student record. Data considered useable for 2013-14 entrants and later.
- Continuation, attainment and progression rates are all lower for students whose parents do not have a higher education qualification.

Parental higher education – continuation



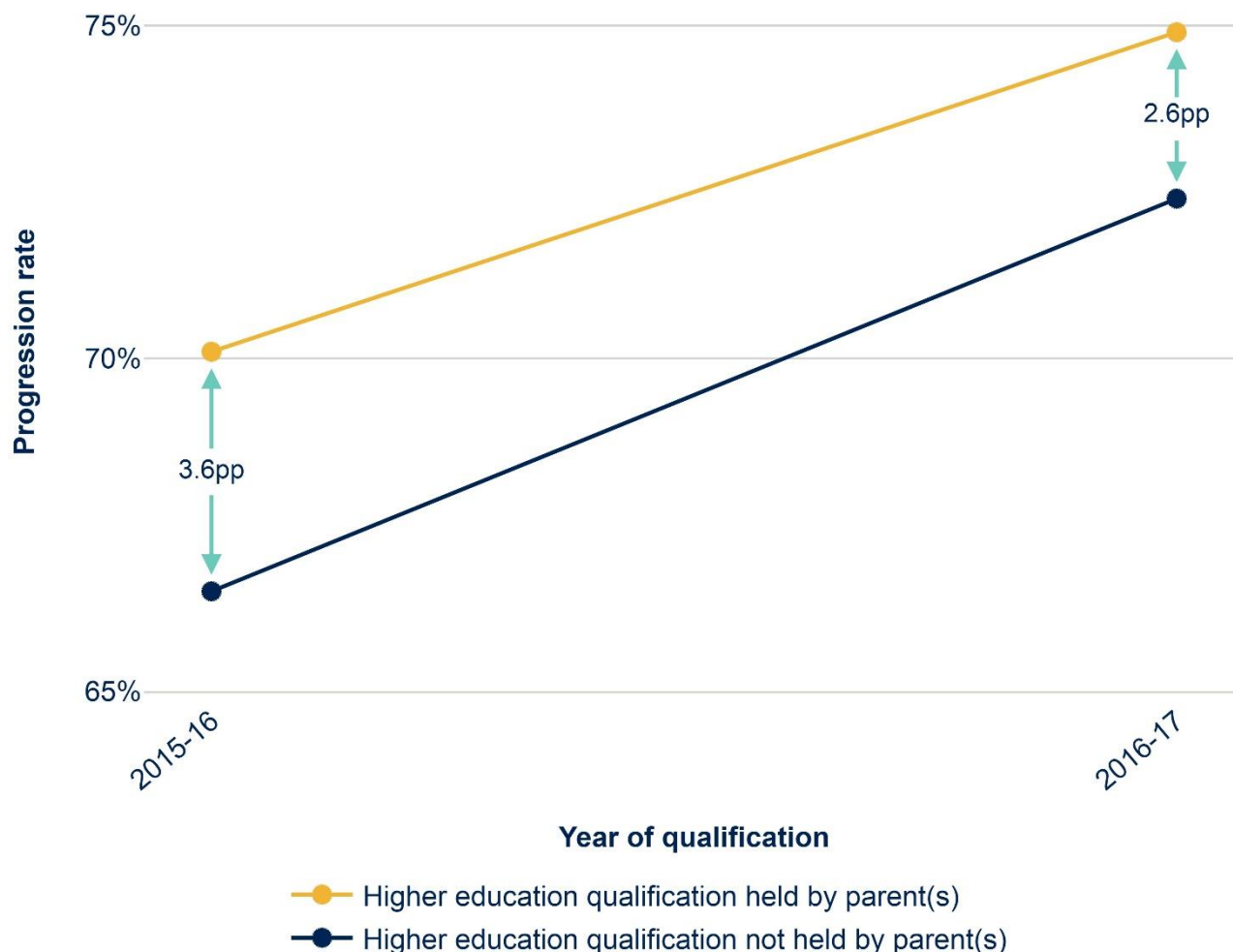
- Continuation rates are consistently lower for students whose parents do not have a higher education qualification.
- The continuation rate of entrants in 2017-18 whose parents do not have a higher education qualification was 3.1 percentage points lower than students whose parents do.
- This difference in continuation has slowly increased between 2013-14 and 2017-18.

Parental higher education – attainment



- Attainment rates are consistently lower for students whose parents do not have a higher education qualification.
- The attainment rate of qualifiers in 2018-19 whose parents do not have higher education qualification was 5.7 percentage points lower than those whose parents do.
- This difference in attainment rate has been relatively stable.

Parental higher education – progression

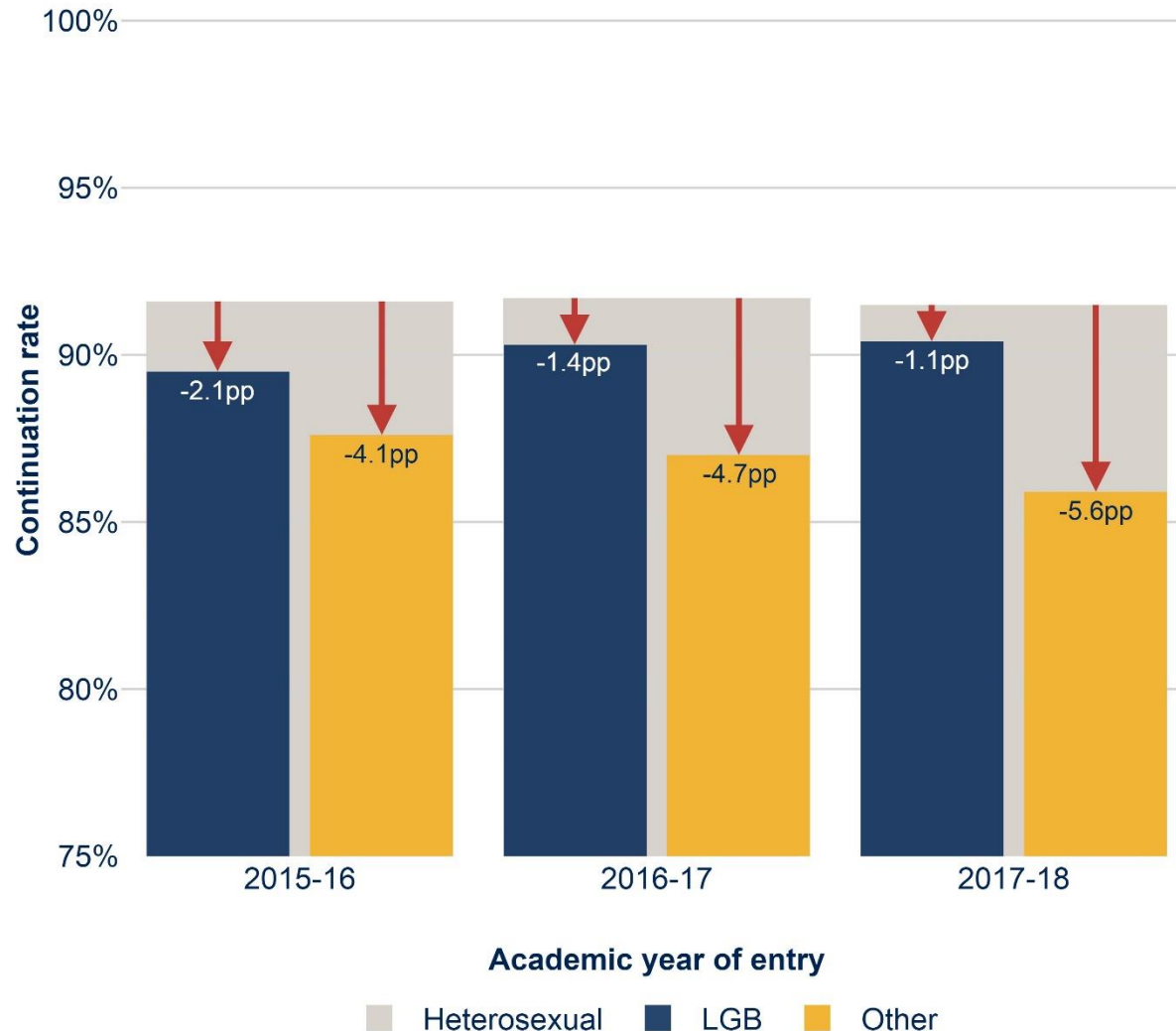


- Students whose parents do not have a higher education qualification have a lower progression rate than students whose parents do.
- The progression rate of qualifiers in 2016-17 whose parents do not have higher education qualification was 2.6 percentage points lower than students whose parents do.
- The data for 2016-17 qualifiers is more representative of the student population and this gap is not necessarily reducing.

Sexual orientation

- A student's sexual orientation, based on their own self-assessment.
- The proportion of students who report as being lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) has been increasing. In 2018-19, 6.2 per cent of full-time, UK-domiciled, undergraduate entrants reported that they are LGB.
- Data from HESA and applies to students at providers that report data to HESA student record. Data considered useable for 2015-16 entrants and later.
- Successful outcomes in higher education vary depending on sexual orientation. Continuation rates for LGB students are lower than heterosexual students but attainment rates are higher. Continuation and attainment rates for students who are not heterosexual or LGB are lower than heterosexual and LGB students.

Sexual orientation – continuation



- Continuation rates are consistently lower for students who are not heterosexual.
- LGB entrants in 2017-18 had a continuation rate that was 1.1 percentage points lower than heterosexual students. Students who are not heterosexual or LGB had a continuation rate that was 5.6 percentage points lower than that of heterosexual students.

Sexual orientation – attainment



- Attainment rates are higher for LGB students than heterosexual students but lower for students who are not heterosexual or LGB.
- The attainment rate of LGB qualifiers in 2018-19 was 2.4 percentage points higher than of heterosexual students. The attainment rate of students who are not heterosexual or LGB was 6.9 percentage points lower than of heterosexual students.

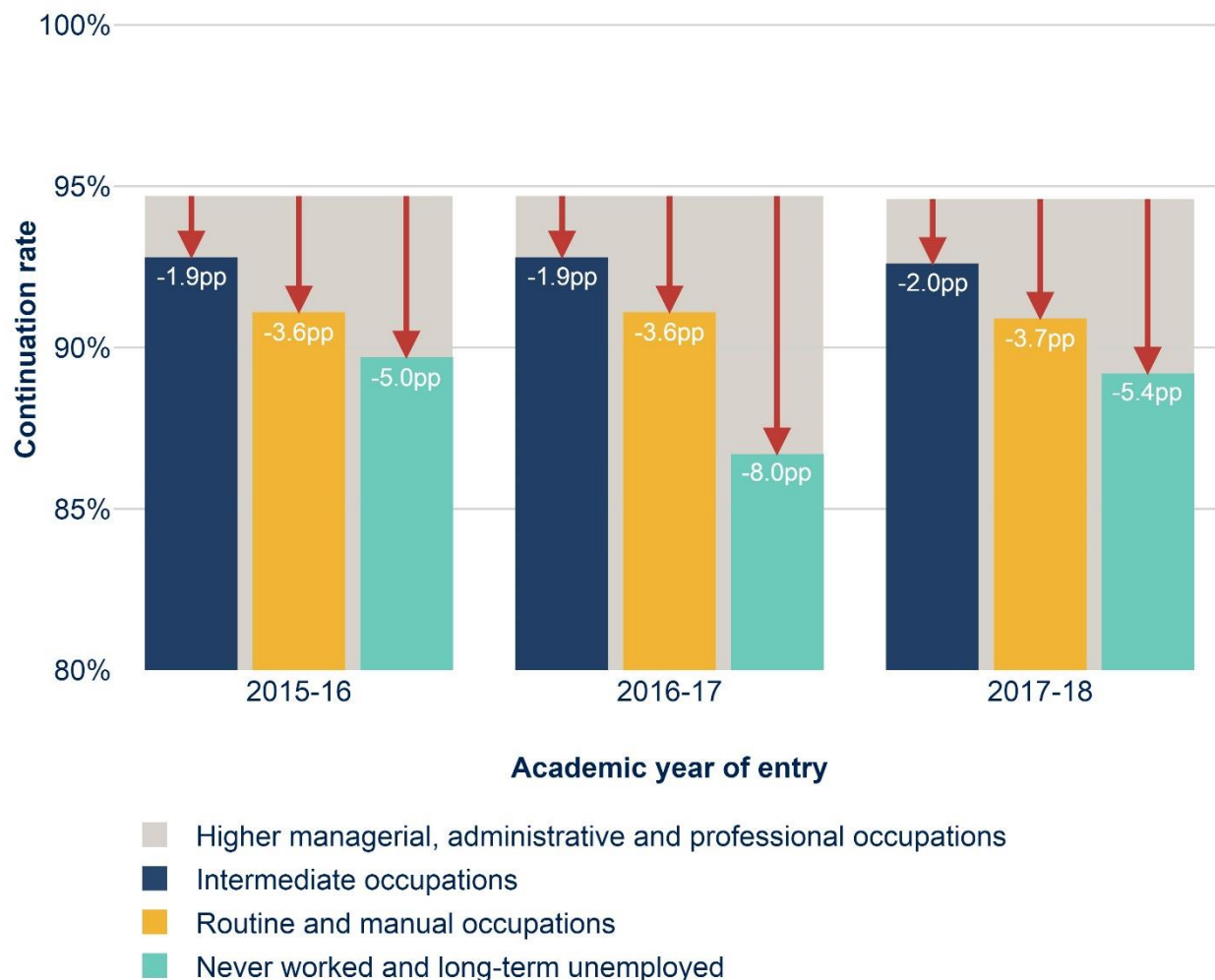
Sexual orientation – progression

- Insufficient data to calculate differences in progression rates by sexual orientation.

Socioeconomic background

- The background of a student, based on the occupation of their parent, step-parent or guardian who earns the most, which is used to assign them to a National Statistics socioeconomic classification (NS-SEC) group.
- Data from HESA and applies to students at providers that report data to HESA student record. Data considered useable for 2015-16 entrants and later. Applies to students who were under 21 when they began their qualification.
- Students whose parents work in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations consistently have the highest continuation and attainment rates, followed by students whose parents work in intermediate occupations, then students whose parents work in routine and manual occupations. Students whose parents have never worked or are long-term unemployed have the lowest rates.

Socioeconomic background – continuation



- Entrants in 2017-18 whose parents work in intermediate occupations had a continuation rate 2.0 percentage points lower than students whose parents work in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations.
- Students whose parents work in routine and manual occupations had a continuation rate that was 3.7 percentage points lower.
- Students whose parents have never worked or are long-term unemployed had a continuation rate 5.4 percentage points lower.

Socioeconomic background – attainment



- Qualifiers in 2018-19 whose parents work in intermediate occupations had an attainment rate 5.2 percentage points lower than students whose parents work in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations.
- Students whose parents work in routine and manual occupations had an attainment rates that was 8.6 percentage points lower.
- Students whose parents have never worked or are long-term unemployed had an attainment rate 21.5 percentage points lower.

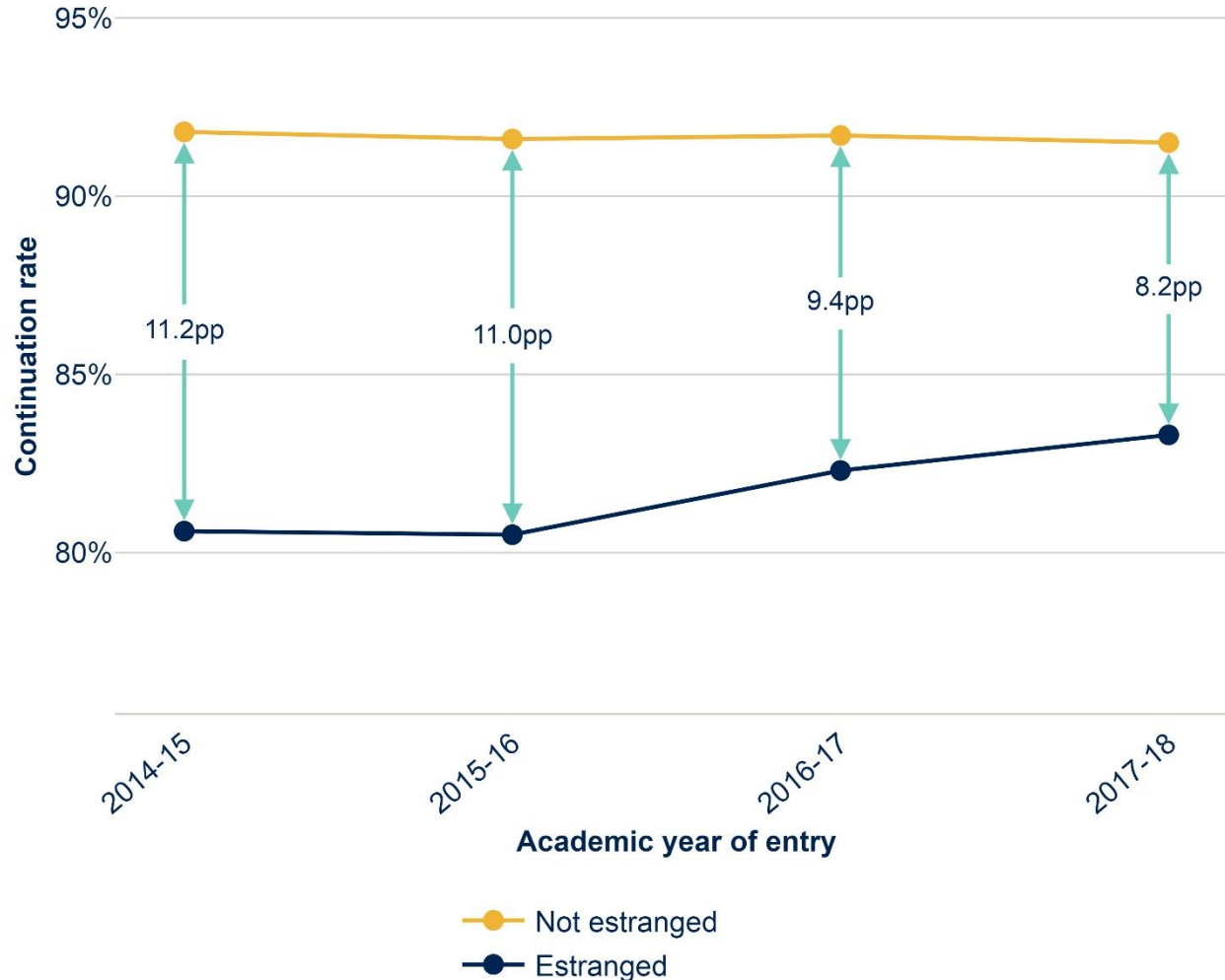
Socioeconomic background – progression

- There is insufficient data to calculate differences in progression rates by socioeconomic background.

Estrangement

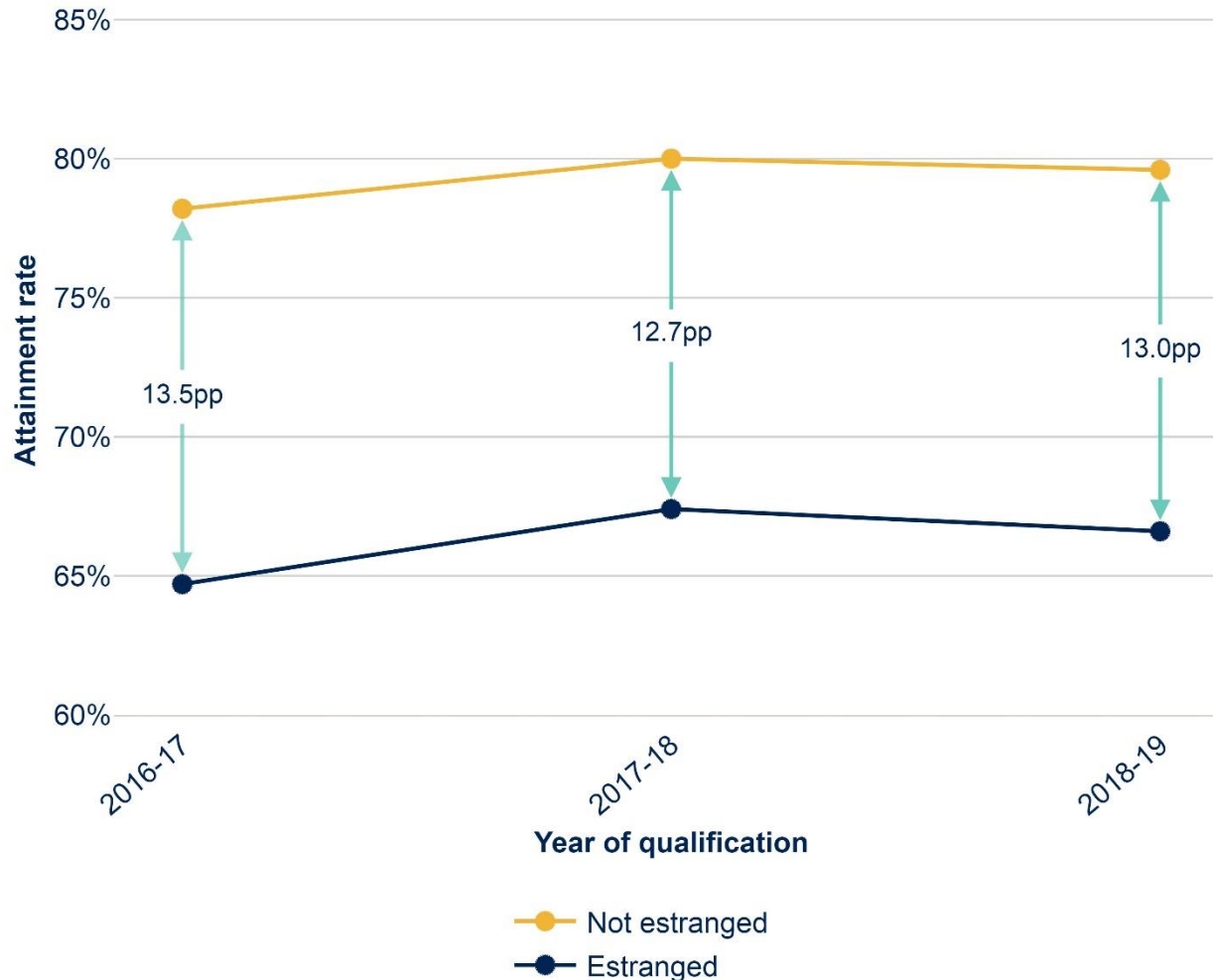
- Whether a student has been irreconcilably estranged from their parents for a substantial amount of time.
- ~ 3,000 students recorded as estranged enter higher education each year.
- Data from Student Loans Company for England, Wales and Northern Ireland-domiciled students. Linked onto ESFA's ILR and HESA's student record and student alternative record. Data used for 2014-15 entrants onwards.
- Estranged students have consistently lower continuation and attainment rates than students who are not estranged from their parents.

Estrangement – continuation



- Continuation rates are consistently lower for estranged students.
- Estranged entrants in 2017-18 had a continuation rate 8.2 percentage points lower than students who were not estranged.
- The continuation rates of students who are not estranged from their parents have mostly remained steady but the continuation rates of estranged students have increased so the difference dropped between 2014-15 and 2017-18.

Estrangement – attainment



- Attainment rates are consistently lower for estranged students.
- Estranged qualifiers in 2018-19 had an attainment rate 13.0 percentage points lower than students who were not estranged.
- The differences in attainment increased slightly between 2017-18 and 2018-19.

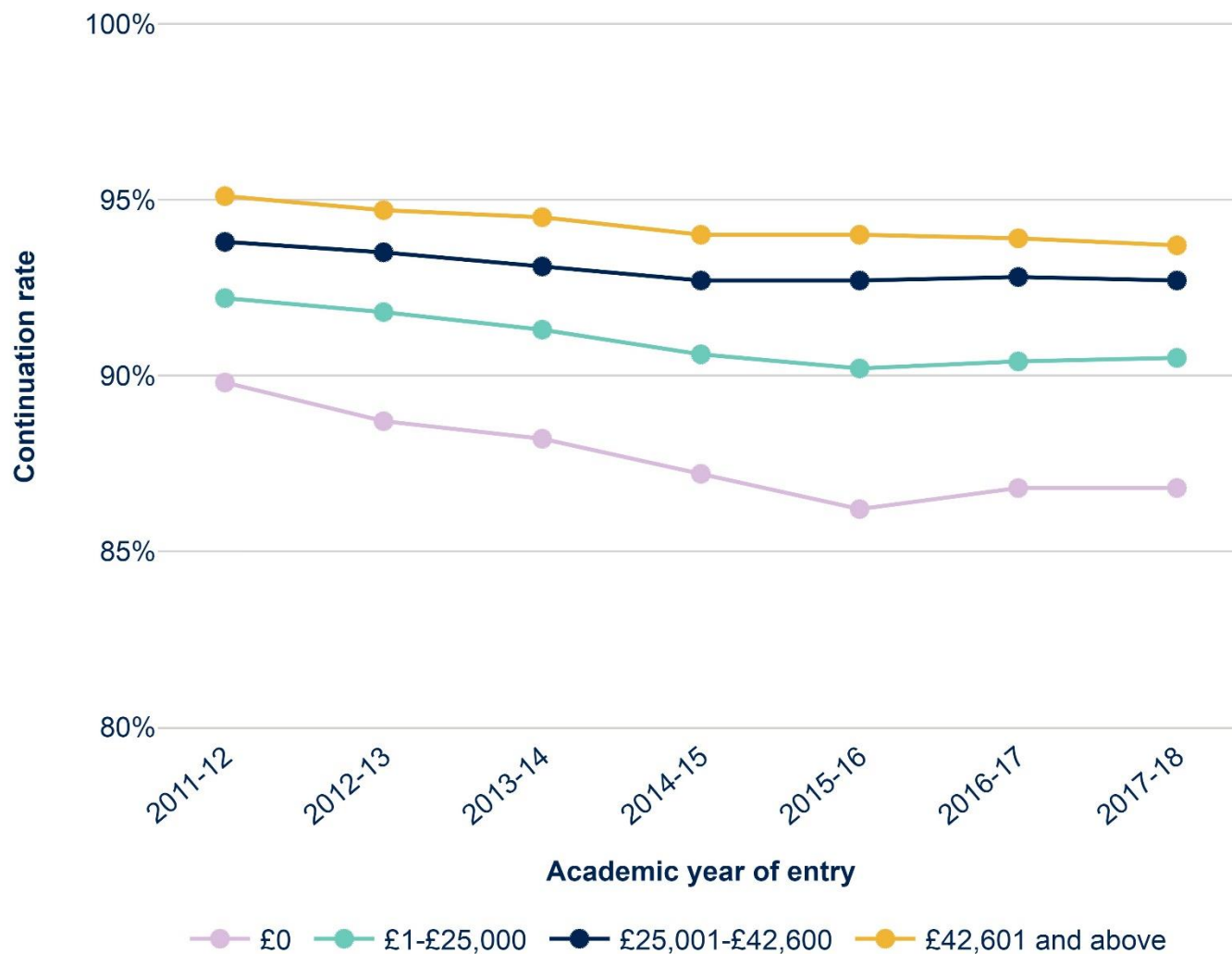
Estrangement – progression

- Only one year of data.
- Students who are estranged from their parents potentially have a slightly higher rate of progression into highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level compared with students who are not.
- The progression rate of estranged qualifiers in 2016-17 was calculated to be 0.3 percentage points higher than students who were not estranged.
- These statistics apply to small numbers of estranged students and a reduced population. Further investigation is required to determine the extent to which this reflects progression rates for estranged students.

Household residual income

- The income of the student's household after certain allowances have been taken into account. Specifically, these statistics represent a student's parental income prior to entering higher education.
- Data from Student Loans Company for England, Wales and Northern Ireland-domiciled students. Linked onto ESFA's ILR and HESA's student record and student alternative record. Data used for 2011-12 entrants onwards.
- Continuation, attainment and progression rates all increase with parental household residual income (HRI). In all years investigated, students whose parents have a HRI of £42,601 and above have the highest rates, followed by students whose parents have a HRI between £25,001 and £42,600, then those whose parents have a HRI between £1 and £25,000. Students whose parents were recorded as having a HRI of £0 have the lowest rates.

Household residual income – continuation



- Entrants in 2017-18 whose parents have a HRI between £25,001 and £42,600 had a continuation rate 1.0 percentage points lower than those whose parents have a HRI of £42,601 and above.
- Entrants whose parents have a HRI between £1 and £25,000 had a continuation rate 3.3 percentage points lower.
- Entrants whose parents were recorded as having a HRI of £0 had a continuation rate 6.9 percentage points lower.

Household residual income – attainment



- Qualifiers in 2018-19 whose parents have a HRI between £25,001 and £42,600 had an attainment rate 3.3 percentage points lower than those whose parents have a HRI of £42,601 and above.
- Qualifiers whose parents have a HRI between £1 and £25,000 had an attainment rate 8.2 percentage points lower.
- Qualifiers whose parents were recorded as having a HRI of £0 had an attainment rate 14.9 percentage points lower.

Household residual income – progression



- Qualifiers in 2016-17 whose parents have a HRI between £25,001 and £42,600 had a progression rate 2.9 percentage points lower than those whose parents have a HRI of £42,601 and above.
- Qualifiers whose parents have a HRI between £1 and £25,000 had a progression rate 5.0 percentage points lower.
- Qualifiers whose parents were recorded as having a HRI of £0 had a progression rate 7.6 percentage points lower.

Attainment and progression rates – worth noting

- Attainment and progression rates are included for students three years after the year of entrance for which the data is usable/available.
- This means the first year of attainment and progression data presented does not include students who completed their qualification in four years. Undergraduate with postgraduate component qualifications typically take four years to complete and have much higher attainment rates than first degrees.
- As such, differences between the first and second year of attainment and progression data will in part result from these additional students being included in the second year.
- The Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey used to calculate progression rates has been discontinued so the last year of progression data in the report was for 2016-17 qualifiers.