

The future of widening
access: what is 'there'?

What is there?

- 3 scenarios after tonight?
- Challenges
- Where to focus?

3 scenarios after tonight?

- Divided Britain drives out widening access
- Corbyn back to the old school
- As you were – for the time being

Divided Britain drives out widening access

- *'We will make it a condition for universities hoping to charge maximum tuition fees to become involved in academy sponsorship or the founding of free schools.'* Conservative Manifesto
- *...we will also launch a major review of funding across tertiary education as a whole, looking at how we can ensure that students get access to financial support that offers value for money, is available across different routes and encourages the development of the skills we need as a country.'* Conservative Manifesto
- Drive for technical ed/Social Mobility Opportunity Areas/push for new school relationships/too much HE - squeezes out access

Corbyn's back to the old school

'Restore the Education Maintenance Allowance for 16 to 18-year-olds from lower and middle income backgrounds' Labour Manifesto

'Labour will reintroduce maintenance grants for university students, and we will abolish university tuition fees.' Labour Manifesto

'Labour will create a unified National Education Service (NES) for England to move towards cradle-to-grave learning that is free at the point of use.' Labour Manifesto

- No fees/capped numbers/ideologically committed govt. but not clear what implications for present structures – access agreements etc.

As you were – for the time being....

- *‘The greatest injustice in Britain today is that your life is still largely determined not by your efforts and talents but by where you come from, who your parents are and what schools you attend. This is wrong’* – Conservative Manifesto
- *‘We want to see universities make their full contribution to their local community and economy, sponsoring local schools and being creative about how they can open up opportunities for local people, especially those from ordinary working backgrounds.’* – Conservative Manifesto
- Higher Fees/Brexit/need to show commitment to reducing inequality cements a ‘role’ for widening access but diminishing central resources for HE and schools

Challenges

Challenges: Evidence and Prejudice

- *'English universities invest £124m a year in increasing the number of disadvantaged students they enrol, but there is too little robust evidence available to tell them what is most effective in improving access'*. Sutton Trust, December 2015
- *'We shouldn't be wasting millions on university access programmes. How many policymakers and academics who compile the endless widening participation reports come from a similar background? Most of them have never been near an FE college, let alone a council estate.'* – Ann Mroz, Editor, Times Education Supplement, August 2016

Challenges

- Continued drop in mature applications – especially nursing (23% fall in applications in Jan 17 round) and stagnation/decline in white applicants
- Drop in A-level applicants in particular subject areas
- Developing student lifecycle/outcome approaches – especially in ‘progression’

Targeting by dimension of agreement

Numerical Targets for WP Students	Out of 126 Universities	%
Universities with specific progression targets for WP cohort(s)	50	39.68254
Universities with specific student success targets for WP cohort(s)	90	71.42857
Universities with specific access targets for WP cohort(s)	126	100

Where to Focus?

Targets post 2020

- Long term: *'By 2030, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent 20% of entrants to higher education'* – Scotland Target
- NEON Report *'Widening Access to Higher Education in England: The State of the Nation'* - released Autumn 2017. Holistic approach to what success in access means – NEON Scorecard.
- Collaboration in access – essential but what should it look like

Participation

Sex	UCAS End of Cycle Report: Male - 4.3% Increase					UCAS End of Cycle Report						
Socio-Economic Group	DfE FSM 15 -1%			DfE FSM 18 + 2%		UCAS End of Cycle Report POLAR 3 Q1 – + 8.2%			HESA Performance Indicators: State School or College – + 3.2%		HESA Performance Indicators: POLAR Q1 +1.7%	
BAME	DfE Entry: Asian – + 2%	DfE Entry: Black – No change	DfE Entry: Mixed – - 1%	DfE Entry: White – - 1%	DfE Entry: Other – -2%	UCAS HE Entry: Asian – + 6.1%	UCAS HE Entry: Black - + 15.8%	UCAS HE Entry: Mixed + 9.1%	UCAS HE Entry: White + 6.1%	UCAS HE Entry: Other + 9.4%	HESA Students in H Ethnicities – + 4.8%	
Disability	HESA Disabled Students Allowance + 5.4%											
Looked After Children	DfE Children Looked After in England HE Entry – 1%											
Age	HESA Students in HE: Age 18 – + 2.9%		HESA Students in HE: Age 19 – + 0.4%		HESA Students in HE: Age 20 – + 0.5%		HESA Students in HE: Age 21-24 – 0.3%		HESA Students in HE: Age 25-29 – 0.6%		HESA Student in HE: Age 30-34 – 3.0%	
Part-time	HESA Part-time study – 1.1%											

Performance

Socio-Economic Group	HESA Performance Indicators: Non-continuation rates by POLAR 3 Q1 – 0.4%										
Part-time	HESA Performance Indicators: Non-continuations rate by part-time + 0.5%										

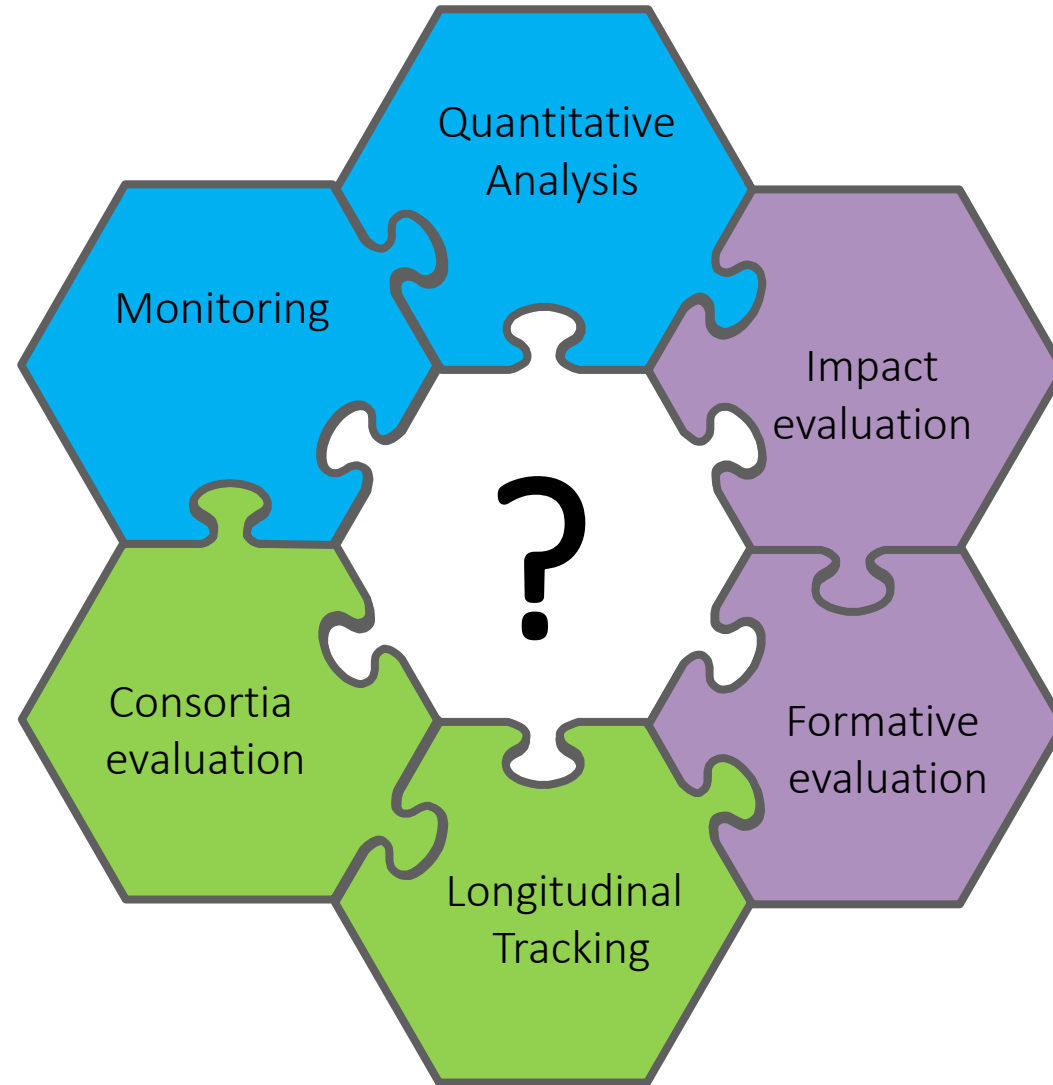
Progression

Sex	HESA Employment of Leavers: Male + 4.0%					HESA Employment of Leavers: – 3.2%						
BAME	HESA Employment of Leavers: Asian + 6.6%			HESA Employment of Leavers: Black + 9.0%		HESA Employment of Leavers: Other – + 5.8%			HESA Employment of Leavers: White – + 3.6%		HESA Employment of Leavers: Unknown + 3.5%	
Socio-Economic Group	DfE Soc 1-9: Students from SOC 4-9 backgrounds progressing to SOC 1-3 level jobs + 5.0%											

Duties of the Office for Students

- The seven general duties of the OfS:
- Protect institutional autonomy
- Promote quality, choice and opportunities
- Encourage competition but have regard for collaboration
- Promote value for money
- Promote equality of opportunity for access and participation in HE
- Use OfS resource efficiently
- Ensure best regulatory practice

Future of collaboration: Measuring the evidence of NCOP



Measuring success of NCOP (from HEFCE)

- Meeting programme objectives
- Taking account of political, structural and educational developments
- Alignment with, and impact on, broader outreach
- Collectively the findings from all three elements will play a critical role in:

Providing evidence of progress and success;

Supporting funding decisions for year 3 and 4 of the programme;

Supporting evidence-based approaches to refinement of effective practice at the local level

Addressing barriers to student success Catalyst Fund programme

- 17 successful awards
- £7.5 million HEFCE funding
- Project lead institutions include 15 HEIs and 2 FECs
- 64 HE providers involved in the projects overall plus 23 additional organisations

- **Project themes**
- Student attainment
- Employability
- Learner analytics
- Inclusive practice
- Mental health

Where to focus?

- Targets post 2020
- Widening access and the role of universities in early 21st century UK
- Access led 'whole institutional' approaches to access
- Articulating evidence of impact - could NEON do more here?
- Shaping thinking of new Office for Students