



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Barriers to participation – Transitions 20/40.

Transitions the Practice Supports

Assessing and understanding barriers to participation in undergraduate study for Transitions 20/40 students.

Abstract

The Transitions 20/40 team at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) recognises that students from Scotland's most marginalised communities often face a range of complex barriers to participation. Eligibility for funding as part of this pre-HE initiative at RCS is dependent on living in an area designated by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation as either in the bottom 20% or 40% of Scottish postcodes.

In accessing and understanding the range of obstacles that a student may encounter, this team believes they are better equipped to offer the full range of pastoral and financial supports pre-HE learners will need if they are to succeed in achieving their ultimate positive destination.

Description

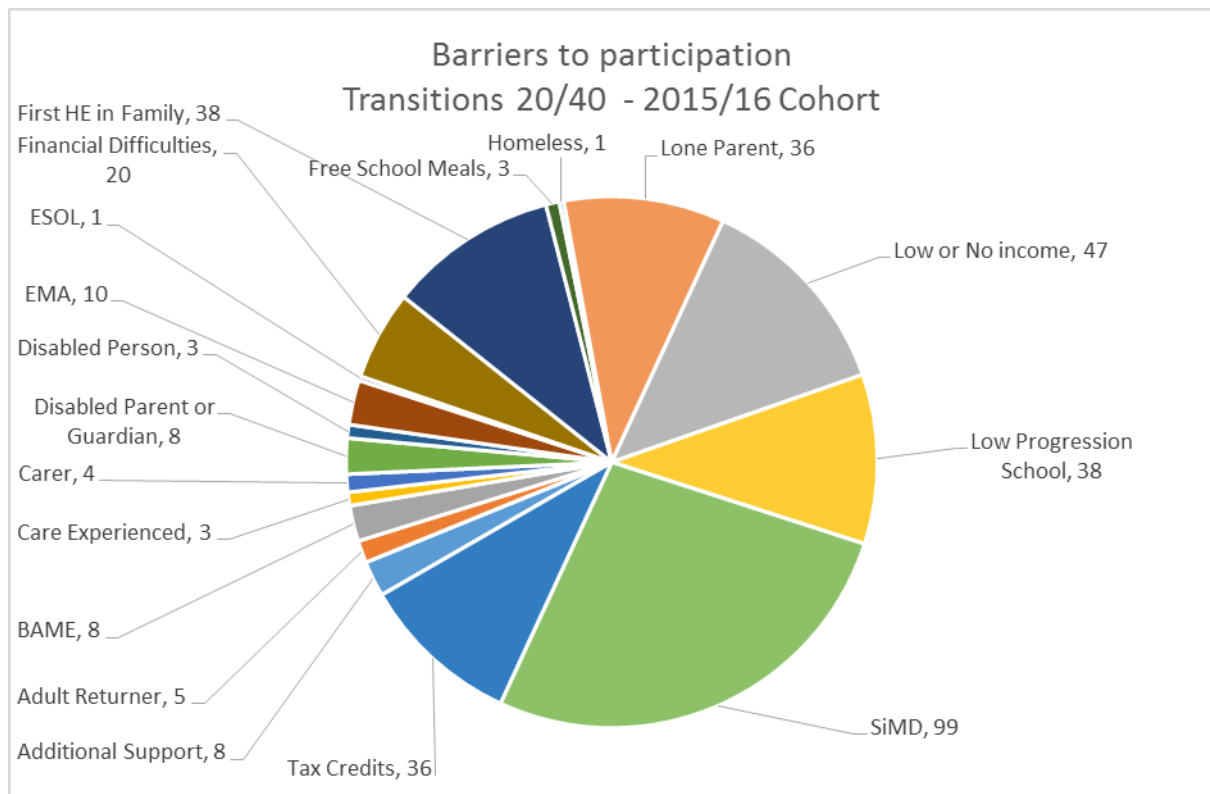
Transitions 20/40 students are asked to self-declare any and all factors that may impede their progress through pre-HE study at RCS and onwards into undergraduate programmes. In previous academic years this data has been collected at induction. The Transitions 20/40 team believe this approach can allow students to slip through the support net. Those wishing entry to the 2016/17 cohort, and beyond, will now be asked to supply this information at the application stage.

The following list illustrates the range of additional barriers to participation that learners engaged in Transitions 20/40 pathways may encounter. This list is by no means exhaustive and is updated regularly.

1. Additional support for learning at school
2. Adult returner
3. BAME
4. Care experienced

5. Carer
6. Experiencing financial difficulty
7. First in family to work towards a study place in Higher Education
8. Free School Meals
9. Homeless person
10. In receipt of EMA
11. In receipt of Tax Credits
12. Language support where English is an additional language (ESOL)
13. Lone parent or from a lone parent family
14. Low or no income household
15. Low progression rate school
16. Person with a disability
17. Person with disabled parent or guardian
18. Refugee or person seeking asylum
19. SIMD 1 or 2 status
20. Veterans

The table below lists the number of learners in each barrier category. The average number of barriers experienced by any given learner in the 2015/16 cohort is four. It's worth noting that two students in the current cohort declared nine obstacles to participation and success and one learner declared ten.



These barriers are unlikely to melt away and will travel forward with a student as they progress to and through undergraduate study. As such, it is important that RCS and other HEIs understand fully the range of factors that can stand in the way of a student's progress, attendance, retention and attainment. The Scottish

Government's Commission on Widening Access recommend that institutions track Widening Access students through application and study to ensure the correct levels of support are in place.

Ensuring a comprehensive and compassionate level of understanding is in place is key to the success of initiatives such as Transitions 20/40. The retention rate for student following these pre-HE pathways in 2015/16 is just under 98%. Nine students have undergraduate study offers to date, including five confirmed places at RCS.

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