

WIDENING ACCESS: PROGRAMME MONITORING HIGHLIGHT REPORT**Report Period: January – June 2019****Completion Date: 7 October 2019****Programme RAG Status: Amber**

Overview: The programme as a whole comprises 45 recommendations and sub-recommendations with 199 identified milestones.

Progress in Period: Over the reporting period there were 62 milestones scheduled for completion across 34 recommendations and sub recommendations. This represents almost 76 percent of the recommendations and sub recommendations within the programme as a whole and 31% of the milestones.

Recommendations: The overall RAG rating of the programme as at the end of June 2019 was amber. At that time, 2 recommendations were unreported on, 17b and 17c, across the remaining 43 recommendations and sub-recommendations:

- 7 recommendations / 16% of the programme was RAG rated blue, 'complete'.
- 17 recommendations / 40% of the programme was RAG rated green, and 'on track for delivery on schedule';
- 18 recommendations / 42% was RAG'd amber 'behind schedule but can be rectified'; and
- 1 recommendation / 2% was RAG'd red 'risk to delivery'.

The 2 unreported recommendations are sub recommendations led by schools representatives. Progress on implementation of these was delayed due to an extended leave of absence in 2018 by the Lead Delivery Partner. A new Lead Delivery Partner has been identified. The timeline for delivery is being re-assessed and new milestone deadlines have still to be agreed.

Issues: Recommendation 24 was RAG rated as red 'risk to delivery' by the Lead Delivery Partner, SFC, at the time of reporting. This recommendation relates to reviewing the Widening Access and Retention Fund (WARF). SFC had intended consulting on WARF in Dec 2018.

Action: SFC has now undertaken the consultation subsequent to the reporting period. The timeline for this recommendation will be reviewed and revised to reflect this.

'High Impact' recommendations assessed as Amber:

Within the programme 15 of the recommendations/sub-recommendations have been identified as 'high impact'. It is considered that failure to deliver these recommendations would have a significant negative impact on the success of the programme as a whole. Of the 18 amber recommendations, 5 are assessed as 'high impact', these are recommendations: 3, 8/8a, 11a, 16, 29b and 31a. Further detail is provided below.

Recommendation 3: *Public funding for access programmes – either through specific external funding or funding from core budgets – should focus on programmes that are consistent with the Scottish Framework for Fair Access.*

This recommendation was slightly behind due to the delay in publishing the Framework for Fair Access, which was published near the end of the reporting period. However, the work of the APSG and BPAG is progressing its work bearing in mind that it must be aligned to the work of the Framework.

Action taken: The timeline for this recommendation will be reviewed and revised to reflect this.

Recommendation 8 & 8a: *The SFC should seek more demanding articulation targets from those universities that have not traditionally been significant players in articulation.... the SFC should develop, or commission, an articulation 'map'.*

Action Taken: An SFC-based tripartite post is in place and is working closely with Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland to support the work of the National Articulation Forum and support the implementation of the COWA recommendations. SFC advise that all remaining points under Rec 8/8a will be developed by and lead on from engagement with the regional discussions and the joint Universities Scotland/Colleges Scotland National Articulation Forum.

Articulation data was published in April 2019 and National Articulation Database data-sharing agreements set-up with institutions. Map of articulation has still to be agreed. This will be discussed as part of the National Articulation Database work.

The status of this recommendation will be reviewed following publication of the report from the National Articulation Forum (due early 2020).

Recommendation 11b: *Should the access threshold fail to deliver the intended outcomes by the end of 2022, Ministers should consider options for providing disadvantaged learners who meet a certain level of attainment with an entitlement to the offer of a place in a university.*

Action Taken: In liaison with the SFC it has become clear that the timeline for this recommendation is out of sync with that for 11a – work to assess the impact of access thresholds. The milestones for 11b will therefore be reviewed and revised to reflect a more realistic timescale.

Recommendation 16: *Universities working with schools, should take greater responsibility for the development of the pool of applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds by delivering academically based programmes to support highly able learners, who are at risk of not fulfilling their academic potential.*

Action taken: Discussion have taken place between SG Access and SG Attainment policy leads regarding support for school pupils through widening access initiatives and through attainment initiatives. It was agreed that we should consider the synergies between these strands of work and whether we can develop a more coherent and collaborative approach going forward. This more collaborative

approach may be preferable to developing new 'programmes' targeted at school pupils. The process to deliver this recommendation will be reviewed in light of this ongoing work.

Recommendation 29b

This recommendation focuses on improving mechanisms to track learners and share data to support fair access. The recommendation states that SG should review data access arrangements to provide a national process for the provision of information to practitioners and policy makers working on fair access.

Action Taken: Work on this recommendation has been delayed due to staff changes within SG; this recommendation has now been reassigned and initial work will be undertaken by Dec 19 after which milestones will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

Recommendation 31a: Asks SFC to *review the measures it uses within outcome agreements and the access work it funds in light of the outcome of work to identify new measures.*

Action Taken: Initial work identified Free School Meals (FSM) as an additional measure; however work is still ongoing with regard to how data on FSM can be shared across the system. SFC will take this part of the recommendation forward once a process for sharing free school meals data is more developed.

Milestone Status: Of the 62 milestones scheduled for completion across the reporting period, 23 have been completed on schedule and 5 were not completed on schedule but were completed within the reporting period. Nine of the 34 milestones not completed relate to work by the Commissioner for Fair Access – the delay to which was previously reported to the ADG and the timeline for delivery of these recommendations has been reassessed and new milestone deadlines have been agreed.

The remaining 25 milestones are spread across the SFC and SG. 17 of the 25 incomplete milestones have been rescheduled to be completed by the end of the next reporting period. One has been rescheduled to be completed in the first quarter of 2020, one in the second quarter of 2020 and a completion date for the remaining 6 milestones has yet to be agreed.