

Annex B: Intervention Strategies Evidence Base

Intervention Strategy 1

IS1 brings together a myriad of sector-level research and thinking alongside a wealth of professional experience by our Access and Participation, Student Recruitment, Junior Conservatoire and Academic staff.

Summary of Underpinning Evidence

Evidence	Rationale
TASO. (2023). Rapid Review to support the development of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) Rapid review to support development of the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (officeforstudents.org.uk)	Evidence to suggest that our target groups are at risk for equal opportunity
Ashton, H and Ashton, D. (2023) Creativity and the curriculum: educational apartheid in 21 st Century England, a European outlier? <i>International Journal of Cultural Policy</i> , 29:4, 484-499, DOI: 10.1080/10286632.2022.2058497	Discussion on the access to arts in state and private secondary education
Strand, S. (2014). School effects and ethnic, gender and socio-economic gaps in educational achievement at age 11. <i>Oxford Review of Education</i> , 40(2), 223-245.	Discussion on school contexts and the effectiveness of compulsory education providers
Reay, D. (2017) <i>Miseducation: Inequality, education and the working classes</i> . Policy Press, Bristol.	Discussion on the disparity between the educational experiences of those attending state-funded and private education in England
Gartland, C. (2015) Student Ambassadors: 'role models', learning practices and identities. <i>British Journal of Sociology of Education</i> , 36(8), 1192-1211.	Evidence to support the positive impact of student ambassadors in outreach work
Austin, M., & Hatt, S. (2005). The Messengers are the message: A study of the effects of employing higher education student ambassadors to work with school students. <i>Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning</i> , 7(1), 1-8.	Evidence to support the positive impact of student ambassadors in outreach work
TASO Toolkit - Aspiration-raising interventions (pre-entry) - TASO	Evidence for a range of outreach interventions
Hughes, D., Mann, A., Barnes, S. A., Baldauf, B., & McKeown, R. (2016). <i>Careers Education: International Literature Review</i> . EEF.	Discussion of the quality of careers education in state-funded secondary education
Fuller, c., McCrum, E., & Macfadyen, T. (2014). Teachers' knowledge and experiences of information and guidance: Some implications for the current policy context in England. <i>Education Enquiry</i> , 5(2), 239-242.	Discussion on the varied experiences of teachers in secondary schools regarding careers education
Haynes, G., McCrone, T., & Wade, P. (2013). Young people's decision-making: The importance of high-quality school-based careers education, information, advice and guidance. <i>Research Papers in Education</i> , 28(4), 459-482.	Discussion on the quality of careers guidance in schools
Great Britain. Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). (2009). <i>Quality, choice and aspiration: a strategy for young people's information, advice and guidance</i> .	Review and recommendations on careers guidance in schools
Thompson, D. W. (2020). Aspirations and ambiguities – the need for focused IAG for school pupils considering progression to higher education (HE). <i>Journal of Further and Higher Education</i> , 44(7), 911-924.	Discussion around the quality of careers education in schools and the link with aspirations to study in HE
Garforth, G. (2016). <i>School control of information, advice and guidance during transition: a two-year study into post-16 student decision-making</i> (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Nottingham).	Discussion around the impact of a school's preferences regarding their students' aspirations and trajectory
Chadderton, C. (2015). <i>The New Statutory Requirements in Careers Guidance in England and the Implications for Careers Provision under the Coalition Government</i> . <i>London Review of Education</i> , 13(2), 84-97.	Discussion of impact of changes to IAG provision in schools since 2012
Holman, J. (2014). <i>Good Career Guidance</i> . https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf	Review of careers guidance in schools and recommendations for best practice
Good Career Guidance. <i>The Gatsby Benchmarks</i> . https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/benchmarks-and-background	Careers guidance framework in state-funded secondary education in England

O'Shea, S. (2021). "Kids from here don't go to uni": Considering first in family students' belonging and entitlement within the field of higher education in Australia. <i>European Journal of Education</i> , 56(1), 65-77.	Discussion on sense of belonging for 'working-class' students in Australia
Reay, D., David, M. E., & Ball, S. J. (2005). <i>Degrees of choice: Class, race, gender and higher education</i> . Trentham books.	Discussion on the experiences of students from underrepresented groups in HE
Reay, D. (2001). Finding or losing yourself?. Working-class relationships to education. <i>Journal of Education Policy</i> , 16(4), 333-346.	Discussion on 'working-class' perspectives of education
Reay, D., Crozier, G., & Clayton, J. (2010). 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. <i>British Educational Research Journal</i> , 36(1), 107-124.	Discussion on sense of belonging for 'working-class' students in HE
Whitty, G. (2001). Education, social class and social exclusion. <i>Journal of Education Policy</i> , 16(4), 287-295.	Discussion on the interplay between social class and education
Moore, J., Sanders, J., & Higham, L. (2013). Literature review of research into widening participation to higher education. Report to HEFCE and OFFA. AimHigher Research & Consultancy Network.	Discussion on the value of on campus activity to bring around a sense of belonging and familiarity with HE providers
Baker, Z. (2020). The vocational/academic divide in widening participation: the higher education decision making of further education students. <i>Journal of Further and Higher Education</i> , 44(6), 766-780.	Discussion on sense of belonging and familiarity
McInch, A. (2022). <i>Working-Class Schooling in Post-Industrial Britain</i> . Only Schools and Courses. Emerald Studies in the Sociology of Education. Emerald Publishing, Bingley.	Discussion on compulsory education in working class, post-industrial communities
CFE. (2019). The National Collaborative Outreach Programme. End of Phase 1 report for the national formative and impact evaluations. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/2d55ab17-7108-4e1d-b883-6bf8d1504e72/ncop-end-of-phase-one-evaluation-report.pdf	Key findings and best practice from Phase 1 of NCOP (Uni Connect)
Rowland, M. (2021). <i>Addressing Educational Disadvantage in Schools and Colleges</i> . The Essex Way. John Catt Educational, Woodbridge.	Practical discussion on combatting disadvantage in schools

Thinking around the need for this intervention stemmed originally from first-hand experience alongside knowledge from existing relationships with schools and colleges across our region and further afield. A number of practices also grew from our relationship with Go Higher West Yorkshire and Uni Connect. Developing our understanding of what barriers needed to be addressed, we looked to prominent research from experts such as Reay (2001, 2005, 2010, 2017), TASO (2023), Ashton and Ashton (2023) and McInch (2022).

As a small, specialist institution, the capacity to undertake multiple interventions and connect with schools and colleges in multiple manners is difficult at best but often not achievable, so we knew that we needed to develop a programme of activity that encompassed both our institutional goals for recruitment as well as served our commitments for access.

Leeds Conservatoire Futures is our multi-faceted programme that brings together key areas of our provision in a clear and engaging brand aimed at schools and colleges. There are four key workstreams to the intervention - our partners scheme, our programmes, our online hub and our bursaries – each covering a range of topics important in the decision-making, aspiration raising, and curriculum support needed by schools and young people and often particularly absent when thinking about studying music and drama.

The partners scheme is our sustained and progressive programme which allows us to develop strong working relationships with schools and colleges. We partner on a 3-year cycle with 15 secondary and further education settings, allowing us to embed conservatoire standard teaching into areas of compulsory education which may need additional support. The need for sustained and progressive programmes was particularly highlighted in the Phase 1 review of Uni Connect (then NCOP) (CFE, 2019) which showed that these were where the most impact could be had.

Recognising that a sustained commitment isn't always the right approach for some of our school and college relationships, our programmes remain open to all settings with some programmes available to small groups and individual learners.

We offer both academic and subject skills workshops as well as careers and IAG-focussed sessions to ensure that learners have a wealth of knowledge to make informed choices for their future. In developing this aspect, we looked ensured that what we offered fit neatly alongside the multiple UK exam board curricula as well as the Gatsby Benchmarks. Where possible we use student ambassadors in these workshops, drawing on their valuable experiences at Leeds Conservatoire as well as their natural ability to engage and enthuse school groups. We have a wonderful, diverse and enthusiastic bunch of ambassadors who connect so well to our school guests.

Our online hub was created during the Covid-19 pandemic but still provides teachers with high quality music and drama teaching resources to complement and enhance their classroom provision. Resources were developed using key research into asynchronous learning and are developed based on needs identified by our partner schools and colleges.

Information about the bursaries we offer, our audition travel refund and support in accessing Leeds Junior Conservatoire provision is also included in this suite of activity. Discussing finances is often still a conversation filled with stigma for many, but we truly believe that finance should not be a barrier to talent. We provide this information easily to teachers and prospective applicants as well as signposting to contact details for more in-depth and personalised conversations.

Leeds Conservatoire Futures is an ambitious and wide-reaching intervention strategy with several moving parts. It's a highly flexible strategy which allows multiple schools and colleges to engage in ways that best suit their settings. The programme has a well-established Theory of Change and evaluation plan looked after by our external evaluator, SEER. We evaluate this strategy as a full suite of activities, with evaluations for all parts contributing to an overall evaluation report.

Risks 4 and 5 – Application Success Rates and Course Type and Delivery Mode – were seen as less of a priority, due to the way the conservatoire operates in these areas. We are a specialist provider with vocational courses, and this is abundantly clear to potential applicants, we pride ourselves on our practical, industry-focussed tuition which may appeal to those who wouldn't consider themselves to be more traditionally academic, as such at present, we currently do not offer part-time or distance learning. For some of our courses, Leeds Conservatoire uses the UCAS Conservatoires deadline of early October to accept applications, therefore a number of our applicants begin preparations for their applications and auditions earlier than most higher education applicants. Equally, the application-audition process at the conservatoire ensures applicants have the creative, technical and performance skill sets needed to succeed at our institution, and through providing feedback on the day to auditionees we can support them to continue preparations for conservatoire study or further auditions.

As mentioned in Annex A, we are in the process of working towards Degree Awarding Powers, so alternative delivery modes and course types will be considered as part of this process, as currently through our degree-awarding from the University of Hull, our ability to deliver courses in non-standard ways is limited.

Intervention Strategy 2

Summary of Underpinning Evidence

Evidence	Rationale
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Palmer, S. (2008). The PRACTICE model of coaching: towards a solution-focused approach. Coaching Psychology International. Vol.1, No.1, PP 4-8	A solution-focused coaching model which works with the strengths and abilities of the recipient to address their needs
Mind Tools. (2018). Available at https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_13.htm	High-performance coaching technique that enables an immediate shift in practice and behaviours
Dweck, C. (2017). Mindset: Changing the way you think to fulfil your potential. London: Robinson.	Discussion around metacognition which encourages recipients to take a more reflective approach to problem-solving
Burgess, S et al. (2018). Role models, mentoring and university applications – evidence from a crossover randomised controlled trial in the United Kingdom. Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, [online] 20(4). Available at: https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10061074/1/Macmillan_Article%20C%20-%20Sanders%20et%20al_accepted%20version.pdf	Evidence review of the impact of coaching vs. mentoring
Leader Syndrome. (2015). Setting Objectives: Better than smart is Smarter. Available at https://leadersyndrome.wordpress.com/2012/02/13/setting-objectives-better-than-smart-is-smarter/	Target setting model that builds in self-evaluation and reflection

This programme will work to a solution-focused coaching technique based on the PRACTICE model, outlined by Palmer (2008). This methodology has the coachee at its heart and focuses on finding solutions that are right for them in order to enable them to meet the expected outcomes.

The PRACTICE model works with coachees to identify the issues they are facing, create targets that support them in overcoming these issues, nurtures them in exploring the most feasible solutions for them, aids them in implementing their solutions and encourages them to reflect and evaluate their progress and the solutions they have chosen. Throughout the programme, coachees should feel able and comfortable to speak freely to their coach about their strengths and skills, without being immediately refocused onto their struggles – the coach should take these on board and work with the coachee to develop ways their strengths and skills can be used to support them in meeting their targets.

In this framework, we have adapted the PRACTICE model to make it manageable for our coaching relationships to fulfil over a short period. Considering the techniques used in high-performance coaching to make fundamental changes to performance (Mind Tools, 2018), this framework should support an immediate shift towards reflective practice whilst nurturing a longer-lasting growth mindset (Outlined by Dweck, 2017) approach to problem-solving and professional practice.

Borrowing research from other areas of widening participation, we will be using role models as coaches. The use of positive role models in supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds has been found to have a positive impact as discussed by The Behavioural Insights Team (2018). For this programme, we recognise that our academic staff are not always the most diverse so we will welcome coaches from all aspects of conservatoire staffing and alumni. We will aim to match coachees with a coach who shares at least one of their identities.

Target-setting techniques are plentiful but for this programme, we will use the SMARTER method (Leader Syndrome, 2015).

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound
- Evaluated
- Recognised/Revisited

This allows us to create targets with our coachees that are realistic and tailored to them and their specific needs and situations. We have chosen the SMARTER method because it includes evaluation and recognition/revisiting. We feel that this will encourage our students to work as reflective practitioners, evaluating and reflecting on their practice as part of their day-to-day study to enhance their work. If we nurture this skill of reflection during this coaching programme, the coachees are more likely to take it forward with them and ideally make it almost second nature.

Intervention Strategy 3

Summary of Underpinning Evidence

Evidence	Rationale
Research in Learning Technology – Journal – Multiple publications. Available at: https://journal.alt.ac.uk/index.php/rlt/about	The leading academic journal for advancement in practice into learning technology
JISC.(2024). Building digital capabilities framework. The six elements defined. Available at: https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8846/1/2022_Jisc_BDC_Individual_Framework.pdf	Functional model for implementing Technology Enhanced Learning
Advance HE. (2020). Technology Enhanced Learning. Available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/technology-enhanced-learning#Overview	Guidance for implementing Technology Enhanced Learning in HE settings
Clark, R. E. (2015) Undergraduate Music Students' Perceptions of Digital Literacies. PGCAP Research paper. University of Hull. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/32682862/Undergraduate_Music_Students_Perceptions_of_Digital_Literacies	Research into digital literacies and capabilities of HE music students
The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018	Regulatory guidelines all HE providers must adhere to
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines – W3 Consortium	Guidelines for accessibility on virtual learning environments
Duval, E., Sharples, M. & Sutherland, R. (2017) Technology Enhanced Learning. Springer Cham.	Discussion incorporating international research and practical implications for Technology Enhanced Learning
Leeds Conservatoire Data Protection Statement. Available at: https://www.lcm.ac.uk/privacy-cookies/	The Leeds Conservatoire Data Protection Statement which details the way the institution handles private data for applicants and enrolled students
QAA. (2024). QAA Quality Code Consultation Document. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/quality-code-consultation-document-24.pdf?sfvrsn=431db481_9	The most recent QAA Quality Code consultation document, which outlines the requirement for HEIs to promote inclusive provision and adopt accessible assessment methodology
Higher Education Commission, Policy Connect. Arriving At Thriving: Learning from disabled students to ensure access for all. (2020). Available at: https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/research/arriving-thriving-learning-disabled-students-ensure-access-all	Highlights the requirements for institutional change towards the adoption of inclusive teaching and assessment practices.
OIA. (2024). Lessons from the Abrahart Case. Webinar slides. Available at: Not publicly available, available on request	These slides give information which was showcased in the Lessons from the Abrahart Case webinar, including findings from research created with large numbers of HE students with disabilities across the UK. The research was undertaken to improve knowledge and access to support services, in response to the High Court ruling that Bristol University was 'liable for disability discrimination' against Natasha Abrahart (under the Equality Act 2010) before she took her own life in 2018, including 'a failure to make reasonable adjustments'. This research highlighted a lack of understanding of reasonable adjustments that academic staff have, especially in cases where a student's disability would be considered

	'invisible', such as those who have mental health conditions, specific learning difficulties etc.
OfS. (2019). IES Report - Review of Support for Disabled Students in Higher Education in England. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/3838/review-of-support-for-disabled-students-in-higher-education-in-england.pdf	This report highlights studies that show that academic staff, alongside all staff working at HEIs in England lack the required level of knowledge of access, inclusion, disabilities, reasonable adjustments and individual or institutional responsibilities under Equality Act 2010, and that HEIs are not providing a sufficient training on the subject either.
Madriaga, M., and Goodley, D. (2010). Moving Beyond the Minimum: Socially Just Pedagogies and Asperger's Syndrome in UK Higher Education. International Journal of Inclusive Education 14 (2): 115–131.	Details of the disadvantages that disabled students face when traditional teaching and assessment pedagogy is used, with inclusive approaches proving to promote a level playing field for disabled and non-disabled students alike.
Building the Right Support Advisory Group, Building the Right Support Delivery Board. (2023). What good looks like - Building the Right Support Delivery Board Advisory group report. Available at: https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/VV_GLL%20report%20-%2018082023%20final%20CHECKED%20FOR%20ACCESSIBILITY%20%28002%29%20TP%20amends-11-16.pdf	Report highlighting the 'othering' that students with Autism Spectrum Conditions (and similar conditions affecting social and/or communication skills) can face, due to neurotypical barriers and traditions not meeting the requirements that individuals with conditions of this nature are able to build social relationships in.
Disabled Students UK, Snowden Trust. (2023). Disabled Students UK's Access Insights Report 2023. Available at: https://disabledstudents.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Disabled-Students-UK-Access-Insights-2023-Report.pdf	Report detailing the most recent average percentages of students who declare disabilities in UK HEIs (2021/22).
TASO. Promoting self-advocacy for disabled students (post-entry). Available at: https://taso.org.uk/intervention/promoting-self-advocacy-for-disabled-students-post-entry/#:~:text=The%20group%20who%20received%20the,et%20al.%2C%202021 .	Resource on the importance of the promotion of self-advocacy amongst disabled students, whilst highlighting the positive impact that Mentoring support can have on disabled students
UK Government. (2010). The Equality Act 2010. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents	Legislation outlining the requirement to prevent discrimination of the identified protected characteristics, which are as follows: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation
Gartland, C. (2015). Student Ambassadors: 'role models', learning practices and identities. British Journal of Sociology of Education, 36(8), 1192-1211.	Evidence showing the positive impact that student ambassadors can have to access for applicants
Royal College of Occupational Therapists. (2018). Getting my life back: Occupational therapy promoting mental health and wellbeing in England. Available at: https://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/media/1059/getting-my-life-back_england.pdf	Report explaining the positive outcomes students can have after accessing occupational therapy whilst studying in HE. With contributions from Clare Copley, Occupational Therapist at Leeds Conservatoire, the report gives information about how OT support can enable students to manage their own wellbeing and develop mental resilience through meaningful occupations whilst studying in HE.
Go Higher West Yorkshire. (2023). GHWY Disabled Learner Transition Pack. Available at: https://gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/courses/ghwy-disabled-learner-transition-pack/	Transition Pack for disabled students moving from Further Education, into Higher Education, helping to explain the different support structures and reduce barriers to understanding and accessing disability support in HE.
The Musicians Census - Musicians' Census (musicianscensus.co.uk)	Review of workforce in the music industry
ACE. (2021) Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case: A Data Report. https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/equality-diversity-and-creative-case-data-report-2019-20	Review of the workforce in the creative arts industries

Academic Support

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) is a term used in education to describe the use of technology to maximise student learning. TEL is often used as a synonym for e-learning but can also be used to

refer to technology-enhanced classrooms and learning with technology, rather than just through technology (Advance HE, 2024).

In addition to learning enhancement, the TEL Team at Leeds Conservatoire aims to develop students' digital capabilities (JISC, 2024), enabling participation with learning technologies no matter their background. Developing digital capabilities is key to closing an attainment gap, students arrive in HE with different levels of capabilities based on their access to technology and learning technology in their prior studies and personal lives. Digital capabilities will be a key part of student's lives upon graduation, whether in further study, practice in the creative arts industry, or the modern workplace.

Digital Accessibility is another key area in which the TEL Team ensure access for learners with disabilities and/or cognitive conditions. Digital Accessibility is the application of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) (W3, 2024) to digital materials an individual may interact with. This includes website content like the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), student intranet (Life), and student information content, but also other digital media which students may interact with, such as documents, slide decks, videos, podcasts and digital communications. This is part of the conservatoire's obligations to The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Alongside our Technology Enhanced Learning Service, the conservatoire also offers a robust academic skills support programme. The Skills for Learning service's key ambition is to retain and support the attainment of all our students. Our strategy involves embedding multiple pedagogical approaches and learning theories into the support we have on offer:

- 1-1 drop-ins with academic staff ensures students can receive tailored support. Offered to all student, 80% of booked sessions have been made by AP students;
- Online self-directed learning allows students to learn reflectively and asynchronously;
- In person workshops offer a collaborative and active learning style
- Our co-curricular sessions embedded within student timetables, 'The Survival Guide Series', offers a mixture of blended, scaffolded learning. Topics covered in this series are informed by student consultation, industry consultation and internal research related to learning and knowledge gaps.

By providing this variety in the support that the service offers, we mitigate any barriers to studying and learning by ensuring that regardless of a student's background, learning style or needs, they have access to varied academic support to be able to achieve their potential here and beyond studying at the Conservatoire.

Wellbeing, Disability and Wider Student Experience Support

A holistic multi-disciplinary approach to support for disabled students at Leeds Conservatoire is in place throughout the Student Support Department's specialist trained staffing body. The department is made up of four teams, with the Disability Support Team working closely with the Health and Wellbeing, Funding and Accommodation Teams to promote a student-centred approach to inclusion through the lens of the Social Model of Disability. Students can access a single point of entry Student Support Referral Form for all teams within the Student Support Department, helping to reduce any perceived barriers in accessing support that disabled students may have faced otherwise.

The Disability Support Team start emailing offer holding applicants from the April before their first enrolment, specifically to fully inform them of the differences between Further Education and Higher Education support methodology, whilst also encouraging them to declare any disability, neurodiversity, mental health condition and/or long-term health condition to Leeds Conservatoire.

This action helps to ensure that support and reasonable adjustments are offered and organised for disabled applicants in an anticipatory manner in line with the Equality Act 2010. This early contact method also enables the Disability Support Team the opportunity to encourage eligible students to start applying for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), with advice offered about the types of documentation that is required when applying for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). As an active member of the Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) working group, Leeds Conservatoire have helped to improve access to disability services across the region through contributions to (and utilisation of) the GHWY Transition Pack. This document helps inform all stakeholders of the differences in support mechanisms for disabled students between Further Education and Higher Education before they enrol.

A member of each team within the Student Support Department is present at each Open Day that applicants attend, with each team offering tailored advice in their specialism and answering questions that applicants or family members may have at the time. The Accommodation Team also offer tours of student lettings during Open Days, whilst private tours of specific room options for disabled students are given, helping to ensure that students with disabilities can request necessary adaptations and choose the room that best suits their circumstances.

The Accommodation team work closely with our accommodation provider partners early in the application cycle, to ensure that the providers are fully prepared for students with disabilities that require any adaptations to their respective buildings before enrolment takes place. Students with disabilities can request the prioritisation of their accommodation type to best suit their individual needs, helping both Leeds Conservatoire and our accommodation provider partners meet any reasonable adjustments required in an anticipatory manner, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

The Disability Support Team run a summer Orientation Day to offer holding applicants with conditions that may cause difficulties of a sensory, social, communication or anxiety nature. Attendees meet other applicants with similar difficulties to themselves before the student population of Leeds Conservatoire, and other Leeds HEIs, move back for the start of the new academic year. Attendees are given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Leeds Conservatoire support staff, have access to example lectures from academic staff, tailored tours of student accommodation, and experience the campus buildings during a quieter period of time when a lower level of sensory stimuli is present both at the Conservatoire, and in the city itself. Student Ambassadors also attend, offering applicants the opportunity to ask questions about the student experience and be given a tour of Leeds from the perspective of a current student. Students who have difficulties funding the trip or from low-income backgrounds are offered financial assistance to attend the Orientation Day by the Student Funding Team.

Students can access advice from the Disability Support Team, as well as declare any existing/newly identified conditions using the disability support section of the Student Support Referral Form throughout the application cycle and during their studies. The form can be filled out as many times as required, with any initial or additional conditions/information declared informing either the creation, or update of, an Individual Adjustments Plan (IAP) document. IAPs are shared with academic staff after the student has been registered and enrolled, and are kept on record for seven years after they leave Leeds Conservatoire. Applicants that decide not to enrol have their declared data deleted after the enrolment period concludes, in line with the Leeds Conservatoire Data Protection Statement and GDPR guidance on information that is no longer relevant.

Yearly training is delivered to academic staff during the Staff Development Week each September by the Disability Support Manager, centred on the importance of the implementation of all recommended reasonable adjustments that are agreed for students in both the lecture and assessment environment. The training also gives advice on inclusive teaching & learning methodology, to encourage a more inclusive institution for all. This training is mandatory for academic staff to attend, whilst a recording is made available for staff that were absent for reasons

outside of their control or new members of staff. Both the Students' Union President and Disability Support Team brought the Executive Leadership Committee a request to initiate further external training on essential disability and Equality Act 2010 knowledge, due to the Bristol University ruling and student feedback. The Disability Support Manager raised a request with management that all staff require a mandatory training module about their responsibilities towards disability support and the Equality Act 2010, with the HR department recently starting the process to explore the development of an additional mandatory online training module for this, helping to address any gaps in knowledge that new employees may have.

The Disability Support Manager has been encouraging the institution to develop and adopt inclusive assessment practices, with the Heads of Schools and Director of Teaching agreeing to use these recommendations when building new courses and the re-writing of existing course for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years respectively.

The Disability Support Team attempt to encourage students to declare conditions and/or investigate disability advice required through email communication, posts on our intranet system and through events held throughout the academic year. 28% of students at Leeds Conservatoire have been given Individual Adjustments Plans (IAPs) detailing their agreed reasonable adjustments this academic year, which is a high percentage compared to the national average of 19% across HEIs in the United Kingdom when last reported in 2021/22. The Individual Adjustments Plan documents are shared directly with the respective students, as well as their academic staff, to help enable them to be in control of their own information and have a route to self-advocacy if they feel confident/comfortable to speak with tutors about adjustments. The Disability Support Team always discuss concerns raised by students with the respective course staff whenever necessary though. To ensure that students can access the support that they require, students are offered advice and guidance on how they can gain diagnostic criteria when they are unsure, or when evidence would likely be rejected by Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

For students who wish to investigate whether they have Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs), we offer and fund a screening and diagnostic referral process for eligible students. This process also includes the identification of traits of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), with information also provided to all students about how they can seek formal medical diagnostic investigation and NHS Right to Choose information. Although no diagnosis of ADHD can be confirmed due to the educational basis of our diagnostic testing, we help to enable students to access evidence to help support DSA applications, largely in light of the length of time spent on NHS ADHD diagnostic waiting lists often being longer than the time that they will study with us.

Leeds Conservatoire is a registered supplier of DSA-Mentoring support. Disabled students who have been recommended our service in their DSA Award are offered tailored support to remove any disability-related barriers that they may have when accessing their studies. The essential retention-related work Mentors deliver includes (but is not limited to) assisting the development of independent coping strategies, alongside planning, organisational and communication skills. Along with supporting the adoption and regular use of assistive technology where appropriate, Mentors have been shown to increase academic engagement and promote the retention of disabled students. Allocated students are given their preference of in-person or online support sessions, usually an hour per week (depending on the individual's DSA allocation), which supports students to engage fully in their studies and address any difficulties that may arise throughout each of their academic years studying at Leeds Conservatoire.

As the first Higher Education Institution in the United Kingdom to employ Occupational Therapists (OTs), Leeds Conservatoire has taken a broad approach to holistically supporting disabled students. The OTs bridge any possible gap in support that may occur when students access both the Disability Support offer and the short-term interventional support that the Health and Wellbeing Team offer.

The OTs help students identify and adopt meaningful ways to engage in their learning, alongside any other occupations that can positively affect their educational experience

The Student Support Department runs a bi-weekly social group for students who have been diagnosed with or identify with traits of neurodiversity. The Neurodivergent Network social group has helped enable students with similar conditions to build relationships with each other, to take part in fun activities, or just settle quietly into the calming, sensory-friendly environment. It has also become a part of our multi-faceted approach to tackling any doubts that some students may have towards accessing support for their disabilities in Higher Education, which has been found to occur largely due to their perception of support delivery in earlier education leaving them feeling socially 'othered'.

We also provide a Quiet Room to students having difficulties with high-anxiety moments whilst studying at Leeds Conservatoire. The Quiet Room provides a quiet, comfortable, sensory-friendly environment and gives them a place to relieve any anxiety-inducing difficulties they are facing at the time.

In regards to mental health and disability support referral mechanisms, the Student Support Department offer students help to self-refer/apply for external support, with the most frequent student requests coming in the form assistance applying for DSA or completing NHS referrals. Some other examples of referral support given by the Student Support staff are through requests for DSA support changes, diagnostic intervention and NHS direct referrals with the student's consent, helping to remove barriers that disabled students may face due to their conditions, whilst ensuring that the department complies with GDPR guidance and respect the students' right to decide their own support routes. The department staff often assist students to refer to General Practitioners, Leeds Mental Wellbeing Services, Leeds Student Medical Practice, Leeds Autism Diagnostic Services, Leeds Adult ADHD Services, Aspire, Emmerge and Link Dyslexia (our diagnostic assessment partner).

The Health and Wellbeing Team often help students to use the NHS Leeds & York Partnership Single Point of Contact, to assist with student mental health crises. Funding and referrals for Hearing Checks and Physiotherapy are organised by the department staff where necessary, assisting students with their physical, as well as mental, well-being throughout their studies.

On rare occasions where a student may be at risk of harming themselves or others, and where the named trusted contact cannot be liaised with in the required timescale, direct referrals without student consent can be initiated in line with the Leeds Conservatoire Safeguarding Policy. NHS crisis or emergency services are the most frequent recipient of referrals without student consent, which would only ever be actioned by department staff to ensure the immediate well-being of a student in a crisis.

Employability and Enterprise

Students are also supported into employment and further study by our Employability and Enterprise team. This team works closely with the creative industries to support our students by providing opportunities, guidance, and advice for preparing for a career as an artist or entrepreneur. The team provides services ranging from headshots and marketing to career guidance, support with applying for funding, and networking. The activity provided is directly influenced by sector bodies such as the Musicians Union, Equity UK, PRS for Music and Arts Council England to name a few.