



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

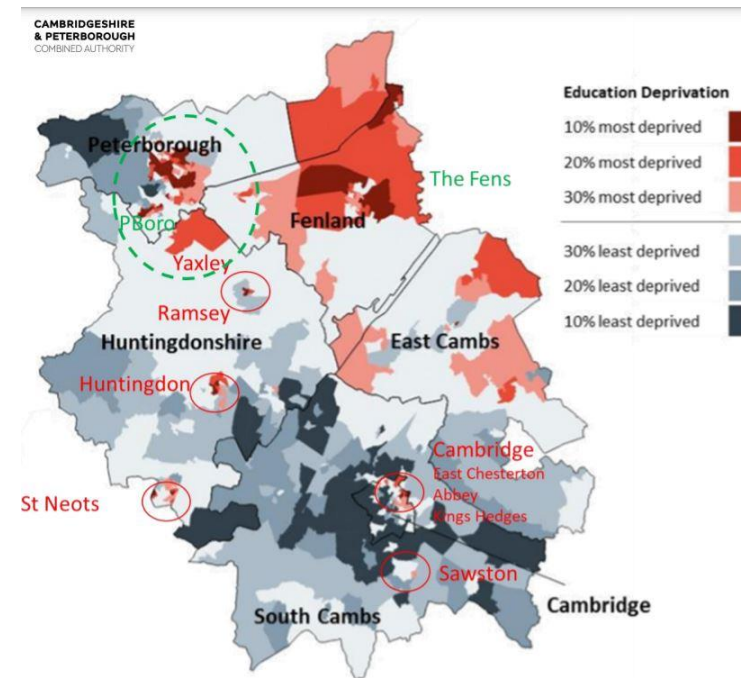
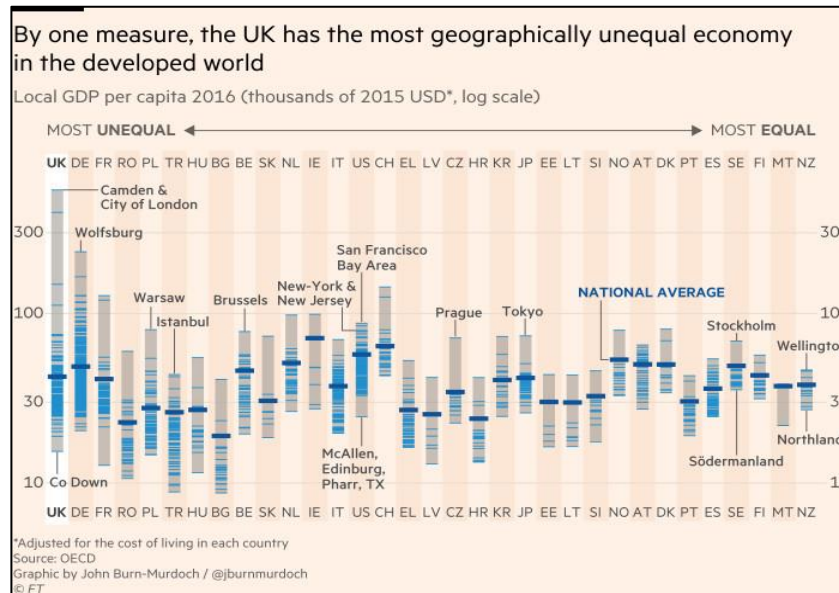
# Widening Participation (WP) initiatives at the University of Cambridge and an introduction to the Foundation Programme

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Dr Alex Pryce, Foundation Year Course Director

**Student Admissions and Access, Education Services**

# The Context



<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/package-to-transform-education-and-opportunities-for-most-disadvantaged>

<https://ifs.org.uk/books/levelling-where-and-how>

<https://www.ft.com/content/c9db4c66-5971-11ea-a528-dd0f971feb9c>



## The Context

### Wisbech

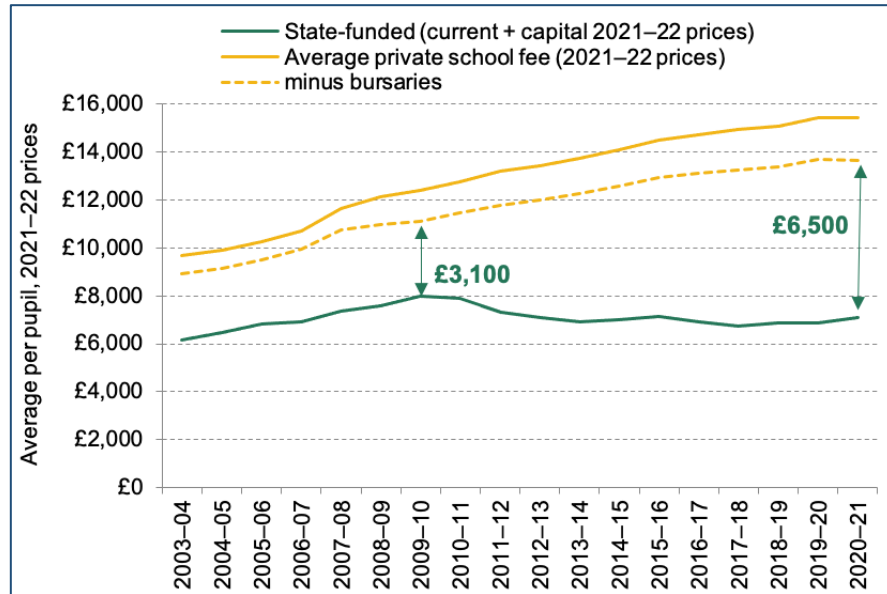
- **25%** of 18 year olds go to university

### Cambridge

- In one area of the city, **100%** of 18 year olds go to university



# The Context



*“When you’re accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression.”*  
**Franklin Leonard**

**GCSEs**

### Pupils who used food banks in pandemic fared worse at GCSEs, study finds

Findings prompt concerns about long-term impact of cost-of-living crisis on poorer students’ life chances

**Sally Weale**  
Education correspondent

Thu 25 May 2023 06:00 BST

Facebook Twitter Email

## What is WP?

- Programmes that provide advice and information about and experience of higher education
- Underrepresented groups
- In schools and at universities

*How do I choose a university and course?*

*How do I apply to university?*

*How do admissions processes work?*

## Why WP at Cambridge?

- The University is committed to widening participation, and to achieving an intake that is reflective of UK society and providing equality of educational opportunity for all those who study at Cambridge.
- Our ultimate objectives are to admit a student body in which no identified priority group is under-represented, and to eliminate gaps between such groups in continuation, attainment and progression.
- Equality of educational opportunity leads to diversity of thought within the University, and to social mobility in the longer term.
- Our commitment to this is set out in a formal agreement with the university's regulator, the Office for Students, in an Access and Participation plan. We have key targets to meet.



## Types of Outreach

- Information and guidance on higher education
- Summer schools
- Mentoring
- Academic skills support
- Subject Specific
- Open days





“Oxbridge is only for  
upper-class private  
schools”

The Telegraph News Sport Business Opinion Ukraine Money Life Style Travel Culture Puzzles

Royals UK news Politics World Health Defence Science Education Environment Investigations Global

## Cambridge accused of ‘social engineering’ as state school pupils now more likely to get a place

The Telegraph reveals for the first time a sharp drop in the rate of admissions for independent school pupils

By Louisa Clarence-Smith, EDUCATION EDITOR and Ben Butcher  
27 October 2022 · 9:05pm







- A record number of state school-educated students and black British students were accepted to the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford in 2022
- Around 73% of UK students are from state schools this year, compared to 72% last year
- More than a quarter of our students will have come from less advantaged backgrounds\* with just over 7% having been eligible for Free School Meals while at school
- The number of black British students this year is up by more than 50% on 2019/20



“Oxbridge is  
more expensive”

**FALSE**







## Which UK city is most affordable\* for students?

Cardiff has overtaken Sheffield (2021) to become the most cost-effective city for UK students.

Pick from the drop-down to see the rankings

Top 10 UK cities

City	Overall UK ranking	City	Overall UK ranking
Cardiff	1st	York	=4th
Cambridge	2nd	Durham	=4th
Southampton	=3rd	Oxford	5th
Sheffield	=3rd	Bristol	=6th
Coventry	=3rd	Birmingham	=6th



What do we do?



# The Insight Programme

With educational attainment being a key factor in determining progression to Higher Education, our progressive Insight programme supports hundreds of pre-16 students to narrow the attainment gap between less advantaged students and their advantaged counterparts.

## Key approaches

- Metacognition/Self-Efficacy
- Teaching of the national curriculum
- Pedagogical and revision strategies
- Oracy



DISCOVER



EXPLORE





# Sharing Education Power



<https://cambridge-launchpad.com/students-gaze-into-future-careers-with-institute-of-astronomy/>



<https://thebrilliantclub.org/news/fenland-parent-power-kickstarted-with-visit-to-the-university-of-east-anglia/>



We work in partnership with several existing University activities, in particular the **Cambridge Mathematics Project** which supports our exciting and innovative mathematics curriculum, and the University's Widening Participation and Outreach programme

**Could you support a school in need?**



Find out how you can build on your experience in education, whilst supporting the wider community as a school governor.

Join the online event for university staff on **Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 12.30pm** to find out more.





# Introduction to the Foundation Year



- No matter how much outreach we do....
- In 2021, we announced we were launching a new five-year pilot Foundation Year;
- 50 students a year take a specially created one-year course that offers them the chance to develop their skills and meet the high academic standards necessary for further study here or in other top universities;
- The course focuses on the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences;
- Connection to Careers is in the social mobility the programme intends to unlock.



Free and fully  
funded for  
students!

## Who is it for?

- Academic requirement: 120 UCAS points from a range of qualifications;
- No age limit, but for UK resident students only;
- There are strict eligibility criteria but they are based on research about disadvantage and intended to be inclusive;
- Criteria also recognise how disadvantage is often intersectional;
- Care-experienced people and refugees/asylum seekers are automatically eligible;
- Others have to meet one or more criteria across different categories.



# Who is it for?

## Category 1: Individual characteristics:

For example: being a young carer, bereaved in education, homeless in education, estranged from parents, serious health issues impacting education, become a parent while in education, moved schools many times, gaps in education or late diagnosis of Special Educational Needs.

## Category 2: Family characteristics

Low income, means-tested benefits or Free School Meals

## Category 3: School/college characteristics

Low school attainment, poor inspection rating, low progression into Higher Education

## Class of 2022



## Who are they?

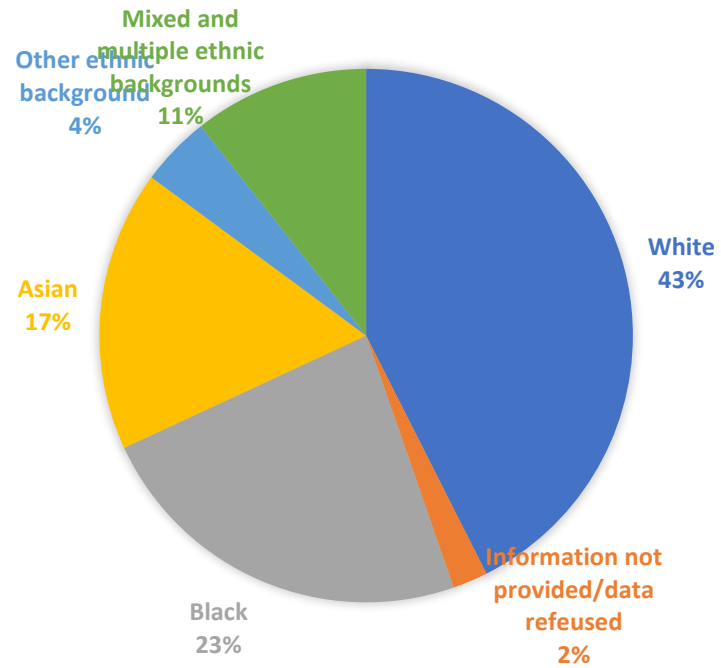
2022 cohort included:

- 32 students from low-income homes
- 9 mature students
- 6 care-experienced
- 7 who have experienced homelessness
- 2 estranged students
- 20 people with young carer responsibilities
- 1 refugee

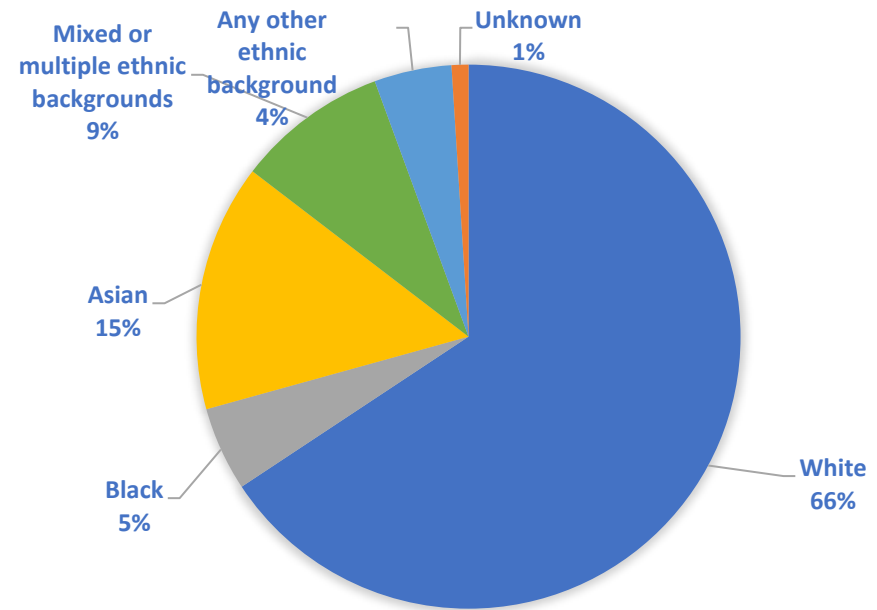
2023 offer holders include:

- 44 students from low-income homes
- 9 mature students
- 9 care leavers
- 6 who have experienced homelessness
- 3 estranged students
- 16 people with young carer responsibilities
- 1 refugee





Foundation Year cohort 2022



All new Home students 2022



# What do they do?

- Live like all other Cambridge students!
- Study a specially-designed multi-disciplinary course in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences;
- Taught in lectures, seminars and supervisions like other students;
- Lots of options to allow students to follow their interests – all course options are multidisciplinary;



## What are their next steps?

- Supported in apply to other universities during the year;
  - Great offers from other top universities (often unconditional).
- Considered for degree courses at Cambridge;
  - Everyone gets a conditional offer;
  - Not like 'applying again'.
- Able to access the Careers Service for guidance and opportunities;
  - Have held networking events to encourage them to think about their future;
  - Encourage them to consider a range of options and not be limited in ambitions;
  - Some have sought out internships and volunteering during the vacations.



Hear from them...



## What next?

- Awaiting results for first cohort – whether they stay here or go elsewhere;
- Looking forward to welcoming the next cohort in September!
- Another cohort getting ready to apply for the programme next year.

