

Access and Widening Participation Conference Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge

Saturday 14 September, 2019



Welcome to Fitzwilliam!

This year marks 150 years since Fitzwilliam was founded to support students at the University of Cambridge who were unable to afford the expense of College fees.

Facilitating access to a Cambridge education has been our mission since 1869. At this Access and Widening Participation Conference we want not only to celebrate the diversity and brilliance of our members, past, present and future, but also to debate how we should respond to the challenges we face today.

We need to challenge ourselves to find new ways of encouraging gifted students to reach their full potential, to facilitate their journey towards higher education, and, once they arrive here, to nurture them, to stretch them, and to help them with their next steps after education.

This is not a new debate, but each generation faces a unique set of challenges and sharing our experiences will offer fresh insight. There are unlikely to be many easy answers bubbling up today, but by sharing our knowledge and our ideas, by bringing together people with many different perspectives, we hope to inspire ourselves, and each other, to work ever harder to identify hurdles and to provide solutions.

On behalf of Fitzwilliam College, let me welcome you to what we hope will be an important day, and to thank you in advance for your contribution!

Professor Nicola Padfield

Master, Fitzwilliam College 2013-19

Access and Widening Participation Conference

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Programme:

09:30 **Registration and coffee in the Auditorium foyer**

10:00 **Welcome by the Master**

10:05 **Leaving Local Authority care to go into higher education**

Research has revealed care leavers are more likely to end up in prison than at university. Recent figures suggest a rise from 6% to 12% of care leavers going on to higher education, but, when compared to 42% of the general population, it is clear there is still more to do.

Chair: Professor Nicky Padfield – Master, Fitzwilliam College and Professor of Criminal and Penal Justice, University of Cambridge
Ashley John-Baptiste (History 2008) – Reporter, BBC
Sam Turner – Voice and Influencing Manager, Become, the Charity for Children in Care and Young Care Leavers
Sophia Hall – Freelance social policy advisor

11:00 **Break and coffee in the Auditorium foyer**

11:40 **Review of recent academic research**

Cambridge University Bursaries help with students' academic outcomes, wellbeing and university experience, a report from the University's Faculty of Education found in June 2019.

Introduced by: Dr Sara Owen – Fellow in Classics and Admissions Tutor for the Arts and Humanities, Fitzwilliam College
Chair: Ashton Brown (PhD Education, 2014) – Child Development Researcher
Dr Sonia Ilie – Director of Studies in Education, Fitzwilliam College
Professor Anna Vignoles – Professor of Education, University of Cambridge and Fellow of Jesus College

12:45 **Break and lunch in the Dining Hall, Central Building**

Art exhibition '*Pakistani Men of Cambridge*'
by Fitzwilliam student Hassan Raja (History 2018)

14:00 **Dispelling the myths**

Research indicates many sixth form teachers actively discourage their brightest students from applying to Oxbridge. If this is the case, how do potential applicants access information about what it is like to apply to and study at Oxbridge?

Introduced by: Dr Paul Chirico – Fellow in English and Senior Tutor, Fitzwilliam College

Chair: Tamsin Starr – Head of News, University of Cambridge

Ibrahim Mohammed – Education influencer

Sam Dobin – Director of Sixth Form, Brampton Manor Academy

Paul Seagrove – Communications Manager, University of Cambridge

15:30 **Break and tea in the Auditorium foyer**

16:00 **It's not (just) about the money**

What are the barriers to increasing participation in higher education from applicants from more diverse backgrounds?

Introduced by: Dr Robert Abayasekara – Fellow in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, Fitzwilliam College

Chair: Professor Graham Virgo – Professor of English Private Law and Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, University of Cambridge

Sir Kenneth Olisa (Engineering with Management 1971) – Chairman, Restoration Partners

Tom Levinson – Head of Widening Participation, University of Cambridge

James Turner – Chief Executive, The Sutton Trust

John Harding – Head of the Disability Resource Centre, University of Cambridge

17:30 **Vice-Chancellor's closing remarks**

17:40 **Drinks and canapés in Fellows' Court**

Any questions?

In order to allow the maximum opportunity for discussion, we have allocated a significant amount of time for Q&A. We will be using the Sli.do platform.

You can download the app to Apple or Android devices from the App Store, or join via the website www.sli.do. The **event code** is **R015**



Admissions at Fitzwilliam

At Fitzwilliam College we are proud of our widening participation heritage and our commitment to giving a chance to the most academically able students, regardless of social or educational background.

Opportunities in education should be available to all. At Fitzwilliam, widening participation is simply viewed as the means of admitting the brightest students. Fitzwilliam is known widely as 'Fitz' and renowned as a welcoming and collaborative college. The warm atmosphere fosters togetherness in a community which is driven, dynamic and high achieving.

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How do we ensure fair access? We look at a candidate's academic achievements to date within a socio-economic and educational context. Potential is hugely important and we assess all information available to us in context. The best assessment of promise, in our experience, is through interviews. This

"I went to pretty much every single college and spoke to students and here just felt like I'd get the best work-life balance. There's a stereotype about coming to Cambridge and at Fitz it's shattered completely" - Apriya (Medical Sciences)



is especially the case for students who do not necessarily look outstanding on paper – whether due to poor schooling or other contextual factors. At interview, candidates have an opportunity to show their passion, curiosity and ability to think. We will often give candidates something they haven't seen before and get them asking questions to build up information. This levels the playing field and helps us to see how they think, rather than just what and how they have been taught at school. We are looking for potential not polish. We have a full-time Schools Liaison Officer to provide resources to schools and



Fitzwilliam's admissions team (left to right): Katherine, Holly, Gill, Sara and Sarah

73% Fitzwilliam's intake of home state students

30.7% Home students with at least one widening participation flag (IMD, Polar, OAC)

colleges which do not have a history of sending students to Cambridge, but which aspire to do so in future. We also have an Admissions and Outreach Coordinator who organises our many widening participation events and projects. We provide accurate information about Cambridge, break down misconceptions about university life, and offer advice.

The diversity and achievements of our current and former students show our track record, and we support our students into the next stage of their lives beyond Fitzwilliam. The strong sense of community permeates through undergraduates, postgraduates, staff and alumni. Our College environment is intellectually stimulating with strong pastoral and academic support. This helps our

"Fitzwilliam was the only college to consistently make more than four offers to students of black heritage each year, making a total of 30 from 2012-16" - The Financial Times (June 2018)

students to reach their full potential. We can always do more and do better. We are aware that large numbers of students from widening participation backgrounds assume that Cambridge is not for them. We are keen to share experience and listen to those who can help us to offer the opportunity of this world-class education to all those with potential.



Dr Sara Owen (Arts and Humanities)
Dr Holly Canuto (Science)
Admissions Tutors, Fitzwilliam College

15.8% Index of Multiple Deprivation figure for Fitzwilliam

14.9% Polar (Participation of Local Areas) 1&2, for the UK areas with the lowest higher education participation rates

16.7% Output Area Classification (OAC), which uses census data to identify applicants from less advantaged socio-economic areas

"Fitz dispels every myth you've ever heard about Cambridge. It's a down to earth and welcoming college, full of friendly faces. What makes Fitz special is our sense of community; students have so many opportunities to get involved in College life" - Sophie (English)

Leaving Local Authority care to go into higher education



Professor Nicola Padfield QC (Hon), MA, Dip Crim, DES
Master, Fitzwilliam College 2013-19

Professor Nicola Padfield became Master of Fitzwilliam College in October 2013. She is Professor of Criminal and Penal Justice at the Law Faculty, University of Cambridge. She will stand down as Master on 30 September. Her research world is sentencing and prisons, and she is a strong advocate of improving educational opportunities for those in prison, and on release. She has long been passionate about access issues: she took a certificate in adult education in 1985, and taught at FE Colleges for several years in both Basingstoke and Cambridge before her appointment to Fitzwilliam in 1991. She was Fitzwilliam's Admissions Tutor for Arts in the late 1990s, when widening access was already top of Fitzwilliam's agenda. She is currently Vice-Chair of the Middle Temple's Education Committee, where widening access to the legal profession, particularly the Bar, also falls within her remit.



Sophia Hall
Freelance social policy advisor

Sophia is the first care experienced person to attend and graduate from Jesus College, Oxford. She is the first person under her local authority's care to complete a master's degree, graduating in summer 2019 with an MSc in Management from Imperial College London's Business School. A strong advocate for foster care, she launched her YouTube channel CareLeaverSophia to provide advice videos to those in the system. She works as a social policy advisor to a number of UK fostering providers, and spoke alongside the Fostering Network at the Be Inspired conference 2019. Sophia was the youngest delegate selected for the World Government Summit in Dubai 2019, and was invited to the 2019 Queen's Garden Party to celebrate her advocacy work. She is working with the Department of Education to launch a new outreach initiative in 2020 to encourage more children in care to apply to university.

Research has revealed care leavers are more likely to end up in prison than at university. Recent figures suggest a rise from 6% to 12% of care leavers going on to higher education, but, when compared to 42% of the general population, it is clear there is still more to do.



Ashley John-Baptiste
(History 2008)
Reporter, BBC

A BBC journalist and presenter, Ashley grew up in care and read history at Fitzwilliam from 2008-2011. He was born in south London to a black father and a white mother. He was taken into care at the age of two and shuttled between foster families and children's homes. He attended a comprehensive school which had three times the number of children from deprived backgrounds than the national average. With the support of his MP, he earned a place at Cambridge. He has enormous enthusiasm and passion to use his story as a tool to motivate and propel others to face their challenges with a sense of optimism and triumph.

Ashley sends his apologies and has shared a BBC News film for us to show in his absence.



Sam Turner
Voice and Influencing Manager, Become

Sam is a key figure at Become, the charity for children in care and young care leavers. He manages the charity's voice and influencing activity, listening to children and young people with experience of the care system and working to ensure their opinions are heard by key decision makers. He is a graduate of the University of Cambridge. Sam studied Geography at Downing College from 2009-2012 and then worked at Downing as the School and College Liaison Officer from 2012-2015, managing its widening participation activity in the South West of England.

Review of academic research

Cambridge University Bursaries help with students' academic outcomes, wellbeing and university experience, a report from the University's Faculty of Education found in June 2019.



Dr Sonia Ilie
Director of Studies in Education, Fitzwilliam College

Sonia is a Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Education at Cambridge, and a Research Leader in Education at RAND Europe. Her research explores inequalities in access to, learning during, and outcomes of education, with a specific focus on higher education. She uses quantitative methods including randomised controlled trials to develop evidence around effective programmes that aim to narrow the socio-economic gap in school attainment and higher education access. She is the lead evaluator for the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach, and helps coordinate RAND Europe's portfolio of evaluation research in education. Sonia has published on access to higher education in both England and low-income countries, including how the Cambridge Bursary Scheme helps students from lower-income backgrounds, who would otherwise struggle to pay for books, rent and even food.



Professor Anna Vignoles
Professor of Education, University of Cambridge and Fellow of Jesus College

Anna is a Professor of Education at the University of Cambridge, a Fellow of Jesus College and of the British Academy, a trustee of the Nuffield Foundation, and advisor to the Economic and Social Research Council. Anna undertakes research into how we can improve students' academic achievement and help them develop the skills they need in the labour market. She has a particular interest in researching the inequalities we see in access to education globally and, in the UK context, the lower levels of educational success of children from poorer families. She has advised numerous government departments and advised reviews into higher education. She was awarded a CBE in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours for her services to social science.



Ashton Brown
(PhD Education 2014)

Ashton is working as a research associate at the Faculty of Education where she uses econometrics and longitudinal data to study widening participation. Ashton, who is a member of Fitzwilliam College, has recently submitted her PhD dissertation titled: *Modelling the Relationship between Parental Behaviours and Childhood Skill Development: Empirical Evidence from the UK and Canada*. While completing her PhD she was also the President of the Cambridge University Women's Boat Club in 2017 and captained the winning Boat Race crew.

Dispelling the myths

Research indicates many sixth form teachers actively discourage their brightest students from applying to Oxbridge. If this is the case, how do potential applicants access information about what it is like to apply to and study at Oxbridge?



Tamsin Starr
Head of News, University of Cambridge

Tamsin is Head of News of the University of Cambridge, responsible for student recruitment communications. She oversees the University's widening participation and access communications as part of her current role. She was responsible for designing and delivering the current *Get in Cambridge* social media campaign to attract underrepresented students to Cambridge, which attracted 500+ 'hard to reach' students to the University's open days bookings earlier this year. She has held senior communications roles in higher education institutions including St George's medical school in London and as a head of media for one of the government's largest departments. This followed a career as a national news journalist for outlets including the Guardian group, BBC and Daily Mail Trust.



Ibrahim Mohammed
Education influencer

Ibrahim, also known as Ibz Mo, graduated from the University of Cambridge in June 2019 with a Psychology degree from Wolfson College. He is a multi-award-winning education influencer and founder of BTYS Ltd (an education charity). He documented his time at Cambridge as an ethnic minority and working-class student on YouTube, accruing over 100,000 subscribers and inspiring others. He received the University's 2019 Outstanding Student Contribution to Education Award for access and outreach. He has collaborated with the University to produce access videos, and supported The Sutton Trust Summer School. Ibz has been invited to speak at 100+ state schools in the UK and abroad, to share his personal journey of hardship to graduation. His dissertation on *How does Social Media impact student attitudes to Education* was published by The Financial Times. He is now studying at BBP Cambridge Law School.



Sam Dobin
Director of Sixth Form, Brampton Manor Academy

Sam is the Director of Sixth Form at the Newham, London state school which saw 41 of its students secure a conditional offer to study at either Oxford or Cambridge this year (38 were successful). Nearly all of those students are from ethnic minority backgrounds, while two-thirds will be the first in their family to attend university. Half of them are on free school meals. The Sixth Form opened in 2012, aiming to transform the progression rates of disadvantaged students to the UK's top universities. Part of their motivation, the students say, is seeing photographs of ex-pupils who received Oxbridge offers on the school walls. In 2014, only one student received an offer from Oxford and Cambridge; in 2018, 25 did. The sixth form is oversubscribed, academically-selective and annually accepts 300 students from a range of local secondary schools.



Paul Seagrove
Communications Manager, University of Cambridge

Paul joined the University of Cambridge's Communications Office in November 2016. He promotes the work which contributes to widening participation and access, trying to diversify the applicant pool and highlight the dynamic and developing community of the University. He also helps to secure media coverage for research conducted by both academics and students. Previously, Paul was a broadcast journalist and producer for the BBC, and the Press and PR manager for the British Antarctic Survey.

It's not (just) about the money



Professor Graham Virgo QC
Professor of English Private Law and Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, University of Cambridge

Graham Virgo has been a Pro-Vice Chancellor with responsibility for Education for five years. In that capacity he has responsibility for University policy and strategy relating to undergraduate students, postgraduate students, part-time students, libraries and library services, and sport. He has been involved with access and widening participation activities throughout his academic career at Cambridge. He has been responsible for access initiatives in the Faculty of Law and has participated in numerous school visits, run summer schools and spoken at access and widening participation conferences. As Pro-Vice Chancellor he has led on the development and implementation of what are now called Access and Participation agreements.



Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE
(Engineering with Management 1971)
Chairman, Restoration Partners

Ken is a state-educated Fitzwilliam alumnus whose business career at IBM and Wang led to founding two technology merchant banks, and serving as the first British-born black director of a FTSE-100 company (Reuters) and on the Boards of major companies including Open Text, ENRC, Huawei (UK) and Interswitch. His charitable passions include President of London homeless charity Thames Reach (for which he received an OBE), Chair of welfare-to-work charity Shaw Trust, and founding Chair of the Aleto Foundation, which supports future leaders from tough reality backgrounds. His wider public service roles have included inaugural membership of the Postal Services Commission and the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. In 2015 Her Majesty the Queen appointed Ken as her Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London. He was knighted in the 2018 New Year's Honours for services to business and philanthropy.

What are the barriers to increasing participation in higher education from applicants from more diverse backgrounds?



Tom Levinson
Head of Widening Participation, University of Cambridge

Tom has been in post since 2008, bar a three-year secondment to lead the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach project. He leads on developing and delivering initiatives to encourage underrepresented and disadvantaged students to make informed decisions about their HE options, including Cambridge. Key is ensuring teachers and advisers can access information about the admissions process and studying at the University, to be in the best possible position to advise their students.



James Turner
Chief Executive, The Sutton Trust

The Sutton Trust is a UK educational charity which aims to improve social mobility and address educational disadvantage. James has been its chief executive since February 2019. Prior to that, James was Deputy CEO of the Trust's sister charity, the Education Endowment Foundation. He also led the Trust's £135m bid to set up the EEF in 2011, was its interim CEO, and served as a founding Trustee. James is also a trustee of The Brilliant Club, the Centre for Homelessness Impact, and a governor of a comprehensive school in the East Midlands, where he lives.



John Harding
Head of the Disability Resource Centre, University of Cambridge

The Head of the Disability Resource Centre since 2008, John has worked in disability support in both further and higher education for over 20 years. He is a Director of the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP), Secretary of the University's Committee on Accessibility and a member of the Cambridge Centre for Teaching & Learning Steering Committee. John is a fellow at Queens' College, Cambridge and is currently studying for his Doctorate in Education (EdD) at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, with a focus on the role of assistive technology in inclusive teaching and learning.