



Access and Admissions in  
Higher Education

Can the university sector  
improve access in a new  
fee environment?

Professor Joy Carter  
University of Winchester

30<sup>th</sup> October 2012

**Q:** Well, can it?

**A:** Possibly, but .....

?

?

?

?





# OUTLINE

1. Good news
2. Bad news
3. Summary

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# New fees regime... good intentions?

"The new arrangements,  
which begin this year,  
will see significant new  
spending on widening  
access..."

May 2012



Vince Cable

Secretary of State for Business  
Innovation and Skills



David Willetts

Minister of State for Universities  
and Science

# 2012 Applications

Application  
rate  
2011 - 2012  
declining more  
strongly for  
*more*  
*advantaged*  
backgrounds



Applicants from different backgrounds do not show substantial changes in the average tuition fee of the courses they apply to 2011 - 2012



# Spending on Widening Access

1) National Scholarship Programme:

**£150m** in 2014/15

2) HEIs:

**£620m** (access agreements for 2015/16 expenditure)

3) HEFCE:

**£264m** (2012/13 allocation)



140%

120%

100%

80%

60%

40%

20%

0%

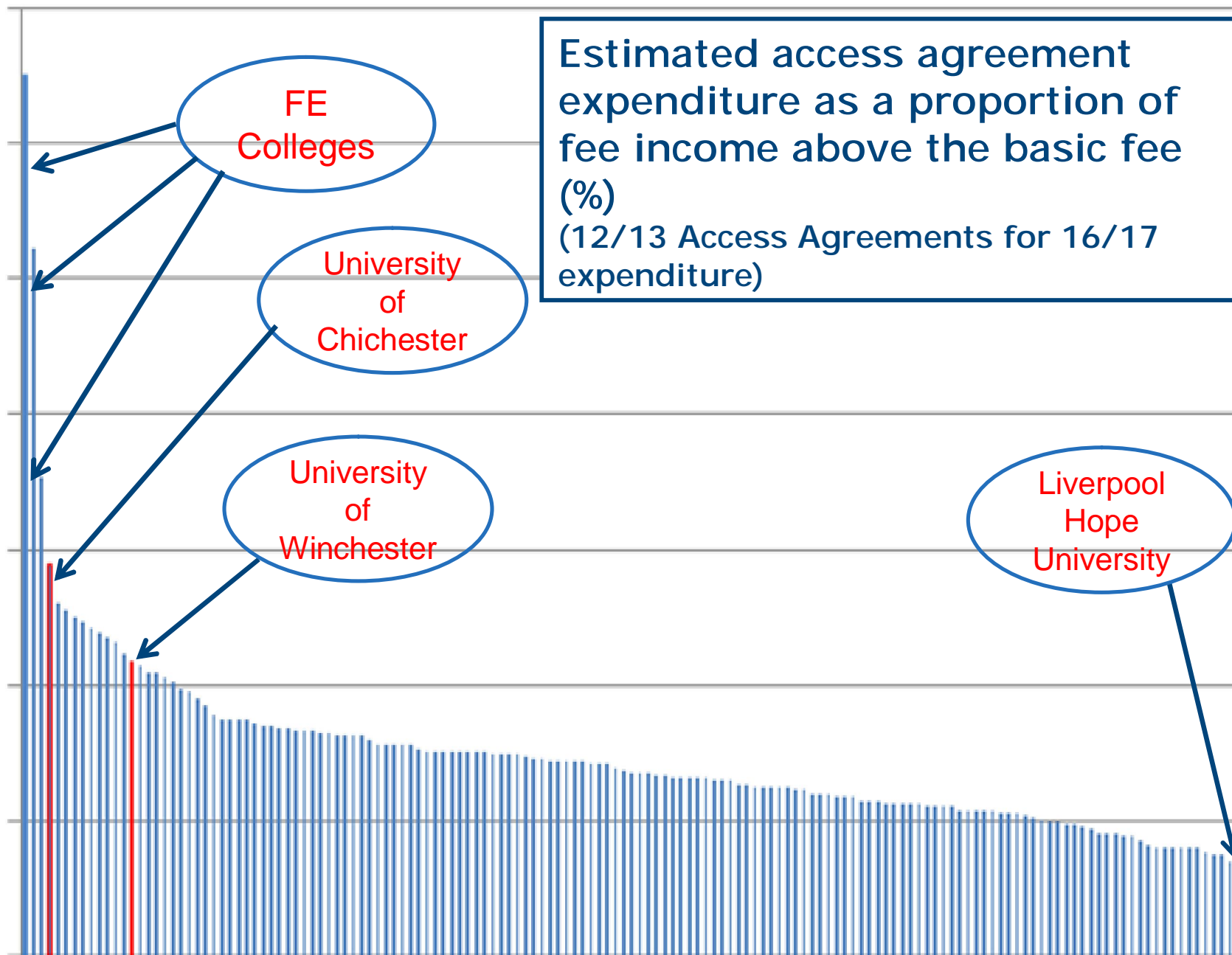
FE  
Colleges

University  
of  
Chichester

University  
of  
Winchester

Liverpool  
Hope  
University

Estimated access agreement  
expenditure as a proportion of  
fee income above the basic fee  
(%)  
(12/13 Access Agreements for 16/17  
expenditure)



“Overall expenditure in this area could reach record levels”

“We estimate that the total expenditure ... could be over £100m more in 2012-13 than in 2009-10”

May 2012



Vince Cable

Secretary of State for Business  
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# A shared strategy

“We want you to develop  
a shared strategy on  
Higher Education access”

May 2012



Announcement on monitoring of Access Agreements  
- due end October

# Contextual data

More debate

More enthusiasm

More action?





# A focus on social mobility


## University Challenge: How Higher Education Can Advance Social Mobility

A progress report by the  
Independent Reviewer on  
Social Mobility and Child Poverty

October 2012

Alan Milburn  
Report published 18<sup>th</sup>  
October 2012





Improving information to  
prospective students  
including:

- Key Information Sets
- Careers information
- Financial information

# Boundaries are being blurred...

Public ⇔ private

Part time ⇔ full time

Universities ⇔ colleges ⇔ schools

Learning **for** work ⇔ learning **at** work

Undergraduate ⇔ postgraduate

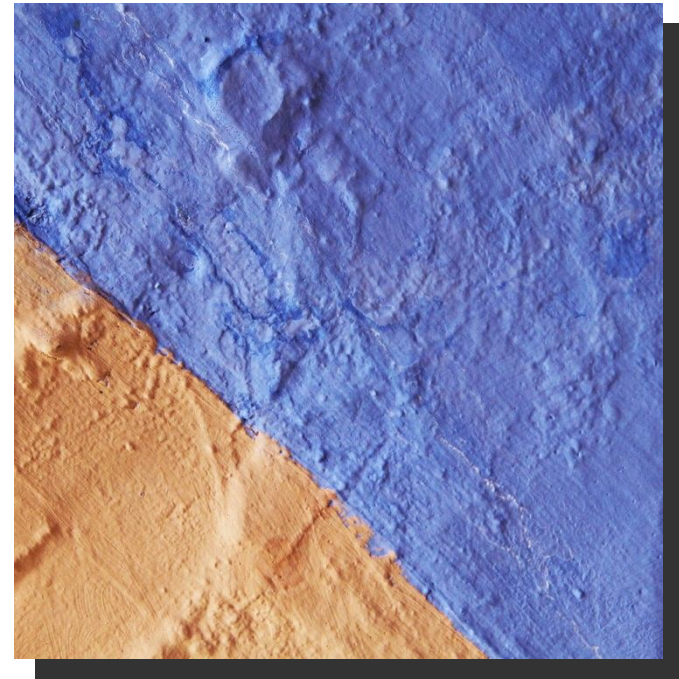
International students ⇔ home students



# Boundaries are being blurred...

The new fee environment brings a new post-modern landscape of choice...

New opportunities & creative thinking – modes of study, teaching and learning methods, study environments



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- Tuition fees - £50 a lecture (*Sunday Telegraph 2.10.11*)
- Why UK students choose college life in a Dutch town (*The Observer 6.3.11*)
- New baby? Best start saving for £30k tuition fees (*The Express, 3.2.11*)
- We work in the sex industry to pay uni fees – Bid to Cope with Tuition Bills (*The Sun, 25.9.12*)

- Graduate unemployment is highest for 15 years (*The Times* 27.1.11)
- A generation abandoned: Graduate unemployment is not only creating an economic black hole but a terrible human tragedy (*The Guardian* 20.7.11)
- Learning on the job beats a worthless degree (*Daily Mail*, 30.4.10)

# New fee regime... good intentions?

Too much emphasis on the Fair Access debate?

Fair access agenda

- 3,000 students

Widening Participation

- ~ 360,000 young people/year

who fail to reach the standards to progress to  
'A' level

and

- ~ 60,000 who are in the top

20% at some stage in their education but did not  
go into HE by the age of 19

2012 applications

# **Affluent neighbours obscure true number of poor put off by fees**

*THE*, 18-24 October 2012





# Spending – is it effective?

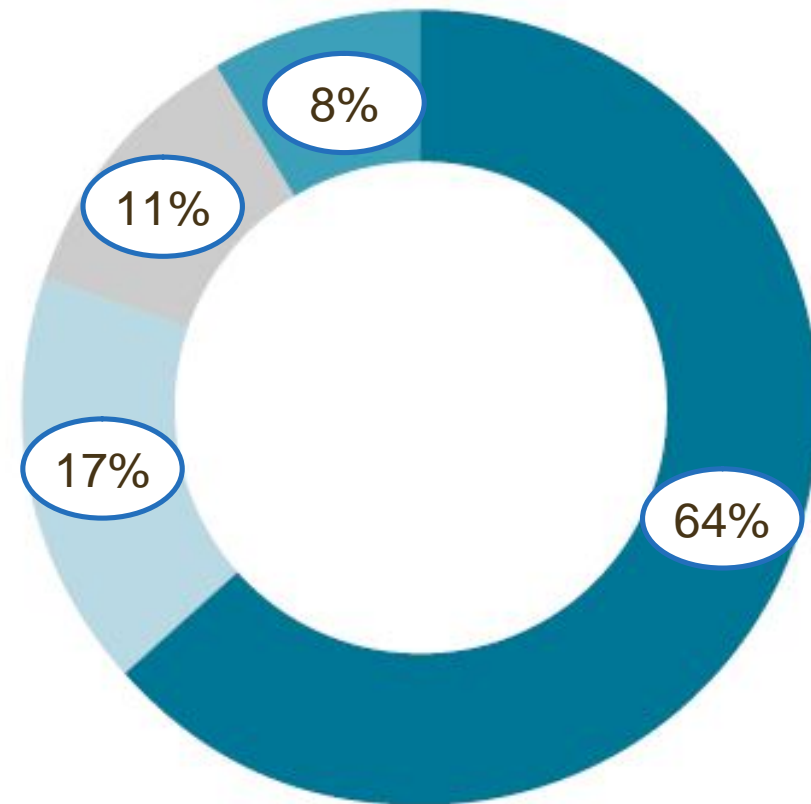
“There is compelling evidence that fee waivers have a negligible or non-existent impact on access”

Alan Milburn  
(interview with *THE* 18 October 2012)



Alan Milburn  
Independent reviewer on  
social mobility and child  
poverty

# Rebalance the spend?

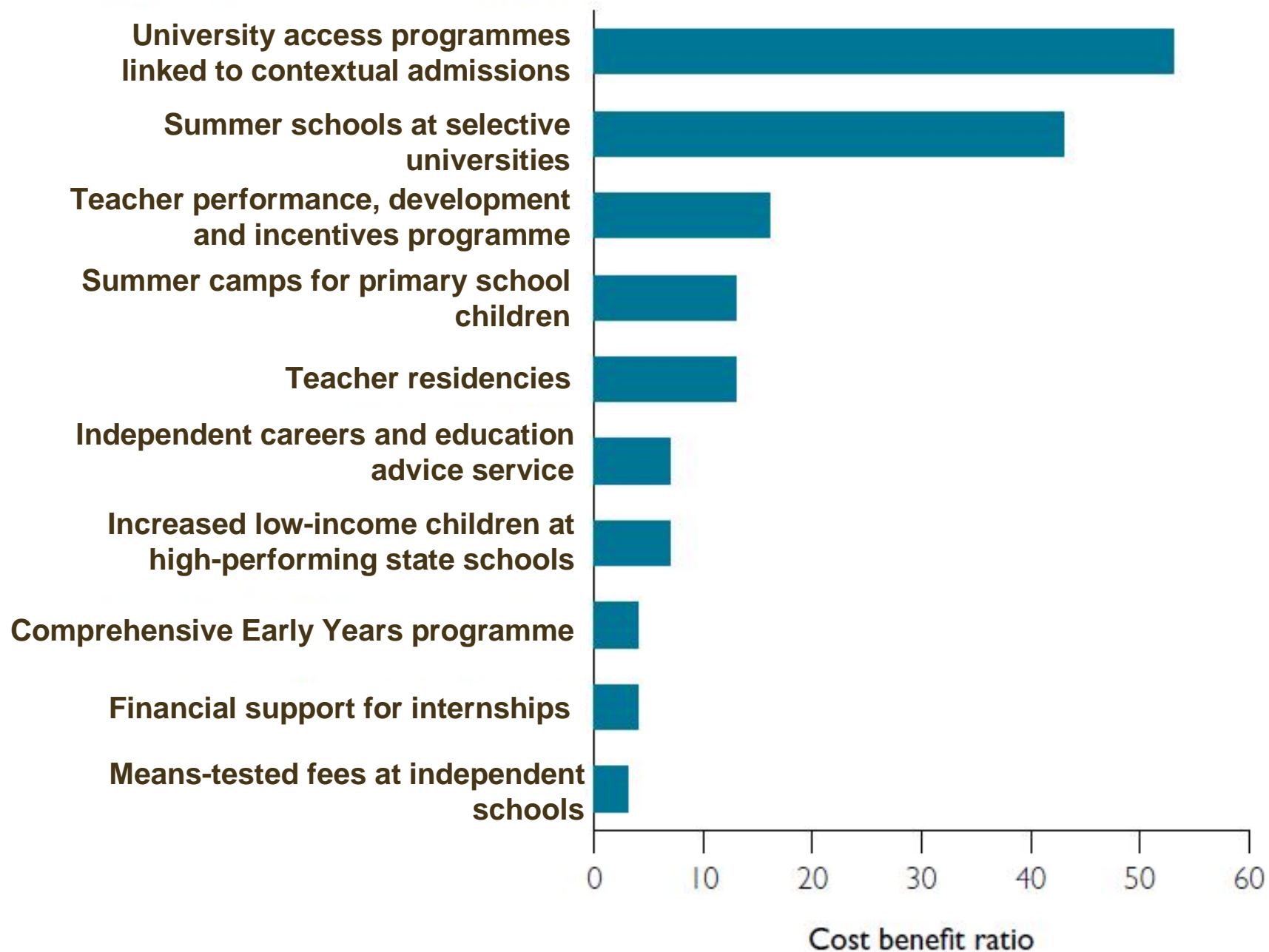


**Source:** OFFA, *Access Agreement Data 2012/13*

Higher education institutions' access agreement expenditure, excluding the National Scholarship Programme



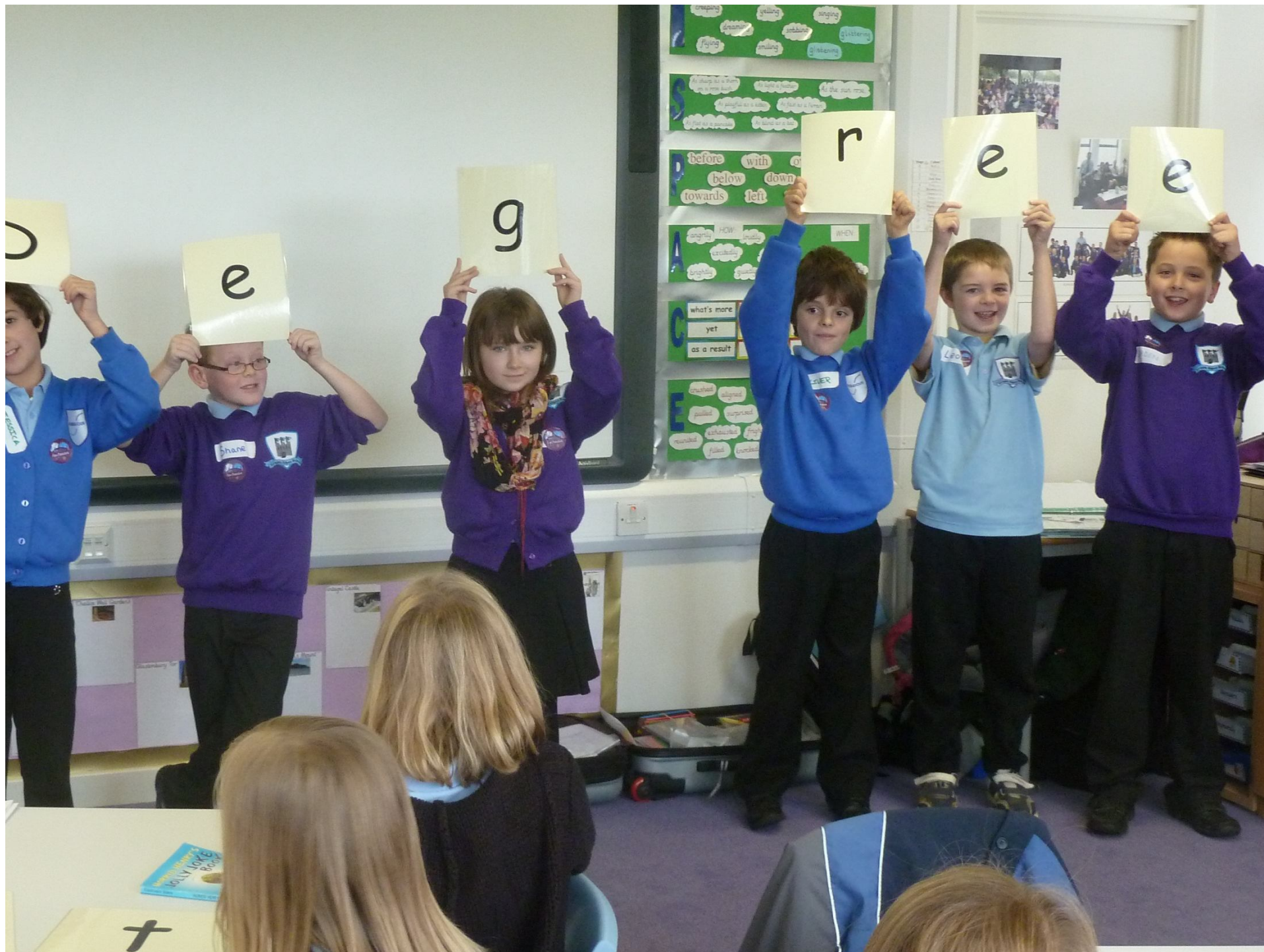
## Relative impact of outreach activity











# What is the effect of AAB+, ABB+ and future policies?

Uncertain . . . . .  
but could have  
very serious  
consequences  
for access



# What is the effect of loans on mature and part time learners?

Mature undergraduates are more likely to...

- have non-traditional qualifications
- study part-time
- be juggling study and family responsibilities
- be from black and minority ethnic groups
- have disabilities
- obtain lower degree classifications

million+/NUS May 2012





# What is the effect of loans on mature and part time learners?



“The new higher education funding regime in England may pose a threat to mature student participation”

million+/NUS May 2012

Impact on part time students?

*Expanding and Improving Part-time Higher Education BIS, June 2012*

# What is the effect of the new fees regime on postgraduate students?



Winchester undergraduate fee **£8500** p.a.

Winchester postgraduate taught fee **£4500**

"I would welcome  
policy ideas on  
how to finance P/G  
study in future"

May 2012

David Willetts  
Minister of State for  
Universities & Science



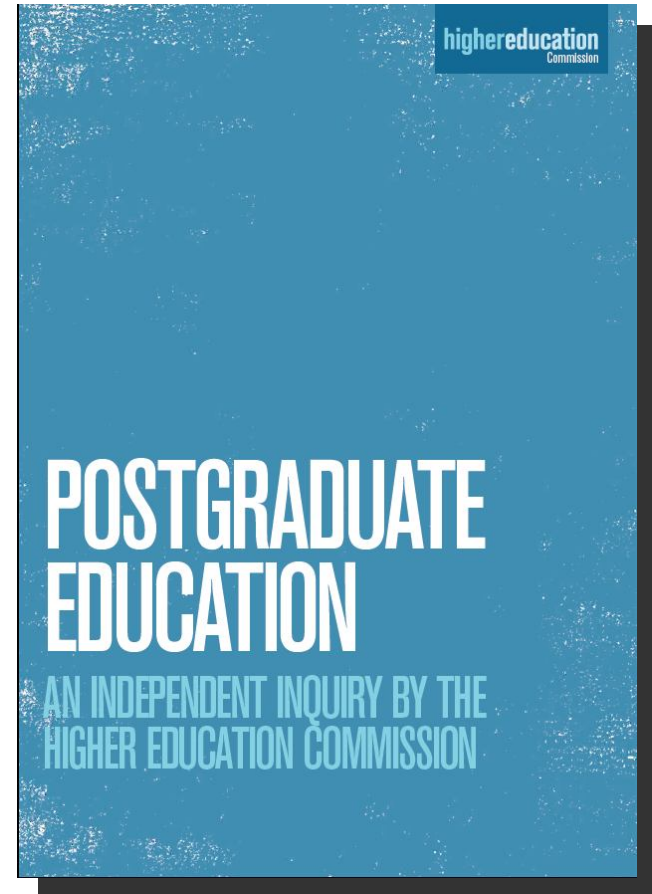


# A “perfect storm” ahead for postgraduate study?

“Fees for postgraduate courses are increasing, whilst a credit crisis, with banks less willing to offer career development loans, continues”

“future student cohorts will be less willing to incur further debt”

Higher Education Commission, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2012



# A “perfect storm” ahead for postgraduate study?

“Students from widening participation backgrounds will feel the effects of greater fees and diminished funding most acutely”

1994 group, February 2012

# Higher Apprenticeships



Difficult for universities to access funding

# Is the loans scheme sustainable?



Write-off on loans 30-32% (government estimate) – could be higher

Report from HEPI  
25<sup>th</sup> October 2012

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**Q:** Can the university sector improve access in a new fee environment?

**A:** Possibly, but.....

- Is spending effective?
- What is the effect of the ABB+ policy?
- Will undergraduate part time and mature students still come?
- What will happen to access for postgraduate students?
- Is the loans scheme sustainable?



