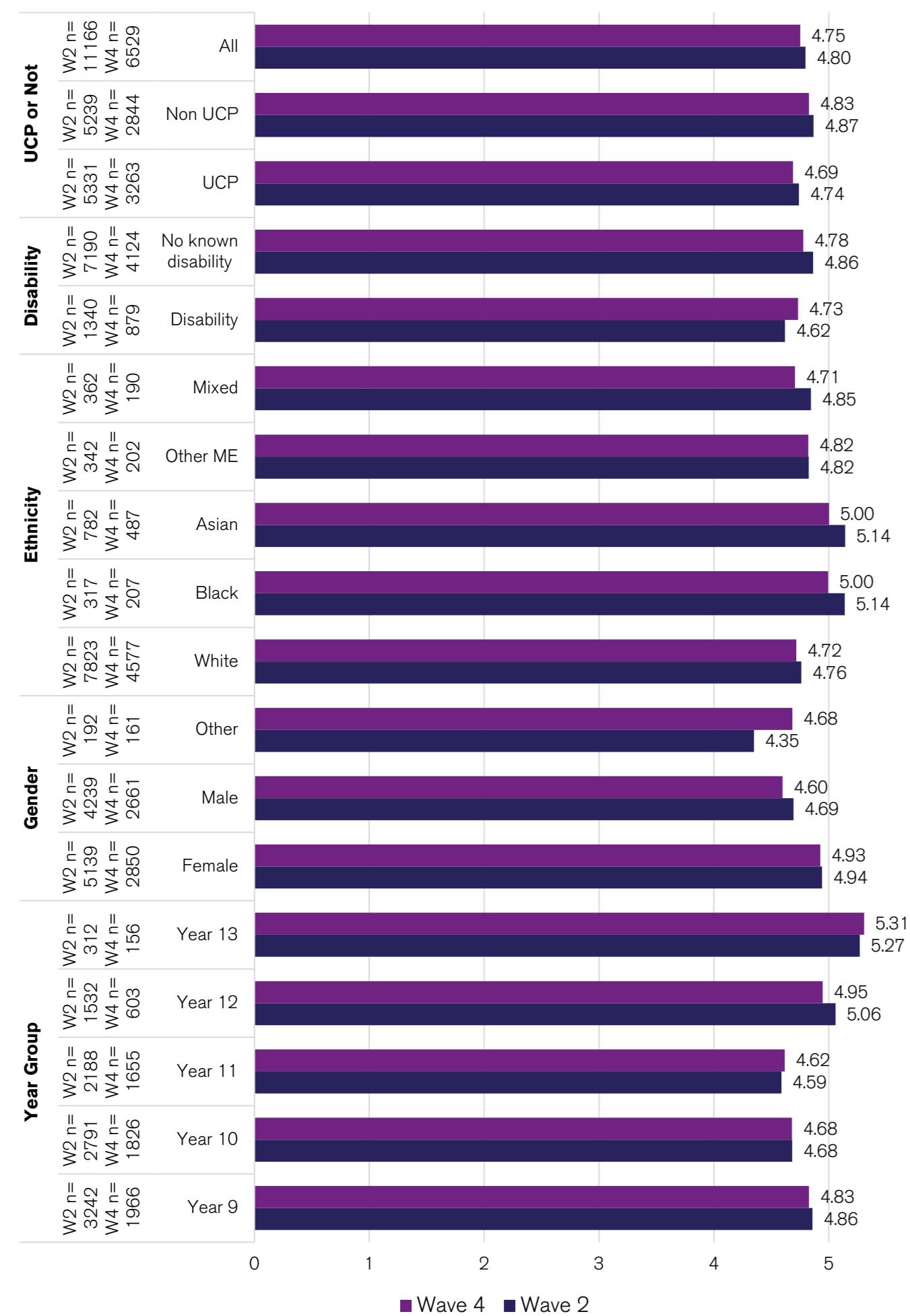


Interventions wrestling against COVID: What does the survey data reveal?

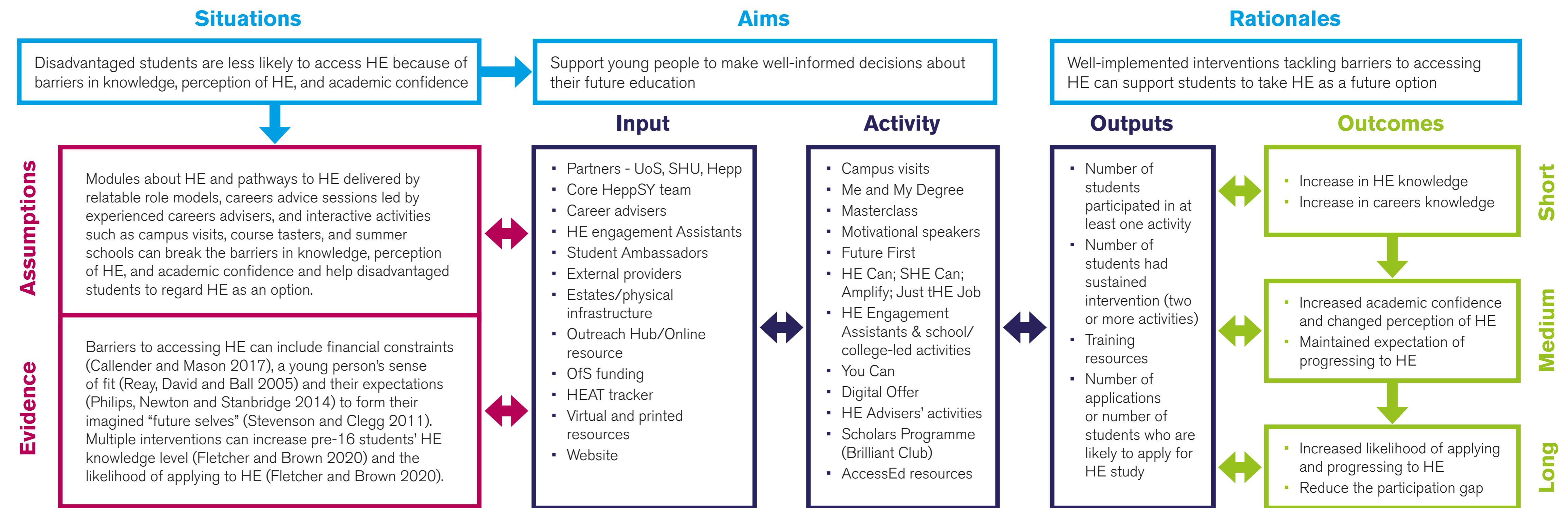
HeppSY and interventions

The Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HeppSY) is part of the Uni Connect Programme, funded by the Office for Students (OfS). The main focus of Uni Connect is to provide targeted higher education (HE) outreach to young people in Years 9 to 13 living in particular geographic areas. HeppSY is working in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), The University of Sheffield (UoS) and 47 South Yorkshire schools and colleges in the academic year 2021/22. HeppSY's core interventions include four strands to support students in overcoming four barriers to progressing to HE: HE knowledge, careers knowledge, seeing your future self, and academic confidence. The median-term impact of the interventions was measured with the annual learner survey and evaluated with the theory of change model.

Likelihood of applying to HE



Theory of change evaluation model 2021/22



Impact indicator: HE expectation

Previous longitudinal studies found that HE expectation was an important predictor of students' GCSE attainment and actual HE application (Chowdry, Crawford, and Goodman 2010; Anders and Micklewright 2015; Khattab 2015). HE expectation is also a proxy indicator of long-term outcome, HE access, in the OfS Uni Connect Programme Learner Survey.

Assumptions

1. Interventions could mitigate the downward trend from Year 9 to Year 11 on the likelihood of applying to HE;
2. Interventions could increase the disadvantaged students' likelihood of applying to HE.
3. Reduced interventions caused by COVID-19 lockdowns could counteract the positive impact of interventions.

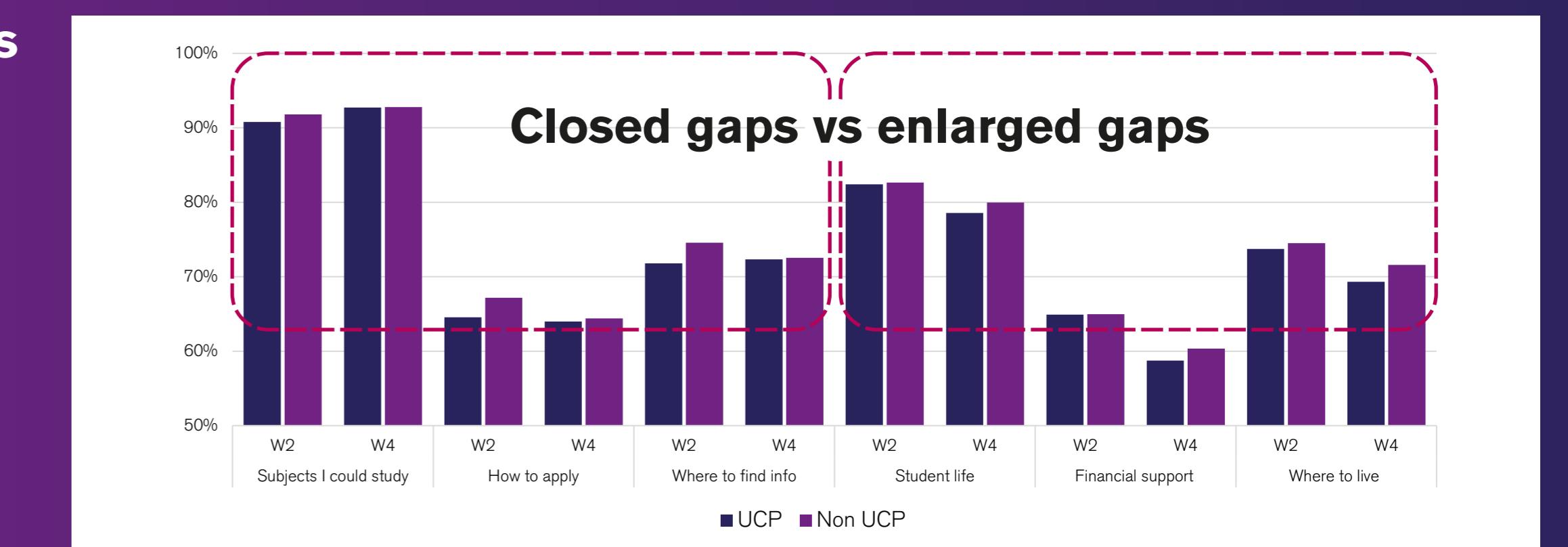
Findings

1. HE expectations showed a downward trend from Year 9 to Year 11 students in the Wave 4 survey as in the Wave 2 survey. However, the slope in the Wave 4 survey is less steep than in that in the Wave 2.
2. The students with disability and the students whose gender identity was other were more likely to apply to HE in the Wave 4 survey than their counterparts in the Wave 2 survey.
3. BAME students and male students' likelihood of applying to HE in the Wave 4 survey decreased than their counterparts in the Wave 2 survey.

HE knowledge gaps between UCP and Non-UCP students

Assumptions

Interventions could close the HE knowledge gaps between targeted UCP students and their counterparts. Reduced campus visits and face to face interactions could counteract interactions' impact.



Closed gaps vs enlarged gaps

Findings

Learning outcomes matched to the four strands of core interventions demonstrated a similar pattern to that in the chart above: those who do not rely on personal interactions to reinforce impact achieve the expected outcomes, whereas those who relied on face to face activities did not achieve the expected outcomes.

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. The systematic comparisons of outcomes in the Wave 2 and Wave 4 survey proved that HeppSY interventions worked despite the interruptions of COVID-19 lockdowns.
2. Personal interactions need to be enhanced in the coming academic years to narrow the knowledge, motivation, perceived HE fit, and attainment gaps.

Dr Chuanyan Zhu
Evaluation & Data Manager

heppSY

OfS Uni Connect Programme