

**WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Analysis of progression rates for
young people in England by free
school meal receipt and school
type

AUGUST 2011

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Introduction

This Official Statistics Release provides the latest information on the estimated number of 15 year olds in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) who progress to Higher Education (HE) by age 19 by 2008/09. The information is presented at national and local authority level. Further data is also provided on the number of young people taking A levels or equivalent qualifications who progress to the most selective institutions by school type.

This release replaces the previous Widening Participation release "*Full-time Young Participation by Socio-Economic Class (FYPSEC):2010 update*" published in July 2010¹. In this release, receipt of FSM is used as the measure of disadvantage and replaces the previous measure based on socio-economic classification. The context for these changes is reflected in the Background.

The FSM and school type/selective institution measures are intended to contribute to the understanding of widening participation issues as part of a range of measures, which have different strengths and limitations. Annex D provides information on some of the other measures available. We aim to further develop the measures contained in this publication over time.

¹ http://stats.berr.gov.uk/he/FYPSEC_2010_final.pdf

Key Findings

Table 1 compares the progression of pupils with and without Free School Meals to Higher Education.

**Table 1: Estimated percentage of maintained school pupils aged 15 by Free School Meal status who entered HE by age 19
Academic Years 2005/06 to 2008/09**

UK Higher Education Institutions and English Further Education Colleges

	Estimated % who entered HE			
	FSM ^[1]	Non-FSM ^[1]	Gap (pp) ^[2]	All
2005/06	13%	33%	19	30%
2006/07	14%	33%	19	31%
2007/08	15%	33%	18	31%
2008/09	17%	35%	18	33%

pp = percentage points

[1] FSM and Non-FSM refer to whether pupils were receiving Free School Meals or not.

[2] Gap is the difference between FSM and non-FSM expressed in percentage points. Percentage figures are rounded; gap figures are calculated from un-rounded data and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages.

The table shows that an estimated 13% of maintained school pupils who received Free School Meals (FSM) entered Higher Education in 2005/06. This rose steadily to an estimated 17% in 2008/09. The estimated progression rate for pupils not receiving Free School Meals also rose, but with a smaller increase, from 33% to 35%. The gap between FSM and Non-FSM rates is therefore estimated to have fallen slightly, to 18 percentage points.

Prior attainment is not accounted for in this measure. Many pupils will not continue their education; therefore may not hold the qualifications to progress to HE. See Annex A, in particular the caveats, for more details on this measure.

Table 2 breaks down the 2008/09 progression rates by Local Authority. In addition, an Excel table associated with this publication gives a time series of this information.

Table 2: Estimated percentage of maintained school pupils aged 15 in 2004/05 by Free School Meal status who entered HE in 2007/08 at age 18 or 2008/09 at age 19, by Local Authority
UK Higher Education Institutions and English further education colleges

Local Authority ^[1]	Estimated % entering HE				% of pupils with FSM ^[5]
	FSM ^[2]	Non-FSM ^[2]	Gap (pp) ^[3]	All	
Camden	34%	47%	13	43%	30%
Greenwich	20%	34%	13	30%	29%
Hackney	37%	41%	4	40%	35%
Hammersmith and Fulham	32%	51%	20	45%	33%
Islington	34%	32%	-1	33%	36%
Kensington and Chelsea	44%	52%	8	50%	26%
Lambeth	30%	45%	16	39%	40%
Lewisham	26%	40%	14	36%	26%
Southwark	31%	37%	5	34%	45%
Tower Hamlets	33%	37%	4	34%	63%
Wandsworth	32%	43%	10	40%	23%
Westminster	45%	43%	-2	44%	29%
Barking and Dagenham	20%	23%	4	23%	25%
Barnet	34%	55%	22	52%	16%
Bexley	15%	33%	19	31%	9%
Brent	39%	56%	17	52%	22%
Bromley	17%	40%	23	38%	10%
Croydon	27%	41%	14	38%	18%
Ealing	35%	52%	16	47%	28%
Enfield	29%	46%	17	42%	19%
Haringey	32%	40%	8	37%	38%
Harrow	36%	56%	20	52%	19%
Havering	10%	32%	21	30%	8%
Hillingdon	19%	36%	16	33%	18%
Hounslow	31%	50%	19	46%	19%
Kingston upon Thames	29%	52%	23	50%	8%
Merton	24%	39%	15	36%	15%
Newham	40%	51%	11	46%	42%
Redbridge	43%	56%	13	54%	15%
Richmond upon Thames	21%	41%	20	38%	13%
Sutton	15%	50%	35	47%	8%
Waltham Forest	32%	40%	8	38%	26%
Birmingham	24%	40%	16	35%	32%
Coventry	16%	33%	16	30%	16%
Dudley	11%	33%	23	30%	14%
Sandwell	15%	25%	10	23%	16%
Solihull	16%	41%	25	38%	11%
Walsall	14%	31%	17	28%	17%
Wolverhampton	15%	36%	20	32%	18%
Knowsley	11%	23%	13	19%	34%
Liverpool	15%	36%	21	29%	32%
St. Helens	11%	35%	24	31%	16%
Sefton	18%	39%	21	36%	16%
Wirral	15%	44%	30	36%	28%
Bolton	18%	33%	15	31%	15%
Bury	15%	38%	23	35%	12%
Manchester	17%	30%	13	25%	43%

Oldham	17%	34%	17	30%	21%
Rochdale	16%	30%	14	27%	24%
Salford	8%	26%	18	21%	24%
Stockport	11%	36%	25	34%	10%
Tameside	11%	27%	17	25%	16%
Trafford	23%	47%	24	44%	12%
Wigan	9%	31%	22	27%	15%
Barnsley	7%	25%	18	21%	21%
Doncaster	8%	27%	19	24%	15%
Rotherham	11%	30%	19	27%	14%
Sheffield	16%	32%	16	30%	15%
Bradford	19%	33%	14	29%	27%
Calderdale	15%	35%	20	32%	13%
Kirklees	17%	36%	18	33%	16%
Leeds	12%	32%	21	29%	18%
Wakefield	9%	27%	18	25%	13%
Gateshead	12%	35%	23	32%	16%
Newcastle upon Tyne	10%	32%	22	27%	20%
North Tyneside	4%	34%	30	31%	10%
South Tyneside	11%	33%	21	27%	27%
Sunderland	10%	27%	17	25%	14%
Isles of Scilly ^[4]	-	57%	-	54%	4%
Bath and North East Somerset	10%	34%	24	32%	7%
Bristol, City of	7%	22%	15	20%	15%
North Somerset	11%	36%	25	34%	8%
South Gloucestershire	10%	30%	19	29%	5%
Hartlepool	16%	34%	18	31%	19%
Middlesbrough	16%	35%	18	29%	31%
Redcar and Cleveland	14%	37%	23	32%	21%
Stockton-on-Tees	11%	39%	28	34%	17%
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	6%	21%	15	18%	23%
East Riding of Yorkshire	11%	38%	27	36%	7%
North East Lincolnshire	8%	24%	16	21%	17%
North Lincolnshire	11%	30%	19	28%	11%
North Yorkshire	15%	40%	25	39%	5%
York	15%	35%	20	34%	5%
Bedfordshire	16%	36%	20	34%	8%
Luton	27%	34%	7	32%	24%
Buckinghamshire	17%	50%	33	48%	8%
Milton Keynes	14%	32%	19	30%	11%
Derbyshire	11%	35%	24	32%	9%
Derby	19%	34%	15	32%	15%
Dorset	10%	32%	22	31%	6%
Poole	16%	36%	19	35%	6%
Bournemouth	11%	33%	22	30%	11%
Durham	10%	32%	22	27%	19%
Darlington	8%	39%	31	34%	16%
East Sussex	10%	28%	18	27%	10%
Brighton and Hove	13%	31%	18	28%	14%
Hampshire	11%	34%	24	33%	6%
Portsmouth	10%	21%	11	20%	13%
Southampton	8%	25%	17	22%	15%
Leicestershire	16%	37%	21	36%	6%
Leicester	26%	38%	12	36%	19%

Rutland ^[4]	-	39%	-	38%	2%
Staffordshire	12%	33%	22	32%	7%
Stoke-on-Trent	11%	27%	16	24%	19%
Wiltshire	8%	34%	26	32%	5%
Swindon	9%	26%	17	24%	8%
Bracknell Forest	8%	32%	24	30%	5%
Windsor and Maidenhead	16%	42%	26	40%	6%
West Berkshire	7%	35%	29	34%	4%
Reading	10%	39%	29	35%	14%
Slough	24%	52%	28	48%	15%
Wokingham	9%	41%	32	39%	5%
Cambridgeshire	13%	36%	23	35%	7%
Peterborough	16%	31%	14	29%	15%
Cheshire	11%	39%	28	37%	9%
Halton	11%	27%	16	24%	18%
Warrington	8%	39%	31	37%	8%
Devon	13%	30%	17	29%	8%
Plymouth	11%	30%	19	28%	10%
Torbay	7%	38%	31	34%	13%
Essex	12%	32%	20	30%	8%
Southend-on-Sea	11%	40%	29	37%	12%
Thurrock	7%	24%	17	22%	10%
Herefordshire	9%	34%	25	32%	6%
Worcestershire	10%	35%	25	33%	7%
Kent	10%	36%	26	34%	8%
Medway	10%	31%	20	29%	8%
Lancashire	15%	36%	22	34%	12%
Blackburn with Darwen	22%	34%	13	31%	26%
Blackpool	16%	22%	6	21%	16%
Nottinghamshire	8%	31%	23	29%	11%
Nottingham	11%	26%	14	21%	30%
Shropshire	13%	34%	21	33%	5%
Telford and Wrekin	11%	32%	21	29%	17%
Cornwall	12%	30%	18	28%	9%
Cumbria	9%	36%	27	32%	12%
Gloucestershire	8%	37%	29	35%	7%
Hertfordshire	17%	43%	26	41%	6%
Isle of Wight	8%	28%	19	24%	17%
Lincolnshire	9%	34%	25	32%	7%
Norfolk	9%	28%	20	26%	9%
Northamptonshire	12%	31%	19	30%	8%
Northumberland	7%	35%	28	32%	10%
Oxfordshire	11%	34%	23	32%	8%
Somerset	12%	31%	19	30%	7%
Suffolk	10%	33%	22	31%	9%
Surrey	15%	38%	24	37%	6%
Warwickshire	10%	37%	27	35%	7%
West Sussex	10%	33%	23	31%	6%
Total England	17%	35%	18	33%	14%

pp = percentage points - = less than 0.5%

[1] Local authority refers to the location of the school the pupil attended, rather than their home address.

[2] FSM and Non-FSM refer to whether pupils were receiving Free School Meals or not.

[3] Percentage figures are rounded; gap figures are calculated from un-rounded data and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages.

[4] Percentages below 0.5 are not shown in the table, nor are related figures which could potentially disclose these; the small numbers involved explain the difference between the non-FSM and overall percentages for these small authorities.

[5] Percentage of pupils with Free School Meals according to the matched data used to produce this table; figures may vary slightly from other sources.

The figures in the table suggest that 88 Local Authorities out of 149 (59%) have a larger gap between the progression rates for FSM and Non-FSM pupils than the England level gap (of 18 percentage points).

Figures are estimates. Care should be taken when comparing progression rates across local authorities. In particular, it is not possible to conclude that the gaps in progression rates shown for different Local Authorities are a reflection of the performance of educational institutions in those Authorities. This is because the composition of the Non-FSM group (and to a lesser extent the FSM group) will vary considerably in terms of levels of affluence and other factors that will impact on educational attainment and progression. The proportion of pupils with FSM varies considerably between authorities, as illustrated in the last column of the table. Note that there is a potential for minor errors in the matching process deployed. See Annex A for more details on this measure and Annex C for information about the matching process.

Table 3 compares progression to HE from the state and independent sector for A level and equivalent level students.

Table 3: Estimated number and percentage of A level and equivalent level students who entered HE by age 19 and the percentage who progressed to the most selective HE Institutions, by independent and state school/college. Academic Years 2006/07 to 2008/09

School/college type	Total age 17 in 2004/05	Progressed to HE by age 19 in 2006/07		<i>of which;</i> Most selective HE ^[1]	
		Number	% of total age 17	Number	% of total age 17
Independent	28,545	24,380	85%	17,925	63%
State	198,610	143,935	72%	51,440	26%
Total	227,155	168,310	74%	69,365	31%

School/college type	Total age 17 in 2005/06	Progressed to HE by age 19 in 2007/08		<i>of which;</i> Most selective HE	
		Number	% of total age 17	Number	% of total age 17
Independent	30,350	25,325	83%	19,195	63%
State	234,860	158,655	68%	58,195	25%
Total	265,210	183,980	69%	77,385	29%

School/college type	Total age 17 in 2006/07	Progressed to HE by age 19 in 2008/09		<i>of which;</i> Most selective HE	
		Number	% of total age 17	Number	% of total age 17
Independent	30,435	24,935	82%	19,005	62%
State	235,875	163,725	69%	60,395	26%
Total	266,310	188,660	71%	79,400	30%

School/college type	Progression rate to all HE			Progression rate to most selective HE		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Independent	85%	83%	82%	63%	63%	62%
State	72%	68%	69%	26%	25%	26%
All	74%	69%	71%	31%	29%	30%

[1] The most selective are defined as the top third of HEIs when ranked by mean UCAS tariff score from the top three A level grades of entrants.

An estimated 72% of those who studied A levels and equivalent qualifications in state schools and colleges in 2004/05 progressed to Higher Education by 2006/07. This rate fell to 68% in 2007/08 and rose to 69% in 2008/09. Over the same period the estimated progression rate for independent school and college pupils fell from 85% to 82%.

The estimated progression rate for state school and college pupils to the most selective Higher Education Institutions was 26% in 2008/09, up by one percentage point from 2007/08 but the same rate as in 2006/07. The equivalent progression rate for independent school and college pupils was 62% in 2008/09, which had fallen by one percentage point from 2007/08.

The independent and state sectors cover a wide range of different types of institution. Within the state sector for example it is possible to distinguish between selective and non-selective schools with sixth forms. In 2008/09 selective state schools overall HE participation was 88% and 58% of young A level entrants progressed to the most selective institutions. These rates are significantly higher than the overall 69% and 26% figures for the state sector shown above².

See Annex B for more information on this measure.

² These results are in line with the findings of a joint BIS/Sutton Trust report published on the 31 July 2009, 'Applications, Offers and Admissions to Research-Led Universities', for an earlier cohort of young A level entrants. <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/migratedD/publications/B/BIS-RP-005> This report discussed differences in progression rates to HE and the most competitive institutions/courses by school type. Both sets of findings largely reflect prior attainment or the A level (or equivalent) performance of students.

Background

For 2008/09, BIS is publishing widening participation statistics by free school meal status rather than by socio-economic classification. Since 2007, the FYPSEC publication was produced annually and reflected the proportion of young people from the top three and bottom four socio-economic classes who participated for the first time in full-time higher education. The publication also included an annex that reproduced some of the other published measures of widening participation (WP). These measures are described in Annex C.

One of these WP measures, “the FSM measure” has been chosen to replace FYPSEC as the core measure of disadvantage in this publication. The “FSM measure” estimates the percentage of young people educated in English maintained schools aged 15 who progress to Higher Education by the age 19. Around 14 per cent of pupils in our dataset were eligible for and claiming free school meals.

The arguments for changing the core measure broadly were twofold. Firstly, there have been ongoing concerns with the quality of the socio-economic class variable that underpinned the FYPSEC measure. Secondly, the FSM measure is a well-established, versatile measure. The measure has helped to assess the number of children progressing to Higher Education from low income backgrounds. It is also one of two Higher Education metrics deployed to monitor the Government’s Social Mobility Strategy³. There is also a strategic link with the Pupil Premium announced by the Department for Education. In October 2010, the Government announced that FSM eligibility would be one of the criteria by which funds would be allocated.

There is also a wider interest in the HE aspirations of young people in local authorities. The FSM measure is an individual-based measure that can be disaggregated at local authority level unlike previous measures such as FYPSEC. Progression rates in England by local authority area are shown in Table 2.

Public consultation

By definition, the arguments for using FYPSEC or FSM as the main descriptor of disadvantage are detailed and complex. In addition, other changes to the scope and contents of the publication were proposed – the provision of information on Higher Education access rates by local authority area and access rates by school type to the most selective institutions. For these reasons, the proposed changes were released for public consultation. BIS released the official consultation paper on the 8th June and invited comments from a diverse group of users of Widening Participation statistics. A formal BIS response to the consultation is set out in Annex E.

³ <http://www.dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/social-mobility-strategy-launched>

Technical Annexes

Annex A

The percentage of young people in maintained schools who progress to Higher Education by free school meal receipt

For the most recent data, the denominator used in this measure covers all pupils aged 15 in 2004/05 in English maintained schools. This denominator is broken down by free school meal (FSM) receipt.

The numerator is calculated by identifying pupils who progressed to HE in either 2007/08 at age 18, or in 2008/09 at age 19. The numerator can then be broken down by FSM receipt. HE students are those students on programmes of study for which the level of instruction is above that of level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework, i.e. courses leading to the Advanced Level of the General Certificate of Education (GCE A-levels), the Advanced Level of the Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE A-levels) or the Advanced Higher Grade and Higher Grade of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Advanced Highers/Highers).

This measure is calculated using matched data. This matches the National Pupil Database to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Individualised Learner Record and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record. This allows pupils to be tracked from English schools at age 15 to higher education (HE) by age 19. The measure covers HE courses at both UK Higher Education Institutions and English Further Education Colleges. It must be noted, due to the matching procedures deployed, all figures in this measure should be treated as estimates. Further details of the matching procedure can be found in Annex C.

The following table helps to demonstrate how the cohort is tracked through to entry into HE.

Academic Year	Age at start of academic year	Stage of Education
2004/05	15	GCSEs or equivalent (Key Stage 4)
2005/06	16	AS Levels or equivalent (Key Stage 5)
2006/07	17	A Levels or equivalent (Key Stage 5)
2007/08	18	Entry to HE
2008/09	19	Entry to HE (following a gap year)

Free school meals may be claimed if parents receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £16,190
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Caveats

1. There may be pupils who are eligible for FSM but do not claim for a number of reasons. Such pupils will not be classified as in receipt of FSM for the purposes of this measure.
2. Pupils may have claimed FSM in earlier school years, but not when age 15. Such pupils will not be recorded as in receipt of FSM in this measure.
3. This measure only tracks entry to HE by age 19. A number of pupils may enter HE at a later age and are not included in this measure.
4. Prior attainment is not accounted for in this measure. Many pupils will not continue their education; therefore will not hold the qualifications to progress to HE.

The following table gives the figures underlying the percentages given in table 1.

**Estimated number and percentage of maintained school pupils aged 15 by Free School Meal status who entered HE by age 19
Academic Years 2005/06 to 2008/09
UK higher education institutions and English further education colleges**

	Pupils ^[1]	% of all ^[2]	Estimated number who entered HE	% of all ^[2]
2005/06				
FSM ^[3]	79,745	14	10,760	6
Non-FSM ^[3]	475,205	85	156,005	93
All	556,615	100	167,070	100
2006/07				
FSM ^[3]	81,115	14	11,405	7
Non-FSM ^[3]	492,610	86	163,955	93
All	573,730	100	175,360	100
2007/08				
FSM ^[3]	82,785	14	12,550	7
Non-FSM ^[3]	508,415	86	169,545	93
All	591,205	100	182,095	100
2008/09				
FSM ^[3]	80,320	14	13,845	7
Non-FSM ^[3]	503,125	86	176,240	93
All	583,445	100	190,085	100

[1] Numbers of pupils according to the matched data used to produce this table; figures may vary from other sources.

[2] Percentage figures are rounded and calculated from un-rounded data, and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages.

[3] FSM and Non-FSM refer to whether pupils were receiving Free School Meals or not.

The table shows that the proportion of pupils with Free School Meals has remained steady between 2005/06 and 2008/09 at 14%. The estimated percentage of Higher Education entrants who received Free School Meals at the age of 15 has changed by around 1 percentage point. For the most recent data point, there were 80,300 pupils who were in receipt of FSM at age 15 in 2004/05 who represented 14% of all 15 year olds on the matched dataset. It is estimated that around 7% of Higher Education entrants had received Free School Meals when they were aged 15.

Annex B

The percentage of young people who progress to the most selective higher education institutions by school and college type

This measure is calculated using matched data. This matches the National Pupil Database to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Individualised Learner Record and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record. The denominator is defined as pupils aged 17 in 2006/07 studying at least one A level or equivalent qualification at all English schools and colleges. This denominator is broken down by the school/college type, state or independent. It must be noted, due to the matching procedures deployed, all figures in this measure should be treated as estimates. Further details of the matching procedure can be found in Annex C.

The numerator is calculated by identifying the pupils who progress to HE in 2007/08 age 18, or in 2008/09 age 19, and of those, which pupils progress to the most selective HEIs. The numerator can then be broken down by school/college type (state or independent).

HE students are those students on programmes of study for which the level of instruction is above that of level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework, i.e. courses leading to the Advanced Level of the General Certificate of Education (GCE A-levels), the Advanced Level of the Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE A-levels) or the Advanced Higher Grade and Higher Grade of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Advanced Highers/Highers).

The “most selective” Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are defined as the top third of HEIs when ranked by mean UCAS tariff score⁴ from the top three A level grades. This measure only covers HE courses at UK Higher Education Institutions and excludes HE courses at English Further Education Colleges.

The following school types make up the state school group in this measure: Community, Voluntary aided, Voluntary controlled, Foundation, City Technology College, Community special, Non-maintained special, Pupil referral unit, Further education, Miscellaneous, Academies, Higher education institutions, Sixth form centres. Schools with sixth forms comprise selective and non-selective institutions. Information on school type comes from DFE records.

Caveats

1. Analysis of changes across academic years in this top third list has shown that 92% of HEIs remained in the top third for three consecutive years.

⁴ Further information on UCAS tariff scores is available on the UCAS website: http://www.ucas.com/students/ucas_tariff/tariffables/

2. This measure is restricted to top three A level attainment. Pupils who study other qualifications at Key Stage 5 will be excluded from this measure.
3. Prior attainment is not accounted for in this measure. Many pupils may not achieve the required A level or equivalent qualifications to progress to HE.

Annex C

Details of the matching process

The National Pupil Database (NPD) contains administrative data on all pupils in state schools in England, collected by the Department for Education. Key Stage 1 (KS1) to Key Stage 5 (KS5) data and Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) records were matched to the Higher Education Statistics Agency's (HESA) Student Record and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Individualised Learner Record (ILR). The matching process allows for school pupils to be tracked through to Higher Education. We estimate that coverage is at least 95% of the HE students that we would most expect to be matched. Although it is not possible to know for certain - it is highly unlikely that matching errors would cause the estimate to vary by more than the level of rounding used. The match achieved is called a "fuzzy match" where we rely on names, postcodes, dates of birth, etc and there is some potential for minor errors in the matching process. For this reason, the figures are deemed estimates due to the reliability of the matching procedure used and subsequently rounded to allow for a small margin of error that arises as result of the matching procedure deployed. There are currently only 4 data points available and the figures are reported from 2005/06.

The data used in developing the Free School Meal Measure is drawn from an extract of the NPD where the matching process permits maintained school pupils at age 15 to be tracked through to Higher Education. The base population is those with PLASC records at age 15 in English maintained schools for each relevant year. The figures are broken down by the Free School Meals status and an assessment is then made of their outcomes in entering a UK HEI or a Higher course at an English Further Education College at age 18 or at age 19.

The figures can also be broken down at local authority level. Young people are reported in the local authority at which they attended school as opposed to their normal residence.

The data used to describe the number of young people entering the most selective universities is drawn from a different extract of the NPD. The matching process permits maintained and independent school pupils at age 17 to be tracked through to Higher Education institutions. A level (or equivalent) students in schools and colleges (state and independent) at age 17 are tracked through who may have subsequently entered any UK HEI. The base population is those with Key stage 5 attainment records, which means they must have attempted qualifications of equivalent level to one or more A levels in the summer. Average tariff scores are collated from Key Stage 5 attainment records for entrants and the top third of HEIs are identified based on this information.

Annex D

Other widening participation measures

The measures given in the main body of this publication could be considered alongside other statistics on widening participation in Higher Education. Two other key measures are described in this annex.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE): Trends in young participation in higher education core results for England

HEFCE have an established programme of analysis tracking the proportion of young people from different backgrounds who enter higher education at age 18 or 19 ('young participation'), and periodically report progress on this measure. The latest publication (January 2010)⁵ reports on trends from 1994/95, with provisional results (based upon applications data) up to 2009/2010. The results cover young people from England in UK HEIs.

The starting point for the participation rate is an estimate of the population size of the young cohort at age 15, as they start their final year of compulsory education. The cohort is then allowed three years to undertake their GCSEs and further education before entrants to higher education (typically aged 18) are recorded followed by a further year of entrants (typically aged 19). The young participation rate is then simply the proportion that those HE entrants form of the population of that cohort when it was aged 15. HEFCE reference the cohorts by the two years in which they can enter HE. For example the participation rate for the 2006/07 cohort relates to that group of young people who were aged 15 on 31 August 2003, aged 18 on 31 August 2006, with those who entered HE doing so in academic years 2006/07 or 2007/08.

This young participation rate can then be directly interpreted as the proportion of a particular cohort of young people who enter higher education. The HE entrants in the measure are drawn from a single real cohort of young people followed across academic years – rather than combining young entrants from different cohorts who enter HE in a single academic year. This makes the participation rate less susceptible to distortions from demographic or behaviour changes (for example, from young people bringing forward their entry to HE to age 18 rather than age 19) that do not reflect a change in the proportion of young people entering HE.

⁵ http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10_03/

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA): Performance Indicators in Higher Education

HESA has published *Performance Indicators in Higher Education*⁶ since 2002/03, prior to which they were produced by HEFCE.

In addition to data about young peoples' socio-economic class, the Performance Indicators (PIs) provide information about the proportion of entrants who are from state schools and low participation neighbourhoods.

The indicator for state schools reflects the percentage of young, full-time entrants to first degrees in English Higher Education Institutions who had previously attended a school or college in the state sector.

The low participation neighbourhood indicator is the percentage of young, full-time entrants to first degree courses in English HEIs whose home area (as denoted by their postcode) is known to have a low proportion of 18 and 19 year-olds in higher education. Those students whose postcode falls within areas which have the lowest proportions (bottom 20%) of HE participation are denoted as being from a low participation neighbourhood (LPN). Please note that the new POLAR2 (Participation of Local Area 2) low participation data is not comparable with the low participation data published prior to 2006/07 (although this earlier data has been included in the table below for completeness).

Although these indicators allow us to assess the relative performance of different institutions in attracting students from different backgrounds, they do not allow us (and were not designed) to assess progress on getting more people from less privileged backgrounds into HE. This is because the PIs provide us with the make-up of the HE student body, and not with the participation rates of students from different backgrounds - i.e. they say nothing about the underlying population the HE students are drawn from.

A further important note is that the figures presented here are for UK-domiciled students in English HEIs.

It is important to realise that none of these measures are directly comparable, as there are differences in definitions, coverage and data sources. It should also be borne in mind that there are other approaches to measuring gaps in addition to the simple percentage point differences given here.⁷

⁶ Latest publication available on the HESA website: <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/2072/141/>

⁷ For example odds ratios, showing the relative odds of participating for the two groups.

Table A: Progress on widening participation in higher education – basket of measures

Academic Year	Progression to HE by FSM status (%)			HESA Performance Indicators (%)				HEFCE Trends in Young Participation (%) ⁽³⁾	
	FSM	Non-FSM	Gap (pp)	State schools	Lower socio-economic classes ⁽¹⁾	LPNs (POLAR2) ⁽²⁾	LPNs (POLAR) ⁽²⁾	Band 1 area	Band 5 area
2002/03	..	..	..	86.4	27.9	.	12.5	14	55
2003/04	..	..	..	86.1	28.2	.	13.3	14	54
2004/05	..	..	..	85.9	27.9	.	13.1	15	55
2005/06	13	33	19	86.9	29.1	.	13.5	15	55
2006/07	14	33	19	87.2	29.8	9.6	.	16	55
2007/08	15	33	18	87.4	29.4	9.9	.	17	56
2008/09	17	35	18	88.0	..	10.2	.	18	58
2009/10	..	..	..	88.4	30.1	10.5	.	19	57

. not applicable .. not available

⁽¹⁾ Due to a one-off issue with socio-economic class information, comparable figures for 2008/09 are not available.

⁽²⁾ From 1997-98 to 2005/06, Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs) were defined as areas for which the higher education participation rate was less than two-thirds of the UK average rate, based on higher education participation levels in the late 1990's. From 2006/07, the LPN definition was updated to reflect changes in patterns of higher education participation since the 1990's. All wards have been ranked by their young participation rates (according to HEFCE's POLAR2 work, based on higher education participation in the early 2000's) and the bottom 20% of wards have been defined as LPNs.

⁽³⁾ HEFCE produce five-level classifications of neighbourhood classification where young people live based on participation levels in HE and the education level, occupation and income of their parents. Band 1 reflects participation rates for that quintile of young people from the most disadvantaged areas. Band 5 reflects participation rates for that quintile of young people from the most advantaged areas.

Annex E

Findings from the public consultation

On 8 June 2011, BIS released a public consultation regarding the content of this publication. The consultation closed on 1 August 2011. Thirty responses were received; respondents included 13 universities, 3 bodies representing groups of Higher Education Institutions, 2 Local Authorities, stakeholder bodies, government departments, a group of academics and a private individual.

Main themes from responses

Removal of FYPSEC

The majority of respondents agreed that the FYPSEC measure was flawed and there are serious data issues that would prove difficult to resolve. A large number of students do not declare their occupational information that is used to derive Social Class status. There were also concerns about the subjective nature of the data collective process that relied on the student's view of their parents' occupation. A small number of respondents did advocate retention of the FYPSEC measure as universities have access to the SEC data, and it is a broader measure of disadvantage than FSM.

Use of the FSM measure

Generally respondents were not opposed to using FSM, but were keen that the limitations were appreciated and explained⁸. There was recognition that FSM is more robust than FYPSEC. There was support for using a range of measures, rather than FSM alone.

There were comments that FSM is a "blunt instrument"; it captures a narrow subset of the population, excluding those with incomes too high to claim FSM who may still be regarded as disadvantaged. It also excludes those who choose not to claim FSM. Some respondents noted that there may be regional differences in take-up rates that could distort interpretation. Capturing FSM receipt at a single point in time, together with the time lag between age 15 and entry to Higher Education, is an issue. It is possible to measure whether there is any record of a potential student having been on FSM since the data was first collected in 2002 and some respondents felt that using this data would capture a larger group that had experienced some period of disadvantage.

⁸ These limitations are discussed for example in:

Vignoles, A.; Hobbs, G. (2009) 'Is children's free school meal 'eligibility' a good proxy for family income?'. *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 36, no. 4, pp.1469-3518, <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/study/departments/qss/756.html>

Kounali, Daphne; Robinson, Tony; Goldstein, Harvey & Lauder, Hugh (2008) 'The probity of free school meals as a proxy measure for disadvantage', Vol. Working Paper Bristol: Bristol University <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmm/publications/fsm.pdf>

It was noted that FSM rates may be volatile because pupils with FSM are a small section of the population, and this population may be sensitive to policy and economic changes. In particular, the number of pupils with FSM may rise temporarily during an economic downturn, which may affect progression rates.

New measure on access to the most selective universities

Many respondents accepted that access to the most selective institutions is important in securing access to the top professions. However, there were some concerns about the limitations of this measure.

The definition of the 'most selective third' of institutions will change every year. The way these institutions has been defined does not necessarily capture the "value added" by lower tariff institutions. Some lower average tariff institutions may have exceptionally competitive courses with demanding entry requirements. A focus on high achieving A level (or equivalent) students introduces a subjective assessment of the relative status of different qualifications. Equally, there is no adjustment for those who pursue different qualifications i.e. Level 3 options (i.e. BTEC National Diploma) or subjects. Another issue is that there may be changes to the UCAS tariff score that could impact on how institutions are identified in terms of selectivity.

There were comments on disaggregating the rather broad state school definition by school type and admissions policy. In addition, the measure only looks at schools/colleges which offer post-16 education (population denominator will be 17 year olds). A large number of state schools, particularly those in disadvantaged areas are 11 to 16 schools and so these schools' performance in progressing young people to post 16 education is overlooked.

Changes following the consultation

After considering the responses received from users, the scope of this publication was altered in the following ways:

- Greater clarity that the FSM and school type/selective university measures are intended to contribute to the understanding of widening participation issues as part of a range of measures, which have different strengths and limitations.
- Detailed explanation of measures, including their limitations
- A table available in Excel format with time series of the FSM measure by local authority.

Longer term BIS will consider the consultation responses in improving widening participation statistics. In particular we will review issues related to school and college type; and will review the use of the FSM measure in discussion with the Department For Education, in the light of possible future changes.

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