

**Different Universities, Different
Approaches, Different
Communities:
Widening Participation in Higher
Education, North East England**

*Durham, Northumbria and Teesside Universities, OECD/IMHE Conference,
Copenhagen, 16 October 2006*

What is Widening Participation?

- It is about widening access to, and participation in, Higher Education
- It is to promote and provide opportunities to everyone who can benefit from Higher Education

In the context of:

- UK entry to Higher Education being competitive and normally based on academic results

Context:

- Labour government 1997 set target of 50% participation rate in Higher Education by 18-30 year olds in 2010
- €3billion invested to help recruit Widening Participation students 1997-2007
- 500,000 students in the 1960s, 2 million today



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North East England :Context

- Tyne and Wear and Teesside conurbations, predominantly rural
- Population 2.5 million- ageing and declining
- GVA 80% of national average
- Total investment in R&D under half national average
- Life expectancy lower than national average

North East England :Context

- Economic sectors: manufacturing (21%), business services (25%) and public sector (23%)
- Economic growth in 2001 and 2003 exceeded national average
- Unemployment rates falling faster than the national average

5 Universities: Durham, Northumbria, Newcastle, Sunderland and Teesside (plus Open University in the North) and 15 Further Education colleges supporting circa 80,000 HE students (ftes

Widening Participation at Durham University -Context

*Strategic Aim: To provide an internationally distinctive learning experience that combines academic excellence with the personal development that comes from college life.
...Embracing size and diversity of the student body.*

To encourage applications from students with the potential to benefit from a Durham degree, regardless of background

Widening Participation at Durham University -Context

- 3rd oldest university in England
- Strong research tradition- 94% research active
- World ranking 1st in UK for science impact
- Employs 3000
- 15300 students
- Two campuses: Durham and Queen's - Collegiate
- Very competitive entry

Widening Participation at Durham University

- School visits
- HE fairs
- Summer schools
- Teachers conferences
- HEAD UP
- STARS
- Mentoring
- Campus tours
- Excellence Fellows

Durham University- Impact so far:

2001-02	2004-05
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9% total applications (2231) from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs) • 407 accepted overall representing 11% admissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.2% applications from LPNs (2447) • 386 accepted overall representing 9.5% admissions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.9% total applications with NE postcode (2946) • 614 accepted representing 16.6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.1% total applications with NE postcode (3017) • 552 acceptances representing 13.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66.5% total applications from state school sector (14610) • 1807 accepted representing 66.7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63.5% total applications from state school sector (63.5%) • 2097 accepted representing 59%

Widening Participation at Northumbria University

Mission:

To meet the diverse needs of an international learning community and to contribute to society and its economic development through research, excellent teaching and high quality student support

Widening Participation at Northumbria University

Aims include...

- strengthening of the economic, environmental and cultural life of the region through opportunities in higher education, creating partnerships, integrating with communities, and generating and disseminating valuable knowledge

Widening Participation at Northumbria University -Context:

- Large, teaching-led University
- Practice-based research underpinning teaching
- 29,500 students and 2,400 staff
- 8,250 part-time students (mostly in employment)
- 55% over 21 yrs old on entry

Widening Participation at Northumbria University

Access Agreement

- HEI-specific benchmarks in 7 criteria for 2004 -2011
- Northumbria met ALL benchmarks for 2004, incl. social class, low participation neighbourhoods, retention in Year 1
- One of only 17 HEIs to hit these 3 benchmarks – balancing disadvantaged background with good retention

Widening Participation at Northumbria University

Higher Education Foundation Course (HEFC)

- One of largest 'Access Courses' in UK – for over 19s
- Established for over 20 years
- Pre-HE modular courses (level 3)
- Delivered in 9 schools and colleges
- Career-led choices dominate e.g. nursing, teaching, social work
- 1,618 students - 314 progressing to Northumbria
- Typically from disadvantaged backgrounds

Widening Participation at Northumbria University

Work-Based Learning

- Employer engagement -major national priority
- Potential new groups of learners - some with little or no HE experience
- Needs flexible curriculum
- Framework for Corporate and Community Collaboration
- 8 models incl. validated award delivered by employer
- 851 learners in 05/06

University of Teesside

Promoting Opportunity, Pursuing Excellence

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The rationale for Widening
Participation – a graphic
illustration

If you live here....



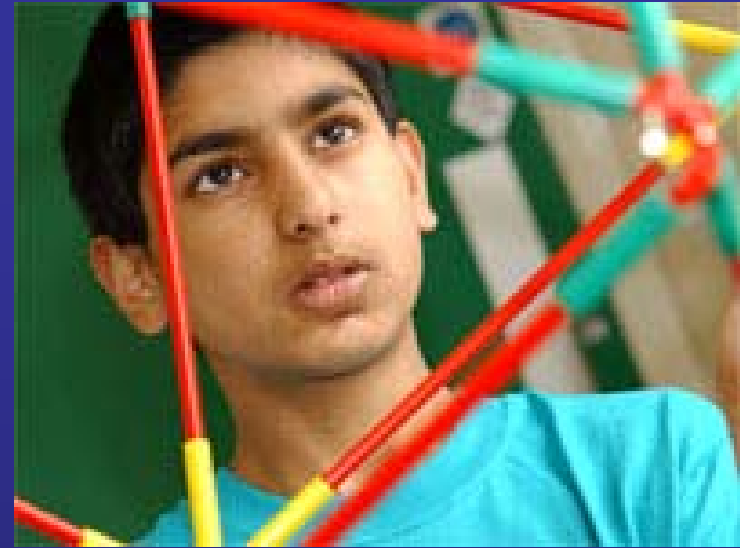
...you're 5 times as likely to go to University as someone living here



University of Teesside

The Centre for Lifelong Learning

- Awareness and recruitment activities across all age ranges, through local, regional and national partnerships
- Contact with 40 000 potential students each year



University of Teesside

METEOR – a flagship programme

- Raising aspirations among 10 – 15 year olds
- Student mentors
- Summer University
- Regular programme of campus activity

11873 in 2004/5

University of Teesside

PASSPORT

- Partnership with Further Education Colleges
- Promotes transitions to Higher Education

10720 in 2004/5

University of Teesside

SETPOINT

- Science, Engineering and Technology focus
- Fostering SET aspirations in schoolchildren

21673 in 2004/5



University of Teesside

WORKING WITH ADULTS

- Adult recruitment strategies
- Higher levels skills in workforce development
- Supporting part-time students

University of Teesside

July 2006 performance indicators (HEFCE):

- 98% students from state school sector (average 87%)
- 43% of young students from disadvantaged groups (average 29%)
- 29% of young students from areas with low participation in HE (average 14%)
- 27% mature students with no previous HE experience (average 16%)

North East Regional Impact 2000-2004

- 4.8% increase in the number of applications to fulltime HE from NE
- 8.4% increase in number of applications from state schools
- 5.4% increase in number of applications from lower socio-economic groups
- Success rate of applicants increased 80.4% - 81.1%
- Success rate of applicants from lower socio economic groups increased from 76.8% to 78.7% (peaked at 80.2% in 2002)

Wider Impact/Issues

- Government moving away from 50% participation target
- Introduction of tuition fees
- Longer term impact to see effectiveness
- Cultural/family issues
- Demand for graduates

Key Questions

- Is it a political priority in your country's education policy to widen access?
- What, if any, are the drivers for Higher Education expansion in your countries?