

May 2007/12

Good practice

Guidance for Aimhigher partnerships and higher education providers

This report is for information, guidance and action

This document provides guidance on effective ways to target outreach activities at people from communities under-represented in higher education. It refines the definition of the target group for Aimhigher and outreach activity; provides a methodology to make targeting more effective; and sets out a process for measuring the effectiveness of the targeting process.

May 2007/12

Higher education outreach: targeting disadvantaged learners



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Foreword by Bill Rammell

Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education

Last year I asked HEFCE to undertake a review of widening participation activities across the higher education sector. The subsequent report showed that real progress was being made in embedding widening participation as core to all higher education institutions, providing a solid basis on which to build. However, the report also identified issues in the way widening participation activity is organised and delivered, suggesting where steps could be taken to improve the effectiveness of outreach activities to help maximise the impact of Aimhigher partnerships and other outreach by higher education providers.

Following the publication of the report, I asked Aimhigher partnerships to prioritise those from lower socio-economic groups in all of their activities, including their work with gifted and talented pupils. In parallel, I asked HEFCE to establish a task group to develop a set of practical recommendations on how better to target outreach activities.

This Government remains committed to giving everyone with talent and ability, whatever their background or circumstances, the chance to benefit from higher education. We have made significant investments in widening participation activity, and HEFCE's report has shown the importance and value of that investment, but it has also shown that we are not yet achieving the greatest impact with those resources. Such a position is not sustainable. Resources are limited and we must focus our investment where it can achieve the greatest good.

Over the last decade, there have been signs of progress. The HE student population has become more diverse and the number of poorer students going to university has steadily risen. However, progress remains stubbornly slow and I believe all of us can and must do more. This work, to target Aimhigher and other programmes more precisely, is an important part of the next phase. We must integrate this activity with the work that is also taking place in schools and colleges, and ensure that it is targeted as closely as possible at those who can benefit most from this type of intervention.

This guidance will support Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers as they make key investment decisions and help them to maximise the impact of the activities they deliver. The guidance refines the definition of the target cohort for Aimhigher and other outreach activity delivered by higher education providers; provides a methodology which will make the targeting process more effective; and sets out a process for measuring the effectiveness of targeting.

I am hugely grateful to HEFCE and the representatives from across the various sectors who made up the task group and helped develop this guidance.

Bill Rammell

Higher education outreach: targeting learners from disadvantaged groups

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of universities in Northern Ireland Heads of HEFCE directly and indirectly funded further education colleges Chairs and managers of Area and Regional Aimhigher Partnerships
Of interest to those responsible for	Widening access and participation in higher education, including staff in higher and further education institutions, schools and local authorities
Reference	2007/12
Publication date	May 2007
Enquiries to	e-mail: wp@hefce.ac.uk

Executive summary

Purpose

1. This document provides guidance on targeting outreach activities at young people from communities under-represented in higher education (HE). It will be useful to all those with an interest in widening participation in HE through raising the aspirations and achievements of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The purpose of the guidance is to:

- refine the definition of the target group for Aimhigher and outreach activity by HE providers
- provide a methodology to make the targeting more effective
- set out a process for measuring the effectiveness of targeting.

Key points

2. Resources for widening participation are limited, so we wish to ensure that they are used effectively. As a principle, resources should be targeted at learners from communities that are under-represented in higher education. Overwhelmingly these are people from lower socio-economic groups and disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers should aim to ensure that around two-thirds of participants in widening participation activities are from the target group.

3. Those whose parents/carers have experience of HE are more likely themselves to enter HE. For this reason we expect that, within the target group, widening participation activities will particularly target those whose parents/carers have not had previous experience of HE.

4. We refer at a number of points in this guidance to 'young people'. Those aged 13-19, and more broadly 13-30, remain the key target groups but we would expect Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers to continue to work with younger learners in primary schools, and with adults. However, the position of adults is different from that of young dependants; in working with adults we would expect Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers to apply these principles in broad terms.

5. Aimhigher partnerships will continue to work with the programmes for 'gifted and talented' young people in ways that are informed by this guidance. In the case of disabled learners, 'disability' rather than social position is the key issue.

6. We would expect the principles in this guidance to be applied in a pragmatic and flexible fashion in the best interest of learners in the target group.

7. Two factors are critical to the success of targeting. The first is the quality of the relationships between all those involved, including widening participation practitioners, teachers in schools and colleges, and Aimhigher and 14-19 co-ordinators in local authorities. This guidance provides the basis for shared objectives across the wider learning community.

8. The second factor is the quality of the data that Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers collect about learners in a range of widening participation activities such as mentoring programmes, day schools, and summer schools. These data indicate whether targeting is working or not, and provide the basis for improvements.

9. We hope this guidance will be useful to:

- senior managers in schools, further education colleges and providers of HE in higher and further education institutions
- senior staff in local authorities
- widening participation practitioners
- Aimhigher area steering groups and regional forums
- Aimhigher area managers and co-ordinators in local authorities, schools or colleges

- teachers, college lecturers and other stakeholders with an interest in helping learners to achieve their full potential.

Action in response to this guidance

10. **Aimhigher partnerships.** The document provides guidance for implementation from August 2007. Aimhigher partnerships should review their plans and move towards the approach described. There is no requirement for partnerships to submit revised Aimhigher plans for 2007-08. However, we will seek feedback on the impact of these guidelines from Aimhigher partnerships in their 2008 monitoring returns. The guidelines will also form the basis for any future request for Aimhigher plans, if the programme continues beyond July 2008.

11. **HE providers.** This document provides guidance on how to ensure the greatest impact in widening participation work, building on the HEFCE review of widening participation published in November 2006. HE providers are encouraged to incorporate this guidance into their outreach activity.

12. **Schools and colleges.** This document provides guidance on the way in which HE outreach resources will be targeted. Schools and colleges are encouraged to:

- draw on the support of and work with their local Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers to raise aspirations and attainment among disadvantaged learners using these guidelines
- incorporate Aimhigher and HE outreach activity into school improvement plans.

Background

13. Following a request from the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education in 2006, HEFCE undertook a survey of the strategy and activity for widening participation in higher education (HE). Responses to the survey were collated in a report to the Minister in November 2006.¹ The review referred to the progress made by Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers (both higher education institutions and further education colleges) in engaging learners with the potential for progression to HE. Further evidence of the progress made to widen participation in HE has been published by the DfES.^{2,3}

14. Throughout this document we refer to Aimhigher partnerships and to HE providers that engage in outreach activity as part of an institutional commitment to widening participation (WP). Despite some differences in approach, Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers often work closely together so that their activities are mutually supportive; the guidance is therefore applicable to both. While recognising the autonomy of institutions, this guidance strongly recommends that HE providers work collaboratively within Aimhigher partnerships and thereby maximise the impact of the resources available.

15. Little progress can be made to widen participation in higher education if the HE sector works in isolation. WP requires a cross-sector approach with schools, colleges and higher education providers working together. This type of cross-sector working can also contribute to the objectives of individual partners. For example, Aimhigher and HE outreach activity has the potential to make a significant contribution to the attainment of individual learners as well as to overall objectives for school or college improvement.

The case for widening participation

16. Most readers will not need to have the case for widening participation explained in detail but it is worth including a brief statement as context. The case is based on the benefits to individuals, to the

economy and to society more generally. It is estimated that, on average, a graduate earns over £100,000 more than an individual with accreditation at Level 3 (A-level or equivalent), but this goes beyond individuals. Social barriers to educational achievement and HE participation entail a serious loss of talent in a modern economy. Widening participation is therefore vital for economic competitiveness as well as social justice.

17. Research during the 1990s showed that children whose parents' incomes were in the highest 20 per cent were around five times more likely to achieve a degree by the age of 23 than those whose parents' incomes were in the lowest 20 per cent.⁴

18. In recent years there has been an improvement in the attainment of learners throughout all key stages of compulsory education. However, the gap in attainment between learners in the upper and lower socio-economic groups remains. A similar gap is reflected in the HE participation rates of learners from upper and lower socio-economic groups, despite the progress in broadening the socio-economic composition of the student population. The HEFCE report on the participation of young people in higher education graphically illustrates the correlation between social class and HE participation.⁵ Figures from the Youth Cohort Study of 2002 show that only about 32 per cent of 16 year-olds from 'routine' employment backgrounds gained five good GCSEs, compared with 77 per cent of those from the higher professional groups.⁶

19. Widening participation is also about fair access. Despite being appropriately qualified, learners from lower socio-economic groups are under-represented in universities and colleges with the most demanding entry requirements. Social class should not be a barrier to entry to any institution and this is an issue that WP activity is also designed to address.

Rationale for targeting widening participation activity

20. Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers have only limited resources for WP activity. It is therefore essential to target resources where they can have most impact. In seeking maximum value for money,

WP practitioners will wish to:

- focus on those groups of learners where we know there are persistently low rates of participation in HE
- seek better coherence for WP activities in an area, and build on existing good practice that delivers results
- ensure synergy with other activities to support groups of learners with special learning needs (such as schemes to support those with disabilities or gifted and talented learners)
- provide targeted learners with a progressive, differentiated and coherent programme of activity
- improve the data sources to support targeting.

Key principles for targeting widening participation activity

21. The principle underpinning this guidance is that resources should be targeted at learners with the potential to benefit from higher education who come from under-represented communities.

Overwhelmingly these learners are from lower socio-economic groups (groups 4-8 in the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, NS-SEC), and those from disadvantaged backgrounds who live in areas of relative deprivation where participation in HE is low.⁷

22. Given that we have identified the target group in this way, we expect that few will have parents or carers who have themselves had experience of HE. Since those whose parents/carers have experience of HE are more likely themselves to enter HE, it is appropriate that we should prioritise learners whose parents/carers do not have that experience. Our targeting guidance will ensure that this happens and means that parental education need not be a criterion in its own right.

23. The focus for WP activity is often those between the ages of 13 and 30 because this is the age group for the Government's 50 per cent participation target. Within that group, much of the work of Aimhigher partnerships with schools and colleges is with 13-19 year-olds. This sub-group will

become more important as Aimhigher partnerships contribute to school improvement and the reform of the 14-19 curriculum. However, WP activity rightly extends to younger learners in primary schools and to adults in the community and the workplace. For example, HEFCE is working with HE providers to build on the successful Aimhigher national project for primary school children. As long as we are clear that, regardless of the age group, our priority is learners from lower socio-economic groups, we are not contradicting the advice in guidance issued to Aimhigher partnerships, merely sharpening its focus.⁸ This stated that:

'The main target groups for the Aimhigher programme [are]:

- young people aged 13-19 from groups that are under-represented in HE
- adults under 30 from groups that are under-represented in HE.

We now wish to emphasise the importance of work with younger learners in primary schools and with those over age 30. The under-representation that creates the need for WP is deep rooted and its origins lie in the early years. There is considerable evidence that attitudes towards learning are formed early. The educational inequalities that result can be addressed at any age, and appropriately targeted Aimhigher activity can help to do this.'

24. Work with younger learners from under-represented groups, for example in primary schools, will be important in changing attitudes and sowing the seeds of raised ambition. However, this type of activity requires a long-term view, with reinforcement throughout a child's education. Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers locally will be best placed to make decisions on the balance of their WP activities.

25. Before developing these guidelines in more detail, we clarify the position of four specific groups: minority ethnic groups, disabled people, learners based in workplaces, and those involved in the gifted and talented programme.

26. All the available evidence suggests that minority ethnic groups are well represented in HE

as a whole.⁹ However, minority ethnic groups are not evenly distributed within higher education, being concentrated in certain institutions and subjects, so there are important issues of fair access. Equally, many members of minority ethnic groups live in the most disadvantaged communities and will therefore often form part of the key target group we have identified. Within the target group, there may well be a need to take account of the specific needs of particular minority ethnic groups, but this does not make them a specific target group for general WP activity in their own right.

27. For disabled people, however, the critical factor is disability rather than social position. The Disability Equality Partnership will continue to advise Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers about the involvement of disabled people. Our commitment to ensuring that WP activities are inclusive for disabled people remains unchanged.

28. Young people who are designated as gifted and talented have already been identified as a group, and Aimhigher is committed to working with gifted and talented programmes in the schools, colleges and communities targeted for WP activity. This is discussed in more detail in paragraphs 34-36.

29. Learners based in workplaces present a special challenge for the targeting process. Learners engaged in apprenticeship programmes, or who are already working towards NVQ Levels 2 or 3, should only be targeted where this can be done efficiently and effectively and where their needs are not being met by other initiatives such as Lifelong Learning Networks¹⁰ or Train to Gain.¹¹

30. We have clearly identified learners from lower socio-economic groups and disadvantaged socio-economic areas as the principal target group for widening participation. However, there are disadvantaged learners that do not fit neatly into any of the broader social categories, for example travellers, refugees and asylum seekers. While many of these will fall within the target group, many will not. Aimhigher aims to be inclusive and we do not wish to discourage this. However, partnerships will need to think carefully about whether targeting such learners requires particular forms of intervention

which will draw resources away from the main target group. Ultimately Aimhigher and other HE outreach activity will be judged on its success in narrowing the social class gap in achievement at all levels and, in particular, narrowing the social class gap in HE participation.

31. In practice, the first stage in targeting often involves 'proxies' for social class or broad measures of social disadvantage that do not directly identify learners from the target group. Often WP practitioners are dependent on the judgement of teachers and others. In all cases, organisers of WP activities will want to establish a shared understanding of the target group with teachers and others to maximise impact on that group, but it will be sensible for the process to take account of the nature of the activity. For these reasons we emphasise below the importance of collecting data from participants in the main WP activities to check the effectiveness of the targeting process. These data should inform the conversations that WP practitioners subsequently have with teachers and others in order to improve effectiveness. An iterative process of this kind might seem slow but should help to secure the co-operation and commitment from all parties that is needed to ensure that targeting works.

32. It is equally important that provision to widen participation in HE should where practicable include negotiation with target learners and their parents/carers, so that they can be actively engaged in shaping their own educational future. The aim is to create a personalised and progressive programme of activity so that targeted learners can be engaged over a period of time.

33. The principles outlined here should be used to inform effective practice. In applying these principles there will need to be a degree of pragmatism, negotiation and flexibility. Learners live, and learn, in communities that are socially mixed to some degree, and there is a range of stakeholder perspectives to be taken into account. Much will depend, for example, on the quality of the relationship between WP practitioners and teachers in schools and colleges. We develop this point in more detail below (see paragraphs 43-49).

34. Gifted and talented learners remain an important part of the Aimhigher programme, especially in former Excellence in Cities areas. The programme makes specific provision for these learners, especially those in the post-16 phase. Many will not be from disadvantaged backgrounds, but Aimhigher and widening participation resources should be targeted at those from lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 4-8) and from backgrounds where there is relative economic disadvantage.

35. The key issue for gifted and talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds is that they may have a restricted view of their own potential and of the range of institutions available to them. They therefore need programmes and guidance to help them make informed choices about higher education and the institutions they apply to. Such programmes should ensure that learners consider all types of HE provider, and that they are supported as they prepare for and go through the application process.

36. Schools, colleges and other post-16 providers may also identify learners aged 11-19 who meet the eligibility criteria for the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth, which targets the top 5 per cent by ability nationally.¹² The Department for Education and Skills recently announced the introduction of 'Excellence Hubs'.¹³ These HE-led partnerships will provide a national programme of HE-led outreach activities for gifted and talented learners, including summer, holiday, weekend, online and blended learning provision. The creation of Excellence Hubs both complements and supplements existing Aimhigher and HE outreach provision. It is important that, during the targeting process for Aimhigher and HE outreach, all stakeholders are aware of the resources available through Excellence Hubs so that they can avoid duplication and maximise coherence and impact.

The targeting process

37. Aimhigher partnerships, schools, post-16 and HE providers should target learners for outreach provision using a three-stage process:

- Stage One: area-level targeting (schools, colleges, communities)

- Stage Two: learner-level targeting
- Stage Three: monitoring the effectiveness of targeting procedures.

38. Cross-sector partnerships are crucial to the development of effective targeting procedures. In particular, Stage Two, learner-level targeting, will require close working relationships between HE providers, school and college staff. The rationale and principles underpinning the targeting process will need to be discussed as part of this relationship. Local authority Aimhigher and 14-19 co-ordinators are also important in targeting at both area and learner levels.

Stage One: area-level targeting

39. This first stage identifies the schools, colleges, and communities where disadvantage is concentrated and where effort and resources should be directed.

40. From autumn 2007, HEFCE will make available data sets for small areas grouped by the rates of young participation in HE, and for small areas grouped by relative deprivation (drawing on the Index of Multiple Deprivation for super output areas).¹⁴ These data will provide all Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers with important contextual information at area level. Details for learners involved in WP activities can also be compared with the HEFCE data to check the accuracy of the targeting process.

41. Targeting at area level should draw on the expertise of local authorities and local 14-19 partnerships, where appropriate localised professional advice or additional data can be obtained. Fischer Family Trust data,¹⁵ and data on free school meals and educational maintenance allowances, are also useful. We will not require Aimhigher partnerships or HE providers to adopt a single model, but we would expect them to establish a well-informed, systematic and transparent method of combining data on deprivation, attainment and participation in order to satisfy the demands of the first stage in targeting.

42. The boundaries of the areas targeted should not be drawn too widely, or too tightly. Aimhigher partners will be mainly concerned to target the

schools and colleges serving the communities defined by social class and relative disadvantage. We would expect these areas to include just under half the population.

Stage Two: learner-level targeting

43. Some activities – because of their nature, scale or duration – may require little or no targeting beyond Stage One, for example events for the whole year group, some campus visits, or school/college visits from student ambassadors. In all cases organisers of WP activities will want to establish a shared understanding of the target group with teachers and others to maximise impact, but it will be sensible to use judgement in applying the targeting criteria and to take account of the nature of the activity.

44. For the most intensive activities, which typically involve selected groups and relatively smaller numbers – for example mentoring, master classes, revision classes, extended tasters, day schools, summer schools – it will be usual for individuals to be selected for participation.

45. At this level, the various stakeholders will decide which learners from disadvantaged backgrounds should be involved. Social class information will almost certainly be unavailable in any systematic way before the event. Information on ‘disadvantaged background’ is also likely to depend on proxies that are useful for including someone, but less useful as a basis for leaving them out. For example, it would not be appropriate to exclude all those who do not receive free school meals or educational maintenance allowances, since not all those entitled to claim will do so. For all these reasons selection for participation should not be inflexible; at best, selection is likely to produce an ‘approximation’ to the target group. This reinforces the importance of data collection, discussed below. The test of effectiveness is the proportion of participants who are in fact from the target group. If this information is gathered, it can then inform the conversation with partners and lead to improvements in the targeting process over time.

46. The importance of co-operation between HE providers, teachers and others cannot be overestimated. Teachers, for example, are likely to

make judgements about those most likely to derive the greatest benefit from the provision on offer but, in doing so, will need to understand the importance of widening participation and the criteria which need to be applied. Teachers will also be able to help partnerships avoid multiple requests to the same learners and parents for personal information.

47. Some Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers identify Aimhigher or WP ‘cohorts’. Within these, it is important to recognise the diversity of the cohort, and to consider approaches based on the ‘personalisation of learning’, involving individuals in different kinds of activity that meet their specific needs. Action on Access is developing a ‘progression model’ for outreach activity, which will focus on engaging learners over a period of time.¹⁶

48. As defined in the report by the Teaching and Learning Review Group¹⁷: ‘Personalised learning and teaching means taking a highly structured and responsive approach to each child’s and young person’s learning, in order that all are able to progress, achieve and participate. It means strengthening the link between learning and teaching by engaging pupils – and their parents – as partners in learning.’

49. Schools receive resources to provide for personalisation in the curriculum. There are opportunities to develop synergy between the personalisation of the school curriculum with Aimhigher and HE outreach, because each seeks to provide coherent and progressive support which meets the needs of individual learners. There is a similar concern to personalise the curriculum in further education. In the DfES consultation document on this area¹⁸ the key elements of personalisation are suggested, and it is possible to see potential links with Aimhigher and HE outreach.

Stage Three: monitoring the effectiveness of targeting procedures

50. This third stage looks at data which need to be collected from participants in the main WP activities, to check the effectiveness of the targeting process.

51. It is often necessary to obtain the permission of parents/carers for learners to take part in WP activities. This provides an opportunity to gather

personal data. Similarly, data can be gathered from participants themselves in the activities referred to in paragraphs 43-44 above. However, every effort should be made to avoid multiple approaches to individuals for the same information.

52. Data gathered from learners should include:

- occupation of main wage earner in the learner’s household
- educational background of parents/carers, for example whether they have an HE qualification
- ethnicity, age and sex of the learner, and any disability they have
- the home postcode of the learner, and the postcode of the school, college or training provider.

53. Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers can obtain these data through working with learners involved in the most intensive programmes to widen participation. Local authorities, schools or colleges should not be asked to provide personal data about learners.

54. In all cases Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers will need to pay due attention to the requirements of data protection legislation. Further information about data protection is on the

Aimhigher practitioner web-site.¹⁹ In particular, if data are to be shared with HEFCE (or others), for example in relation to summer schools, the appropriate permission needs to be obtained. There should be no difficulties where data are aggregated for analysis and individuals cannot be identified.

55. We have specifically asked Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers to collect data on the occupational background of participants in the principal WP activities. A summary of the social class categories based on occupations is set out in Table 1. We provide more information about this in Annexes A and B and recommend a simple approach to allocating individuals to NS-SEC classes from information about occupational background.

Criteria for success

56. Having set out the basis on which targeting should be conducted, we attempt to define the basis on which it could be said to be successful. We are aware that learners from the target groups live and study in communities which are to some extent mixed. In these circumstances there are judgements to be made. That is why we have advised Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers to be firm with respect to the principles for targeting, and pragmatic in their implementation. We offer below

Table 1 **National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)**²⁰

Class	Occupation
1	Higher managerial and professional occupations
1.1	Large employers and higher managerial occupations
1.2	Higher professional occupations
2	Lower managerial and professional occupations
3	Intermediate occupations
4	Small employers and own account workers
5	Lower supervisory and technical occupations
6	Semi-routine occupations
7	Routine occupations
8	Never worked and long-term unemployed

some thoughts about how to judge success, which we will review in the light of experience.

57. In England in 2004-05 the percentage of young full-time first degree entrants from NS-SEC 4-7 was approximately 28 per cent of all HE students, with 72 per cent from NS-SEC 1-3.²¹ We should aim to reverse these proportions for participants in WP activities. The actual proportion of those from NS-SEC 4-7 is likely to vary depending on the age group; the lower socio-economic groups are a smaller proportion of post-16 than of pre-16 learners. In addition, NS-SEC 8, 'long-term unemployed/never worked' is not recorded separately for performance indicators or participation rates, although Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers will want to record this occupational status. We suggest that partnerships and providers should therefore be aiming for about two-thirds of participants in the most intensive activities to be drawn from NS-SEC 4-8, with the proportion of those from social classes NS-SEC 4-7 recorded separately.

58. Similarly, widening participation activity will be concentrated in areas of relative deprivation. However, measures based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) super output areas will not necessarily correspond neatly to the geographical areas, and the schools/colleges that serve them, identified in the first stage of targeting. We suggest as an initial target that two-thirds of participants should come from areas with the highest levels of deprivation as presented in the IMD.²² The first 13,000 super output areas in the IMD represent the most deprived areas and contain 40 per cent of the working age population.

59. In working towards about two-thirds of the learners on WP activities being drawn from the target group, we recognise the following matters which will affect outcomes. First, the figure is likely to be more appropriate for some activities than others. Second, recruitment to WP activities will reflect a different level of understanding in some schools/colleges than in others. The composition of the groups of participants in terms of their social background will, to some extent, be the result of discussion and negotiation. Finally, until we have more and better data on the characteristics of participants, it is not

easy to decide on the figure to aim for. What Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers will need to know for the most intensive activities is the proportion of learners coming from social classes 4-8 and the proportion from deprived areas.

Monitoring and evaluation

60. Improved targeting will depend on improved monitoring. The comments of learners, teachers, parents and others are invaluable when the effectiveness of provision is evaluated. However, it is the quality of information collected from (or about) participants in WP activities that will tell schools, colleges, HE providers and Aimhigher partnerships whether their targeting is effective and whether they need to do more to make it so.

61. This guidance has identified the type of activities and the data that Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers will need to collect (see paragraphs 50-55). Most collect these data already. The only weakness identified in the HEFCE review of WP was the lack of data about social class. Initially there may be uncertainty about the specific activities where data from participants should be collected. We provided examples in paragraphs 43-44 above, but differences in definition and judgement and what practitioners think is practicable will always create an element of uncertainty. In practice this should not be a problem. These guidelines set out what we are trying to do and why, and we can rely on the judgements of Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers in implementing them. Differences in reporting will be less important than the overall improvement in the quality of data.

62. For this reason we do not propose to review Aimhigher monitoring arrangements at this stage. It may be helpful to do this later, particularly because partnerships and HE providers record and process data in different ways. At this stage we wish to emphasise the importance of continuous improvement, and to underline the need for data collection and analysis that shows whether the key target group has been successfully involved. Aimhigher partnerships will need to think about this in the returns they make, and given the way Aimhigher and HE outreach are complementary, we would expect HE providers to be doing this too.

Next steps

63. **Aimhigher partnerships.** This document provides guidance for implementation from August 2007. Aimhigher partnerships should review their plans and move towards the approach described. There is no requirement for partnerships to submit revised Aimhigher plans for 2007-08. However, we will seek feedback on the impact of these guidelines from Aimhigher partnerships in their 2008 monitoring returns. The guidelines will also form the basis for any future request for Aimhigher plans, if the programme continues beyond July 2008.

64. **HE providers.** This document provides guidance on how to ensure the greatest impact in institutions' WP work, building on the HEFCE review of widening participation published in November 2006. HE providers are encouraged to incorporate this guidance into their outreach activity.

65. **Schools and colleges.** This document provides guidance on the way in which HE outreach resources will be targeted. Schools and colleges are encouraged to:

- draw on the support of and work with their local Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers to raise aspirations and attainment among disadvantaged learners using these guidelines
- incorporate Aimhigher and HE outreach activity into school improvement plans.

Annex A

National Statistics Socio-economic Classification and social class

1. The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) is the classification for social class introduced in 2001 to replace the older Registrar General's classification. NS-SEC, like its predecessor, is based on a scheme that classifies occupations. The previous scheme differentiated occupations on the basis of a hierarchy of 'skills', in which the manual/non-manual distinction was fundamental.

2. In the NS-SEC, occupational categories 1-3 (higher and lower professionals and intermediary employees) are taken to be the higher socio-economic groups; categories 4-7 (small employers and own account workers, lower supervisory and technical, semi-routine and routine workers) are taken to be the lower socio-economic groups. There are, of course, huge debates behind classification systems of this kind but we cannot enter into those here; we take the 'official system' as a given.

3. The new measure of social class participation recently published by the DfES uses NS-SEC. Like the performance indicators for higher education, this participation measure distributes those in NS-SEC 8 (who are long-term unemployed or have never worked) proportionately across the whole population. It would be neither sensible nor desirable for Aimhigher partnerships or HE providers to attempt to do this in monitoring participation in WP activities. It is simpler and better to record this category separately as 'unemployed'.

4. A second significant feature of the new widening participation measure is the use of 'household reference person' to establish the social class of the household to which the dependant young person belongs. It is useful to have information on the occupational background of the father/mother or carer. However, this is insufficient because father and mother are not interchangeable, that is to say there is not an even (or roughly even) distribution of men and women across the different NS-SEC categories. For example, almost three-quarters of those in the intermediate category are women; almost three-quarters of those in the lower supervisory and technical category are men. Since people establish relationships across occupational

categories we need some way of determining the occupational background/social class category of the **household**. This is done by taking the household reference person (HRP), defined as the person who is the 'householder' (responsible for the house) or the highest wage earner. Since it is very difficult to determine the householder (many mortgages for example are held jointly), the usual way of determining the HRP is the highest wage earner. This is why UCAS asks for this information on its application form.

5. The next question is how to determine NS-SEC from the description of 'occupation' provided by the learner or their parent/carer. It is not possible for Aimhigher partnerships or HE providers to do this in a systematic and rigorous way for participants in WP activities. Even the simplified 'self-coded' procedure requires knowledge of factors such as the size of the employing organisation, number of employees and so on. What we propose instead is a simple approximation exercise. The tables in Annex B contain 351 occupations in a simplified version of the Standard Occupational Classifications 2000 (SOC 2000). These are divided across seven NS-SEC categories, with the largest number (80) for 'lower managerial and professional occupations', and the lowest (26) for 'small employers and own account workers'. A reasonable familiarity with these tables will enable practitioners to allocate participants in WP activities to an NS-SEC category, by asking whether the job description provided is, or looks like, one of those listed. There is no expectation that an exact match is made.

6. The result will be no more than an approximation to the social composition of any group of learners. We suggest that this is good enough: practitioners are engaged in day-to-day monitoring and reporting, not in conducting research that meets more exacting standards. A greater degree of accuracy could only be obtained by interviewing the adults concerned, or administering a complex questionnaire. The costs – not least in staff time – could not be justified. It is open to Aimhigher partnerships and HE providers

to test the accuracy of their judgements by using a combination of interviews and questionnaires with a sample of participants from one or more key activities, although careful thought would need to be given to the design of such research. However, on a day-to-day basis the use of the information provided to arrive at a better understanding of the social background of participants is sufficient.

Annex B

Occupational classifications of NS-SEC groups

See Annex A, paragraphs 4-6, for guidance on using these tables.

SOC2000: Standard Occupational Classification 2000

NS-SEC: National Statistics Socio-economic Classification

NS-SEC 1 Higher managerial and professional occupations

SOC2000

code NS-SEC 1.1 Large employers and higher managerial occupations

1112	Directors and chief executives of major organisations
1113	Senior officials in local government
1121	Production, works and maintenance managers
1123	Managers in mining and energy
1131	Financial managers and chartered secretaries
1132	Marketing and sales managers
1133	Purchasing managers
1134	Advertising and public relations managers
1135	Personnel, training and industrial relations managers
1136	Information and communication technology managers
1137	Research and development managers
1171	Officers in armed forces
1172	Police officers (inspectors and above)
1173	Senior officers in fire, ambulance, prison and related services
1181	Hospital and health service managers
1184	Social services managers
1212	Natural environment and conservation managers
1231	Property, housing and land managers
1111	Senior officials in national government

NS-SEC 1.2 Higher professional occupations

2111	Chemists
2112	Biological scientists and biochemists
2113	Physicists, geologists and meteorologists
2121	Civil engineers
2122	Mechanical engineers
2123	Electrical engineers

2124	Electronics engineers
2125	Chemical engineers
2126	Design and development engineers
2129	Engineering professionals
2131	IT strategy and planning professionals
2132	Software professionals
2211	Medical practitioners
2212	Psychologists
2213	Pharmacists/pharmacologists
2215	Dental practitioners
2216	Veterinarians
2311	Higher education teaching professionals
2313	Education officers, school inspectors
2317	Registrars and senior administrators of educational establishments
2321	Scientific researchers
2322	Social science researchers
2329	Researchers
2411	Solicitors and lawyers, judges and coroners
2419	Legal professionals
2421	Chartered and certified accountants
2422	Management accountants
2423	Management consultants, actuaries, economists and statisticians
2431	Architects
2432	Town planners
2434	Chartered surveyors (not quantity surveyors)
2443	Probation officers
2444	Clergy
3223	Speech and language therapists
3512	Aircraft pilots and flight engineers
3532	Brokers
3533	Insurance underwriters
3535	Taxation experts
3551	Conservation and environmental protection officers
3568	Environmental health officers

SOC2000**code****NS-SEC 2 Lower managerial and professional occupations**

1122	Managers in construction
1141	Quality assurance managers
1142	Customer care managers
1151	Financial institution managers
1152	Office managers
1161	Transport and distribution managers
1162	Storage and warehouse managers
1163	Retail and wholesale managers
1174	Security managers
1182	Pharmacy managers
1183	Healthcare practice managers
1185	Residential and day care managers
1211	Farm managers
1222	Conference and exhibition managers
1224	Publicans and managers of licensed premises
1225	Leisure and sports managers
1226	Travel agency managers
1235	Recycling and refuse disposal managers
1239	Managers and proprietors in other services
2127	Production and process engineers
2128	Planning and quality control engineers
2214	Ophthalmic opticians
2312	Further education teaching professionals
2314	Secondary education teaching professionals
2315	Primary and nursery education teaching professionals
2316	Special needs education teaching professionals
2433	Quantity surveyors
2441	Public service administrative professionals
2442	Social workers
2451	Librarians
2452	Archivists and curators
3111	Laboratory technicians
3113	Engineering technicians

3114	Building and civil engineering technicians
3119	Science and engineering technicians
3121	Architectural technologists and town planning technicians
3123	Building inspectors
3131	IT operations technicians
3132	IT user support technicians
3211	Nurses
3212	Midwives
3213	Paramedics
3214	Medical radiographers
3215	Chiropodists
3221	Physiotherapists
3222	Occupational therapists
3229	Therapists
3231	Youth and community workers
3232	Housing and welfare officers
3319	Protective service associate professionals
3411	Artists
3412	Authors, writers
3413	Actors, entertainers
3414	Dancers and choreographers
3415	Musicians
3416	Arts officers, producers and directors
3431	Journalists, newspaper and periodical editors
3432	Broadcasting associate professionals
3433	Public relations officers
3441	Sports players
3442	Sports coaches, instructors and officials
3511	Air traffic controllers
3513	Ship and hovercraft officers
3531	Estimators, valuers and assessors
3534	Finance and investment analysts/advisers
3536	Importers, exporters
3537	Financial and accounting technicians

3539	Business and related associate professionals
3541	Buyers and purchasing officers
3542	Sales representatives
3543	Marketing associate professionals
3544	Estate agents, auctioneers
3561	Public service associate professionals
3562	Personnel and industrial relations officers
3563	Vocational and industrial trainers and instructors
3564	Careers advisers and vocational guidance specialists
3565	Inspectors of factories, utilities and trading standards
3566	Statutory examiners
3567	Occupational hygienists and safety officers (health and safety)
4111	Civil Service executive officers
4114	Officers of non-governmental organisations

SOC2000

code NS-SEC 3 Intermediate occupations

3112	Electrical/electronics technicians
3122	Draughtspersons
3216	Dispensing opticians
3218	Medical and dental technicians
3311	NCOs and other ranks
3312	Police officers (sergeant and below)
3313	Fire service officers (leading fire officer and below)
3314	Prison service officers (below principal officer)
3421	Graphic designers
3434	Photographers and audio-visual equipment operators
3449	Sports and fitness occupations
3520	Legal associate professionals
3552	Countryside and park rangers
4112	Civil Service administrative officers and assistants
4113	Local government clerical officers and assistants
4121	Credit controllers
4122	Accounts and wages clerks, book-keepers, other financial clerks
4123	Counter clerks

4131	Filing and other records assistants/clerks
4132	Pensions and insurance clerks
4134	Transport and distribution clerks
4135	Library assistants/clerks
4136	Database assistants/clerks
4150	General office assistants/clerks
4211	Medical secretaries
4212	Legal secretaries
4213	School secretaries
4214	Company secretaries
4215	Personal assistants and other secretaries
4217	Typists
5242	Telecommunications engineers
5245	Computer engineers, installation and maintenance
5249	Electrical/electronics engineers
6111	Nursing auxiliaries and assistants
6112	Ambulance staff (excluding paramedics)
6121	Nursery nurses
6212	Travel agents
6214	Air travel assistants
6215	Rail travel assistants
7122	Debt, rent and other cash collectors
7125	Merchandisers and window dressers
7129	Sales related occupations
7211	Call centre agents/operators
7212	Customer care occupations
8138	Routine laboratory testers

SOC2000

code

NS-SEC 4 Small employers and own account workers

1219	Managers in animal husbandry, forestry and fishing
1221	Hotel and accommodation managers
1223	Restaurant and catering managers
1232	Garage managers and proprietors
1233	Hairdressing and beauty salon managers and proprietors

1234	Shopkeepers and wholesale/retail dealers
2319	Teaching professionals
3422	Product, clothing and related designers
5111	Farmers
5119	Agricultural and fishing trades
5312	Bricklayers, masons
5313	Roofers, roof tilers and slaters
5315	Carpenters and joiners
5316	Glaziers, window fabricators and fitters
5319	Construction trades
5321	Plasterers
5322	Floorers and wall tilers
5323	Painters and decorators
5494	Musical instrument makers and tuners
6122	Childminders and related occupations
6222	Beauticians and related occupations
7124	Market and street traders and assistants
8214	Taxi, cab drivers and chauffeurs
8215	Driving instructors
9112	Forestry workers
9231	Window cleaners

SOC2000

code NS-SEC 5 Lower supervisory and technical occupations

3115	Quality assurance technicians
3514	Train drivers
4142	Communication operators
5113	Gardeners and groundsmen/groundswomen
5222	Tool makers, tool fitters and markers-out
5223	Metal working production and maintenance fitters
5224	Precision instrument makers and repairers
5231	Motor mechanics, auto engineers
5232	Vehicle body builders and repairers
5233	Auto electricians
5241	Electricians, electrical fitters

5243	Lines repairers and cable jointers
5244	TV, video and audio engineers
5314	Plumbers, heating and ventilating engineers
5421	Originators, compositors and print preparers
5422	Printers
5424	Screen printers
5432	Bakers, flour confectioners
5493	Pattern makers (moulds)
5495	Goldsmiths, silversmiths, precious stone workers
5499	Hand craft occupations
8114	Chemical and related process operatives
8123	Quarry workers and related operatives
8126	Water and sewerage plant operatives
8133	Routine inspectors and testers
8142	Road construction operatives
8143	Rail construction and maintenance operatives
8149	Construction operatives
8216	Rail transport operatives
8218	Air transport operatives
8219	Transport operatives

SOC2000

code NS-SEC 6 Semi-routine occupations

3217	Pharmaceutical dispensers
3443	Fitness instructors
4133	Stock control clerks
4137	Market research interviewers
4141	Telephonists
4216	Receptionists
5112	Horticultural trades
5212	Moulders, core makers, die casters
5213	Sheet metal workers
5221	Metal machining setters and setter-operators
5234	Vehicle spray painters
5311	Steel erectors

5414	Tailors and dressmakers
5434	Chefs, cooks
6113	Dental nurses
6114	Houseparents and residential wardens
6115	Care assistants and home carers
6123	Playgroup leaders/assistants
6124	Educational assistants
6131	Veterinary nurses and assistants
6211	Sports and leisure assistants
6231	Housekeepers and related occupations
6232	Caretakers
6291	Undertakers and mortuary assistants
6292	Pest control officers
7111	Sales and retail assistants
7112	Retail cashiers and check-out operators
7113	Telephone salespersons
7121	Collector salespersons and credit agents
8111	Food, drink and tobacco process operatives
8112	Glass and ceramics process operatives
8115	Rubber process operatives
8116	Plastics process operatives
8117	Metal making and treating process operatives
8118	Electroplaters
8119	Process operatives
8121	Paper and wood machine operatives
8124	Energy plant operatives
8125	Metal working machine operatives
8129	Plant and machine operatives
8131	Assemblers (electrical products)
8132	Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods)
8135	Tyre, exhaust and windscreen fitters
8136	Clothing cutters
8141	Scaffolders, staggers, riggers
8217	Seafarers (merchant navy); barge, lighter and boat operatives

8221	Crane drivers
8222	Fork-lift truck drivers
8223	Agricultural machinery drivers
9111	Farm workers
9133	Printing machine minders and assistants
9211	Postal workers, mail sorters, messengers, couriers
9219	Elementary office occupations
9221	Hospital porters
9223	Kitchen and catering assistants
9241	Security guards and related occupations
9242	Traffic wardens
9249	Elementary security occupations
9251	Shelf fillers
9259	Elementary sales occupations

SOC2000

code NS-SEC 7 Routine occupations

5211	Smiths and forge workers
5214	Metal plate workers, shipwrights, riveters
5215	Welding trades
5216	Pipe fitters
5411	Weavers and knitters
5412	Upholsterers
5413	Leather and related trades
5419	Textiles, garments and related trades
5423	Bookbinders and print finishers
5431	Butchers, meat cutters
5433	Fishmongers, poultry dressers
5491	Glass and ceramics makers, decorators and finishers
5492	Furniture makers, other craft woodworkers
5496	Floral arrangers, florists
6139	Animal care occupations
6213	Travel and tour guides
6219	Leisure and travel service occupations
6221	Hairdressers, barbers

7123	Roundsmen/women and van salespersons
8113	Textile process operatives
8122	Coal mine operatives
8134	Weighers, graders, sorters
8137	Sewing machinists
8139	Assemblers and routine operatives
8211	Heavy goods vehicle drivers
8212	Van drivers
8213	Bus and coach drivers
8229	Mobile machine drivers and operatives
9119	Fishing and agriculture related occupations
9121	Labourers in building and woodworking trades
9129	Labourers in other construction trades
9131	Labourers in foundries
9132	Industrial cleaning process occupations
9134	Packers, bottlers, canners, fillers
9139	Labourers in process and plant operations
9141	Stevedores, dockers and slingers
9149	Other goods handling and storage occupations
9222	Hotel porters
9224	Waiters, waitresses
9225	Bar staff
9226	Leisure and theme park attendants
9229	Elementary personal services occupations
9232	Road sweepers
9233	Cleaners, domestics
9234	Launderers, dry cleaners, pressers
9235	Refuse and salvage occupations
9239	Elementary cleaning occupations
9243	School crossing patrol attendants
9244	School mid-day assistants
9245	Car park attendants

Annex C

Members of the Task Group

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Viv Wylie MBE	Director, Aimhigher West Midlands Region

Notes and sources

¹ ‘Widening participation: a review’, HEFCE November 2006, www.hefce.ac.uk under Widening participation/Research programme.

² ‘Widening participation in higher education’, DfES November 2006, www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway under Higher Education Reform.

³ ‘Evidence from the evaluation of Aimhigher’, DfES Topic Note 2006, available at www.aimhigher.ac.uk/practitioner under Programme Information/Monitoring and Evaluation.

⁴ Blanden J and Machin S ‘Educational inequality and the expansion of UK higher education’, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 2004, Issue 51(2), pp 230-249.

⁵ ‘Young participation in higher education’, HEFCE 2005/03, p107, Figure 50, www.hefce.ac.uk under Publications. This report looks at the proportion of young people who entered higher education over the period 1994-2000. It provides measures to monitor changes in overall participation rates year on year, and to monitor differences in participation between young people from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds. The report defines the most and least advantaged families according to where they live. Web-based maps showing these local patterns of participation (known as POLAR – Participation of Local Areas) are also available.

⁶ Youth Cohort Study 2002, DfES, www.statistics.gov.uk.

⁷ The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) publishes performance indicators for HE (www.hesa.ac.uk/pi), which provide comparative data on the performance of higher education institutions in widening participation, student retention, learning and teaching outcomes, research output and employment of graduates. These indicators use NS-SEC groups 4-7 because group 8 (long-term unemployed/never worked) is distributed across the population. When monitoring for purposes of targeting we propose to record ‘unemployed’ separately. For a discussion of socio-economic disadvantage see paragraphs 21-33.

⁸ ‘Aimhigher: guidance for submitting strategic plans 2006-08’ (HEFCE 2006/02) is available at www.hefce.ac.uk under Publications.

⁹ Connor H, Tyers C, Modood T, and Hillage J, 2004, ‘Why the difference? A closer look at higher education minority ethnic students and graduates’, DfES Research Report RR552, www.dfes.gov.uk/research under Programme of research.

¹⁰ Lifelong Learning Networks are funded by HEFCE to improve the coherence, clarity and certainty of progression opportunities for vocational learners into and through higher education. They consist of networks of higher and further education institutions, along with key partners such as Aimhigher, Regional Development Agencies, Sector Skills Councils, and local employers. Further information is available at www.hefce.ac.uk under Widening participation/Lifelong Learning Networks.

¹¹ Train to Gain is a brokerage service run by the Learning and Skills Council that helps businesses to find the right training for their employees. Information about the programme is available at www.traintogain.gov.uk. Details of the pilot projects to extend the programme to higher level skills are at www.hefce.ac.uk under Learning and teaching/Employer engagement/Pilot projects and pathfinders.

¹² From 1 September 2007 the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth is due to be replaced by a Learner Academy for all 4-19 year-olds identified by their school or college as gifted and talented.

¹³ Excellence Hubs are government-funded partnerships led by higher education institutions in each region across England. They will provide non-residential summer schools and other outreach activity to meet the needs of gifted and talented learners. Further information is on the CfBT Education Trust site, www.cfbt.com under Teach/Gifted and Talented Education/Excellence Hubs.

¹⁴ HEFCE will issue a ‘user guide’ to these data when they become available. See also note 22 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

¹⁵ Fischer Family Trust is an independent, non-profit organisation which undertakes and supports projects to address the development of education in the UK. One project provides analysis and data which help

local authorities and schools to make more effective use of pupil performance data, for self-evaluation and target-setting. See www.fischertrust.org under Performance Data Projects.

¹⁶ Further information on the progression model is available at www.aimhigher.ac.uk/practitioner under Programme Information/About Aimhigher.

¹⁷ '2020 vision – report of the Teaching and Learning Review Group', DfES 2006, available at <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk>. Further information about personalised learning can be found at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk under Personalised learning.

¹⁸ 'Personalising further education: developing a vision', DfES 2006, www.dfes.gov.uk under Consultations.

¹⁹ www.aimhigher.ac.uk/practitioner under Communications/Communications Resource Pack.

²⁰ Further information on NS-SEC is available in Annexes A and B of this document and from the Office of National Statistics at www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/ns_sec.

²¹ 'Performance indicators in higher education in the UK', Table T1a Young full-time first degree entrants 2004-05, is available at www.hesa.ac.uk under Performance Indicators.

²² The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines a number of indicators, covering a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area (super output area) in England. There are 32,482 such areas. The indices are used widely to analyse patterns of deprivation, identify areas that would benefit from special initiatives or programmes and to determine eligibility for specific funding streams. For more information see www.communities.gov.uk under Research and statistics/Publications/Creating better communities research and statistics.

List of abbreviations

DfES	Department for Education and Skills
FEC	Further education college
HE	Higher education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher education institution
HRP	Household Reference Person
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NS-SEC	National Statistics Socio-economic Classification
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
WP	Widening participation

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