PIONEERS

Barriers & Facilitators to University entry by ethnicity

Kizzi Keast, Ciara McCabe & Niamh Bull
k.keast@reading.ac.uk; c.mccabe@reading.ac.uk

Contents

Executive Summary: 2
Introduction: 4
Methodology: 5
Discussion: 6
Moving out or staying at home: 6
Cost and financial support: 7
The role and importance of supporters: 8
Being welcomed, treated fairly and fitting in: 10
Where are young people finding information about university? 13
What could universities do to help you with your decision making and applications? 14
Conclusions: 16
Recommendations for institutions: 17
Recommendations for outreach practitioners: 18
References: 19
Appendices 20
Appendix 1: Questionnaire Design 20
Appendix 2: Interview Questions 22
Appendix 3: Diamond 9 results 23

Executive Summary:

There has been much discussion about the impact of socio-economic status on rates of progression to Higher Education. What there has been less focus on, are the race equality implications of widening participation efforts. Masked by the global figure that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds have a higher participation rate in HE than their white counterparts, issues of race and ethnicity seem to have fallen from the widening participation agenda. This exploratory study looks at issues of Access to Higher Education, seeking the views from young people themselves and giving them a voice.

The report presents six recommendations for Higher Education institutions when considering their recruitment and outreach activities to ensure that they are meeting the distinct needs of young people from different ethnicities. The report makes a further four recommendations specifically aimed at recruitment and outreach practitioners.

For Black respondents, the questions relating to fitting in and being welcome at university produced striking results which should not be ignored. These results really highlighted the current political and social environment of the moment, bringing into sharp focus the awareness that these young people have of systemic racism. Concerns were raised by Black young people about how their applications would be treated, and whether they would fit in, and even be safe, on a university campus.

In South Asian students there was much more emphasis on being closer to home and ensuring that their parents were involved in the decision-making process to foster a sense of safety and being "allowed" to go. Involving parents in the decision making process is important here, ensuring parents feel that their child will be safe and looked after at university, and also that they will be able to return home regularly. Support and encouragement of commuting would perhaps benefit this group.

East Asian students were the group that reported the lowest levels of confidence in their ability to achieve the required grades to go to university, the lowest levels of understanding of the application process and the lowest levels of possible support from their parents. As no East Asian participants came forward for interview it wasn't possible to explore this further and this could warrant further investigation in the future.

In both South Asian and Other respondents issues of their parents/carers being able to fully understand the application process were raised. With parents/carers being such a critical resource for prospective students higher education institutions could perhaps be doing more to ensure that the efforts they make to support parents/carers are inclusive and accessible – this could include producing IAG for parents in languages other than English.

Institutional recommendations:

Make information about financial support easy to find and actively promote this to prospective students and their supporters – especially parents

Engage parents/carers and ensure that information provided is both helpful and accessible.

Be explicit in your institution's commitment to anti-racism, diversity and inclusion

Ensure marketing material is balanced and “authentic” to give prospective students a true and balanced picture

Ensure information is clear and easy to find – especially on institution websites.

Provide opportunities for prospective students to meet and talk with current students

Practitioner recommendations:

Understand your target demographic

Understand your own biases and assumptions

Showcase diversity, highlight support for BAME learners and challenge racism

Understand the admissions process yourself

Introduction:

There has been much discussion about the impact of socio-economic status on rates of progression to Higher Education, with concerns that poorer students are failing to benefit from the expansion of, and investment in, Higher Education. What there has been less focus on, as highlighted by the Runnymede Trust, are the race equality implications of widening participation efforts. Masked by the global figure that young people from minority ethnic backgrounds have a higher participation rate in HE than their white counterparts, issues of race and ethnicity seem to have fallen from the widening participation agenda. This exploratory study looks at issues of Access to Higher Education, seeking the views from young people themselves and giving them a voice.

The participation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in higher education increased from 14.9% of all students in 2003/4 to 17.2% of all students in 2007/8 (Equality Challenge Unit, 2009). However, these headline figures mask inequalities with the 'BAME Umbrella'. For example, the participation rates of students from Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi backgrounds are only half the rates of Indian and Black African students (Connor et al., 2004). The largest increase in the numbers of BAME students attending university has occurred among Black individuals – in 2003 these students made up 4.4% of all students, which increased to a share of 7.3% in 2018 (Advance HE, 2020). BAME students predominantly apply to and attend universities in close proximity to the family home. A third of Chinese and Indian applications, and over half of Bangladeshi applications are made to local universities while only a quarter of white UK students apply to local universities (Shiner and Modood, 2002).

The differential rates of participation across BAME groups also exposes the difficulty in attempts to increase the involvement of BAME individuals in higher education generally rather than specifically. It has been suggested that the specific needs of BAME students have become subsumed within generic widening participation policies (Aimhigher, 2006).

This report set out with an aim of hearing the authentic voice of BAME young people, and considering their specific barriers and facilitators, taking a more granular approach to ethnicity to identify if there are any specific differences between ethnicities that sit within the BAME umbrella. The results may confirm assumptions that many practitioners in HE recruitment and outreach already hold, but they also tell us about the mindset of young people today and expose their honest feelings about university. Six recommendations are made throughout the report, these are explicit actions that could be taken to improve and enhance the recruitment process for young people from specific ethnicities. A further four recommendations are made at the end of the report specifically for Outreach and Recruitment practitioners, to consider how they approach their own practice and can continue to deliver in a truly inclusive way.

Methodology:

In the first phase of this project, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to schools and contacts in the Study Higher network. Recruitment of participants to the study was also carried out on social media (UoR Outreach Twitter, Study Higher Twitter, Study Higher LinkedIn) and was also later expanded to young people enrolled on the Reading Scholars programme. (See Appendix 1 for the questionnaire.)

After completing a number of demographic related questions, participants were then asked to respond to a series of statements using a 5 point likert scale. The results of these questions were subsequently analysed in SPSS. A total of 139 valid responses were received (8 responses were excluded as the respondent did not meet the eligibility criteria for the study.) 51% of respondents (n.70) identified as being from a White background, leaving 49% of respondents who identified as being from other ethnic backgrounds. Due to the small numbers of respondents from certain ethnicities, certain backgrounds were regrouped with the final classifications for analysis being: Any White, East Asian, South Asian, Any Black, Any Mixed and Any Other.

The results from the questionnaire were analysed in SPSS and results were graphed. P values were calculated to identify responses with high levels of statistical significance, and those where results were likely attributable to random chance were not explored in great detail.

Following analysis of the questionnaire data all participants who consented to being contacted for further research, and who had identified as being from any non-White ethnicity were invited to participate in a telephone interview to explore their views further. Uptake for this was disappointingly low, with only six interviews being carried out in total. While these responses cannot be considered representative, they do add an additional narrative to the evaluation of the questionnaire. All participants in the interviews were asked to choose a pseudonym and these have been used throughout the report.

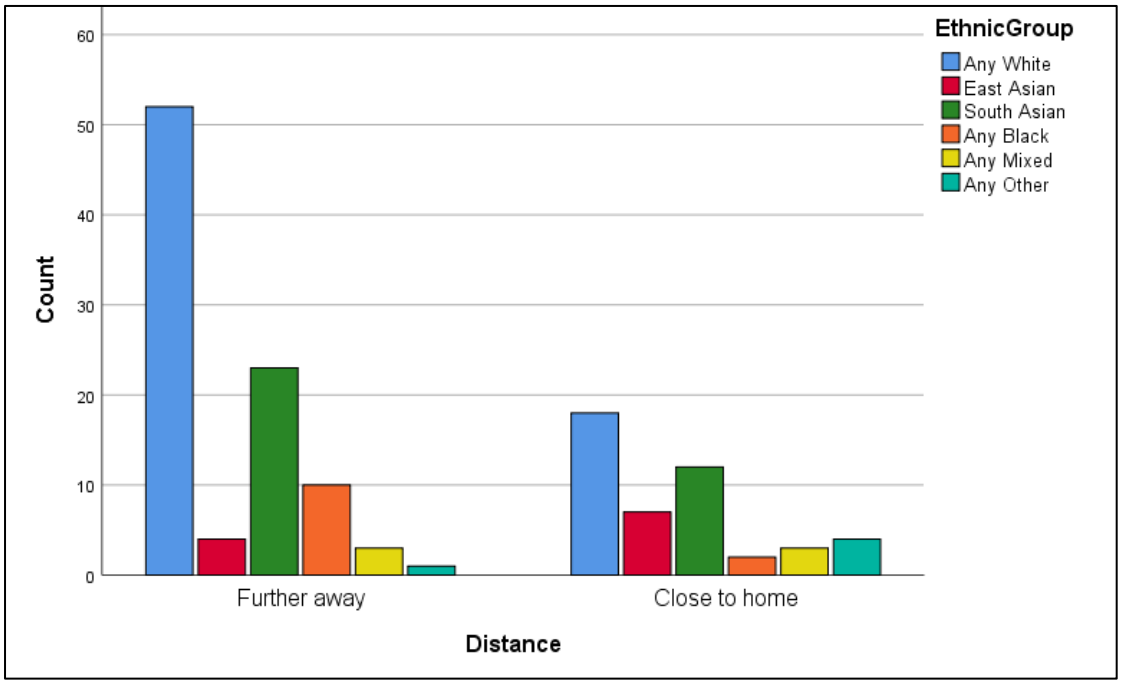
Discussion:

Moving out or staying at home:

> *"Brown people are supposed to stay closer to their house*

Anna, F, South Asian

Despite those who were interviewed from South Asian ethnicities reporting that they would be less likely to move away to university, the majority of respondents to the questionnaire, regardless of ethnicity reported a preference for attending a university more than one hour from home. The exception to this was found in East Asian identifying young people who were more likely to prefer staying close to home than moving away.



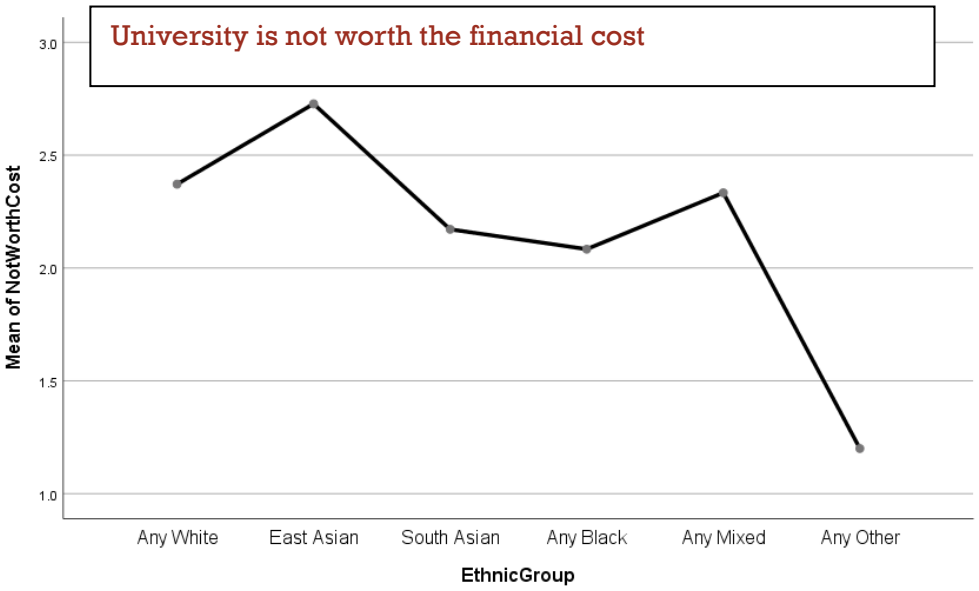
However, this questionnaire failed to capture the nuances in "further away" with distance being subjective. For Anna, she wanted to move out of the family home but expressed needing to remain close enough to home that she would be able to return home every weekend.

"I'm supposed to come home every weekend, so if I was to go somewhere really far, it would be like going so far away and then like came back for weekend is like there's not really any point […] I want to come back here every weekend but it's like it kind of has an effect on your university of choice because then you can't go too far otherwise how you going to come back every weekend?"

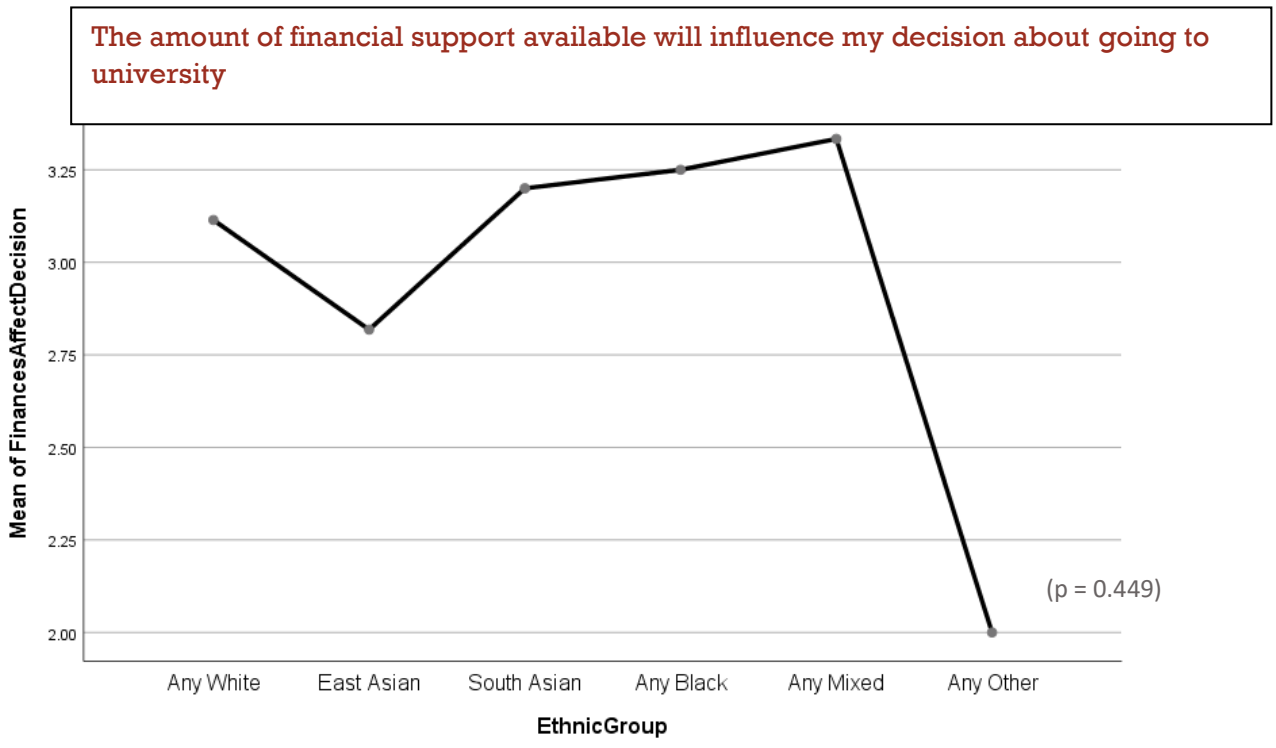
This was echoed in comments made by Maria (F, South Asian) when asked if she felt her ethnicity would affect her decisions about university, with it being expected in her culture that she wouldn't go far for university.

"In [my] culture like it is a popular decision to go to university. But to stay living at home as well. Like normally they don't move out. So normally we'd have to pick like a university nearby, unless you can convince our parents to allow us."

Cost and financial support:



(p = 0.097



(p = 0.449)

Majority of respondents to the survey indicated that they would be attending university, they had already made up their minds, and therefore they have already decided that the cost of attending university is worth it. There are some discrepancies in their scores with East Asian respondents being less sure about the cost being worth it. Unfortunately, no East Asian respondents accepted an invitation to take part in the interview and therefore this couldn't be explored further. Finance and cost of attending University didn't feature heavily in the interviews, with just one of the six respondents mentioning finance but with the understanding that support is available.

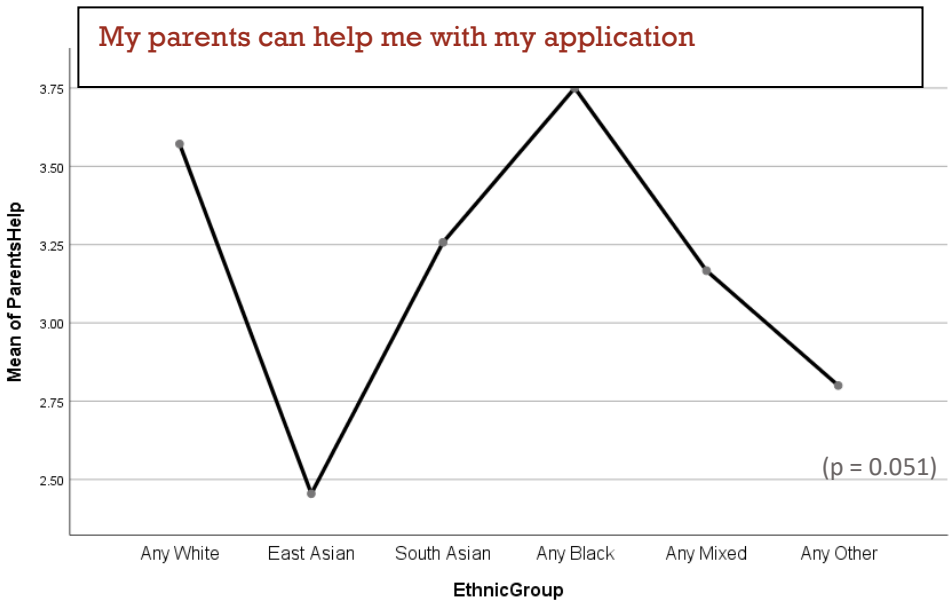
> *"A lot of people will not go to university because of the costs, especially* [those who] *come from poorer backgrounds. Parents can't afford to take you there. Like if you have special funds and pays that you know will support us let us know because that will really help I think."*

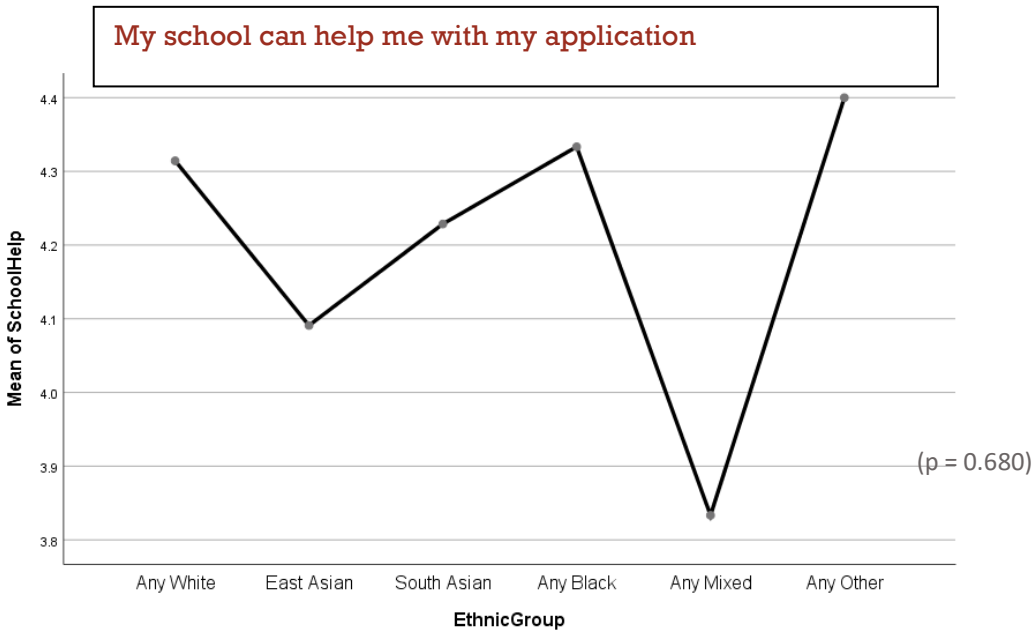
Anna - when asked what universities could do to convince someone like her to apply to university.

Recommendation: 1 Make information about financial support easy to find and actively promote this to prospective students and their supporters – especially parents.

The role and importance of supporters:

Young people by and large don't exist in complete isolation, they have supporters (friends, family, teachers etc.) who help them make important decisions and also help share knowledge and understanding. When considering applying to university there are two groups of supporters who are often targeted by university outreach and recruitment provision – teachers and parents/carers. As a result, questions were asked in the questionnaire and also in the interviews about who would be able to support the young person with their applications and with their decision making. In the questionnaire statements were given about "Parents/Carers" and "School/College" – school being used in place of teacher to so as to include teaching assistants, careers advisors and other support staff in the school or college.





The most statistically significant of these sets of responses being the statement around parents/carers where East Asian and Any Other respondents present the lowest mean averages, both below 3.0 (Unsure). The role of parents was explored in the interviews, with a focus on whether parents would be able to support with the application process. For many respondents there was a culture in which they were "expected" to go to university, and this encouragement from parents was appreciated. However, when asked specifically if parents would be able to help them with the application process issues of knowledge and language were raised.

"At home we speak Kurdish […] Their English isn't bad, but it isn't good. […] but if I give them my personal statement, I say can you check it please? They won't really understand it 'cause there's like a lot of much more formal language."

Kosar, M, Other

I think for students they make it quite clear what they want in like a personal statement or something like that, but maybe for parents it's not as accessible."

– Anton, M, Black Caribbean

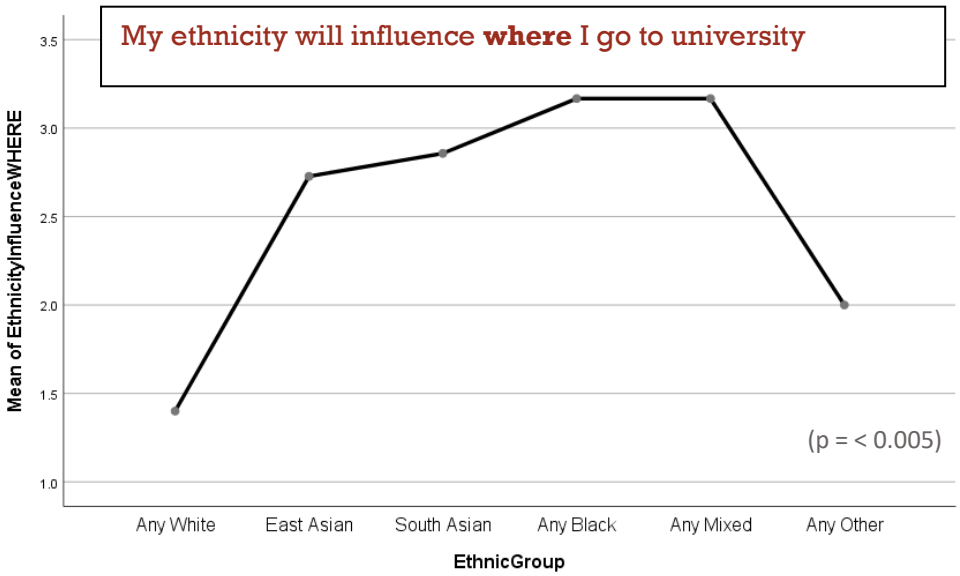
Polling by YouthSight for the Office for Students in 2018 found that parents were prospective students' most important source of information about university (OfS, 2019). Polling by YouGov in 2019 found that while 74% of parents across the UK said that they felt confident in supporting their

children to make decisions about university, this confidence didn't always translate into accurate knowledge.

Recommendation 2: Engage parents/carers and ensure that information provided is both helpful and accessible.

Being welcomed, treated fairly and fitting in:

The murder of George Floyd in May 2020 and the subsequent Black Lives Matter global protests forced the world's attention on the deep-rooted racism that still pervades today, either subconsciously or consciously. It is hard to deny that structural racism existing in UK Higher Education institutions. In 2019 an EHRC report found that racial harassment is a common experience for a wide range of students and staff at universities across England, Scotland and Wales. Around a quarter of students from an ethnic minority background (24%), and 9% of White students, said they had experienced racial harassment since starting their course. This equates to 13% of all students[i]. This reality is felt strongly by prospective students from non-White ethnicities, and in particular by those from Black ethnicities and came through strongly in both the questionnaire and the interviews.



Young people in the questionnaire and in the interviews were all still quite confident about going to university and didn't feel that their ethnicity was a barrier to going to University. In fact, as we saw in the discussion around moving away from home, for some of the young people it was more a cultural expectation that they *would* go to university. However, they did have strong opinions on where they would consider going to university, where they would fit in and feel safe.

"some of the Northern Universities tend to have more Blacks there

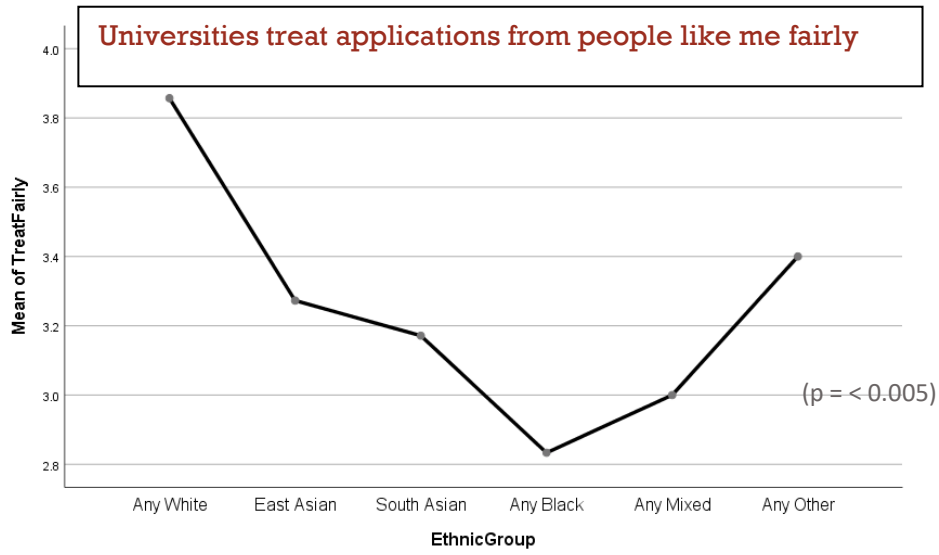
Lullaby, F, Black African

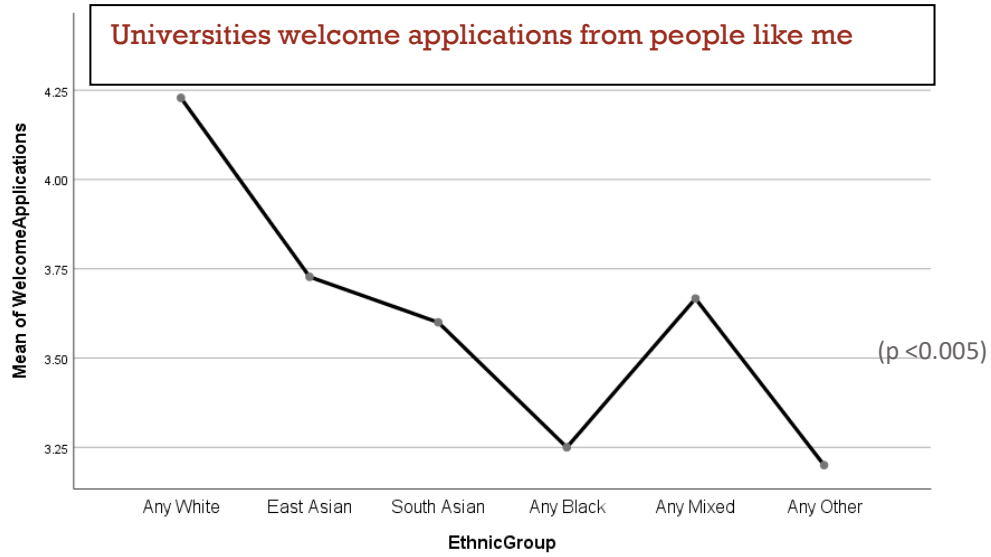
"You know there are a few stereotypes about what sort of people go there

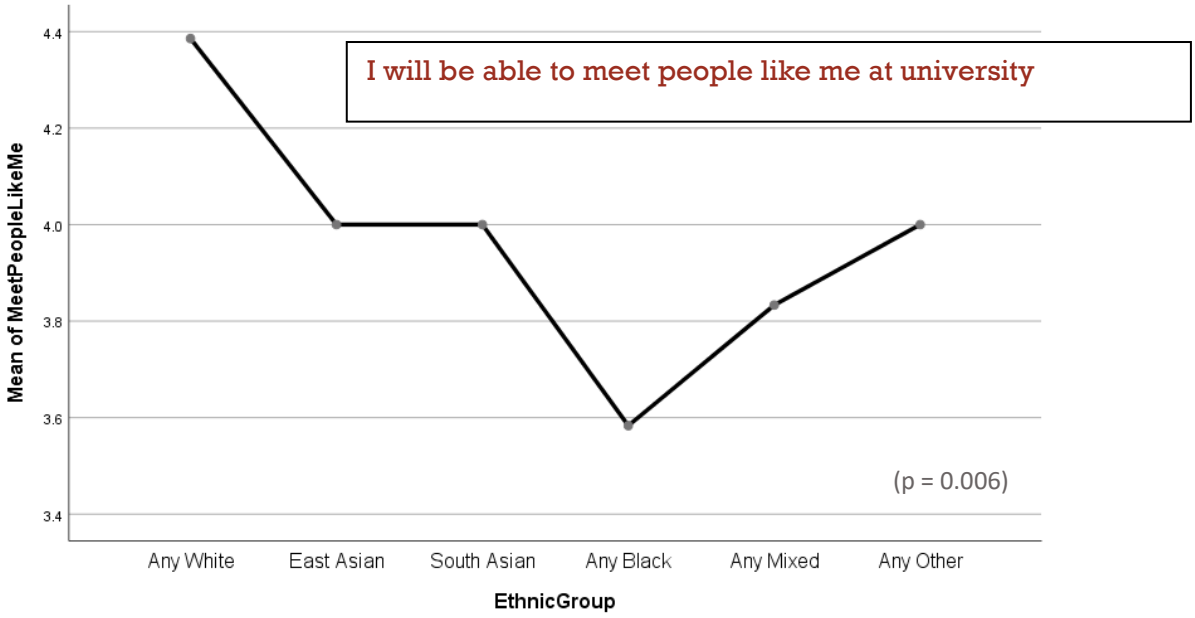
Anton, M, Black Caribbean

"even recently there's a system of racism and still going on. So it's like, will I feel welcome? Will I have the right grades to go there? How's my mental health going to be like if I go there? Will I be looked down on? Will I feel welcome or am I just gonna have imposter syndrome just going there."

Lullaby, F, Black African







"I prefer to go to some where that's more diverse."

Riaz, M, Other

"My friend went to this university and they said that there's a much more accepting environment for who I am."

Kosar, M, Other

It should be concerning for university recruitment, outreach and admissions teams that young people are reporting varying levels of confidence that their applications will be welcomed and treated fairly. These statements in the questionnaire have high statistical likelihood and should not be dismissed as random chance. This coupled with the many examples pulled from the interviews means there is still much for universities to do to ensure that their non-White applicants do not feel discriminated against in the application process and are assured that they will be welcomed and well supported once enrolled.

Recommendation 3: A strong, public commitment to anti-racism and undertaking the work that this requires.

Where are young people finding information about university?

In the interviews young people were asked where they go to find out information about university.

Interviewee	Ethnicity	Sources of information
Anna	South Asian	Social Media (Instagram & Tik Tok). Family with experience of going to university themselves
Maria	South Asian	UCAS. University websites
Anton	Black Caribbean	University websites. The Student Room.
Lullaby	Black African	University websites. Social media.
Kosar	Other	University websites. YouTube
Riaz	Other	University websites. UCAS. Social Media.

University websites are the most commonly used source of information by the young people interviewed. The small sample size means that this isn't representative of the whole population but it is worth bearing in mind when thinking about where to publish information for prospective students and designing institution websites. Prospective students are particularly interested in module lists and the option to hear from current students. Anton expressly said in his interview that the university website themselves was a determining factor in which institutions he was considering applying to. He was looking for a website that was *"easy to get around and you can find what you want."*

When considering *how* and *where* to market university, and to ensure that young people are getting the correct information another important consideration came up in the interviews. The young people spoken to are all looking for unbiased and honest information. As a generation raised with polished social media they are looking for, and actively seeking out the ugly truth.

> *"I'll go on YouTube and search like "vlog of" going to university of wherever. It just gives you more like real perspective rather than like the online open days […] I j want to see the ugly side. It's not just pretty."*

Kosar, M, Other

Recommendation 4: Ensure marketing material is balanced and "authentic" to give prospective students a true and balanced picture.

Recommendation 5: Ensure information is clear and easy to find – especially on institution websites.

What could universities do to help you with your decision making and applications?

During the interviews participants were shown 8 different activities often undertaken by university outreach and recruitments teams and asked to arrange them in order of most to least helpful. A 9th card was also provided for participants to add any other activity they could think of, but this was ignored (and therefore placed in 9th position) by all.

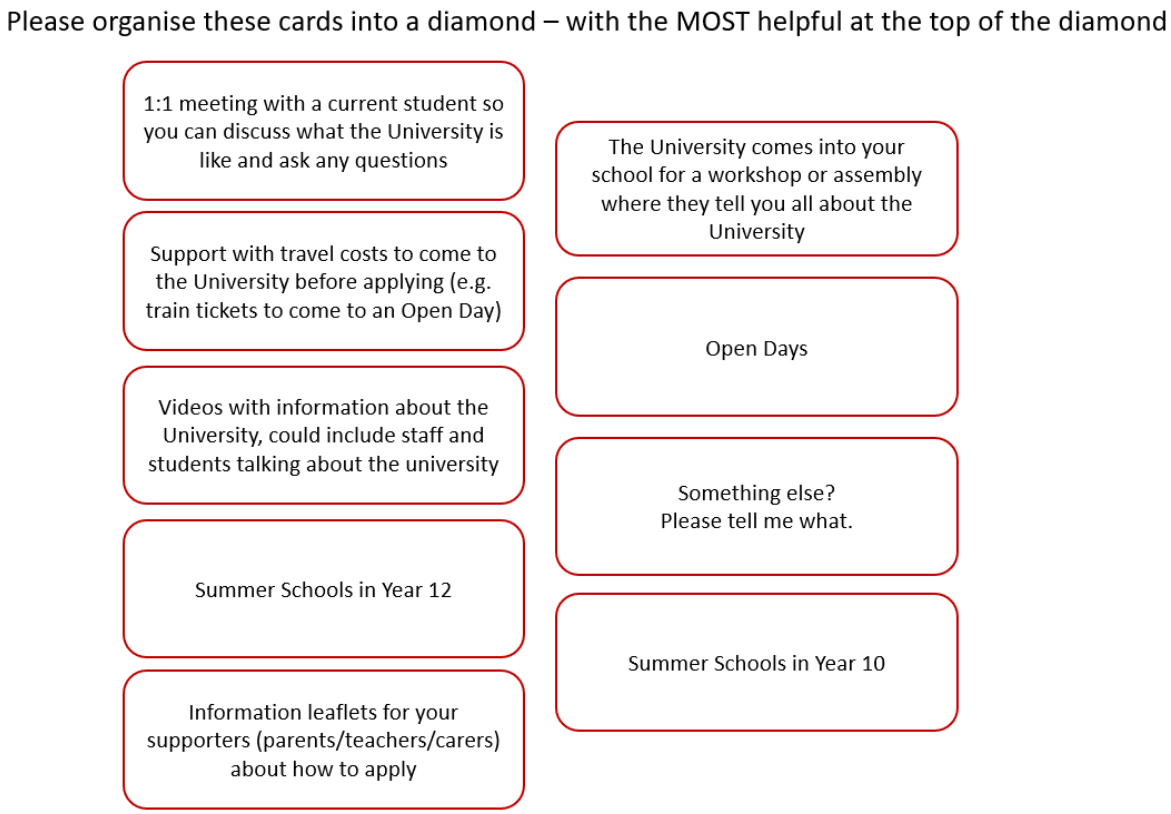


Figure 1: The options presented to participants in the "diamond 9" activity

Participant	Ethnicity	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Anna	South Asian	1:1 meeting with a current student	Support with travel costs	University comes into your school
Maria	South Asian	Open Days	Year 12 summer schools	University comes into your school
Anton	Black Caribbean	University comes into your school	Videos with information	1:1 meeting with a current student
Lullaby	Black African	1:1 meeting with a current student	University comes into your school	Open Days
Kosar	Other	Open Days	Year 12 summer schools	1:1 meeting with a current student
Riaz	Other	1:1 meeting with a current student	Videos with information	University comes into your school

Where participants placed 1:1 meeting with a current student in their top three (all except Maria) they were asked if it would matter if the student they met with was of the same ethnicity as them.

Name	Ethnicity	Response
Anna	South Asian	Ethnicity only, 'cause I think they will be able to relate to me a little more in specific situations.
Anton	Black Caribbean	I think it it would make it more easy to relate them. But then again it wouldn't make too much of a difference.
Lullaby	Black African	It doesn't matter what background, as long as you have the same interest
Kosar	Other	I don't really think that I wouldn't mind who's answering my questions.
Riaz	Other	I don't think that matters.

In all cases, it was more important to the young person that the student they spoke to was studying the subject they were interested in studying (or at least a very similar subject)

Recommendation 6: Provide opportunities for prospective students to meet and talk with current students.

Interviews took place during the Coronavirus Pandemic and respondents mentioned that they would prefer to have things take place “face to face” rather than “virtually” but they were also pragmatic about the realities of this and that it wouldn’t always be possible. As such, many would appreciate the option to speak to current students to be a part of an Open Day (as is common practice) and also as a virtual option on a university website or other platform such as The Student Room and UniBuddy.

Conclusions:

The results of this research piece are limited by the sample sizes achieved, especially when it came to the interviews. However, this doesn't mean they haven't provided interesting and useful actions that Higher Education Institutions could undertake which are highlighted above and then summarised below. While many of the barriers and facilitators noted through this study are the same for all young people, regardless of their ethnicity, there were some recommendations that could be made to ensure that young people from a diverse range of backgrounds will feel welcome and supported in higher education. It is important to consider all of these factors when planning outreach or recruitment activity, and when planning activities for specific ethnic groups, attention should be paid to the needs of that group.

For Black respondents, the questions relating to fitting in and being welcome at university produced striking results which should not be ignored.

In South Asian students there was much more emphasis on being closer to home and ensuring that their parents were involved in the decision-making process to foster a sense of safety and being "allowed" to go.

East Asian students were the group that reported the lowest levels of confidence in their ability to achieve the required grades to go to university, the lowest levels of understanding of the application process and the lowest levels of possible support from their parents. As no East Asian participants came forward for interview it wasn't possible to explore this further and this could warrant further investigation in the future.

In both South Asian and Other respondents issues of their parents/carers being able to fully understand the application process were raised. With parents/carers being such a critical resource for prospective students higher education institutions could perhaps be doing more to ensure that the efforts they make to support parents/carers are inclusive and accessible.

The recommendations of the report are detailed below.

Recommendations for institutions:

- **Recommendation 1: Make information about financial support easy to find and actively promote this to prospective students and their supporters – especially parents.**
  While institutions may feel that they are already doing this, it remains important, and the methods used should be continually reviewed to ensure they are still relevant to the target audiences. Information about financial support is particularly important to prospective students from White, South Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicities. Where appropriate, consider making this information available to supporters in a range of different languages to increase accessibility.

- **Recommendation 2: Engage parents/carers and ensure that information provided is both helpful and accessible.**
  Support the supporters of young people with materials which explain the application process and how they can support their young person. Consider providing this material in other languages to increase accessibility.

- **Recommendation 3: Be explicit in your institution's commitment to anti-racism, diversity and inclusion**
  Be clear on how issues of racism are dealt with within your institution and your institutional stance on racism. Ensure your promotional material and Student Ambassadors are reflective of your student population. Recruiting diverse staff teams would ensure that young people come into contact with a range of staff, helping to break the image that universities are "male and pale".

- **Recommendation 4: Ensure marketing material is balanced and "authentic" to give prospective students a true and balanced picture.**
  Make use of "authentic student voice" in marketing materials. Encourage "student take overs" of official social media channels. Show reality and not just perfection (or prospective students will go and find it somewhere else!)

- **Recommendation 5: Ensure information is clear and easy to find – especially on institution websites.**
  Ensure information about entry requirements, module choices, teaching hours and assessment methods are easily found on your institution website. Where possible and appropriate share reading lists. Graduate outcomes, rankings and wider student life are all important factors when making decisions about university and so should also be easy to find.

- **Recommendation 6: Provide opportunities for prospective students to meet and talk with current students.**
  While this is common practice for many institutions it was worth adding as it came up so frequently as a top choice from interview respondents. Prospective students are most interested in speaking to current students studying the same degree programme as they are intending to study – but there may be added benefits to being able to speak to a current student from a similar background to themselves.

Recommendations for outreach practitioners:

Recommendation 1: Understand your target demographic

This report has highlighted differences in perceptions and expectations of university amongst young people from different ethnicities. Where possible, identify the make up of your target audience and tailor your content as appropriate to meet their needs. For example, if you know that you are going in to deliver to a group with a large South Asian population you may wish to mention support for commuting students, good transport links to allow easy travel "home" and information about campus safety which could be shared with parents to ease concerns about the young person moving out.

Recommendation 2: Understand your own biases and assumptions

Everyone has unconscious biases; the challenge is being aware of them and adapting your behaviour appropriately. Engage with EDI training provided by your institution to make sure that you are skilled and confident in identifying your own biases and how you can challenge these. Be aware when you are making assumptions about young people and challenge yourself where necessary.

Recommendation 3: Showcase diversity, highlight support for BAME learners and challenge racism

Consider the images you use in any presentations, where possible use a diverse range of student ambassadors and make sure that you are aware of the support networks, societies and spaces for BAME learners at your institution. Accept that you cannot understand the lived experience of young people from different backgrounds to yourself, but that you can signpost to support and reassure. Debunk myths and stereotypes and be prepared to challenge racism should it occur.

Recommendation 4: Understand the admissions process yourself

For those who work in Recruitment & Outreach, and for those who work outside of a higher education institution the admissions process can seem complicated and daunting. Understanding what happens at different stages of the process as a practitioner can help you demystify and explain the system for young people. For example, a young person might not be aware that an institution does not see their ethnicity at the point of application and they might be concerned about institutional bias or racism, but by knowing the system you can reassure them that this is not the case and that their application will be treated fairly.

References:

Advance HE. (2020). *Equality in higher education: statistical report 2020 | Advance HE*. [online] Available at: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/equality-higher-education-statistical-report-2020.

Aim Higher (2006). A Review of Black and Minority Ethnic Participation in Higher Education A Summary Report for Conference The National BME Education Strategy Group The brief.[online] Available at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/ah_hefce_black_minority_participation.pdf [Accessed 22 Oct. 2021].

Connor, H., Tyers, C. and Modood, T. (2004). *Why the Difference? A Closer Look at Higher Education Minority Ethnic Students and Graduates*. [online] Available at: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/ethnicity/migrated/documents/educationreport.pdf.

EHRC (2019). Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged equalityhumanrights.com. (n.d.). [online] Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged.pdf.

Equality Challenge Unit (2009) *Equality in higher education: statistical report 2009 (Equality Challenge Unit) — University of Leicester*. [online] www2.le.ac.uk. Available at: https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/projects/student-retention-project/dissemination/resources/equality-in-higher-education-statistical-report-2009-equality-challenge-unit-1 [Accessed 22 Oct. 2021]

Office for Students (2019). *Parents need more support to help their children make good decisions about university - Office for Students*. [online] www.officeforstudents.org.uk. Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/parents-need-more-support-to-help-their-children-make-good-decisions-about-university/ [Accessed 22 Oct. 2021]

Shiner, M. and Modood, T. (2002). Help or Hindrance? Higher Education and the Route to Ethnic Equality. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23(2), pp.209–232.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Design

1. Name:

2. Gender Identity:

3. Age:

4. Ethnicity:

5. Postcode:

6. Primary Language spoken at home

How do you feel about University?
Below are some statements about accessing University. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement:
5-point likert scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

I have already made up my mind about whether I will go to University.
The cost of University will stop me from attending:
There is financial support available if I chose to go to University:
University is not worth the financial cost:
The amount of financial support available will influence my decision about whether or not to go to University
University is an investment; the cost will be worth it:
I know what grades I need to get into University
I am confident that I will get the grades I need to get into University
I understand the application process for University
My parent(s)/Carer(s) will be able to help me with my application
There is support available from my school/college to help me apply to University
The decision of my friends/peers will influence my decision
I feel pressure to do the same as my friends/peers
If your parent(s)/carer(s) speak a language other than English – My parent(s)/carer(s) will be able to support me in making my application as they will understand the application I have to complete
Add a "not applicable" or option to skip

How does ethnicity affect your decision making about University?
In this study we are interested in how people's ethnicity and culture can affect their decision making about University. Below are some statements about access to University. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

5 point likert scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

People like me go to University
People like me are expected to go to University
People like me will fit in at university

People like me go to University to get a better job in the future
People like me go to University to grow as a person (gain confidence, make new friends etc.)
Universities treat applications from people like me fairly
Universities welcome applications from people like me
My religion/faith will be respected at University (i.e there will be facilities for me to pray etc.)
I will be able to meet other people like me at University
My family would prefer that I don't go to University
Some universities are more accepting of people from different ethnicities than others
My ethnicity will influence my decision about if I go to University or not
My ethnicity will influence my decision about where I go to University

Do you feel that the current pandemic has negatively impacted your mental health?
We are interested in finding out if the pandemic has increased symptoms of mental health disorders in young people, specifically symptoms of anxiety and depression.
5 point likert scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

Do you feel the pandemic has affected your decision making about University?
Please choose the statement you most agree with
1) The pandemic has had no effect on my decision making about university
2) The pandemic has contributed to my decision to apply to university
3) The pandemic has contributed to my decision to not apply to university

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Confirm name

Confirm ethnicity

Do you plan to go to University?

Why?

What do you see as the biggest challenges in going to University?

What might stop you, or makes the decision hard?

What are the biggest facilitators – things that will help make the decision easier?

How much do you think your ethnicity affects your decision making?

Are there things Universities could do to make themselves more accessible/attractive to people from the same ethnic background as you? Do they do anything currently that makes them inaccessible/unattractive to people from your background?

How could Universities support you in your decision to go to University? How could they support you to make your choices?

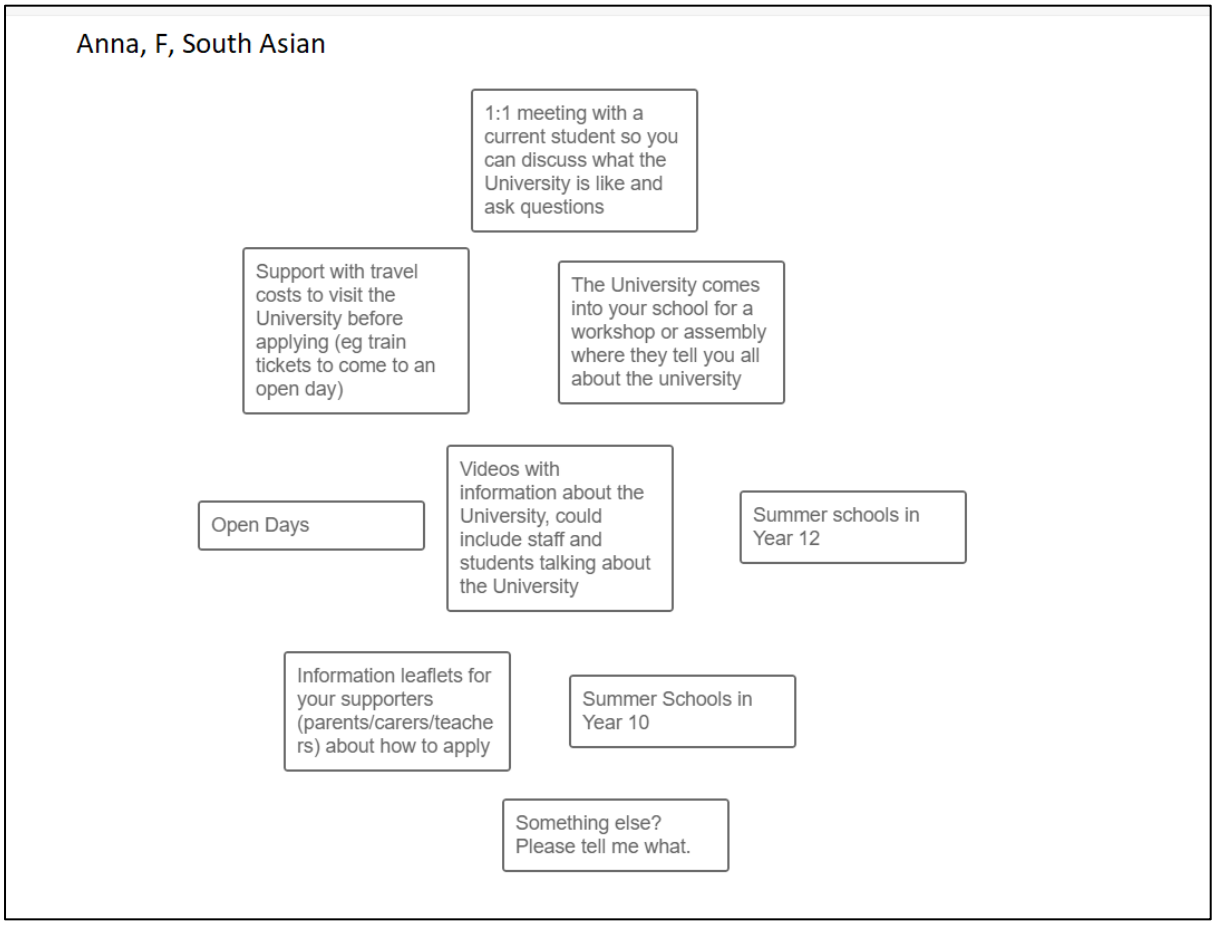
Have you seen/heard universities doing anything that has made you not want to go to university/to that particular university?

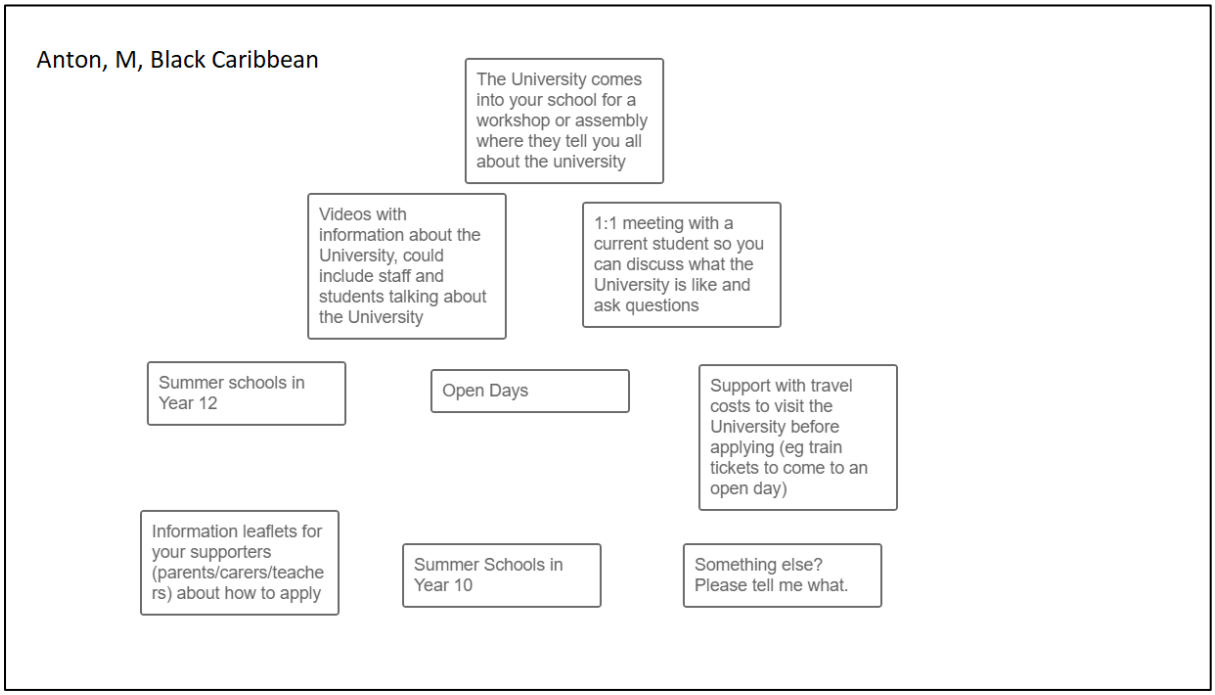
Who supports you in making your decision and will support you in applying to university? Do you think they are fully informed and able to support you? What are their barriers in being able to support you? Could Universities do more to help these people help you?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

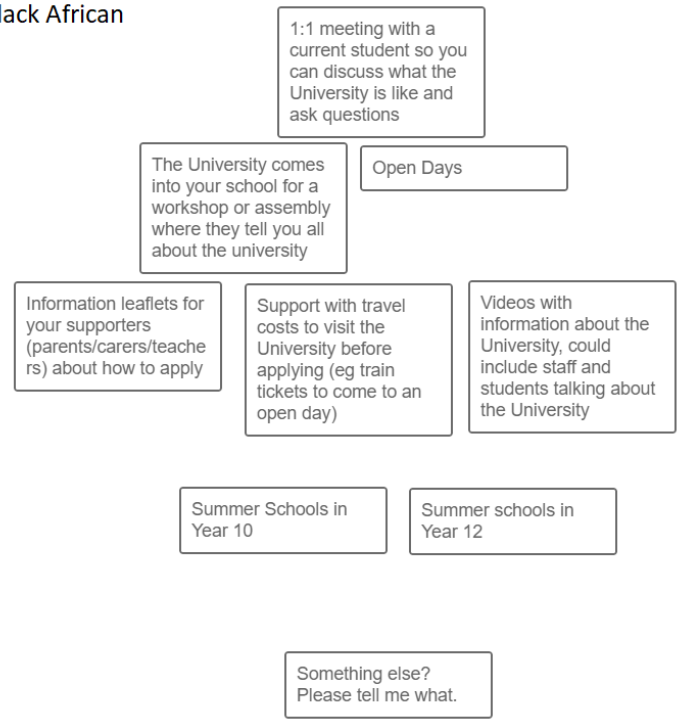
We will be anonymising your responses in our final report. Would you like to choose your 'pseudonym' for the report? Which pronouns does your pseudonym use?

Appendix 3: Diamond 9 results

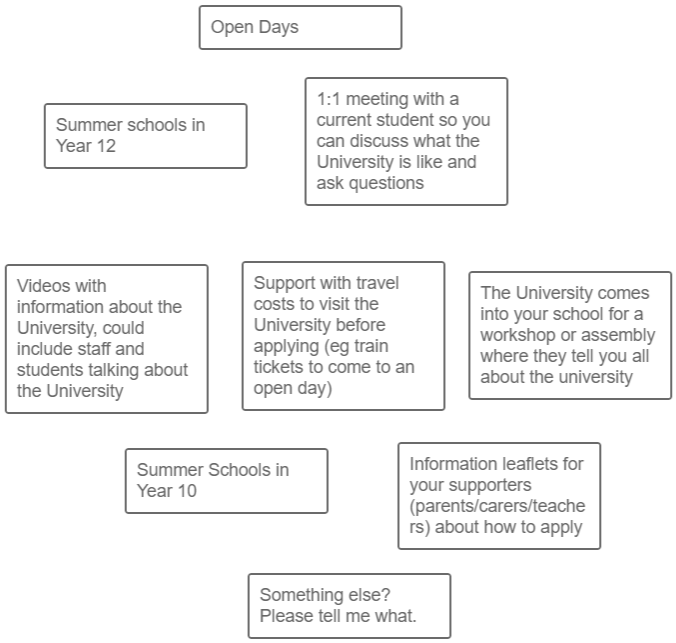




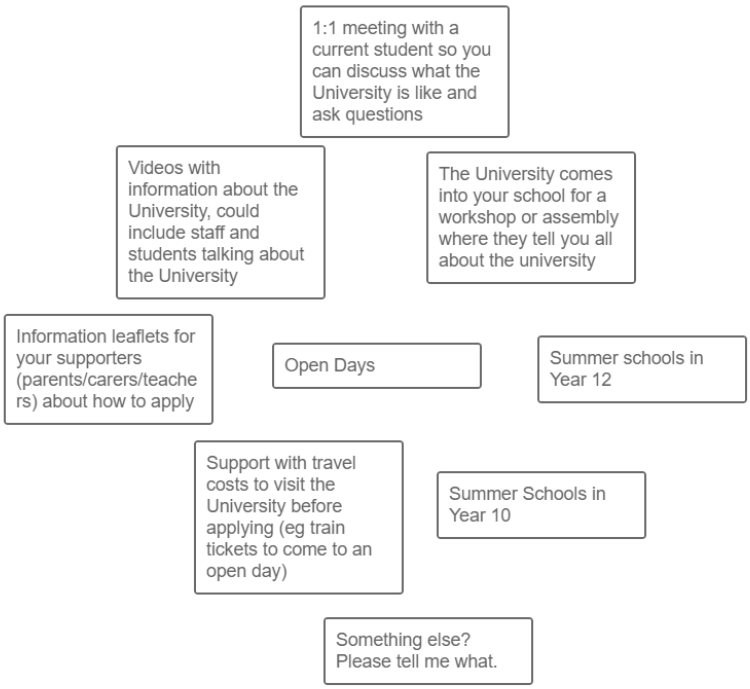
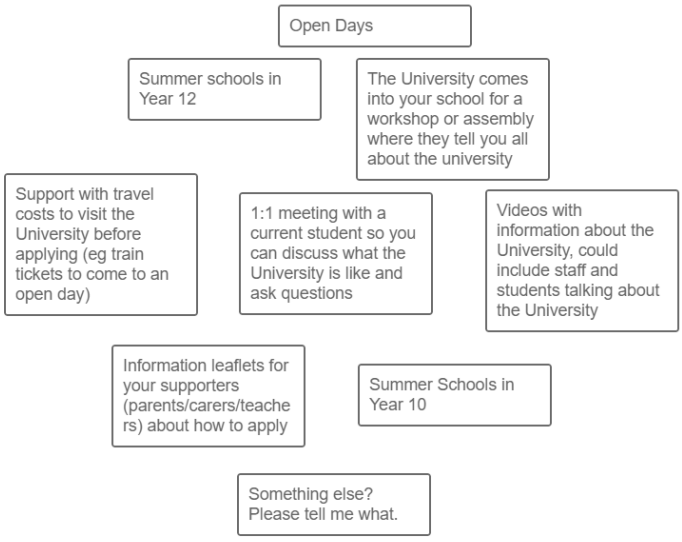
Lullaby, F, Black African



Kosar, M, Other



Riaz, M, Other



Maria, F, South Asian