AccessHE

Higher Education awarding
gaps and ethnicity in London:
Going beyond BAME

An AccessHE Report
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AccessHE is part of London Higher

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Acknowledgements

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AccessHE

AccessHE is a key division of London Higher and the pan-London network supporting underrepresented learners to access and succeed in higher education (HE). AccessHE does this by facilitating collaborative outreach and student support work that brings together HE providers, schools, colleges and local government. It is the largest regional membership organisation of its kind in England, representing 26 HEI members.

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➜ Executive Summary

1. Background

It has been well documented in the higher education sector over recent years that a gap in terms of degree attainment exists between white students and those from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. This gap in attainment impacts on the graduate outcomes of students from BAME backgrounds and can lead to lower earnings and fewer chances of being in graduate employment. However, in terms of addressing such differences in social and economic outcomes across those from different ethnic communities it has also become increasingly recognized that the label BAME as a mechanism of orienting policy and practice has limitations.

This report examines the characteristics of degree awarding gaps in London Higher Education (HE) providers and between those from different ethnic communities as well as the reasons there may be for these gaps. It also suggests possible actions to address them. It tries, as far as possible, to take a more granular approach focusing on differences by specific ethnic group and going beyond the BAME label. It draws on data from the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) in degree attainment in 2018-19, analysis of Access and Participation Plans (APPs) for 2020-21 to 2024-25 of HE providers in London, a survey of London HE Providers and focus groups with students from non-white backgrounds studying at such providers.

2. Key Findings

2.1 Analysis of degree attainment data

- Across all London providers, 36% of white students achieved a First Class degree in 2018-19 as opposed to 19% of students from non-white group. 82% of white students achieved a First/Upper 2:1 as opposed to 58% of students from non-white groups.
- The percentage of students from non-white groups achieving a First Class degree differs significantly between groups however. It ranges from 36.56% for Chinese students to 16.85% for those from Black/Black British African backgrounds.
- While the differences between ethnic groups in First Class degree achievement is just under 20% from the least to the most successful group, at Upper 2:1 the difference across all ethnic groups is less than 3%.
- Across all London providers examined, the gap between black and white students in 2018-19 amongst those achieving First/Upper 2:1 is 15% - which is 7% lower than the gap identified nationally.
- However, the gap at individual providers with more than 2000 students between black and white students achieving First/Upper 2:1 ranges from 1% to 29%.
- While in terms of the First/Upper 2:1 gap there are five providers at which the gap is less than 5%, looking at gaps in the achievement at First Class level alone the average gap across these providers is 20%.
- Comparing Pakistani/Bangladeshi students and white students the average gap between those obtaining a First/Upper 2:1 is 15% and those obtaining First Class Degrees alone is 13%. The First/Upper 2:1 gaps ranges between different HE providers from 26% to 3%.
- Comparing Indian student to white students the average gap between those getting First/Upper 2:1 is 10% and those getting First Class degrees alone is 9%. The First/Upper 2:1 gaps ranges ranges between HE providers from 22% to 2%.
- Each ethnic group has its own distinctive attainment profile. For example, while Indian students are amongst the most likely to obtain a First Class degree, they are also the most likely (in percentage terms) to obtain an unclassified degree.

2. Key Findings

2.2 Analysis of Access and Participation Plan (APP) data

- Of the 38 Access and Participation Plans (APPs) produced by London HE providers and examined by AccessHE, 29 had a target related to closing the awarding gap between White and BAME students. Just under 50% had a target related to closing the gap between White and Black students while just under 30% had a target related to white and Asian students. Only one APP had a target that related to a specific group of Asian students which were those from Pakistani/Bangladeshi backgrounds.

2.3 Survey of HE providers

- In their understanding of the reasons for the gap, providers' responses differ between those that highlight wider contextual factors such as socio-economic background and those that focus on racism, lack of inclusivity in the curriculum and issues with staff awareness.
- Of the 12 providers who completed the survey, 50% had specific Key Performance Indicators related to addressing attainment gaps between ethnic groups.
- Responsibility for addressing degree awarding gaps was located at senior levels in all institutions either with a member of the senior leadership team or a senior strategic committee made up of leaders from across the institution.
- Providers who completed the survey are at different points in developing institutional approaches to addressing degree awarding between ethnic groups, with some undertaking significant amounts of activity. These activities include reviewing the curriculum, forming anti-racism or White racism affinity groups and working to develop 'co-produced' approaches with students.

2.4 Focus groups with students from non-White backgrounds

- Students consulted in this research by their peers were largely unaware of an 'awarding gap'. They were acutely aware though of differences in their student experience compared to that of white students.
- They were clear about the limitations in using the term BAME to describe them and to understand their experiences in HE. As one student stated when discussing consultation on 'BAME' issues – *'I feel like, at present, everyone is included in something that pertains to black students and I don't think it's helped us in any way'.*
- Students consulted felt supported by their teaching staff but felt they did not fully understand how the ethnic group a student belonged to shaped their higher education experience. As one student from a South Asian background said: *'It's hard when you're trying to plan your own life and your own future but you're not the same identity as them, and your next step is not going to be the same as them, in reality. But they push you in a direction, saying that anything is possible, when in reality, it's very different. And they can't do much for you even if they're lovely and supportive.'*
- Lack of diversity in teaching staff was seen as an important issue amongst the students consulted. It was felt to affect the ability of staff to relate to the challenges that students from non-White ethnic backgrounds faced.
- Some students consulted were able to identify 'micro-aggressions' which affected their student experience significantly, with such occurrences identified more frequently by Black than South Asian students in this particular sample.
- Students felt that they should be consulted to a greater degree regarding issues related to race and ethnicity. They also felt that information on financial support and events/initiatives related to ethnicity should be better promoted and that while there was a strong need to 'decolonise' the curriculum, this process would be far from straightforward.

Recommendations

- Each provider should analyse the differences in attainment between White students and those from each different ethnic group and publish the results on an annual basis.
- The Office for Students should adopt a more granular focus in establishing their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for access and participation separating differences in First Class degree achievement from those at Upper 2:1.
- The Office for Students should ask providers to construct, where cohort numbers allow, targets related to closing awarding gaps that are more granular and that relate to specific ethnic groups rather than using BAME as a category.
- The Office for Students should outline clearly how it will work with providers who have low numbers of students from specific ethnic groups and who may find it difficult to construct numerical targets, to ensure that they still adopt a granular approach to this issue.
- Providers should prioritise a structured, ongoing dialogue with students to produce 'co-created' approaches to enhancing student achievement focusing on working with different, specific ethnic groups.
- Further research is required to understand why there is clustering of students at Upper 2:1 level at London HE providers meaning gaps between ethnic groups in terms of degree attainment are very small here but large at other classification levels.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff need to be supported by providers to undertake professional development work that enables them to work as effectively as possible with student bodies made up of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- A pan-London initiative to address gaps in degree awarding and outcomes, bringing together HE providers, representative bodies, the Mayor's Office and other key stakeholders should be launched from 2021-22. The group should develop shared approaches to meeting this challenge.

Summary

This report shows that differences in HE attainment by ethnic background across between learners studying at London HE providers are pronounced, nuanced, ongoing and affect all providers. The analysis of data on degree awarding shows the value of trying, as far as possible, to take a granular approach and move away from comparing a group classified of BAME with White students. These differences in degree attainment were framed in some cases as primarily owing to the prior attainment of students before they enter HE. While prior attainment plays a big role, it cannot deflect from the need identified by students consulted in this report for HE providers to address what may be systemic cultural and structural factors within institutions that negatively impact on the degree attainment of students from different ethnic groups. There is evidence, gleaned from the survey of HE providers, of a range of activity being undertaken at senior levels to address degree awarding gaps by ethnic group.

HE providers now need to set aside concerns around hierarchy and competition and share knowledge regarding which of these activities are proving the most effective.

The Report

➜ 1. Background

It has become well documented in the higher education sector over recent years that a gap in terms of degree attainment exists between White students and those from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. This increased awareness and understanding of such a gap has led to a greater focus by higher education's regulatory bodies on closing it, with the current regulator, the Office for Students, making closing the gap in degree outcomes between Black and White students one of its access and participation targets. [1] Addressing this gap has also moved up the agenda of universities themselves. In 2019 Universities UK together with the National Union of Students (NUS) released a major report that sought to 'break down (racial equality) barriers and accelerate sector-wide progress towards eliminating BAME attainment gaps.' [2] The Office for Students released its analysis of targets in 2021–2025 Access and Participation Plans (APPs) submitted to them by 171 Higher Education providers (HEP). [3] There were over 200 targets related to addressing differences in degree attainment in these plans – more than there were relating to any other area of inequality in access/participation in HE.

While the commitments to address the gaps above come from a genuine concern to address inequality in HE, the term BAME used to frame this issue, has come under increased scrutiny in recent years.[4] This report attempts, as far as is possible at this present time, to focus on the experiences of specific ethnic communities rather than grouping such communities together under the BAME banner.

This report examines the characteristics of the degree awarding gap at London HE providers, considering potential reasons for these gaps and possible actions to address them. It draws on data from the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA), a survey of London providers and focus groups with 25 students from BAME backgrounds.
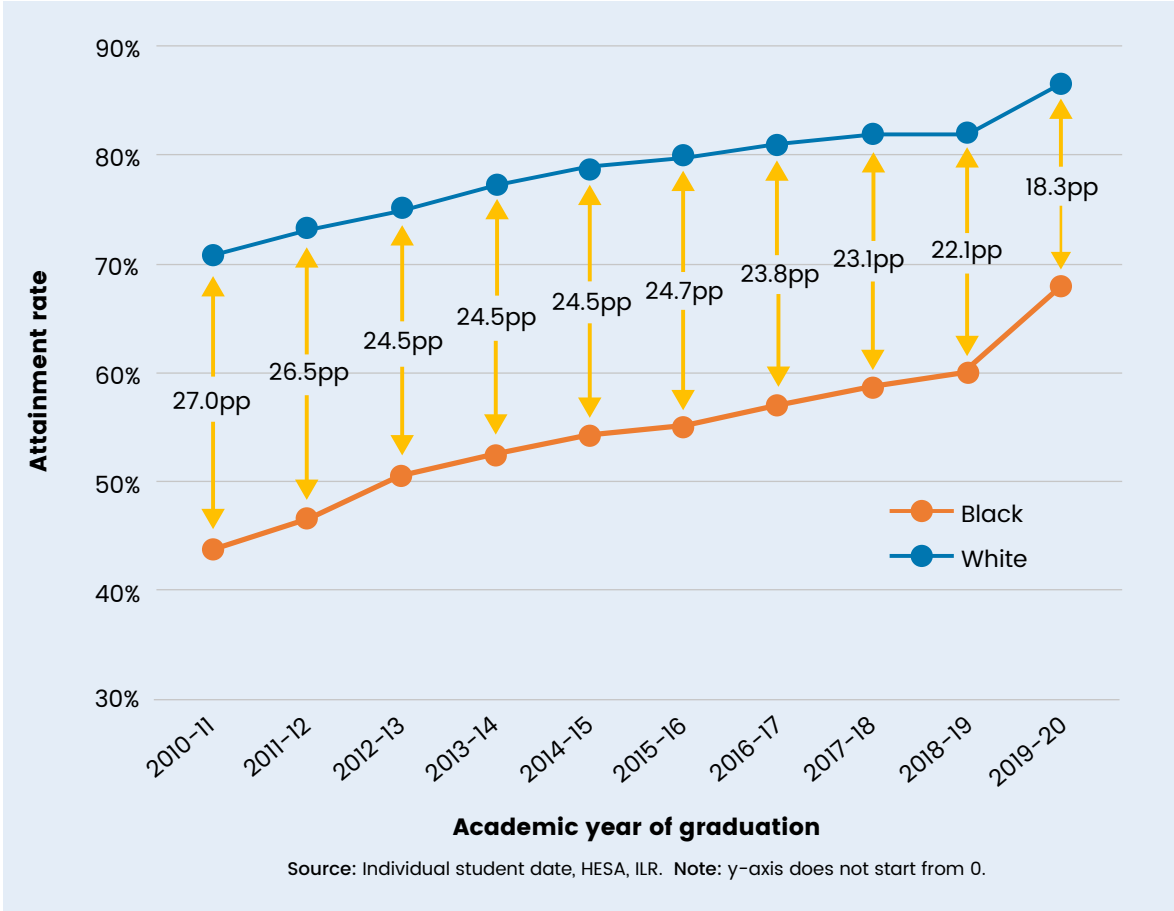
1. For more information: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/
2. Universities UK (2019) Black. Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities#Closing the Gap - https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.aspx
3. Office for Students (2020) Transforming opportunity in higher Education An analysis of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plans - https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/transforming-opportunity-in-higher-education/
4. Commission on Ethnic Disparities (2020) - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities

➜ 2. The BAME awarding gap – a national picture

Awareness of an awarding gap between White students and those from non-White backgrounds began to increase significantly from the early 2010s following analysis of degree outcomes undertaken by the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE). The 2013 report '*Higher education and beyond: Outcomes from full-time first degree study*',[5] tracked five cohorts of UK-domiciled, young, full-time first degree students over 2002–03 to 2006–07. It looked at differences in the chances of achieving a First/Upper 2:1 degree; achieving a degree and continuing to employment or further study; and achieving a degree and continuing to graduate employment (as opposed to any employment) or further study. It found that after controlling for prior qualifications on entry Black students were 11% below their expected level in terms of achieving a First Class or Upper Second Class degree. Indian students were around 3% below and other Asian students were 7% below their expected outcome.

Most recently the Office for Students (OfS) has made one of its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) eliminating the unexplained gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between White students and Black students by 2024-25, and eliminating the absolute gap by 2030-31.[6] Diagram 1 below highlights the extent of the challenge this target presents.

Source: Individual student date, HESA, ILR. **Note:** y-axis does not start from 0.

However, the issue is not just one of difference in degree outcomes between White and Black students. Table 1 below shows the difference in degree attainment between different ethnic groups. It also looks to take into account prior attainment of students before they enter HE. The observed difference is the difference that can be explained by the prior attainment level of the particular group. As the Table shows there is a considerable amount of 'unexplained' difference in attainment for each of the non-White groups described in Table 1.[8]

Table 1: Observed/Unexplained differences in attainment by ethnic background

Ethnic group	First or upper second class degree	Reference (white)	Observed difference	Unexplained difference
White	82.2%	82.2%	–	–
Black	60.4%	82.2%	–21.9pp	–17.3pp
Asian	71.7%	82.2%	–10.5pp	–9.5pp
Mixed	75.4%	82.2%	–6.8pp	–6.2pp

5. HEFCE (2013) Higher education and Beyond: Outcomes from full-time first degree study, HEFCE:Bristol
6. For more information see - https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures
7. For more information see - https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/

8. For more information see - https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/differences-in-student-outcomes/ethnicity/

➜ 3. Higher Education provision in London

London has the highest rate of HE participation of any region in England and by a considerable distance the largest number of providers. It also, as the region with by far the most ethnically diverse population, has the largest number of students from non-White ethnic backgrounds studying within it. Students from BAME backgrounds made up 51% of all UK students in London, compared with 21% of UK students at all other HE providers outside of London.[9] It is now the case that students entering HE from London are drawn predominantly from BAME backgrounds. Previous reports by AccessHE have shown that the percentage of young students (aged 18-24) entering HE in London from BAME backgrounds was 63% in 2016 and that this may rise to 73% by 2030.[10] Given the evidence showing that students from BAME backgrounds are more likely to live at home or study close to it,[11] is reasonable to assume that the student body of London providers will include an increasing number of students from minority ethnic groups into the future. The consequence of the above is that for some providers in London, the majority of their students are drawn from BAME backgrounds.

The size of the London HE sector and its ethnic diversity mean that if the Office for Students is to achieve its target of closing degree awarding gaps, then what happens in London is crucial. Existing research shows though that within London there are differences in completion rates by ethnic group. Research undertaken by the Social Market Foundation in 2019[12] showed that 13% of Black students withdraw from their studies in London as opposed to 8% of White students. However, the report also suggests that the non-continuation rate among Black students at London's HE providers is related to the attainment of students before they enter HE.

➜ 4. Methodology

Data was collected for this report in four different ways, which are detailed below.

4.1 Analysis of Access and Participation Plans (APPs)

All HE providers are required to submit an APP as part of their registration with the HE regulator, the Office for Students. The purpose of the APP is to set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, enabling them to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. APPs for the period 2020-21 to 2024-25 were submitted to the OfS in 2020. The APPs of 38 London HE providers were examined.

4.2 Analysis of data on HE attainment by ethnic group

Data on degree classifications of all undergraduate students in 2019 by ethnic background was obtained from the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA).

4.3 Focus groups with students from London HE providers

To establish the perspective of students a group of undergraduate students were trained as 'peer researchers'. They then led focus group discussions with other undergraduate students from BAME backgrounds. The focus groups ranged between 25 and 90 minutes in length, with 3 -5 students participating in each one. A total of 25 students participated in these focus group discussions. The peer researchers and those who were participants in the focus groups were drawn from five different London HE providers. The focus groups were recorded, transcribed and then analysed to identify key themes emerging from them.

### 4.4 Survey of London Higher Members

In order to understand better how different HE providers interpreted issues regarding degree outcome differences by ethnicity and how any differences were being addressed, an online survey was undertaken. This was distributed to the Heads of Institutions of over 40 London HEP who are members of London Higher. The survey was completed between August – October 2020.

9.   Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (2020) Students in Higher Education, 2018/19.
10. Atherton, G & Mazhari, T (2018) Preparing for hyper-diversity: London's student population in 2030, London:AccessHE –
     https://www.accesshe.ac.uk/yYdIx0u7/Preparing-for-hyper-diversity-Londons-student-population-in-2030.pdf
11. Donnelly, M & Gamsu, S (2018) Home and Away: Social, ethnic and spatial inequalities in student mobility. London: Sutton Trust -
     https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Home_and_away_FINAL.pdf
12. Petrie, K & Keohane, N (2019) Building on success: Increasing higher education retention in London, London: Social Market Foundation -
     http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Building-on-Success.pdf

➡️ 5. Understanding the challenge

This section draws on the analysis of APPs, the data obtained from HESA and the responses from the survey of London Higher members.

5.1 Access and Participation Plans (APPs) and awarding gap targets

As with the APPs submitted by the HE providers across England, the majority of APPs from London providers include targets related to addressing BAME degree awarding gaps. As Diagram 2 shows, it is the most common target in the APPs of London providers.

Diagram 2: Targets in Access and Participation Plans (APPs) 2020-21-2024-25 for London HE providers
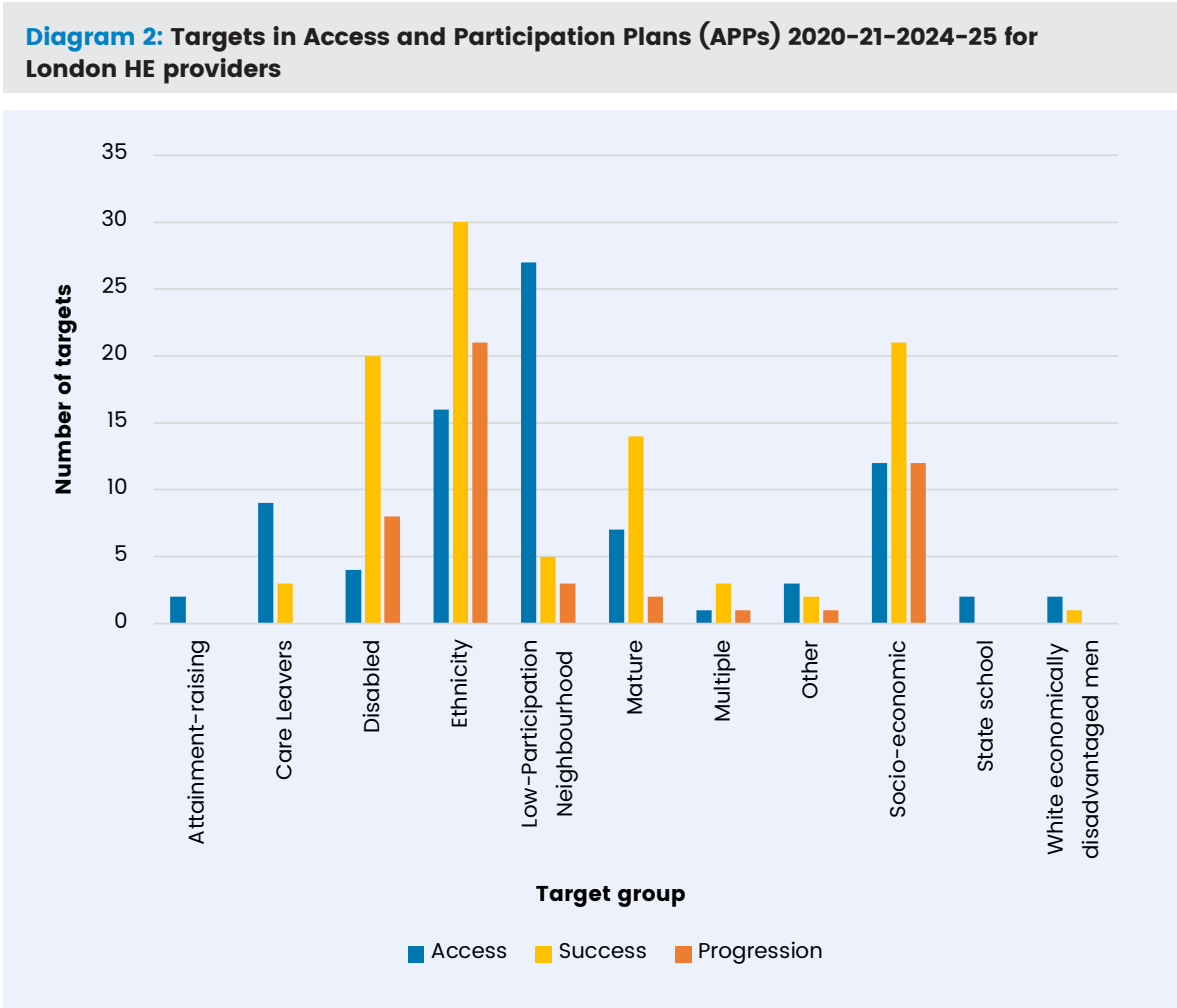
Of the 38 APPs examined:
- 29 had a target related to closing the attainment gap between BAME and White students or White students and a specific ethnic group.
- 20 had a target related to closing the attainment gap between Black and White students.
- 10 had a target related to closing the attainment gap between Asian and White students.

The analysis above shows clearly that addressing attainment gaps is a priority in the context of APPs, relative to other areas of focus in the plans.

5.2 Attainment gaps in London – what the data shows

The analysis of differences in degree outcomes across London providers will start by comparing White students and students from BAME backgrounds. As argued in the introduction, the BAME categorisation has limitations. Analysing attainment gaps for students from White and from BAME backgrounds and then taking a more granular approach highlights these limitations.

Gaps between different ethnic groups in terms of achievement of First Class/Upper 2:1 are examined, in keeping with the target set by the Office for S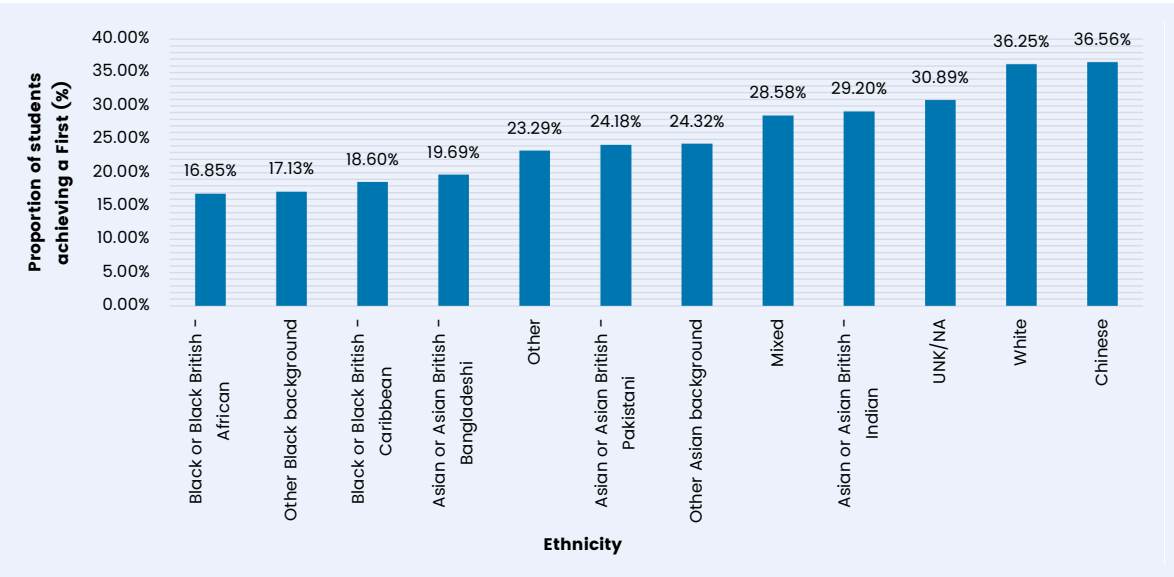tudents. However, gaps at First Class level only are also examined as some quite significant contrasts emerge between what the analysis of First Class/Upper 2:1 gaps and First Class gaps alone show.

Looking firstly at students from White and BAME backgrounds across all the providers examined, Diagram 3 below shows a percentage difference of students from each group who achieve a First Class/ Upper 2:1 of 14%. However, amongst those achieving First Class degrees the gap is larger at 17%.

Diagram 3: White and BAME students achieving First Class and Upper 2:1 degrees all London providers
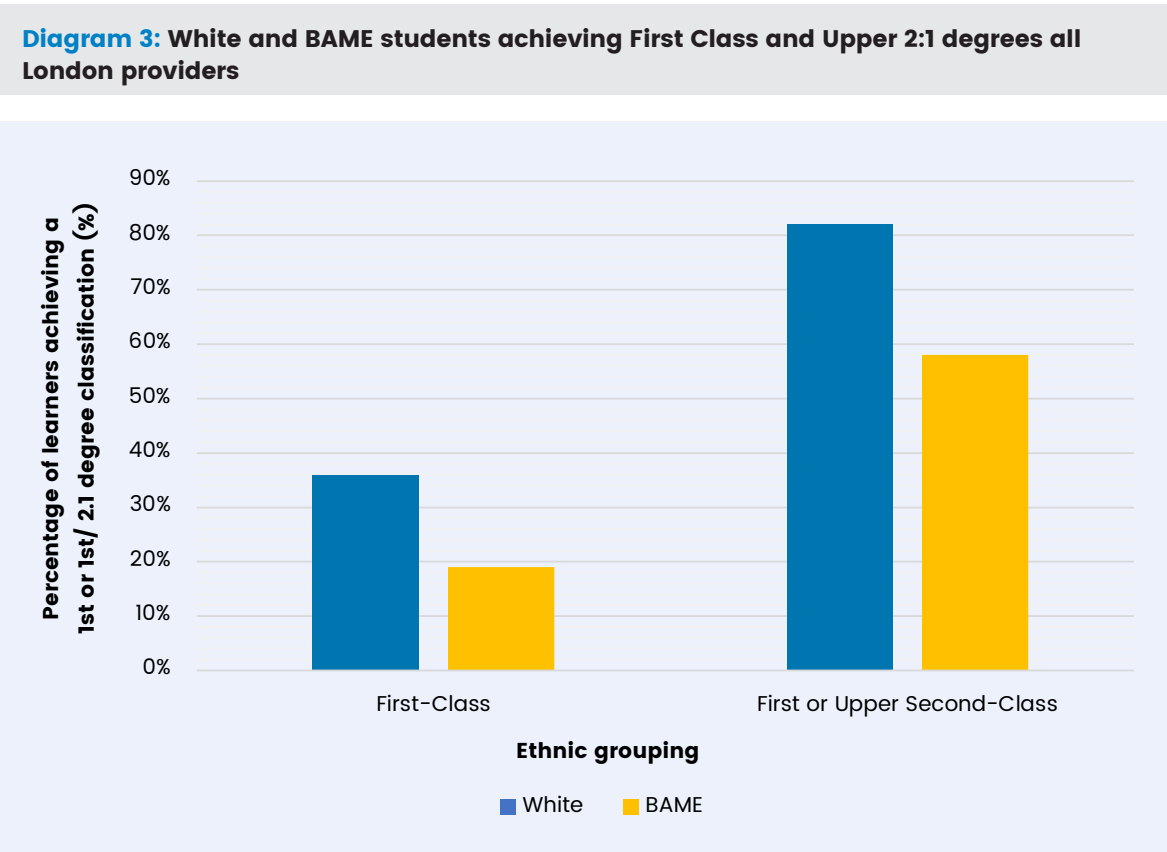
While the differences outlined in Diagram 3 are important, Diagram 4 shows the value of looking at attainment variations between specific ethnic groups.

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12. London Councils (2017) The Higher Education Journey of Young London Residents December 2017 - https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/children-and-young-people/14-19-young-peoples-education-and-skills/ypes-0
13. HEFCE (2017) 'The geographical mobility of students' Available at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/maps/mobility/mobdata/ (Accessed September 2018

Diagram 4: Students achieving First Class degrees by ethnic group across all London HE providers


It illustrates the distinct differences in achievement levels between groups of non-White students. However, the percentage of students from non-White groups achieving a First Class degree differs significantly between groups. it ranges from 36.56% for Chinese students to 9% for those from other Black backgrounds.

Black students, whether they are from Black African, Black Caribbean or other Black backgrounds are the least likely to achieve a First Class degree. White students are more than twice as likely to achieve a First Class degree than any Black student.

Diagram 5 below takes the pan-London analysis a step further and shows the degree classification profile of students from each ethnic group.

Diagram 5: Degree classification by ethnic group across all London HE providers
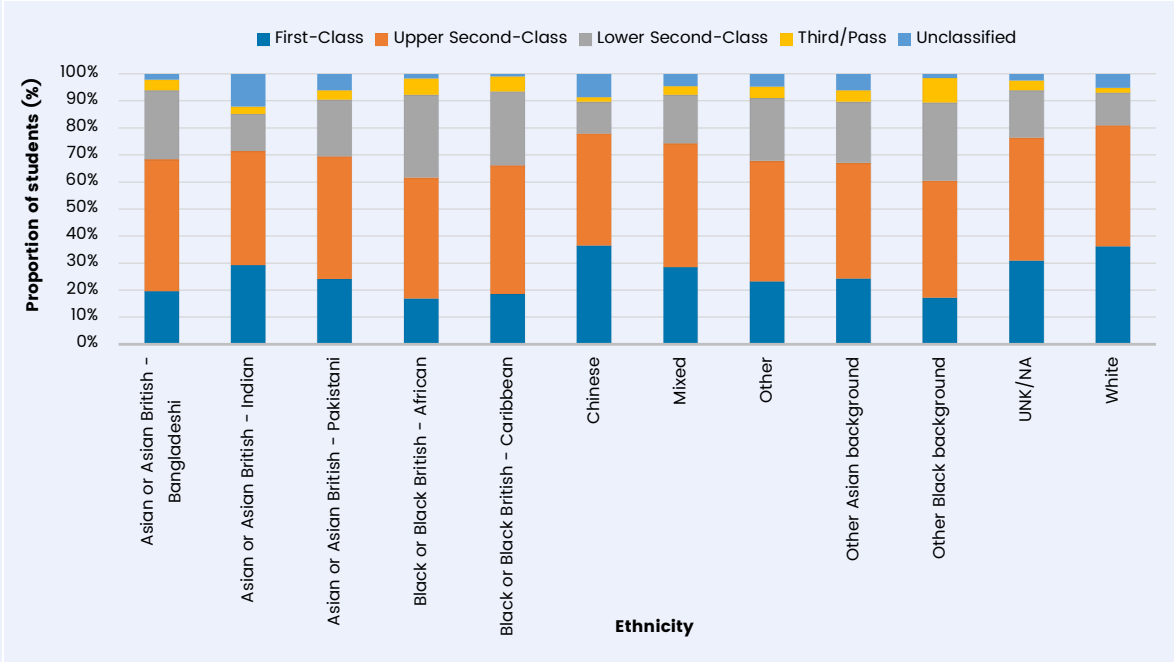
It is noticeable how few students across the providers examined achieved a Third Class degree – less than 5% of students (as shown in Table 1 below). There are some interesting differences by ethnic group highlighted in Diagram 5. Over 12% of Indian students did not achieve a degree classification and were unclassified. Yet at the same time, 29% achieved First Class degrees - an outcome only bettered by White and Chinese students. It is also noticeable how many Black students achieve a Third Class degree. Looking at the three categories of Black students, they are the groups with the highest proportions of Third Class degrees, ranging from nearly 6% of all students to nearly 10% of all students. Less than 2% of White students graduate with a Third Class degree.

Finally, looking at Upper Second Class degrees there is much less variation in terms of the percentage of students across ethnic groups achieving at this level, despite the significant differences at First Class level (shown in Diagram 3 above). The range of difference across all ethnic groups is from 41% to 48%. Comparing White and Black Caribbean students, for example shows that despite the large differences (18%) in the percentages of each group getting First Class degrees, the gap at Upper 2:1 is much smaller at just under 3%. To aid in the interpretation of Diagram 5, Table 1 represents the same data numerically.

Table 1: Degree classification by ethnic group across all London HE providers

Ethnic group	First Class	Upper 2:1	Lower Second	Third/Pass	Unclassified
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	19.69%	48.74%	25.52%	3.95%	2.11%
Asian or Asian British – Indian	29.20%	42.30%	13.62%	2.72%	12.17%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	24.18%	45.39%	20.90%	3.41%	6.12%
Black or Black British - African	16.85%	44.81%	30.54%	6.15%	1.65%
Black or Black British - Caribbean	18.60%	47.58%	27.29%	5.53%	1.00%
Chinese	36.56%	41.39%	11.78%	1.66%	8.61%
Mixed	28.58%	45.71%	17.98%	3.21%	4.52%
Other	23.29%	44.60%	23.12%	4.22%	4.77%
Other Asian background	24.32%	42.74%	22.56%	4.22%	6.17%
Other Black background	17.13%	43.30%	28.97%	9.03%	1.56%
UNK/NA	30.89%	45.58%	17.46%	3.56%	2.52%
White	36.25%	44.67%	12.07%	1.87%	5.15%
Average	**25.14%**	**44.73%**	**20.98%**	**4.12%**	**4.69%**

An important part of the pan-London picture is examining differences in degree awarding between providers. A productive starting point for this is looking at how London providers perform relative to the Office for Students' formal target concerning the BAME degree awarding gap, which is couched in terms of the difference in First Class and Upper 2:1 attainment between White and Black students.

Diagram 6 shows differences in First/Upper 2:1 and First alone for providers with more than 2,000 undergraduate students. Some smaller providers have quite low numbers of non-White students, which can impact analysis that looks at gaps in terms of the percentage of any given population, hence they are not included. Looking first at the gap across all these institutions in terms of First/Upper 2:1 degrees, at 15% (the average bar in Diagram 6) it is 7% less than the national gap shown in Diagram 1 above. Looking at the individual gaps by HE provider though, shows a very big range with the biggest gap at 30% and the lowest at 2%. Of the 24 providers included in Diagram 6; seven of them have a gap in attainment of over 20%.
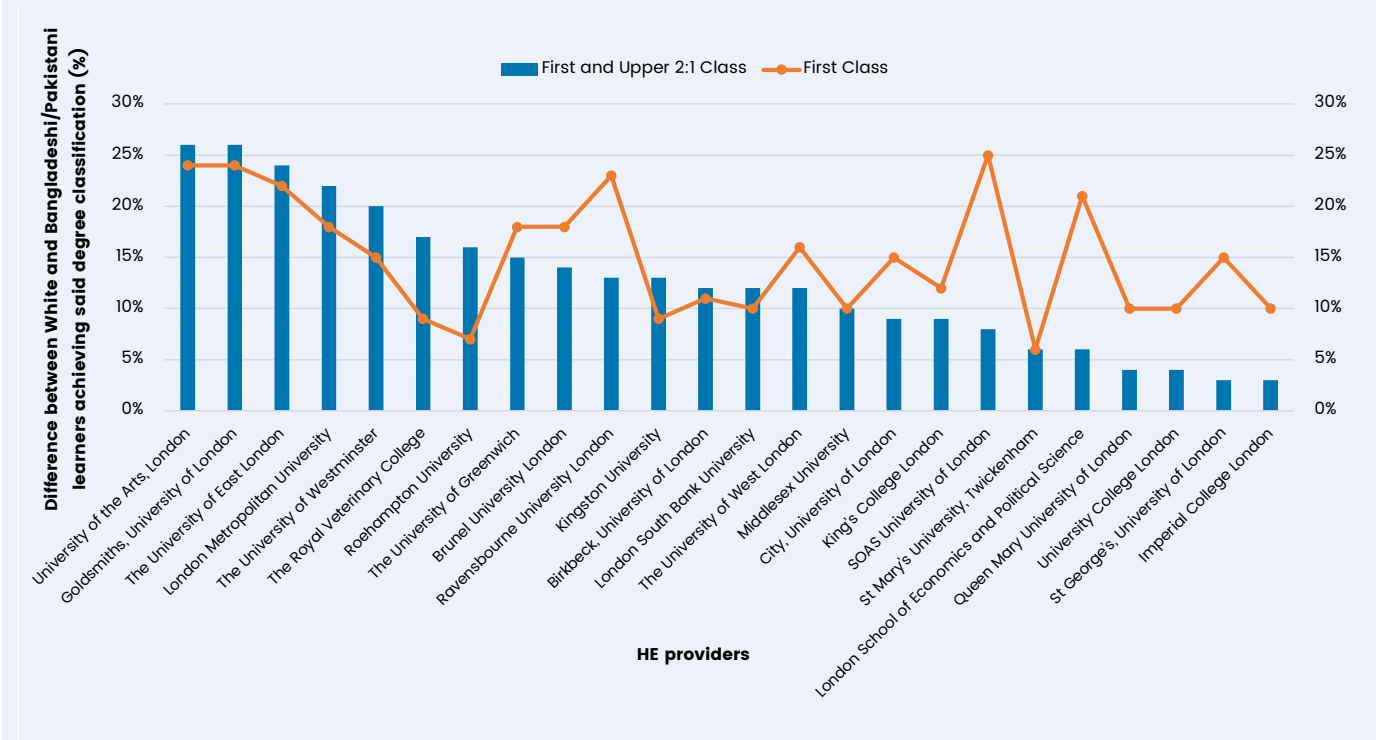
Diagram 6: Difference between Black and White students achieving a First/Upper Second Class degree for providers with more than 2,000 undergraduate students
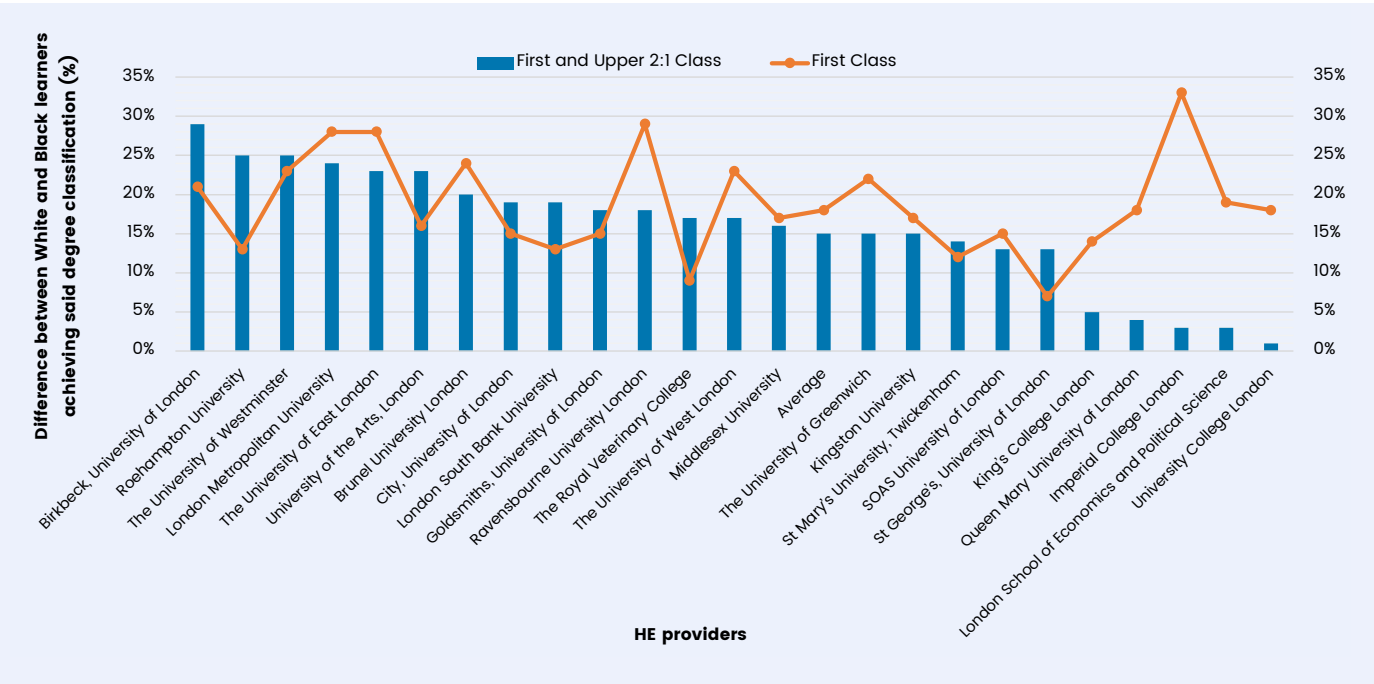
The five providers at the lowest end of the difference scale (i.e. where the gap is less than 5%) also share some common characteristics , including all being members of the Russell Group, while the other 19 in Diagram 6 are not. While, in these universities, gaps between Black and White students at First/Upper 2:1 level are very low, if we consider only First Class degrees, these gaps are far larger. This can be seen in the difference between the bar (First Class and Upper 2:1 degrees) and line (First Class). These differences are quite striking and highlight the need to separate analysis between First Class/Upper 2:1 gaps and First Class degree gaps. For these five providers, the gap at First Class/Upper 2:1 is less than 5%, while at First Class level the average gap across these providers is 20%.

Diagram 7 across shows the differences in achievement at First Class/Upper 2:1 and First Class alone between White and Bangladeshi/Pakistani students.

Diagram 7: Difference between Bangladeshi/Pakistani and White students achieving a First/Upper 2:1 Class degree for providers with more than 2,000 undergraduate students

As with the differences between achievement for Black and White students there is a considerable range in terms of these differences across providers; the First Class/Upper 2:1 gap ranges between providers from 26% to 3%. For Pakistani/Bangladeshi students and White students, the average gap between those being awarded First/Upper 2:1 is 15% and First Class Degrees is 13%. As in Diagram 6, the providers with the smallest gaps between Bangladeshi/Pakistani and White students in terms of First Class/Upper 2:1 achievement also have bigger gaps when just First Class degrees are examined.

Finally, Diagram 8 on the next page outlines the differences in achievement at First/Upper 2:1 and First Class level alone between White and Indian students.

Diagram 8: Difference between Indian and White students achieving a First/Upper 2:1 Class degree for providers with more than 2,000 undergraduate students
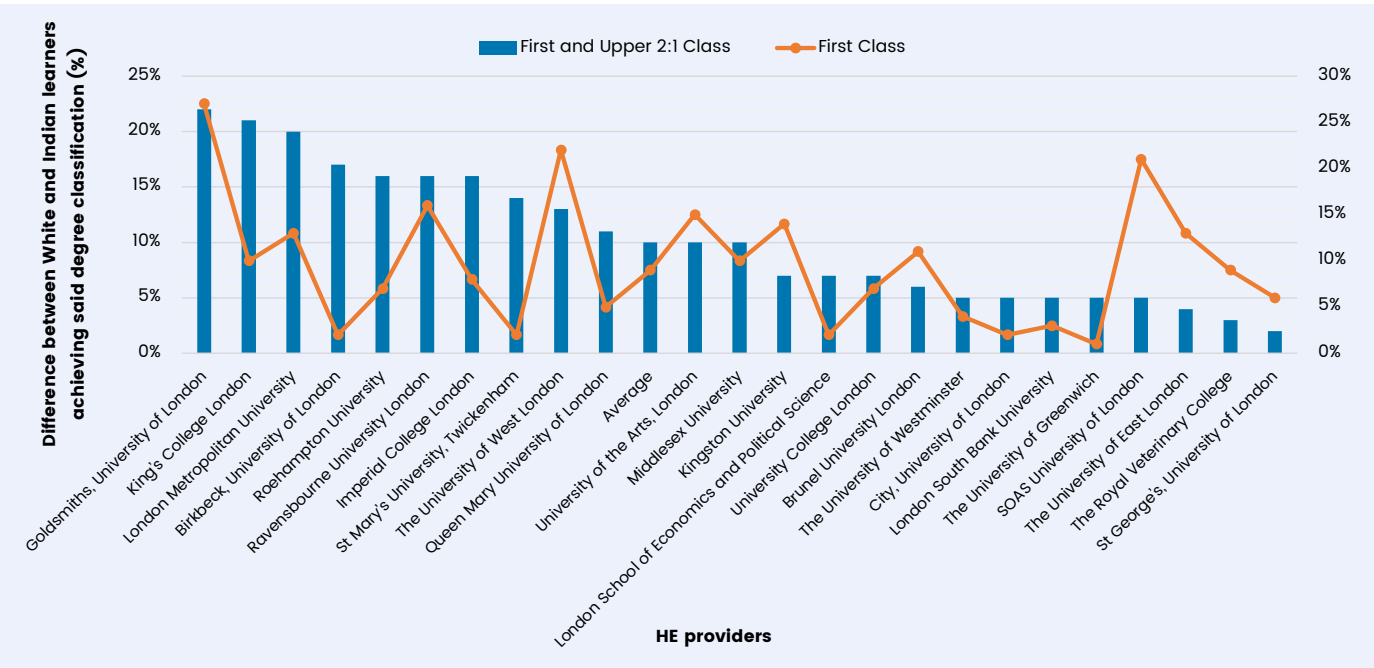
The relationship between gaps at First Class degree level and First Class/Upper 2:1 level is far more uneven than in the previous two diagrams. Comparing Indian students to White students, the average gap between those getting First /Upper 2:1 degrees is 10% and First Class degrees alone is 9%. This is lower than the gaps between White and Black/Bangladeshi/Paskistani students described above. The numbers of Indian students at several of the providers in Diagram 7 is very low, which may account to some extent for the bigger contrasts between the gap at First Class level and First/Upper 2:1 level compared to the contrasts in the above two diagrams.

Those providers with the smallest gaps at First Class/Upper 2:1 level (as with Diagrams 5 and 6) have larger gaps in terms of First Class degrees. Here, though, the contrast is smaller, with the exception of one provider. Also, the providers themselves differ. Diagram 7 emphasise the value of looking at gaps at First Class and Upper 2:1 separately.

5.3 Awarding gaps within London HE providers

The information available from agencies such as HESA will enable a provider-wide perspective on differences in attainment to be obtained. However, in order to guide effective practice a more granular understanding of differences across schools and programmes would ideally be available. Several survey respondents described these differences in their institution and these answers are below:

'This gap varies across Schools and Programmes, and the University average was 11% in 2018/19. One of our Schools has a gap as low as 1% for the School overall (although this varies across Programmes within the School), while other Schools have average gaps as high as 18%.'
City University

'The attainment gap is most prevalent in Arts & Creative Industries, which is also our least ethnically diverse school. Nevertheless, it is sizeable for all schools. The attainment gap is smaller between A-Level students (7% - 82% for White students v. 75% for BAME) than for BTEC students (16% - 68% for White students v. 52% for BAME).'
Middlesex University

'The highest gap is in Schools of Education and Communities and the lowest is in the School of Psychology. The range of the gap is 7.9% - 14.5%.'
University of East London

'There are differences in awards by ethnicity across almost every subject area, though the gaps are larger in some areas than others there does not appear to be any immediate patterns in terms of which subjects have larger gaps and we also see big fluctuations between each year.'

Brunel University The responses above highlight the value of collecting granular data within an institution and using this data to inform practice.

→ 6. Why do differences in attainment between ethnic groups exist?

In this section, the perspectives of the students who participated in the peer-led focus groups and the providers who responded to the survey will be explored.

6.1 The views of students

6.11 Knowledge of a gap and views on 'BAME'
Overall, students consulted knew little about the existence of any attainment gaps. Even when students did know about the attainment gap this was not something they learned from their universities. No students recalled a time when their universities had mentioned the attainment gap.

When told about the existence of an attainment gap between students from White and BAME backgrounds, some students felt it did not apply to their specific universities. Others felt that an attainment gap was inevitable, the structure of the education system.

'As far as British White people, they are from England, they have a lineage here and they speak the language, they can read, write and speak English. Obviously, that gives them a head start in this. They understand the system, the university system in this country. It's dominated by the people who created it, who were from a White background.'
South Asian male

On the whole, students felt that the term BAME was problematic. They made very clear that not trying to address the experiences of different, specific communities would result in a failure to tackle barriers (to attainment or otherwise), because experiences varied hugely by ethnicity.

'Trying to lump every issue of discrimination or racism or some micro-aggression to the whole community, as a whole, becomes slightly problematic. Because maybe, as a black male, the problems I might face are different from what maybe, a black female might face or maybe, a South Asian female.' Black male

6.12 The role of staff
On the whole, students felt comfortable with their academic tutors and lecturers. However, some students did feel that the lack of staff from non-White ethnic backgrounds was problematic.

'They always promote diversity and whenever they are, let's say, taking a picture, there's always diversity amongst the students. But in terms of the professors, the people who are in authority, they're never really that diverse.'

'I don't feel represented by the lecturers in all honesty. Most of our lecturers are all White. I think there's just probably, my personal tutor, she's Muslim and she's Arab and then there's just one other I think, one of the other lecturers who is Black.' South Asian female

'It's hard when you're trying to plan your own life and your own future but you're not the same identity as them, and your next step is not going to be the same as them, in reality. But they push you in a direction, saying that anything is possible, when in reality, it's very different. So that clashes and it's something that you have to deal with on your own. And they can't do much for you even if they're lovely and supportive.' South Asian female

"I felt like it was very difficult to try and have some sort of dialogue about Blackness or any sort of person of colour background because they wouldn't be able to understand where I'm coming from.' Black female

"I guess my lecturers that I see, there's like very few people of colour. I think I've only seen one Black person, Black lecturer, that taught me and he was different because I even scored higher in my essay with that person, which is weird." Black female

There were examples of students who were more overtly critical of the teaching they had received. One, South Asian male student described how he felt his lecturers had an "elitist mentality". One lecturer was quite dismissive and insulting when approached by this student, which may deter students from asking questions in the future and this could have clear consequences for their attainment.

"He didn't answer my question. He just looked at me and said, 'If you're asking me these questions, you're a hundred per cent failing my course.'"

Another Black male student reported that even his lecturers expressed surprise if he was successful in a task. "It's like oh, even from your lecturers, 'Oh wow, I'm quite surprised that you're able to achieve this.' Why would you be so surprised?"

The students also touched on their interactions with non-teaching staff such as particular counsellors and therapists at university. They commented on how the experience was affected by the ethnicity of the therapist. In some cases, students felt that it would be unlikely that a counsellor who was not from their ethnic background could advise them appropriately, due to not having a relevant understanding of their lived experiences and the cultural forces which shaped their lives. It was interesting to note that those from psychology or biomedical backgrounds felt that this would unlikely be an issue.

6.13 Institutional cultures
The views on initiatives such as Black History Month were mixed. Some students felt that there was very little to be achieved by such initiatives and that they could be perceived as a box-ticking exercise.

There was some concern around the way in which students were consulted on matters relating to diversity, or more specifically, the composition of students that were consulted on events specific to a given ethnicity. The consultation with every single ethnic group on BAME matters was considered potentially problematic. For example, one Black female student who participated in the focus groups said, "I feel like, at present, everyone is included in something that pertains to Black students and I don't think it's helped us in any way".

Among South Asian students, on the whole, the micro-aggressions they experienced appeared less apparent, compared with Black students.

When it came to reporting racism or micro-aggressions from lecturers, students were afraid that they could be penalised for speaking out.

"They (students) feel like if they address the issue when it comes to that professor, the professor might treat them differently, knowing that they had put a complaint against him or her. They might give them a grade they might not deserve or treat them differently compared to other students." Black male

6.14 The curriculum
While students felt strongly about the importance of decolonising the curriculum, they felt that it had the potential to go wrong. One student reflected on what she learned about Haiti on her politics course. She recalled that there was no other relevant references to colonialism as an example of how, "Decolonising the curriculum will bring more Black in to it, but not in a good way." Moreover, students went on to describe that even when history is taught by a Black academic, for example, there would be doubts about the authenticity of the course. This was because history would have been taught to Black academics from a White perspective:

'So what would we put in? Are we going to put in what they taught us about ourselves or what? You just don't know what's going to end up in there.' Black female

Related to this point, there was emphasis on the importance of who was discussing history from around the world in ensuring students were receptive to it. As one student said:

'….if the representation isn't there, people tune out.' East Asian female

In some cases, students felt that there were many nuances to consider when talking about decolonising the curriculum. One student explained that for some, decolonising the curriculum could mean removing all traces of colonisation and imperialism. A Black female respondent described how it could mean "leave(ing) out a bit of the corruption," or "add(ing) a spice of history, the nice stuff". The students agreed on the need to have a general consensus on what it actually means to decolonise the curriculum beyond "….some sort of ploy to make people happy," and how the scale of decolonisation could be measured, if at all.

In considering the different means through which the curriculum could be decolonised, the question of whether it was even possible was raised:

'I think the question I always have been asking when it comes to decolonising the curriculum, what is it to decolonise the curriculum? A curriculum that was made by people that did not want for us to learn. What is it to decolonise that? Can it be done? Is it another thing of dreams to say?' Black female

6.2 The view of institutions

6.21 Institutional practice and ethnicity
The answers regarding the reasons for awarding gaps related to ethnic background differed in length and detail. To an extent they resonated with the views of the students above. There was a division, though, between those responses that acknowledged and discussed issues of race and ethnicity and where these issues could be addressed, and those that preferred to focus on broader contextual factors. These factors included the apparent tendency for students from BAME backgrounds to take BTEC qualifications prior to entering HE.

'The issues are multifaceted and complex. Probably the most significant problem that has sustained the gap is the lack of awareness about the problem and when it has been discussed, colleagues have adopted a student deficit model. Unfortunately, when this perspective is the primary focus regarding this issue, colleagues have implemented interventions focused on fixing the student.

The approach of fixing the institution is one that we have adopted in the past year and we have seen tremendous results. The main challenge (which I acknowledge is not a limitation) is white fragility. Some staff do not understand the importance of this agenda and try not to engage for a range of different reasons.' University of East London

'Consultations with Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority staff and students have highlighted issues with assessment. In our Physiotherapy department BAME students have lower attainment in practical assessments, where the assessor watches the student perform a task and then grades them, when compared to White students. No such gap is evident for assessments where the student is unseen (e.g. a written essay or exam).'

In terms of curriculum, students (and staff) have noted that some subject areas focus on curriculum content which is euro-centric and focused on White communities/ scholars. Students have also reported having some challenges in relationships with other students, feeling as though they are subject to micro-aggressions which can gradually grind them down. Similar problems were also noted in their relationships with staff.' Brunel University

'There are a number of reasons for these attainment gaps including:
- *Lack of staff ownership of the issue alongside concerns about the credibility of the data.*
- *Reluctance to accept race as an explanation for the attainment gap – preferring a student deficit/socia-economic explanation and sensitivity around the topic.*
- *Lack of knowledge of BAME issues, agendas and curriculum inputs and confidence in working with BAME students.*
- *Difficulties reflecting on whiteness in the academy and a lack of BAME voices in the curriculum.*
- *Lack of knowledge on how to address the attainment and knowledge and skills (pedagogy) around inclusive practice'.*
Roehampton University

'(Reasons include)… institutional bias embedded in academic practice and conventions, insufficient understanding of anti-racism, lack of diverse curriculum, racial representation in senior staffing and academic appointments (although there is a lot of work being undertaken to address these issues)' London Metropolitan University

6.22 Role of prior qualifications and socio-economic background

As indicated in the answer above, there was an open recognition from some respondents that there was much more that their institutions needed to do ragrding awareness and understanding of issues related to ethnicity, and structures that may perpetuate gaps in attainment between groups.

However, for other students, the differences in entry qualifications between White and non-White students were highlighted as the key issue. Factors related to socio-economic background and being a 'commuter' student were also mentioned. Explicit reference to ethnicity and race are absent in the responses across.

'A key issue is type of qualification, with BTEC students clearly at a disadvantage compared to A-level students. Our curriculum and assessment regime still reflect the skills and strengths developed by A-level curricula. Socioeconomic factors are a key aspect as is a lack of sense of belonging in higher education and consequent lack of engagement with additional learning support.'
Middlesex University

'*There are [reasons] we can see and ones we cannot. The two biggest factors seem to be:*
- *BTEC or other qualifications (sometimes with lower grades).*
- *Commuter students (although this is a diverse group, so we can see some overlap between ethnicity, residency, earlier qualification, entry grades but commuting seems to be a particular powerful marker).'*
Royal Holloway

➡ 7. What could be done to address differences in attainment by ethnic background?

7.1 Views of students

The students consulted felt that universities had a major role to play in leading change around race and racism, and there were a number of suggestions regarding what could be done to support students from BAME backgrounds to achieve their full potential when in higher education. These suggestions are grouped together and outlined below.

7.11 Listening to students and creating inclusive environments
Students felt that university provided a place where people from a range of backgrounds were "*under one roof,*" and provided "*an unprecedented opportunity to leave your comfort zone.*" It was felt that the role of universities in preparing students for the world should include an understanding of tolerance and diversity.

'They're always saying how they are preparing us for the future, preparing us for the world, for the real world and if they're not giving us this, then what's the point? What are students paying for if it's not for opportunities and awareness and to learn things, more than just their field?'

Students referred to past instances where advances in women's rights were achieved by lobbying from students, and noted that "*university students have been part of a change in society*" – they felt it made sense that those who were actively engaging in education to open their minds were best placed to lead change. As the students commented:

'I simply ask for people to be paying attention, for people to be aware and for there not to be the presence of weak leadership. You set a precedent as someone who runs an institution. You set a precedent as someone who is holding a position of power. Set the correct precedent, set the correct tone in whatever capacity you have. That's your job and that's your role.' Black female

'I think if people higher up just sit down and listen, I think that would be a huge change, revelation, revolution in itself.' Chinese female

7.12 Making financial support for more accessible
There was a strong view that financial issues were often a major impediment to learning. However, the support available from HE providers was not as well-publicised as it could be. Students reported that a lot of their peers were not aware of the different types of support available to them. Similarly, the process of applying for support was described as off-putting.

"You can get a bursary because you come from a low income household and you have no idea about it, you're just going to suffer in silence, almost." Black male.

7.13 Promoting events and engagement on race via students
Students felt that invitations to events on diversity and other initiatives were too often sent out via mass emails from the university, in a way which failed to grab their attention. They felt a better way to ensure higher attendance and engagement around diversity, and in turn awareness, knowledge and understanding, was to ask students to promote these events. They felt it was more relatable to the invitees that way, and then they would be more likely to attend.

7.14 Enabling lecturing staff to strengthen their pastoral roles
Students felt that, in most cases, lecturers were mainly focussed on advancing research and education. There was a view that a greater focus on training teaching staff to develop their pastoral skills would be very beneficial. Such training could include greater awareness of issues relating to ethnicity and diversity.

'I think we've just got to get the lecturers to be willing to re-educate themselves and start from scratch. To have extensive time spent in understanding diversity to an extent. Or not being fearful of it.' Black/White female

Greater diversity in the staff was supported strongly by the students consulted, however they cautioned against increasing the diversity of staff without making a safe space for them.

"There's no use you saying you need to hire Black staff members if it's not a safe space for us to be in. That's something that is quite missed within the whole macro of ideas. When it comes down to the micro there is oversight, really, really big oversight." Black female

7.2 Higher Education providers: how are they trying to close the gap?

7.21 Making senior leaders responsible

Higher Education providers are complex organisations where responsibility for outcomes is diffuse by nature. This is beacuse the power to influence them is held at different levels. It is important, therefore, that it is clear who has responsibility for a challenge such as addressing the attainment gap between different ethnic groups. Table 2 shows where responsibility lies in the providers who responded to the survey. It illustrates that in several cases a member of the senior leadership team has designated responsibility for addressing the issue. It is also evident that in at least four cases, responsibility for these issues is integrated with that for access and participation issues overall.

Table 2: Responsibility for addressing the attainment gap between White and BAME students

University	Where responsibility lies
Central School of Speech and Drama (CDD)	Widening Access and Diversity Committee
London Metropolitan University	Member of the senior leadership team
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Member of the senior leadership team
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Dance and Drama	Principal chairs in access and participation meetings
University of East London	Dean of the Office for Institutional Equity
City University	Education and Student Committee, chaired by the Deputy President and Provost
Brunel University	The access and participation element of the work is overseen by the Vice-Provost (Education). The broader anti-racism work is overseen by the Vice-Provost (Students, Staff and Civic Engagement)
Roehampton University	Senior Vice Principal Education, Vice Principal Quality and Standards and Student Success Project board reporting direct to the Executive Board
St. George's, University of London	Ultimately with Vice Chancellor/Senior Leadership Team with devolved responsibility to Vice Principal Education, Heads of academic departments and Director of Student Engagement
Royal Holloway, University of London	Access and participation group
Middlesex University	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Learning & Innovation
University of West London	EDAG (Equality and Diversity group) and Access & Participation Plan (APP) Group

As well as understanding who is responsible for addressing this gap in a provider, the survey examined what they were responsible for. Of the twelve providers five had specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to addressing awarding gaps for different ethnic groups. These KPIs were specific to the provider, and differed in magnitude and timeframe. The University of East London (UEL), for example, had a target to close the attainment gap between different ethnic groups by 2028. For Middlesex University, in contrast, the KPI was to eliminate the good honours attainment gap between White and BAME students by 2030-31.

'In our five year plan, we set a KPI to narrow more than half the degree attainment gap between BAME and White students by increasing the outcomes of the former group by at least 2% annually. Therefore, by 2024-25, we aim to reduce the attainment gap from the current 19.6% to 9.6%.'
University of West London

7.22 Changing pedagogy and curriculum

In terms of actual work on addressing the awarding gap being undertaken by the providers who responded to the survey, it was clear that they were at differing points in the development and implementation of this work. The work of the providers who were more advanced in this process is outlined below.

"Our initial focus is on inclusive practice, and ensuring that inclusive practice approaches are embedded across all programmes at City. We are also mindful of inconsistent approaches to assessment which may have an impact on degree-awarding gaps experienced by our students. Through our work on the Race Equality Charter, we are aiming to review the impacts of bias and of the underrepresentation of BAME staff within academic departments, and how these can contribute to degree-awarding gaps. Above all, we are committed to continually working with students and staff to understand their voices, perspectives and experiences so that we can more fully understand the issues underlying degree-awarding gaps and other examples of differential outcomes at City.'
City University

'We are undertaking a range of activities including:
* *Transitional support*
* *Assessment review*
* *Development of an inclusive curriculum*
* *Personal tutoring curriculum*
* *Wellbeing integrated in the curriculum*
* *Employability support*
* *Working in partnership with the Students' Union.'*
Middlesex University

'Our activities include student-led curriculum reviews, specific work related to anti-racism (lectures etc.) and staff training. A new anti-racism working group has also been formed, along with new processes for data sharing internally and the funding action research at subject level.'
Brunel University

7.23 Intersectionality and working with students

Alongside the range of activities described above related to curriculum change, staff training and data collection, there were also examples of providers focusing on specific areas where action could potentially reduce these attainment gaps. As highlighted above, ethnicity interacts with gender, socio-economic background and other characteristics.

'We have conducted analysis on the extensive intersectionality that exists between ethnicity and other characteristics which influence attainment. We know that BAME students are more likely to live with parents and have longer commutes, more likely to have studied BTECs rather than A Levels and come from postcodes with IMD scores that reflect higher levels of deprivation. We also know that, while these factors are not enough to fully explain the gaps observed, they do offset them to some extent.'
Middlesex University

In addition, specific consultation with students was identified by all of the providers who completed the survey as an important area of attention for them.

'There is a student workstream to examine main concerns that will help to inform a review of Race Equality in the University. Also, students are invited to sit on groups such as the Attainment Working Group, and SU representation on a number of key groups. There have been a number of previous focus groups undertaken with students focused on understanding the student experience.'
St George's University London

'Activities have been co-developed with students and staff from a BAME background to ensure we understand the "lived experience" of those from BAME groups. Our APP Student Champions are actively consulted in the development, implementation and evaluation of the strategies/activities that have been developed to address attainment differences between certain groups of students.'
University of West London

'We take on board feedback to shape what we do going forward. Online discussion 'degree gap' sessions where hugely popular, so we have introduced a bi-monthly discussion session hosted by the Equity Collective (which is a group within the university that focuses on all things related to equity). This is for all staff and students. We have also introduced a new staff network called the 'White Anti-Racist / Affinity Group'. This is for White identifying staff to learn more about Whiteness and racism.'
University of East London

7.24 Examining institutional culture
Alongside the specific activities that providers who responded were engaged in, there was also evidence of attempts to consider how the broader culture of the institution could be changed in order to recognize the presence of an awarding gap related to ethnicity. This change could also function as a mechanism to address this gap.

'Through the establishment of a Centre for Equity, a suite of programmes on inclusion which seek to educate members of our community on race, racism and nuances of these issues. Through partnership events with the Students Union and through transparency with our students on the actions we are taking there is also visible and vocal championing of this agenda from the Vice Chancellor.'
London Metropolitan University

Since the fieldwork for this project was undertaken London Metropolitan University has launched an ambitious new £15 million Race Equity Strategy which will focus on increasing diversity in staffing, changing institutional culture, decolonising academic practices, and funding new research.[13]

'The conservatoire is oriented by ideas of preserving art forms which some view as problematic, even inherently excluding. Research is required to understand staff views of how diversity fits into conserving of art forms or relates to creativity. Some research suggests a problematic student culture focused on outdated cultural stereotypes.'
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Dance and Drama

➔ 8. Summary

8.1 Taking a more granular approach

This report shows that differences in HE attainment between learners studying at London HE providers by ethnic background are pronounced, nuanced and ongoing. The analysis of data on attainment shows the value of trying, as far as possible, to take a granular approach and move away from comparing a group classified as BAME with White students. The targets in the Access and Participation Plans (APP) of London providers reflect to an extent, a more granular approach but there is more to do here. The data shows clearly that there are gaps in attainment between White and Indian as well as White and Pakistani/Bangladeshi students, but only one APP has a target that relates specifically to Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi groups. There is a greater focus on differences between Black and White students, but such targets are only in half of the APPs examined. It is important to state here that the numbers of students in smaller providers in particular from specific ethnic groups may be very small making forming realistic targets difficult. Given these small numbers, as recommended below, the OfS needs to consider how it can ensure providers are still addressing the attainment gaps in a granular fashion even when student numbers are small.

Nor does addressing specific differences between particular ethnic groups come through as a dominant theme in the approaches that providers were taking to address attainment differences between ethnic groups revealed via the provider survey. This is not to say that those responsible for driving this issue forward in providers are unaware of how ethnic groups differ, but as the work of providers in this area develops it is crucial that bespoke work specific to the needs of different ethnic communities is developed as far as possible.

This analysis also demonstrates the importance of separating Upper 2:1 from First Class degress in trying to understand attainment differences. The gaps identified do matter. Students with First Class degrees compared to graduates with Upper 2:1 degrees and are more likely to be in graduate employment. Furthermore, research undertaken looking at the earnings of students born in 1970 and 1990 showed that the returns to a First Class/Upper 2:1 degree were as high as 20% for the older cohort.[14]

13. For more information – https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/news/pr-main-university-news-content-store-hidden/2021/march/london-met-launches-ambitious-race-equity-strategy

14. Petries, K (2020) Graduate Outcomes in London, London: Social Market Foundation – https://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Graduate-outcomes-in-London-March-2021.pdf
HESA (2020) How does the return to a degree vary by the class of award? – https://www.hesa.ac.uk/files/Return-to-degree-by-class-Summary-20200310.pdf

8.2 Making ethnicity and race central to understanding degree awarding gaps

The data presented in this report on awarding gaps between ethnic groups does not account for the qualifications that students enter HE with. There are limitations in what HE providers can do over a three- to four-year course to improve the attainment of students. However, this does not mean that attainment differences in HE by ethnic background can be entirely 'explained' by different groups' prior qualification levels and that there is nothing that HE providers can do to affect this. There are accounts in section 2 of HE providers undertaking comprehensive amounts of activity to address attainment gaps. This includes attempts to change deep-rooted institutional culture and practice which work against students from BAME communities. However, there were differences in the responses to the survey between those who framed the issue primarily in terms of institutional or staff culture and practice and others who framed it as one related to prior attainment and/or qualification entry routes. Understanding what data tells us about attainment in HE and prior qualifications is vital in constructing specific strategies

tailored to different courses, for example. But framing this issue, even if this not the intention, as one mainly out of the hands of HE is very problematic. This is demonstrated clearly by the views expressed by students in section 7.1.

The peer-led focus groups, as well as illustrating the importance of going beyond the BAME label, showed that ethnicity clearly shapes the student experience. Attainment gaps may have been something that the participating students were largely unaware of, but they could quite easily recall times when they felt their perspective had been ignored because of their ethnic identity, subjected to some form of micro-agression or struggled to see themselves in the curricula they were taught. These experiences did not necessarily imply that academic staff or institutions were unaware of diversity or racism, or that students did not recognize efforts were being made to address these issues. However, much greater consultation and engagement was needed, along with deeper changes in what HE providers do and who works at making these changes.

8.3 The importance of collaboration

Finally, the common message emerging from all three sections of this report is that if attainment gaps between learners from different ethnic backgrounds are to be reduced then collaboration and exchange of practice between HE providers in London is essential. The size and nature of these gaps may differ across providers but they exist in them all. Being serious about addressing them does not just mean investing in strategic change and addressing institutional culture. It means setting aside hierarchies and competition to recognize that no one provider has the answers on its own. A coherent initiative engaging stakeholders from across London including HE providers and others is essential if a city with one of (if not the) most diverse student populations in the world is going to support students to achieve their full potential.

➔ 9. Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Each provider should analyse the differences in attainment between White students and those from each different ethnic group and publish the results on an annual basis.

Recommendation 2:

The Office for Students should adopt a more granular focus in establishing their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for access and participation separating differences in First Class degree achievement and that at Upper 2:1.

Recommendation 3:

The Office for Students should ask providers to construct, where cohort numbers allow, targets related to closing attainment gaps that are more granular and refer to specific ethnic groups rather than using BAME as a category.

Recommendation 4:

The Office for Students should outline clearly how it will work with providers who have low numbers of students from specific ethnic groups and who may find it difficult to construct numerical targets, to ensure that they still adopt a granular approach to this issue.

Recommendation 5:

Providers should prioritise a structured, ongoing dialogue with students to produce 'co-created' approaches to enhancing student achievement for those from BAME communities

Recommendation 6:

Further research is required to understand why there is clustering of students at Upper 2:1 level at London HE providers meaning gaps between ethnic groups in terms of attainment are very small here but large at other classification levels.

Recommendation 7:

Teaching and non-teaching staff need to be supported by providers to undertake professional development work that enables them to work as effectively as possible with student bodies made up of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Recommendation 8:

A pan-London initiative to address gaps in attainment and outcomes, bringing together HE providers, representative bodies, the Mayor's Office and other key stakeholders should be launched from 2021-22 that develops shared approaches to meeting this challenge.