Creating
Connections

Social Mobility
PLEDGE

University of
Central Lancashire
UCLan

Foreword

I can't remember a time as a child, even at primary school, when I wasn't determined to get to university. I don't remember how I first became aware of universities and how they could extend my education after school or college. Somehow, somewhere, I got into my head that although no one else in my family had ever been, and we didn't really know what it would be like, I had a sense it was a very good thing that I definitely wanted to do.

As I went into secondary school, this dream of going to university changed from something I knew I wanted to do to something I felt I needed to do in order to have the sort of opportunities I hoped for. Growing up in Rotherham in the 1980s, with a lot of unemployment locally, strongly underlined that if I was to get better opportunities for myself, education was the way I could put myself in the best position possible.

Looking back I was single minded about my studying, but I can now see that, for other people, it could be different. Maybe they never see the graduation photo of someone in the paper that grabs their attention and fires their ambition. Perhaps their family isn't supportive or because no one's been before the question of going to university never really comes up. Maybe there are just plenty of jobs locally that pay a reasonable wage so, although I'd felt it was crucial for me, for others it feels like there's no real need to go on to higher education to be able to earn an income. Although I was able to spread my wings at 18, for others there are all sorts of wider responsibilities that mean that's just not possible.

Those are all reasons why a person may end up not going on to higher education. But none of them relate to that person's potential to be able to do so in the first place.

We should have choice in our education system. If people make an informed choice not to go onto higher education, that should be respected. But what's vital is that choice exists in the first place. So when universities work in communities to make choice available, then they can play a crucial role in a person's life.

The reality is that for some it's about having that choice right on their doorstep and then having a sense that they can go on to a fulfilling career locally too, one recognised and valued by a far wider community.

It's often hugely overlooked how vital the role of many universities is in driving the talent pipeline for those employed in the public sector and for key workers, especially in the NHS. The relentless focus on graduate earnings wrongly downgrades the importance of many healthcare and allied services roles that are utterly key for local communities and their economies.

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) has shown through the development of its Burnley campus how both these issues can be tackled together. The Burnley campus has widened out access to higher education for a broader community which in many cases won't have the chance to go on to higher education unless it is on the doorstep. It is playing a crucial role in ensuring that going to university is a real choice for people in that community, working alongside further education and local schools. However, it also has a double bonus for people locally. It doesn't just mean more opportunity on the doorstep, it also means public services like the NHS can have the well-trained professionals they need, staffed by and representative of the local community it serves. And COVID-19 has made it ever more clear that healthy people are a pre-requisite for a healthy economy.

The UCLan Burnley campus is educating people who are otherwise often furthest away from a level playing field on opportunity. It enables them to fill those critical vacancies which are vital to local public sector employers not just in the NHS, but also others, including the police service and teaching. Not only do these professions offer excellent careers for people, there is a wider importance that key workers in public services in the area reflect the local community.

The effort and thinking that sits behind what the Burnley campus offers, how it educates and the support it provides have a real impact on levelling up in its region. For anyone still of an old-fashioned mindset of a university as an ivory tower, it is a million miles away. By contrast it is about hard work and commitment at a grass roots level that is changing lives for the better, year by year.

Other universities can rise to the challenge in the same way. There is no doubt that progressing the levelling up agenda is fundamental to Britain's future and a far wider effort is needed to combat Britain's weak social mobility. But many of those solutions will need to be locally tailored and owned if they are to succeed. The work that UCLan is pioneering in Burnley can provide a template for others to look at how to tackle inequality, fill crucial key worker vacancies in the NHS and other public services and encourage genuine diversity in the organisations that underpin this country.

Foreword

It gives me immense pleasure to write a Foreword to this Report on Social Mobility which underlines the significance that the University of Central Lancashire places on active social mobility through its values, Strategy and practices. It is central to our identity as an institution and an area that we continually strive to improve.

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) has been at the forefront of creating opportunities since its inception in 1828 as the Institution for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. It has been just over a year since I returned here as Vice-Chancellor and I was delighted to find that the commitment to transforming lives and to widening access and participation was as strong as ever.

As the University embarks on a new chapter in its long history, with the creation of a new brand and a new Strategy to take us through to our 200th anniversary in 2028, I am confident that we will reaffirm our commitment to being a civic university and retain our motto 'Ex solo ad solem' (From the Earth to the Sun) to capture the ethos and spirit of a progressive institution that welcomes students from all backgrounds and believes in opportunity for all. We will also redouble our efforts to support the economic, social, and cultural development of our region.

The Social Mobility Pledge provides an excellent platform both to profile our commitment to social mobility and to create focused action to help to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on some of the most deprived communities in the United Kingdom most in need of levelling-up.

This is particularly true of our Campus in Burnley, which serves a population of over half a million residents in East Lancashire, and has grown rapidly in recent years providing courses that are relevant to the current and emerging needs of the East Lancashire economy. This includes a significant focus on training key workers through our delivery of courses including Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work.

Our Opportunity Action Plan for the Burnley Campus recognises that the University's contribution goes beyond delivering teaching and producing graduates. It includes:

- accelerating the development of the Campus;

- investing more in raising aspirations within our communities;

- enhancing our further education partnerships to create even greater access and opportunity;

- developing our course portfolio so that more residents have the confidence to enrol on a degree course at their local University;

- building on our employer engagement so that local companies can benefit from the University's research and innovation and improve their competitiveness and productivity by recruiting our graduates.

Further, the Opportunity Action Plan will enable us to review and renew our commitment to active social mobility across the entire University portfolio. Our Campuses in Preston, Burnley, Westlakes and Cyprus are located in their own distinctive settings and we will work with our partners in each context to support social mobility.

Finally, I want to take the opportunity to thank the Rt Hon Justine Greening and all those involved in the Social Mobility Pledge campaign for assisting the University through this process and for their contribution to the national agenda. We look forward to playing our part by strengthening our own commitment to active social mobility.

Professor Graham Baldwin
Vice-Chancellor, UCLan

The UK's Social Mobility Problem

Social mobility is typically measured as the difference between a person's occupation or income and that of their parents. When there is a weak link, there is a high level of inequality, while a strong one suggests a low level of social mobility[1].

Social mobility levels in the UK have been stagnant for years. This means that those born into deprivation are statistically likely to remain in those circumstances throughout their lives[2]. *A Broken Social Elevator? How to Promote Social Mobility* reports that, given current levels of inequality and intergenerational earnings mobility, it could take at least five generations, or 150 years, for the child of a poor family to reach the average income, on average, across OECD countries. One in three children with a low earning father will also have low earnings while, for most of the other two-thirds, upward mobility is limited to the neighbouring earnings group.

Unsurprisingly, this is not uniform across the globe as social mobility has different rates in different countries. It can take just two to three generations to reach that average income in the Nordic countries but nine or more in some emerging economies.

Globalisation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution have successfully helped to reduce extreme poverty and eradicate famine. While celebrating that success, however, it cannot be denied that the flipside is that they have also deepened inequalities by transferring low-skilled jobs in high-productivity sectors in high-income economies to lower-income counterparts.

The OECD's report also highlighted that, whereas many people born to low-educated parents between 1955 and 1975 enjoyed income mobility, this has stagnated for those born after 1975.

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1. "About us - Social Mobility Commission - GOV.UK." https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/social-mobility-commission/about. Accessed 28 Nov. 2019.

2. "State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain." https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662744/State_of_the_Nation_2017_-_Social_Mobility_in_Great_Britain.pdf. Accessed Nov. 2019.

3. https://www.socialmobilitypledge.org/news/2019/2/2/class-diversity-at-work-worse-now-than-decades-agonbsp

Over the four-year period looked at by the report, about 60 per cent of people remained trapped in the lowest 20 per cent income bracket, while 70 per cent remained at the top.

At the same time, one in seven middle-class households, and one in five people living closer to lower incomes, fell into the bottom 20 per cent.

This is borne out by the Social Mobility Pledge's own research which reveals that, in the UK, young people are finding it harder to progress in the workplace than their parents or grandparents did.

Its study[3] of 2,000 people revealed that most UK workers believe breaking through the 'class ceiling' is harder for young people now than it was for earlier generations. A majority (60 per cent) of workers aged 35 to 64 believe economically disadvantaged people in the generation below them have a harder time advancing their careers than those one generation older.

The poll also asked thousands of workers aged between 18 and 64 to score how easy it is to get on in life, regardless of background, in the UK, with one being 'very hard' and 10 being 'very easy'. An average score of five was registered, although a quarter of those polled rated it 'hard' or 'very hard'.

Getting on as a disadvantaged young person is either 'difficult' or 'very difficult', according to the majority (54 per cent) of respondents, rising to 62 per cent in London.

Only 44 per cent of respondents said progressing in life regardless of background is easier in the UK than elsewhere in the world.

Universities are crucial in facilitating an individual's route to better opportunity and, at the same time, improving the communities in which they are located. It is important for us all that they adapt and consider new ways of working to make sure opportunities are directed at those who need them most. In a recent report by the Social Mobility Commission, research shows that graduates are three times more likely to participate in workplace training compared to those with no qualifications. Universities are key to facilitating those initial links with employers to ensure that their graduates are well prepared for the workplace.

The Social Mobility Pledge has been set up to highlight and address these issues in the UK and, in doing so, to level up opportunity and build a fairer society. It encourages organisations to be a force for good by putting social mobility at the heart of their purpose. By sharing their own best practice with other businesses and Universities, they are not only demonstrating their own commitment but creating a powerful shift towards purpose-led organisations.

Opportunity Gap

The impact of coronavirus across locations, ages and education levels also has an impact for social mobility in the UK.

Our research shows that eight of 14 measures used to calculate social mobility will be impacted. We have used existing place based social mobility analysis together with the predicted impact of coronavirus to examine the size of a community's 'Opportunity Gap'.

From our analysis we believe there are 16 areas in England at risk of a 'double opportunity hit'. Already amongst the worst areas for social mobility, they are going to be particularly badly affected by coronavirus. Those in the top 20 per cent, with the largest opportunity gap are referred to as COVID Opportunity Coldspots.

This opportunity deficit overwhelmingly impacts people from more disadvantaged communities and backgrounds and the gaps start opening up from the very start. Coronavirus widens that opportunity gap for young people at every stage of their formative years and it is becoming clear that we are at risk of a lost generation.

The impact on those in the education system in these more disadvantaged communities is obvious. Education closes the gaps between the life chances of different young people. Research by the Sutton Trust showed that underpredicting of grades of BAME and disadvantaged young people is significantly more likely to happen than for their better off counterparts. Unfortunately, this year's A Level results confusion has shown that they are precisely the group that has suffered the most. That inevitably harmed their chances of getting into the university they were aiming for and those higher education institutions will find themselves on the front line in trying to prevent a further widening of the opportunity gap.

For those relying on part-time work that is now no longer available, university may even become unaffordable. Other students may have previously found it a struggle but nevertheless managed to balance study with wider family and financial responsibilities. For those already on a course, it may mean they simply cannot afford to see it through to the end and drop out. This would be a dramatic backward step on social mobility.

UCLan's experience, detailed in this report, demonstrates that it is possible to improve outcomes for their students, despite the many barriers that exist for them.
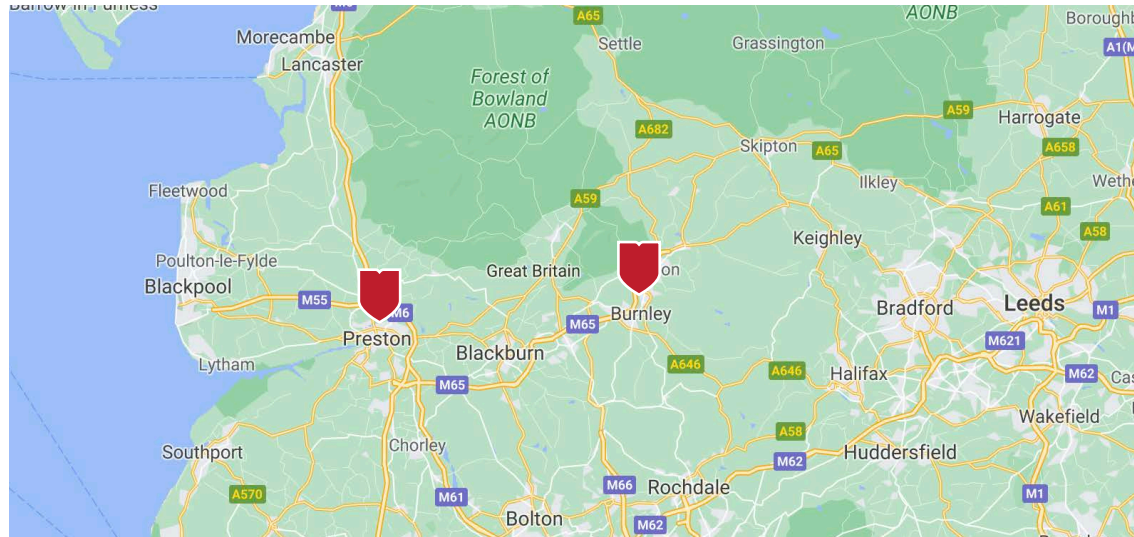
It shows how it has provided an effective place-based solution in the area, enabling students to improve their life chances by equipping them with the skills to fill local jobs, especially in the NHS and wider public sector.

This report contains insights into best practices which have worked well and which have had a positive outcome for students. It features case studies which illustrate the impact that its approach has had on individuals as well as analysis focusing on the community in which it is located.

The Opportunity Action Plan also considers how UCLan might develop its work further with the NHS locally and encourage other universities to consider a similar approach. It also suggests possible next steps and recommendations for further action.

Coronavirus

The Office for Budget Responsibility's COVID Reference Scenario predicts that the UK economy will contract by 35 per cent, with unemployment potentially peaking at 10 million.

But, just like the issue of social immobility, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic is varied across the UK. While the 35 per cent national average figure is high in itself, it is the case that some areas – predominantly in the North West and Midlands – will see their economic growth reduce by almost 50 per cent. Only one of the twenty hardest hit areas is in London and the South East.

In addition to the significant diversity of geographic impact estimated by the Centre for Progressive Policy, the Resolution Foundation points to previous data suggesting that there is likely to be a large impact on those leaving full-time education and graduating into an economy in the midst of turmoil.

In the 2008 recession, the unemployment rate across the whole population rose from 5.2 per cent in 2007 to 8.5 per cent in 2011; for those with GCSE-equivalent qualifications the unemployment figures were 22 per cent in 2007 and 32 per cent in 2011.

Large numbers of young people are now in the jobs market having had their career pathways significantly disrupted. One in three young people under 25 are employed in the three sectors most affected by the pandemic: travel, hospitality and retail. It has the potential to leave a long-term legacy of unemployment and will certainly impact those from disadvantaged backgrounds and on low incomes the most.

Coronavirus has shone a spotlight on the inequality that already exists and data suggests that it will have a varied and profound impact across locations, ages and education levels. It is clear that the businesses and Universities which do best as we recover from the crisis will be those that have stepped up to the mark in recent months for their students, employees and communities. We need them now to lead the way in delivering solutions and sharing best practice.

Introduction

The University of Central Lancashire, UCLan, based in Preston, has a history steeped in an ethos of inclusion and social opportunity.

It grew out of The Institution for the Diffusion of Knowledge, founded in 1828 by Joseph Livesey's Temperance Society, which was itself founded by seven Preston working men.

Under the endowment of a local lawyer, Edmund Robert Harris, this gradually expanded throughout Preston and became a regional centre for the arts and sciences.

At the close of the 19th century, the Victoria Jubilee Technical School (later known as the Harris Institute and now known as the Harris Building) was built, with the aim of providing local youths with a technical education in all areas. In 1932, the Institute changed its name to the Harris Art College. It underwent further expansion and in 1952 became the Harris College. In 1973 this became Preston Polytechnic then the Lancashire Polytechnic in 1984. In 1992, full university status was awarded as the University of Central Lancashire.

The University is now the UK's 19th largest in terms of student numbers, with a staff and student community of nearly 38,000. It is on an urban campus in Preston, with others in Burnley and Westlakes in West Cumbria. A campus was opened in Cyprus in October 2012.

UCLan has students and researchers from more than 100 countries and partnerships with 125 international institutions, including a base in China's Shenzhen Virtual University Park.

UCLan has 98 professors, over 600 research or knowledge transfer-active members of staff, and 763 research students. There are 246 Honorary Fellows of the University.

In 2010, UCLan became the first UK modern university to appear in the QS World University Rankings. In 2015 the Centre for World University Rankings placed UCLan in the top 3.8% of all worldwide universities, highlighting the progress it has made in providing students with real-world learning experiences and reflecting the institution's broad pool of academic talent.

The University boasts strong links with employers, including British Aerospace, Rolls Royce and Cisco Systems, and offers business incubation facilities and training for students after graduation.

UCLan has been at the forefront of developing degrees in emerging disciplines such as fashion and forensic science, of which it is now the largest higher education provider in the world. More recent additions include dentistry and undergraduate medicine, which is being delivered in the UK's newest medical school.

Best Practices

Background

The University is committed to enabling all people to fulfil their potential and meet their life and career goals. However, while working with students from all backgrounds, it is conscious that some face greater challenges in accessing and succeeding in higher education.

It therefore focuses its access and participation work particularly on students from neighbourhoods with low HE participation and high deprivation, BAME students, mature students, disabled students, care-leavers, carers, students who are estranged from their families, students from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, students who are refugees and students from military families.

It has a high proportion of students who have BTech qualifications rather than A-Levels and so have had a greater exposure to applied learning and many students who will have been working before they realised they wanted to pursue higher education.

This means the University has had to adopt and mix different teaching approaches. This brings its own challenges but also has advantages in that students can benefit from the cross fertilisation of experience and background that is available. This is further enriched by the input of international students from more than 100 different countries.

UCLan's analysis shows that it has been successful in widening access. In 2017/18, the participation gaps at UCLan for full-time students from the least represented group - using the POLAR 4 measure compared with the proportion of 18 year olds within the population from these areas - were 3.1pp for first degree students, 7pp for other undergraduates, 3.2pp for all undergraduates and 1pp for those on undergraduate courses with a postgraduate component.

The analysis shows that, for full-time students, UCLan makes a significant contribution to the access agenda at sector level.

The data also suggests that further increases in numbers of students from the lower quintiles using either measure should not be actively sought, as this would risk creating an opposite imbalance.

The gaps in continuation between the most and least represented groups have reduced over the ast five years for all groups at UCLan, other than he 'undergraduate with postgraduate component'. The numbers in the latter category are small and the gaps are not statistically significant.

The data also suggests that UCLan makes a positive contribution towards equality of opportunity at sector level. Its evaluation indicates that its bursary schemes contribute to this. UCLan provides a significant level of financial support to enable students to focus on their studies, rather than the need to earn money, which offers them a better chance of succeeding during their time there. Use of the OFFA evaluation toolkit has shown that students with low incomes who are receiving financial support are more likely to continue into the second year of their course, less likely to cease study without gaining a qualification and slightly more likely to obtain a first or upper-second class degree.

Feedback from students in receipt of financial support indicates that this is highly valued and makes a significant difference to some students' ability to stay the course.

The proportion of full-time Asian 18-year-olds at UCLan has increased over the past five years from 14.4% to 20.6%, compared to an overall population level of 8.2%. The entry rate for every ten thousand in the population reached a high of 55 in 2017-18, the highest rate for all ethnic groups.

Over the past five years, the proportion of Black students at UCLan has fluctuated markedly, from a low of 2.3% in 2013-14 to a high of 4.5% in 2014-15, falling thereafter to 3.1% in 2017-18. During this period, the proportion of Black 18-year-olds within the population was 3.6%.

The proportion of students with mixed ethnicity at UCLan has grown from a low of 2.2% in 2013-14 to a high of 4.8% in 2017-18, while the proportion within the population was 3.2%. The proportion of the population with an ethnicity described as 'other' has been 1.1% during the last five-years, while the proportion at UCLan has fluctuated, but with a slight growth over the period from 0.5% to 0.6%.

The white proportion of the population at UCLan has fallen from 80.4% to 70.9%, against an overall population of 84%. In Preston and the Lancashire wards closest to the University campuses, the BAME population accounts for up to 26.8% of the population, so at least some of this gap is attributable to local demography, but the University is conscious of wider concerns around participation levels among white working class males, so its monitoring, evaluation and analysis work will explore this.

At UCLan, none of the gaps in continuation rates by ethnicity were large or statistically significant over the past five years but the University is working to increase continuation rates generally and is aware that this could be more effective with some groups than others and will monitor this to ensure gaps are not created.

The gaps in attainment between white and black students have reduced over the past five years at UCLan. The gaps in attainment between white and Asian students at UCLan have fluctuated over the period but this is not a homogenous group, so data at this level can be misleading and qualitative data is being gathered to facilitate appropriate interventions.

In progression to employment, gaps appear to have increased over the last two years and a statistically significant gap has emerged between white and Asian students. Further analysis of the data has shown that those Asian students who are in employment or further study have higher rates of graduate level employment than white students, so it may be that these students are more able to delay taking up employment until they secure higher level jobs. UCLan will continue to monitor this to ensure all graduates are able to achieve strong progression rates.

The proportion of full-time mature students (age 21 and over) at UCLan was 38.8% in 2017-18 and has increased over the most recent five-year period. The proportion amongst part-time students was 89% in 2017-18. UCLan therefore makes a positive contribution to access for mature students.

Continuation rates for full-time mature students (all undergraduates) at UCLan have improved over the period, rising from 84.7% to 86.4%. Continuation rates for part-time mature students have been lower, but have also risen from 71.5% to 77.7% over the same period.

Attainment rates for full-time mature students (all undergraduates) at UCLan have also improved over the past five years, from 68% achieving a first or upper second class degree in 2013-14, to 71.3% in 2017-18, albeit with a drop in the rate between the two most recent years. For part-time mature students, the UCLan picture shows a rate of 62%, however, there has been a marked drop between the two most recent years.

Rates of progression to employment or further study for full-time mature students at UCLan have shown considerable improvement over the past five years, rising from 71.4% in 2012-13 to 82% in 2016-17. For part-time mature students, the picture is even more favourable, with 90% of UCLan students progressing to employment or further study in 2016-17.

The proportion of full-time disabled students at UCLan in 2017-18 was 13.6%. Changes for different types of disability have been small (all lower than 1%). However, for part-time students, the proportion of disabled students at UCLan is low and saw a marked fall between 2016-17 and 2017-18 from 9.9% to 6%. This pattern is similar across all types of disabilities. This will be an area to explore further to identify effective measures to increase numbers.

None of the gaps in continuation rates at UCLan between disabled and non-disabled students have been statistically significant over the past five years. When looking at specific types of disability, it is apparent that students with multiple disabilities are more likely to leave their course early, followed by those with mental health issues. Continuation rates for both of these groups have improved in recent years following changes in support services, however rates for those with cognitive and learning disabilities have declined. Those with sensory medical and physical disabilities have continued at a slightly higher rate than those with no disability in three of the last five years.

UCLan has seen a marked increase in the numbers of (self-declared) care leavers studying over the last five years and outcomes for care leavers studying have improved significantly in recent years. Following identification by its Student Support Service and the Students Union of the specific needs of students who are also carers, UCLan has provided specialist support to such students in recent years. It has recently started to collect full data on the numbers of students impacted.

Similarly, UCLan has recently identified the additional support needs of students who are estranged from their families and has put support packages in place. Last year it supported a total of 54 students. The University's work with military veterans has highlighted barriers to access and success in HE faced by those from a military background so it has now started asking students to declare this background during enrolment so that it can start to make an assessment of issues in this area.

Widening Access

UCLan takes an evidence informed approach to change and has a long history of success in widening access to underrepresented groups. It is core to its mission and values and features strongly in its overall University Strategy which is to create an inspirational student experience, enabling everybody to fulfil their potential. It aims to achieve this through a whole-institution approach.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: UCLan is strongly committed to fulfilling its equality and diversity responsibilities across the full range of its activities. It will promote equality, diversity and inclusion by providing diverse entry routes to its degree courses with interventions and support to ensure students achieve their full potential, regardless of prior attainment.

Learning and Teaching Strategy: UCLan's strategy outlines the importance of a curriculum which is accessible to all with the potential to succeed and which is inclusive, applied, flexible and sustainable. These elements are monitored through academic governance, recognised through university recognition schemes and shared and celebrated at university and faculty level events. The Student Experience Strategic Change Programme is a vehicle to lead activities which will enhance access, participation, and outcomes for all students.

Pennine Lancashire Strategy: As part of UCLan's Pennine Lancashire Strategy, the University continues to invest in the development of its Burnley Campus. Pennine Lancashire, which comprises the boroughs of Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Ribble Valley and Rossendale, has a population of over half a million residents and is the only area in the UK of this size without a university. Three of the five boroughs feature in the top 15% of the most deprived areas in the UK.

Its overarching aims here are to:

- Become a regional asset situated in the heart of Pennine Lancashire with national and international recognition and reach.

- Deliver the benefits of higher education to individuals, employers and the wider community and contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of the Pennine Lancashire area.

- Help to transform life opportunities and empower students and staff to achieve to their full potential.

Engaging with the communities around the campuses in Preston, Burnley, Whitehaven and Cyprus as a responsible corporate neighbour is core to UCLan's approach. Its work includes sponsorship, sharing of expertise, offering use of resources and representing areas in regional and national debates, to address cultural, educational and social issues alongside multiple partner agencies.

It provides non-standard and alternative access routes to all undergraduate degrees through foundation entry courses and higher level apprenticeships. It recognises the different pathways for students into university, through traditional school and college entry, vocational education and training, in partnership with colleges and training providers and as apprentices. Its subject-based social media led introductory campaigns and activities for new students have been demonstrated to be effective in helping students progress and maximise attainment at university, and in achievement of their career goals.

Widening access to higher education is the major driver behind its extensive collaborative arrangements with further education colleges and other partner organisations. Its collaborative partnership includes over 25 partners, one of the largest HE/FE collaborations in England. The University has set up formal structures to work with FE colleges and these have resulted in strong personal and informal relationships being formed. Open and clear communication on all sides is of key importance in this.

UCLan is the lead institution for the Lancashire UniConnect programme, Future U. It is also a partner in the Cumbria UniConnect programme, Hello Future. Through the NCOP outreach hubs and National Networks for Collaborative Outreach legacy projects, it works collaboratively with other HE providers to support widening access for under-represented groups across the region.

UCLan is the lead institution for the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance Lancashire and North West Hub. Through this hub it will work collaboratively with other HEIs across the region to engage young people from military families. Analysis from its assessment of performance shows that UCLan performs well on access targets.

Raising aspirations and improving attitudes to higher education

The University takes a strategic approach to widening participation and has a long-term partnership programme with primary and secondary schools through its School-University Network (SUN). With these partner schools it delivers a sustained and progressive programme of outreach activity for students from groups that are under-represented in HE.

One example of that activity is UCLan's Get Ahead programme. Year 9 students from seven local secondary educational institutions took part in the most recent one. The programme featured five sessions, four in-school and one on campus, covering a wide range of personal development and success bolstering activities aimed at developing career knowledge, confidence and raising aspirations and knowledge of Higher Education.

The programme overall is operating successfully and producing meaningful impacts on self-reported measures. Of those questioned, 62.1% reported that they were more likely to go to university following the programme. Participants overall felt that HE is something that is for them at a higher rate following the session than before. However, a good portion of the sample continue to report they are 'unsure', identifying this as an area for further development.

Contributing to the improvement of attainment rates prior to higher education

UCLan will deliver significant STEM-engagement activity as part of its WP programmes to highlight the pathways through HE into professional careers which are likely to be in demand. UCLan is currently the only university in the UK to have a partnership with the Royal Institution of Great Britain (Ri) running a Young Scientist Centre.

Through the centre, it offers school students from target groups free interactive STEM workshops and attainment-raising interventions. The University runs the Lancashire Science Festival which is aimed at schools and families and reaches over 12,000 people per year. The Festival has a high proportion of visitors from areas of high deprivation (IMD) and research shows it positively impacts parents' attitudes towards HE and STEM.

Working with care leavers to increase HE progression rates

UCLan will continue to work with other HEIs, local authorities and charities to offer a collaborative programme of WP activity for care-experienced and estranged young people. It is developing a forum for care-experienced students that aims to provide an informal support network for those participating. The long-term plan is to extend the function of this programme to become a group mentoring project, inviting young people with experience of care who are interested in university to attend. The aim of this will be to help access to HE and increase students' support networks and chance of succeeding if they choose to study at the university.

Support Packages

UCLan provides a range of tailored support packages to enable students from particular target groups and non-traditional backgrounds to complete their studies.

There is a student information and support area called <i>, from where they can be appropriately directed and supported in ways which help them to develop as independent learners.

For care leavers, it offers a dedicated point of contact for advice and support, from application through admission, enrolment and study offering advice on a range of issues and signposting/referring to other services, as required. It provides access to study skills support, enhanced careers support and a personalised care leaver plan.

There are waivers on deposits for university-owned accommodation and year-round accommodation contracts for students who may not have alternative accommodation during vacations. Financial support is also offered, including a cash bursary of £1,000 per year of study, paid in four instalments through the year, plus advice on additional funding sources.

Students who are estranged from their families are prioritised for financial support and have a dedicated point of contact working with each student to create a personalised estranged student plan. With 147 officially recognised estranged students in 2016/17, UCLan has the sixth highest number of estranged students across the country, so it has taken the Stand Alone Pledge to show its commitment to support for these students. It offers a designated bursary of £1,000 per student in line with the support it offers to care leavers.

UCLan supports students who find themselves homeless. In addition to a specialist support package, it provides emergency accommodation which is rent-free for the first week, to give students time to make more permanent housing arrangements. It has a strong network of public and voluntary sector links and works closely with the Housing Advisory Service within the local authorities.

The University has developed targeted support for students with caring responsibilities who care, unpaid, for a family member with an illness or a disability, mental health condition or an addiction. This includes the provision of support for student carers through a named contact and a personalised carers plan that covers both academic and pastoral support, as well as targeted financial support of a minimum of £500 per year of study.

UCLan provides targeted financial support for students in low income households below £20,000. Financial support will continue to be provided to students in cash and includes a higher bursary payment during students' final year which is intended to reduce the need to undertake part-time employment at this critical point in their studies.

The Harris Bursary Fund provides financial support to students in need. The University targets support to mature students, those with family responsibilities and students in hardship who are living at home but struggling to meet the costs of travel. Priority groups targeted via Hardship Funding are: disabled students and students who are unable to work due to illness; students who are homeless or facing eviction; students receiving the final year loan rate who are in financial difficulty; and postgraduate students who have been unable to secure alternative funding. These groups may receive bursaries or priority loans, dependent upon need.

Following the removal of the Access to Learning Fund, UCLan set aside a similar amount on an ongoing basis (c£1m) to support students suffering financial hardship.

This fund gives students facing hardship additional financial support to access and remain in Higher Education. Targeted areas for this funding include assistance for students in areas such as supporting dependents whilst studying, students who may be estranged from their families, emergency payments for unexpected financial crises and help for students who may be considering giving up their course because of financial problems.

The University understands that students who 'commute' onto campus face additional pressures and challenges, such as greater isolation and transport costs, which are drivers in the higher levels of withdrawal for such students. It has therefore introduced a heavily subsidised bus scheme from key regional hubs, intended to support the creation of 'home study groups' to increase peer support.

UCLan has silver award Armed Forces Covenant status for the work it does to support staff and students from military backgrounds. Staff work closely with military families to advise on further and higher education opportunities for all members of the family.

UCLan's new programme Get Ahead: Start aims to support the transition into university. This preparatory programme for applicants from its APP target groups covers key information about university life, with a particular focus on preparing students for learning in an HE environment. The programme also gives applicants a chance to build a social network prior to commencing study.
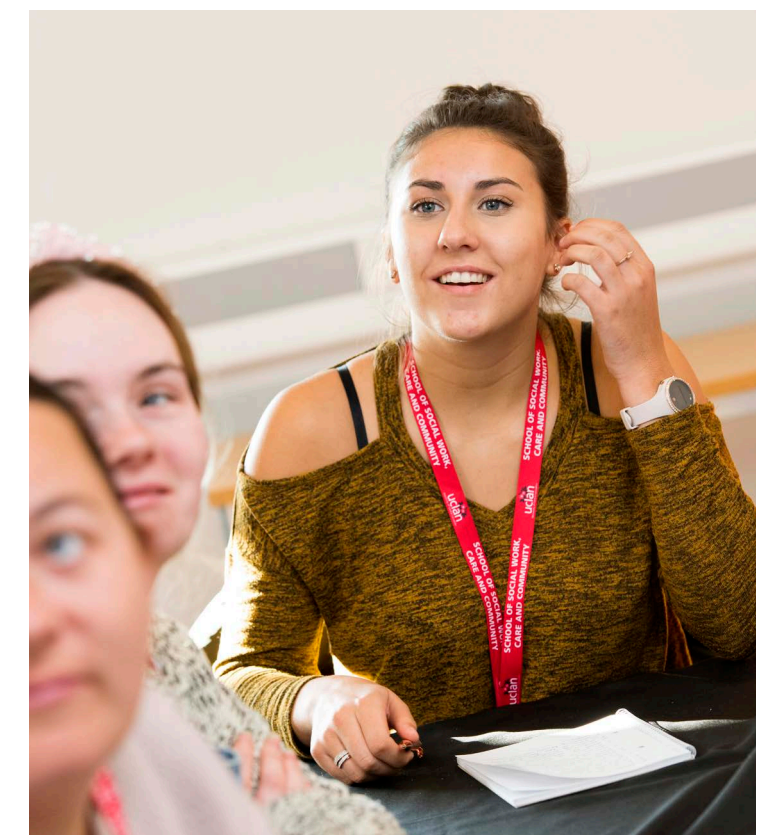
Student consultation

Students are represented on all University committees at institution and faculty level. In developing this Access & Participation Plan, UCLan has engaged with and involved students, working closely with Students' Union.

Evaluation

UCLan uses a mixed methods approach for evaluation, using quantitative data to assess its overall performance and qualitative methods to evaluate the efficacy of individual programmes. All the programmes and activities run through UCLan's Access work have bespoke evaluation hat measures whether the desired impact or outcome of the intervention has been achieved.

The University monitors progress against delivery through its operational and strategic reporting. Targets and milestones identified here are monitored through reports.

Employability

UCLan uses a mixed methods approach for evaluation, using quantitative data to assess its overall performance and qualitative methods to evaluate the efficacy of individual programmes. All the programmes and activities run through UCLan's Access work have bespoke evaluation hat measures whether the desired impact or outcome of the intervention has been achieved.

The University monitors progress against delivery through its operational and strategic reporting. Targets and milestones identified here are monitored through reports.

UCLan provides a traditional career offering, with advisors giving information on a one-to-one basis. It particularly considers how to reach out effectively to all students so that as many as possible engage with them. It uses all the data gathered in this context to assess who is using the service and how it can be better tailored to engage those who tend not to use it. Recognising that employers are switching to online recruitment processes, it undertakes a range of activities to provide support to students, especially those groups who may need particular help. In 2019, 200,000 activities were undertaken online.

UCLan has not only forged links with the larger regional employers, but also with SMEs which can provide opportunities and experiences for the students as well as a valuable resource for the businesses.

Students are also encouraged to set up their own businesses and are provided with support. UCLan is one of the country's leading universities for student start-ups and for the number of student businesses which are still in operation after three years. The University makes students aware of the opportunities and potential which can come from setting up their own businesses. It has entrepreneurs who are setting up businesses and are not necessarily themselves students working alongside UCLan students. It has also built up a bank of expertise of people who can provide mentoring, support and guidance. In the last five years, it has helped more than 1,000 graduates start their own businesses - the second highest figure in the UK. Even for students who are not ultimately successful in setting up businesses, the experience and skills gained are invaluable and this is recognised by employers.

## Future social mobility plans

The University of Central Lancashire aims to excel in all aspects of access and participation, both through continuing to close local gaps in rates of access, success and progression by those from disadvantaged backgrounds at a faster rate than that of the sector and by contributing to an overall reduction in those gaps across English Higher Education.

However, the University has no intention of resting on its laurels and has identified a number of priorities to widen access to its services even further. These are:

• **A commitment to maintaining its position against POLAR4, IMD and mature student indicators for access.**

• **To raise the aspirations and improve attitudes towards higher education of young people living in low participation neighbourhoods through sustained programmes of outreach, resulting in a 10% increase in positive attitudes among participants, by 2025. As interim milestones, UCLan is aiming for a 3% improvement in 2021-22, 6% in 2022-23, 9% in 2023-24.**

• **To contribute to the improvement of attainment rates prior to higher education through programmes of work focused on GCSE Science, resulting in a 15% improvement in results for GCSE level questions amongst participants in each programme, by 2025.**

• **To work with care-leavers to increase HE progression rates, resulting in 30% of participants entering HE by 2025.**

UCLan's analysis shows it contributes to student success for a number of groupings, but there is more work to do. Its priorities here are:

• **To continue to support students from target groups to ensure continuation rates remain on a par with those from less disadvantaged backgrounds.**

• **To eliminate the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between white and Black students by 2025. As an interim, it will reduce the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between white and Black students by 50% by 2025. In the longer term, the aim is to remove all ethnicity attainment gaps.**

• **To eliminate the gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between disabled students and non-disabled students by 2025.**
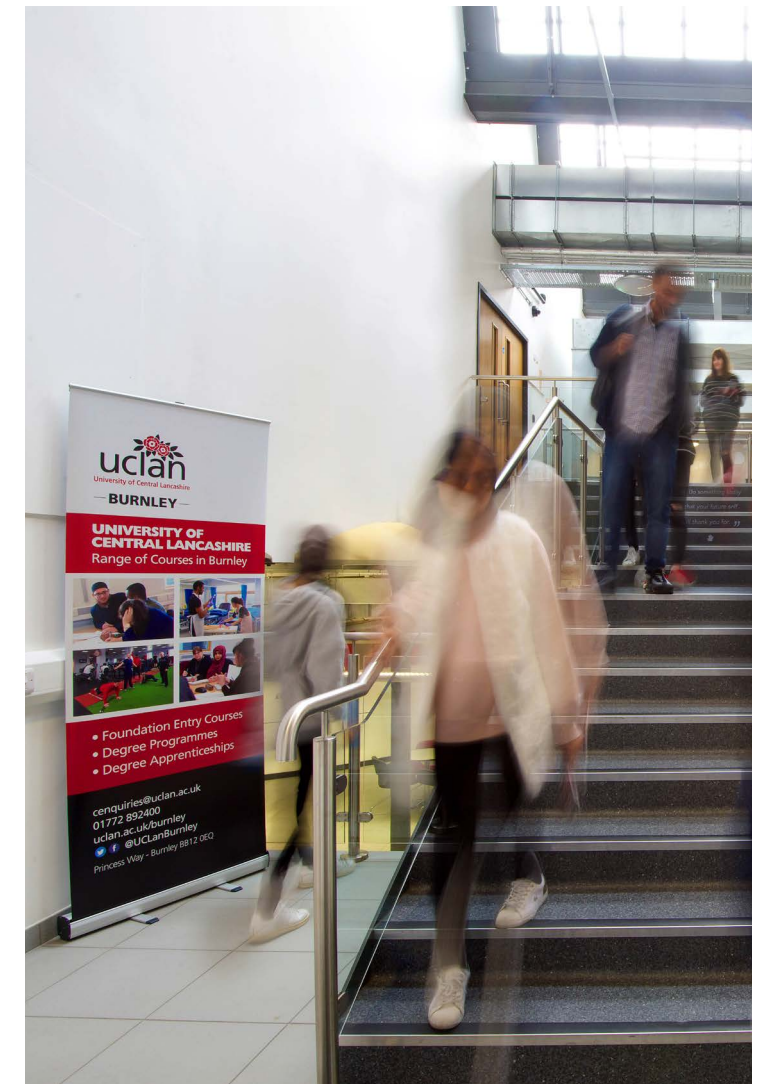
In making a contribution to progression to employment or further study for the majority of disadvantaged groups, based on DLHE data, the University's priorities are:

• **To continue the current programme to enhance rates of progression to employment or further study. As an interim, it aims to ensure students from target groups benefit from support for graduate start-ups and UCLan has set a target of facilitating five start-ups per year by such students, for each year of this plan.**

• **To work with the new Graduate Outcomes data, to assess whether changes from DLHE data have resulted in significant and/or material gaps in outcomes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, by 2022.**

COVID-19

At the start of the Covid crisis UCLan had to move swiftly from a situation where it was beginning to put greater emphasis on working from home to having to leave the campus at short notice and switch totally to remote home working.

This was a successful transition, thanks to the work previously done by the University and its IT experts to develop a culture of using technology to support learning. All teaching colleagues, for example, have Microsoft Surface Pro, which was used extensively before Covid.

Victoria Mill

During the crisis, the University has seen an increase in student attendance in many sessions and significant increases in student performance. Many of UCLan's students have outside commitments such as work to support themselves financially or caring for family members, so the flexibility provided by online learning was helpful.

While online learning will never replace elements of face-to-face teaching, as students return to campus, UCLan is determined to apply some of the lessons learnt during lockdown.

Student Wellbeing Services, the <i>, Inclusive Support and the Counselling Mental Health & Wellbeing (CMHW) teams moved to online working and continued to provide the majority of our existing services by phone and online.

The Services also enhanced their support offer across each strand. This included the assessment and payment of a 'COVID' bursary, and the delivery of key deliverables of Welcome in the <i>. The Inclusive Support team quickly developed online BSL Interpreting provision in collaboration with the CELT team and assisted with the accessibility of online learning with guidance on the captioning of lectures, and supporting students to utilise technology. The team delivered online transition events for new students, specifically intended for students with Autism and Mental Health conditions, to enable successful progression into the University.

The CMHW team worked tirelessly to keep in individual contact with self-isolating students. The team continued to provide wellbeing support throughout this period which challenged the mental health and wellbeing of many, and was often during periods when the usual external referral agencies were not available.

The Residences Team have been offering a range of support measures for students living in halls who are required to self-isolate. Students are advised to contact the Residences Team, as well as Corona Enquiries, to confirm if they have tested positive for COVID-19 or are showing symptoms or have been contacted by NHS Track & Trace

Following notification of self-isolation, all students in the flat are contacted by the Residences Team to inform them about self-isolation requirements and the support in place. We have prepared a comprehensive halls COVID-19 guide packed with key information, including links to the government website for information on how to self-isolate. Clear information is given to students about accessing wellbeing support on a 24/7 basis.

Out of hours and on weekends dedicated Security Support Officers are visible around the halls of residence to assist students with a range of residential issues and to signpost students to wellbeing services.

Once the Residences Team are notified about a case of self-isolation in halls, food packs are delivered to each of the students within the self-isolating flat, and a cleaning pack is also provided to the flat. Thereafter, students are contacted regularly by the Residences Team by phone as a welfare measure, and to see if they require support – in some cases, students are referred to the Wellbeing team if they require additional support.

Students who are self-isolating are able to access a range of virtual events facilitated by the Students' Union, details of which are posted regularly on the halls' Facebook pages.

An on-site residential team has remained on site throughout the pandemic and moved to remote working in March. This has resulted in a visible and accessible support team available to the students to assist with any issues relating to living in halls, including maintenance issues, cleaning issues and wellbeing issues.

UCLan is the largest provider of graduates for the health and social care sector in Lancashire and Cumbria and is the only modern university with a School of Medicine, School of Dentistry and School of Pharmacy. This year medics and nurses graduated early so that they could join local trusts in the fight against Covid. Of the medical doctors who graduated, all were employed within 48 hours in the East Lancashire Health Trust. Second year nursing students were also going into the trusts to provide support.

The University is based in an area of acute health inequalities and UCLan developed its medical provision in recognition of that. For example, dental students train for their first year in the University but then go to dental education centres which have been set up in areas of need, such as Carlisle, Accrington, Morecambe or Blackpool. There they can provide a vital service while getting a broad range of experience.

During the Covid pandemic we have been unable to engage with schools in the same way we normally would. Research we conducted over the summer of 2020 with parents and teachers indicated primary science learning had been particularly negatively impacted during school closures. In response to this the YSC team are delivering 'live' science lessons broadcast to schools and are organising kit loan schemes for primary schools to deliver practical science learning. Evidence from the EEF shows learning has been disproportionately negatively impacted for young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds. In response to this we delivered a tutoring programme in Maths and English over he summer of 2020 and we will expand on this in the Spring term of 2021 to support students in our partner schools.
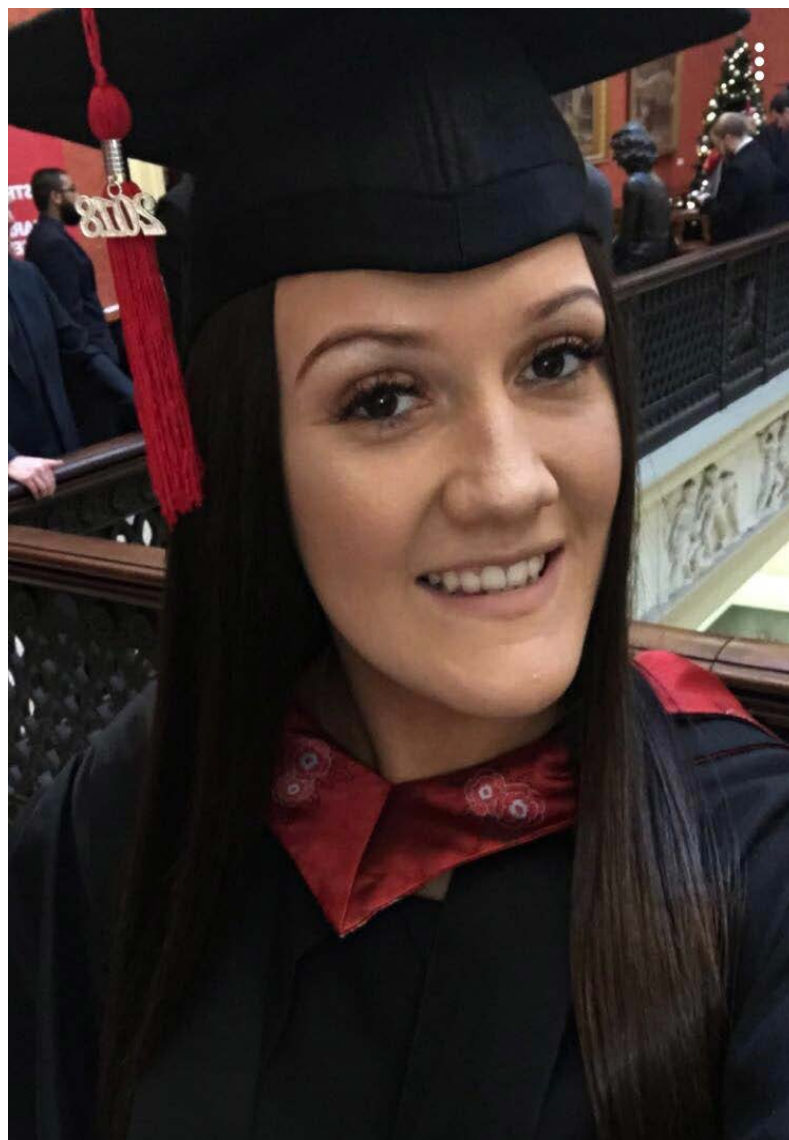
Josephine Wood

Josephine graduated from a Community Leadership degree with first class honours in 2018 and is now studying an MA in Social Work.

What made you choose to study your course?

I was a senior volunteer for my local Youth centre for about 8/10 years and really got to love being a youth worker, as I was a young kid who got that helping and supporting hand when I needed it, an thanks to my youth centre, I wasn't messing on the streets and getting into trouble. So, I wanted to follow in that journey of supporting and helping to be there for kids that needed support and someone to believe in them. So, community leadership was perfect for me to study.

What did you do after graduation?

After I graduated, I wanted to get a job in my field of work but unfortunately, the government had cut funding and all positions were frozen. So I tried searching for a job that I would love while working part time, and there wasn't any so I thought what job would I love to do next in connection with helping children, as they're the next generation and need all the help and support to become who they want to become.

Please tell us about the journey that brought you to where you are today?

I really struggled in high school and my life has always been a struggle. I have never had it easy and I have had tons of bad luck but I had a really devastating personal event happen to me in 2015.

I really lost myself and went down a dark path but the youth centre was a safe haven for me. They helped and supported me and we spoke about where I wanted to be in life and university came up as another friend of mine was just finishing his last year in it. I also have learning disabilities as well so I never thought I would be able to do university. But I applied. I put everything into it, blood sweat and tears as they say and I graduated and with First class honours as well. So [I'm] really proud of myself.

What are your lasting memories of your time at UCLan?

The amazing experiences, I have travelled round the world and worked with such a massive wide range of people, and from different backgrounds. I have worked in an orphanage in Morocco, delivered a Global Youth Solutions programme in Oman, I have worked in three different cities in Italy with the Red Cross.

Plus, I have some amazing people in my life from uni, as the lectures are amazing, really supporting and I can't thank the staff enough for helping me through my time at university.

What is your greatest achievement?

All my years at university, I went and I conquered, I learned so much and had my eyes opened massively. It was overall an amazing time at uni, I learnt so much about myself on the way as well. Then ending up with first class honours just made the perfect end to the whole experience.

What advice would you give to graduates wanting to do something similar, or what message would you like to give to those thinking of taking up study?

Always believe in yourself. You never know what you can accomplish unless you apply yourself - always be willing to take up an opportunity and go for it. I was worried about putting myself out there in uni but [UCLan] believed in me and so I did it, and it was the best thing ever. It opened a lot more doors of opportunity for me and I will be forever grateful.

What impact has your experience at UCLan had on your life?

It has opened my eyes and mind to see things differently, also how I see myself has changed; it has totally changed my life and for the better.

Being from a town that does not have a good name and good environment to be growing up in, having Burnley UCLan gives me the opportunities I could not have got anywhere else. And I am now in Preston UCLan studying my masters to be a social worker and it all started with Burnley.

Case Study

Sarah Knowles

Sarah is in her fourth year of the MBBS programme and is a recipient of the Mackenzie Scholarship, which is awarded to students from the East Lancashire area. Sarah has been studying from the Burnley campus since her third year.

What made you choose to study your course?

I was keen to find a career that was interesting, and one that I wouldn't be bored day-to-day. Medicine is exciting and always evolving so I hope I'll always be able to find ways to challenge myself throughout my career. Studying medicine at UCLan also allows me the bonus of caring for people from the area I grew up in.

What do you plan to do once you graduate?

I plan to stay in the North West and start working as a Doctor in a foundation programme in a local hospital.

Please tell us about the journey that brought you to where you are today?

I grew up in Darwen and attended St Wilfrid's high school in Blackburn. I was never sure what I wanted to do so I ended up taking A Levels in the subjects my friends were taking. Following this I worked in local pharmacies, around this time my family, which is full of nurses, encouraged me to take advantage of the NHS bursary and get a nursing degree.

I knew I wanted to do medicine even as a student nurse, but I never had the right qualifications or grades to get one of the competitive places. Medicine always seemed too far out of my reach.

After I registered as a nurse, I worked in intensive care in Manchester for over 2 years, it was an interesting and often challenging job, I was working there during the Manchester Arena bombings. However, I knew it wasn't the right role for me and now that I had a BSc degree, I was able to meet the entry requirements for some medicine degrees.

I applied for Medicine at UCLan and was shocked when I was awarded the first Mackenzie Scholarship given by UCLan and East Lancashire teaching hospital. It pays my full tuition fees and I receive a generous non-repayable grant every year. The course has been difficult at times but I'm now in my 4th year and preparing to sit my final exams at the end of this academic year and can safely say I'm living life without any regrets.

What are your lasting memories of your time at UCLan?

Making friends with other students from around the world, I now have best friends from Canada and Iran. I don't think I would have ever met such diverse friendly people without taking this degree.

What is your greatest achievement?

Being awarded the Mackenzie scholarship and setting up a new society within the medical school aimed at increasing diversity in medical education – check out 'Widening Access to Medicine with UCLan' to see the amazing outreach work they do with disadvantaged students from the local area.

What advice would you give to graduates wanting to do something similar, or what message would you like to give to those thinking of taking up study?

I would probably tell them that if you don't apply you'll never know and that there's always a way to make something work.

What impact has your experience at UCLan had on your life?

The opportunity UCLan gave me to study medicine has completely changed my life and my future. I now have a platform to help make positive changes for myself and people around me; and so many other opportunities have presented themselves for me since becoming a medical student. For example, this year I'm one of the HLA leadership scholars which is a national programme which develops leadership within healthcare.

UCLan has allowed me to grow as a person; I think I've become more culturally aware and knowledgeable through my studies and the friends that I've made here.

I used to feel a little bit lost but I'm now surer that I'm on the right path in life. I'll always be thankful to UCLan for putting their faith in me by awarding me the Mackenzie scholarship and giving me the chance to become the first doctor in my family.

Insights and Assessment

The University of Central Lancashire demonstrates what it means to be a successful place-based university, matching courses to its students' needs and, at the same time, responding to the needs of the community by providing a pipeline of talent for the public sector.

Widening participation to university has always been at the heart of UCLan's approach. The University reaches out to those who are from less advantaged backgrounds, who do not necessarily have traditional or conventional academic histories and who are often the first in their families to go to university. It understands the need to ensure that everyone in the area has the opportunity to go to university if they have the potential to do so, regardless of their background. Given that the personal circumstances of many in the area would mean that going to university elsewhere would simply not be an option, it has facilitated progression to higher education on their doorstep for those furthest away from a level playing field.

The development of the Pennine Lancashire Strategy, with three of the five participating boroughs in the top 15 per cent of the most deprived areas in the UK, illustrates how a university can act as an anchor in its region, offering higher education and opportunities in the area for its graduates, at the same time as ensuring a continued supply of skilled workers for the local labour market.

The University has focused on the development of a new campus in Burnley that will accommodate local demand while also recognising that there are specific difficulties in East Lancashire that need to be addressed. Its continued expansion shows how successful this has been and it is clear that students have a particular pride in being part of the Burnley campus. With its wraparound services and where they are known by name, they feel it is' their' campus.

As the largest provider of health and social care education in Lancashire and Cumbria, UCLan is one of only five universities in the country delivering medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, alongside a range of other health related subjects such as nursing, midwifery and paramedic practice. With its new health and social care facilities on the Burnley campus, it is therefore in a prime position to provide graduates for the jobs that will arise in its local community. The coronavirus pandemic has shown the essential role that these key workers play, particularly in the NHS, with good health outcomes undoubtedly equalling good economic outcomes for the region.

It is therefore crucial that universities like UCLan continue to reach out to their local communities to broaden the pool of talent from which it can recruit. As the public sector is the area's largest employer in UCLan's case, it also seems sensible to ensure that its public services there are representative of its diverse local community. People should be able to see themselves reflected in the doctors and nurses, police and teachers that are such an integral part of it, and, importantly, at the most senior levels.

UCLan's sustained and progressive programme of outreach raises the confidence and aspirations of those from families who have usually had no experience of university and little knowledge of what opportunities could open up for them as a result of gaining a degree. Its focus on STEM engagement illustrates that it understands the needs of its community and which careers will best serve it. It also recognises the need to reach out to children as early as possible to have the best chance of influencing their life choices so highlighting STEM subjects and potential careers in its schools' programmes enables it to tap into potential talent that will, in due course, provide skilled graduates to fill local vacancies.

With over 25 partners, the University has one of the largest Higher Education and Further Education collaborations in England, to help strengthen non-standard access routes into its courses. It works especially hard with those groups who often find themselves left behind - care leavers, the disabled, those from Pupil Referral Units and former members of the military services. It also works strategically with a wide range of other local based partners who comprehensively understand the situation on the ground locally, including councils, Blackpool Opportunity Area, NHS Trusts and local JobCentres, to reach out to those for whom university was not an option earlier in their lives. Recognising the impact that the coronavirus pandemic will have on the labour market, and that many people will need to retrain and reskill, it is already making great efforts to attract mature students who will often have complex studying needs to fit around caring responsibilities but who will be crucial to include in a skilled local workforce.

To ensure improved access for all who have the potential, UCLan offers a wide ranging curriculum that is flexible and relevant for its students and constantly reviews the situation so that this remains the case. It regards early intervention as key in ensuring that undergraduates complete their courses and flourish, personally and academically. The support networks it provides are often different from those in other universities, for example relating to domestic violence and safeguarding, reflecting the previous personal histories of students who have often experienced complex lives. It tailors solutions to different groups of people, including to the estranged and the homeless, and carries out continual evaluation to understand what makes a difference to facilitating a successful university experience. It sees the extensive offer around financial support as just one element of a package of holistic support that is available to them.

The work carried out by the careers team to support students and their transition to employment is similarly thorough. UCLan helps them to view their lived experiences as transferable skills, providing them with qualities that are attractive to prospective employers such as resilience, flexibility and the ability to organise. It is also quick to intervene to ensure that students remain motivated and achieve the best degree possible.

The overcoming of barriers which many have faced to even begin a degree course is seen as a positive attribute as it acknowledges that many employers are now looking for the first time at how far prospective employees have come, rather than where they are at the moment.

Alongside the large regional employers such as BAE Systems, and the big public sector employers such as the NHS, the area has a large number of SMEs. Recognising that they are not able to operate graduate schemes in the same way as larger employers, UCLan works with them to supply graduates who want to remain in the local area. As one of the country's leading universities for student start-ups, entrepreneurship flourishes here and it works hard alongside other partners to provide up to date information and advice that informs students about the opportunities that can come from setting up a business.

The University has also been smart with the use of digital resources such as Linkedin to track where their graduates go on to work and reach out to those employers who may now be looking to recruit from a more diverse background. They also recognise that keeping in touch with their alumni directly can make a positive contribution, as does mentoring and the identification of role models.

Similarly, the change to a digital offer with online learning as a result of the pandemic has provided a wealth of information that the University can draw on to assess what services students are accessing and they have been quick to tailor their careers guidance in response to the current situation where most employers are recruiting and operating online.

- **The University runs the Lancashire Science Festival which is aimed at schools and families and reaches over 12,000 people per year.**

- **With over 25 partners, the University runs one of the largest HE/FE collaborations in England.**

- **In the last five years, the University has helped more than 1,000 graduates start their own businesses - the second highest figure in the UK.**

The facts show that UCLan has made determined progress in its efforts to level up in its area. Its approach to evaluation is long term. It examines where the gaps in opportunity are and then assesses what might be done to close them, offering focused and innovative solutions. It is unafraid to lean into areas where there remain problems, for example the lower participation rate of white working class males or the poorer degree outcomes for BAME students, and to acknowledge that more needs to be done to resolve them. It sets itself specific and ambitious targets, challenging itself as an institution to continually raise the bar in addressing social mobility issues.

UCLan's robust partnerships and contribution to education in its widest sense enable it to play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural life of the region. It understands that it is important to maintain a close relationship with the community it serves to ultimately provide students with more opportunity and therefore more advantage once they graduate. Its long term approach pays dividends as it engenders trust within the community which can see that the University is taking their priorities and making them its own, working together with other partners on the

significant challenges the region faces. In this way, the University becomes a purpose-led organisation, less focused on its own marketing and advertising and more on the community's needs.
Without the University, most of its potential undergraduates would remain in the area but minus the skills and expertise that come from updated and relevant degree courses, and therefore unable to take advantage of the opportunities on their doorstep. They would lose the opportunity as individuals to make something of their lives and the local community would be unable to fill the important vacancies in its public sector organisations. The UK cannot afford to waste its human capital and should be making full use of all the talent available to it.

This report shows that UCLan has already demonstrated its clear commitment to widening access and participation in higher education and to ensuring that those with talent that are the furthest away from a level playing field will have equal access to opportunities as a result. This is crucial as communities look to recover from the impact of the pandemic and it should continue to develop its work across Lancashire, focussing on the public sector and the NHS particularly.

Recommendations

The Social Mobility Pledge is working with over 500 businesses and universities to ensure that, no matter where they are born or what their start in life, everyone has access to opportunities.

It is encouraging them to adopt a purpose-led approach, with determined leadership and a strategic approach to achieve that for the long term. In particular, it is challenging universities to become levelled up universities which put social mobility at the heart of everything they do.

This report demonstrates that the University of Central Lancashire's approach to matching courses not only to its students' needs but also to those of the community is hugely effective. This is already making a significant impact in Burnley.

Our recommendations for further action are:

- **Given the economic context of East Lancashire, the University should continue to develop its Burnley Campus by helping to raise aspirations, developing new, relevant courses and facilitating an increase in numbers going to university. This could be through the use of contextualised application and recruitment processes for example. Examples of best practice featured in other universities working with the Social Mobility Pledge include the University of the West of England, whose targeted outreach programme in Bristol focuses on potential first generation students and their families. Any programme needs to be given time to embed into the community to have the most effective results.**

- **The University should continue to develop its links with the public sector, particularly the NHS, to ensure that its graduates are career-ready, with the skills and expertise that it needs to close the current gap between the number of students graduating and the number of vacancies that are still unfilled in its local hospital. Not only will this provide rewarding careers, in jobs that matter, but it will also ensure that those communities see better health outcomes which will in turn produce improved, healthy economies - a double bonus for social mobility.**

- **The University should continue to work with its local public services to ensure that they are more diverse, to better reflect the communities they represent. The challenge is not only to encourage the public sector to improve social mobility by becoming more diverse but to consider how progression for those from more diverse backgrounds into senior positions might be facilitated, making the case for competence rather than connections, reflecting the public it serves at all levels.**

Data Analysis

Data Analysis:
Part A - Social Mobility

In this section of the Opportunity Action Plan we analyse the challenges those individual communities face in terms of social mobility and the impact of COVID-19. The combined and interlinking impact of those two elements enable us to quantify a community's "Opportunity Gap". For the purposes of this analysis we have focused on Preston which is the location for the main campus and Burnley where the Burnley campus is located.

Social Mobility research conducted in 323 local authorities in England and Wales shows the top 20% of local authorities are labelled as 'hotspots', areas where social mobility is good, and the bottom 20% of local authorities are identified as 'coldspots', areas where social mobility is poor.

It is important to note that just because an area is designated a hot or cold spot based on the current rankings, that is not the complete picture. An area which is a social mobility hotspot for most indices can also mask sharp decline in social mobility at different life stages such as early years.

These complexities highlight that social mobility cannot be tackled with a 'one size fits all approach'. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the challenges those individual communities face is vital and we assess social mobility below through those life stages.

Office	Constituency	Ranking out of 533 constituencies
Main Campus	Preston	258
Burnley Campus	Burnley	491

Preston

		Preston	England
Early Years **233**	Percentage of Nursery providers rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	92	93
	Percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a good level of development	55	53
Schools **195**	Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a primary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	77	83
	Percentage of children eligible for FSM achieving at least the expected level in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2	40	39
	Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a secondary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	97	72
	Average Attainment 8 score for pupils eligible for FSM	39	39
Youth **200**	Percentage of young people eligible for FSM that are not in education, employment or training (positive destination) after completing KS4	87	88
	Average points score per entry for young people eligible for FSM at age 15 taking A-level or equivalent qualification	29	26
	Percentage of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 achieving two or more A-Levels or equivalent by the age of 19	32	34
Adulthood **477**	Median weekly salary of all employees who live in the local area	341	443
	Average house prices compared to median annual salary of employees who live in the local area	5	8
	Percentage of people that live in the local area who are in managerial and professional occupations	16	30
	Percentage of jobs that are paid less than the applicable Living Wage Foundation living wage	24	25
	Percentage of families with children who own their home	58	65

Preston Analysis

Preston is the location of the University of Central Lancashire's main campus. Two of its indicators are in the top 100 rankings and two are in the bottom 100; across all life stages, Preston ranks at 258/533 on the Social Mobility Index. The area is fairly average for social mobility.

Early Years

At the early years life stage, Preston performs better than average at 233/533. Ninety-two percent of nurseries in the constituency are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted, slightly worse than the national average of 93% and ranking Preston as 309/533 for this measure. In the other measure for this life stage, the percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a 'good level of development', Preston is ranked 186/533; 55% of those children achieve a good level compared to the national average of 53%.

School Life Stage

Ranking at 195/533 at the school stage, Preston is in the top 40% of constituencies. Seventy-seven percent of pupils eligible for free school meals attend good or outstanding primary schools, with 40% of them achieving the expected level in reading, writing, and maths at the end of Key Stage 2, the national average being 39%. At secondary level, attendance of FSM eligible pupils at good or outstanding schools is 97%, making Preston the 71st best constituency, and an average Attainment 8 score of 39 places Preston at 239/533.

Youth Life Stage

The youth stage sees Preston fall very slightly to rank at 200/533. Eighty-seven percent of young people who were eligible for free schools find themselves in a positive destination (defined as being in education, employment, or training) after completing Key Stage 4. Thirty-two percent of FSM-eligible young people will achieve two or more A Level or equivalent qualifications by age 19, those that do take A Levels will have an average points score per entry of 29. Preston ranks at 251 and 108 for these measures respectively.

Adulthood Life Stage

At the adulthood life stage, Preston ranks worst at 477/533. Although only 24% of jobs pay less than the real living wage, average earnings are £341 weekly – the English average is £443. Housing is five times the annualised salary, the 49th most affordable area in England (where houses are eight times the annualised salary), but home ownership is low at 58%, the 105th worst area for this measure. The percentage of jobs in the area that are managerial and professional stands at 16%, ranking Preston at 529/533 for this measure, the fourth worst in England.

Burnley

		Burnley	England
Early Years **431**	Percentage of Nursery providers rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	91	93
	Percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a good level of development	50	53
Schools **375**	Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a primary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	94	83
	Percentage of children eligible for FSM achieving at least the expected level in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2	35	39
	Percentage of children eligible for FSM attending a secondary school rated outstanding or good by Ofsted	61	72
	Average Attainment 8 score for pupils eligible for FSM	32	39
Youth **494**	Percentage of young people eligible for FSM that are not in education, employment or training (positive destination) after completing KS4	83	88
	Average points score per entry for young people eligible for FSM at age 15 taking A-level or equivalent qualification	24	26
	Percentage of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 achieving two or more A-Levels or equivalent by the age of 19	27	34
Adulthood **313**	Median weekly salary of all employees who live in the local area	388	443
	Average house prices compared to median annual salary of employees who live in the local area	2	8
	Percentage of people that live in the local area who are in managerial and professional occupations	26	30
	Percentage of jobs that are paid less than the applicable Living Wage Foundation living wage	32	25
	Percentage of families with children who own their home	67	65

Burnley Analysis

Burnley is the location of the University of Central Lancashire's Burnley campus. Two of its indicators are in the top 100 rankings and three are in the bottom 100; across all life stages, Burnley ranks at 491/533 on the Social Mobility Index. Burnley is a social mobility coldspot.

Early Years

At the early years life stage, Burnley performs poorly at 431/533. Ninety-one percent of nurseries in the constituency are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted, worse the national average of 93% and ranking Burnley as 397/533 for this measure. In the other measure for this life stage, the percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a 'good level of development', Burnley is ranked 369/533; 50% of those children achieve a good level compared to the national average of 53%.

School Life Stage

Ranking at 375/533 at the school stage, Burnley is in the bottom 30% of constituencies. Ninety-four percent of pupils eligible for free school meals attend good or outstanding primary schools, with 35% of them achieving the expected level in reading, writing, and maths at the end of Key Stage 2, the national average being 39%. At secondary level, attendance of FSM eligible pupils at good or outstanding schools is 61%, making Burnley the 378th best constituency, and an average Attainment 8 score of 32 places Burnley at 522/533.

Youth Life Stage

The youth stage sees Burnley fall to its worst ranking, at 494/533. Eighty-three percent of young people who were eligible for free schools find themselves in a positive destination (defined as being in education, employment, or training) after completing Key Stage 4. Twenty-seven percent of FSM-eligible young people will achieve two or more A Level or equivalent qualifications by age 19, those that do take A Levels will have an average points score per entry of 24. Burnley ranks at 390 and 409 for these measures respectively.

Adulthood Life Stage

At the adulthood life stage, Burnley ranks at 313/533. A very large number (32%) of jobs pay less than the real living wage, and average earnings are £388 a week. Housing is just three times the annualised salary, the third most affordable area in England, but home ownership is only slightly higher than average at 67%, the 264th area for this measure. The percentage of jobs in the area that are managerial and professional stands at 26%, ranking Burnley at 365/533 for this measure.

Data Analysis: Part B – COVID-19

As well as considering the social mobility baseline for a community, our analysis also reflects the developing impact of Coronavirus on opportunity. The Office for Budget Responsibility's Covid Reference Scenario predicts that the economy of the United Kingdom will contract by 35%, with unemployment potentially peaking at 10% (1).

But just like the issue of social immobility, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic is varied across the UK. While the 35% national average figure is high in itself, it is the case that some areas – predominantly in the North West and Midlands – will see their economic growth reduce by almost 50%. Only one of the twenty hardest hit areas are in the South East or London (2).

In addition to the significant diversity of geographic impact estimated by the Centre for Progressive Policy, the Resolution Foundation point to previous data suggesting that there is likely to be a large impact on those leaving full time education and graduating into an economy in the midst of turmoil. In the 2008 Recession, the unemployment rate across the whole population rose from 5.2% in 2007 to 8.5% in 2011; for those with GCSE equivalent qualifications the unemployment figures were 23% in 2007 and 32% in 2011 (3).

An exacerbating factor for those leaving full time education without a degree is the varied impact of the virus on different sectors of the economy. While sectors such as financial sectors will emerge from the coronavirus pandemic relatively unscathed, with a contraction of just -5%, sectors like retail and hospitality, which have a higher proportion of workers who haven't completed higher education, will contract by -50% and -85% respectively (1).

The health impacts for the coronavirus pandemic show that it is more likely to kill people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, but the economic impacts are disproportionately hitting BAME people as well: polling done by BMG for the Independent has also shown that people from black and minority ethnic households are almost twice as likely as white Britons to report that they have lost income or jobs. Lord Woolley, the Chair of the Race Disparity Unit, has pointed out that while "the virus itself doesn't discriminate, the system does, and that has left BAME communities extremely vulnerable both on health and economic grounds" (4).

So the data suggests a varied and profound impact across locations, ages, education levels, and ethnicity. This has a worrying impact for social mobility in the United Kingdom, as we predict that 8 out of 14 measures used to calculate social mobility will be impacted. We have combined existing place based social mobility analysis with the predicted impact of coronavirus to estimate the size of a communities developing "Opportunity Gap" and ranked these throughout England.

From our analysis we believe that there are 16 areas in England at risk of a 'double opportunity hit': already amongst the worst areas for social mobility, they are going to be particularly badly hit by coronavirus. These areas are Babergh, Bolsover, Broxtowe, Cannock Chase, Corby, Crawley, East Cambridgeshire, East Northamptonshire, Erewash, Melton, North Warwickshire, Norwich, Rutland, South Derbyshire, Tamworth and Wellingborough.

Local Authority	Opportunity Gap	Ranking
Corby	318	1
South Derbyshire	310	2
Wellingborough	308	3
Melton	306	4
North Warwickshire	296	5
Preston	95.5	256
Burnley	209	76

Burnley's Economy

Sector	GVA (£m)	GVA (%)	Decline (%)
1 Accommodation and food services	26	1.2	−85
2 Administrative and support services	163	7.3	−40
3 Agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste	13	0.6	−17
4 Construction	66	2.9	−70
5 Education	122	5.4	−90
6 Financial and insurance activities	38	1.7	−5
7 Human health and social work activities	212	9.4	+50
8 Information and communication	48	2.1	−45
9 Manufacturing	609	27.1	−55
10 Professional, scientific, and technical activities	54	2.4	−40
11 Public administration and defence	59	2.6	−20
12 Real estate activities	167	7.4	−20
13 Transportation and storage	47	2.1	−35
14 Wholesale and retail (including repair of motor vehicles)	516	23.0	−50
15 Other	105	4.7	−60

Burnley's largest sectors

Sector	GVA (£m)
Manufacturing	609
Wholesale and retail	516
Human health and social work	212
Real estate	167
Admin and support services	163

Biggest impacted sectors

Sector	Predicted Decline (%)
Education	−90%
Accommodation and food	−85%
Construction	−70%
Other services	−60%
Manufacturing	−55%

Burnley's biggest sectors are manufacturing, wholesale and retail, human health, real estate, and admin and support services. One of these, manufacturing, is also in the worst impacted sectors, while two, human health and real estate, are in the least impacted sectors. The next three largest sectors, education, other services, and construction are all amongst the most impacted sectors. A large health sector has been noted as being able to provide a buffer to COVID-induced shocks in the economy; in Burnley the health sector makes up 9.4% of the economy as the third largest sector. In Burnley, economic growth is predicted to decline by 40.2% - this is worse than the 35% contraction across the UK as whole.

Taking into consideration the economic reduction in Burnley as well as its position on the Social Mobility Index, we predict that an Opportunity Gap of 209 will arise, the 76th largest in England.

Preston's Economy

Sector	GVA (£m)	GVA (%)	Decline (%)
1 Accommodation and food services	101	2.3	–85
2 Administrative and support services	339	7.9	–40
3 Agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water and waste	72	1.7	–17
4 Construction	295	6.8	–70
5 Education	278	6.4	–90
6 Financial and insurance activities	202	4.7	–5
7 Human health and social work activities	479	11.1	+50
8 Information and communication	150	3.5	–45
9 Manufacturing	192	4.5	–55
10 Professional, scientific, and technical activities	159	3.7	–40
11 Public administration and defence	514	11.9	–20
12 Real estate activities	470	10.9	–20
13 Transportation and storage	149	3.5	–35
14 Wholesale and retail (including repair of motor vehicles)	734	17.0	–50
15 Other	180	4.2	–60

Preston's largest sectors

Sector	GVA (£m)
Wholesale and retail	734
Public administration	514
Human health and social work	479
Real estate	470
Admin and support services	339

Biggest impacted sectors

Sector	Predicted Decline (%)
Education	–90%
Accommodation and food	–85%
Construction	–70%
Other services	–60%
Manufacturing	–55%

Preston's biggest sectors are wholesale and retail, public admin and defence, human health and social work, real estate, and admin and support services. None of these are in the worst impacted sectors, while three, public admin, human health, and real estate, are in the least impacted sectors. A large health sector has been noted as being able to provide a buffer to COVID-induced shocks in the economy; in Preston the health sector makes up 11.1% of the economy as the third biggest sector. In Preston, economic growth is predicted to decline by 32.9% - this is better than the 35% contraction across the UK as whole.

Taking into consideration the economic reduction in Preston as well as its position on the Social Mobility Index, we predict that an Opportunity Gap of 95.5 will arise, the 256th largest in England.

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