

## FEEDBACK SHEET TO BE COMPLETED AFTER THE MEETING

<b>Name of Council Member</b>	<b>Professor Tony Hazell</b>
<b>Title of Conference/Meeting</b>	<b>Fair Access and Widening Participation in HE: An OFFA you can't refuse.</b>
<b>Date of Conference</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> January 2005</b>
<b>Approximate number of people at the conference/meeting</b>	<b>200</b>
<p><b>Issues of Relevance to HPC</b></p> <p>This conference was timed to coincide with the publication of the HEFCE report "Young Participation in Higher Education", a detailed study of participation rates of young people in HE across the UK. It was also designed to focus on the work of the recently established Office for Fair Access (OFFA).</p> <p>Main speakers were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor Ivor Crewe, President of UUK</li> <li>• Sir Martin Harris, Director OFFA</li> <li>• Professor Geoff Layer, Dean of Lifelong Learning, University of Bradford</li> <li>• Kat Fletcher, President, NUS</li> <li>• Dr Tessa Stone, Director of the Sutton Trust</li> <li>• Virginia Isaac, Director of Marketing and Communications, UCAS</li> <li>• Professor Les Ebdon, Vice Chancellor, University of Luton</li> <li>• Martin Ward, Deputy General Secretary, Secondary Heads Association</li> <li>• Colin Flint, Associate Director for Further education, NIACE</li> </ul> <p>In addition, four short seminars were held simultaneously at the end of the afternoon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Providing Financial Support to Widen Access": Simon Deville, Educational Grants Advisory Service Manager, Family Welfare Association.</li> <li>• "Widening Access-The role of HE Colleges": Rhiannon Evans, Director of Students and External Relations, Edge Hill College of HE.</li> <li>• "Raising Expectations Amongst Gifted Young People from Underrepresented Groups-The HE Gateway for the Gifted and Talented": Ken Sloan, Director of Corporate Services, National Academy for the Gifted and Talented, University of Warwick.</li> <li>• "The Aimhigher Initiative-Latest Developments": Jo Wiggans, Director, Aimhigher, Greater Manchester.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst not of immediate relevance to the work of the HPC this conference provided a most valuable insight into the challenges being faced regarding widening participation in higher education by young people. It also provided examples of initiatives being taken across the sector as part of a broader strategy to widen participation by people of all ages.</p> <p>The HEFCE Report contains clear confirmation of the substantial regional differences in participation, with young people in some regions being 50% more likely to enter HE than their peers in other regions. The full extent of participation inequalities is revealed by using neighbourhood level geographies such as census wards. These show that young people living in the <b>most advantaged</b> 20 per cent areas are five to six</p>	

times more likely to enter HE than those living in the **least advantaged** 20 per cent of areas.

There are also major gender variations in participation, with young women in England being 18% more likely to enter HE. This inequality is more marked for young men living in the more disadvantaged areas and is further compounded by the fact that young men are less likely to successfully complete their HE courses and gain a qualification.

The report also highlights differences in participation depending on month of birth, with those born in the autumn being up to 20% more likely to enter HE than those born in the late summer. The difference between males and females is even greater, with girls born in September being 30% more likely to enter HE than boys born in August!!

Professor Les Ebdon, Vice Chancellor of the University of Luton, gave many examples of successful initiatives at Luton to increase participation from traditionally under represented groups and the seminar on the latest developments in the “Aimhigher” initiative gave examples of successful intervention at the schools level. This particular initiative, which operates only in England, has established a number of partnerships with Strategic Health Authorities to address the need to attract more participants from under represented groups into health and social care training programmes.

**Papers from the conference which include the slide presentations of most speakers have been lodged with the Secretary to the Education and Training Committee Niamh O’Sullivan.**