F: So, again, thank you very much for coming along today and for helping out. My name is Heather, and I’m here to facilitate the focus group. So, if we could go around and introduce ourselves; would you like to start?

*[Participant Intros]*

F: That’s great. Thank you everyone. So, my first question, just to get the discussion going, is quite general. So, I just want to know what you understand about Widening Participation in general, so, not necessarily to Medicine, but you know just Higher Education. Has anyone heard of it, do you know what it is?

P?M: I would say, from what I’ve heard, Widening Participation is about if there’s let’s say a professional job where there’s a certain ethnic group, or group of people who are under-represented, then it’s all about trying to increase the amount of the under-represented people in that sector, so, yeah, that’s my understanding.

P?M: I think it’s, yeah, I think it’s when they look at different sectors and they look at the population, does the sector match of population, the demographic in that location, and if it doesn’t, then Widening Participation is kind of used as an avenue to push people into that sector.

P?F: I think for me, it literally is people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Of course, disadvantaged backgrounds, there’s usually like a criteria for it, so, I don’t feel like Southampton, they look at your school you went to, so, say if people got, if the school had lower than average GCSEs, then you’d get onto a course like this, and if your, I don’t know, postcode they look at, I’m not sure about the postcode, it’s, also if it’s like if your family makes a certain amount of money, that’s what I know from Southampton.

P?M: Yeah, just to build on that, so, Widening Access, it just provides access, so, opportunities for people who are, who have less opportunities than other people; it’s just levelling the outcome, if that makes sense.

P?F: I agree with everyone. I would also say, for example, let’s say, if there are so many different ethnicities, that counted as minorities, and they’re not really represented at Uni, especially for example in the Medicine Course, when you go on to be a doctor, those people from different ethnic monitories may not have that representation, so, they may be understood differently. So, for example, I remember learning things about a pain and how different cultures express pain differently, so, like having people from different ethnicities in a certain profession will help patients who suffer pain to be understood, as well.

P?F: I was just going to say, Widening Access is like helping someone reach their potential when they’re not able to. So, say, obviously from like a disadvantaged background to you know get you to where you want to be, so, you can work with or be on the same level as people who don’t come from disadvantaged backgrounds, it helps you, it propels you to that level. That’s what I found, from my personal experience.

P?M: It’s could be levelling out the playing ground. But it’s like you went to a disadvantaged school, you might have been able to get three A\*s, because of your situation at home, or your teachers weren’t great.And your parents are kind of like, you’re going to get three A\*s, so, it’s like we’re going to make it two As and one A and B, and two Bs, so, like you can get to that environment. It’s not saying that you’re less capable, but obviously like balancing the situation out.

F: Great. And then moving more specifically into Widening Participation in Medicine, which we’ve sort of touched on a little bit, do you think it’s important to increase participation in Medicine, and you know what kind of things, what things different universities do?

P?F: Definitely. Like, Medicine and Widening Participation, it’s actually important that aspect of I think the course, all different universities, and of the profession. Just because, you know obviously like also there’s to like level th playing field, it’s to get you to… I don’t know, I just, not a lot of Unis, I think every Uni probably has a Widening Participation course now, for Medicine, and they all have like different criteria and I don’t know what the question was anymore, yeah.

P?M: Yeah, I think it’s important. But I know for me, the only reason I was able to have like a sense of, a sense of like ‘I can get into Medicine’, was when Kings had like a, they have a special course, forgotten the exact name of it, but they came to my Sixth Form, because they knew my Sixth Form was in an area where they needed to widen participation, and have like these workshops, and the workshops actually showed me okay, this is Medicine, you can actually get there, this is what you have to do to get there. And also like, different universities do have that push to it, and I think it’s very important, because otherwise, well without it, most people from where I am from wouldn’t know about an avenue towards getting, coming here, because that’s not something that is kind of spoken about in those communities, absolutely.

P?M: Yeah, and just about building a rapport, and in particular for Medicine, you need experience in the medical field before you get here, like work experience or volunteering, and unfortunately like if you come from a deprived background, your chances of getting any experience like that is very slim compared to somebody who would have contacts in those areas, I think therefore having these opportunities for Widening Access programmes, enables people to get that experience and therefore improve their personal statement; another path getting into Medical School. I find it all helps in the end.

P?F: I think it’s hard, I’ve heard that, traditionally like I’ve heard that Medicine, like a doctor is like a middle-class, White, male, like doctor, so, I feel like widening participation, it kind of expands that powerful, there are females now and I feel that doctor just includes females, people that aren’t White, just like gives people opportunity and like I think what P8F said, like everyone has like different, like when they go to a doctor, it’s nice to have someone that’s also, I don’t know, maybe had a similar background to you, so, doctors, there’s like GP surgeries everywhere now, and like now people can feel like they can relate to like their doctor, because I think that’s important. Especially like, in Primary Care, where your doctor is basically there from when you’re a child to the adult, so, yeah.

P?F: I also feel like Medicine traditionally, is just seen as very competitive, and a lot of people just don’t consider doing it because of the whole application process and higher requirements to actually get in. I feel like people find out that there’s a Widening Access, and it gives them a little bit more hope and a bit more chance of like actually trying to apply. Because I remember when I was applying, I was like, oh, I don’t think I’m going to get in on the BM5 course, so, then that’s what led me to apply for BM6, things like that, so, I literally had no hope of trying to get into Medicine, so, I wouldn’t just try it out, and it worked out in the end. I feel like people know that that option is there, it gives them more motivation, and a certain hope that they can actually end up studying Medicine.

P?M: I would say I think Widening Participation schemes are very important. Because for me, myself, there was only a handful of things which I could actually apply for, so, probably like thirty Medical Schools top, and I could only apply to like five or so, and like a couple of them were Widening Participation. I think even it’s good that these schemes exist and are increasing diversity in Medicine, because ultimately, if I had grew up in, I don’t know, a certain area, like South London or something like that, the population I’m serving is not going to be from that traditional sort of middle-class background, so, it’s kind of like you’ve grown up and it’s kind of you can relate to people a bit more, and then tailor your care better towards them, because again, if there’re more people to allow coming from these backgrounds making it as a doctor, and it’s like, the younger generation can see you, and say I can aspire to be someone like this now, because when I was growing up, because of the people I knew, I had a few connections, so, I had role models, but I know I spoke to a lot of people, they don’t see anyone kind of looks like they’re in the professional, they’re put off, like when I told people what subjects I studied at A-Level even, they’re, oh, you studying that kind of subject, like Biology, Chemistry, Maths, you want to be a doctor, it was just unheard of. Certain people were really offput, they were really put off, by studying these subjects, so, I think it’s really important to kind of change the narrative, yeah.

P?M: I think this is going a bit off topic, but, obviously we’re both from South London, and I think there’s an aspect to it that you kind of look ahead to the person in front of you, and that’s like inspiration. So, you look at typical doctor, this person’s so White male, I’m not a White male, I might not do that. You look at other things, other footballers, oh I like this footballer, he’s also Black, which is the majority of good footballers are Black and Caribbean, so, you have that perspective that I can do football, like coach, work out most people who are there are from my background, so, those who play football at good clubs are from my background. And when you have these Widening Participation courses coming into universities and you see someone who isn’t a White male, or someone who isn’t from a traditional background, and you’re like okay, how did you get here, how did you get to this point, and it kind of like opens up your mind that you don’t have to always follow this certain path that everyone goes through, that you can actually kind of cut corners and do something else with your life.

P?M: I think there needs to be a bit of exposure from younger, to like show people it’s not all, these are not limited to these kinds of careers or professions, because like you was saying, like a lot of people, like the ambition, you know be a footballer, you know be a rapper or something like that, I don’t know, nothing to do with sciencey kind of subjects, so, I think maybe starting from schools, just letting them know, going in early, into these Inner-state schools, and just saying, this is what we do, and consider it, maybe consider Medicine. Because I know a lot of people didn’t have that, and they kind of regret maybe not trying to go for it, but you know, that’s my views.

P?F: Yeah, I just think that certain people access higher education, for example, for me, like my parents never went to university or anything, so, it was just like I am the first person in my family to go, so, I think it is just helpful for that, and then it helps like my siblings now, that you can get to Uni now, because I can see someone older, yeah, it’s like what you guys are saying about role models, and I agree with that.

P?F: Like my mum, she pushed for us like to go to Uni because she wasn’t able to. So, like, and Widening Access or Participation courses, they basically, I wouldn’t be here without that. Like, I applied for Uni twice and I didn’t get into any of like the traditional Medicine courses the first time around. So, then I looked more into it like, and I think they’re quite hidden, they’re not really like, out there, so, I had to look myself, like my Sixth Form, they didn’t help me with it, so, I found like all these courses, that are saying you can get this grade, you can get that grade, this background, and I just felt like wow, like this isn’t closed off to me, I can still be a doctor sort of thing, so, yeah.

P?F: Yeah, the same. I didn’t actually know about this, any of these access courses, until like the last minute. I think it was like a week before the deadline, I was going to apply for all the five-year courses, and I found them at Southampton, and I applied here.

P?F: I applied to Southampton, Bristol.

P?M: I didn’t know about Kings. I only knew about Southampton, because my friend applied. She was just like you should try Southampton. But I didn’t know about any others, pretty much.

P?F: Only like through research, like The Student Room, that’s where I found all of like, well the list of like these Widening Participation Courses. I was like oh my gosh, there’s all that.

P?F: There’re more coming out each year.

P?F: Yeah, yeah.

P?F: I think it started at Southampton actually, yeah.

P?M: Yeah, do you remember what that M said about, because I didn’t know about Medicine until I got to like AS, I didn’t know it was like, when I started college, I didn’t even choose Chemistry, I done Biology, PE and something else, and I was like, I can, well by the end of A2 I can do whatever I want. And it wasn’t until we had like a Medicine’s night, or a night about Science, and when they talked about different pathways. So, it would have helped if I had that in, I don’t know, Year 10 or Year 11, or someone in my Infrastructure would have been like this is what you need to do for this, or for that, but we didn’t, not that we didn’t have that, we were more focused on other avenues of life, so, yeah.

F: Well that’s really interesting. Thank you. So, you guys are on the BM6, so, I’m just wondering what you know about the different programmes of different routes; so, you’ve talked about the five-year programme as well, the different programmes we have here to get a medical degree?

P?F: There’s BM5, BM6, BM(EU), BM(IT), BM4. Yeah. But I don’t know like that much. Mature students can.

P?M: So, they do it in four?

P?F: They’re still BM5.

P?M: Yeah.

P?F: They’re still BM5s, yeah.

P?F: They’re still BM4s.

P?M: We are, like when you look around the lecture theatre, you’ll see people from all kinds of backgrounds, and it’s looks really nice, so, like you say, you’ve got all these kinds of backgrounds and it’s just another place where all the people come and we learn together. I don’t think it makes a difference where you’re from, it doesn’t really affect you, it’s just where we come from, but at the end of the day we’re all learning the same things, if that makes sense.

P?F: I feel like BM6 has lots of varied, like variations in ethnicities as well. So, like I remember when I first, when I started the first year, there was like most of like people from different ethnic minorities, were from BM6, and I feel like that kind of added like a bit of a mix to like the BM5 students.

P?M: Yeah, that is true. I think if you take away all the BM6 students from our year, that’s like, like if you take away all the BM6s, it’s just a few Black boys, and there’s like one Black girl if you take all the BM6s.

P?F: No, there’s like four.

P?M: Four.

P?F: Yeah.

P?M: Yeah, oh yeah.

P?M: There’s four.

P?M: Yeah, so it’s like, without that, it kind of, it doesn’t provide the full kind of experience I would say, because I think people from, not my background, benefit from.

P?F: Having us.

P?M: Because even when we just walk around and they ask you about your background and where you come from or what you do and they’re like, oh, this is what you do, this is how you’ve done it, so, it’s kind of like opening their eyes. Not like they were blinded in any way, but it’s always good to know different cultures, oh, yeah, I think it definitely adds diversity.

P?M: None the less though, I think we still integrate really well as BM6 students, we integrate with the first years. For example, I have friends from all kinds of courses that are in the BM5, and in their first year of Medical School, so, regardless of like being BM6, you can still get along with people who are BM5 or the graduates, who are from Germany or wherever, it’s really nice when you’re all together.

P?F: Yeah I feel like we learn from each other as well.

P?M: I’d say it depends, yeah, I would say it depends. Actually, no, I would say he’s right, I think it just depends on your attitude towards Black coming in, so, I wouldn’t know that it’s not going to be like Sixth Form, I would say, in terms of the environment, but it’s good to put yourself out there and meet different groups of people. It’s something that change is good sometimes, so, we’re going into professions like again, that is largely similar to this, so, it’s kind of like you get used to it, I suppose.

P?M: But an aspect of it is that you spend a whole year in BM6 with people, with the BM6 group and then you go to BM5, and it’s like they say integrate, and it’s like do you leave all your friends behind and integrate. It’s kind of hard to like make a friendship, but all of us integrate guys, it’s fun, and make new friends.

P?F: No-one to talk to, and literally, you were like, integrate, integrate!

P?M: If we do that, then it’s like okay, you’re going to forget all the friends you had before, not that I’ll forget, but it’s kind of hard to be like in temporary friendships every two days, or you can just stick with BM6 group, then it’s like, oh, you know these guys are all together, so, it’s kind of hard. I don’t know how you’re meant to do it, but.

P?F: I don’t know. I feel like integrating isn’t everything. So, you can, you can speak to people from the different courses, and you can become friends with them, but to force it.

P?M: Yes.

P?F: As in, if you are like just genuinely like friendly all with them, that’s fine, but if you’re forced, and you’re not happy with what you’re doing, then there’s really no point. Like just stay with the friends that you have. You know you still have the experience of being with other groups of people, but.

P?F: For me, like you can still see, even though everyone’s integrating, you can still see there is slight separations so, it’s like the BMEUs they’re all in their one row, and then there’s the rest of them; so, you can see little bits. But then, yeah, what you’re saying, like talking, yeah, being civil with eachother

P?M: Fantastic.

P?F: It’s not like it’s a fight!

P?M: That’s like, they want a perfect world where everyone comes together. Even like, in society, there’s always going to be some groups of people in different, there’s always like segregation, not in a bad way, but you’re not going to hang out with everyone for the sake of hanging out with them. If you, if me and P4 we’re both from the same area of London and we both like football, and it happens to be that we’re Black, I’m going to hang out with P4, I’m not going to be like oh, he’s Black, I want to integrate and make everything look good, I’m going to look for another person who doesn’t relate with me. So, it’s like you, the people who, you like what you like, tend to be from the same area, and if that’s London, they’re going to be Afro-Caribbean, or.

P?F: That’s not true.

P?M: For me, for me. Or they’re going to be BM6s, I think.

P?M: Yeah, I would say like, talking about it, I don’t have any problems with anyone outside of my Year, kind of thing, but it’s like I know I click more with certain people, but I would never be one to force it, so, I feel like some people will try and force it, but I’m, like you say, I would be comfortable by myself kind of thing, rather than force it, but I feel like some people would be actively try and force it, and I think, I don’t know, it’s hard to combat

P?F: Can I ask a question; so, do you feel like the people, like BM5s, they’d feel uncomfortable if you were trying to make a relationship with them, or do you feel like?

P?M: Someone said like, we’re unapproachable, so, they said the BM6s were unapproachable, because.

P?F: Yeah, but we’re not.

P?M: Just sat, no, that was before.

P?F: That’s because we’re stuck together, we sit together

P?M: I think some people are, that’s more to do with their, like they come from mindset that these guys are from a different culture, I’m not from their culture, so, it’s obviously hard to go to a group of people and try and be their friend, especially when they’re another culture. So, I think there was an aspect of they didn’t know us properly, and they we’re like, okay, how am I going to fit in.

P?F: They knew each other, they kind of have the banter and the background

P?M: Yeah, there have never been situations where they have to actually go and make friends, most of them, they’re like, you know what, well-established. I think it was more towards that then we’re mean people, don’t talk to us, kind of thing. Right now, I think they’re actually close to us. If I assume, we’re talking about the same people.

P?M: Yeah, we are like besties, this guy.

P?F: I’ve had BM5s come up to me and be like, oh, I want to get to know BM6s

P?M: It’s almost as though they want to be a BM6.

P?F: Yeah, it’s almost as though they want to be. I’ve had so many people say, I want a BM6, I wish I did BM6. I think it’s because of that like, I don’t know, it’s like you are a group and you are a small group, and people are like that’s so exclusive, and like, I don’t know, like the BM6 team offer, do talks and there’s like little like extra things that happen sometimes, and they’re like, I’m a bit jealous, I wish I’d done that, but it’s just because they’re missing out on it, not because of anything we’ve done

P?F: But I feel like it’s bound to happen, because it’s like twenty to thirty students, we’ve been together for one year in the classroom, so, you’re bound to make close friendships with those people. But then I feel like, as you go on from Year 1 to Year 2, then you end up making friends from BM5. Like I have got quite a few friends from BM5, and like we get along, we sometimes hang out, but it just doesn’t mean just because you’ve got one close group of friends, that you can’t necessarily make friends or meet up with other people from BM5 you know. I just feel like it’s like what you were saying, it just depends on who you end up getting along with, yeah, so, you can’t have like really fun conversations with people or like if you don’t enjoy each others’ company, then there’s no point staying in that company, but yeah.

P?F: Did you want to know what we know about the courses or?

F: Yes. Well you’ve just answered two of my other questions then, so, we can come back to that, so, yeah.

P?M: I don’t know much about IT, BM(IT).

P?F: Yeah, I don’t.

P?F: Is BM(IT) the international? Third year, they come. They’re in Malaysia.

P?M: Because what happens is, the German students, they leave us after second year, they continue their clinical practice in Germany, in Kassel.

P?F: So, there are international students in our year, but.

P?M: They did tell us about this.

P?F: Yeah, but they’re BM5.

P?M: There was a lecture that we did.

P?F: Oh, so, there’s another course.

P?M: Yeah, yeah.

P?F: Wow! I did not know this at all!

P?M: There’s the BM(IT).

P?M: I know, BM4 sounds like hard, they have like the first and second year together, and then, certainly in a week, they do the heart in a week.

P?F: No, they don’t.

P?M: They did. I spoke to one of them, I can’t remember, I spoke to someone ???

P?M: BM(EU)s are, they go to Germany in the third year, and they come back for the finals.

P?F: Oh, do they?

P?M: BM(IT), I don’t know.

P?F: BM(IT) are in, they’re in Malaysia right now. They’re going to come in third year, and join us.

P?F: The lectures, or what?

P?F: So, they’ll be doing clinical practice, but they.

P?F: Whereas they will do their clinical years with us, but they were doing the, like what is it, pre-clinical.

P?M: So, do their practice here, or can they do their practice in Malaysia?

P?F: I don’t know. They get their degree from the University of Southampton.

P?M: Oh, they do.

P?F: I mean they’re Southampton degrees.

P?M: You think that’s in third year, fourth year? We’re in our second

P?F: Yeah.

P?F: Oh, I thought you meant individuals. I’ve never met any BM6 second years, I was just saying it the other day to, I don’t know if you know A.

P?M: Yeah.

P?F: Yeah.

P?M: Yeah, okay, everyone does.

P?F: But yeah, I was say to A.

F: Right, great. So, I think, so, you kind of have a bit of a sense of the different programmes that we have. Have you noticed any kind of differences; do you have any perceptions about students on the different programmes; like I think we’ve kind of touched on it, you talking about how BM6 may be seen as a bit more unapproachable because you’ve got friendships already; is there anything else that you might be able to comment on about the different programmes?

P?M: I’d, like I didn’t have, but someone said to me that they had a perception of me, because I must have had a, I was taking a lot of phone calls, so, they were like, maybe this person was selling illegal substances. So, they’ve told me about that. Not them, my friend told me, about that, but that’s one perception that they had, just that someone had, I should probably mention that’s probably an extreme perception.

P?F: I think it’s a very extreme perception, and I think it’s very wrong that they had that perception of you. And it gets me, it gets me so angry that people think that just because he is a boy that takes a lot of phone calls, he’s a Black boy that takes a lot of phone calls, so, I’m getting very angry right now

P?M: I don’t know if it was, it’s always a young, White, well I don’t know if they would have, but I’m not sure if they’d have that same perception, but they knew obviously BM6, and somebody from a disadvantaged background or whatever, that is labelled as rough; that is one thing that came up.

P?M: Yeah, I think there is also an aspect of, and of course all of ethnic minorities in the year of BM6, so, it’s like some perceptions can be ethnic minorities, that kind of need this extra year. I mean some have said that’s a joke, they kind of see that as a joke, but people joke, are like oh, it’s not my fault you guys needed an extra year, because they’re saying that we’re kind of old and they’re young, or something like that, you guys needed an extra year. That’s always been said in a joke, but I think there’s a slight, in the back of their minds, like it’s not something that you would say by looking at all the ethnic minorities are BM6s, majority, and they are, all need this extra year, that can be a perception of they are less, or something like that, but hopefully, I don’t know, this may be an extreme, I hope it’s not like that, but I know someone did say it, as a joke.

P?M: I think what it is, it’s the first time they’ve met you, it’s the first impression kind of thing, so, and particularly in first year, it’s quite a strong feeling towards you, but as you go through Medical School, that disappears. Like nobody at the end of your degree, people will say to you, you’re a BM6, but you’ve got a medical degree. That image goes at the end; does that make sense.

P?M: Yeah.

P?M: So, it is something I can totally agree with you at the beginning, people say, oh he’s a BM6, maybe he needs extra help, maybe he’s not as intelligent as us, but as you get through and you complete each stage of your medical degree, you come to the end, and no longer that image stays; does that make sense? Yeah, I think it’s nothing to worry about later on, but at the moment, like it does get on your nerves, hundred percent I totally understand that. Whereas, my first year, that I can totally agree with you, but as I get along, I always tell myself, if you achieve something and they’re achieving the same thing as you, it kind of makes you level out; that’s the whole thing about levelling out.

P?F: I don’t know. I came to the Medical School, well when I started first year, with regards to like BM5s, I was, I don’t know, I was a bit nervous to be around them, so, you know all of like BM6, at the end, like we had a talk about you know integration and I don’t know, being with other years and how it might come as a bit of a shock or whatever, and I know it, I think it kind of like scared me a little bit, because we were told that they’re different, they’re like you know, you know just try to talk to them sort of thing, and I don’t know, BM5s, to me... They seemed unapproachable to me. Like I don’t know, like they seemed like, I felt personally, I couldn’t really, I felt very not like myself, because I’m usually very, loud, I’m very loud, and very talkative. Like at the start of the year I just didn’t really want to you know talk or anything, because of it.

P?M: My perception is like I didn’t, in terms of my first thoughts, I thought before I even came here, is from the BM6 stuff I had, I was thinking that these people would be very different, that I’m going to have to make, sorry, I have to make like extra, extra effort to try and fit in kind of thing, because I thought we’d just be very different.

F: Yeah.

P?M: But then I was still thinking, I said I wouldn’t try and force it to fit in, but I will still speak to people, but you very quickly find who you can and don’t relate to as much, I’d say that, yeah, I’d be able to sit and talk with people, but like would I you know go out with, I don’t know, hang out with outside of Uni, probably not for a lot of people, but yeah.

P?M: The one thing that helped me, that I like joined the football, The Roosters, in my, this year, so, first year, and most of them were BM5s from the year ahead and some BM6 from the year ahead, so, it’s like when they kind of see you playing football, do a sport, and it’s kind of like takes away the barrier of BM6, BM5, because at the end of day you’re still on the same team and you might be better them at the sport, you might be worse than them at the sport, but it takes away the barrier, and helped me a lot, and it helped me to make friends in the year above, and in the same year. I wouldn’t speak to them, and then I went to football, and all of a sudden we start speaking; these are BM5s. But there was an aspect to it that, I went the year beforehand and there weren’t any BM6s at football the year beforehand, and I went once and I was like this is very different to what I’m used to. And I went this year, and now the captain is a BM6. So, I’m not sure whether that environment was because there was an aspect of BM6, he’s the captain, he’s the leader, okay we have that kind of mindset. Because when I went the year before, and it was very kind of different, hostile. Whereas now, I remember like I must have tackled someone and they gave me like a dirty look, I’m like, and this is my first day here, like do you want me to stay or something, and that one time, it was like, hey I’m P3M, nice to see you, and I was like okay, BM6, okay, and introduced me to everyone else. I was like okay; I feel more comfortable. So, it’s, I think sport is a good way of kind of changing the perception, but you need, you need someone in the sport to understand what perception there should be, because when I went the first year, I didn’t go back afterwards, I was like I don’t want to stress myself for the whole year coming to football, when it’s that environment

F: It’s good that you went back though.

P?M: Yeah, it helped a lot.

P?M: I think he’s right about how societies like when you do sports. But I did do that Street Doctors, but a lot of them were BM5s, so, but I couldn’t speak to them, but now, like he said, didn’t build relations, he said he didn’t think he would because BM6s like, but most of them weren’t BM6s, but I don’t know, maybe it’s because we had the common thing, the passion, whatever, but yeah, I didn’t get on. I think the main thing, people hang out, I don’t drink, so, again that limits me from a lot of like social stuff, because they all go out drinking, but, yeah, I think it’s alright, that’s what I would say.

F: What about studying for students on different programmes, do you get to do that, you know tutorials or seminars or anything?

P?M: Yeah, so, you realise people have been, the way they study is shown by the way, it shows the way they’ve been brought up. For example, some people have the really strong schedules and stuff, so, like you compare yourself to them, but at the end of the day, whilst we’re in class, like you have your own learning methods and stuff like that. I don’t think it like affects you to be honest.

P?F: My like, it’s almost like tutorial, but it’s like we like arrange like tutorial study groups, like during the exam period, and yeah, I mean yeah everyone’s like we all like worked together and it’s pretty good. Yeah, so, I don’t see any differences between BM5s and us. You could see differences as in what you knew, but it wasn’t like BM5s, they’re smarter than BM6s or anything.

F: Yeah.

P?F: But then again I was only BM6, so, not much comparison, yeah.

P?M: And I think it’s similar to, as these two were mentioning before, about finding a common ground, so, for example societies, that’s common ground and here it’s knowledge in this case, and if you have a common ground with somebody then I think it will enable you to work together.

P?M: Yeah. Even with like with knowing that people, common ground, it’s, I do study with some BM5s, with the different programmes, it’s not a thing, but I like to study by myself, but when I do need help I know that I can speak to someone in the year above, in BM5, because I met them through football, or I can speak to someone in my course in BM5, because I know them through football again. I wouldn’t know them otherwise, because we have like a day where it’s like make friends, and it’s like if you’re not going to have an environment where you can make friends, it’s kind of hard to actually go out and study with someone if you don’t really know them. But yeah, I don’t know any BM4s to study with them, or BM(IT)s. BM(EU)s, no, no BM(EU)s. Well BM5 and BM6, we do study together.

F: But BM(EU) you don’t study with.

P?M: I’d say out of everyone I speak to, I speak to BM(EU)s the least.

F: Thank you.

P?F: Well I’m the opposite, I’d say.

P?M: But they speak German around you, and I’m like help me out!

P?F: I speak to some BMEUs, I like a couple of them, but they’re really friendly like, but they do tend to stick together, yeah, well I think, at least.

P?F: I don’t know. Not stick together, but a lot of them have like close friendship groups with BM5s and some BM6s, yes, so, there’re quite a few that I’m friends with.

P?M: I do speak to BM5, but BM(EU), well the year above, through football, so, football has helped me a lot, well it has this year, but certainly on a bus, you know, they speak German, they don’t speak German together, even in a tutorial, and then I was asked, like well go and work with these BM(EU)s and it was, I think we were doing ??? (0:34:18) or something, and then they were speaking, you know in this group they were speaking German, and I was like, what can I do, and then I was like, I can have a go, but yeah so, it can be hard if you don’t speak the language and you’re trying to make friends and they’re speaking in German, apart from that.

F: So, final question. Do you think having diversity and having different programmes and integrating students from different programmes, do you think it brings anything to the learning environment? Just thinking specifically about Medical School learning environment, or maybe in the future, in the profession, what does having diversity do?

P?M: I think in the future, like in an ideal world, I’d like the Healthcare Service to reflect the diversity in the population. So, for example, you’ll have a very diverse Country in the UK, I’d like for the whole Medical School to represent that sort of us, we’ve mentioned numerous times, so, they can relate to each other, so, I think that’s the main aim through Medical School. And as for Medical School in general, I think if you have people from different backgrounds, like it’s just like in anything, any time, in any situation, you can learn from each other, so, I think that helps. So, if you have people from like the same area and you’re not going to be able to learn something like you learn from somebody from another place, so, I think that helps in Medical School as well, so, I think diversity is key, like in this case.

P?F: I think it also, not only just like helps us to like, no, it helps like BM5s, because they’re probably not used to like different people from different backgrounds, like I think it just helps them to be exposed to like, oh there’re different people, so, when I go into like the community, like start treating patients, they’re like a bit more aware of like different cultures, yeah.

P?M: And then also it helps the BM6s as well, because I’m from London, not everyone is from the same culture, so, you might be stuck in, I don’t know, Stoke, and you have to learn different cultures, and of course you spend your whole six years here with people from different cultures, you’ll be like, okay, I know what to expect and I know how, even though I think it’s how you greet each other, if I say this they’ll be confused, maybe they’ll be like what are you doing, this might be seen as rude, this might be seen as rude, but now you’ve been, spent six years learning that, when you go there you know how to be empathetic to a White English man, or empathetic White old English lady, because you’ve been in an environment for six years, so, I do think it helps. But also, in terms of you want, I think it helps in terms of doctor/patient relationship, because if I went to a GP and every GP was a certain, a certain culture, or they had a certain appearance, it would make me kind of feel that probably less inclined to go to that person because I’m like okay, this person isn’t Black, a totally different person, how’s he going to understand what I’m trying to say. I do think it does help the doctor/patient relationship.

P?F: I think it also makes them more of an understanding person, so, if you’re exposed to different people, especially from different places, then they have different ideas and different viewpoints, and you sort of learn how to understand where they’re coming from, and then you can implement that in the future as well when you’re practicing. And also, even though with BM5s, BM5s are not all one culture and one ethnicity, they’re all, some of them are, most of them, not most of them, but actually some of them are from different backgrounds, and I feel like with other integrations like BM(EU)s or BM6s, then they’ve got more people who might, who they might associate with or identify with, and so, it also gives them that option to as well.

F: Yeah.

P?M: And it’s more fun.

P?F: Yeah.

P?F: I’m definitely learning how to, like diversity has helped, and I’m learning, I’m learning how to like control my, I don’t know, like I think sometimes I get a lot of like, ignorant questions and stuff about things, and you have to learn how to cope with it, and I think being in an environment in Medical School, where it’s not too serious, we can like really to have like a one-on-one chat with like different, like BM5s and stuff, and you teach them things that you know they may not have known before, that was wrong to do, or it’s annoying for someone to hear the same thing over and over, so, you know about like, anything. So, yeah, you learn how to cope with getting those questions constantly, and you teach people, and the person as well, like don’t ask these questions or don’t say this thing or don’t say that thing, and I think it’s, it’s good being around different people; it’s good.

P?F: Also with different, when you meet patients, depending on where that patient is from and what condition they have, they may present differently, so, I feel like this is also important for the curriculum to sort of be like oh a patient from this background may present like this, whereas a patient from this background would present like this. One of my friends was telling me, when she had a placement, I think they were talking about jaundice, and someone said, oh how would, the teacher must have been like, oh, how would you identify jaundice, and oh you just look at the skin, but then you wouldn’t think like someone is of a darker colour, then that wouldn’t be a clear indication whether they’ve got jaundice or not, because you wouldn’t be able to tell, so, it’s about knowing about, like being told that okay, if a person is of a darker skin, then the best places to look are the eyes, or like for example certain drugs and give different drugs based on what ethnicity they’re from, because of the way their body reacts to it, or like, yeah, so stuff like that, it’s also important for the curriculum to integrate that in as well. Because I remember the person who was asked that, she felt really ignorant after that, after she said it, but obviously it’s not her fault, because like making sure that all students also learn that information.

F: Yeah.

P?M: Yeah. I do think even with what you said, I remember we had a lecture, and the lecturer said, jaundice, you see the skin colour, I was thinking I’m black-skinned, you can’t see my skin colour, but no-one mentioned it, you know just assumed that, of course they like to talk about a textbook male, White, blah, blah, blah.

F: Seventy kilograms.

P?M: But in London, a textbook male wasn’t White or seventy kilograms, in London, a textbook male could be a different kind of thing. Maybe it works in Southampton, but it doesn’t work in London, this is a different place, so, the programme should kind of reflect different things, and maybe they should know that we’re kind of not all textbook males, they need to stop saying that you see jaundice in the skin colour, I’m like, you can’t see it in my skin colour, what am I meant to do if I’m there, and it’s like obviously you learn, then you learn it in these placements or clinical things, but if you get put in a placement where everyone’s a certain thing, and you get put back in London, it’s like oh, what do I do, so, yeah.

F: Great. Thank you. Has anyone got anything else they’d like to add?

P?F: Just on the placement side, when I go, we have HCA placements, and yeah the patients will ask questions like oh, where are you from, you from this Continent or blah, blah, blah.

P?F: I’ve had that.

P?F: Yeah.

P?F: I had it in Marks & Spencer’s today.

P?M: What!

P?F: Going about,

P?F: I think it’s just, it’s also a help to patients, if they get to be exposed to other people from different places, yeah, and you can just like explain to them, yeah.

P?F: You just have to be calm.

P?F: Yeah.

P?M: And that’s interesting.

P?F: You get a lot of, like I was talking to another BM6, and she was saying, she’s in third year, she was saying, oh, right, you’re going to get so many questions from patients, like, here, because if they’re from like an area where it’s like very rural, they won’t have seen like someone like you before, you’ll get questions and questions, and you just have to, you just have to stay calm. That’s what I think is so great about diversity, and like in Medical School, because you’re going to get questions, but you learn how to cope, you learn how to cope with them. You’re going to go in like a professional environment, you’re going to still get the questions, you can’t get angry at patients, especially if you know they’re just curious, so.

P?M: I think that’s good, because it’s like we are like the first, I don’t know if it’s the first generation, we’re like the first, we can say the first generation of like, of BM6 doctors graduating, so, it’s like we kind of put the, what we kind of show the patients is what’s going to, what they’re going to think, so, it’s like a good situation that we are, okay, we are at the frontier of it, so, maybe there could be a bit more emphasis on you guys are at the frontier, not look the best, but know that we kind of portray will be.

P?F: What they think.

P?M: What they think and what they see for the years to come, so, yeah. And I went on, I went on GP placement last year, and my doctor wasn’t really, wasn’t from like my background and all these kinds of things, I just had like a general chat with him, and I think from the end of that conversation, he saw that okay, people from London who might not have traditional routes in Medicine, are still approachable, they’re still, somebody can speak to you, they’re not being so isolated, or it’s we do that stuff, well actually it shouldn’t affect the course, and it’s like they’re trying to drop the level down for Medicine to kind of fit them in, but it’s trying to balance it out, so, it was a good conversation we had, so, I think if we, if every student has that mindset of being an ambassador, not like it’s a weight to carry of BM6, I think it would, maybe would help.

P?F: Yeah.

P?F: I think it’s also important, though, because we also have like lecturers and some are clinicians, or like, obviously you have placements and stuff, you’re going to be working with clinicians, maybe making it more aware of like the different courses that are available. Because I remember when I was in Year 0, I had a placement at the hospital, and the doctor that, who I was just observing, asked, oh, what year are you in, because he thought I was like third year, and I said, Year 0, and he just started laughing, had a giggle fit, and I was like what was the purpose of that, yeah, don’t know.

P?M: I got the same thing.

P?F: And he was a lecturer I saw afterwards, and that’s the thing, he was a lecturer as well, so, he’ll be teaching students who are BM6, BM5, BMEU and he was laughing. Yeah. I feel it’s important to also make teachers aware. That was funny.

F: Great.