

Welcome to the January 2026 edition of the *Action on Access eBulletin*.

I'm not a fan of Reviews of 2025: this first month's *Action on Access eBulletin* of 2026, looks firmly to the present and future. For instance, we can look ahead to Young Carers Action Day 15 March and the Young Carers and Young Adult Carers APPG (All-Party Parliamentary Group) Enquiry '26 reporting on 28 Feb - see Ariel's story, age 12, [here](#). You may already be aware of the [Young Carers Alliance](#), a growing network of organisations and individuals committed to improving the support available for young carers, young adult carers and their families. I'd like to promote this Alliance which brings together representatives from research, policy and practice: all its members are committed to bringing about improved outcomes for all young carers.

UK Higher Education invariably is reported in the MSM and by politicians and the press as fragile but as we know is far more robust. However, as I work through the current *eBulletin*'s contents there is plenty of work to do on the challenges to Widening Participation and to Student Engagement and Success - namely:

- how to respond to the critics of the HE sector
- how to move effectively and positively to a much more integrated tertiary education sector
- how to address the "absent presence", hidden neglect of students with disabilities
- how to continue to improve the experiences and success of care experienced and estranged students; improving their retention and attainment outcomes
- how to improve the poor experience and stress of student renters
- how to accommodate and ameliorate the stress caused to student working at jobs during term-time
- how to both balance free speech, academic freedom and the protection of individuals and communities from threats, abuse and harassment on campus. There is an immediate need to improve community cohesion on campuses and in communities; and maintaining good campus relations
- how to uphold the notion and practices of the Civic University
- how to support student success by better preparing them for employability
- how to embrace Microcredentials and balance these against traditional, fixed, learning patterns; and to promote Life Long learning
- how to deploy AI not as a policing tool but as a powerful mechanism to support student learning and academic success; and influence policymakers to shift their attention from policing to pedagogy
- how to ensure that 2026 will be the year that international education bounces back.

I hope you will find that the content of this month's *eBulletin* offers paths to solutions to answer these challenges.

In place of this Month's Guest Article, we are pleased to print the first of four short news items from the UPP Foundation presenting their major enquiry into Widening Participation conducted over the spring and summer of last year. University Partnerships Programme is a major UK leading provider of on-campus residential and academic accommodation infrastructure. The UPP Foundation is a registered charity that offers grants to Universities, Charities and other Higher Education bodies - with a history of providing grants and practical support for projects which help students from low-participation groups to access and thrive in Higher Education.

Our Guest Articles are normally provided by subscribing HE providers and WP stakeholder charities. We are currently calling for Articles. In the past, these have been acknowledged by authors to have greatly increased interest in their work and bolstered their profile. If you would like to submit an Article (1250 words) do please get in touch with me at: a.rawson@actiononaccess.org

I have been in South Africa over the Christmas and New year holidays where I learned a new salutation:

Sharp Sharp

Go Well,
Andrew