Socioeconomic disadvantage and access to higher education

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Contents

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List of tables and figures

Tables

Figures

1

Socioeconomic disadvantage and access to higher education: issues

Introduction

Broadening access to higher education is a goal which can produce positive outcomes both for the individuals concerned and for wider society. Patterns of participation in post-compulsory education in Britain have changed greatly over the past three decades – since the mid 1970s, increasing numbers of young people have 'stayed on' at school beyond the minimum leaving age of 16 years. Between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s, the proportion of 16 year olds remaining in full-time education in England and Wales rose from around one third to more than seven in 10. This has led to a better qualified school-leaving population. In turn, these school-leavers have continued their careers in education, in increasing numbers, by progressing to courses at further or higher education institutions. Between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s, the proportion of UK school-leavers entering higher education doubled.

Despite these increases in the number of full-time students, there remains an under-representation in higher education of school-leavers from disadvantaged backgrounds. In 1997 approximately one third of school-leavers in the UK entered higher education. However, geographically this varied from over 80% in the most affluent areas to 3% in the most disadvantaged. This inequality of representation is certain to have negative consequences for both economic efficiency and social justice. This report details the nature of this under-representation and explores the reasons behind this situation.

This report is based on research conducted in Scotland between January 1999 and June 2000. For a survey of school-leavers, a sample of young people was recruited and surveyed twice – first in the Spring of 1999 and then again during the following Autumn. By the time of the second survey a proportion of respondents had progressed to higher education, while others had not done so. Next, from the information given by these two surveys, 44 particularly disadvantaged but qualified young people were selected for in-depth interviews. These interviews asked respondents about their experiences concerning either the transition from school to higher education or their reasons for leaving full-time education. A survey of parental attitudes to post-school education and employment was also conducted.

Post-compulsory education

The expansion of post-compulsory secondary education has changed the profile of pupils who remain in school beyond the minimum school-leaving age. The final compulsory school year in Scotland is fourth year (S4), at the end of which pupils are aged 16. Qualifications gained up to this point are not taken into consideration when applying to courses in higher education. In fifth year (S5) the exams known as 'Highers' may be taken. These exams have a similar role to A levels elsewhere in the UK in determining whether academic achievement is of a sufficient standard to gain entry to a course in higher education. At the time of the survey, final year (S6) Scottish secondary school pupils could either re-sit their Highers (should they have failed to reach a satisfactory standard in their S5 results), sit extra Highers or enrol in courses known as CSYS (Certificate of Sixth Year Studies). These latter courses were said to help prepare the school-leaver for university study, although they were not taken by all higher education entrants.

The CSYS qualification reflected the traditional role of year S6, as preparation for entry to higher education. However, the increasing numbers remaining in school, beyond even S5, has led to a more heterogeneous population in S6. Today, as well as the 'standard' high-achievers, other pupils from 'non-standard' backgrounds can be found in S6. Many of these non-standard pupils are low-achievers who remain in school for non-academic reasons, such as the lack of jobs, the existence of a bursary for remaining in school, or to avoid being 'press-ganged' into a government training scheme. Nevertheless, other non-standard final year pupils may gradually acquire sufficient qualifications to enter higher education, many of whom may not have previously considered doing so.

Partly because of the increasing numbers of pupils remaining in post-compulsory education, in 1999 a new unitary system of qualifications called Higher Still was introduced in Scotland. This new system replaced the old qualifications of CSYS and vocational modules and brought them together with the old Highers in a five-level hierarchy. The penultimate level remains Highers with CSYS being replaced by an Advanced Higher. The young people surveyed in this research were among the last school-leavers to qualify for higher education under the old system in Scotland (it should be noted, however, that all post-school qualifications have remained unchanged).

Post-school education

There are a number of options open to the qualified school-leaver who wishes to remain in full-time education. These are described below.

Degree

Open only to the highest achievers, degree courses are available at universities and specialised colleges (such as art schools). Degree courses are not a fully homogenous category. Most degrees offered in Scotland are honours degrees, which require four years of study (although there is usually an option to leave after only three years with an ordinary degree). For students studying in the rest of the UK, degree courses tend to last only three years. However, some specialist degrees (for example, medicine) may involve five years of study. Successful degree students have the option to undertake further years of study in order to gain postgraduate qualifications (such as teacher training).

HND

Higher National Diploma (HND) courses are similar to degree courses but last only two years and tend to be taught either at (some) further education colleges or the 'new' or 'polytechnic' universities. As with degree courses, most applications to HND are made in advance through the body called UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). In this report, these two courses – diploma (HND) and degree – will be referred to as higher education (HE), while other post-school education will be regarded as further education (FE).

HNC

Higher National Certificate (HNC) students, as with degree and HND students, are currently funded by student loans and were, at the time of data collection, eligible to pay 'up-front' tuition fees (currently being abolished for Scottish students studying in Scotland). For the purpose of this report, HNC will be considered as further education; however, it must be stressed that this is not the 'official' definition used by Scottish policy makers. Our definition of HNC as further education is used here because such courses are only taught at further education colleges and are often seen as a gateway to a degree or HND course (in England many HNC courses are part-time only). It might be argued that to use a definition of higher education which includes HNC would artificially inflate levels of participation. It is possible for some students to leave an HND course after only one year with an HNC qualification. As for other further education courses HNC lasts only one year full-time.

NC

The National Certificate (NC) is the least advanced post-school qualification and school achievement is not a prerequisite for entry. For this reason, only the most popular NC courses require application prior to leaving school. Students at this level in further education are funded by a bursary rather than the system of student loans and tuition fees.

It should be noted that, in future, no Scottish

students will pay up-front tuition fees, but will have to meet these costs in arrears. Other than this change to the timing of the payment of tuition fees (from in advance to in arrears), the Scottish system of student finance differs little from that found elsewhere in the UK.

Other courses

Finally, many further education colleges also offer courses available at school or elsewhere, including Highers and vocational modules. Such courses may be considered an extension of school-level work rather than post-school education.

In terms of level of academic qualification, the courses listed above can be regarded as a simple continuum between degree courses (highest) and NC or 'other courses' (lowest). From this it would seem logical that qualified young people should choose the course which is best suited to their level of achievement at school. However, many other factors may influence school-leavers' decisions whether or not to enter post-school education and if so at which level.

Under-representation in higher education

The central aim of this report is to distinguish between the factors which *qualify* young people for higher education and those which *predispose* them to attend. Although in absolute terms there has been an increase in participation in higher education across all social groups, in relative terms the gap between disadvantaged young people and their more advantaged peers has remained.

Table 1 compares participation rates in higher education, using statistics for 1998 from UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admission Services), with social class, as defined by the Registrar General (this refers to an ESRC 1995 estimate of social class, see Rose et al, 1997). From this it can be seen that participation rates were greatest – both in absolute terms and proportionally – among young people in social classes I (professional) and II (managerial), and least in social classes IV (semi-skilled manual) and V (unskilled manual).

Beyond the imbalance apparent in the table above, other more hidden inequalities may also be at work. For example, students from 'working class' backgrounds (IIIM to V) may be more likely to enrol in certain subjects with a limited range of employment opportunities. In contrast, more advantaged entrants may be more likely to enrol at more prestigious institutions or in more advanced courses. This is reflected in the Table 1 by the greater imbalance within degree course entrants than within HND entrants. This pattern seems likely to be protracted in both directions, with an increasing proportion of students from working class backgrounds enrolling in further education courses and a greater proportion of middle class students continuing to postgraduate qualifications.

In the further education sector the proportion of working class entrants increases. Indeed, figures released annually by the HM Inspectors of Schools Audit Unit reveal that proportionally *more* young people from schools in deprived areas enrol in NC courses. For example, more former pupils of schools in deprived areas of Glasgow enrol in further education than in higher education. In contrast, no former pupils of some independent schools enrol in further education.

Table 1: Higher education and social class

Social class	Degree %(UCAS)	HND %(UCAS)	Approximate % population 1995
I	14	6	5
II	40	31	30
IIIN	12	12	25
IIIM	15	18	19
IV	8	9	16
V	2	3	5
Unknown/other	11	20	0

These inequalities are partly a reflection of poorer academic achievement by disadvantaged young people while at school. However, it is clear that this imbalance is not solely a result of academic underachievement. For example, in the UK, around three quarters of young people with two A levels in social classes I and II make a direct transition to higher education, compared with around a half of equivalently qualified young people in classes IV and V. Clearly not all choices made by qualified young people, such as whether to attend university or not, are based on academic achievement alone.

Ideally, qualified school-leavers should choose to advance directly to the course in post-school education best suited to their abilities. However, many factors may deter some young people from making this choice. These include financial, geographical and social considerations, all of which may act as 'barriers' to full participation in higher education. It was hypothesised at the beginning of this study that these non-academic factors would exert the greatest influence on the most disadvantaged among qualified young people.

The study areas

To address these issues, a sample of school-leavers was recruited from schools located in four distinct geographical areas. These were chosen because they each represented areas of disadvantage, either socioeconomically or geographically. Areas of socioeconomic disadvantage were measured using the Carstairs DEPCAT (deprivation category) system. This system uses levels of male unemployment, overcrowding, low social class and car ownership to classify every postcode sector in Scotland on a scale from DEPCAT 1 (most affluent) to DEPCAT 7 (most deprived). Geographical disadvantage was defined in this research as provision of and distance from institutions of higher education as well as areas qualifying for government assistance. The four study areas were selected to represent an urban–rural continuum, from inner city to remote highland and island environments. The areas chosen were Glasgow City, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Argyll.

City: Glasgow

Glasgow is Scotland's largest city, with a population of 624,000, rising to over one million with the addition of its more prosperous suburbs. The city contains the majority of the most deprived postcodes in Scotland (DEPCAT 7). Despite this level of economic disadvantage, Glasgow city has a wealth of higher and further education institutions. These institutions provide a microcosm of what is available in these sectors throughout the UK. There are three universities in Glasgow, each of which corresponds to the three phases of university development in Britain. That is, one 'ancient' or 'ivy league' university (Glasgow), one 'red brick' or 'established' university (Strathclyde) and one 'polytechnic' or 'new' university (Caledonian). Another 'new' university is located near Glasgow in the adjacent Clydeside conurbation at Paisley. Glasgow also has two more specialised institutions of higher education: the Glasgow School of Art and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. The city is particularly well served in the further education sector, with no fewer than 10 further education colleges located within the city boundary and several more in the city suburbs and adjacent Clydeside conurbation. It is interesting to note that Edinburgh – a smaller city than Glasgow – has by comparison three universities, *three* specialist higher education colleges and only three further education colleges. The relative imbalance in further and higher education provision between the two cities in itself seems likely to be a reflection of the relative levels of disadvantage between the two cities, Edinburgh being by far the more affluent.

Seven Glasgow schools were recruited for participation in this study. Six of these schools were located in areas of multiple disadvantage (either DEPCAT 6 or 7); the seventh is in a slightly more affluent area, but was selected because it was known to have a large number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Two of these schools were Roman Catholic and all had severely deprived areas within their catchment, including both DEPCAT 7 postcode sectors and Social Inclusion Partnership areas (SIP or equivalent).

Large towns: Lanarkshire

The county of Lanarkshire has a population of 634,000, most of whom live in several large towns adjacent to Glasgow city. The area was formerly a major centre of manufacturing industry, but many of these industries (such as the steel industry) have recently declined or disappeared altogether, leaving the area with one of the lowest levels of qualified adults in Scotland.

There are no universities in Lanarkshire, though there are five further education colleges located in five separate towns. Transport links between towns are somewhat limited, with most routes being focused on Glasgow. However, this means that commuting to Glasgow's universities and colleges can be relatively straightforward from Lanarkshire. Daily travel to higher education institutions located in Edinburgh or Central Scotland is also a viable option for students resident in this area.

Lanarkshire schools tended to have larger numbers of S6 pupils than in Glasgow, so only three schools were recruited for participation in this research. All three schools were located in large towns near Glasgow (within 20 miles); each contained SIPs within their catchment and were located in a DEPCAT 5 or 6 postcode sector.

Small towns: Ayrshire

This is a semi-rural county, more distant from Glasgow than Lanarkshire, with a population of 375,000. Although there are three large towns and some affluent areas in Ayrshire, the schools selected were located in small towns around the periphery of the county. These were each in areas where extractive industries once predominated, which now suffer high unemployment and population decline.

Although there are no universities or higher education institutions based in Ayrshire, there are two campuses located near Ayr town (Paisley University and the Edinburgh-based Scottish Agricultural College) where some degree courses are available. Commuting to Glasgow's universities and colleges is possible for some but not all students resident in this area. However, quality of transport links, time, distances and costs involved make this a more difficult prospect than it is for Lanarkshire students. There are only two further education colleges based in Ayrshire, although these have some smaller specialised outposts scattered throughout the county.

Four small town schools for this research were selected from Ayrshire. These schools not only served the town in which they were situated, but also a variety of outlying small towns and villages. This is in contrast to the Lanarkshire sub-sample where each town visited contained at least three secondary schools. All four Ayrshire schools were located in DEPCAT 5 postcode sectors and contained SIP areas.

Remote: Argyll

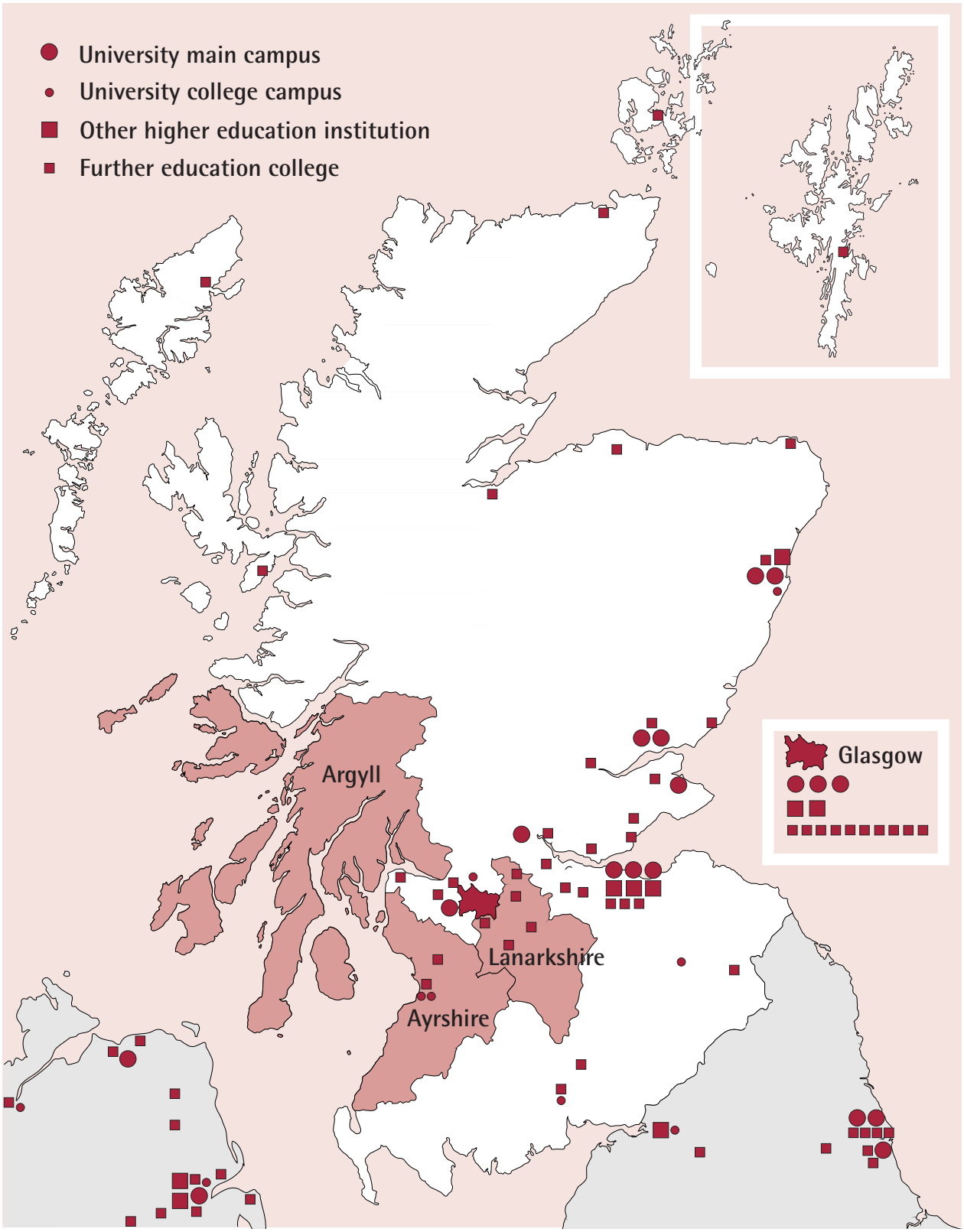
The final geographical area visited was the county of Argyll. This is mainly a remote area of highlands and islands, with a population of 91,000. Although much of this county is quite affluent, many residents are dependent on seasonal employment in the tourist industry, agriculture and fisheries.

There are no universities or colleges in Argyll. Indeed, even on the mainland, much of the population lives more than 100 miles from any such institution. Although one Greenock-based college has an outpost in the county, as does the University of the Highland and Islands project (begun 1999), these offer only limited opportunities for entry into higher education. For most potential students living in Argyll, a transition to higher education must also mean a housing transition, with all the extra barriers this presents to the disadvantaged young person.

Only two schools were selected in Argyll, as these had a higher level of achievement (and HE entrance rate) than those in the other three areas. These schools were not located in particularly deprived areas (both were DEPCAT 4), although each contained a SIP within its catchment. However, both schools were distant from any urban centres containing university or college campuses and included even more remote areas within their catchments, such as Gaelic-speaking areas and islands (one school ran a hostel for pupils who lived too far from a school to travel daily).

The geographical location of these four areas relative to higher and further education provision in Scotland is shown in Figure 1 overleaf.

Figure 1: Study areas



Note: In this figure the university college campus symbol also indicates the locations of campuses of other higher education institutions, but not campuses located within the same city as the main campus

Research methods

In total, 16 schools were selected from the four study areas (it should be noted that, whenever given, the names of participating schools are pseudonyms, as are any references to the names of towns [or areas of Glasgow] in which they are located). All had below the Scottish national average level of school-leavers entering higher education, yet had a sufficient number of pupils studying Highers or CSYS in year S6 for a viable sample of qualified young people to be recruited.

It was decided to recruit an initial sample of young people from pupils nearing the end of their final year in each of the schools selected. It was anticipated that a proportion of those recruited would progress to higher education in the following Autumn, while others – including some qualified school-leavers – would not do so. To measure how many respondents in this initial sample actually progressed to higher education, it was decided to keep track of these young people by conducting a postal follow-up survey at this time, in the following Autumn. On completion of this follow-up, it was decided to assess the attitudes of respondents' parents towards higher education by postal survey.

As well as these surveys, face-to-face interviews were conducted with a representative sub-sample of qualified but disadvantaged young people. Some interviewees were in higher education, others were not. These interviews were undertaken in order to assess the barriers faced by qualified but disadvantaged young people, which may have impacted on their level of participation in higher education.

Summary

In this chapter we have outlined the gap in representation in higher education between disadvantaged young people and their more advantage peers. We have also outlined some of the potential barriers to entering higher education which disadvantaged young people may face and which may be responsible for this inequality. These barriers include finance, distance from institutions, local labour markets and cultural familiarity with higher education. Underlying all of these is the acknowledged continued underachievement of schools in deprived areas, and of children from less affluent families in general. This means that relatively few school-leavers from disadvantaged backgrounds reach the level of achievement which would allow them to gain entry to higher education. What is less well understood is whether those disadvantaged young people who do gain adequate qualifications are as likely to progress to higher education as their more advantaged peers.

This research aims to explore the transition from school to higher education made by young people living in disadvantaged areas. This is done by undertaking a school survey in four contrasting geographical areas. These study areas were selected to represent the different barriers to accessing higher education that qualified but disadvantaged school-leavers may face. In the next chapter we will detail the results of an initial classroom survey designed to measure levels of academic achievement among final year pupils in schools located in areas of disadvantage.

2

Post-compulsory education in low achieving areas

Introduction

This chapter will examine patterns of educational attrition among young people from disadvantaged areas. This will utilise the findings of the initial classroom survey described in the previous chapter. The survey was carried out during the spring term of 1999, and was administered to all final year (S6) pupils at each of the 16 participating schools who were present on the day that the researcher called. The questionnaire used was designed to measure levels of disadvantage and academic achievement by enquiring about respondents' backgrounds (for example, parental occupations), school qualifications and future aspirations.

The research sample

In total, 516 respondents completed the questionnaire (there was only one refusal). A detailed breakdown of how this sample was derived is provided in Appendix A. The sample size was slightly larger than had been anticipated. This was in part due to closures and mergers of secondary schools in Glasgow city. Four of the seven Glasgow schools selected had been affected by this. The schools which had closed were all in areas of multiple deprivation and had become non-viable due to diminishing pupil numbers. This phenomenon worked to the advantage of this research as it helped to provide additional respondents from schools which had so few achieving S6 pupils that they would not otherwise have been selected for this study. All of the participating Glasgow schools received pupils from outside their catchments, through parents choosing to send them there in preference to the local school. This process is best illustrated by one school, 'Edgeside' Community Secondary, where the number of questionnaires returned (n = 23) was almost double the school roll at the beginning of the year (12). In the three other study areas there were clearly fewer, if any, alternative schools for parents to choose from.

The number of questionnaires obtained at each school varied between 80 and 13. The number of S6 pupils participating in this research from each school is in part a function of the size of the school catchment population, small in some rural areas (for example, Ayrshire), large in some major towns (for example, Lanarkshire). However, levels of disadvantage also play their part in shaping the numbers of pupils who 'stay on' until year S6. Levels of pupil attrition tend to be highest in schools located in areas of disadvantage and lowest in schools in affluent areas. Indeed, the ratio of S6 pupils present (the number of questionnaires returned) is a good proxy measure of disadvantage. Approximately 8% of all Scottish secondary school pupils are in S6. In the schools sampled (before allowing for mergers and absences), this percentage averaged 3.4% (that is, less than half the national average 'staying on' rate) and was lowest in the Glasgow schools selected (2.5%). From the social backgrounds of the participating schools it might be expected that the sample of school-leavers recruited would display high levels of disadvantage. However, as we will see, due to their increased likelihood of staying on, many relatively affluent young people were also recruited.

Patterns of disadvantage

Background demographics

As might be expected from an S6 school survey conducted during the spring term, most of these respondents were aged 17 (91.9%). A majority of respondents were female (56.8%) – this finding would appear to reflect recent trends which have indicated that girls are out-performing boys in school.

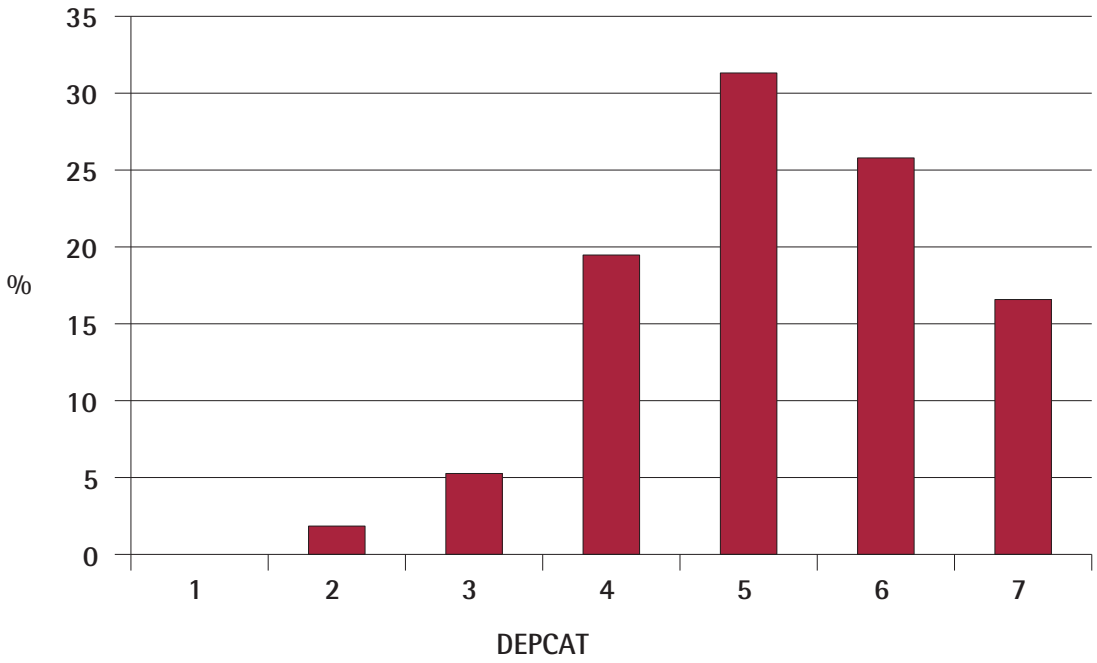
Only 14 respondents were from ethnic minority backgrounds, five describing themselves as Chinese and nine as Pakistani (most of whom attended the specially selected 'Southside' school and who also described themselves as Scottish). A total of 19 respondents described themselves as English, 13 as Irish and seven as other nationalities.

Just under a third (30.6%) of the sample were from single-parent families, and under one in 10 (8.9%) were only children. Three quarters (75.8%) had at least one parent who was in full-time work, while more than one in eight (13.2%) had at least one unemployed parent. Almost one third of the sample (29.6%) received a bursary to assist them to stay on at school. This bursary payment in itself can be considered a good indicator of socioeconomic disadvantage. Around two thirds (65.8%) of the sample received money from their families ('pocket money'), with around a half (51.8%) earning money from part-time work. More demographic details of the sample are provided in Appendix B.

Area of residence

The design of this research intentionally included a study area which was remote from institutions of higher education. This was the Argyll study area schools, from which 81 (15.7%) of the respondents were recruited. All of these individuals lived so far away from any university or higher education campus that a housing transition would be necessary for them to enter a degree or diploma course. Also, as intended by the research design, the respondents were predominantly resident in deprived areas. As shown in Figure 2, almost three quarters (73.6%) of the sample lived in deprived DEPCATs (5 to 7), whereas none lived in the most affluent areas (DEPCAT 1). Only nine respondents lived in the second most affluent postcode sectors (DEPCAT 2), all of whom lived in one Ayrshire village. Additionally, more than two out of five respondents (42.5%) lived in government assisted areas (SIPs or equivalent). This figure is slightly misleading when applied to this sample, as such assisted area status is only given to urban areas, making it unapplicable to most of Argyll.

Figure 2: Area (postcode) deprivation of addresses of S6 school-leavers



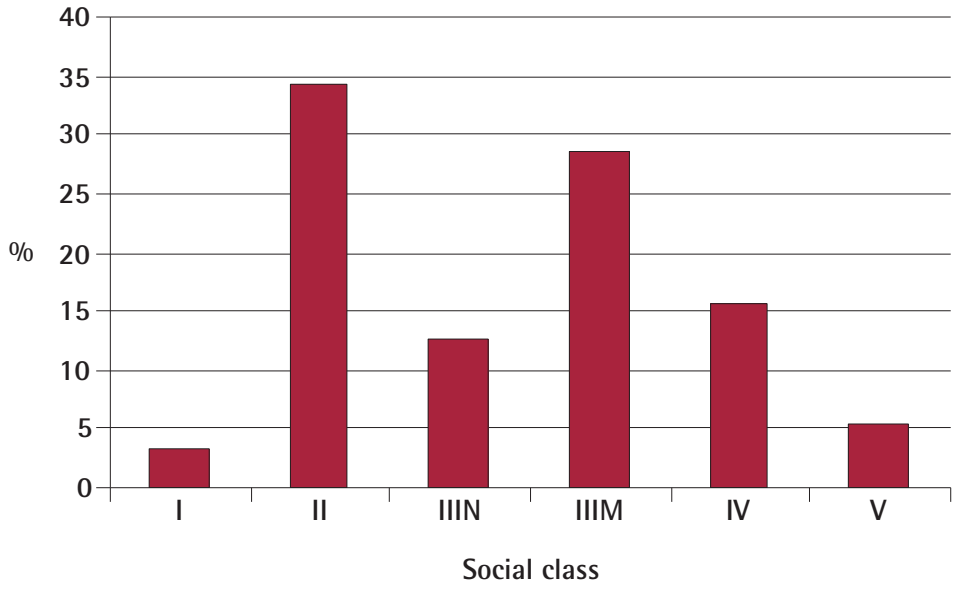
Social class

Despite their area of residence, the social class profile of these respondents was not heavily skewed towards the less affluent. Social class was measured here using the Registrar General's system (see Chapter 1, p 3) for head of household, according to what respondents had said their parents' occupations were. If either parent was not working, respondents were asked to provide their previous occupation. As can be seen from Figure 3, only half (49.8%) of those who provided information on their parents' occupations were classified as being in the manual social classes (IIIM to V). This surprisingly high level of non-manual respondents is in part explicable by the presence of the Argyll sub-sample, who were selected on the grounds of geographical, rather than socioeconomic, disadvantage, and which had the highest level of non-manual social class respondents (65.8%). However, even the sub-sample recruited from low-achieving schools in deprived Lanarkshire returned a majority of respondents who were classified as non-manual (56.9%). This is not what one might expect to find in schools serving deprived communities and suggests that many pupils who enter S6 are atypical of their communities, having come from the more affluent local families.

In subsequent analyses this 'middle class' group (43.0% of the total sample) will be referred to as *relatively* advantaged. It must be stressed however, that this definition is only relative to the remainder of the sample and in no way can these respondents be described as an affluent elite (only 15 respondents were in social class I). The most common parental occupations in this *relatively* advantaged group were: in social class II, primary school teacher and nurse (both n=27) and in social class IIIN, sales assistant (n=38). Although many of these were unemployed or single parents, it is nevertheless clear that the parental occupational class of this sample as a whole is above what might be expected from the geographical areas in which this research was conducted. This seems likely to be a function of a greater attrition rate of disadvantaged young people operating even within these relatively low-achieving schools. In other words, it is possible that such schools need only to have a small percentage of 'middle class' children in year S1 to obtain a majority middle class roll in year S6.

Not indicated in Figure 3 are the 74 (14.3%) respondents who provided no parental occupation. These individuals could give no parental occupation for a complex variety of reasons, including parents who were (or were last known to be) unemployed, long-term sick, deceased, retired, a houseperson, a full-time carer, a student, institutionalised or simply not present and, hence, their occupational status was unknown to the respondent. When compared to those who did provide their parental occupation, this group were found to be particularly disadvantaged. Half (51.4%) of these respondents

Figure 3: Social class of S6 school-leavers from schools in disadvantaged areas



were from single-parent families, which in part explains why they could not provide an occupation for either of their parents (as in such cases often their mother is present as a housewife/carer and they do not know what job their father does, even if they do know that he is working). Seven out of 10 (70.8%) of this group were bursary pupils at school, and a nearly eight out of 10 (78.1%) stated that neither of their parents were currently working full-time. Although this group of respondents might be considered as 'lower class', in subsequent analyses they will be treated separately from respondents who were classified.

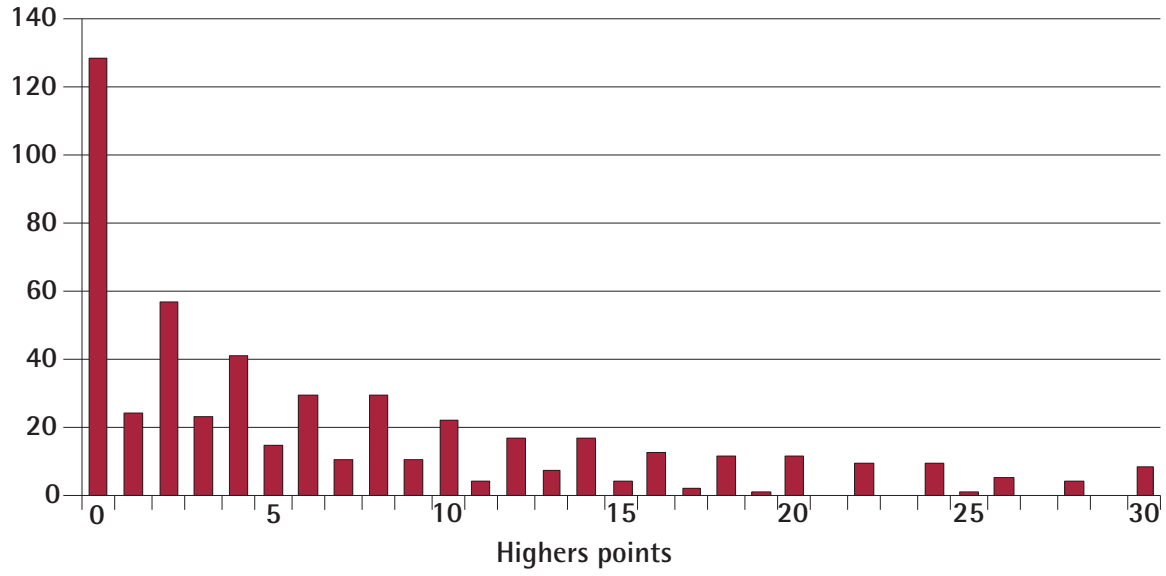
Patterns of academic achievement

The Scottish qualifications required for university entry are Highers, up to five of which can be sat in years S5 or S6 (see Chapter 1, p 1). In practice, most Highers are taken in S5, so, by the time of this school survey, it was already apparent which pupils were likely to qualify for entry to higher education and which were not. A total of 28 different subjects at Highers grade were taken by these respondents. Subjects taken ranged in popularity from Latin – just two pupils – to English, which was taken by almost three quarters of the entire sample (n=371). Not all pupils went straight to Highers in S5; many waited until S6 before attempting these. This delay is related to underachievement in prior examinations (Standard grades) rather than pupils choosing to delay a year. At the time of the survey more than one fifth of the sample (n=110) had not taken any Higher exams, though only 15 of these pupils were not sitting any in S6. This is different to the system elsewhere in the UK, where A levels are normally taken in the final year of school.

Among those who had already sat their Highers, success rates varied considerably. The easiest way to represent this is by using the points system applied to each grade of Higher. These points are awarded to each exam grade as follows: grade 'A' six points, 'B' four points, 'C' two points and 'D' one point. The distribution of Highers points obtained in S5 exams by this sample is shown in Figure 4.

From Figure 4 it can be seen that, despite remaining in school until S6, many of the sample were relatively unqualified. A quarter (n = 28) had no Highers points at all, while at the opposite extreme only eight pupils had been awarded 'straight A' grades in all five subjects they had sat (30 points). At some universities, such as Glasgow, the rule of thumb for the minimum level of achievement is often considered as twelve points (or three 'B's). Only one fifth of the sample had attained this level of academic achievement (n=121). However, this rule of thumb applies to mainstream subjects, and others may be more difficult (or easier) to gain entry to, depending on their popularity and prestige.

Figure 4: Distribution of academic achievement (Highers points)



As success at Highers grade represents the key to university access, this finding has implications for the future destinations of respondents. In order to see which school pupils were more likely to be successful at Highers, a sophisticated statistical analysis was conducted. This was a multiple linear regression correlation analysis (Ordinary Least Squares) which used all the demographic variables (measures of disadvantage) listed in Appendix B, to predict Highers points (the dependent variable). Four such variables were found to be predictive of academic success[1]. These were living in Argyll, having parents who work, having income from a part-time job and, in particular, being in a higher parental social class. In other words, even at this early stage, more advantaged young people are more likely to have obtained the qualifications necessary for entry to higher education than their disadvantaged peers.

The relationship between success at Highers and social class within these predominantly low-achieving schools is clearly demonstrated in Figure 5. The mean number of points already gained by non-manual social class (I to IIIN) S6 pupils was 9.2, compared with only 5.6 among their manual class (IIIM to V) peers. The mean Highers points for the group with no parental social class (marked 'X' on Figure 5) was 3.5, lower than any social class (this group corresponds to the parents who do not work in the regression equation predicting Highers success above).

Figure 6 compares social class against whether or not respondents had already made an application for higher education. As might be expected, Figure 6 displays a similar pattern to Figure 5. Interestingly, however, it would appear that the social class gradient is restricted to applications for the more advanced of the two higher education qualifications – degree courses. Those who had applied for HND courses only were more likely to be pupils in a manual social class, both in relative and absolute terms (in Figure 6 the 53 respondents who had applied for both types of courses are included in the degree applicants). This finding is in line with the figures reported by UCAS in Table 1. Those with no parental social class had the lowest rates of applying for a degree (27.1%) and highest of applying for an HND (14.3%).

The inequalities indicated by Figures 5 and 6 were increased further when those who had already been accepted for courses in higher education were examined. Although many pupils had not yet heard the results of all their applications, and one school – 'Muirburgh High' in Lanarkshire – did not allow pupils to apply to university through UCAS until S6, the gradient between social class I and V in unconditional offers was already apparent. Figure 7 shows the proportion of respondents in each social class who had already been accepted. Only one respondent had received an outright rejection for any application at this time; she was a 'straight A' pupil who had been rejected from 'Oxbridge' by interview.

Figure 5: Social class and academic achievement

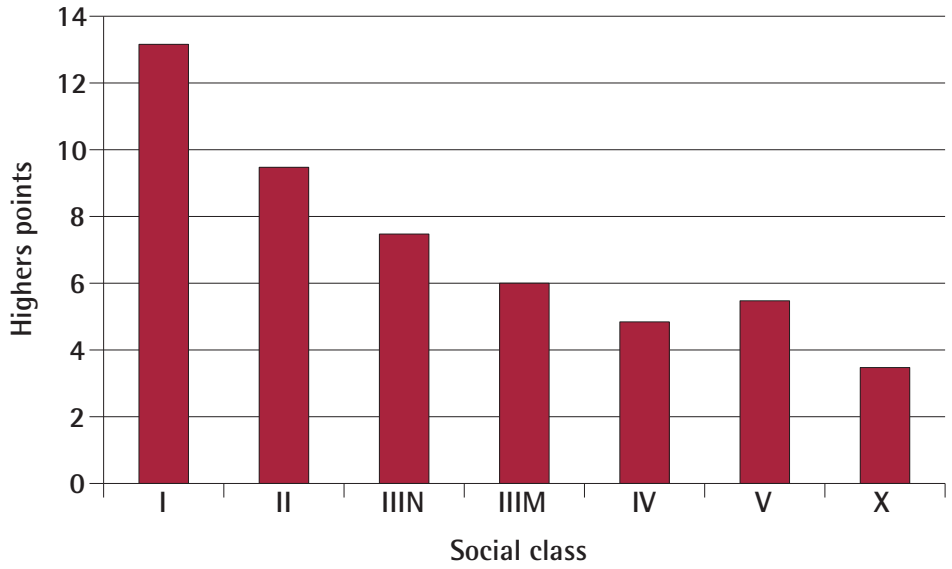
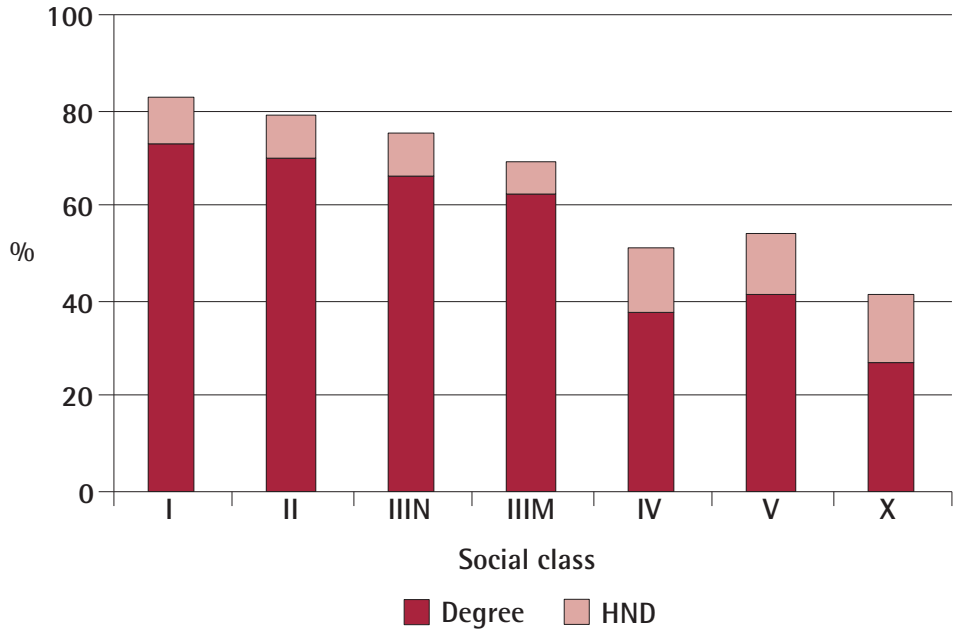


Figure 6: Social class and applications to higher education



As indicated by Figure 7, midway through S6, 27.5% of all non-manual social class pupils had already attained a place in higher education – the corresponding figure for manual social class pupils attending the same schools was only 16.4% (or, alternatively, 83.6% of manual class respondents who made an application to higher education had not yet secured a place at university or college). This difference was statistically significant, even when only those who had made an application and already knew the result were considered. In other words, more disadvantaged pupils had to wait until the end of S6 before knowing whether or not they could enter university, perhaps relying on the results of a second series of Highers examinations at the end of that year. Greater success in S5 allows breathing space in S6, where pupils can prepare for university (in the case of these respondents) by studying CSYS courses (now being replaced by 'Advanced Higher').

Figure 7: Social class and unconditional offers of places in higher education

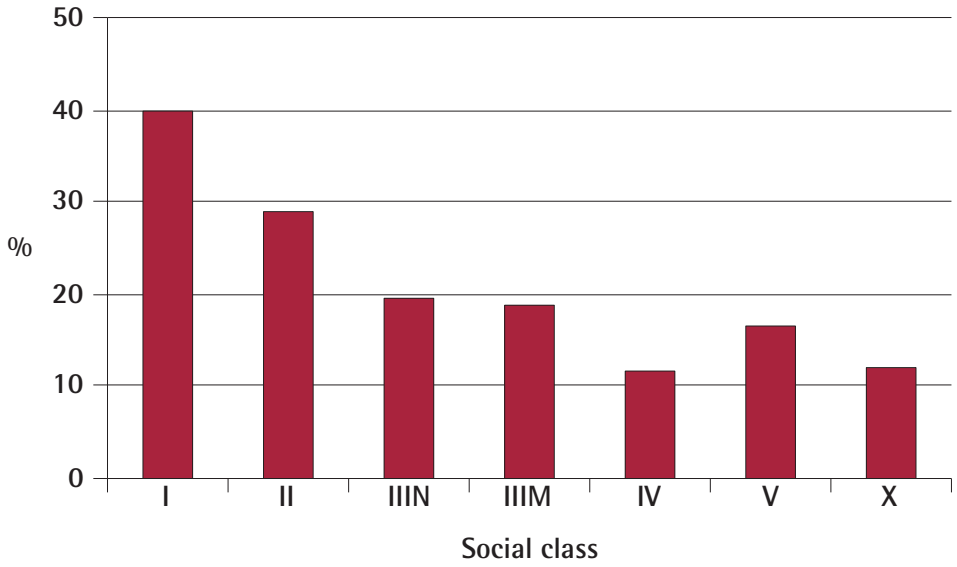


Figure 8: Social class and sixth year studies

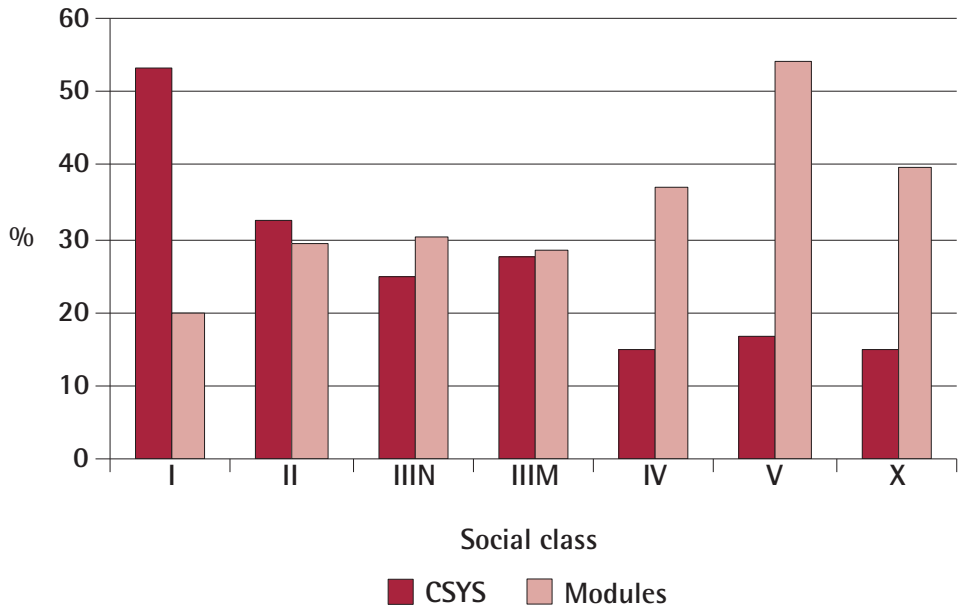


Figure 8 shows the proportion of S6 pupils who were actually sitting at least one CSYS, compared with the numbers who were sitting vocational modules, which (especially at this late stage) may be considered to be preparation for the labour market.

Highers points and the social class differences detailed above were not the only factors which influenced the likelihood of applying for higher education. Females were significantly more likely to apply than males (71.6 and 59.4% respectively). This is despite no statistically significant difference in mean Highers points already obtained between females (7.2) and males (6.3).

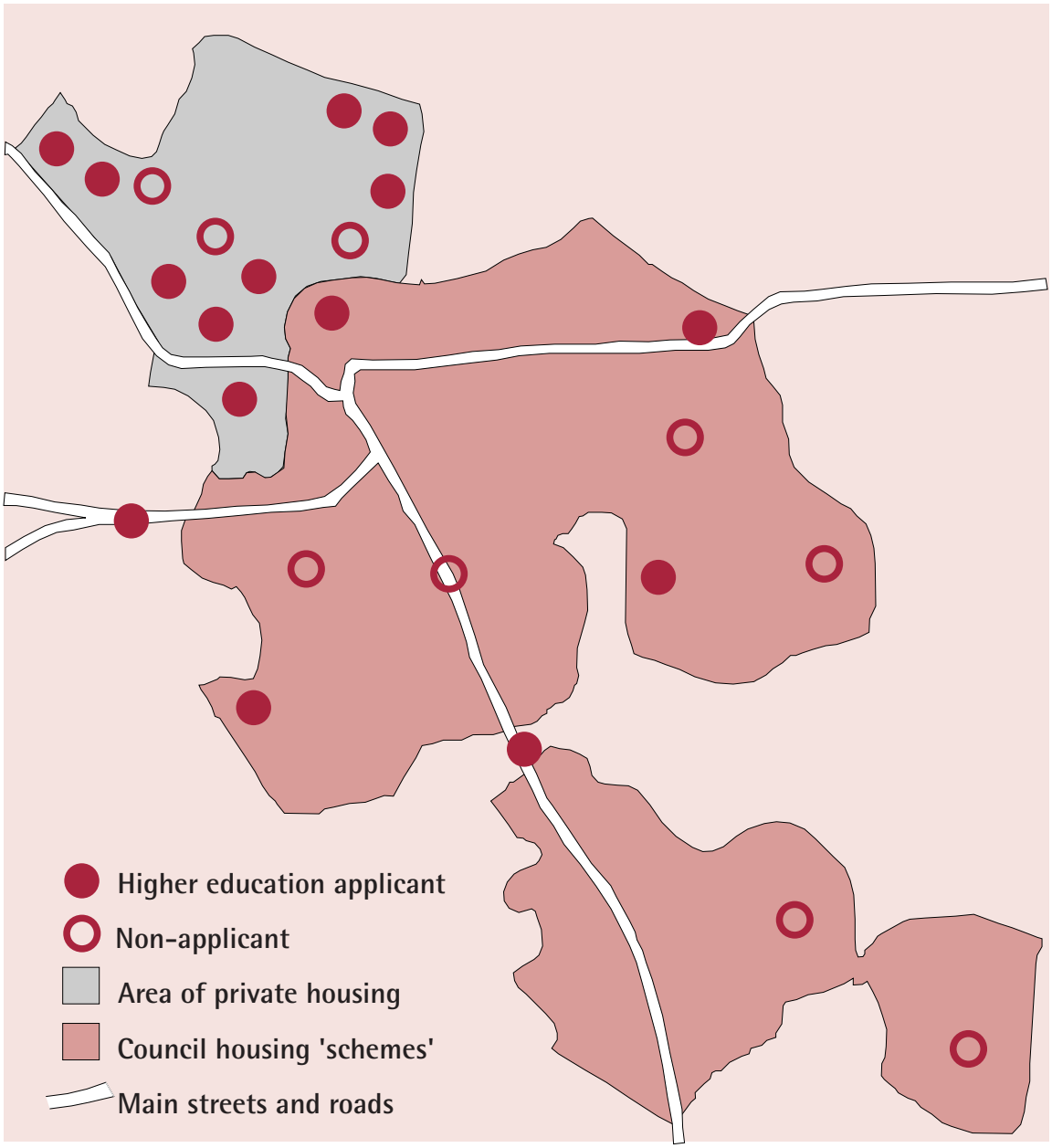
There were also considerable geographical differences between and within the four study areas. As anticipated during the school selection procedure detailed in Chapter 1, proportionally more prospective higher education students attended the remote Argyll schools (87.7%) than those in the other areas (62.3%).

The more rural areas were also less homogenous than the urban areas in the sample. In Ayrshire, the social patchwork of differing towns and villages was apparent in the likelihood both of remaining in S6 and of making an application to higher education. This is illustrated by the catchment area of 'Coaltoun' Academy in Ayrshire. This includes a relatively affluent rural area of farms, 'Coaltoun' (population approximately 9,500) and two satellite developments – 'North Coaltoun' (population, 4,000) and 'Low Coaltoun' (1,500). Although all three settlements are classified as disadvantaged (all are SIPs, containing some of the worst 10% enumeration districts in Scotland, all DEPCAT 5 or 6), 'Coaltoun Academy' returned 24 questionnaires from pupils resident in 'Coaltoun', but only three from 'North Coaltoun' and two from 'Low Coaltoun'. In other words, pupils living in the larger town, where the school was situated, were more likely to stay on until S6. This confirms the findings concerning social class detailed earlier which indicated that, even in deprived schools, some pupils are relatively more disadvantaged than others.

Even within the relatively over-represented 'Coaltoun', the geographical distribution of addresses of S6 respondents, and in particular higher education applicants, was not random. This is shown by Figure 9.

From Figure 9 it can be seen that half the S6 pupils and most of the higher education applicants in this town lived in one small area – a residential area of modern housing. Of the remaining S6 pupils, few lived in the council housing schemes (where the bulk of the town's population lived), although four higher education applicants lived on or near one of the town's main roads. These localised patterns of inequality were repeated for all the schools surveyed outside Glasgow. Residents in the Lanarkshire sub-sample, particularly applicants, also had a tendency to live on or near main roads (more desirable housing) and not on council housing or, especially, SIP areas. The Argyll sub-sample included the children of relatively affluent 'incomers' (only 23 Argyll pupils stated that both of their parents had attended secondary school in the county, compared with over three quarters in every other study area).

Figure 9: Localised inequalities in post-compulsory education ('Coaltoun')



Summary

In this chapter we have highlighted educational inequalities among a sample of young people from schools in disadvantaged areas. Although the sample contains some *relatively* affluent respondents, we recruited many multiply disadvantaged individuals with sufficient qualifications to gain entry to higher education.

A three way split in levels of achievement was apparent. Approximately one quarter of the sample had no qualifications at Highers grade, while another quarter already had sufficient qualifications to gain unconditional entry to higher education. The remainder of the sample had obtained some Highers, but either did not yet have good enough grades to enter higher education or were awaiting the result of their application.

Those who had been unconditionally accepted for higher education were less likely to be from a disadvantaged background. This is because the relatively advantaged young people in the sample were more likely to have been academically successful at school. The overall impression from this stage of the research was that even within low-achieving schools, pockets of more 'middle class' pupils tended to do better academically. Indeed the presence of these atypical pupils masked the true gravity of educational inequalities present in disadvantaged school areas.

Respondents who had applied to higher education and had not been accepted were now either re-sitting or attempting more Highers. The outcome of this second series of examinations seemed likely to be the crucial phase in determining entry to higher education among this cohort. In the next chapter we will follow the progress of these young people, to assess just how successful they were in these examinations and how many progressed to university or college.

Notes

[1] Variables in the regression equation which predicted Highers points (adjusted R square=0.104) were: social class (t=4.79, p=0.000), living in Argyll (t=3.39, p=0.001), parents not working (t=–2.59, p=0.010), and any income from work (t=2.40, p=0.017).

Variables not in the equation were: gender, single parent, only child, car access, total income, any income from family, bursary pupil, DEPCAT, SIP area, and living in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, or Ayrshire.

3

Destinations of final year school-leavers

Introduction

The previous chapter detailed patterns of disadvantage and educational achievement in a sample of young people recruited in the spring of 1999. This 'original' sample was recruited with the intention of tracking their progress after leaving school. To this end, in October 1999, a 100% postal follow-up study was undertaken (this excluded one respondent who refused to give his name and address and two foreign exchange pupils). This postal survey was initiated at the point in time when all respondents entering higher education should have spent at least one week as a student. This chapter will focus on post-school patterns of educational attrition between the original and follow-up surveys.

The follow-up postal survey achieved a response rate of 77%. This was much higher than anticipated, perhaps reflecting levels of concern among young people about these issues. Perhaps because of this high response rate, when data from the first and follow-up surveys were compared, only two significant demographic differences were found between those who responded and those who did not. First, females were more likely to have responded than males: six out of 10 (59.7%) respondents in the follow-up sample were female. This gender difference was explicable by the fact that more females were applying to higher education in the first place. Seven out of 10 (69.9%) respondents in the follow-up survey had made an application at the time of the first survey, compared with only a small majority (55.0%) of those who did not make an application. In other words, those who participated in the follow-up were more likely have been interested in higher education in the first place.

Perhaps of more importance was the absence of differences between the original and follow-up samples in terms of social class (I to V) and residence (study area or deprivation measures). Most (over 60%) of the respondents recruited at each school also participated in the follow-up survey. In other words, disadvantage did *not* significantly affect attrition rates. A detailed breakdown of the demographics of the respondents in the follow-up sample is given in Appendix C.

Enrolment in post-school education

Just over half (54.7%) of respondents who participated in the follow-up survey had progressed to higher education. This was divided between 170 who enrolled in degree courses and 47 who entered diploma (HND) courses. Less than one quarter (23.8%) of the sample had left full-time education. Of these, 51 were now in full-time work, three had enlisted in the armed forces, 14 were on a 'skill-seekers' government training scheme, 17 were unemployed, eight were only working part-time and one had returned to secondary school. Between the extremes of having left education and having enrolled in higher education was a third group (21.5% of the follow-up sample) who were now in further education. These comprised 26 HNC students, 47 NC students, seven on vocational courses (GSVQ), three sitting Highers and two on other (non-academic) courses. These categories of school-leaver destination were not entirely mutually exclusive. One full-time worker was a 'gap-scholar' whose firm would fund her through university, starting in the following year. One 'skill-seeker' was being put through an NC course and one further education student did not state what qualification he was studying for. Finally,

one degree student had already 'dropped out' of university (after less than one month) and was now working full-time.

The eventual destinations of these school-leavers differed somewhat from their stated intentions when they were at school. The differences between stated intentions (applications) and destinations (whether they actually made it to higher education) can be gauged by comparing Figures 10 and 11. Figure 10 shows what might be described as an ideal or 'best case' scenario, dependent on the original sample's (most advanced) ambitions for the year after they left school. Figure 11 shows the actual destinations of respondents in the follow-up sample.

It should be noted that the destinations shown in Figure 11 may not be end points. Many may have chosen to use FE as a 'stepping stone' to higher education, while others may have taken a 'year out' of full-time education. Indeed, only one third (32.3%) of respondents who were not in full-time education at the time of the follow-up stated that they had no intention of applying for any courses this year, while another third (34.8%) had already done so.

Figure 10: Original school sample (*n*=516): applications to post-school education

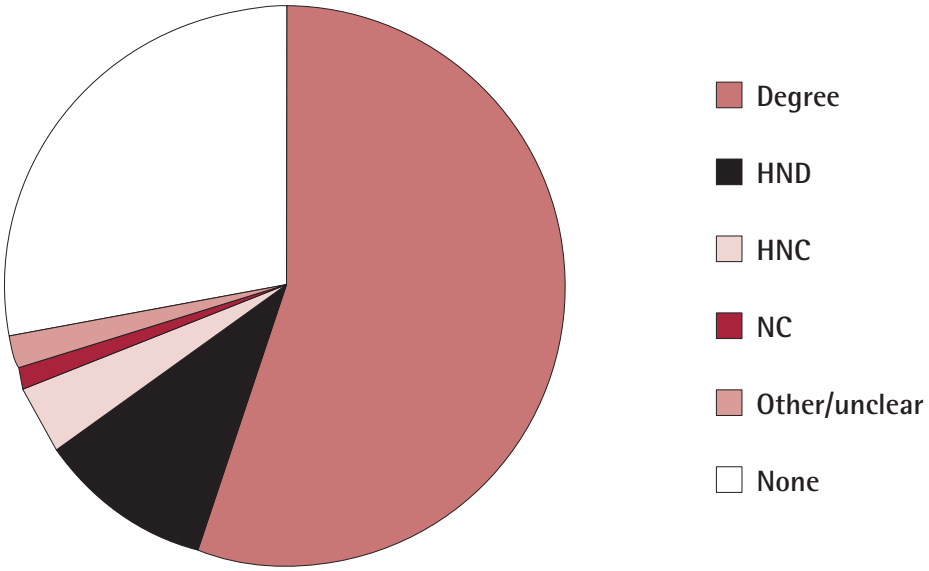
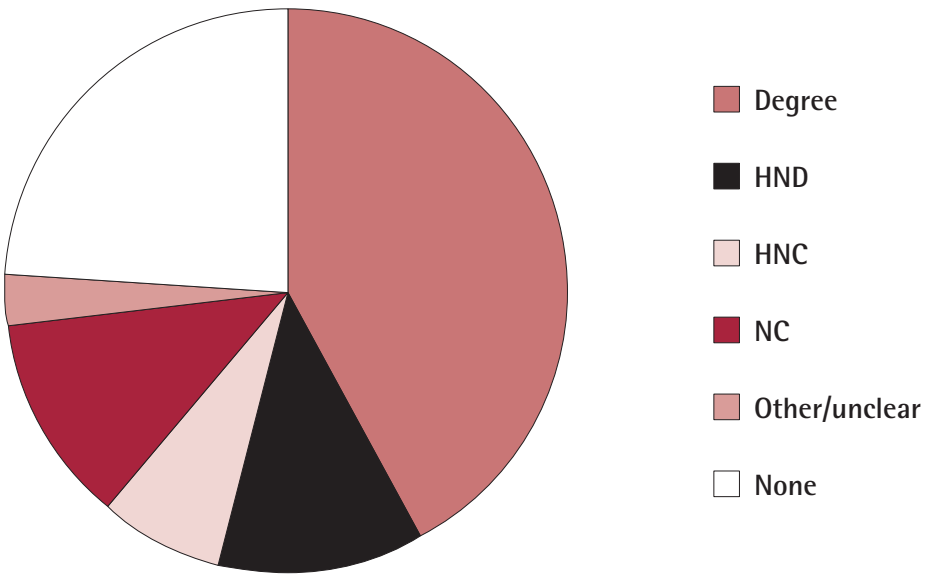


Figure 11: Follow-up school sample (*n*=395): actual post-school education



Higher education students and non-students compared

Looking at the respondents who entered higher education revealed that six out of 10 (59.3%) were female and, despite mostly having attended schools near the bottom of the 'league table', most (55.6%) were from the non-manual social classes (excluding 18 higher education students who had no parental occupational class). The comparable statistics for all accepted UCAS applicants in 1998 were 52.1% female and 73.3% non-manual social class. In other words, the profile of the higher education students in this research differed from the overall student population in being relatively *more* female and *more* 'working class'.

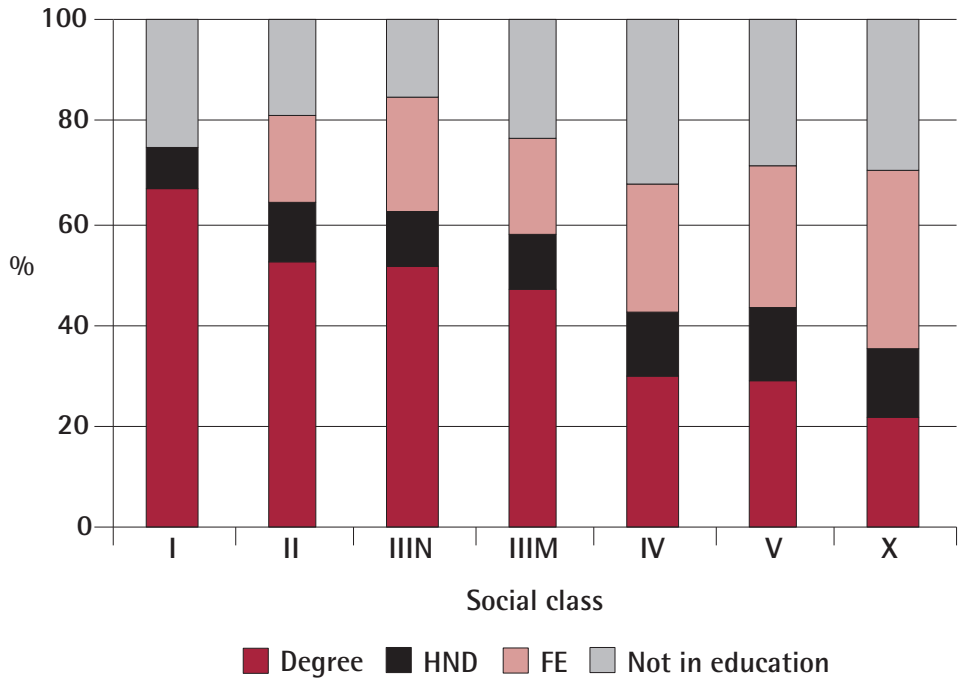
Demographics and school-leaver destinations

Respondents who were in higher education differed from those in the follow-up sample who were not. Despite their greater numbers in the follow-up sample, proportionally as many females as male respondents were now in higher education (54.2 % of the female respondents and 55.3% of males). However, the social class gradients identified in the previous chapters remained as pronounced as ever. Figure 12 highlights the destination of young people for the different social classes.

From Figure 12, it can be seen that a majority in all the non-manual social classes (I to IIIN) were now studying degree courses, whereas a minority were doing so in each of the manual classes, particularly IV and V. Those doing the less advanced HND courses were more evenly spread cross the social classes, with a slightly greater proportion of social class IV and V respondents studying for a diploma. The group who did not give any parental occupation (described in the previous chapter and marked X on Figure 12) had the lowest level of entry to higher education (21.6%) but the highest level of enrolment in further education (35.3%).

The overall pattern of participation in further education was quite different from higher education. Indeed, as indicated by Figure 12, it more closely resembled the pattern of diploma students. This is perhaps unsurprising, as three quarters (76.6%) of HND students in this sample were enrolled at further education colleges. Also shown on this figure are the numbers in each social class who were no longer in full-time education. Of all of these school-leaver destinations, only enrolling in degree courses[1], the most advanced or prestigious option, was statistically significantly related to social class. However, other factors may also influence destination.

Figure 12: Social class and S6 school-leaver destinations

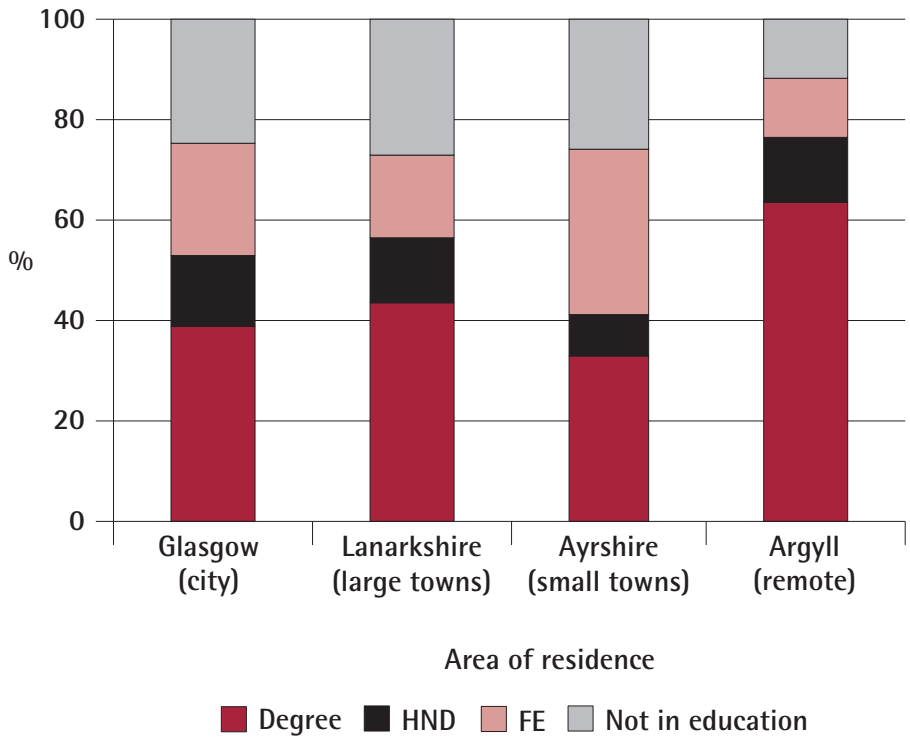


Geographical factors influencing school-leaver destinations

Comparing the four study areas also revealed differences in the destinations of respondents. These are shown in Figure 13.

From Figure 13 it can be seen that levels of participation in higher education were much lower among the Ayrshire respondents. In contrast, the Argyll sub-sample had the highest levels of participation in higher education despite the greater barriers faced by these young people in terms of distance from any institutions of post-school education. These differences between study areas also mask more local differences between and within the schools which participated in this research. For example, only one respondent from 'Pittoun Academy' in Ayrshire was now in a degree course (with one other studying for an HND). In contrast, only one respondent from 'Lochbeg Grammar' in Argyll was no longer in education (a high-achiever who had deferred entry to university). At another extreme, a majority of respondents in the follow-up sample from 'Edgeside' Community Secondary in Glasgow were now studying a further education course. A detailed breakdown of the destinations of respondents from each study area is presented in Appendix D.

Figure 13: S6 school-leaver destinations and area of residence compared



Predicting participation in higher education

The differences in participation rates between study areas may be a function of the differing social class profiles of the four study areas. To account for this and the effects of other factors which may influence school-leavers' transitions, more sophisticated statistical analyses were conducted, aimed at predicting which respondents were most likely to enrol in higher education. Multiple linear regression correlation analyses were conducted using all the demographic variables (measures of disadvantage) listed in Appendix B, with a binary measure of whether or not each respondent was enrolled in higher education (degree plus HND) as the dependent variable (in a similar procedure to that used to predict Highers points in the previous chapter).

An initial regression analysis revealed four variables, collected at the time of the first survey, which were significantly related to being in higher education at the time of the follow-up, controlling for other demographics. The variable which was most strongly related to school-leaver destination (higher education or not) was living in Ayrshire[2]. This was an inverse relationship, that is, respondents recruited from the participating Ayrshire (small town) schools were *less* likely to progress to higher education. Being a bursary pupil and having parents who did not work at the time of the first survey was also strongly inversely related to being in higher education at the time of the follow-up survey. In contrast, being in a higher social class (between I highest and V lowest) was positively related to entering higher education. Taken together with interactions, these four variables alone predicted 10% of the variance in higher education enrolment (see note 2). In other words, increased likelihood of progressing to higher education could be predicted by not living in the Ayrshire study area, being middle class, having working parents and not being a bursary pupil in S6.

Clearly, access to higher education is provided by academic performance and not demographics. To check if this was indeed the case, the above analysis was repeated with the inclusion of a variable measuring Highers points. Unlike the other variables, this measure was taken from the follow-up survey and so included any extra Highers points which respondents may have obtained in S6. This second analysis eliminated two variables – social class and parents not working (which approximates to those with no occupational social class). This confirms the finding, discussed in the previous chapter, that these two variables are strongly related to academic achievement at school (Highers points). Unsurprisingly, current Highers points was a far stronger predictor of entry to higher education than demographics: by itself this measure accounted for over one third of variance in entrance rates[3]. Nevertheless, being from the Ayrshire (small town) sub-sample and having been a bursary pupil were both still strongly predictive of non-enrolment in higher education, even when controlling for Highers. Why these two variables should remain is not entirely clear. However, in the case of bursary pupils, this may support the view that some of these individuals had only stayed on at school because of the bursary, rather than as preparation for higher education. Interestingly, those who were bursary pupils at school were significantly more likely to be in receipt of a bursary as a student (33.6%) compared with those who received no bursary at school (12.4%). This implies that some individuals may enrol in NC courses to maintain receipt of a bursary. The Ayrshire residents may have been deterred from higher education by a combination of distance (in comparison to Glasgow and Lanarkshire) and socioeconomic disadvantage (in comparison to Argyll). Alternatively – as became apparent during subsequent face-to-face interviews – there may be a greater cultural distance from higher education in these small towns, which could compound the effect of any geographical and economic disadvantage.

Taken together with Highers points, living in Ayrshire and having been a bursary pupil (plus interactions between the three) accounted for two fifths of the variance in entry into higher education, leaving three fifths of this variance unaccounted for (see note 3). In other words, many other factors as well as level of qualifications and simple measures of socioeconomic disadvantage are involved in determining whether or not young people make the transition directly from school to higher education. These will be explored in Chapter 5.

Summary

In this chapter we have tracked the destinations of school-leavers through the use of a postal follow-up survey. These destinations can be grouped into three potential outcomes: higher education, further education and those not longer in education. The transition straight to higher education can be regarded as the direct route. Over half of respondents followed this route. This means that approximately half of those who were relying on their S6 Highers results to secure a place at college or university were successful in doing so. Of course this does not mean that they were always successful in gaining their first choice of course, subject or institution.

Those in further education can be regarded as having the potential to advance to higher education, going by an indirect route. Among those not in education, only one third had no intention of returning to full-time education in the following year. Another third had already applied for a studentship, the remainder being, as yet, undecided. As such, those currently not at college or university were as likely to be delaying their entry to post-school education ('deferring') as leaving altogether ('rejecting'). Reasons for these courses of action will be elaborated on in the Chapter 5.

As expected, more advantaged school-leavers were more likely to have enrolled in higher education. It must be stressed that enrolling in higher education was found to be more strongly related to achievement at school (defined by Highers points) than (directly) by social class. There was little evidence that disadvantage in itself restricts access to higher education. However, underpinning all of this was the finding detailed in the previous chapter – that middle class pupils are more likely to gain the qualifications at school sufficient to gain entry to higher education, even within predominately deprived areas.

At this stage there was already some evidence that disadvantaged young people who do attain higher education are more likely to enrol in less advanced courses (HND rather than degree) as compared with their more advantaged peers. This implies that simply recording whether or not a young person has enrolled in a full-time course is not sufficient to fully measure the effects of disadvantage on participation in higher education.

The next chapter will expand upon respondents' educational destinations by looking at more subtle measures of participation in post-school education. The types of courses, subjects and institutions enrolled in by these young people will be examined, as will how able they and their parents are to finance them.

Notes

[1] Other than by linear association only enrolment in degree courses varied statistically significantly by social class (Chi-square=12.99: df=5: p=0.025, by linear association p=0.001).

[2] Variables in the regression equation which predicted higher education (adjusted R square=0.098) were: living in Ayrshire (t=–3.54, p=0.000) parents not working (t=–2.94, p=0.004) bursary pupil (t=–2.80, p=0.005) and social class (t=2.20, p=0.028).

Variables not in the equation were: gender, single parent, only child, car access, total income, any income from family, any income from work, DEPCAT, SIP area, and living in Glasgow, Lanarkshire or Argyll.

[3] Variables in the regression equation which predicted higher education (adjusted R square=0.391) controlling for Highers points (adjusted R square=0.360) were: having been a bursary pupil (t=–3.97, p=0.000) and being from Ayrshire (t=–2.92, p=0.004).

Variables not in the equation were: gender, social class, parents not working, single parent, only child, car access, total income, any income from family, any income from work, DEPCAT, SIP area, and living in Glasgow, Lanarkshire or Argyll.

4

Patterns of participation in higher education

Introduction

In the previous chapter we tracked the destinations of school-leavers, that is those who had progressed to higher education and those who had not. Using the findings of the follow-up survey, this chapter will examine these destinations in detail. The follow-up survey collected new data which made it possible to measure the changing demographics of the sample as they made the transition from school to higher education. Beginning with those who made the direct transition from S6 to higher education, this chapter will detail different levels of participation in higher education.

Destinations within higher education

Even among school-leavers who had progressed directly to higher education there was a great deal of heterogeneity. Respondents were not only doing a variety of courses (such as degree or HND), but also a range of different subjects, at a variety of institutions, dispersed throughout the country, and they also displayed a number of different statuses in terms of their finance.

Subjects studied in higher education

All the subjects taken by respondents were collapsed into the principle subject groups used by UCAS. A comparison between all accepted UCAS applicants in 1998 and the higher education students in the follow-up sample is shown in Table 2.

Interpreting the following table requires some caution. First, there is a potential overlap between these principal subject groups. For example, courses in hospitality, tourism and travel could be put into either the communication or business categories dependent on the institution, while a geography degree could be either in physical science or social studies, dependent on subsidiary subjects. Second, there is likely to be some reporting bias, with respondents who were doing combined courses only reporting their favoured final degree topic in the follow-up questionnaire (this became apparent during subsequent face-to-face interviews). Such reporting, although in many ways more informative of intentions, would underestimate the proportion of the sample in the combined studies category during their first year.

From Table 2, the most obvious way in which the higher education students in the research sample differed from other students was that they were more likely to be studying for an HND. Of the total sample of 217 respondents, 47 had enrolled on HND courses (22%) compared with 9% of all UCAS applicants. In other words, this relatively disadvantaged sample were less likely to progress directly from school to the highest qualification on offer (degree). Within the degree students some less obvious differences were also apparent. The most popular degree subjects were business, engineering and maths/computing. All of these were in proportions above the average UCAS entrant rate, as were the proportions in communication, education and (with the inclusion of HND) medicine and allied disciplines. Each of these subjects could be described as specialised, career-oriented or even vocational. In contrast, more 'academic' subjects, such as the humanities (for example, history), languages (for example, English) and the creative arts (for example, music) were less popular with students in the research sample.

Table 2: Subjects taken by respondents in higher education compared with all accepted UCAS applicants

	Respondents degree		Respondents HND		UCAS degree	UCAS HND
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	%
Business	14	24	23	11	11	30
Engineering science	14	24	4	2	6	8
Maths and computing	11	19	0	0	7	20
Physical science	9	15	0	0	5	1
Social studies	9	14	2	1	12	3
Biological science	6	10	2	1	6	2
Education	6	10	0	0	5	1
Communication	5	8	15	7	2	4
Allied to medicine	4	7	34	16	7	3
Medicine and dentistry	4	6	0	0	2	–
Languages	3	5	0	0	6	–
Humanities	3	5	0	0	4	0
Creative arts	3	4	2	1	9	15
Architecture and building	2	3	9	4	2	2
Agriculture	0	0	6	3	1	5
Combined studies	8	13	6	3	16	5
Total	**100**	**170**	**100**	**47**	**100 (*n*=272,340)**	**100 (*n*=25,880)**

The broad principal subject categories used by UCAS mask a range of specific courses, each with their own levels of prestige. For example, agriculture includes a range from veterinary medicine to food science. In total, 37 different subjects in higher education were enrolled in by respondents (plus three at FE level only). Each course can be seen as having different levels of attractiveness to each respondent. For example, five of the six medical students were in social classes I and II, compared with none of the eight studying chemistry or pharmacy. The relative over-representation of disadvantaged students seems likely to have had an effect, not only on which subjects were taken, but also which were not. For example, no respondent had enrolled (or been accepted) for higher education courses in astronomy, classics, divinity, economics, marine/nautical studies, music, philosophy, statistics or veterinary medicine, and only one each for archaeology, drama, non-English languages, politics, sociology and veterinary nursing (though some may have taken these as joint or subsidiary subjects).

These findings imply the possibility that respondents may be more career conscious or cautious about subject choice in comparison to other first year students, rather than being altruistic or academically motivated. On the other hand, many respondents may only have become aware of what many of these subjects involved on arrival at university. A full breakdown of the subjects taken by respondents, including FE students, is shown in Appendix E.

Institutions of higher education

As well as studying a broad range of subjects, respondents in higher education also attended a range of institutions. As most (81.1%) higher education students studied at universities, these were sub-divided into three types of institution as follows:

- 'ivy league' or 'ancient' universities
- 'red brick' or 'established' universities
- 'polytechnic' or 'new' universities

'Ivy league' in this context refers to historic universities which received their charters over 100

years ago. Such institutions are usually regarded as the most prestigious and often offer the most advanced courses or subjects (such as medicine). Examples of such institutions include Durham, Edinburgh and Oxbridge. 'Red brick' refers to universities usually established during Victorian times or in the 20th century prior to 1990. Many of these are located in major cities, specialising in courses which reflect the local industrial heritage (such as engineering) or are located on purpose-built campuses. Examples of these include Leicester, Heriot Watt and Keele. The term 'new university' refers to the former polytechnic colleges which were awarded their charters during the expansion of higher education that has occurred in the past decade. Such universities often have the highest numbers of non-standard students (for example, low social class, mature students and ethnic minorities), as well as the highest 'drop-out' rates. The types of subjects and courses (for example, HND) available at these reflect their recent transition from polytechnic college status.

Table 3 details the destinations of respondents in the follow-up survey who entered higher education, broken down by type of academic institution.

Table 3 illustrates a polarisation between type of institution and degree or diploma courses. Only one respondent was studying for a degree at an FE college. In contrast, only one respondent was studying for an HND at a 'red brick' university and none at an 'ivy league' university. More higher education students were enrolled in a degree course at a 'red brick' university than elsewhere, though the combined number of students studying either degree or HND courses at 'new' universities was similar. Just over one fifth (21.7%) of higher education students (10.9% of the whole follow-up sample) were now studying at an 'ivy league' university. Even fewer were in other institutions of higher education. These comprised one at agricultural college, one at art school in England and two at more general higher education colleges.

Comparing the different types of institution chosen by respondents in this research requires a degree of caution. This is because many factors may govern choice of institution other than its prestige, subjects or courses on offer. In particular, distance from each institution is likely to be a crucial factor. It was expected that this might be a particularly strong influence with disadvantaged Scottish students and this was indeed confirmed in this research. The geographical locations of the institutions respondents had enrolled in tended to be very local. In both the higher education and FE sectors, a majority (58.8% and 69.9% respectively) of respondents stated that they attended the nearest institution to their parental home which offered the course they had enrolled in. This meant that a large majority (71.6%) of all university students were enrolled at one of Glasgow's three universities, compared with only 10 respondents (5.7%) at three similar universities in Edinburgh. Only six respondents had enrolled at an institution outside Scotland (all in England). These comprised four who were studying at 'new' universities, one at an art school and one at an FE college. Therefore, all other things being equal, a prospective student in this sample is more likely to choose a university in a familiar area, within commuting distance than one far from home.

Table 3: Types of institution studied at by respondents entering higher education

	Degree		HND	
	%	*n*	%	*n*
'Ivy league' university	25	43	0	0
'Red brick' university	41	69	2	1
'New' university	31	53	21	10
Other higher education institution	2	4	0	0
Higher education at FE college	1	1	77	36

Table 4: Choice of university in Glasgow city

	Students (*n*)	Applicants (*n*)	UCAS applicants 1998
Glasgow	38	127	22,072
Strathclyde	49	124	15,835
Caledonian	39	113	16,835

To account for the effect of locality on enrolment, we compared enrolment at three universities based in Glasgow city. Each of these institutions represent one of the types of university detailed above. Namely the University of Glasgow ('ivy league'), the University of Strathclyde ('red brick') and Glasgow Caledonian University ('new'). Using a range of academic indicators, *The Sunday Times* publication *The good university guide 1998* (the year respondents would have made their applications) ranks Glasgow 20th, Strathclyde 42nd and Caledonian 71st of the UK's 96 universities. The rank order of these universities in terms of entrants from state school is the reverse of this. In 1999 (the year respondents enrolled in university) Caledonian was ranked 4th, Strathclyde 31st and Glasgow 67th. In theory, these three institutions should all be equally accessible, although Strathclyde and Caledonian are located in the city centre, whereas Glasgow is in the 'west end' of the city. Table 4 shows the proportion of respondents attending each of the three universities compared to UCAS applicants as a whole.

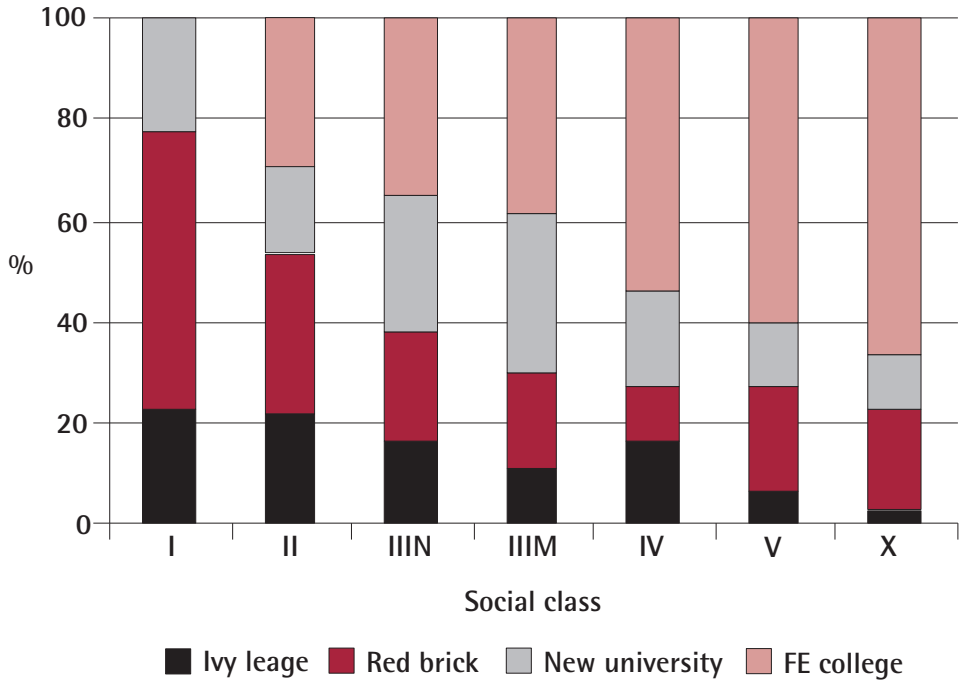
From Table 4, it can be seen that Strathclyde had enrolled slightly more students from the sample than the other two institutions. This is different from the number of respondents who had applied to each; in terms of applications, Caledonian was slightly less popular than the other two. This is in turn different from the UCAS figures for applicants in 1998 which shows the 'ivy league' Glasgow university as clearly the most popular of the three among all prospective students. Taking a crude ratio of applicants in the sample to 1998 UCAS applicants reveals Strathclyde (1 to 127) to be relatively the most attractive of the three institutions to the sample respondents, relative to other applicants, with Glasgow University being the least attractive (1 to 174).

Each respondent could make up to six separate applications through UCAS, some to the same institution, some to others. Prospective students may choose a range of institutions, including a first choice and a 'fall-back' in case their application to their first choice is rejected. With this in mind the success rates among applicants to these three institutions also varied between Glasgow (29.9%) and Strathclyde (39.5%). In other words, prospective students in this relatively disadvantaged sample were least likely to both apply or enrol in an 'ivy league' institution. At Caledonian (34.5% success rate) eight of the 39 students gained a place through the clearing system, compared with only one at Glasgow and none at Strathclyde. This implies that the local 'new' university was the most likely of the three to be chosen as a fall back, should an application to somewhere else (such as Glasgow) be unsuccessful. Interestingly, however, over three quarters of higher education students in all social classes stated that the institution which they were now at was their first choice. This implies that these respondents had not been aspiring to other, perhaps more prestigious or distant, institutions.

It is quite remarkable that none of these respondents had enrolled in any 'red brick' or 'ivy league' institution outside Scotland. Only three respondents had applied for Oxbridge, none were successful (despite one being a 'straight A' pupil). It is equally remarkable that none of these respondents were successful in gaining entry to either of Scotland's independent art schools. This does not reflect a lack of interest in the creative arts among this population, as 17 were studying art at FE level (compared with only five in HE), but that few respondents had applied and none had gained entry to these prestigious institutions.

Over the follow-up students as a whole (HE and FE), the social class gradient was clearly visible across all categories of institution, as indicated by Figure 14. Again, it was those who could give no parental social class that appeared to be least successful, with only one student in this group attending an ivy league institution.

Figure 14: Social class and type of institution attended by all school-leaver new students



As might be expected, Figure 14 is very similar to Figure 12 (which detailed course type), except that the FE sector representation appears much greater in Figure 14. This is because most HND courses were being studied at FE college (see Table 3) and both of these courses were more likely to be chosen by disadvantaged students.

Levels of participation in post-school education

Further education students

Figure 14 shows the social class distribution of the 85 respondents who enrolled in the FE sector (defined as mainly HNC or NC in this research). This is the reverse to that of university students. At one extreme, none of the social class I respondents were at FE college; at the other extreme, two thirds of the students with no social class were at FE college. Only 10 respondents in study areas which had FE colleges enrolled at FE colleges outside their area; eight of these were in the adjacent Clydeside conurbation. One Argyll respondent attended an outpost campus of a Greenock-based college situated in a local industrial estate which offered a limited range of (HNC) subjects.

The most popular FE subject taken by these respondents was art (n=17), followed by social care options (n=15). No other subject was taken by more than 10 respondents at FE level (see Appendix E). During subsequent face-to-face interviews, detailed in the next chapter, it became apparent that many of these new FE students would have the opportunity to progress to higher education (HND) within their college, although not necessarily at the same local campus.

Potential students not in education

As indicated in the previous chapter, only one third of respondents who were not full-time students had no intention of returning to education the following year. Of the 16 non-students with 12 or more Highers points (the rule of thumb for entry), only six had not already made an application to higher education.

Of the 25 non-students who stated what type of application they had made, nine had applied for at least a degree course and eight for an HND only (three had applied for both). Ten of these applications were for nursing courses – perhaps reflecting a waiting list for this subject. The most popular institution applied to was the ('ivy league') University of Glasgow. These findings indicate that, despite not currently being in

education, not all non-students were disinterested in education or lacking in ambition (one had applied to Oxbridge).

Predicting level of participation in post-school education

Given the patterns apparent in Figures 12 and 14, it was decided to repeat the statistical procedure used to predict enrolment in higher education, in the previous chapter, to account for the different qualifications (degree and HND) which constitute higher education. Also, as NC and HNC may be used as a 'stepping stone' to higher education, it was decided to include FE students in the analysis. Effectively, this produced a three-point dependent variable representing the minimum duration of each course in years from degree (three years, mainly at university) through HND (two years, mainly at college) to NC and HNC (one year, only at FE college). As the non-students in the sample comprised many deferring potential students, whose school-leaving destinations were as yet unknown, this group were not included in this analysis.

An initial regression equation using only background demographics (see Appendix B) yielded four variables which, taken together, predicted 10% of the variance in course length[1]. Enrolment in longer (or more advanced) courses was positively related to higher social class and car access, but negatively to living in (small town) Ayrshire and having parents who did not work. When Highers points was introduced, almost half the total variance in course length was accounted for[2] (more than for any other analysis conducted). As with previous regressions, the strongest predictor of the type of course enrolled in was prior qualifications (Highers points). Again, it must be stressed that these prior qualifications were obtained at school, predominantly by the *relatively* advantaged young people in the sample. Controlling for Highers points (which again replaced social class) revealed that course length was inversely related to living in Ayrshire, DEPCAT and having parents who did not work. In other words, students who lived in small town Ayrshire, lived in a deprived area and whose parents did not work, were the most likely to be enrolled in an FE course and the least likely to be studying for a degree.

There are a number of possibilities which may explain these findings. The longer time involved with more advanced courses may deter some young people with limited funds (for example, if nobody in their household is employed, or commuting is deemed too expensive). Alternatively, local culture (for example, in deprived areas or in small towns) may make further education (college) seem a relatively attractive prospect, compared with the 'bigger step' of moving directly from school to university.

Student and non-student finance and support

By the time of the follow-up, the non-students differed from the new students in many ways other than level of involvement in post-school education. The most obvious differences were in terms of housing and finance. Specifically, non-students were now in the labour market, while students were involved with the mechanisms of student funding, fees and accommodation.

Sources of income

Table 5 details the various sources of income of students and non-students in the follow-up sample.

Table 5 clearly shows that, not only does student income vary from that of non-students, but that there is also a great deal of difference between those in higher education and those in the FE sector. On the whole, non-students might be described as both 'better off' and more self-sufficient. Most non-students were working (usually full-time) and earning much more than student (part-time) workers. Although the average income of students in higher education was almost three quarters of that of non-students, their biggest source of income was from loans. Three quarters of higher education students had already taken out a loan, even though the follow-up survey was conducted in the first month of their first year at college or university. Indeed, this figure is likely to underestimate the true number of students taking out loans, as it became apparent during subsequent face-to-face interviews that many had been experiencing difficulties in arranging student loans at the time of the follow-up survey. In contrast, most FE students were in receipt of a non-repayable (local authority) bursary. Some HE students also received a bursary (those in nursing or related subjects and some who lived in remote islands) as

Table 5: Mean weekly income of students and non-students compared

	HE students		FE students		Non-students	
Income source	**£**	**% in receipt**	**£**	**% in receipt**	**£**	**% in receipt**
Parent(s)/family	£26.02	46	£26.00	36	£14.10	26
Work	£41.68	55	£39.98	39	£110.20	85
Bursaries	£42.33	9	£30.90	66	£15.00	1
Loans	£54.37	68	£48.71	15	–	–
Other (such as benefits)	£33.56	5	£20.54	6	£42.81	11
Total	**£73.02**		**£50.39**		**£98.43**	

did the one non-student who had returned to school. Some students received other income from special funds made available to disadvantaged young people to assist them through higher education (such as the Robertson Trust).

Perhaps because of their reliance on loans rather than bursaries, more HE students than FE students both worked part-time and (still) received income from their parent(s) or other family. The number of higher education students who were already working part-time is remarkably high given that this research was undertaken at the very start of their student careers. On the other hand, even at the time of the first survey, only five of the respondents currently in HE stated that work would not be an important source of their income (as a student) in the following year. The economic necessity for part-time work seems certain to take up time which many students would otherwise wish to spend at study.

It should be noted that, at this early stage, no income variable varied significantly across the social classes, either overall or when only including those in higher education. Those with no parental occupational class did receive less overall (primarily because those in work earned less) but, in part because of greater receipt of special funds, those in higher education had a similar level of income to other HE students. This does not mean that all are equally able to finance a studentship, merely that they have similar income needs. Beyond this first month in HE, students' abilities to maintain income levels and repay debts may not be so equitable.

Due to the timing of this research – at the beginning of term – it was not possible to ask student respondents for a detailed account of all their expenditure. Nevertheless, there are a number of costs unique to the student population which can be examined at this stage – specifically tuition, accommodation and travel.

Tuition fees

The students in this sample are part of a rather unique age cohort in Scotland in that they will be in one of only two year groups who were liable to pay tuition fees in advance of entry into post-school education. In theory, all respondents who were studying for degree, HND and HNC courses should have been means-tested to assess the size of the fees they were due to pay for each year's tuition. In 1999 the full fee was £1,025 per year. This is expected to be met by the students' parents. However, students from low-income families may have some or all of their fees paid by the Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS). Indeed, exemption from having to pay tuition fees is a good proxy measure of disadvantage (students whose joint gross parental income was below £16,945 pay no fees). Table 6 compares actual fee eligibility in the follow-up sample with what respondents had expected to pay at the time of the first survey.

Table 6: Eligibility for tuition fees among higher education students

	Anticipated		Actual	
Fee	%	*n*	%	*n*
Full amount	12	22	26	62
Part amount	3	5	20	47
Exempt	13	25	36	86
Don't know	73	138	17	41

As can be seen from Table 6, only one quarter of the students in the follow-up sample were paying full tuition fees (although some did not know if they were eligible to pay). What is quite alarming about this table is that so few were aware of their likely eligibility in advance of leaving school. Only 25 individuals believed that they would be exempt from paying fees should they enrol in higher education (one of whom was mistaken). In other words, a large number of potential students may be uncertain or worried about tuition fees, even when they are unlikely to be eligible to pay. Such a lack of information in S6 seems likely to act as an unnecessary deterrent to HE for some young people and their parents.

Accommodation and travel

More than one third (38.4%) of higher education students in the follow-up sample had now left their parental home. This compares with fewer than one in 10 of both further education students (9.4%) and non-students (7.6%). As might be expected from the research design, the most marked difference in levels of leaving home was found between the four study areas. Table 7 compares the numbers of students in higher education from each of the four study areas who had left home.

The pattern shown in Table 7 confirms the necessity of a housing transition for young people in the remote study area (Argyll) who wish to enter HE. Although the urban–rural continuum in terms of numbers of students between Glasgow and Ayrshire is what might be expected, it is remarkable that so few students overall have left home. Only four Glaswegians had done so – two living in halls of residence and two obtaining a council house tenancy. This concurs with findings concerning respondents' choice of institution detailed above. These findings tend to support the view that, among this population, leaving the parental home to go to university is done as a necessity rather than a choice.

The reluctance to leave home, for whatever reason, is also borne out by the distances and costs of commuting to university or college. These burdens were greatest for 'stay at home' Ayrshire students, who spent on average 2 hours 36 minutes travelling at a cost of £4.83 each day. Due to their proximity to higher education institutions and transport nodes, Glasgow students incurred the least commuting burden (1 hour 23 minutes for £2.58 each day). Commuting Lanarkshire students were between these extremes (1 hour 43 minutes at £4.36 daily)[3].

The costs of accommodation and apparent willingness to travel imply that there are benefits from remaining in the parental home. As the providers of many of the respondents' accommodation and much of their financial support, it was decided that parental attitudes to higher education should be explored.

Table 7: Geographical aspects of accommodation among higher education students

	Glasgow		Lanark		Ayr		Argyll	
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
Parental home	94	58	85	56	46	19	0	0
Student accommodation	3	2	15	10	44	18	85	40
Other accommodation	3	2	0	0	10	4	15	7

Parental attitudes and support

The original survey questionnaire gave an option for respondents to 'opt out' of a parental survey. A short postal questionnaire was sent to the parents (or parent) of those who gave their permission[4] during the spring of 2000. More than half (56.9%) of the 292 parental questionnaires sent out were returned. Almost three quarters (72.8%) were completed by the respondent's mother alone, a further 5.6% were jointly completed by both parents. The parent(s) of respondents in higher education were *not* significantly more likely to return the questionnaire than those who were not. There was also *no* difference in the likelihood of returning a questionnaire between the social classes of respondents' parents, although those living in remote Argyll (72.9%) were much more likely to have done so than those living elsewhere (51.1 to 56.6%).

As might be expected from a sample of parents who took the trouble to respond, most were highly supportive of their son or daughter entering post-school education. Only six parents stated that they would rather their son or daughter got a job. Two of these had a son or daughter who was currently in HE and one in FE. Only one parent felt that higher education was of little importance, compared with 100 (60.6%) who felt that it was extremely important. However, there was less accord between parents when it came to providing (financial) support for their son or daughter during their studentship. This is shown in Table 8, which indicates that few parents expected to provide all financial support for their son or daughter during a studentship. On the other hand, few expected to give no support, with roughly equal numbers expecting to provide half or most. The reasons for this may be that, although a majority were willing to provide a high level of support, many felt that they were unable to do so.

When parental attitudes to student finances and self-support were examined, an even greater spread of responses was found. These are shown in Table 9.

The parents appeared particularly unhappy at the prospect of their sons and daughters taking out student loans. This is at odds with the high numbers of respondents currently in higher education who had already taken out loans. In contrast, a majority of parents were happy to see their son or daughter work part-time during term-time.

Table 8: Levels of parental financial support

	None		Little		Half		Most		All	
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
Expect to pay	2	4	12	20	39	65	41	67	6	9
Are willing to pay	2	3	10	17	24	40	32	52	32	53
Are able to pay	13	22	29	48	23	38	27	44	7	12

Table 9: Parental attitudes to student life

	Very unhappy		Unhappy		Not bothered		Happy		Very happy	
Attitude towards:	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
Student loan	25	41	45	73	9	15	17	28	3	5
Student work	5	8	18	29	11	18	55	89	12	19
Leaving home	14	23	32	51	19	30	30	48	5	8
Doing a post-grad course	1	1	5	8	29	47	45	73	21	34

There were few differences between parental responses in terms of social class or area of residence. Argyll parents were less unhappy about their sons or daughters leaving home to go to college or university (as might be expected because of the necessity of doing so in that area). Also, parents in lower social classes felt less able to support their son or daughter through a studentship. As might be expected, this was particularly the case with the parents who had no occupational class, nearly half of whom (47.1%) felt unable to give any support, compared with only one in 10 of the rest of the sample (9.5%). Nevertheless, nearly all the parents who responded to this questionnaire were on the whole very positive about higher education. Unfortunately, it cannot be known if this was also the case for those who did not respond.

Summary

In this chapter we have examined patterns of participation in higher education. From these it is clear that the destinations of respondents detailed in the previous chapter only tells part of the story. Those who had progressed to higher education were found to be a very heterogeneous group (in terms of courses, subjects, institutions, finance and support). Compared with the student population as a whole, students in this research were more likely to be enrolled on shorter or less advanced courses, in more vocational subjects, at 'newer' universities or FE colleges. Within the sample, students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds were found to be the most likely to be studying non-degree courses at FE college. It must be stressed that this was primarily a function of existing social class differences in school attainment, rather than any systematic selection biases by universities.

The young people who had enrolled in higher education differed from the remainder of the sample in terms of finance and residence. Most non-students were in paid work, most FE students received bursaries, most higher education students had taken out loans, with more than half also working part-time. One quarter of the sample had left home between the two data sweeps. For many this may only be a temporary change of address (that is, for term-time), as most of these 'movers' were now in HE and came from the more distant areas.

Despite being more likely to have left home, respondents in HE remained more dependent on parental support than those who were not in education. Although respondents' parents were unhappy about the prospect of their son or daughter leaving home and, in particular, about them taking out a student loan, on the whole those who responded to a short postal questionnaire were very supportive of higher education.

Clearly all these factors: institutions, subjects, social background, geography, housing transitions, student versus non-student finances and levels of parental support must influence the disadvantaged young person's career choices. In the next chapter we will look at how respondents perceive these as barriers which can either limit their participation in higher education or deter them from entry altogether.

Notes

[1] Variables in the regression equation which predicted type of course (adjusted R square=0.104) were living in Ayrshire (t=–3.42, p=0.001) parents not working (t=–3.30, p=0.001) social class (t=2.31, p=0.022) and car access (t=2.90, p=0.023).

Variables not in the equation were: gender, only child, single parent, total income, any income from family, any income from work, bursary pupil, DEPCAT, SIP area, and living in Glasgow, Lanarkshire or Argyll.

[2] Variables in the regression equation which predicted type of course (adjusted R square=0.478), controlling for Highers points (adjusted R square=0.449), were living in Ayrshire (t=–2.64, p=0.009) parents not working (t=–2.33, p=0.020) and DEPCAT (t=–2.32, p=0.021).

Variables not in the equation were: gender, social class, only child, single parent, car access, total income, any income from family, any income from work, bursary pupil, DEPCAT, SIP area, and living in Glasgow, Lanarkshire or Argyll.

[3] These differences in time and cost were statistically significant by linear association along the urban Glasgow to rural Ayrshire continuum by ONEWAY analysis of variance (F=8.71 and 11.50 respectively, both p=0.000).

[4] Of the 395 school-leavers who participated in the follow-up study, 102 (25.8%) had indicated that they did not wish us to contact their parents. Those who gave permission were more likely to progress to HE (59.0% compared with 42.2% of those who opted out; Chi^2-square=8.71, *df*=1, *p*=0.002). One respondent lived with her grandparents, another with her aunt and uncle – both of these sets of relatives were sent a questionnaire. Only one respondent was living independently while at school and did not give a contact address for her parents.

5

Experience of barriers to participation in higher education

Introduction

As outlined in previous chapters, young people's choices of post-school education may be governed by many non-academic factors. To explore these in detail, it was decided to conduct face-to-face interviews with a sub-sample of respondents. Forty four such interviews were conducted during the spring of 2000. Rather than randomly selecting respondents for these interviews, it was decided to focus on disadvantaged but qualified young people. The selection of interviewees was stratified to be representative of each of the destinations examined in Chapter 3 (see Figure 11). As far as possible, it was intended to match interviewees in each destination by qualifications (Highers points).

Selection procedure

A rigorous stratification system was employed to select appropriate interviewees. To be representative, 23 interviews with respondents in higher education were carried out, 10 in further education and 11 with non-students, according to their status during the follow-up survey. This framework was adhered to, regardless of any changes in status which might occur in the time between the follow-up survey and face-to-face interview. Selection of interviewees involved taking the highest qualified respondents who were not in education and matching them to similar individuals who were students. Disadvantage among HE students was defined by non-eligibility to pay tuition fees (as a result of means-testing). Disadvantage among FE students and those not in education was defined by being a bursary pupil when at school or by living in either a deprived SIP area or in remote Argyll. All respondents, regardless of their destination, who were in either social class I or DEPCAT 2, were excluded, as were HE students who were eligible to pay full tuition fees. A full description of the selection procedure is given in Appendix G.

Interviews were conducted in a variety of settings, including parental homes, term-time addresses, halls of residence, university campuses and work places. All interviews were taped and transcribed before analysis. The interview gave each of these qualified but particularly disadvantaged respondents the opportunity to explain why they were in their current situation, and what barriers they had encountered in attempting to access higher education. In this chapter, whenever an interviewee's statement is presented, their educational status and reason for selection is also given. A brief profile of all interviewees is given in Appendix H.

Educational barriers

School

The schools selected for this research were all near the bottom of the so-called league tables in terms of school-leavers entering higher education. Many aspiring interviewees felt that attending an 'underachieving' school, which may not see preparation for university as a high priority, presented a barrier to their prospects.

> "When I was at school my careers advice people were like trying to get you by saying, 'Oh! you can do this sort of job' and everything, but were not exactly helping you where its like, 'Oh! you can sort of do this uni degree' or whatever.

> They were more designed with getting jobs for everyone rather than like encouraging them to go on to university and things." (HE student, paying no fees, #303)

> "It's not really about universities, they're always going on about jobs and that, but never about going down to university, but it's always just be a mechanic and all this." (HE student, paying no fees, #477)

As well as feeling that their teachers were more focused on the majority of less academically oriented pupils, some respondents found these other pupils themselves to be a distraction.

> "It was getting quite violent. There was a lot of fights amongst the senior ones and the junior pupils.... I think if I wasn't in medicine ... you had to do a 6th year at school.... It is a lot harder to get in if you don't. If it had not been for that [the fact that she wanted to study medicine] I would definitely not have went in for 6th year at school and went out to work for a year." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Interviewees found that things got easier in the senior school, when staff could devote more attention to those (few) pupils who stayed on.

> "See like, after you get started doing Highers and everything, the teachers have a lot more time for you, but 1st to 4th year, aye, it was the idiots that got all the attention." (HE student, paying no fees, #296)

As indicated in Chapter 2, a small number of young people were only included in the sample as a result of school mergers. One respondent felt she would not have made it to higher education were it not for the closure of her old school (which would not have been deemed viable for this research).

> "Well at 'Bridgeside' [closed school] they did nae really bother if you went and did anything, but at 'Riverside' they encouraged you.... They did nae really care if you passed exams, you just dae modules and that's fine. The teachers really ... they thought you were common.... They thought everybody was like that, they just treated everybody the same way like they were stupid." (HE student, paying no fees, #503)

In the previous chapters, it became apparent that the greatest barriers may be facing the most academically able pupils. This was reinforced during face-to-face interviews, with those aspiring to more prestigious institutions or advanced courses. This situation may, in part, explain the lack of respondents who applied for Oxbridge (or any other English 'ivy league' or 'red brick' university) and why, ultimately, no respondents were successful in obtaining a place at such institutions.

> "I think more people should try for it [Oxford], 'cos people don't even consider it in 'Lochbeg', I think I'm the only person for I don't know many years that's even applied for it." (Non-student, remote area, #347)

> "[#366] and I got stick from so many teachers for applying [to Cambridge], I mean really there was one teacher that would not even speak to us because it was a case of, 'Oh! Our universities are not good enough for you', and made you think you were a snob and all this, but a couple of teachers were really encouraging and trying to help us out and going through interview situations and all this, but basically, no, they don't want you.... I took it upon myself, I mean I sent away for a prospectus. We don't have the prospectus in school ['Glenburgh']." (HE student, paying no fees, #427)

This is not to say that individual schools or staff members did not encourage their talented pupils towards academic success, despite some pupils fears and reservations.

> "I didn't think it was for me, but certainly there was the careers teacher, she was much more motivating and saying that, 'You can still do it, just because you went to Riverside doesn't mean you'll not get the grades'." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Leaving school

Perhaps because of their lack of local familiarity with post-school educational institutions, many interviewees who continued their education stated that they saw going to university or college as a 'big step'. As indicated in the previous chapter, some of the respondents who were not in education at the time of the follow-up were in fact deferring the transition to better prepare for this big step.

> "I decided to take a break before going to university and also the scholarship appealed to me quite a lot because it gives me funds while I am at university as well, but also it was a great opportunity because of the training I am getting." (Non-student, former bursary pupil, #249)

> "Partly the reason I took the year out was because of the student loans being introduced. My parents can't afford to support me, so I'm saving up this year so I've got some money behind me when I do go away." (Non-student, remote area, #347)

Deferring entry was a particular feature of prospective students from remote areas who needed time to prepare for the inevitable housing transition.

> "I just saw the [job] advert in the '*Eileanbeg Telegraph*' and I didn't quite fancy going away straight away to university, so I took a year out and thought that would be quite a good job to have and gain me experience as well.... You see it's really quite expensive to go away, if you think about all the debt I'd get into, I think I'd get into a lot of debt." (Non-student, remote area, #489)

> "Why am I here ['Eileanbeg']? Well basically with primary teaching I know that experience is essential, so it was to take a year out to do that, plus to make money, like, for college, obviously because it's so expensive." (Non-student, remote area, #451)

Many interviewees who entered HE were aware that they were non-standard students, and were often the first from their family to have gone on to HE. For them higher education was highly valued as a 'passport' to a better way of life.

> "Well I think it is very important to me because it means I can get the chance to do something like, I mean none of my family have got like degrees or anything, so it means that I have got the chance to do something that none of them have done, and it gives me a chance like maybe see a bit of the world depending on what I decide to do." (HE student, paying no fees, #303)

Some of the better qualified respondents were now encountering former pupils from more advantaged schools, including private schools, for the first time, and realised that things had been different for them.

> "There was a scholars course because like 60 scholars within the whole of the UK and there is only, like, three of us from Scotland. But all the ones are from London and everything is very much private school orientated. But the other three scholars that are in Scotland, there is only me and one other that are from state schools. We were complaining yesterday because all the mailings do go out to the private schools and everything, so we are trying to get it more so that states are more notified of it." (Non-student, former bursary pupil, #249)

> "Well most of them [being interviewed at Cambridge] I was going to say they were English, but that is really racist and bad, but I just came from a completely different background from all of them and I could not relate to any of them at all. Even the night before when we were all sitting about eating and things like that and sitting having a wee conversation and I could hardly make out what they were saying never mind talk to them about it." (HE student, paying no fees, #427)

Having been one of the *relatively* 'better off' at her school, this respondent only became aware of her disadvantage on entering higher education.

> "They all speak a certain way and you are not impressive anymore, but then you have also got that kind of you're poorer. I

did not feel working class until I went to uni, because I am not particularly working class, I mean my dad is a [primary] teacher and things and now I feel incredibly working class and I feel like a wee socialist that stands up for what she believes in in uni." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Geographical barriers

Living in remote areas

For the Argyll (remote) respondents entering higher education also meant leaving their home area. For some, leaving their community and coming to the city could be quite a culture shock.

"There was about 50 people where I lived [an island] and now there's like 500,000, it's totally different." (HE student, paying no fees, #477)

As well as the problems of physical relocation, these respondents also had to cope with the increased financial burdens associated with moving. This respondent had secured a place on a distance learning HNC course in Argyll while he decided whether or not it was viable for him to leave in order to advance his education.

"I mean I am alright for money here, but I suppose it would obviously be different if I was to go away. But the only reason I am alright for money here is because I have got through my course and obviously I got a loan.... If I was to go away I would do something better yes – probably a degree.... I would actually be very happy to stay in the [Lochbeg] area, if it was a possibility." (FE student, remote area, #318)

Leaving home

For respondents from remote Argyll, leaving the parental home was seen as a necessity. In Glasgow and Lanarkshire – both close to institutions of higher and further education – leaving home was unpopular. The main drawback of living at home for these respondents was in 'missing out' on student life.

"Because I live out in the Northeast of Glasgow, because I travel and I don't have a car either.... So it kind of means that as far as things like night life goes and being part of the student life I don't have anything to do with that really. I am more involved with people from work [the Co-op shop] and stuff who aren't basically students. You feel you are missing out on student life quite a lot by not being out there." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

For the Ayrshire (small town) respondents, this decision was less clear cut, as the burden of long distance daily travel was relatively balanced against the costs of moving to a term-time address. However, for some, a studentship was seen as providing an opportunity to 'escape', even to the point of influencing choices in higher education.

"I wanted to leave North Coaltoun, kind of thing, because it's like pretty much a dead-end cycle round there so I wanted to get out." (HE student, paying no fees, #303)

"Yes, I think Ayr [FE college] offers quite a few art courses now, so I could have possibly went there, but I wanted to get away from Ayrshire." (HE student, paying partial fees, #248)

Accommodation

Those who left home were then faced with the prospect of finding term-time accommodation. This could be quite a challenge for young people who were not familiar with mechanisms used by students from more standard backgrounds.

"We were not very knowledgeable about Glasgow to be honest and we applied through Glasgow Council and the flat they offered us was like 15-floor, high-rise, damp and we turned them down and then we decided we were going through estate agents and it was a wee bit dodgy. So we actually got it through the newspaper. I didn't see it until we moved in, [#249 and #193] came up, but we were not too bothered about being in a student area, more a community area we wanted to be in, near shops and such." (HE student, paying partial fees, #248)

For some interviewees, term-time accommodation was less than ideal and could affect commitment to higher education.

> "It is an old building – there is a lot of renovation work needing done to it and so far people have had to move out of their rooms because the ceiling's falling in and things like that – me being one of them." (HE student, paying no fees, #303)

Travelling

Most students, apart from those in halls of residence, incurred some travel costs. Only a few disadvantaged respondents had full car access, and public transport was often limited (particularly in small town Ayrshire). For these reasons, many interviewees in higher education found that travelling could erode both their finances and study time.

> "Well, travelling is the biggest thing without a doubt, travelling is £60 a month at least and then my books would maybe would be £200 per semester and there is two semesters so it is about £400. But it's usually travelling and eating because if I am in here for a full day I need to have my lunch and my dinner." (HE student, paying no fees, #379)

One respondent found she was ineligible for halls of residence, due to the proximity of her moorland cottage to Glasgow, yet with only four buses passing her home each day, a housing transition was imperative for her to attend her chosen college.

> "Well I couldn't travel to Glasgow from 'Ashtoun Moss' because I wouldn't be able to get a bus on time. My class starts at 8.45 in the morning and there is not a bus that leaves Ashtoun Moss to get me to Glasgow early enough [the first bus leaves at 7.00am]. So it is impossible." (HE student, paying partial fees, #248)

Again, as with accommodation, in extreme cases, travel problems could contribute to disillusionment and dropping out of higher education.

> "I was actually at Paisley University and after that I gave it up because I had to keep travelling to Ayr [campus] all the time and I had no money and had no loans at that point so. It was the fact my loan had not came through and I paid £50 per week train fare to get there, so I just did not have that kind of money. So I had to pack it in." (non-student, former bursary pupil, #057)

Financial barriers

Clearly, the problems encountered with student accommodation and travel are only in part geographical. Finance was an important factor in dictating decisions involving whether or not to leave home, and also the accepted standard of accommodation or mode of transport used. These considerations impacted on levels of participation in higher education. Money would appear to be the reason most students in this research chose to enrol at local universities or colleges. For example, one interviewee stated that she knew that she was, in her opinion, enrolling in the worst medical school in Scotland, but being the closest it was the only one that she could afford to study at:

> "That is why I went to Glasgow. I probably would not have gone to Glasgow if it had not been for the money." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Commuting from the parental home had the twin advantages of minimising accommodation costs and allowing continued access to parental support. Respondents often entered into agreements with their family which recognised both their own hardships and their parents' inability to provide for all student needs.

> "I don't pay money and they don't give me money, we kind of agreed on that, you know, that's fine." (HE student, paying no fees, #015)

> "If I am working I will pay money to my mum and dad, aye, but if I am not then they just give me free rent." (HE student, paying no fees, #379)

Non-students, on the other hand, were expected to help provide for their parents, and often saw being reliant on 'pocket money' as a disincentive for entering higher education.

"I see my friends [students] and I think, 'Oh no! That's just not me'. I hate having to take money off my mum and dad. I like being independent and doing my own stuff. Like I have got a car and that to pay for and if I was not working then I could not afford it." (non-student, deprived SIP area, #005)

Part-time work

As expected from the findings of the questionnaire surveys, many interviewees saw work as essential to successfully funding their way through higher education. This included both full-time temporary employment (for example, during summer vacation) and part-time employment during term-time.

"I could just about survive now with my less hours, but I couldn't survive without it altogether. Definitely not." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

"I knew that I would have to move up here for it to be possible to go [to college]. I had to work full-time during the summer to get money to come. I am working just now. I work part-time, but if I didn't have that job there is no way I could stay up here." (HE student, paying partial fees, #248)

Many were already finding that part-time work often clashed with classes or study:

"Trying to balance work and the university, now that is the hardest thing because for a while there I had five day a week job. And it was running straight from uni to work and concentrating more on work than uni." (HE student, paying no fees, #379)

Some interviewees found they had to cut back on time spent working in order to accommodate study, often to levels lower than the amount they had worked while at school.

"Bad one – difficult to get days off to study and things like that.... Aye, because I'm going to finish every other Tuesday and every Wednesday at 3.30 and then I start work at 5.00 on a Tuesday and a Wednesday. So I'm going straight from there to work and by the time I get home I'm [tired]. Yes, I just collapse, I never get anything done." (HE student, paying no fees, #018)

"I've been working there for two-and-half years now, and I used to do like nine hours a week you know, like, I do three hours a night. But once I started uni I asked to drop a night because I thought, you know, I really need more time to study because I felt I did not have enough." (HE student, paying no fees, #015)

This situation could be particularly acute in the run up to Christmas, when both the demands of employers and financial needs of students tended to be greatest.

"I was working a lot over Christmas and New Year because I was falling behind in sort of assessments, and I was not getting in on time because they were asking me to work, and it is that way that you could not say no because you would lose your job kind of thing." (HE student, paying partial fees, #248)

Student loans

The other major source of income for the students in higher education in this sample was from student loans. As mentioned in the previous chapter, many respondents had difficulty in securing loans in the first place.

"I have been trying to 'phone the loans people for the past two weeks – can't get through at all. The bank don't know nothing about it. The college say just keep trying there is nothing they can do. My first instalment of my loan was late as well...." (HE student, paying partial fees, #248)

"I'd just started work then, so the £30 travelling expenses per week – I was nae even making that at weekends, so I was getting low on money before my loan come through." (HE student, paying no fees, #225)

"Then it was trying to get a hold of people and talk to them about getting a loan was an absolute nightmare. Spent days on the

> 'phone trying to get hold of them and was put through to somebody else and they said it was coming and it wouldn't come and it was a bit of a nightmare." (Non-student, former bursary pupil, #057)

Even if adequate loans could be obtained, the likelihood of large debts at such a young age was a considerable barrier to these less affluent young people.

> "I mean you have got to look at reality, my mum is a single parent you know what I mean. Some people just can't afford it.... It isn't fair but that's just the way it is and I think if it was going to put me into serious debt or you know put pressures on my mum or things like that I just simply wouldn't do it. You just try to have to get up and try and get a job. It would put me off." (FE student, former bursary pupil, #271)

> "That is one of the reasons that I never went to university. That was a big consideration, if I wanted to go on – in case I fell into debt." (HE student, paying no fees, #225)

Again, better qualified disadvantaged young people enrolled in more advanced (longer) courses faced the greatest problems, such as this interviewee who was studying for a five-year degree:

> "I have got the extra year and the books, you definitely need to take out the maximum loan.... It bothers me that if I think about it, it is just under £3,000 and I am doing five years – that's £15,000 debt by the time I qualify which I am really not very happy about at all." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Bursaries and grants

Interviewees who were either currently studying nursing or were enrolled in NC courses at FE colleges were in receipt of non-repayable bursaries. Unsurprisingly, there were no complaints about this system of student funding.

> "Yes, well I have got a £100 per week to do the nursing course which is a lot more than you get on the broo [benefit]." (Non-student, former bursary pupil, #230)

'Losing' this bursary and going on to the loans system was clearly a disincentive for this interviewee, who was already thinking about higher education next year.

> FE student (former bursary pupil, #161): "I would say it encouraged me – the bursary – as I said before, that does encourage me quite a bit."
>
> Interviewer: "Next year when you stay on, when you don't get a bursary, how do you feel about that?"
>
> FE student: "I honestly don't know what to do because of that. I know it will affect me."

Those already in higher education thought that bursaries or a return to the old grants system could be a big incentive for disadvantaged young people.

> "I had to sort out the fees – whether I would be able to afford to go. But everything is sorted out now, but with the loans and I think they should really bring back grants because I really don't want to be in debt. But I had to take out a student loan, so I see that as a really big obstacle because some people just can't afford to go to university." (HE student, paying no fees, #015)

> "I mean abolish tuition fees – without a doubt they shouldn't be here I mean making students pay to learn is just a ludicrous thing. But grants should be means tested as they are, but I am not really sure how you could make it fairer, because I know people that deserve grants but don't get them and people who don't deserve them but do get them." (HE student, paying no fees, #379)

Tuition fees

Another controversial aspect of student finance concerned tuition fees. Although none of the higher education students selected for interview were eligible to pay full fees, some did express strong opinions on this topic. These were usually formed either by witnessing school friends who were having problems paying tuition fees or their

class-mates from more affluent backgrounds who were not.

> "Most of my friends didn't have any tuition fees, I was one of the few had any. The ones in medicine have got more, their parents are just 'funny money'. So I've seen two opposite ends, I've not really seen any in the middle. Except for one friend that's got £700 odd fees, but his mum lost her job and he had to pay it off himself so he had more money for that, so he is finding that quite difficult." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

One respondent spoke of the deterrent effect that tuition fees had, even among those, like him, who would not have to pay any. This corroborates the lack of knowledge respondents displayed about their likely fee status before leaving school.

> "It made me consider whether or not to go to university, but it was really only for a short time. I thought about it and I found out about what I was going to have to pay and how I was going to organise myself and found out that I can support myself through the loan so.... The only thing they didn't do was tell me that you are going to pay fees or you're not going to have to pay fees or you will be able to get a good loan, you won't get a good loan. Things like that, as I didn't know anything about that until I was actually at university on the course and then I found out." (HE student, paying no fees, #379)

What was surprising was that not all interviewees saw the abolition of 'up-front' tuition fees in Scotland as a good thing. The most disadvantaged young people, who currently had all (or most) of their fees paid by SAAS, felt that the proposed new system of payment in arrears would be unfair to them.

> "It's worse off for me to do it that way – to pay £2,000 once you're earning money – because it means I'll have to pay something, whereas if I was getting it paid for me every year I'd be well off." (HE student, paying no fees, #504)

Again, this disincentive seemed strongest with disadvantaged students who were attempting longer (more advanced) courses. Under the future system, the medical student saw her potential fees rise, from £576 in advance under the current system, to £4,100 in arrears once she had qualified.

> "I thought [my fees would be] £144 three times – don't have to pay in 5th year, so that would only be about £500/£600, whereas now it is going to be £2,000 extra because you have to pay it at the end. That worries me more because if it was for me, £144 – I could work that off in the summer, but now it is just a big lump sum at the end." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Student finance policy

This research was timely as it coincided with the much publicised Cubie inquiry into student finance conducted by the Scottish Parliament[1]. There was certainly an overall view that more could be done to financially assist disadvantaged students. It was felt that this might encourage more non-standard students to stay on at school and enter higher education.

> "North Coaltoun is quite hard hit by unemployment and things like that so most people think, 'Oh! I can't go to university because I have not got the money' and things like that. So maybe if they gave like a bit more financial support to people in that situation then they might get more people from areas like North Coaltoun coming to university and things." (HE student, paying no fees, #303)

Perhaps inevitably, those currently in higher education were dissatisfied with current government policy. This was seen as somewhat hypocritical, on the one hand making public statements about widening access to education yet, on the other, making it increasingly difficult for less well off young people to be able to afford to participate.

> "Well if I was part of the government I would bring back grants. I mean Tony Blair saying 'education education education', yet you need to take out money to go uni. So I would bring back grants and I would make sure that everyone was treated equally, no matter how much [money] their parents made." (HE student, paying no fees, #015)

"That's what I don't like about the government either, they say they want people to go to university but they are charging a hell of a lot for them to go to university, so they're no really. They are doing the opposite of what they should be doing." (HE student, paying no fees, #085)

Social barriers

As well as the more obvious educational, geographical and financial hurdles faced by potential students from disadvantaged backgrounds, other more subtle factors (more difficult to quantify in earlier statistical data collection) were also important.

Parents and family

Many respondents were the first in their family to enter higher education, and only five interviewees had a parent who had been to college or university. As a consequence, many said their parents expressed some reservations about them becoming a student.

"I think my mum was a wee bit thingamy [unsure] about it. She felt I should go out and get a job and start earning money because by the time after university, the time it takes me to find a job, I could have a job just now. Especially if I need to start paying tuition fees." (HE student, paying no fees, #085)

"I mean, that's what my mum and dad keep saying to me, 'Just think of the debt you'll get into' and that." (Non-student, remote area, #489)

"My dad said it a few times – that he had heard stories of people going to college and going to university and getting degrees and ending up with nothing at the end of it. I thought about that. Hence the reason why I went to get work, I sent to the [design companies] and that. That idea didn't work, so the only option was to go to college." (FE student, former bursary pupil, #161)

Parents could also exert an influence on choices within higher education, particularly towards more vocational subjects. For example, this interviewee was sitting an NC in secretarial studies at a nearby FE college on her mother's advice, rather than music or business at university in Glasgow, as her teachers had advised.

"Well I can't say my teachers, because they encouraged me to do different things. I would have to say my mum. I know I keep going on about my mum but I think my mum encouraged me because it was more practical to go and, you know, get something behind me." (FE student, former bursary pupil, #271)

Others found their parents to be enthusiastic about the prospect of having a son or daughter at college or university.

"My mum and dad have always been quite supportive and they'd rather that I got out of Ayrshire and did something rather than just sit back." (HE student, paying partial fees, #248)

Sometimes parents actually exerted some pressure on the interviewee to not follow in their footsteps and to go into higher education.

"My mum said, 'You should just go and do it, and even if you want to be a fisherman [like his father] you can come back. But just go and do it for the first couple of years'." (HE student, paying no fees, #477)

Peers

The effect of peers, as with family, could impact on decisions concerning higher education by either encouraging or discouraging respondents. This was true of both their old peers, from their home community, and new ones, especially class-mates from more affluent backgrounds. Interviewees who had entered higher education were aware that their life choices were not the norm for people from their community.

"There was two of us [applying for medicine] in our year, but that was the first in about 20 years or something that there had been anybody going into anything like it." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

"I think that Ashtoun is a really bad place because it does have a kind of mindset

where if you do move away and if you do want to go into higher education and everything people do think that is just completely sad." (Non-student, former bursary pupil #249)

Likewise, there was a perception that their fellow students recognised that interviewees were somewhat atypical of their home areas and also atypical students.

"Doing a case study in Easterhouse, which is just down the road from me and I have a lot of my friends live up there, but we are all going into Easterhouse as a group and some of the comments that come from them.... They don't seem to realise that the people from Easterhouse and the people from here [Riverside] are the same as them. They seem to think they are all violent and drunk. They just hear the press problems and put two and two together, and I feel they are not actually insulting me, but I feel that they are sometimes. Although they are not saying it is you, you know what I mean, you feel kind of protective of your own background." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Many interviewees found it difficult to make friends at university or college, where most people that they encountered were from unfamiliar backgrounds.

"I like the course, but I don't like the city. People down here don't talk to you ... different lifestyle down here." (HE student, paying no fees, #477)

"There is a small group that I get on well with, but in general they are very different backgrounds to me and it makes it quite difficult. They have also got a lot more money which means you can't really socialise with them in the same way. I tend to not, I only know them at university." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Some interviewees felt that they were regarded as inferior by their more affluent fellow students because of their disadvantaged backgrounds.

"Some of them come fae places like Milton Keynes and that, and sort of like think they are better than you, but other people are just like from like Glasgow or Edinburgh, whatever, and are just average people really." (HE student, paying no fees, #504)

"They think they are better than everyone else kind of thing, that's what I don't like about them, they are all so confident." (HE student, paying no fees, #477)

There was clearly a possibility for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to become trapped in a 'catch-22' situation, where they felt they could neither 'fit in' at home nor at university.

"I was looking forward to it. I thought within the school we had always been told that, well I was always told, if you are good at school and you don't fit in to school, the trouble makers and stuff, you should go to uni and that there it will be all away. You tend to find then, that you don't fit in there ... in another way from school." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

"I thought it'd be better. If I had my friends down here it would be brilliant, but I'm finding it hard to make friends because, I don't know, they don't understand my accent sometimes, I don't know what it is." (HE student, paying no fees, #477)

Class consciousness

Some interviewees, particularly the highest achievers, felt that they were now encountering barriers related to their social class.

"See this is before we even went down [to an interview for Cambridge] I was sitting saying to [#366] I mean what is the point in us trying this because look at how many minority groups we are in. Not only do we go to a comprehensive school we are Catholics, I am a girl, I mean we are Scottish need we say anything else." (HE student, paying no fees, #427)

"I see more of a problem being a class thing. I didn't really believe it was present when I started off. I thought it

> wouldn't be as present as it maybe is, but I mean there is a definite thing for the Hutchie [a private school] group. I find that definitely exists, so if that still exists in your working life then that is obviously going to be a problem for me I would imagine." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Even at this early stage, class awareness had already influenced some respondents' choices of higher education, in this case towards a 'new' university.

> "The people that I went to school with that I know that's went to Glasgow and Strathclyde [universities], they always seem a bit more up themselves than the people I'm here with [Caledonian]." (HE student, paying no fees, #356)

One respondent indicated that a more affluent classmate had the opposite reason for choosing to study at Glasgow:

> "Somebody said they came up to Glasgow to study because they want to study an area of deprivation. I just thought it is not the only thing that Glasgow is – an area of deprivation." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

Giving up on education

The respondents in this research had all spent at least two years in full-time education beyond the minimum leaving age. As detailed in Chapter 2, most pupils who attend the selected schools do not stay on at until S6. Furthermore, many of those who do stay on are not there in preparation for university, but leave school with few qualifications and enter the labour market directly. A few respondents who did gain qualifications (Highers) also chose to directly enter the labour market. Although surprisingly small in number, these 'rejecters' of post-school education provide an alternative viewpoint to the bulk of the sample.

The lure of full-time employment

The most obvious reason for respondents choosing to forego the opportunity of higher education was to earn money.

> "I suppose it was just the fact that I was used to working and I didn't really fancy going and being a poor student." (Non-student, former bursary pupil, #370)

As well as making money, entering full-time employment was seen as a way of gaining experience, which was viewed by some as on a par with post-school education in terms of career progression.

> "I have got experience. Sometimes when you go to college once you have completed all your course and that, sometimes people don't want to take you on because you have not had any experience. So this is getting me some experience." (Non-student, deprived SIP area, #005)

> "Well it ['rejected' college course] would probably be a waste of a year, I would rather get experience and being in a working environment and dealing with people and everything as well." (Non-student, former bursary pupil, #370)

On the other hand, this respondent found that working full-time had helped her decide to apply for higher education the following year:

> "Just by going by my [full-time] job, the only job I could get in there just now is an office junior. Whereas if I had a degree in accountancy or something, then I could get a higher paid job." (Non-student, remote area, #489)

As already stated, many of those currently not in education were actually deferring entry to higher education. However, even those who currently had no intention of returning did not rule it out altogether for the future. This interviewee had stayed on at school (deferred entry to the labour market) to obtain more Highers in case he was unable to get a job.

"It's like a safety net, in case I want to go to college or university and get a better job." (Non-student, former bursary pupil, #188)

The reluctant student

Some interviewees at college or university had already attempted to find full-time work, been unsuccessful, and reluctantly returned to education.

"I had an interview at [company name] – that's an accountancy firm in Coaltoun. But with the exam results I had they telt me it would be a waste of time, 'cause it was like lower than what I wiz able tae dae." (HE student, paying no fees, #296)

"I opted to stay here [Lochbeg] and look for a job. After about four or five attempts or like going for an interview and that and, I would say, coming close, I was unsuccessful in finding a job and this course [HNC] came up." (FE student, remote area, #318)

Interviewees in this situation tended to choose the minimal course possible to gain access to their chosen (vocational) career.

"I think that [HND] is enough, I mean I have done a wee bit of research myself of people who are doing graphics and stuff and people who are doing like the top graphics and they seem to have just done the small courses and then gone onto doing the job straight away. That's because they are good at it, so I reckon if you are good at it and you want to get spotted then...." (FE student, former bursary pupil, #428)

"I could stay on for five [years of study] if I do well, I could stay on for five if I tried, but och!, I'm not really wanting to do that.... It would be a Masters, but it's like a managers job, but I wouldn't mind kind of practical hands-on, well I'm not really wanting labouring work or anything, just a hands-on approach job." (HE student, paying no fees, #477)

The student apprentice

Many interviewees saw their studentship as an apprenticeship. This was found at all levels, from NC to advanced degree students, and reflects the range of vocational rather than academic subjects shown in Table 2.

"I was interested in medicine but I definitely wanted to do a degree where I knew it would be like ... it's almost like an apprenticeship, because it removed any worry. I was worried I would do an English degree or something – I was interested in English – and then not get a job at the end of it." (HE student, paying partial fees, #053)

This respondent found herself doing a vocational subject that led to a job rather than the subject which she enjoyed and was most talented in:

"I would have loved to [have studied music and drama] as soon as I wasn't in school, but it is all to do with confidence and then I thought to myself what if I am not good enough, what if I don't make it, you know. And then I think 'Okay, well lets think about this', so I thought if I go do my medical secretary or whatever I was going to do, I thought, at least it is something practical behind me, so that if I did go to drama, then I'm not as good as I think I am, then I have got something to fall back on. I can at least go and, you know, apply for a job to be a medical secretary and say like I have got the qualifications for this could you please give me a job." (FE student, former bursary pupil, #271)

In a sense, choosing subjects on economic grounds rather than ability can be considered as hidden educational disadvantage. In other words, some disadvantaged young people do not leave education altogether, but do leave the subject which they are most able or qualified in.

Leaving early

Another way in which this process was apparent was when respondents did study their preferred subject, but at a less advanced level. For example, one interviewee chose to study for an HND rather than an honours degree, partly

because of the extra cost involved in the longer course:

> "It was one of the reasons that I went to college as well because I could of went to university, but that was four years and I did not know whether I could afford it." (HE student, paying no fees, #225)

Against the advice of her parents and teachers, this respondent opted for an HNC at further education college over a university degree:

> FE student (deprived SIP area, #220): "I could not afford to go to university.... You would have to move up here and it would be quite hard ... because that would mean you'd be going longer."
>
> Interviewer: "What would you say was the main reason that you chose here instead?"
>
> FE student: "The length of the course really."

Even those who planned on completing a degree course realised that the same barriers to continued participation would still exist at the end of their studies.

> "I would really like to do another degree in a science, but it is the money thing again. I think I would need to get a job and do a degree part-time." (HE student, paying no fees, #379)

In other words, participation in higher education by disadvantaged young people may be reduced, not only by them rejecting or deferring entry, but also by them choosing less academic subjects, or even less advanced courses, as a result of their disadvantage.

Dropping out

The final way in which participation in higher education can be reduced is by students dropping out. Although beyond the remit of this research, some respondents had already dropped out of post-school education by the time that these interviews were conducted. As time passes and more barriers are encountered, it seems likely that many more may either reduce their level of participation in higher education or, as with this interviewee, drop out completely:

> "I did like being at university. I liked the people and that. I enjoyed the course. I thought it was really good, but at the end of the day it just got back to money again. That was the thing that was going to stop me." (Non-student, former bursary pupil, #057)

Summary

These face-to-face interviews confirmed the hypothesis that decisions made by disadvantaged young people concerning higher education are not solely based on their qualifications. Choices of courses, institutions, subjects and whether or not to continue participation in full-time education were governed by a number of other factors. These included geographical, financial and social barriers, all of which interacted with pre-existing and newly developing educational barriers.

In the short space of time between the completion of the follow-up questionnaire and these interviews, many respondents had already changed their status (see Appendix H). Some who had left full-time education were either considering returning or had already done so during the winter intake at FE colleges. Others who had enrolled in HE had either dropped or were considering strategies aimed at minimising their participation. As indicated in previous chapters, the greatest barriers were often subtle and faced by the highest achievers.

Note

[1] In December 1999 the Cubie inquiry made a large number of recommendations to the Scottish Parliament, including the abolition of up-front tuition fees. This recommendation is currently being implemented; others (for example, benefits for students who cannot find vacation employment and the reintroduction of maintenance grants) are not. Cubie also recommended that payment of tuition in arrears should begin at an income level of £25,000 gross. The Scottish government has currently reduced this threshold to only £10,000. This 'cherry picking' of Cubie's recommendations is certain to have influenced the accuracy of statements made and opinions expressed by interviewees.

6

Conclusions and policy implications

Post-compulsory education has increasingly become a feature of the transition between school and work. Participation in higher education can no longer be considered the preserve of the elite or 'middle-class'. However, this is not to say that disadvantaged young people enjoy equal access to higher education. It has become clear in recent years that, despite the broadening of higher education in general, the gap in representation between these social groups has remained strong. This research has attempted to uncover reasons why this should be the case. During the course of this study, a number of barriers to participation in higher education have been identified. In this final chapter we will examine these barriers and highlight some their implications for policy.

At this stage it may necessary to redefine what is meant by *participation* in higher education. As this research progressed, it became clear that simply enrolling in a higher education course, or not, was a rather simplistic way of defining participation. A more accurate definition would be that of *level of participation*. This includes not only the presence or absence of enrolment in a degree or HND course, but also the nature of this course (how advanced or prestigious). To simply measure numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds entering higher education may in fact mask some more subtle 'hidden disadvantage', as these young people may be enrolling in courses which are not equitable with those enrolled in by students from more advantaged backgrounds.

In this research, few disadvantaged young people had successfully gained access to the courses at the most 'desirable' institutions or in the most advanced subjects. Those who had done so tended to come from slightly 'better off' families within the research sample. One of the most striking findings of this study was that the so-called 'school league tables' of entrants to higher education are in fact quite misleading when assessing the numbers of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who enter degree or HND courses. The schools which participated in this research were all below the national average for university entrants and were located in areas of disadvantage. Nevertheless, even within these schools, most degree course entrants were from *relatively* more advantaged backgrounds, from the small pockets of middle-class residents (mostly classes II and IIIN) within the catchment areas of each of these schools. Although these may provide only a single figure percentage of the local school roll, this often translates into a majority of the school-leavers from that school who enter higher education. In other words, pupils from the *most* disadvantaged backgrounds are even less likely to enter higher education than might be suggested by the 'official' school statistics. Likewise, 'deprived' postcodes may contain hidden pockets of relative affluence (in a similar way to the better known phenomenon that 'affluent' postcodes contain pockets of disadvantage). Consequently, we see little merit in admission polices designed to assist students from certain schools or areas.

From these findings, it is clear that for the vast majority of disadvantaged young people, the labour market, rather than higher education, was their post-school destination. This is simply because such pupils tend to leave school before the final year (S6), and many of those who did stay on were more likely to be preparing for the labour market (by sitting vocational modules) than for university. It must be stressed that the under-representation of disadvantaged young people in higher education is a result of their lack of qualifications obtained at school, meaning that

fewer apply, rather than because of any selection biases by institutions. There is clearly a need for policy to become more focused on improving the academic performance of disadvantaged young people during their school years, rather than on university admissions procedure.

For those from *all* social backgrounds who did obtain suitable qualifications for entry to higher education, the labour market was rarely chosen as a post-school destination. Indeed, those who were qualified and were not in education in the year after leaving school could better be described as deferring (rather than rejecting) entry to higher education. The reasons why some young people deferred entry to higher education highlight some of the barriers faced by all disadvantaged potential students. These barriers are complex, and it would be over simplistic to say that any one factor was responsible for shaping their choice of route into higher education. More often, a complicated equation needed to be solved in order for the best option to be chosen. This might involve income, availability of full-time work, travel, accommodation, free study time, future prospects, preparedness to take on debt, parental attitudes and social influences. Deferring students had often taken a 'year out' in order to save money or otherwise prepare for higher education (rather than through choice). This 'choice' could be influenced by a range of factors, including, for example, students from remote areas needing to prepare for a housing transition. Deferring study for a year or more increases the likelihood that a young person will not return to full-time education and, if they do, it leaves them a 'year behind' compared with their peers (and is therefore likely to reduce participation).

Many of those interviewed did not value participation in post-school education as an end in itself, but as the only way to get a job. Some of these individuals had already attempted to get a job, but had failed to do so. For these 'reluctant students', returning to full-time education was seen as their only viable option. Such young people tended to enrol in the least advanced course available. Perhaps more worrying was that some highly qualified young people, who *did* value higher education, would also enrol in less advanced courses. This was done so that they could enter the labour market as soon as possible in order to minimise debt. Clearly there is a potential for this process to continue throughout higher education. Successful HND students from disadvantaged backgrounds may be more likely to decide not to advance to degree level. Likewise, disadvantaged students may choose to leave university with an ordinary degree, rather than continue for an honours year, and few will want to take on the extra costs involved in post-graduate study.

Participation in higher education was seen by many to simply be the best way to access a 'good' career. Many disadvantaged young people were attracted to specific courses because these were seen as having a job at the end (which could allow them to quickly clear up any debt accumulated during their studentship). Such courses were likened to apprenticeships, and were usually in more vocational subjects and not necessarily the subject the young person was most talented in.

For those who were determined to go as far as possible in higher education, the strategies that they adopted for overcoming the barriers which they faced could often come into conflict with one another. An example of such conflict concerns choices of part-time work. A large majority of the young people in this research saw part-time employment as essential for them to be able to afford higher education. Even by midway through their first year, many students interviewed were finding that they had to balance the conflicting needs of part-time work and (supposedly) full-time study. In such cases, disadvantaged students may have to decide either to work less in order to free up more study time (and risk losing their job), or to work more in order to purchase books and course materials. If the student chooses to work less they may become more financially dependent on student loans and other sources of debt. However, both the young person and their parents were often unhappy about the prospect of taking on debt (rather than part-time work during term time). This example illustrates the interconnectedness of the barriers faced by prospective students, even before other life stresses are taken into account.

Other strategies of minimising costs, and hence accumulated debt, included choosing the nearest university or college and staying at home with parents. This can also reduce the level of participation in higher education: the nearest institution did not always offer the 'best' courses for the young person concerned; staying at home with parents minimised accommodation costs, but often maximised travel costs (time as well as money) and made the non-standard student feel

remote from university life. Some disadvantaged young people felt that they did not fit in at university, for reasons ranging from geography to social class, and saw this as an obstacle to their career both in higher education and beyond.

Although there is little that can be done to change such feelings, other than policies which increase the overall representation of non-standard students within the higher education population, there does appear to be a need to familiarise disadvantaged young people with student life (for example, practical finance arrangements). This may enable prospective students to pick the course, institution and subject which they are best suited for. If this is done early in the secondary school career (perhaps as early as S2) it may also help encourage more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to 'stay on' and gain more qualifications.

A more obvious way of attracting more disadvantaged young people to higher education is to make it more financially appealing to both them and their parents (who may have had little or no contact with such institutions). Interestingly, the abolition of up-front tuition fees, although welcomed by many, was not seen to benefit the most disadvantaged (who previously had their fees paid by a student award agency). This group would clearly benefit more from the reintroduction of student grants similar to the non-repayable bursaries received by NC students. As things stand these courses (NC) may seem preferable to the more advanced HNC (in the same subject, at the same institution and even taught by the same person) because of the different ways in which they are funded, again pushing disadvantaged young people into less advanced courses.

Another way of making participation in higher education more attractive would be through the provision of low-cost and better standard student accommodation. For less affluent students from remote areas the necessary housing transition was often seen as the main deterrent to participation in higher education. For stay-at-home students with high commuting costs, cut-price student travel was seen as helpful and travelling expenses as highly desirable. Housing and travel assistance may not only help the disadvantaged student financially (less debt and part-time work), but would also free up more time for study. Again, this illustrates the interconnectedness of the various barriers faced by disadvantaged young people enrolled in or aspiring to higher education.

This research has highlighted a gap in the level of participation in higher education between disadvantaged young people and their more advantaged peers. This is primarily a function of school performance, which has knock on effects that influence representation throughout higher education. Those disadvantaged young people who do gain adequate qualifications for entry to the most advanced courses, at the most prestigious institutions, are then faced with a range of barriers which may adversely influence their level of participation in higher education. Reducing these financial, geographical and social barriers is vital if full participation in higher education is to be broadened for under-represented groups. This necessarily means not only increasing the numbers of less advantaged young people entering higher education, but also increasing their level of participation within higher education. This research found that the greatest barriers were being faced by the *most able* (best qualified) disadvantaged young people. Clearly, this situation is far from the goal of widening access to higher education for under-represented groups.

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Appendix A: Original sample recruitment

School and study area	Roll (approx)	DEPCAT (lowest)	% 2+ Highers	% enter HE	*n* S6 sample	Follow-up *n*
Westside Secondary	1,000	6 (7)	5	13	18	11
Parkside Secondary	750	6 (7)	7	11	20	13
Riverside Secondary	1,300	6 (7)	14	16	31	25
Northside RC Secondary	800	7	6	8	19	13
Eastside RC Secondary	950	7	8	10	34	28
Edgeside Community Secondary	850	7	4	9	21	13
Southside Secondary	800	4 (6)	13	13	19	16
Glasgow City school sample					**162**	**119**
Muirburgh High	450	5 (6)	11	20	26	19
Craigburgh High	950	5 (6)	10	15	43	34
Glenburgh RC High	1,300	6 (6)	13	20	80	63
Lanarkshire large towns school sample					**149**	**116**
Coaltoun Academy	1,000	5 (6)	13	20	30	26
Ashtoun Academy	950	5 (6)	6	20	57	48
Pittoun Academy	400	5 (5)	10	17	13	9
Sandtoun Academy	600	5 (6)	11	9	24	16
Ayrshire small towns school sample					**124**	**99**
Lochbeg Grammar	500	4 (4)	23	26	31	24
Eileanbeg Grammar	1,000	4 (6)	24	27	50	37
Argyll remote school sample					**81**	**61**
Scotland average	**787**	**4**	**16**	**29**		
Total sample					**516**	**395**

Notes: The above figures for entry to higher education includes HNC students; RC indicates Roman Catholic schools (which are also state run in Scotland).

B

Appendix B: Original sample demographics

	n	%
Sample size	516	100.0
Female	293	56.8
Name/address provided	515	99.8
Aged 17 years	474	91.8
Glasgow (city)	162	31.4
Ayr (small towns)	124	24.0
Lanark (large towns)	149	28.9
Argyll (remote schools)	81	15.7
Single parent	156	30.6
Only child	46	8.9
Mother unemployed	39	7.7
Father unemployed	43	8.6
Mother works (full-time)	196	38.6
Father works (full-time)	348	67.4
Income from family	316	65.8
Income from Bursary	149	29.6
Income from work	263	51.8
Other income	7	1.4
Full use of a car	141	27.9
Occasional car access	67	13.3
Applied to higher education	337	66.3

	n	%
Deprived DEPCAT	**379**	**73.6**
DEPCAT 1	0	0
DEPCAT 2	9	1.8
DEPCAT 3	27	5.2
DEPCAT 4	100	19.4
DEPCAT 5	161	31.3
DEPCAT 6	133	25.8
DEPCAT 7	85	16.5
No address given	1	-
Manual social class*	**220**	**49.8**
Class I	15	2.9
Class II	151	34.2
Class IIIN	56	12.7
Class IIIM	127	28.7
Class IV	69	15.6
Class V	24	5.4
No parental occupation given	74	-
Lives in a SIP area	219	42.5

* The percentages in each social class exclude the 74 respondents who could not provide an occupation or previous occupation for either of their parents. This group of individuals is likely to include many of the most disadvantaged young people surveyed.

Note: Not all percentages are based on *n*=516 due to a small amount of missing data for some questions.

C

Appendix C: Follow-up sample demographics

Original sample data of those who participated in the follow-up

	n	%		*n*	%
Sample size	395	100	**Deprived DEPCAT**	**288**	**72.9**
Female	236	59.7	DEPCAT 1	0	0.0
Glasgow (city)	119	30.1	DEPCAT 2	8	2.0
Lanarkshire (large towns)	116	29.4	DEPCAT 3	22	5.6
Ayrshire (small towns)	99	25.1	DEPCAT 4	77	19.5
Argyll (remote schools)	61	15.4	DEPCAT 5	127	32.2
Single parent	110	28.2	DEPCAT 6	99	25.1
Only child	29	7.3	DEPCAT 7	62	15.7
Mother unemployed	33	8.4			
Father unemployed	33	8.5	**Manual social class***	**173**	**50.3**
Mother works (full-time)	150	38.2	Class I	12	3.5
Father works (full-time)	272	70.3	Class II	114	33.1
Income from family	248	67.8	Class IIIN	45	13.1
Income from bursary	109	28.4	Class IIIM	98	28.5
Income from work	204	52.6	Class IV	54	15.7
Other income	4	1.0	Class V	21	6.1
Full use of a car	112	28.9	No occupation given	51	-
Occasional car access	58	14.9			
Applied to higher education	272	69.9	Lives in a SIP area	167	42.3

* Social class percentages exclude the 51 respondents who could not provide a parental occupation.

Note: Not all percentages are based on *n*=516 due to a small amount of missing data for some questions.

Data collected during the follow-up

	n	%
Lives in parental home	295	75.1
Lives in halls of residence	63	16.0
Lives in student flat	8	2.0
Lives in private rented flat	15	3.8
Council tenant	5	1.3
Owner-occupier	2	0.5
Other	5	1.3
Income from family	143	39.0
Income from Bursary	72	18.8
Income from loan	148	39.6
Income from work	223	58.8
Other income	25	6.6

D

Appendix D: Follow-up sample destinations

School	Degree students	HND students	Any FE course	Not in education
Westside Secondary	4	0	5	2
Parkside Secondary	5	1	3	4
Riverside Secondary	18	5	1	2
Northside RC Secondary	7	2	0	4
Eastside RC Secondary	8	4	6	2
Edgeside Community Secondary	2	1	7	3
Southside Secondary	3	3	6	4
Glasgow schools	**47**	**16**	**28**	**29**
Muirburgh High	6	2	2	9
Craigburgh High	12	6	4	12
Glenburgh RC High	33	7	12	11
Lanarkshire schools	**51**	**15**	**18**	**32**
Coaltoun Academy	12	2	7	5
Ashtoun Academy	14	2	16	16
Pittoun Academy	1	1	3	4
Sandtoun Academy	6	3	6	1
Ayrshire schools	**33**	**8**	**32**	**26**
Lochbeg Grammar	14	4	5	1
Eileanbeg Grammar	25	4	2	6
Argyll schools	**39**	**8**	**7**	**7**
Total	**170**	**47**	**85**	**94**

Notes: Totals are not mutually exclusive (for example, one respondent was enrolled in a degree course but had dropped out and taken on a full-time job); therefore totals do not always equal those in the follow-up totals given in Appendix A.

E

Appendix E: Destinations of (S6) school-leavers, numbers enrolled in each subject

Subject	HE	FE	Subject	HE	FE
Accounts	7	1	Geography	2	0
Agriculture	2	0	History	4	0
Archaeology	1	0	Journalism	6	0
Architecture	3	1	Languages	1	0
Art	5	17	Law	9	0
Astronomy	0	0	Marine/nautical	0	0
Beauty	1	1	Maths	11	0
Biology	11	2	Medicine	6	0
Building	4	0	Music	0	1
Business	28	6	Nursing	12	1
Care	0	15	Optical	2	0
Chemistry	9	0	Philosophy	0	0
Classics	0	0	Physics	4	1
Combined Studies	16	5	Politics	1	0
Computing	8	7	Psychology	4	0
Cookery	0	0	Secretarial	0	3
Dentistry	0	0	Sociology	1	0
Divinity	0	0	Sport	8	3
Drama	1	5	Statistics	0	0
Economics	0	0	Technical	0	0
Education	10	0	Tourism/travel	7	5
Engineering	26	6	Veterinary	0	0
English	4	0	Vet nursing	1	0

Note: All subjects above were applied for by at least one respondent in the original sample.

F

Appendix F: Destinations of (S6) school-leavers, numbers enrolled at each institution

Institution	Enrol	Apply
Scottish ivy league universities		
Glasgow University	38	127
Edinburgh University	3	44
Aberdeen University	3	27
St Andrews University	1	11
Scottish red brick universities		
Strathclyde University	49	124
Heriot Watt University	4	27
Dundee University	3	34
Stirling University	13	38
Scottish new universities		
Caledonian University	39	113
Napier University	5	27
Robert Gordon University	3	14
Abertay University	1	10
Paisley University	11	77
'Oxbridge' university	0	3
UK ivy league university	0	2
UK red brick university	0	11
UK new university	4	10
Overseas university	0	1

Institution	Enrol	Apply
Higher education institutions		
Glasgow Art	0	5
Royal Music/Drama	0	2
Edinburgh Art	0	2
Scottish Agricultural	1	4
Queen Margaret	4	5
Northern	7	8
UK HE	1	2
Further education colleges		
Anniesland	15	13
Building and Printing	7	8
Cardonald	15	13
Central Commerce	11	8
Food Technology	5	7
Glasgow Nautical	7	1
Langside	6	3
North Glasgow	4	4
Stow	3	1
Cambuslang	0	1
Coatbridge	6	2
Motherwell	5	1
Bell	11	35
Ayr	22	2
Kilmarnock	6	4
Dumfries	0	0
Borders	0	0
Clydebank	2	2
James Watt	5	6
Reid Kerr	1	1
Falkirk	0	1
Telford	0	1
Oatridge	1	1
UK FE	1	1

Note: All institutions above were applied to by at least one respondent in the original sample.

G

Appendix G: Selection of face-to-face interviewees

	Higher education		Further education		
	Degree	**HND**	**HNC**	**NC**	**Not in education**
Courses	18	5	4	6	11
Total	**23**		**10**		**11**

Selection rationale

Order selected: (1) 11 highest achieving non-students, matched to
(2) 10 highest achieving FE students,
(3) five highest achieving HND students and
(4) 18 similarly achieving degree students.

Eligibility for face-to-face interview

Eligible if: (1) In HE or FE
and
pays no tuition fees
or pays partial fees (less than 50% [£500])

(2) Not in HE or FE
and
was a bursary pupil (in S6)
or lives in remote area (Argyll)
or lives in deprived SIP area (if not remote area).

Excluded if: Pays full fees (if in higher education)
or is social class I
or lived in DEPCAT 2 area (in S6).

H

Appendix H: Profile of face-to-face interviewees

ID	Gender	Age	School or college and study area	Highers points	Social class	Course or occupation at time of follow-up	Institution at time of follow-up	Transitions since follow-up
5	F	18	Muirburgh, Lanark	10	IIIM	Full-time work	Not in education	
15	F	18	Muirburgh, Lanark	19	II	Degree, Maths	Strathclyde University	
18	F	18	Muirburgh, Lanark	16	IIIN	Degree, Social Studies	Paisley University	
38	F	18	Edgeside, Glasgow	22	X	NC, Art	Cardonald FE	
53	F	18	Riverside, Glasgow	34	II	Degree, Medicine	Glasgow University	
57	F	18	Riverside, Glasgow	10	IIIM	Full-time work	Not in education	Degree drop out
85	M	18	Northside, Glasgow	12	X	Degree, Business	Caledonian University	
120	F	18	Eastside, Glasgow	16	IIIN	Degree, English	Glasgow University	
136	M	18	Southside, Glasgow	10	X	HND, Business	Cardonald FE	Unemployed
161	M	18	Craigburgh, Lanark	14	IIIN	NC, Art	Cardonald FE	
188	M	18	Craigburgh, Lanark	14	X	Casual work	Not in education	
203	F	18	Ashtoun, Ayr	12	IV	Degree, Science	Strathclyde University	
220	F	18	Ashtoun, Ayr	14	IV	HNC, Accounts	Central FE	On to HND level
225	F	18	Ashtoun, Ayr	20	X	HND, Sports	Nautical FE	
230	F	18	Ashtoun, Ayr	12	II	Unemployed	Not in education	HND, Nursing
248	F	18	Ashtoun, Ayr	21	V	HND, Art	Building FE	
249	F	18	Ashtoun, Ayr	42	II	Gap scholar	Not in education	Unconditional HE
255	F	18	Pittoun, Ayr	11	IV	HND, Nursing	Caledonian University	
262	F	18	Pittoun, Ayr	10	IV	HNC, Hospitality	Ayr FE	
271	F	18	Sandtoun, Ayr	8	IIIN	NC, Computing	James Watt FE	NC, secretarial
288	F	20	Coaltoun, Ayr	5	V	Unemployed	Not in education	Training scheme
289	F	18	Coaltoun, Ayr	5	IIIM	Part-time work	Not in education	NC, Social Care
296	F	18	Coaltoun, Ayr	17	II	HND, Business	Ayr, FE	
303	F	18	Coaltoun, Ayr	15	X	Degree, Chemistry	Paisley University	
318	M	18	Lochbeg, Argyll	26	II	HNC, Computing	James Watt FE	
347	F	18	Lochbeg, Argyll	28	II	Full-time work	Not in education	Unconditional HE
348	F	18	Glenburgh, Lanark	21	IV	Degree, Chemistry	Glasgow University	
356	M	18	Glenburgh, Lanark	8	IIIM	Degree, Engineering	Caledonian University	
362	F	18	Glenburgh, Lanark	18	V	Degree, Art Studies	Strathclyde University	
370	F	18	Glenburgh, Lanark	7	II	Training scheme	Not in education	Full-time work
379	M	18	Glenburgh, Lanark	18	II	Degree, Sports	Strathclyde University	
385	M	18	Glenburgh, Lanark	21	IIIM	Degree, Sports	Glasgow University	
387	F	18	Glenburgh, Lanark	30	V	NC, Art	Motherwell FE	
414	F	18	Glenburgh, Lanark	6	IIIM	HNC, Social Care	Coatbridge FE	
427	F	18	Glenburgh, Lanark	30	II	Degree, Maths	Glasgow University	
428	M	18	Westside, Glasgow	6	X	NC, Art	Anniesland FE	
437	F	18	Westside, Glasgow	9	IIIM	NC, Art	Central FE	
451	F	18	Eileanbeg, Argyll	18	IV	Full-time work	Not in education	Unconditional HE
477	M	18	Eileanbeg, Argyll	22	II	Degree, Engineering	Strathclyde University	
484	M	18	Eileanbeg, Argyll	10	IIIN	Degree, Education	Stirling University	
489	F	18	Eileanbeg, Argyll	14	IIIM	Full-time work	not in education	Unconditional HE
501	M	18	Riverside, Glasgow	38	IIIM	Degree, Chemistry	Strathclyde University	
503	F	18	Riverside, Glasgow	18	IV	Degree, Archaeology	Glasgow University	
504	M	17	Riverside, Glasgow	18	V	Degree, Maths	Stirling University	

Notes: X = No social class as no parental occupation provided.