

Research Question: Using student perspectives in the North East of England with a particular focus on how the impact of Covid 19 has affected them, how has the lack of knowledge about access to higher education programmes affected the widening participation of the students who use them?

Objectives of Research:

- To highlight the fact that not all colleges and sixth forms have access to higher education schemes, meaning that many students who would benefit from them are missing out
- To assess how the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has affected outreach and engagement for students who are using access to higher education programmes
- To establish what the thoughts and feeling of the students who use access to higher education programmes, with a particular look at the A level Scandal of last year and what effects that had on the students
- To understand what still needs to be done in relation to these programmes, with a particular focus on North East of England students and whether they feel prepared when applying to university.

Summary of project:

My projects primary research will be on the year 13, North Eastern college and sixth form students who are using the access to higher education programmes in order to gain access into universities which usually wouldn't be attainable for them due to their material background. I will undertake primary research in the forms of online informal surveys and informal interviews of the students who are using these programmes

The first thing which I will look at in my project is how the year 13 students initially found out about the access to higher education. I will ask via an online informal interview whether they believe the programmes were well publicised. Plus whether they believe that they had enough support or any from their sixth form or college, especially last year when all teaching and communication was suddenly moved online due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, since many colleges still do not have access to these schemes. By doing this part of my research I hope to establish what still needs to be done in order to ensure the students who will benefit from these programmes will get to use them,

My project will then go on to look at the impact the coronavirus pandemic has had on widening participation for year 13 students who are using access to higher education schemes. I will ask the students who used these programmes whilst the pandemic is in play, whether they believed they had enough outreach and engagement either from the college or the university they want to apply for. I want to understand whether they think that Covid 19 affected the chances or application into university via these schemes

I will then ask about the participants' thoughts and feelings about these programmes. With a particular look at how the A level scandal of last summer impacted their perspective. As many

tend to already question themselves about the worth of a reduced offer, I want to establish whether the mess-up of last years A levels further intensified these anxieties

In my project I also want to look at what still needs to be done for North East students who use these programmes as lower income have a history of low recruitment into higher education in particular, I want to establish whether they believe they feel prepared enough when starting off their university career and what they think still needs to be done, widening participation wise.

All of the research completed will be done via voluntary participants, who I will engage with first via a completely voluntary online survey. For now all interviews that I will conduct will be online to keep in line with current guidance about the Pandemic. Furthermore, any research collected will be stored in a confidential file and destroyed in a safe manner at the end of the research, the participants will be fully aware of the fact that they can pull out of the study whenever they wish to.

References

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