

# TAKE YOUR PLACE

## ANNUAL REPORT

Network for East Anglian  
Collaborative Outreach  
2017



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# WHO WE ARE

The Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco) is a consortium of five universities and eight further education colleges. We are working together towards the government's national aim of doubling the proportion of students from underrepresented neighbourhoods progressing to higher education and degree level apprenticeships by 2020.

Our partners include all of the higher education providers in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, working closely with schools, Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities and other stakeholders.

neaco is one of 29 consortia across England that have been funded as part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) to deliver outreach in areas where the higher education participation of young people is low - and much lower than expected based on GCSE-level attainment.

neaco is taking a non-prescriptive approach to widening participation, intuitive to the needs of students, staff and local communities. At the centre of this approach is our Take Your Place framework, a fully funded and progressive programme for target students. It includes several strands, each addressing our target students' identified needs and aims to increase progression to higher education.

The framework focuses on improving our students' understanding and preparedness towards applying for higher education, developing their passion and ambition towards the idea of higher education as well as making informed choices to enable progression.

"neaco brings together a huge amount of expertise and experience and we will be making the very most of this opportunity for the region. We are a collaborative partnership which aims to show the region's young people the array of higher education options available to them as well as providing practical support to help them achieve their goals. Our region offers world-class courses taught in leading centres of research, and vocational courses with excellent links to business and the professions."

**Tom Levinson**  
Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco)  
Project Manager

## OUR PARTNERS:



# CHAIR OF THE EXECUTIVE GROUP OVERVIEW



*Explore your options, discover your potential is our call to young people in East Anglia as they consider life after school.*

It has been a year of rapid growth for the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco), as we work towards this goal. From the outset of the project in January 2017 with a handful of staff, we have grown to a full contingent of 46 at the close of the year. This has enabled us to reach all 74 target wards, identified as regions with low participation in higher education, lower than expected given GCSE attainment.

From the inception of the project, we have embedded evaluation into our work, involving experts from the Faculty of Education here at the University of Cambridge. We have collected approximately 21,000 survey responses from students which will help us understand the knowledge, attitudes and aspirations of young people towards higher education. Future surveys will show us how these have changed through engagement with the project.

We are collaborating with organisations in East Anglia with aims aligned to ours to ensure a coherent approach that closely articulates with existing activity. Three areas within East Anglia have been identified by the Department for Education as 'social mobility coldspots' and we are working with the Opportunity Areas in Norwich, Ipswich and Fenland & East Cambridgeshire to provide the strongest possible support to young people in making decisions about their education and career options.

Improving the participation of underrepresented groups in higher education is a central pillar of the social mobility agenda, with education as the key focus point. Currently students from advantaged backgrounds are about two and a half times more likely to enter higher education compared with those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and we know that graduates earn, on average, at least £100,000 more over their lifetimes than those without a degree but with two or more A levels\*.

Our ambition to double the proportion of young people from underrepresented neighbourhoods progressing to higher education is unflinching. It would not be possible without the collaboration of our partner universities and colleges. We thank you.

**Professor Graham Virgo QC (Hon)**

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education  
University of Cambridge

Chair of the Executive Group  
Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach

\*Department for Education (2017) Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2015 to 2016.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2015-to-2016>

# AT A GLANCE



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

First meetings of Executive Group, Steering Group and Advisory Groups

Small Central team in place

County Coordinators in place

Higher Education Champion recruitment commences

High priority schools identified

FIRST QUARTER

Initial meetings with three Opportunity Areas

Executive Group, Steering Group and Advisory Groups meetings

First Higher Education Champion in place

Evaluation framework in place

Target wards activity started – 20 activities run

Progression specialist mentoring commences

Framework active in schools

Access Champions' pilot programme in six schools

SECOND QUARTER

CEC Enterprise Coordinator meetings

Opportunity area meetings

Executive Group, Steering Group and Advisory Groups meetings

All Higher Education Champions in place

Higher Education Champions intensive training week

Access Champions selected and training commenced

Baseline surveys sent out to schools and colleges in East Anglia

99 activities run

Access Champion programme expanded to 26 schools and 8 Further Education Colleges

THIRD QUARTER

Norwich Opportunity Area delivery plan launched including neaco as a key partner

Launch event

Executive Group, Steering Group and Advisory Groups meetings

46 staff members

Access Champions in school training

21,793 Baseline surveys received from 76 schools and colleges

First randomised control trial commences

Outreach commenced in all target wards

458 activities run

Future First alumni networks established in 29 schools, 1231 alumni signed up

FOURTH QUARTER

269 target students engaged

808 target students engaged

2534 target students engaged

67 target schools and colleges engaged

- Key:**
- Governance and collaboration
  - Staff
  - Training
  - Evaluation
  - Activity
  - Framework development

# IMPROVING OUTCOMES, ONE STUDENT AT A TIME

2017 has seen the development and implementation of **Take Your Place** in our target schools.

This progressive programme includes several strands of activity, each addressing a student's identified needs:

- Improving their understanding and preparedness towards applying for higher education
- Improving their passion and ambition towards the idea of higher education.

To support these identified needs, the **neaco Information, Advice and Guidance framework** was piloted in schools in May and rolled out to 67 schools and colleges ready for the beginning of the school year in September. The framework provides a set of outcomes and accompanying resources to help structure provision and ensure consistent development of activities.

Integral to the programme has been our **Higher Education Champions** who work with our target students. Building to 28 project staff across the year, they are all experienced education and outreach professionals.

Our Higher Education Champions in-school work has included widening and enhancing current programmes such as University visits and taster days, as well as the development of new activities tailored to the needs of schools and pupils. We are also working with parents and local communities to ensure young people are fully supported.



*Supporting our in-school programme of learning, events throughout 2017 have given our students a taste of alternative areas of study to pursue. Campus visits and university taster days, as well as the development of new activities tailored to the needs of schools and pupils, are examples of these.*

## Take Your Place Against Terrorism

The Take Your Place Against Terrorism conference in Lowestoft Sixth Form College, Suffolk, helped to break down preconceptions students may have about terrorism. The conference saw students take part in a variety of workshops and discussions designed to dispel misconceptions and educate. It also saw a wide range of guest speakers take part in question and answer sessions and a panel, including Muslim scholar and former jihadist Manwar Ali and former English Defence League organiser Ivan Humble.

Laura Davies, a neaco Higher Education Champion, said: "We were delighted to have helped organise such a diverse event. It gave a great taste of some alternative areas of study to pursue at higher education level whilst discussing topics relevant to the world today."



## A Live Autopsy

A Live Autopsy event in Norwich gave a taste of a different style of learning as students got a chance to examine a real (pig's) anatomy. 13 schools and colleges attended the event held at the beginning of December. Students went along for a variety of reasons, including support for their application to university and to find out more about the area they wish to pursue after school.

Rosie from City College Norwich found the event helpful in consolidating classroom learning: "I wasn't sure it was going to be my kind of thing but I absolutely loved it. Seeing the stuff we've learnt about in real life, and being able to properly understand how it all fits and works together was amazing - it was one of the most interesting things I've ever done."



neaco works with  
**67**  
schools and colleges



**“**  
*Rachel Pickering,  
Higher Education  
Champion, talks about her  
work with target students*

“Working within Ormiston Bushfield Academy, a large school in Peterborough with 258 target students, I have had the opportunity to work closely with several students. Examination of Year 12 results showed that several target pupils had significantly underachieved and this was having a knock on effect on their Year 13 effort and attainment in lessons. Since October I have met each pupil weekly for half an hour.

“The ability to build relationships with pupils and support them as they progress through Year 13 has meant I am on hand as barriers to progression pop up: from checking their personal statements, reminding them of the need to juggle academic and work commitments or giving praise when they have achieved in class or met major deadlines.

“For some students a barrier might be as small as knowing how to send an email. With another student I have worked to rebuild her confidence after she had been set predicted grades which prevented her applying for a three year degree. We have worked to investigate alternative routes to achieve her aim of becoming a teacher and I am delighted that she has applied to study a Foundation degree from September.”



**“**  
*Paul Roberts,  
Higher Education  
Champion, talks about  
working within the school*

“Stanground Academy, a large school in Peterborough with 510 target students, operates a ‘horizontal’ tutoring system with dedicated year teams from years 7-13. One of my biggest challenges is getting regular, meaningful contact with my target students.

“By utilising time put aside for an existing programme, I was able to adapt our framework to fit into 30 minute sessions. Stanground’s year 9 and 10 students now have the Take Your Place framework delivered on a weekly basis. The school has been delighted that something based on progression and improving aspirations is readily available to tutors and the school have really bought into the programme. This means that over 170 year 9 and 140 year 10 target students are being taught both strands of the framework on a weekly basis.

“In the first term Year 9 students are given sessions on choosing options, the benefits of higher education, considering their interests and career options. Year 10 have sessions on post 16 & 18 options, auditing and expressing their skills. All resources are readily available on the staff area of the school system which ensures continuity and the opportunity to run the programme for several years to come.”

In 2017 neaco  
awarded 4 school  
grants, totalling:  
**£4971**

In 2017 neaco  
received:  
**24**  
applications  
for grants from  
schools

## FORGING LINKS WITH SCHOOLS

Throughout the year, we have forged strong links with our target schools through our Higher Education Champions’ work both within schools and with our students. At the end of 2017 we are working with 67 of our target schools and colleges across East Anglia.

Our schools grant scheme forms part of the Take Your Place programme. Our approach is localised and targeted. In 2017 we invited target schools and sixth form colleges to apply for funding, supporting the aspiration and progression of young people to higher education.

Schools access funds directly for specific projects, encouraging diverse and innovative approaches to supporting outreach activity. Among those awarded grants of £500 to £10,000 include Caister Academy, Thetford Academy and Chantry Academy.

Funding has been granted to Chantry Academy for a student council visit to parliament and university politics departments in London and Suffolk. This grant aims to inspire year 9 and 10 students to understand politics as a possible career choice and maps the routes available.

Chantry Academy were also awarded a further grant to help raising aspirations in computer science for target year 9 students. A visit to Bletchley Park will allow students to explore the history of computing, along with cryptography and computer programming.



### Caister Academy

Caister Academy is a coastal town in an area of higher education underrepresentation in Norfolk. They have been awarded a grant to fund Space and Beyond, a cross curricular subject exploring our skies.

“The Space and Beyond project is intended to broaden the awareness of higher education and what is out there. By looking beyond Norfolk, showing the students that there is so much diversity and choice, I decided Space was the obvious topic as it has been in the headlines with Tim Peake going into Space and Suzi Umber winning the Astronauts TV Programme.

“With the funding we will be taking students to the National Space Centre in Leicester and giving them the opportunity to compare both skies and opening their imaginations.”

**Sarah Arnold,**  
Librarian, Caister Academy

### Thetford Academy

Funding has been granted to Thetford Academy for a careers fair to raise awareness of advanced and higher apprenticeships in Thetford. The fair will help to stimulate interest among students and their parents/carers as well as prospective employers in apprenticeships as a very real alternative to university.

“There are very few Higher Apprenticeship opportunities available locally. Employers have indicated their interest in offering places but are unsure how to do so, and young people have had to go much further afield for opportunities. The grant will allow us to put together an event for employers and potential employees in the school.

“Bringing together existing Higher Apprenticeship employers with real experience, as well as training providers and young people who are potential candidates, we are hoping this will really kick-start the provision in Thetford and increase the skills of our young people and the opportunities for them to do so in a real working environment.”

**Suzanne Scott,**  
CEIAG Coordinator, Thetford Academy

# A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH



Image above: Local student with Miles Cole, neaco Steering Group member, University of Suffolk, Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Jackie Partridge Higher Education Champion.



"Norfolk County Council has been pleased to work in partnership with neaco to deliver support to young people to help them to successfully move from education into Apprenticeships, particularly at higher and degree level."

**Paul Wright**  
Apprenticeships Strategy Manager, Norfolk County Council



There are a number of organisations working to improve social mobility across East Anglia. Throughout 2017 we have worked with organisations in the area whose aims closely align to neaco's to ensure a coherent approach is taken to address the high level of need across the region.

Funded by the Department for Education, the Opportunity Areas of Norwich, Ipswich and Fenland & East Cambridgeshire, identified as social mobility 'cold spots', are driving social mobility to ensure young people in these areas have the same chances as those from other parts of the country.

We are represented on each of the various Opportunity Areas working groups and form part of their delivery plans. We have regularly met with the Opportunity Areas throughout 2017 and will continue to do so to ensure alignment in our offerings to target students.

December saw neaco meet with the Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, at the University of Suffolk to discuss issues of social mobility and the work neaco is undertaking in this area.

Throughout 2017 we have collaborated with organisations such as the Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Citizen Service and have

identified a pathway for 2018 to drive towards our shared goals. The Careers and Enterprise Company Compass Tool, a self-evaluation tool for secondary schools to model their provisions against best practice, is being used as part of our programme of activity offered into schools in East Anglia.

We established three Advisory Groups in Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, which first met in March. The Groups consist of representatives from Local Enterprise Partnerships, local councils and other stakeholders ensuring a local expertise is being fed into the programme and maximising synergies.

Working with Norfolk County Council, we agreed to co-fund two posts in the council to support and encourage progression to Degree Apprenticeships in Norfolk. Supporting neaco's core priorities, these staff will work closely with our Higher Education Champions. They will also develop links with local employers, forming a matching process between employer and apprentice.

Our partnership with Future First is helping to give young people access to role models through building alumni communities. At the end of December, we had 1231 former students signed up through Future First to support their old school or college.



## Collaborating with Mind to help mental health awareness in schools

Working in conjunction with the mental health charity Mind and their StressLess Project we deliver weekly workshops on stress management and mental health awareness. In Nene Park Academy we have identified that one hurdle our target students face is related to stress, depression and resilience. These become barriers to self-esteem, achievement and progression. This was a concern raised by the students themselves, and also identified by staff as a need.

Year 12 were invited to apply to be trained as mental health ambassadors in the school. Twenty students had successful applications and were accepted on the training course. They attend weekly workshops which are run by the school's Higher Education Champion. These ambassadors will then run a workshop for the whole of the sixth form during a special collapsed timetable day in February. The plan is to roll this out to Year 10 students which will ensure the sustainability and longevity of this specific project in school. Students are enjoying the sessions and see the value of the project. Another school has also requested this initiative for their students.

**Elisa Kenton-Howells**  
Higher Education Champion



## Our partnership with the Norwich Opportunity Area

"neaco are an important partner in supporting our ambitions to enable 40% of young people in Norwich to go onto higher education or a higher level apprenticeship by 2021. neaco have already established a presence in our high schools and colleges by providing a Higher Education Champion, who is not only helping schools to provide appropriate activities and advice, but helping to deliver a streamlined package of careers and enterprise support with our other key partners National Citizen Service and the Careers and Enterprise Company. The neaco small grant scheme is also enabling local partners to deliver bespoke and innovative projects to raise aspirations."

**Chris Starkie**  
CEO of New Anglia LEP and Partnership Board lead for the Advice, Transitions and Destinations working group, Norwich Opportunity Area



# WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

A vital part of our work in engaging underrepresented young people is understanding and working with their communities. First and foremost poor social mobility is about underrepresentation in communities. Working within schools only gives a partial picture of the lives and influences of our targeted young people. Understanding, interacting with, and finding ways to influence the communities they live in, completes this picture.

Throughout 2017 we have worked with our communities in a number of ways. Our community grants scheme, attendance at skills shows and localised conversations with key influencers are just a few ways we engage with the community and raise awareness of widening participation.

Our community grant scheme offers up to £20,000 for local community groups to use their expertise and networks to support the progression of young people to higher education. The scheme is open to any not-for-profit organisations including community groups, educational charities, arts groups and libraries.

In 2017 we received nine grant applications and awarded two, totalling £16,823.

Peterborough Council of Voluntary Service were awarded a community grant in 2017 to undertake research. Focus groups will examine the perceived barriers parents believe are preventing their children from progressing to higher education, while street-level mapping techniques will pinpoint 'below the radar' contact points for young people to allow effective targeting of messages.

A grant was awarded to Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality to research the needs of families and communities of target students in Ipswich. The grant will be used to identify the barriers inhibiting young people in continuing to higher education and possible resolutions to this issue.

In 2017 we created a Higher Education Zone at the three Skills Shows in Suffolk, Norfolk and Peterborough. The shows brought together partner institutions within the zone. Our students were transported to the event, which engaged an estimated 500 young people from our target areas.

*"The Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality believes that widening participation is not just about increasing numbers in higher education but about ensuring equal opportunity for everyone. We are therefore encouraged that neaco recognises the importance of parents, families and communities in supporting young people in making the choice to progress to higher education. The Take Your Place Community Grant will allow us to implement an intervention aimed at identifying and sharing what works when engaging with families from Black and Minority Ethnic and disadvantaged backgrounds"*

**Phanuel Mutumburi**  
Business and Operations Director, Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality



## Great Yarmouth

Great Yarmouth is a Norfolk coastal town with a high proportion of underrepresented young people. Across the six secondary schools we work with in the area, we have almost 4000 target students which is around 50% of students enrolled in these schools.

Higher Education Champions Andy Underwood and Marie Borrego have been working in the Great Yarmouth community throughout 2017.

Neighbourhoods That Work is a community project, with a primary aim to build community resilience in Great Yarmouth. One of their local coordinators, Louise Tully, is integral in bringing the community together.

"In August we were exhibitors at the Community Roots Family Fun Day, organised by Neighbourhoods That Work. The event is a Mind horticultural project in Cobham, an area of great deprivation in Great Yarmouth. Our two stalls at the event were hugely popular - Andy used games to engage families and I asked people of all ages to draw what they want or wanted to be at 18.

"Andy and I have also worked with the Make it Happen Steering Group, informing them about neaco and how we are working locally. They are a local community group with mainly retired members who have very strong links to the communities.

"In September we also participated in Great Yarmouth Library's annual Summer Reading Scheme Celebration Evening.

"Our Arts Higher Education Champion Jodie Marr and I attended Enjoy - Great Yarmouth in December. They are a cultural education group coordinated by Time and Tide Museum and run lots of successful cultural events in the town.

"So, happy times in Great Yarmouth as I feel that we really are working well with local community groups."

**Marie Borrego,**  
Higher Education Champion



Received

9

community grant applications

2 community grants awarded totalling:

£16,823



## Working with the Muslim community in Peterborough

Our Higher Education Champion Elisa Kenton-Howells has been working with the Muslim community in Peterborough.

"In several of our Peterborough schools a large number of target students come from within the Muslim community. There are many needs, questions and issues which relate specifically to this community and their participation in higher education. It was vital that we understand the background of these students and reach out to the community in order to meet these specific needs. I work with the Muslim Council in Peterborough and also with a representative who is in charge of community liaison with the City Council. We are regularly in touch to discuss the support offered by the project and ways forward, for example talking to mothers about higher education at a Sisters Coffee Morning held at one of the local mosques.

"We have also trained Higher Education Champions and teachers to be aware of the specific issues which may relate to students from a Muslim background. The Cambridge Muslim College was contacted and a meeting

was held to discuss our project. A programme of training was put together and will run over five monthly six-hour sessions. The training covers all areas of Islam that may have a bearing on a student's participation in higher education. By training Higher Education Champions the plan is that they pass on this knowledge to teachers in their respective schools, likewise if any teachers or management wish to attend they can make sure the information is passed on within their schools, guaranteeing the longevity and sustainability of this initiative."





# EMBEDDING CHANGE THROUGH CPD



*Training and CPD are an integral part of our progressive framework. They are a valuable and important way to build the sustainability of the project, ensuring a lasting impact for years to come.*

Throughout 2017 we have delivered a number of training programmes, both for our staff and senior leaders in schools. The Higher Education Access Network (now Causeway Education) has delivered 10 days of training and CPD sessions.

Throughout the year we have strived to deliver high quality CPD opportunities for senior leaders in schools through our Access Champion programme. This provides support in their role and embeds good practice sustainably across the participating schools. Access Champions are supported by both our Higher Education Champions, and their local Progression Specialist – aligned to the programme to provide mentoring services to students. Working in partnership has ensured workshops,

resources and mentoring are tailored and relevant to each school's needs, from staff room to class room. Starting with a pilot roll out in April 2017 to those schools with the highest numbers of target learners and Further Education Colleges, the Access Champion project was rolled out to high priority schools by the end the year.

The program of training for our Higher Education Champions throughout 2017 has been intensive. From the outset of the project, Higher Education Champions have been trained on every aspect of the progressive framework from implementation through to adapting the framework for a local context.

In other areas of training, delivery partners Future First, who access alumni networks to act as role models for our target students, have delivered training to teachers.

Our activity in this area, along with partnership with organisations like Causeway Education and Future First help to build a sustainable outreach culture in East Anglia.

**40**  
teachers undertaken  
CPD as Access  
Champions

Trained  
**28**  
Higher Education  
Champions over  
9 sessions



## Our Bespoke Training

"Our experience running programmes and workshops designed to support underrepresented students progressing to higher education has enabled us to create a series of bespoke training days for both Access Champions and Higher Education Champions.

"Access Champions from schools and colleges across East Anglia joined together for their first training day. Access Champions were introduced to the scheme, spent time analysing their current systems and creating action plans to improve their systems. The training also included some of our research around personal statements, strategies for parental engagement and raising aspirations through subject enrichment.

"The Higher Education Champions underwent intensive training throughout the year. The objective for the initial training was to familiarise them with the progressive framework and to prepare them for working in a school or college context. They were also introduced to some of the broader barriers that can contribute to underrepresented students not progressing to higher education, for example public and parental engagement."

**Imogen Pemberton,**  
Programme Manager - East Anglia  
Higher Education Access Network



## Being an Access Champion

"I have enjoyed training as an Access Champion as part of my CPD. Meeting with other Access Champions, sharing ideas about UCAS applications, processes and submission has been enjoyable and rewarding – particularly in motivating and encouraging students to progress to higher education.

"The OSCAR resource has been immensely beneficial in creating personal statements. All my year 12s have been set up and had time on it. It's easy to access and feedback from students was positive – they all particularly loved making the Avatar. It has provided welcome extra support as students are able to work on it independently.

"Take Your Place has been invaluable and very supportive. I'm looking forward to seeing the first cycle of students go through after a year to see the impact of OSCAR."

**Louise Ahmed,**  
Access Champion and Sixth Form Student Support Officer  
St John Fisher Catholic High School, Peterborough

## Higher Education Champion Training

The training we have received as Higher Education Champions has been wonderful – thorough, wide ranging and very practical. I particularly valued the StressLess training – it was thought provoking and adaptable.

I have used a couple of the techniques we were introduced to when juggling my own busy work/family commitments and am in the process of adapting it to roll out as a workshop for Year 11s preparing for GCSEs at Benjamin Britten School in Lowestoft."

**Jo Hand,**  
Higher Education Champion

# EVIDENCE BASED OUTREACH



**21,793**

surveys returned to CFE

**6318**

target students recorded on HEAT

**2**

Randomised  
controlled trials

*Embedded in the project is the belief that we have an opportunity to improve the evidence base of the impact of outreach work.*

Evaluation has been embedded in the programme from the outset. The progressive framework forms the basis for our local evaluation, providing measurable key outcomes and objectives.

We have partnered with researchers from the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, Professor Anna Vignoles and Dr Sonia Ilie, to develop our evaluation design and inform our analysis.

Our evaluation protocol consists of two complementary strands. Our impact evaluation assesses the outcomes of the delivery of our progressive framework, using a range of complementary quasi-experimental and experimental methods. Alongside the impact evaluation, the aim of the process evaluation is to understand how the intervention is implemented, assessed using qualitative methods.

We have integrated our evaluation with the National Collaborative Outreach Program (NCOP) evaluation, using data from the national baseline survey and Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) for our analysis to avoid duplication of effort.

In September 2017 we conducted a baseline survey of 21,793 students in 76 schools and colleges across East Anglia, capturing 6318

target students. This survey included questions developed by CFE, the national NCOP evaluator, as well as questions to inform our own evaluation. The survey provides crucial information about students' knowledge and attitudes towards higher education, providing a baseline against which our progress can be measured. This has provided interesting results, for example we found that Year 11 target students are half as likely to say they 'definitely will apply' to higher education as the most advantaged students in the survey.

In collaboration with CFE and the Behavioural Insights Team, 2017 saw the first of two randomised controlled trials. These trials provide a unique opportunity for robust evaluation of innovative outreach interventions. The interventions consist of a set of text messages to Y11 and Y13 students, designed to nudge students to make more informed choices about post-16 and post-18 options. In 2017, our texts were delivered to over 250 Year 13 students, and their progression to higher education will be compared against a control group.

Sharing and communicating our findings and collaborating with the Widening Participation community is central to our philosophy. Early in the project, Data and Evaluation Analyst at neaco, Dr Christopher May, established a mailing list and convened a working group to enable consortia and the national evaluators to share best practice. In December 2017, Dr May and Dr Ilie also presented their work on neaco's evaluation design and emerging findings at the Society for Research into Higher Education conference. We are also collaborating with NEON on their "Does Cost Matter?" research project in partnership with Universities UK.

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**£9.17m**

funding to December 2018

**£3.01m**

total expenditure during 2017

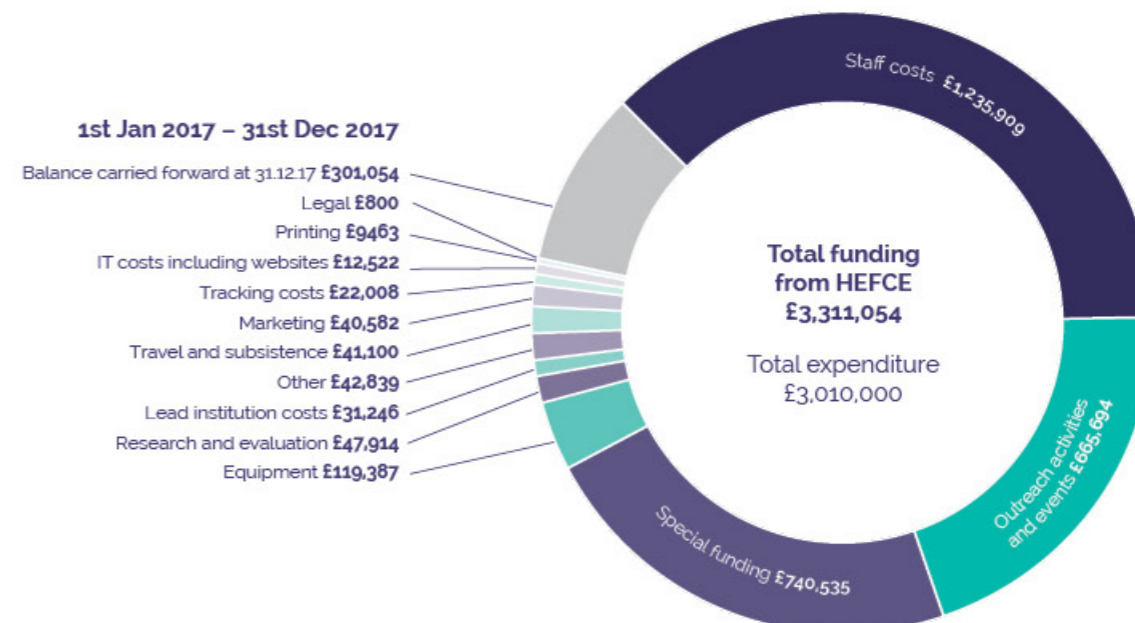


*neaco is funded by The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), as part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP).*

HEFCE have allocated neaco £9.17m in funding, to be spent during the period Jan 2017 – Dec 2018. During 2017 we have requested and received £3.31m of this funding from HEFCE. Our total expenditure during 2017 has been £3.01m. Expenditure has gradually increased during 2017 as the project has become established, and during the fourth quarter reached a level which we expect to be stable during 2018.

Following a gradual increase in expenditure during 2017, our forecasts should fall in line with our original budgets in the third quarter of 2018.

Our primary expenditure has been on staff costs (£1.24m), Outreach (£666k) and Special Funding (£741k) We now have a full complement of 46 staff including 28 Higher Education Champions delivering outreach activity in schools to our target young people. Our Outreach costs have covered the delivery of the Take Your Place programme by our universities, Further Education Colleges and charities in our partnership. Our special funding has covered a programme of CPD for teachers, and mentoring for target students.



# TAKE YOUR PLACE

neaco

[takeyourplace.ac.uk](http://takeyourplace.ac.uk)

[info@takeyourplace.ac.uk](mailto:info@takeyourplace.ac.uk)

