

The Secret Sauce of Lifelong Learning

Professor Ian Pickup
Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor

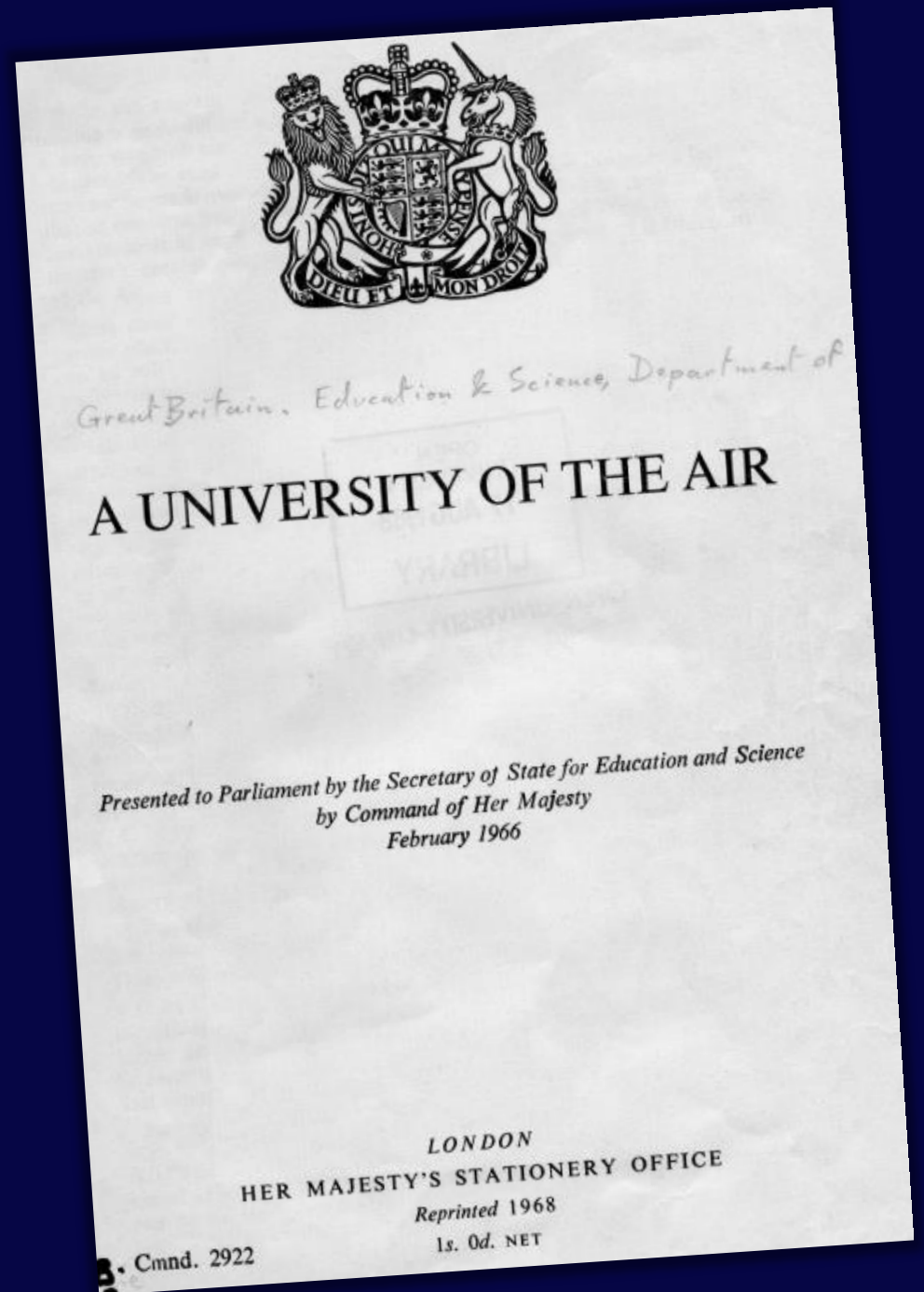
Natalie Baker
President, OU Students Association

Andrew Akin Kolapo
OU Council student member



Lifelong learning – from the start

“It is essential that students should be given the opportunity of obtaining **intermediate qualifications** ... ‘**credits**’ should be awarded for component elements (and) **shorter courses** in engineering, professional and technological subjects should be provided from the start...”



The Open University at a glance



We are the **largest academic institution** in the UK, operating across the four nations.

450+ undergraduate and **140** postgraduate modules.



Approx. **200,000** students based across the UK and internationally.

28% of our undergraduates lived in the 25% most economically deprived areas (IMD Q1).



74% of students have no previous HE qualifications on entry.

c. 10% who complete a qualification have credit transfer in their profile.



The average age of new undergraduate-level students is **29**.

70% of students are working either full or part-time.



Teach in over **160** UK prisons and **30** secure environments.

37,000+ students have a declared disability.



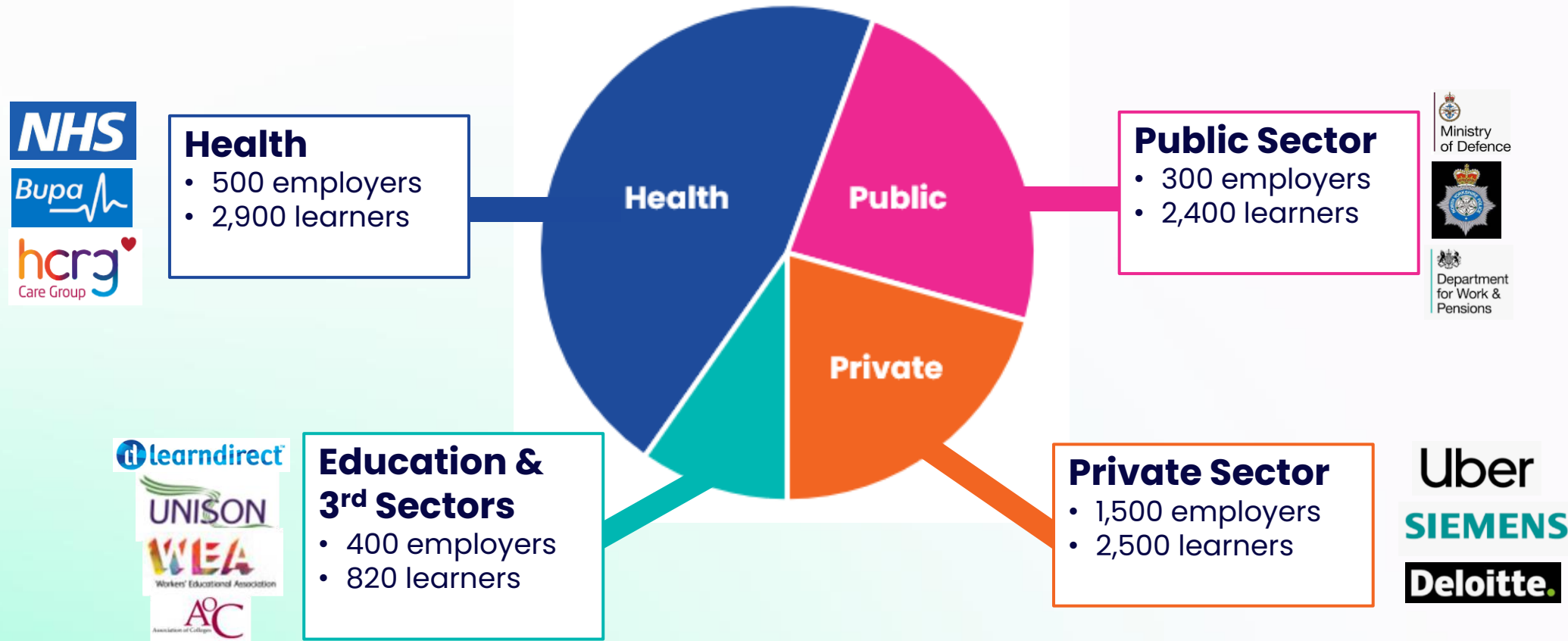
111m visitors to our OpenLearn platform since 2006.



Five years after graduating **more than 90%** of graduates still live in the postcode area where they lived while they were studying.

1,500+ Armed Forces members and their dependents study with us.

Learning whilst working: working to learn



- In 2023/24, the OU worked with **2,700 employers** resulting in study for over **8,600 learners** in Apprenticeships and corporate learning
- A **further 46 institutions** were partnered through Validated and International Partnerships, providing licensed content and validated qualifications to thousands more learners across the UK and worldwide.

An evolving view of lifelong learning

Relationships

- Personalised student-tutor interaction
- Student-student engagement
- Student-degree team member engagement
- Peer learning communities
- Dedicated success coaches
- Virtual office hours

Learning

- From 'rock star' to the 'tricky topic' learning events
- Adaptive learning platforms
- Dynamic hyper-personalised assessment
- AI-generated learning feedback
- Virtual and Augmented Reality
- Gamification and interactive tools

Support

- 360-degree digital profile
- AI tutor and assistants
- Enhanced predictive and prescriptive learning analytics
- Personalised digital literacy programmes
- Adaptive skills development

Wellbeing and work-life balance

- Mental health support
- Flexible scheduling
- Career and employability support
- Alumni networks and career mentoring
- Digital inclusion and universal design

Increased student control over their learning experience

The Secret Sauce of Lifelong Learning?

Flexible

Personalised

Lifelong – by design

Learner centred

Partnership-focused

Responsive and ever-evolving



And now to the panel....