

Newcastle University Access and Participation Plan 2025-29

Core theories of change 2025-2026



Notes

These core theories of change have been developed for the implementation of the first year of activity set out in the Newcastle University Access and Participation Plan 2025-2029. [link to APP]

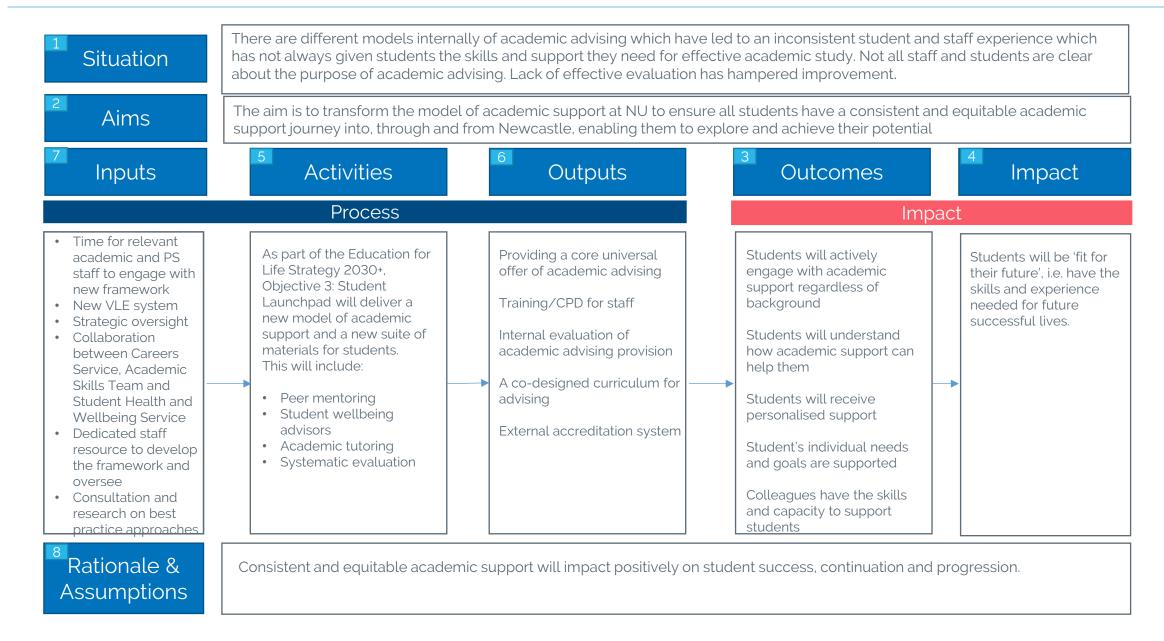
Some intervention strands have further developed enhanced theories of change which are not included here.

We would expect some of these theories of change to evolve over time, as learning is gathered from evaluation.

The template used is the TASO Core Theory of Change template which can be found at: https://taso.org.uk/libraryitem/core-theory-of-change/

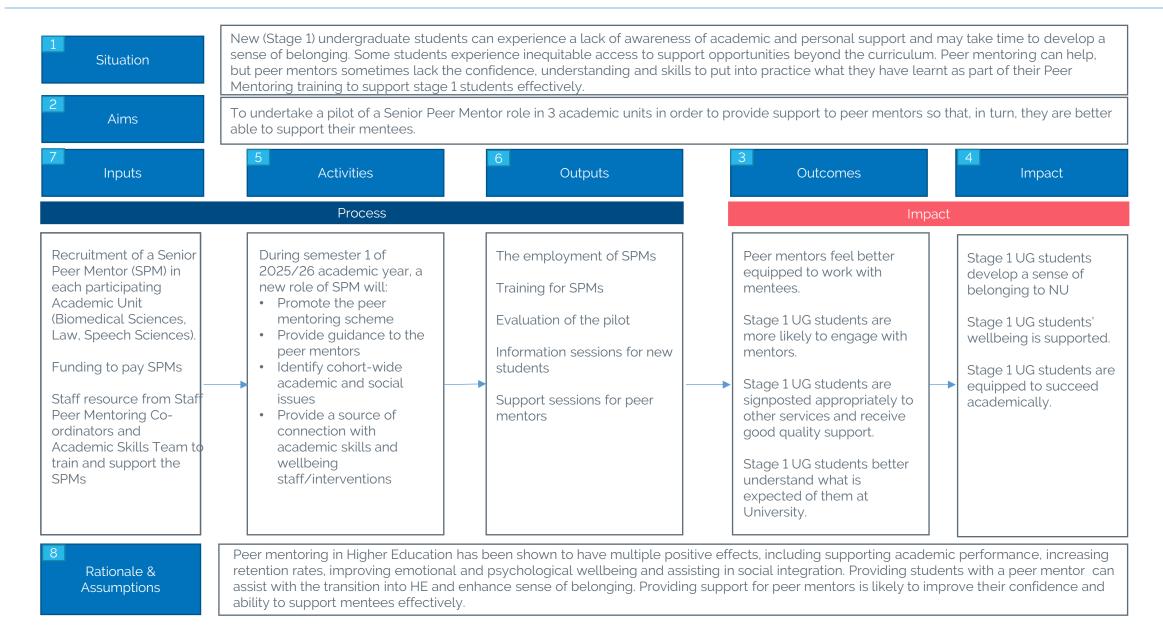
APP IS2.2 Skills support triage





APP IS2.3 Peer mentoring

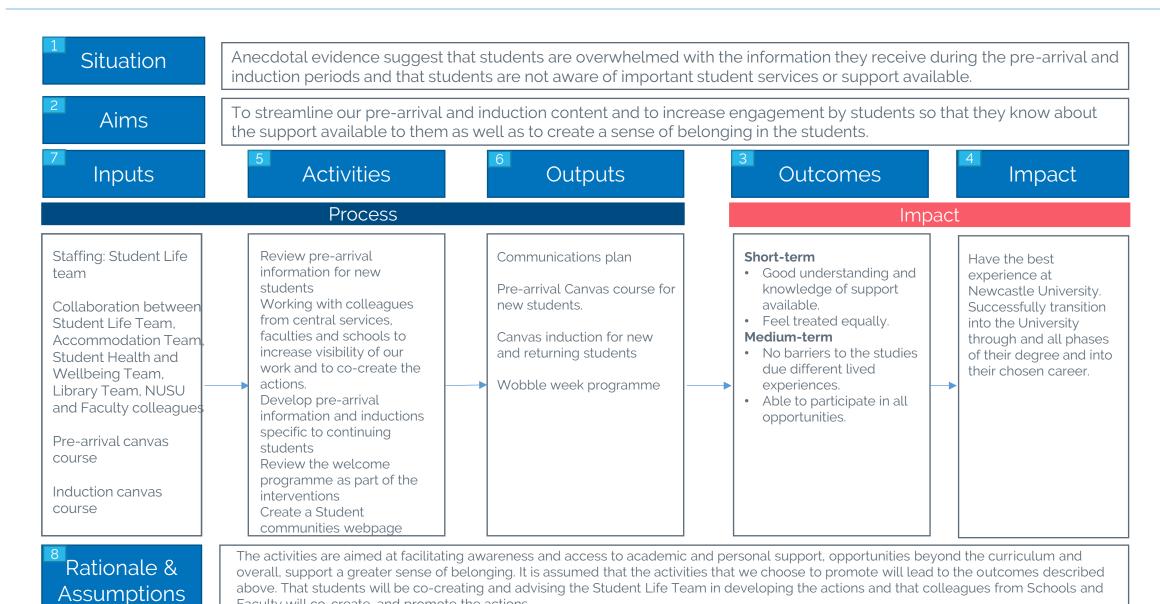




APP IS2.4 Pre-arrival and induction information

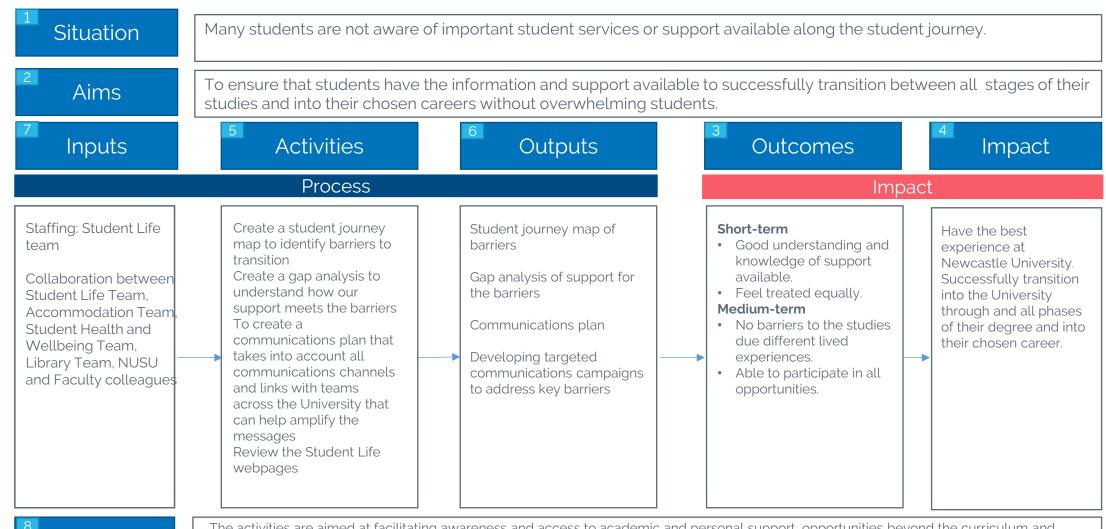
Faculty will co-create, and promote the actions.





APP IS2.6 Understanding and supporting transition





Rationale & Assumptions

The activities are aimed at facilitating awareness and access to academic and personal support, opportunities beyond the curriculum and overall, support a greater sense of belonging. It is assumed that the activities that we choose to promote will lead to the outcomes described above. That students will be co-creating and advising the Student Life Team in developing the actions and that colleagues from Schools and Faculty will co-create, and promote the actions.



APP IS2.7 Bridging the gap project

Note: The theory of change for this project is contained in the following report:

Thomas, U. (2025) Bridging the gap evaluation report. Newcastle University: Newcastle upon Tyne.



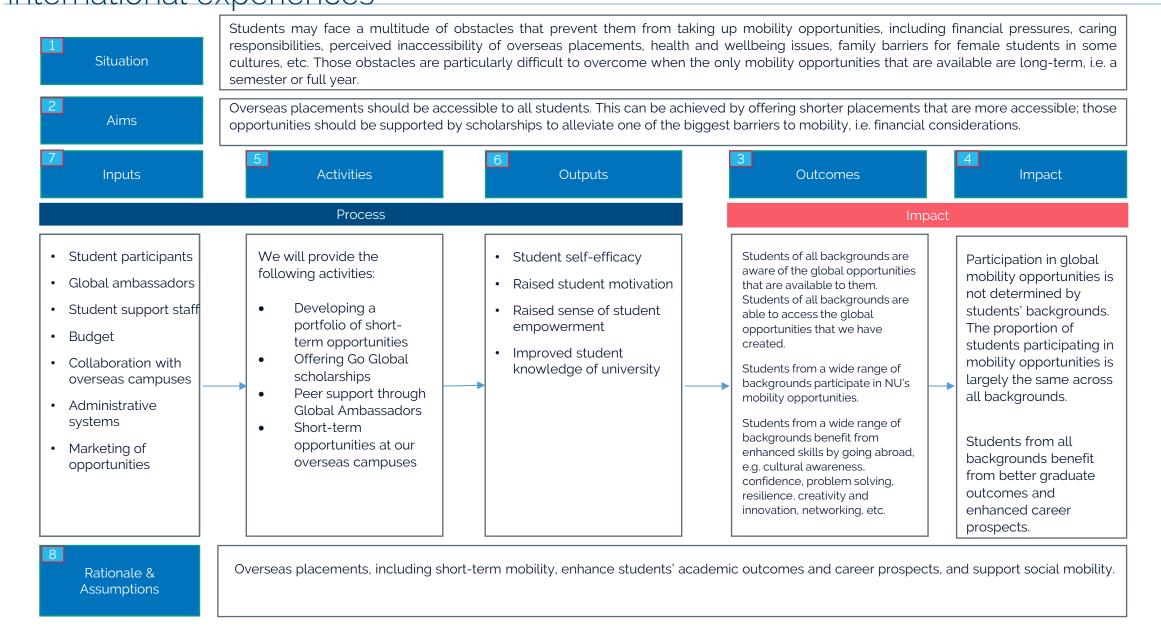
APP IS2.9/10 Academic societies funding scheme and participation bursaries

Note: The theory of change for this project is contained in the following report:

Blows, C. and Zephirin, S. (2025) Activities Access Fund 2024-2025 Report. Newcastle University Students' Union/Newcastle University: Newcastle upon Tyne.

APP IS2.11/12 International mobility programme and supporting international experiences

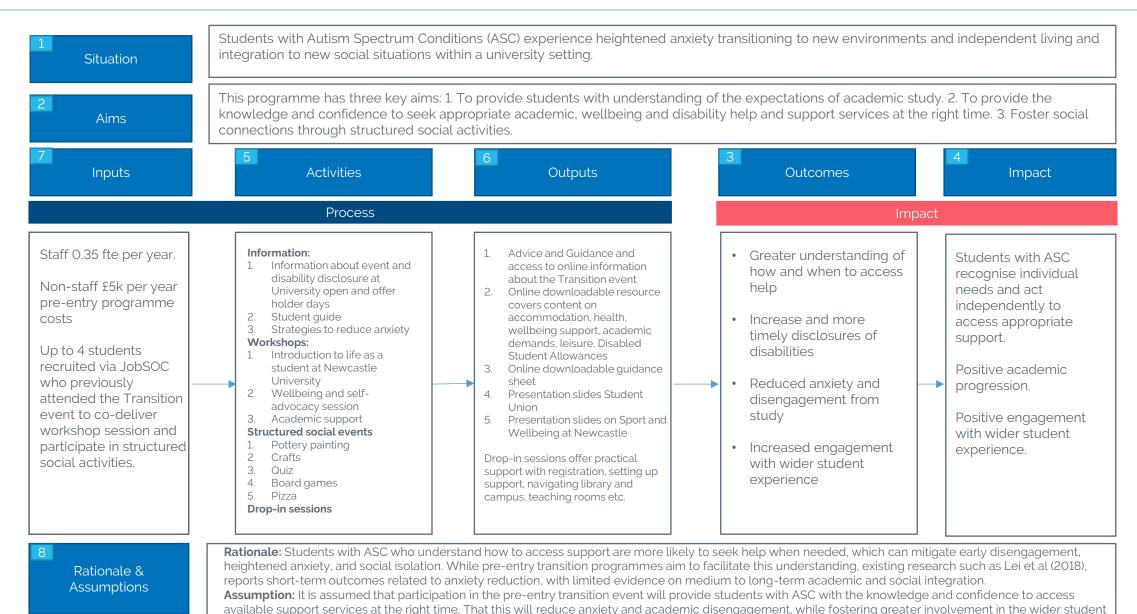




APP IS3.2 Pre-entry transition

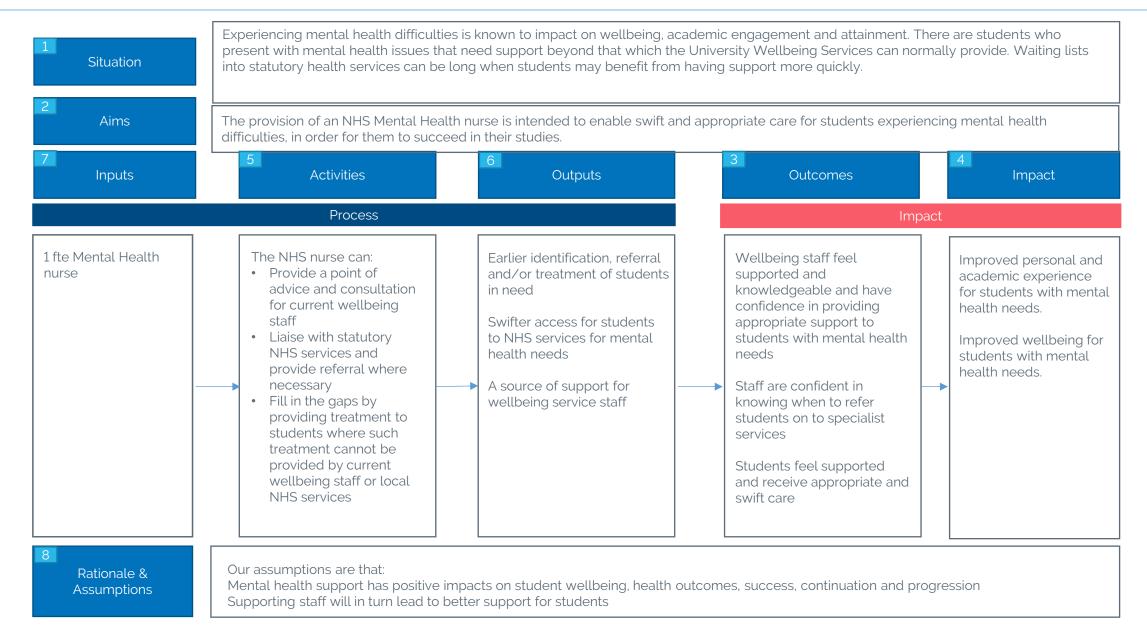
experience.





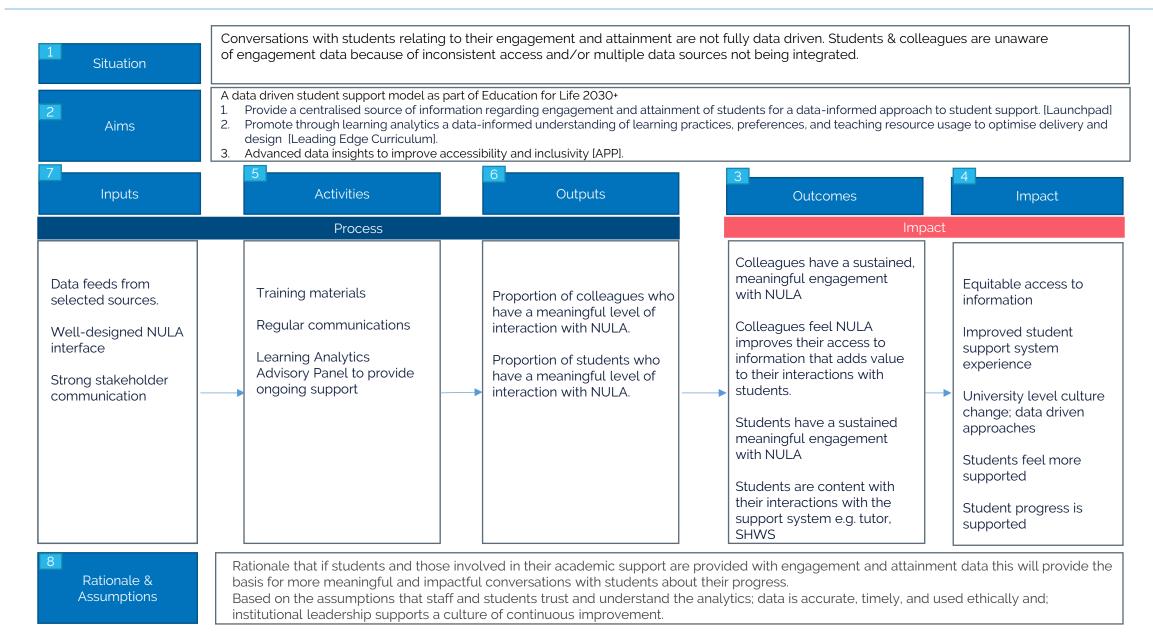
APP IS3.3 Supporting transition to NHS treatment





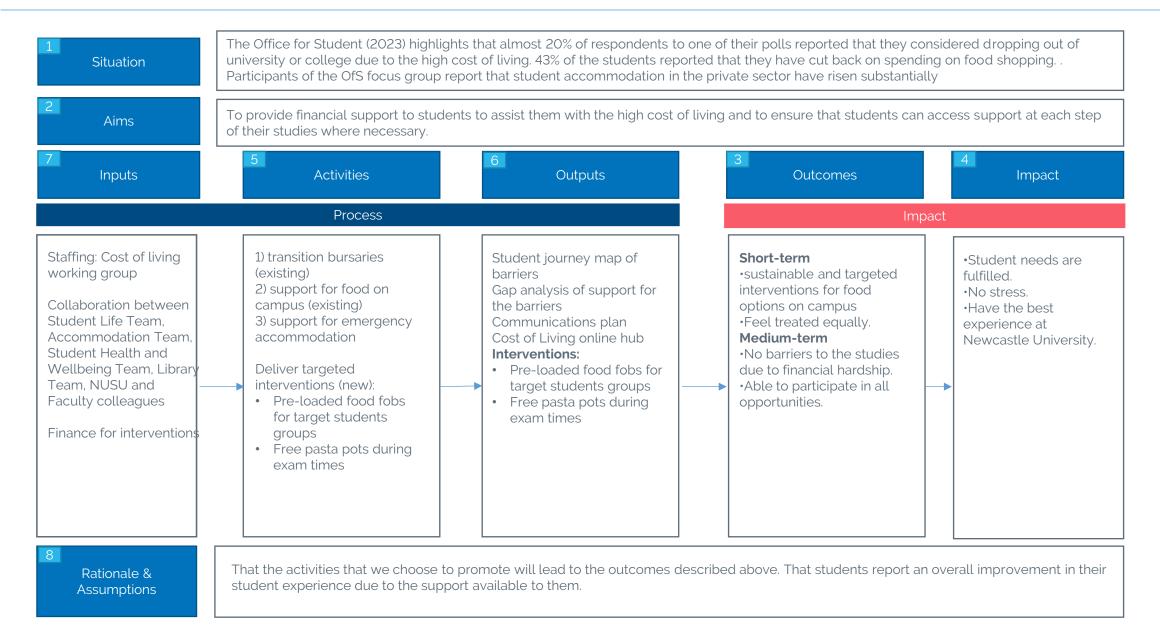
APP IS3.5 Learning analytics





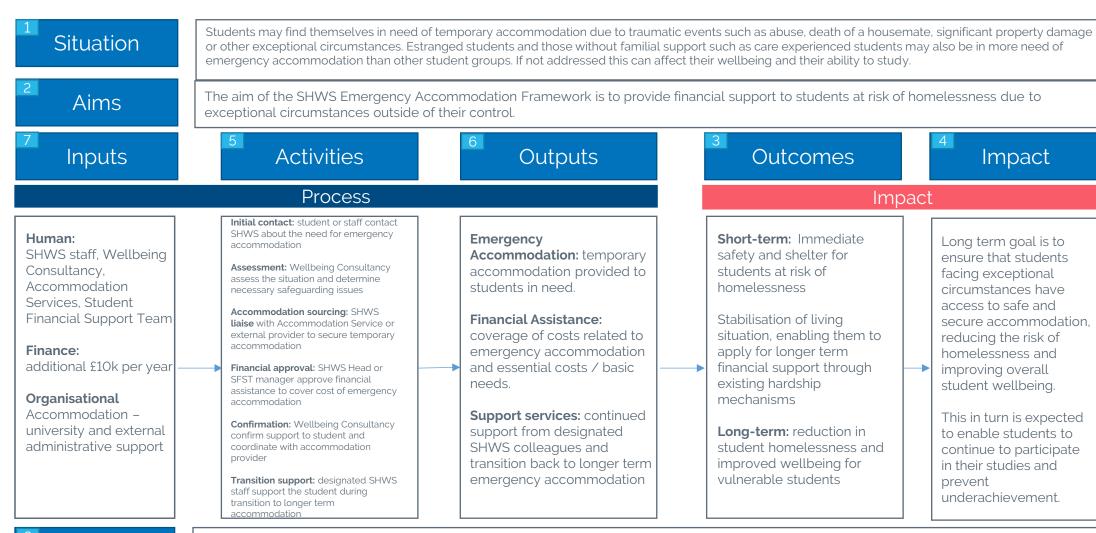
APP IS4.1 Targeted financial support





APP IS4.1 Support for emergency accommodation





Rationale & Assumptions

Rationale: providing emergency accommodation and financial support is essential to the ensure the safety and wellbeing of students facing exceptional circumstances.

Assumptions: availability of dedicated funding and coordinated support from SHWS staff are critical for the success of the framework.

APP IS4.1 Exceptional hardship bursary



Situation

Students may find themselves in need of support due to circumstances beyond their control, such as political conflict, natural disaster or their status an asylum seeker or refugee. If not addressed this can lead to homelessness and inability to access food and medication, meaning they may drop out of study.

2 Aims

The aim of the Exceptional Hardship Bursary and Living Cost Bursary schemes is to provide expedited financial support to displaced students whose main funding source has ceased due to natural disaster or conflict, where they are unable to access financial documentation - such as bank statements - required for discretionary hardship support. Aim is to ensure that students in crisis facing exceptional circumstances have access to funding to support basic living costs, reducing the risk of homelessness and being unable to cover the cost of necessities such as food and medication as well as allowing them to continue to participate in their studies.

Inputs

Activities

Outputs

Outcomes

Impact

Process

Human:

Student Financial Support Team, Student Health and Wellbeing Service

Finance:

Hardship Donations and additional £29k secured from Student Disbursement Fund in 2023/24

Organisational:

Microsoft Teams Form, SAP, SFST / SHWS / Student Payments Team administration Initial contact: SHWS Director / Head contact affected students to provide overview of SHWS support in response to conflict / natural disaster. Students experiencing financial difficulties encouraged to contact SFST.

Triage: SFST Hardship Team online application

Assessment: SFST Manager / Deputy Manager review applications determining if main source of funding has ceased and / or bank accounts frozen. Input sought from Academic Registrar for complex cases

Financial approval: SFST Manager / Deputy Manager

Confirmation: SFST Manager / Deputy Manager

Payment: SFST Hardship Team input payments and send to Student Payments Team

Referral: Outcome letter signpost to SHWS & SFST discretionary financial support scheme

Evaluation: No formal evaluation due to sensitivity of circumstances but ad hoc feedback collated

Financial Assistance: £1,500 non-repayable bursary to

assist students with short - medium term living costs

Support services:

signposting to SHWS if wider wellbeing support required. Information about University's discretionary Student Financial Support Fund / Financial Assistance Fund provided should financial difficulties persist Impact

Short-term: Students in crisis receive expedited financial support and are able to have their basic needs met, reducing worry and stress and making homelessness less likely.

Long-term: Improved wellbeing for vulnerable students.

Students are able to continue to participate in their studies, reducing the risk of non-continuation and underachievement.

Rationale & Assumptions

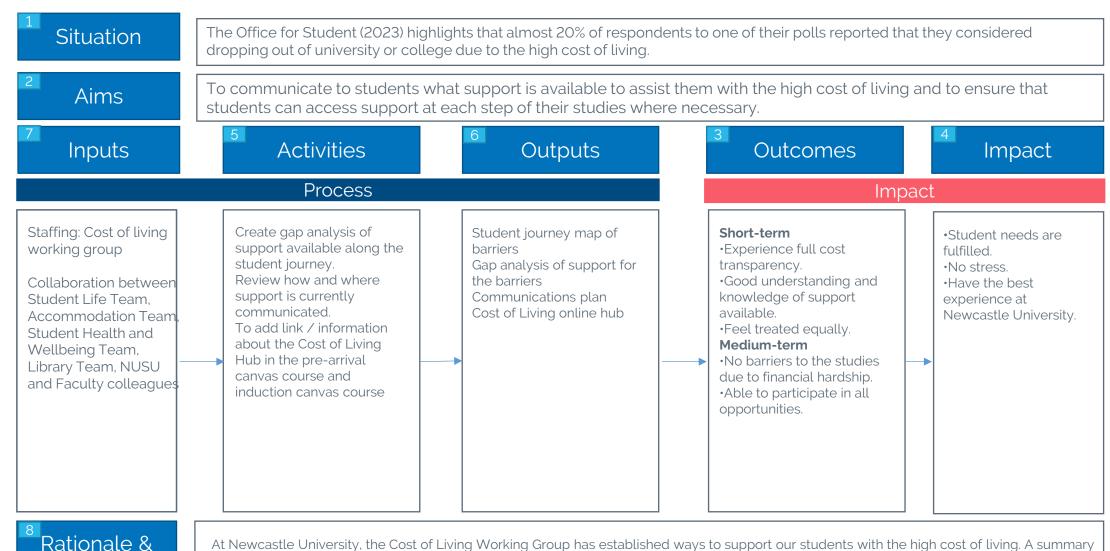
Rationale: providing expedited financial support is essential to the ensure the safety and wellbeing of students facing exceptional circumstances.

Assumptions: availability of dedicated funding and coordinated support from SFST staff are critical for the success of the framework.

APP IS4.2 Improving online cost of living resources

Assumptions

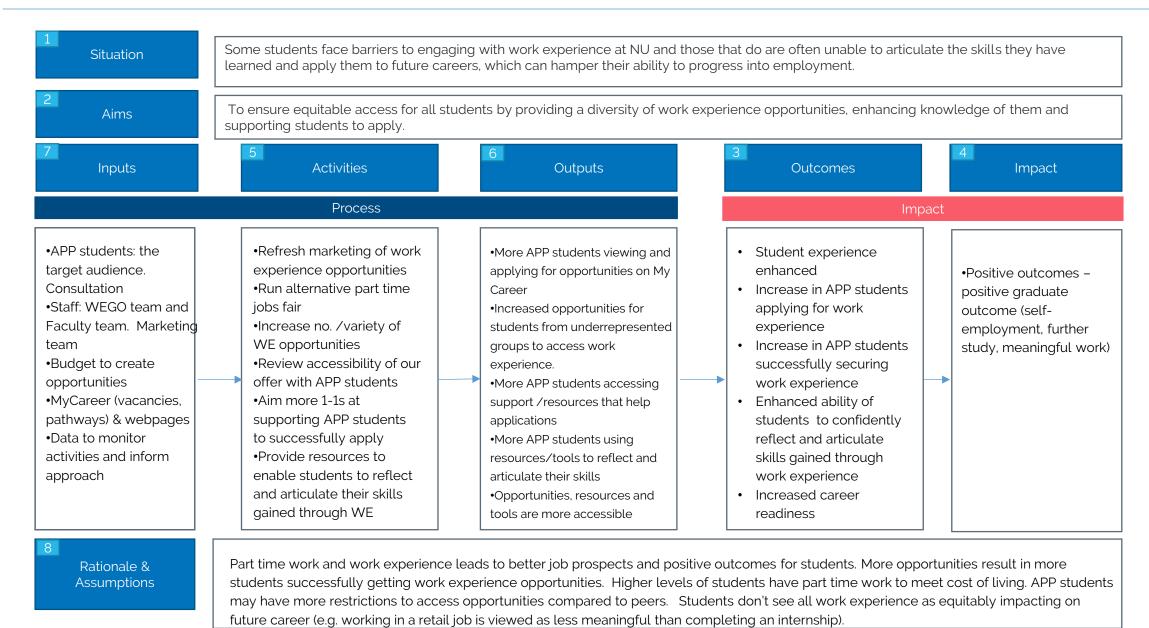




At Newcastle University, the Cost of Living Working Group has established ways to support our students with the high cost of living. A summary of the support available can be seen at the Cost of Living Hub. However, many students still don't know about the support available, or the support doesn't meet their needs. That the activities that we choose to promote will lead to the outcomes described above. That students report an overall improvement in their student experience due to the support available to them.

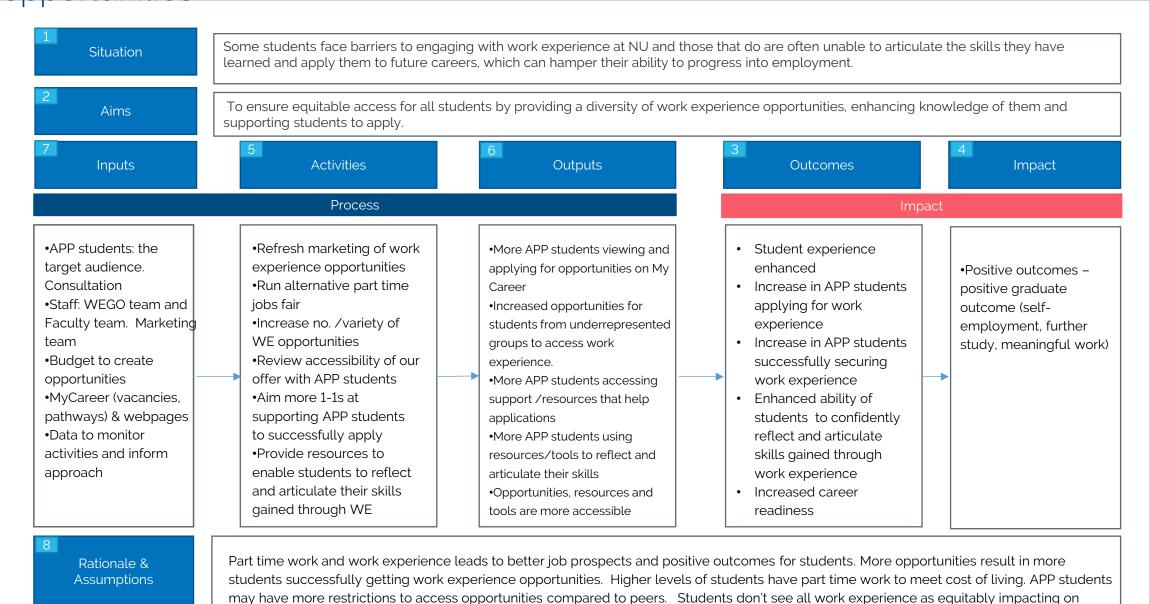
APP IS5.2 Support for freelance careers





APP IS5.3 Work experience and skills development: opportunities

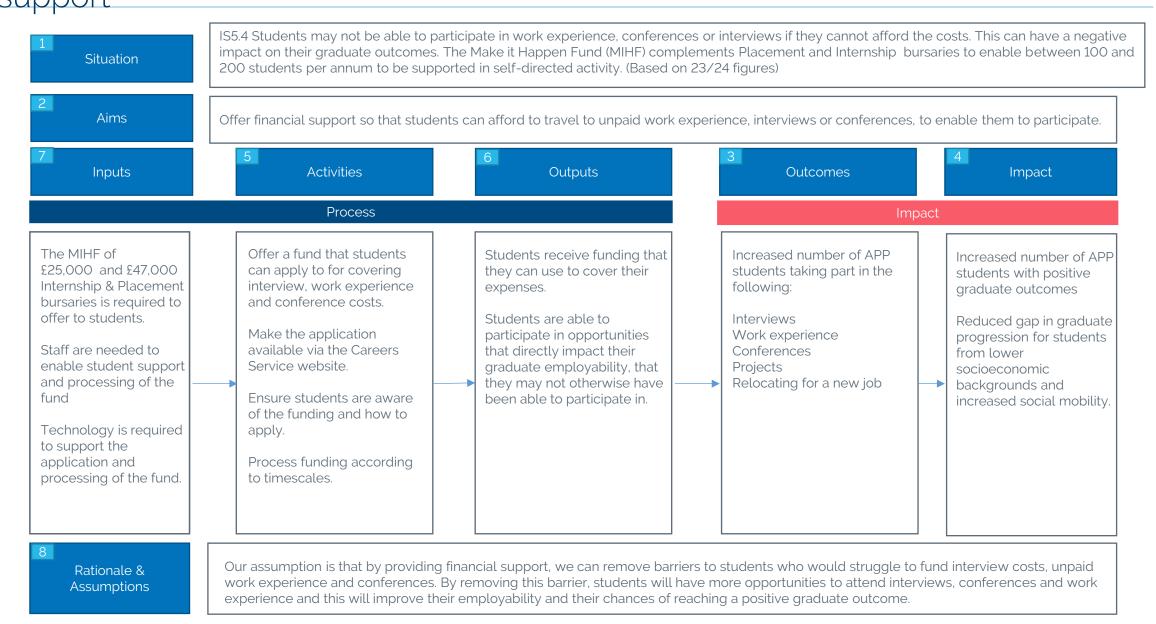




future career (e.g., working in a retail job is viewed as less meaningful than completing an internship).

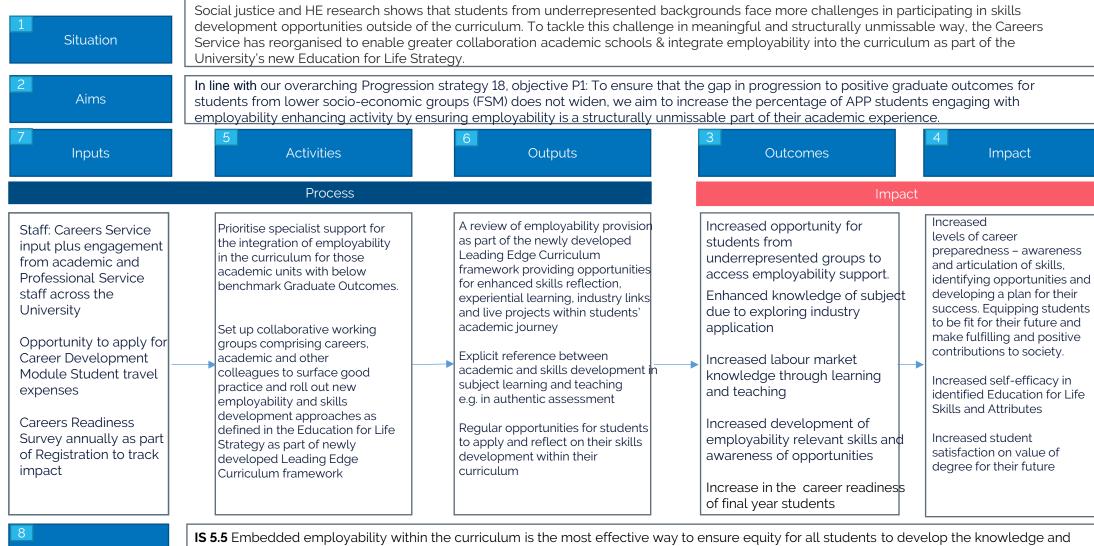
APP IS5.4 Work experience and skills development: financial support





APP IS5.5 Embedding employability in the curriculum





Rationale & Assumptions **IS 5.5** Embedded employability within the curriculum is the most effective way to ensure equity for all students to develop the knowledge and skills required for successful graduate outcomes (including work, further study and business creation) this is particularly true for students from underrepresented backgrounds including Q1 socioeconomic backgrounds for whom engaging in extracurricular activities can be a particular challenge.