Action on Access
The National Co-ordination Team for Widening Participation

Higher Education and School Partnerships - New Opportunities to Engage with Schools

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Aimhigher

14-19 Reforms

NCEE Recommendations

Mentoring schemes

SCHOOLS

Higher Education Progression Framework

New Opportunities White Paper

Higher Education Institutions

Reduced student numbers, student loans and graduate unemployment

Higher Education Related Learning

Why Engagement?

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- Widen participation to improve social mobility & change the social mix of some HEIs
  - Those young people from low income backgrounds who come in the top 20% test results at age 11 are half as likely to attend university as those who have not

Why Engagement?

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- Raise aspiration – teacher's attitudes
- Raise attainment – role for HE
- Improve learners job prospects
- Influence, understand & support the curriculum
- Government policy

Traditional models

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- Schools use Aimhigher money to fund programmes for targeted learners
- Schools participate in Aimhigher activities
- Schools take up offers from HEI WP teams
- Schools take up offers from other WP schemes e.g. mentoring
- Schools work within wider partnerships
- Ad hoc engagements

The Higher Education Progression Framework

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- Based on good existing practice
- Creates a coherent journey within flexible structures
- Based around learner outcomes
- Requires partnerships of quality and depth
- An Aimhigher curriculum map with multi-agency delivery

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Are the NCEE Recommendations and the New Opportunities White Paper changing the nature of engagement with Schools?

Key Recommendations

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- **Information Advice and Guidance**
  - A revised draft Ofsted inspection framework
  - Possible pilot of post 16 and post 19 progression data
  - Statutory guidance for local authorities
  - Responsibility at senior management level statutory guidance to follow

Key Recommendations

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- **Working with younger students**
  - Map existing work with primary schools
  - HE visit for primary aged pupils
  - National Challenge Schools to fund an HE experience at KS3
  - KS2 pathfinders – impact of early intervention

Key Recommendations

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- **Progression Pathways**
  - Four main qualification pathways – apprenticeships, diplomas, FLT & GCSEs
  - 14-19 Prospectus & Common Application Process
  - TDA to support 14-19 teacher's awareness of these pathways

Key Recommendations

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- **Comprehensive Package of Assistance**
  - Pupils from low income backgrounds in top 50% of performers
  - Continue to target existing resources e.g. Aimhigher, Aimhigher Associates, Outreach departments (strategic assessments)
  - 11 research intensive universities to seek out high potential learners from poor backgrounds & recognise each others compact schemes

Key Recommendations

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- **Focus on attainment gaps**
  - Aim to break the link between disadvantage and attainment
  - School report card looking at well being of disadvantaged students
  - Statutory targets for improving performance of pupils on FSM
  - Variances in attainment part of the ‘single conversation’

Key Questions

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- Formalising what already exists
- The nature of targeting
- Moving towards the statutory
- Aspiration and/or attainment
- The future of those resources
- The economic climate and student numbers

What makes a good engagement?

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- An understanding of each others ‘language’
- Mutual benefit
- A partnership of equals
- A sustained relationship