



# **Enhanced Theory of Change: Improving access to, and success on, sandwich courses for students from widening participation backgrounds**

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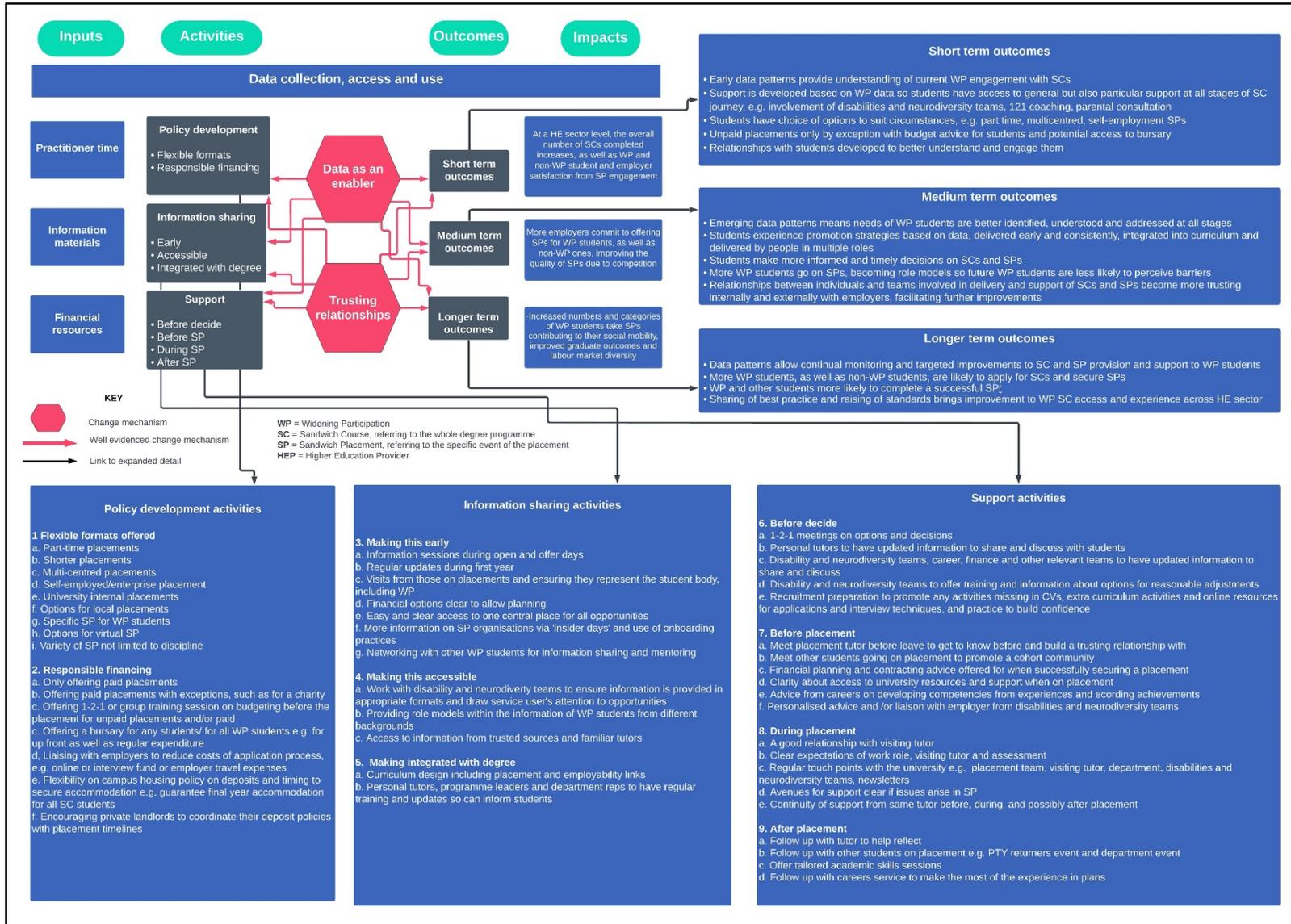
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# 1. Enhanced Theory of Change Overview





## 2. Why is the intervention being run?

There is evidence of a positive correlation between participation in sandwich courses and employment. This extends to the quality of employment, as sandwich courses also correlate with high-quality ‘graduate level’ work as a student destination (Mason, Williams & Cranmer, 2009). Yet, students from widening participation (WP) backgrounds are less likely to enrol in sandwich degrees than their peers.

This set of interventions aim to improve access to, and success on, sandwich courses for students from WP backgrounds. It is being run to address equality gaps in the take up of sandwich courses (see TASO 2022, [briefing note](#)) and associated improvements in employment outcomes (see TASO [Employment and Employability rapid evidence review](#), Ramaiah and Robinson 2022).

This Enhanced Theory of Change (EToC), presented visually in Section 1 and then in detailed sections in Section 11, has been developed as part of a TASO funded research project exploring the barriers to, and solutions for, WP students accessing and successfully completing sandwich courses. The EToC is based on the findings of the exploratory phase of research, where qualitative data was collected through 20 interviews with undergraduate students (both WP and non-WP) and staff from 10 higher education providers (HEPs) responsible for sandwich course (SC – referring to the whole degree programme) and sandwich placement (SP – referring to the specific placement event) provision. This EToC and the potential interventions it presents has been user tested with 20 WP students across four HEPs as part of the research project. For further details of the project and methodology, please see the [full report here](#).

## 3. Who is the intervention for?

This intervention is designed to bring benefits to undergraduate students from WP backgrounds, the HEPs who facilitate SCs and to the employers who offer SPs.

- Firstly, undergraduate WP students will benefit from improved access to and success on SCs, leading to improved graduate outcomes. Specifically, this EToC covers recommended actions at all stages of a student’s SP journey, from pre-placement, during and post-placement. It is additionally expected that some of the interventions will bring value and benefit to all students in the HEPs that implement the EToC, whether they are from a WP background or not. In this way, the quality of access to, experience on and outcomes from participation in SCs would be raised.
- Secondly, the intervention is designed to benefit HEPs and the HE sector as a whole in terms of student experience, recruitment and retention, relations with employers and graduate outcomes.



- Thirdly, employers offering SPs are an additional beneficiary, who will be selecting candidates from a wider and more diverse pool of applicants, who are better prepared and more supported.

#### 4. What is the intervention?

Currently, although WP students experience different SC journeys, typically participation involves common elements such as a SP taking place in one organisation over the period of one academic year. Students often have an allocated placement tutor who will be in contact a minimum number of times, with a reflective report sometimes being required, before students re-join the HEP for their final year.

Drawing from existing literature and the research conducted to inform this EToC, the activities presented offer a range of potential policy and programme interventions to improve access to, experience on and outcomes from SCs for WP students. Together these interventions cover all stages of a SC journey, from before a decision is made about whether to do a SC or not, to the recruitment and preparation stage, during the SP and post-placement too.

For the HE sector, this EToC offers a necessary focus on SCs so their value is fully recognised and changes made to improve accessibility, quality and outcomes for WP students. For each HEP, implementing the EToC offers an opportunity to select the combination of interventions most relevant to their own context and that of their student body, to achieve improved accessibility, quality, and outcomes. This means that some indicated changes would be more suitable for some HEPs than others, depending on issues such as the categories and numbers of WP students they have, size of the SP provision and support infrastructure. For WP students themselves, these interventions offer opportunities for accessing improved information and engaging in a range of specific support activities over an extended period.

##### 4.1 Inputs

Four main types of input have been identified as important: data; practitioner time; information materials; and financial resources. However, the first, that of data, is foundational to all other inputs. This is represented in Sections 1 and 11 in the way 'data' provides the starting point and spans the breath of the EToC model.



### *Data*

The fundamental core input is data. As discussed in the [full research report](#), it was found that HEPs differed considerably in whether and how they collected data on issues core to this EToC. The variance in HEPs' data collection practice included: whether the number of students on SCs was recorded; the number of WP students going on SPs; and what categories of WP students were involved in SPs. This data is fundamental to understanding the nature of current provision, with a view to identifying equality gaps and improving practice.

### *Individual and institutional time*

HEP employees who support SCs, (including employability teams, academic staff, and student support services) need to input their time to facilitate the other material inputs needed, such as data collection, development of information materials, support services and financial resources. Practitioner time is also an important resource for the design, adaptation, implementation and evaluation of the potential interventions being presented. Additionally, the time of WP students, and potentially their families, is an important input which allows them to engage in interventions, such as events, information provision and the support available.

### *Information and resources*

This includes tangible inputs, such as online and printed materials, as well as intangible inputs, such as knowledge sharing through training. The information and resources used must be informed by evidence; therefore, data on equality gaps at a HEP and sector level is essential here.

### *Financial resources*

This would facilitate the other inputs - data, practitioner time and production of information. However, beyond this, financial resources could also enable the development of further infrastructure in the form of systems and processes for the support of SCs, as well as providing financial aid to WP students where this would address barriers.



## 4.2 Activities

The EToC module developed presents four categories of interventions that emerged from the research conducted, each of which represents a core area of change required. For each of these four key areas of change, multiple types of activities are presented. Again, it is important to highlight that not all these options will be relevant to all HEPs or all WP students. Thus, a more granular EToC could be developed at the HEP level for each adapted activity type. While this EToC focuses mostly on the pathway for HEPs, this could be adapted to a pathway at the more meta-level of the HE sector, as well as a pathway set at the individual level of a WP student too. Below the four activity categories are discussed, with detail of all the proposed interventions included on the detailed visual representations of the EToC in Section 11.

### *Data collection, access and use*

This is seen at the foundational intervention necessary to enable change. Data would be collected, made available and used by SP teams regarding the numbers and characteristics of students interested in, taking up and completing sandwich placements, as well as with respect to their experiences on placement and the employment outcomes after graduation. Widening participation data should be collected as part of this activity, HEPs could then observe sub-groups of students dependent on specific WP markers.

### *Policy development*

Policy development at the HEP level is required to facilitate the sharing of best practice and the development of new activities that will reduce equality gaps between WP students and their more advantaged peers. This activity would ideally be reinforced by coordinated HE sector approaches and prioritisation on SC related policies. Two areas are significant here.

Firstly, policy regarding what constitutes a SP needs to be reviewed and a diversity of options developed. Implementing this policy would involve working with employers to develop alternative formats and with Programme Leaders to coordinate placement timing, as well as any impact on assessment and support. Some HEPs already offer a variety of formats and report that some formats contribute to overcoming challenges WP students commonly face. Examples of different formats could include: part-time placements; shorter placements; multi-centred placements; self-employed/enterprise placement; university internal placements; local placements; specific placements for WP



students; virtual placements; and the variety of placements not being limited to a student's discipline. This could provide flexibility to some WP students who need to retain other paid jobs, either in the summer or part-time, have caring responsibilities and/or need to find placements close to home. However, to avoid further unintended disadvantage, all options must still provide the benefits associated with SPs, be fully recognised, and valued by the HEP and appear on the student's degree transcript.

Secondly, supportive, and clear policies regarding responsible finances in relation to SPs is an important component for all students, but particularly for many WP students. This was discussed repeatedly as a barrier (especially for students who were the first in their family to attend HE and those from lower socio-economic groups). Policy development in this area involves the provision of paid-only placements (AGCAS 2022), providing transparent and early information about the financial impact of taking SPs, providing budgeting training, liaising with employers to reduce application and other costs, as well as offering direct financial support (e.g., bursaries) where possible. In addition, policy regarding student accommodation for returning years should be developed to ensure that the need to secure this early does not bring additional stress and financial burden for students considering a SP.

### *Information sharing*

A third category of activity for overcoming inequality in provision and barriers for WP students relates to the fundamental need to make information available, for it to be clear, early, accessible and for trusted individuals to be involved in delivering this. This information is important for all students in relation to whether they consider and decide to do a SC, however for WP students this can be particularly important. For example, where WP students lack cultural and social capital that could provide access to role models who have completed placements or contacts to help to arrange placements, the information provided by the HEP becomes their main or only source for understanding and engaging with placements. The associated activities in this category of change have been structured into three groups.

Firstly, information needs to be shared early. Specific activities would include: offering information sessions during open and offer days; regular updates during first year; visits from those on placements and ensuring they represent the student body, including WP; financial options being clear to allow for planning; easy access to one central place for all opportunities; information on SP organisations via 'insider days' and use of onboarding practices; and networking sessions with other SP students (including WP) for information sharing and mentoring.



Secondly, information needs to be developed and shared in accessible ways. Activities include: working with disability and neurodiversity teams to ensure information is provided in appropriate formats and that they draw their service user's attention to the opportunities; providing role models within the information of WP students from different backgrounds; and providing access to information from trusted sources and familiar tutors. This should again be available early, so the possibility of a SP is on the student's radar from the start of their HE journey.

Thirdly, information provision should be integrated within the degree programme. Specific activities include: curriculum design embedding placement and employability links; and personal tutors, programme leaders and department representatives to have regular training and updates so they can keep their students informed. In this way, the information sharing category of interventions would involve multiple sources of information, to include for example, admission and marketing teams, placements and careers service, programme and module leaders, tutors, student ambassadors, as well as neurodiversity, mental health, and disability services.

### *Support*

Finally, enhancement of support for all students, but particularly those from WP backgrounds is necessary. As this is a significant category of potential activities, these have been organised to represent the four distinct periods of the SC journey. The specific types of activities each could entail are detailed below. However, the specific pathway towards this change will depend on each HEPs context and for each WP student, their specific needs.

Activities to provide enhanced support before a WP student decides whether or not to do a placement include: one-to-one meetings on options and decision-making; personal tutors to have updated information to share and discuss with students; disability and neurodiversity teams, careers, finances and other relevant teams to have updated information to share and discuss; disability and neurodiversity teams to offer training about options for reasonable adjustments; and focused recruitment preparation to be offered to promote any activities missing in CVs, extra curriculum activities and online resources for applications and interview techniques, and practice to build confidence.

Before a WP students goes on a placement, supportive preparation activities would include: meeting their placement tutor to get to know them before they go, to promote the building of a trusting relationship; meeting other students going on placement to



promote a cohort community; financial planning and contracting advice for when successfully securing a placement; clarity about access to university resources and support when on placement; advice from careers team on developing competencies from experiences and recording achievements; and personalised advice from disabilities and neurodiversity teams, where appropriate and liaising with employers.

Then during the SP, activities to enhance the support available to WP students include: regular contact with the visiting tutor to promote a good relationship; providing clear expectations of the work role, the visiting tutor role and assessment process; regular touch points with the HEP (such as the placement team, visiting tutor, department, disabilities and neurodiversity teams and newsletters); clear avenues of support available if issues arise in SP; and continuity of support from the same tutor before, during, and possibly after placement.

Finally, specific activities for enhancing support after the placement include: a follow up with tutor to help reflect on the experience; follow up with other students on placement, such as HEP-wide and department SP returners events; academic skills sessions exclusive to and tailored for SP returner reintegration needs; and follow up with career services to make the most of the SP experience in graduate career planning.

### 4.3 Outcomes

The outcomes created by the intervention and activity groups outlined above are hypothesised to develop overtime. Therefore, the outcomes are presented over three time periods.

#### *Short-term outcomes*

- Early data provides understanding of current WP SC engagement
- Support is developed based on WP data so students have access to general but also particular support
- Students have choice of options to suit circumstances
- Unpaid placements only by exception with budget advice for students and potential access to bursary
- Relationships with WP students developed to better understand and engage them

In the short term, when data starts to be collected on SC engagement from WP and non-WP students, early patterns will provide an enhanced understanding of the current relationship between WP students and SC provision. Based on the data, support



mechanisms can be developed so WP students have access to general, but also particular support, where useful at all stages of SC journey. Depending on the needs identified in early data patterns, the type of support possible could include the involvement of disability and neurodiversity teams, one-to-one coaching and parental consultation. Another short-term outcome would see WP students, as well as non-WP students, have a choice of SP options to suit their circumstances. These could include part time, multicentred and self-employment SPs. In addition, unpaid placements would only be available by exception, with budget advice for students and potential access to a bursary where funding was available. Finally, even in the short term, relationships with WP students will be developed and enhanced to better understand and engage with them regarding SCs.

### *Medium-term outcomes*

- Emerging data patterns means needs of WP students are better identified, understood and addressed
- Students experience promotion strategies based on data, delivered early and consistently, integrated into curriculum and delivered by people in multiple roles
- Students make more informed and timely decisions on SCs and SPs
- More WP students go on SPs, becoming role models so future WP students are less likely to perceive barriers
- Relationships between individuals and teams involved in delivery and support of SCs and SPs become more trusting internally and externally with employers, facilitating further improvements

In the medium term, emerging data patterns will result in the needs of WP students better identified, understood and addressed at all stages of the SC journey. Students will experience a wide variety of promotion strategies that are based on data and so tailored to need. This promotion and sharing of information will be delivered early and consistently. It would also be integrated into the curriculum and delivered by different people in multiple roles, such as tutors, SP teams, programme directors, lecturers, WP students who previously took up SPs and alumni, employers and support teams. This increased provision of information sharing will mean students make more informed and timely decisions on SP. Interventions will result in more WP students taking SPs, leading to the outcome of more WP role models, so other WP students are less likely to perceive barriers for themselves as they can recognise their own situations in the examples of SP successes offered and be less likely to perceive barriers to SPs. Finally, relationships between individuals and teams involved in the delivery and support



of SP become more trusting overtime, both internally with WP students and each other, and externally with employers, which facilitates further improvements.

### *Long-term outcomes*

- Data patterns allow continuous monitoring and targeted improvements to SC and SP provision and support to WP students
- More WP students, as well as non-WP students, are likely to apply for SCs and secure SPs
- WP and other students more likely to complete a successful SP
- Sharing of best practice and raising of standards brings improvement to WP SC access and experience across HE

Finally, in the longer term, the ongoing collection and analysis of SC data patterns will allow continuous monitoring and targeted improvements to SC and SP provision and targeted support to WP students. Some of this enhanced provision and support would also benefit non-WP students. This will lead to the longer-term outcome of more WP and non-WP students applying for SCs, securing SPs and being more likely to complete one successfully. Additionally, the sharing of best practice and raising of standards will bring improvement to WP access and experience of SCs across the HE sector.

## **4.4 Impacts**

Three major types of impacts have been identified as relevant to the implementation of the interventions outlined in this EToC.

- The number of SCs completed increases, as does WP and non-WP student and employer satisfaction from SPs
- More employers offer SPs for WP and non-WP students, improving the quality of SPs due to competition
- Increased numbers and categories of WP students take SPs contributing to their social mobility, improved graduate outcomes and labour market diversity

The first lasting and sustained impact from the intervention is a rise in the overall number of SCs being completed across the HE sector, together with a rise in satisfaction levels from taking part in SPs for WP and non-WP students and employers. Secondly, as a result, more employers are likely to commit to offering SPs to WP students, as well as increasing the volume of SPs available to all students. Due to increased employer engagement with SPs and competition between them, this will also lead to improvements in the quality of the SPs offered. The final lasting and sustained



impact is an increase to the overall number, and categories, of WP students take SPs. This contributes to their social mobility, as they benefit from improved employment outcomes post-graduation and labour markets also benefit from increased diversity.

#### 4.5 Change mechanisms

Within this EToC, two change mechanisms have been identified as significant and persistent in leading towards the expected outcomes and impacts of the intervention.

- **Data as an enabler:** The collection of, access to and use of relevant data is suggested to be fundamental to enabling improved access to and support on SPs for WP students. Data enables an understanding of the current situation, where activities need to be targeted, monitors the success of these activities and provides opportunities for evaluation and refinement. The current lack of access to and use of data was a key finding of this research and addressing this provides a mechanism to facilitate all categories of the changes recommended by our EToC.
- **Trusting relationships:** This is a core mechanism which facilitates the delivery of two significant activity categories: 3 - Information Sharing and 4 – Support. The key relationships relevant are those between the WP student and those individuals and teams with a role in sharing information and supporting the student in their WPs. This group will mostly be made up of personal tutors, placement teams and programme leaders. However, wider groups and individuals may also be included, such as: department placement leads; module leaders; careers, neurodiversity, disability, student support and academic skills teams; employers; and WP alumni. Trust can enable interventions in these two activity areas in two ways. On one side, the student can be more likely to access and engage with information and support when it is from someone they have confidence in, have access to, know and find approachable. On the other side, those in HEPs that develop and deliver information and support are better able to design, adapt and get students to engage with them where there is a good relationship provides knowledge of the student and their needs. This change mechanism therefore means that relationship building and utilising existing trusted relationships within a student’s network can best facilitate this intervention.

#### 5. Who is delivering the intervention?

Who is delivering the interventions will differ between the groups of activities:



- **Activity groups 1 (data collection) and 2 (policy development):** are likely delivered by the SP teams, together with the wider employability leads and data management teams within the HEP.
- **Activity groups 3 (information sharing) and 4 (support):** are likely delivered by a range of individuals and teams. Typically, these would involve placement teams as part of the employability team, placement tutors within departments and the employers offering them. The wider group involved, as we have seen, can include programme directors, module leaders, student support teams such as careers, administration, disabilities, neurodiversity, and academic skills, as well as department placement leads, SC alumni and student networks.

While the interventions presented in the EToC provide an overview for sector level change, the actual activities would be delivered at the level of individual HEPs. This will allow adaptation to their own context and student needs, to be underpinned by the collection of data on sandwich placements and WP student engagement with provision. As illustrated in Section 3, working with a wide range of student support services is recommended to ensure tailored support is prioritised at the institutional level, knowledge and value is given to SPs and particularly WP access to them. Additionally, this EToC places emphasis on the building of trusted relationships where WP students are mostly going to be accessing information and support. This will be enhanced where the same individuals can build relationships with WP students overtime and by using those they already know and are supported by, as much as possible in the process. Although this comes down to the individual HEP for delivery, there is an opportunity via this EToC for sharing across the sector, which is to be encouraged.

## 6. How is the intervention delivered?

Each type of intervention or activity will need its own delivery plan, adapted to the context of each HEP and indeed to the needs of different WP students. Nevertheless, in all cases, delivery would be informed by the data, and it is recommended that robust data collection is prioritised by HEPs.

## 7. Where is the intervention delivered?

This is likely to involve a mix of in-person and online delivery. Regarding intervention activities 1 (data collection) and 2 (policy development), is likely to be coordinated within the placement teams as part of student support services. Regarding intervention activities 3 (information sharing) and 4 (support), it is likely to be delivered at SP



recruitment events during open and offer days on campus, as well as during the first and second year of the degree training programme. Resources to provide information, application support, case studies and pathways for accessing support are likely to be delivered online. Delivery within a student's programme could involve module leaders, programme directors, placement leads and personal tutors holding one-to-one and group sessions in class or online. Support would also be delivered externally to the university within the workplaces for SPs.

### 8. How many times will the intervention be delivered? Over how long?

As per the EToC, it will be necessary to break this intervention down into different types of activities, each of which will need elements delivering in the short, medium and longer term. How many times and over how long activities will be delivered will be determined by individual context and student needs of each HEP, with some of them needing to be delivered on a continual basis. Below we provide an overview of delivery considerations for each of the four activity groups. When all these are set up, the intervention will be complete and procedures for maintaining and continually improving SC access and delivery of quality SPs for WP students will be established.

- **Data collection, access and use:** this is a continuous process, with improved data collection, access and use required throughout the student journey. HEPs should collect data on the students' intentions to complete a placement at the beginning of their HE journey and track this, as well as details regarding placement type, duration and successful completion rates. This should be monitored and analysed on an ongoing basis, then regularly made available as appropriate to those involved in the design, promotion and delivery of SCs.
- **Policy development:** this will need to be informed by the data collected and initially a review of current policy will be necessary to identify where changes are needed. The design and implementation of new policies regarding flexible formats and responsible finances would be a next step, with the time scale dependent on individual institution's needs and context. A regular monitoring and evaluation of the success of new policies will also be necessary, ideally built into existing policy review cycles.
- **Information sharing:** providing information on SCs is critical at multiple time points throughout the student journey. Activities under this category will likely be delivered multiple times, including when the student first arrives at HE, when a student first enrolls on a SC or when they have a later opportunity to opt for one, when SP choice is made, then before, during and after the SP. Therefore, a cycle



of information sharing would be established for each cohort of students, with additional information sharing scheduled regularly with others involved in support of WP students engaging with SCs, both within the HEP and externally with employers offering SPs.

- **Support:** existing support provision would need to be audited by each HEP. The SC data collected would then be used to design and implement support activities, according to the context and WP student needs in each HEP. As with information sharing activities, multiple support types will need to be offered at different time points throughout the student journey. Again, a cycle of support activities would be established for each cohort of students, centred around the key time points of before SP decision is made, before to SP is taken, during the SP and after the SP. Which types of support and their prioritisation would be identified by each HEP's data as what is relevant to their specific WP student's needs. Monitoring and evaluating student experiences of support would be built into this process, to enable continual improvement.

### 9. Will the intervention be tailored?

The design of the EToC has been informed by TASO's previous work on sandwich placements and employability, as well as knowledge of the relevant academic literature, and importantly the data collected throughout this research project. It therefore draws on the challenges identified for WP students by staff and students at a range of HEPs, as well as some of the practices designed to overcome these and the activities HEPs described as aspirational or part of future plans. In this way, the interventions presented represent existing best practice in the sector as well as newly developed interventions designed to address gaps. These will need to be tailored for each individual HEP, and particularly their WP student needs.

Foundational to this is the unifying intervention of data collection with respect to participation in sandwich placements and the outcomes for participating students. This needs to be collected on a much more systematic, granular and ongoing basis for all HEPs, especially as it relates to students from WP backgrounds.

### 10. How will the implementation be optimised?

The three key elements for optimising implementation are seen to relate to data usage, adaptation and evaluation.

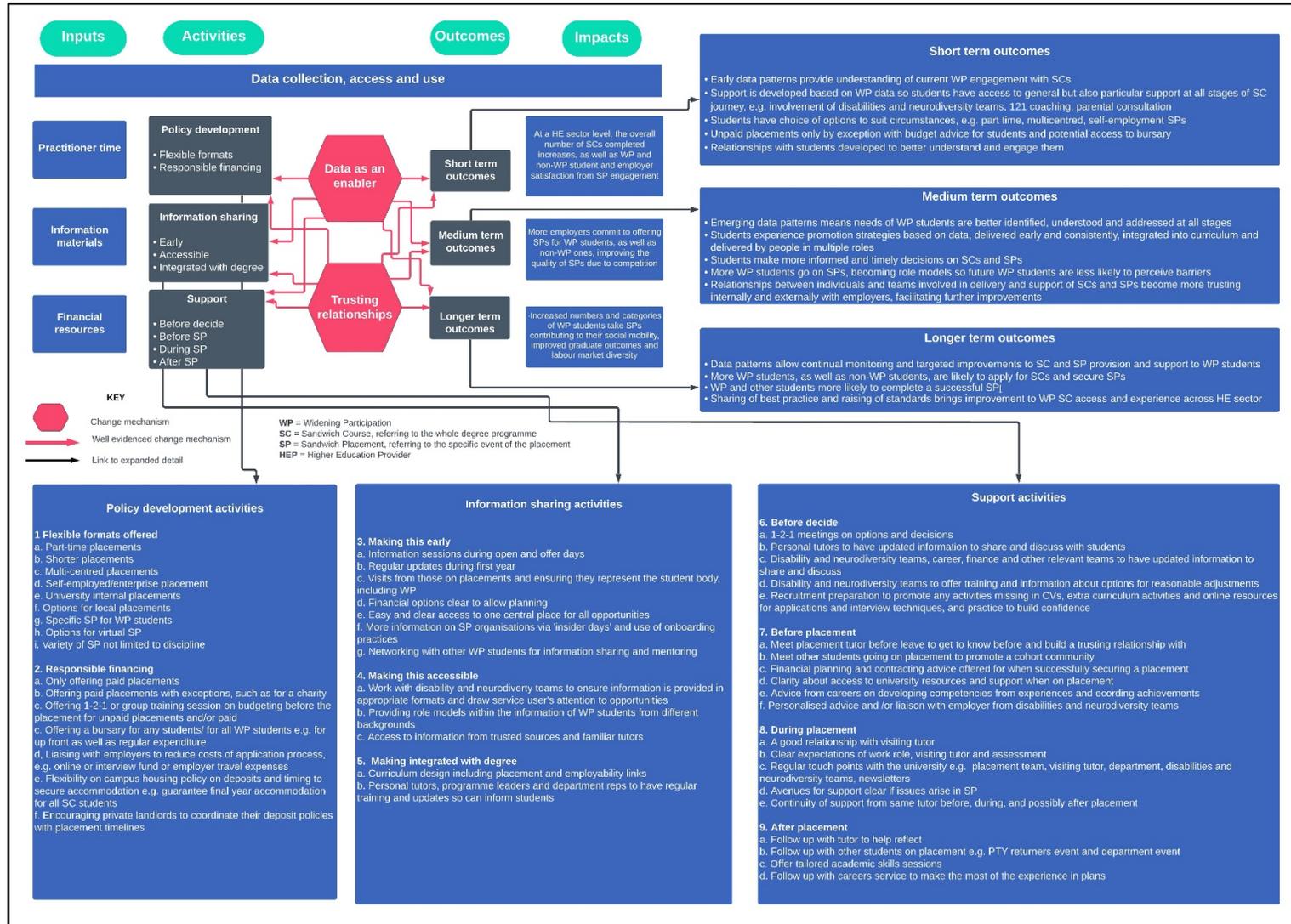


- **Data usage:** the implementation plans and delivery need to be informed by existing institutional data
- **Adaptation:** data provision and usage will allow for adaptation to the specific context of each HEP and their student body
- **Evaluation:** evaluation of the intervention will be vital to optimising the outcomes and sustained impact

The final phase of the research project that informed this EToC involved user testing with 20 WP students from four HEPs. The students were interviewed to explore whether they already had experience of any of these interventions in their HEP and if they assisted them in their decision about placements, whether they impacted their SP experiences or their outcomes. Where an intervention did not already exist, we ask whether it might have impacted their SP decisions, experiences or outcomes if it had of been available. Interviewees were also asked how they would prioritise the intervention activities included on the ToC model, and to identify any activities that could have helped them but were missing in the model. A short version of our original ToC was shared with students before the interview (see [full report for details](#)), together with a brief explainer video designed to introduce them to it. Following this user testing, the ToC was reviewed and amended in line with the data collected from participants. Evaluation of interventions will need to be conducted at a HEP level and on an ongoing basis to ensure the EToC facilitates lasting and sustained improvements in access to and success on SCs for students from WP backgrounds.

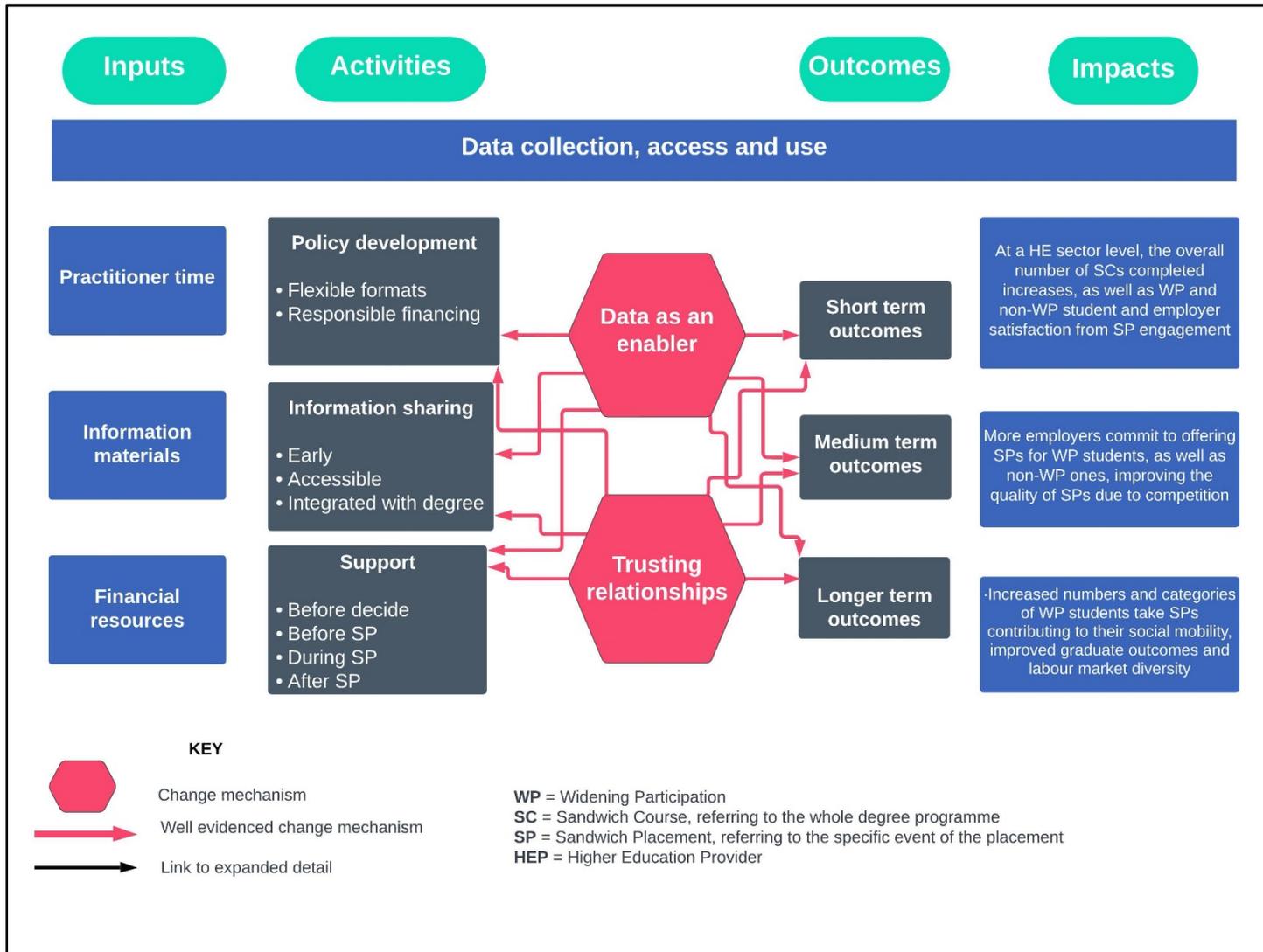
## 11. Expanded Theory of Change Model

### 11.1 Visual overview of model



11.2 Enhanced ToC presented in three parts to allow for detailed viewing

a. The main model





*b. The detailed activities sections*

**Policy development activities**

**1 Flexible formats offered**

- a. Part-time placements
- b. Shorter placements
- c. Multi-centred placements
- d. Self-employed/enterprise placement
- e. University internal placements
- f. Options for local placements
- g. Specific SP for WP students
- h. Options for virtual SP
- i. Variety of SP not limited to discipline

**2. Responsible financing**

- a. Only offering paid placements
- b. Offering paid placements with exceptions, such as for a charity
- c. Offering 1-2-1 or group training session on budgeting before the placement for unpaid placements and/or paid
- c. Offering a bursary for any students/ for all WP students e.g. for up front as well as regular expenditure
- d. Liaising with employers to reduce costs of application process, e.g. online or interview fund or employer travel expenses
- e. Flexibility on campus housing policy on deposits and timing to secure accommodation e.g. guarantee final year accommodation for all SC students
- f. Encouraging private landlords to coordinate their deposit policies with placement timelines

**Information sharing activities**

**3. Making this early**

- a. Information sessions during open and offer days
- b. Regular updates during first year
- c. Visits from those on placements and ensuring they represent the student body, including WP
- d. Financial options clear to allow planning
- e. Easy and clear access to one central place for all opportunities
- f. More information on SP organisations via 'insider days' and use of onboarding practices
- g. Networking with other WP students for information sharing and mentoring

**4. Making this accessible**

- a. Work with disability and neurodiverity teams to ensure information is provided in appropriate formats and draw service user's attention to opportunities
- b. Providing role models within the information of WP students from different backgrounds
- c. Access to information from trusted sources and familiar tutors

**5. Making integrated with degree**

- a. Curriculum design including placement and employability links
- b. Personal tutors, programme leaders and department reps to have regular training and updates so can inform students

**Support activities**

**6. Before decide**

- a. 1-2-1 meetings on options and decisions
- b. Personal tutors to have updated information to share and discuss with students
- c. Disability and neurodiversity teams, career, finance and other relevant teams to have updated information to share and discuss
- d. Disability and neurodiversity teams to offer training and information about options for reasonable adjustments
- e. Recruitment preparation to promote any activities missing in CVs, extra curriculum activities and online resources for applications and interview techniques, and practice to build confidence

**7. Before placement**

- a. Meet placement tutor before leave to get to know before and build a trusting relationship with
- b. Meet other students going on placement to promote a cohort community
- c. Financial planning and contracting advice offered for when successfully securing a placement
- d. Clarity about access to university resources and support when on placement
- e. Advice from careers on developing competencies from experiences and eording achievements
- f. Personalised advice and /or liaison with employer from disabilities and neurodiversity teams

**8. During placement**

- a. A good relationship with visiting tutor
- b. Clear expectations of work role, visiting tutor and assessment
- c. Regular touch points with the university e.g. placement team, visiting tutor, department, disabilities and neurodiversity teams, newsletters
- d. Avenues for support clear if issues arise in SP
- e. Continuity of support from same tutor before, during, and possibly after placement

**9. After placement**

- a. Follow up with tutor to help reflect
- b. Follow up with other students on placement e.g. PTY returners event and department event
- c. Offer tailored academic skills sessions
- d. Follow up with careers service to make the most of the experience in plans



*c. The detailed outcomes sections*

**Short term outcomes**

- Early data patterns provide understanding of current WP engagement with SCs
- Support is developed based on WP data so students have access to general but also particular support at all stages of SC journey, e.g. involvement of disabilities and neurodiversity teams, 121 coaching, parental consultation
- Students have choice of options to suit circumstances, e.g. part time, multcentred, self-employment SPs
- Unpaid placements only by exception with budget advice for students and potential access to bursary
- Relationships with students developed to better understand and engage them

**Medium term outcomes**

- Emerging data patterns means needs of WP students are better identified, understood and addressed at all stages
- Students experience promotion strategies based on data, delivered early and consistently, integrated into curriculum and delivered by people in multiple roles
- Students make more informed and timely decisions on SCs and SPs
- More WP students go on SPs, becoming role models so future WP students are less likely to perceive barriers
- Relationships between individuals and teams involved in delivery and support of SCs and SPs become more trusting internally and externally with employers, facilitating further improvements

**Longer term outcomes**

- Data patterns allow continual monitoring and targeted improvements to SC and SP provision and support to WP students
- More WP students, as well as non-WP students, are likely to apply for SCs and secure SPs
- WP and other students more likely to complete a successful SP
- Sharing of best practice and raising of standards brings improvement to WP SC access and experience across HE sector



## 12. Assumptions and Change mechanisms

### Change mechanism 1: Data as an enabler

- We assume that it will be possible to collect data on SC interest, uptake and SP types, and graduate outcomes for all students as well as granulated for WP categories.
- This assumption is based on reports from some HEPs about data already collected or available in the institution, even if not currently used, or made available to SP staff, or broken down in relevant ways,
- This change mechanism will involve the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of data to relevant teams to inform their interventions, such as WP graduate outcomes after placements informing promotion of them or monitoring of placement uptake and experiences to enable targeted support,

### Change mechanism 2: Trusting relationships

- We assume that resources and training will be available to involve multiple teams and individuals in the development and delivery of early, accessible and integrated information on sandwich placements, as well as the design and delivery of a support structure that all students but particularly WP students will be able to access with confidence.
- This assumption is based on reports from HEPs that they plan or would like to target support for WP students and that some already have started to do so, as well as the sector wide prioritisation of employability.
- This change mechanism will involve the building of trusting relationships between students from a WP background and those involved in supporting them. This could be via one-to-one sessions, regular contact with programme leaders, tutors trained in SP provision, and involvement of specialist teams such as for disability, neurodiversity and finance. The support systems developed can also utilise existing trusted relationships with those who already are involved in the support of WP students. Finally, it will require the development of constructive and long-term relationships between those providing support within the HEP and employers.



### 13. Risks and limitations

This EToC has been developed at a sector level, to be implemented at an institutional level and is designed to impact WP students at a personal level. The WP student journey of change involves engagement with activity interventions relating to information sharing and support. The HEP journey of change involves engagement with activity interventions relating to data collection, access and use, policy development, information sharing and support. Together these make up the system.

The broad categorisation of challenges, categorisation of changes and suggested interventions at the sector level, do not individually apply to all HEPs or will not apply in the same way. Therefore, a limitation of the model presented as an overview in Section 1 and in fully in Section 11, is that it cannot cover the exact detail of each potential intervention. However, it is designed to allow HEPs to have a wider view of relevant issues and opportunities. Each HEP would then adapt this to develop their own ToC appropriate to their context, student body and stage of development, and possibly a ToC for each of the interventions they utilise. The final phase of the research project involved user testing with WP students, designed to identify any further risks and limitations so they can be mitigated. This means the EToC in Sections 1 and 11 has already been revised accordingly to present the sector with the most useful tool.

### 14. References

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