

hnepi

The image features the word "hnepi" in a white, serif font, centered on a dark blue background. The text is enclosed within a white, stylized arc that forms a partial circle. The arc starts above the 'h' and ends below the 'i', with a small gap between the top and bottom segments on the right side. The letters are white and have a classic, slightly condensed serif style. The overall composition is clean and modern.

How should widening access data inform policy?



**Reaching the parts of society
universities have missed:
A manifesto for the new Director
of Fair Access and Participation**

Edited by Paul Clarke and Dr Diana Beech



Higher Education Policy Institute



BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR ALL

HEPI Report 106

Report published on 10 May 2018:

- Collection of 35 different ideas from both within the HE sector and from other sectors and industries (including journalists and politicians)
- Not all ideas involve data collection! Some headline-grabbing proposals include:
 - appointing a Student Mental Health Commissioner;
 - delivering unconscious bias training for staff;
 - granting fee waivers to asylum-seekers;
 - curbing the use of unconditional offers; and
 - founding new Oxbridge colleges to widen access.

Using statistical returns for different student groups



LGBT students:



- Data returns on sexual orientation and gender identity are not currently mandated by HESA (unlike other protected characteristics) and it is vital this is addressed if we are ever going to know the access and participation rates of LGBT students across departments and student services.

Introducing targets within individual HEIs



Care leavers:

- Introducing targets could help to demonstrate a real commitment to ensuring a positive change in the educational life and eventual outcomes of otherwise marginalised groups.
- Targets can improve access, progression and success.

Introducing targets on a national level



- It is important to talk the language of long-termism and advocate targets that go beyond the term of one parliament.
- For example, Scotland is committed to ensuring 20% of HE students are from the 20% most deprived backgrounds by 2030.
- Similar long-term targets are needed in England including targets for success and progression into graduate employment.

Developing contextual data



- The problem with POLAR data is that it is increasingly being used as the only indicator of disadvantage – a role for which it was never intended and, on its own, is unsuited.
- What is needed is a basket of measures not only to support contextualised admissions but also target outreach activity and assist in monitoring and supporting student progress and outcomes.

Linking data in one place



- We have data that could be used to assess the impact of policies contained in Access Agreements as well as for better understanding the important mechanisms behind differential access to HE for disadvantaged students... BUT we need to link this data in one place.
- Good data will help us to find out why things are happening (e.g. socio economic gaps in access to elite universities and types of subjects studied) AND which access programmes are best at tackling them.

The way forward...



- There is a clear role for:
 - universities/colleges to invest in analytic capacity;
 - sector bodies to mandate data collection on wider socio-economic groups/characteristics;
 - the Office for Students to present existing data effectively; and
 - governments to look beyond quick wins and set a longer-term vision.





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