National outreach coverage dataset

This document provides information about a new dataset containing outreach activities delivered to all schools and further education colleges in England by providers, Uni Connect and charities.

The dataset is publicly available as an Excel spreadsheet and includes data recorded by higher education outreach providers, who are members of tracking services and currently delivering widening participation outreach activities in schools and further colleges (FEC) in England. For a full list of project partners please see Appendix 1.

This is the first release of this dataset. It is currently considered as an experimental dataset and as such we are keen to hear feedback from end users.

How to use the dataset

It is important to note that the aim of this dataset is not to show the impact of outreach, but simply to show the outreach activities delivered during academic years 2017/18 to 2019/20. The unique reference number (URN) of each institution is shown so that it can be linked to other datasets for further analysis. If your organisation is a member of a tracking service, you may wish to consider linking this dataset to the planning datasets provided by trackers to their members.

The inclusion of '% eligible FSM' in the data file denotes the percentage of school learners on Free School Meals. It is intended as a simple, publicly available proxy for deprivation. In practice, outreach providers use a whole range of targeting criteria when selecting schools or colleges for outreach activities. We recommend users link this dataset with the planning datasets provided by their tracking service in order to include proxies for disadvantage other than FSM, such as participation of local areas (POLAR4), indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) and income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI).

What the dataset enables you to do

1. **Identify schools and colleges in England which have received relatively little outreach delivery over the last three academic years.** Providers can use this information to inform them which schools and FE colleges they could target in the future, to ensure their coverage of outreach is maximised within their operational area. Please Note: The latest delivery year (2019/20) includes outreach delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic where delivery is likely to differ from previous years.
2. **Identify schools and colleges in England which have or have not received certain types of activities over the last three academic years.** Providers could use this information to inform the nature of the outreach offer they target towards these schools and colleges in the future, ensuring coverage of outreach is optimal within their operational area.
3. **Identify schools and colleges in England which appear to have received disproportionately high volumes of outreach delivery over the last three academic years.** Providers can use this information to inform which schools and FE colleges to target in the future, although we must be careful to understand why a school has received such high levels of outreach and only reduce if it can be better targeted elsewhere. not. It is also important to take into account the overall school and college population in a region, detailed at school and college level in the 'number of pupils' column and the profile of those students, indicated in the '% eligible FSM' column, when identifying over-served schools/colleges.

4. **To determine how many other providers are working in schools and colleges in your operational area.** The dataset shows which providers are engaging in outreach in your area and may help explain why you have not been able to engage with certain schools and colleges.

5. **To facilitate collaboration between providers working in nearby areas**. The dataset provides activity counts by type of activity and type of provider: higher education providers (HEIs), Uni Connect partnerships and third sector organisations. Where providers are not currently sharing data, this dataset can help providers work together to ensure coverage of outreach is maximised and activities offered by different providers complement each other. The dataset may also help support Uni Connect partnerships ensure there is minimal overlap with HEI-delivered outreach in their area.

6. **The dataset may also be of value in identifying 'hot' and 'cold' spots nationally, as well as the contribution of different types of provider to all outreach delivered nationally.** However, a note of caution here. As discussed in more detail in the limitations section below, there are likely to be regional differences in the extent of the original data capture of outreach delivery. Therefore, comparisons of outreach delivery between regions are not advised, as in some regions outreach delivery has been relatively under-recorded.

How the dataset is constructed

Outreach activity data for the three academic years 2017/18-2019/20 were extracted and put together from project partners' databases: HEAT, Aimhigher West Midlands and East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership . Each row of the national outreach coverage dataset represents one school or college, with adjacent columns showing counts for activities, activity contact hours and providers for outreach activities delivered to the students.

The dataset includes only schools and colleges meeting all the following criteria:

- Included in the Department for Education's Get Information about Schools database (previously called Edubase) on March 2021
- A valid Unique Reference Number (URN)
- Situated in England
- State and free schools, state colleges
- Listed as 'open'
- One of the following phases of education: secondary, sixteen plus, middle deemed primary and primary deemed secondary
- Schools and colleges with an institution type of 'special', 'alternative provision' and PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) are excluded.

When data on outreach interventions are recorded by a provider, an activity ID number is allocated to each outreach event. It is this ID number which designates a single activity as a unit for counting. Variation has been detected in relation to mentoring activities where, for example, one provider may record a ten-week mentoring intervention as one activity and another may record this as ten separate activities. To standardise our counting approach, mentoring activities are counted once per year per provider for each receiving where it is delivered.

Where outreach activities have been delivered to a school or college that is now closed, and it has been superseded by another (according to Edubase), activities related to the superseded receiving institution are attributed to the successor institution, linked by its unique reference number. This is done for the last predecessor only, as linking back to two or more predecessor institutions is likely to

take the activity counts beyond the three-year period this dataset is designed to represent.

Activity types

Activity types relate to a 'common typology' developed by the three tracking services. Where activities on HEAT were recorded as type 'other', they were excluded. Therefore, the total of activities by type is sometimes lower than the three-year activity count.

Some activities are delivered to both pre-16 and post-16 year-groups. Therefore, the total of pre-16 and post-16 activities exceeds the three-year activity count in some cases.

In order to populate the pre-16 and post-16 fields, providers indicated which year groups an activity had been delivered in their submitted data. However, the year groups are not split out by receiving institution. Where more than one school or college is added to an activity, the year groups are conflated. An activity can have year groups 7 through to 13 ticked and then several receiving institutions added, and all of those institutions will be recorded as having received an activity delivered to both pre- and post-16 year-groups.

Several providers have not been classified as an higher education provider, Uni Connect partnership, or third sector organisation provider type, so although their activity is counted in the three-year activity count, it has not been counted within the activity count by provider type columns. An example of these providers would be collaborative groups of HEIs, UCPs, TSOs or other organisations that work with a provider contributing data to this project.

Limitations to the dataset

The limitations largely relate to incompleteness and inconsistencies in the recording of outreach activity data.

1. A survey conducted at the start of the national coverage project indicated incomplete data capture by our contributors (HEAT members; AHWM; EMWPREP; and The Access Project).

Despite this incompleteness, the survey showed that recording of 'all' or 'most (>50%)' activity-level data had increased year-on-year. For example, 2017/18 'all' or 'most' activity-level data for pre-16 students had been recorded by 70% of respondents, increasing to 79% in 2019/20.

Data capture varied by Activity Type, for example in 2019/20 with 'all' or 'most' data on Summer Schools recorded to a greater extent (85% of respondents) than those on Subject Masterclass/Subject Insight (75% of respondents).

There was also regional variation in data capture. Respondents were asked how much activity-level data they had captured for a) pre-16 students; b) post-16 students. Averaging 'all' and 'most' responses across the three academic years (2017/18; 2018/19; 2019/20) and across both age groups produced the following results:

Region	% Providers recording All' or 'Most' activities
East Midlands	92%
East of England	94%
London	59%

North East	47%
North West	72%
South East	82%
South West	67%
West Midlands	89%
Yorkshire and the Humber	62%

The extent of contributors' data recording is influenced by dedicated resource and how far tracking is embedded into the outreach process.

2. In some cases, activities are recorded as delivered to an unknown institution.

These tend to be lower-intensity activities (e.g. community-based events) attended by students from unknown institutions. Where this is the case, 'unknown institution' is shown in its own row at the top of the column of beneficiaries in this dataset.

3. Information regarding the year groups taking part in an activity is often only partial.

In some cases, for example, only '11-19 learner' has been recorded, particularly for IAG activities. These cannot be added to the total of pre-16 or post-16 activities.

4. It is not always possible to record contact hours accurately for activities.

Where engagement in the activities is not assured (e.g. online video), it is advised by tracking services to avoid inaccurate data capture. This may apply to a greater degree to particular activity types and associated providers.

5. Student counts by receiving institution are not recorded in the dataset.

This is because some providers find it difficult to ascertain participant numbers by school or college. Counting participants per receiving institution can occur where a student record is created for a given ('known') participant; but this is not always possible; and such counts may be lower than the sum of 'known' and 'unknown' students.

Recommendations For Outreach Providers when recording data on Outreach Activities

In order to improve data capture of outreach activities the Project Steering Group have created some recommendations for providers when recording data on the outreach activities they deliver. If implemented, the following changes in data capture would help mitigate the above limitations in future iterations of this dataset.

1. Activity records should be created for all outreach activities delivered, with the help of clear guidance from tracking Services. Complete recording will mean that this dataset is able to give a full and accurate picture of outreach coverage nationally.
2. The schools/colleges to which activities are delivered should be recorded where possible (i.e. avoid recoding activities against an 'Unknown Institution'.
3. Total participants per named receiving institution should be recorded where possible. This would allow the inclusion of student counts in this dataset, showing the number of participants per school/college.
4. The recording of mentoring activities should be standardised. The project group plan to work with TASO to provide recommendations as to how multi-intervention activities such as mentoring should be recorded.

5. Where possible, the year groups taking part in an activity should be recorded, specifically as separate year groups e.g. Year 11, Year 12, etc. This enables more accurate monitoring of pre- and post-16 outreach delivery.
6. Contact hours should be recorded where possible, in order that the intensity of engagement with specific institutions and groups is monitored.
7. Tracking services should support and encourage the automation of data capture through capture tools, e.g. online event programmes; registration tools (to alleviate paper-based collection); and survey tools, all integrated into the tracker system.

Appendix 1

The following providers have contributed data to this dataset:

AHWM Members:	EMWPREP Members:	HEAT Members:
Aston University	Bishop Grosseteste University	Aston University
Birmingham City University	De Montfort University	Anglia Ruskin University
Birmingham Metropolitan College	DMU Community	Bath Spa University
Halesowen College	Harper Adams University	Bournemouth University
Newman University	Keele University	Brunel University London
South and City College Birmingham	Loughborough University	Buckinghamshire New University
University College Birmingham	London Southbank University	Canterbury Christ Church University
University of Birmingham	REACH	Cardiff University
University of Worcester	University of Derby	City, University of London
Aimhigher Birmingham & Solihull	University of Leicester	Coventry University
	University of Lincoln	Durham University
	University of Nottingham	Edge Hill University
	DANCOP	Falmouth University
	Higher Horizons	Goldsmiths College, University of London
	LiNCHigher	Hartpury University and Hartpury College
	Pathways	Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
		King's College London
		Kingston University
		Lancaster University
		Leeds Beckett University
		Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts
		Liverpool John Moores University
		London Metropolitan University
		London School Of Economics And Political Science

		Manchester Metropolitan University
		Middlesex University
		Newcastle University
		Northumbria University Newcastle
		Nottingham Trent University
		Oxford Brookes University
		Pearson College London
		Plymouth Marjon University
		Queen Mary, University Of London
		Ravensbourne University London
		Royal Agricultural University
		Sheffield Hallam University
		SOAS, University of London
		Southampton Solent University
		South Essex College
		St George's, University of London
		St Mary's University, Twickenham
		Staffordshire University
		Teesside University
		University College London
		University for the Creative Arts
		University of Bath
		University of Bedfordshire
		University of Brighton
		University of Bristol
		University of Cambridge
		University of Central Lancashire
		University of Chester
		University of Cumbria
		University of East Anglia
		University of East London
		University of Essex
		University of Exeter
		University of Gloucestershire
		University of Greenwich
		University of Hertfordshire
		University of Hull
		University of Kent
		University of Leeds
		University of Leicester
		University of Liverpool
		University of Manchester

		University of Northampton
		University of Oxford
		University of Plymouth
		University of Portsmouth
		University of Reading
		University of Salford
		University of Sheffield
		University of Southampton
		University of Suffolk
		University of Sunderland
		University of Surrey
		University of Sussex
		University of the West of England, Bristol
		University of Warwick
		University of West London
		University of Winchester
		University of Wolverhampton
		University of York
		York St John University
		Aspire Higher
		Aspire to HE
		FutureHY
		Future Quest
		Future U
		Go Higher West Yorkshire
		Greater Manchester Higher
		Grows (GAP)
		Hepp SY+
		Hello Future
		Humber Outreach Programme (HOP)
		Kent And Medway Collaborative Outreach Programme
		London NCOP
		Make Happen
		Network For East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (NEACO)
		North East Uni Connect Programme (FutureMe)
		Next Steps South West
		Shaping Futures
		Southern Universities Network
		Study Higher
		Sussex Learning Network
		The Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON)
		Think Higher

		Wessex Inspiration Network
		Brightside Trust
		IntoUniversity
		Realising Opportunities
		The Brilliant Club
		The Sutton Trust
		The Access Project