Mapping Exercise

Purpose

1. This paper provides an overview of information gathered through the recent SFC Access and Bridging Programmes mapping exercise, key themes to emerge, and how these may impact the progression of BPAG key aims and objectives, as well as fulfilment of CoWA Recommendation 7.

Background

2. At the first meeting of both the APSG and BPAG, and tying in to a need to clarify terminology and the role of the Steering Group, members noted a need to understand current bridging programme provision across Scotland.

3. Although mapping exercises have previously been conducted by other organisations; Robertson Trust, Universities Scotland etc., it was felt that with the fast-paced changes in the landscape in response to CoWA, a snapshot of current provision was essential to ensuring the APSG and BPAG had relevant and up-to-date information to feed into Group discussion.

4. The mapping exercise was shortened to ensure minimal time commitments on those completing the templates, and only sought to gather information on key areas which both groups had described as essential to understanding to progress with CoWA Recommendations 4 & 7. This included;

    a. Partnerships created to deliver the programme

    b. Whether programmes at present were taken into consideration during institutional admissions processes

    c. Targets and measures used for selection of programme participants

    d. The aspects making up the programme (e.g. mentoring, summer schools, skills workshops etc.)

    e. Whether any future developments are planned.

    The Bridging Programmes mapping template is included under Appendix item 3.

5. In the first wave of information gathering, the mapping template was sent to university and agency/organisational contacts, identified from previous mapping exercises and website trawls. An initial email was sent to contacts on 29 March 2019 and followed up with two subsequent reminder emails.

Bridging Programme Mapping Summary

6. Of the 19 universities the mapping exercise was sent to, 16 responded with examples of either Access or Bridging programmes run (sometimes in partnership) by their institution. Returns were also received from Forth Valley College, all four SHEP programmes, SWAP and the Brilliant Club.

7. A total of 68 individual Access Programmes and 28 Bridging Programmes were submitted as part of the mapping exercise. These detail a range of programmes which have a total of 90,885 engagements (there is likely crossover on individuals participating in one or more of these programmes, therefore the number does not represent the total number of pupils engaged with) with primary school pupils through to adult returners/mature learners across Scotland.

Partnerships created to deliver the programme

8. 12 of the 28 returns (43%) reported a partnership delivery model in conjunction with other institutions, organisations or industries. Local authorities alone were not counted in this number. However, joint institutional approaches were not common, and where these existed, this was often based on funding requirements; e.g. SFC funded AHDP programmes. Other partnerships primarily revolved around previously existing national programmes and charities (e.g. Sutton Trust).

Regional spread of a programme

9. 13 of the 28 (46%) returns indicated that a learner from any region could apply to or access the Bridging Programme. All other programmes displayed a region-targeted approach.

Whether programmes at present were taken into consideration during institutional admissions processes

10. 19 of the 28 (68%) returns indicated that the programme or elements of the programme, were taken into consideration as part of the Admissions process. In relation to our terminology around Bridging Programmes, this demonstrates that what some institutions may class as Bridging will not fit under our definition, or that there are programmes which could perhaps be seen as Bridging if some elements were enhanced/included.

11. Of these 19, only 4 programmes identified that there were national agreements of recognition. These primarily referred to the Reach partnership and the Sutton Trust Summer School which is included as a checkbox on UCAS applications. LEAPS also indicated that most institutions took this into consideration during the application process. However, there was no further information provided on what exactly this gained applicants in the admissions

process. All programmes considered as part of admissions processes on a national scale, are all nationally funded programmes and have multi-institutional involvement.

12. The majority of programmes (11) indicated that participation was taken into consideration as part of a specific universities admissions process, but not nationally. These programmes varied with some using summer schools and programmes completion as a conditional aspect of admissions, whereas others took into consideration programmes which were run pre-application. Examples of these are the Dundee Access Summer School and the Gateway to Arts programme at the University of St Andrews.

13. 4 programmes were unsure of the extent to which they were taken into consideration during admissions processes, if any, but did provide an SCQF credit rating element so are important to discuss in regards to the group's current draft definition of Bridging. TopUp, Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) and LiftOff all identified SCQF elements in programmes; support for Advanced Highers, SCQF 7 credit bearing and SCQF 6 credit bearing respectively.

Targets and measures used for selection of programme participants

14. Of the 28 returns, six programmes did not specifically target disadvantaged learners as part of the selection process. Three of these programmes offered additional support for students who wished to study particular degree programmes, therefore are focused on specific recruitment and admissions rather than access or targeted bridging. One of these programmes did not identify contextual criteria, however, did offer the programme to students who had received an adjusted offer, therefore are likely to be disadvantaged in some way.

15. Of the 22 programmes who did indicate that selection is based on contextual criteria denoting disadvantage, the most popular groups used in processes were SIMD20 and care experience (100% of programmes used these as criteria for consideration in selection). These reflect Scottish Government priority areas and link to those measured in university outcome agreements.

16. Attending a low progression school or being a carer were also key priority areas for selection for programmes, with 95% of programmes using these as criteria for selection/participation.

17. SIMD40 and free school meals were used by 73% of programmes.

18. First generation, EMA and estranged were the least likely to be taken into consideration of the measures given in the template, with 59%, 55%, 50% of programmes indicating their use respectively.

19. Several criteria were listed under 'other' which were not provided in the template checklist. These included; asylum seeker, refugee, adverse family circumstances, rurality, additional support needs, ESOL, children from travelling communities etc. All these criteria were said by institutions to also present barriers to learning.

20. Programmes which were tied to offers in most cases also had some kind of academic requirement; for example, the Gateway to Arts at St Andrews requires applicants to achieve BBBB at Higher.

21. When asked which year group the programme was aimed at, 15 of the 28 interventions (54%) were targeted at pupils in the senior phase, and in particular S5 and S6. Some of these were aimed at preparation for HE in the summer between S6 and continuing into university/college.

22. 12 of the programmes (46%) were not targeted based on age or year, but rather on an individual's circumstances; for example, a summer school may be offer support to those learners holding an offer to a particular degree programme at that institution.

The aspects making up the programme

23. Of the types of activities listed, the aspect which was least included in bridging programmes was shadowing, with only 36% of programmes offering this. As Bridging Programmes traditional happen in the senior phase or post-application, this may be understandable as most students may have taken part in similar opportunities earlier in their academic journey. However, we should ensure moving forward that shadowing opportunities are emphasised through earlier activities in access programmes.

24. As may be expected, the most popular elements of bridging programmes revolved around specific subject support; including study skills workshops (86%), specific subject based workshops (82%) and tutoring or subject specific study support (79%). At the points leading up to a learner making an application to HE we would expect support to take the form of attainment raising, understanding of the particular degree course being applied to and preparation for HE study; all of which are outcomes of the activities listed above.

25. Generally, returns submitted under Bridging Programmes incorporated a range of activities. Not included in the points above are; mentoring (75%), academic based project work (68%), personal statement/application support (54%) and summer schools (46%). Although summer schools are explicitly mentioned in A Blueprint for Fairness and have played a large part in previous BPAG discussions, it is interesting to note that these at present make up less than 50% of what is perceived as Bridging Programme work within the current landscape. Other activities were also mentioned including; access to research catalogues,

access to online resources, SAAS and bursary support, guest lectures, skills development, finance workshops, health and wellbeing workshops etc.

Future Developments

26. 13 of the 28 (46%) programmes indicated that future scale-up development will likely take place. In most cases, this would take the form of increased numbers (either using the same or different criteria), increased geographical spread or increase in the number of schools/local authorities engaged with.

Summary of key themes

27. In this section, members will be asked a series of questions that arise from the analysis of the collected data. The overarching aim of these questions is to identify the key characteristics of a potential outline model for a coherent approach to academic bridging into the HEI sector.

The aspects making up the programme

28. Mapping showed that there is an array of different approaches to offering support through Bridging Programmes. With no one consistent approach. Further work around the mapping exercise will now work on categorising based on group agreed terminology rather than where stakeholders believe their programmes may sit. This will then better allow us to understand any gaps in provision and opportunity for expansion.

29. As discussed previously, there are two main themes to programmes submitted as Bridging – those which aim to prepare students for study in Higher Education at any institution and those which prepare students to enter one specific university and are inextricably linked to recruitment and admissions policies.

30. Members are asked to consider what the key aims and objectives of a National Bridging Progamme should be and if all components of the programme should provide bridging to Higher Education generally or if elements could provide specific pathways to individual institutions.

Partnerships created to deliver the programme

31. Although there are some partnerships apparent in the delivery of Bridging Programmes, these tend to be linked to funding requirements (e.g. Reach partners) or between an institution and an agency/organisation (e.g. Sutton Trust). Programmes with more than two partners inputting into a specific programme, and those with more than one institution involved, are few.

32. Members are asked to consider how partnership working could be enabled more effectively in support of the development of a national bridging programme/framework.

Regional spread of a programme

33. At present, the majority of Bridging Programmes are targeted at disadvantaged learners within the HEI's local regions. As we know from the spread of SIMD20 areas across Scotland, this could severely limit the access to opportunities pupils from certain areas have, particularly those in rural areas.

34. Members are asked to consider ways in which Bridging Programme provision can be expanded to provide effective coverage nationally, including in rural

areas, ensuring accessibility for all disadvantaged learners.

Whether programmes at present were taken into consideration during institutional admissions processes

35. Although it has been identified that the majority of programmes which view themselves as falling under the Bridging category include elements which are reportedly taken into consideration under admissions processes, these are often either only in the admissions process of the institution running the programme, a requirement of entry to a specific programme, or are national programmes like the Sutton Trust Summer Schools.

36. **Members are asked to consider what action needs to be taken to develop a national recognition framework for bridging programme outcomes within admissions processes.**

Targets and measures used for selection of programme participants

37. Mapping demonstrated that when target measures are used in selection for these programmes, these often link in to SFC or Scottish Government areas. This in itself, creates greater clarity in the landscape, as the work of both APSG and BPAG will move towards creating a coherent landscape where pupils from these specific groups can access opportunities for support throughout their learner journey.

38. **Members are asked to consider if a National Bridging Programme should have a defined target audience and, if so, what work is required to define this audience taking account of work on access thresholds and individual university recruitment strategies.**

Future Developments

39. As discussed above, fewer than 50% of programmes actively plan to expand in the coming year. With this, the pressure of CoWA and focus of the Scottish Government on creating more clearly communicated Learner Journey's, the present time creates an opportunity within the landscape for change.

40. **Members are asked to consider how best to engage the sector in the addressing the priorities of BPAG going forward.**

Further information

41. Contact: Pamela Forbes, Senior Policy/Analysis Officer, tel: 0131 313 6501, email: pforbes@sfc.ac.uk

Appendix

   1. *Institutional and Agency Responses to Definition and Mapping Exercise*

University	Returns
University of Aberdeen	Returned
Abertay University	Returned
University of Dundee	Returned
University of Edinburgh	Late return
Edinburgh Napier University	Returned
University of Glasgow	Returned
Glasgow Caledonian University	Returned
The Glasgow School of Art	Returned
Heriot-Watt University	
University of the Highlands and Islands	
Open University	Returned
Queen Margaret University	Returned
Robert Gordon University	Returned
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	Returned
SRUC	
University of St Andrews	Returned
University of Stirling	Returned
University of Strathclyde	Returned
University of the West of Scotland	Late return

Agency	Returns
LiftOff	Returned
AspireNorth	Returned
FocusWest	Returned
LEAPS	Returned
Causeway Education	
SWAP	Returned

The Robertson Trust	Conversation
The Prince's Trust	
Street Law	
The Rank Foundation	
EY Smart Futures	
Social Mobility Foundation	
MCR Pathways	
The Brilliant Club	Returned
Sutton Trust	
Nuffield Foundation Research Placements	
ICAS	Conversation
Childrens University	Conversation

2. *Access and Bridging Programme Definition Drafts*

Draft Definitions of Access and Bridging Programmes

Definition of Access Programmes:

"Access programmes are tailored programmes of activity which are designed to encourage individuals from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds to understand, make a competitive application to and support them to succeed in gaining a place in Higher Education. Typically these are sustained programmes of activity which include more than one point of intervention or continuous support. Skills gained on access programmes are transferable across the sector and are not specific to one institution. These programmes will usually include activities based on one or more of the following;
- Aspiration building
- Attainment raising
- Academic development
- Information, advice and guidance on HE admissions and the application processes
- Build individuals knowledge of the Higher Education environment"

Comments on Access Programme Definition:

Definition of Bridging Programmes:

"Bridging Programmes create a 'bridge' between an institution in one sector of the education landscape and another in a different sector.* In the context of school to university transition, bridging programmes are run during the senior phase (S5-S6) and are aimed at pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. They include a significant element of academic preparation which can be recognised as credit in admissions processes and may have SCQF Level 7 accreditation."

*Note: the focus of the SFC Bridging Programmes Advisory Group will be on the school to university transition at this stage.

Comments on Bridging Programme Definition:

3. *Bridging Programme Mapping Template*

Bridging Programme Information Template

The following proforma has been designed to allow the Bridging Programmes Advisory Group (BPAG) to gather relevant and current information in order to map bridging programmes across Scotland. This will allow the group to work towards implementing Recommendation 7 of the Commission on Widening Access Report;

Recommendation 7: The Scottish Funding Council, working with professionals, should develop a model of how bridging programmes can be expanded nationally to match need.
- Given the clear benefits to the learner, the model should ensure that academic credit awarded through the completion of such programmes is transferrable between universities.
- Successful completion of such programmes may form one of the conditions of the access thresholds to be developed in line with Recommendation 11.
- This model should have particular regard to the evidence that bridging programmes are especially beneficial when delivered earlier in the education journey.

Each institution/agency is asked to complete the following proforma for each bridging programme run by their institution/agency. Please complete all sections fully.

Please return all proforma to the email address below by Friday 17th May 2019.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Pamela Forbes, pforbes@sfc.ac.uk, 0131 313 6545.

Name of bridging programme:	
Institution(s) or agency(ies):	
Additional partners: *Please note that only one template should be completed for each access programme.*	
Key contact(s) for this programme:	Name: Position: Institution/Organisation: Email address: Phone number:
Does the programme have any additional funding partners, other than your own institution/agency?	
How many individuals participate in the programme each year?	
Geographical regions covered by this programme *(please check all which apply):*	☐ Aberdeenshire, Orkney and Shetland ☐ Ayrshire ☐ Borders ☐ Dumfries and Galloway ☐ Dundee and Angus ☐ Edinburgh ☐ Fife ☐ Forth Valley ☐ Glasgow

	☐ Highlands, Islands & Moray ☐ Lanarkshire ☐ Lothians ☐ Perthshire ☐ West
Please list all schools the programmes works with:	
Which year group(s) is the programme aimed at:	
Which (if any) of the following criteria are taken into consideration for entry to the bridging programme?	☐ Attend a low progression school ☐ SIMD 20 ☐ SIMD 40 ☐ First generation ☐ Free school meals ☐ Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) ☐ Care experienced ☐ Young Carer ☐ Estranged ☐ Academic criteria (please list what these are) ☐ Other criteria (please list what these are)
Briefly describe the selection process:	
Is the programme currently recognised and taken into consideration during the Admissions process of other Scottish universities? Are there any formal	

arrangements to share data? Please detail:	
Are there any plans to develop / scale up this programme? Please detail:	
Please provide a brief description of the programme, including identification of components which are recognised as credit in admissions processes (this can include SCQF ratings as an example):	
Please tick all of the components listed opposite which are included in the programme:	☐ Mentoring ☐ Tutoring/subject specific study support ☐ Specific subject based workshops ☐ Study skill workshops ☐ Academic based project work ☐ Summer school ☐ Personal statement/application support ☐ Shadowing ☐ Other (please list what these are)