

TAKE YOUR PLACE

ANNUAL REPORT

Network for East Anglian
Collaborative Outreach

2019



neaco

takeyourplace.ac.uk

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WHO WE ARE

In parts of East Anglia, young people are less likely to go into higher education than in other areas of the country despite similar GCSE results. The Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco) is one of 29 partnerships across England that have been funded by the Government through the Office for Students (OfS) as part of the Uni Connect* programme. The national aim is to deliver outreach in these low participation areas in order to increase the proportion of students progressing into higher education and higher apprenticeships. These local partnerships give inspiration, increase aspiration and support young people in planning their future education.

neaco is a local partnership of five universities and nine further education colleges in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We work closely with schools, local enterprise partnerships, local authorities and other stakeholders.

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.

*Uni Connect is the new name for the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) rebranded 27th January 2020.

OUR PARTNERS:



A WARM WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

During 2019, the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco) partnership grew in terms of both our impact and our success. The continuing passion and commitment of our fantastic collaborative teams is enhancing the support and guidance we deliver to our region's schools, colleges and young people through the Take Your Place programme.



Over the last year, we have remained focused on raising the aspirations and engagement of our target students throughout East Anglian schools, sixth forms and further education colleges (FECs), whilst continuing to work with teachers, parents and local communities to ensure that young people receive the best support and information with which to make an informed decision on the wide variety of pathways into higher education they can access.

Looking ahead to our fourth year, our partners continue to work hard to deliver a wide range of impartial activities to local students across five universities, nine FECs and through local visits to schools and sixth forms. In 2019 alone, neaco delivered 3,437 activities to 32,436 students - an astonishing achievement made possible through the enthusiasm and determination of all staff working on the project.

We have refreshed our progression framework to better complement schools and colleges' priorities, aligning with the Gatsby Foundation's eight benchmarks for Good Career Guidance, and added capacity for engaging with staff and parents. Delivered by our Higher Education Champions across the region alongside teachers and tutors within our schools and colleges, this has contributed to a fantastic 14% increase in the number of target students engaged throughout the three counties, up to 13,025 from 10,878 in 2018.

The project remains committed to robust evaluation. We saw a 20% increase in the number of follow-up surveys completed by students (up to 27,743) in 2019. As well as helping us to understand 'what works' in the region, the evidence gathered from this huge volume of surveys will contribute significantly to the national evaluation.

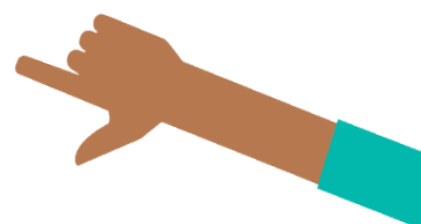
Our relationships with local businesses, public and third sector organisations in East Anglia have continued to develop in 2019. We have explored new ways to collaborate with the Opportunity Areas in Norwich, Ipswich and Fenland & East Cambridgeshire, building on new relationships with parents, through our Higher Education Parent Champions, who help to address misconceptions and concerns around their children's progression into higher education. We have also worked to build upon new directions into higher education, including higher and degree apprenticeships.

2020 brings new challenges and a greater than ever imperative to use this opportunity to positively change the landscape of HE outreach in the region. Working closely with schools, colleges, other Uni Connect partnerships and a wide range of organisations and agencies in the region, our partnership remains committed to helping realise the ambitions of young people across East Anglia, both now and for years to come.

Tom Levinson

Head of Widening Participation and Regional Collaboration | University of Cambridge

Chair of the Steering Group
Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach

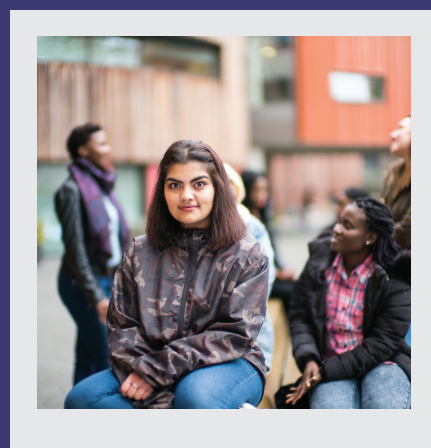


OUR MISSION

We support students in making informed decisions about their future

Our vision is one of equal rates of progression to higher education and higher apprenticeships between students living in target and non-target wards across East Anglia. We work towards this through:

- 1** Delivering and coordinating outreach activities which raise aspirations and support target students to make more informed choices using our progressive framework
- 2** Supporting the development of 'Information Advice and Guidance' related systems and infrastructure, and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff in target schools and colleges
- 3** Evaluating our approaches to ensure we learn which interventions work best





OUR VALUES

Each of our values aligns **Take Your Place** activity with our mission and framework.



Collaborative

We work in partnership with target educational institutions, organisations and initiatives which have missions aligned to neaco



Impartial

We promote all available pathways and higher education providers within and beyond East Anglia



Sustainable

We deliver and support activity which embeds systemic change in schools Information, Advice and Guidance; we prioritise initiatives which are scalable and could be sustained post-neaco



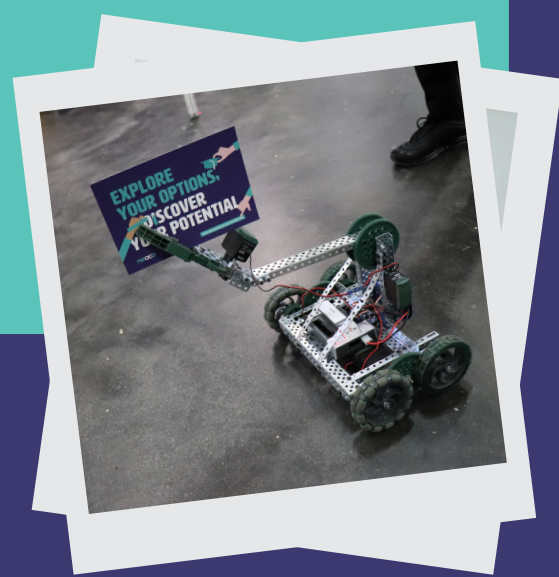
Learn

We undertake research to inform practice and better understand decision making of target students; we thoroughly monitor and evaluate impact; we develop staff



Responsive

We operate within an agreed framework, while supporting and responding to the needs of target schools and students



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2019 we showed an increase in the number students from target wards engaged:



We worked alongside

104
schools and sixth forms



9
Further Education
Colleges

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH
2,382 target
students engaged

NORFOLK
3,833 target
students engaged

SUFFOLK
6,899 target
students engaged

New College
Stamford
Stamford



University Centre
Peterborough
Peterborough

College of
West Anglia
King's Lynn



Anglia Ruskin
University
Peterborough



Peterborough
Regional College
Peterborough



CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH

Cambridge
Regional
College
Cambridge



College of
West Anglia
Cambridge



University of
Cambridge
Cambridge

Anglia
Ruskin
University
Cambridge



Universities

Our staff in schools, sixth forms and Further Education Colleges worked with students in delivering

3,437

activities to

32,436

students.



Responses to our annual impact survey have also increased in 2019:



NORFOLK

Easton & Otley College
Easton



Norwich University of the Arts
Norwich



University of East Anglia
Norwich



City College
Norwich

East Coast College
Great Yarmouth



East Coast College
Lowestoft



SUFFOLK



West Suffolk College
Bury St Edmunds

Easton & Otley College
Otley



University of Suffolk
Ipswich



Suffolk New College
Ipswich

Our staff include:

29 ✓

Higher Education Champions working in schools and colleges

15 ✓

neaco funded staff in Further Education Colleges

3 ✓

Arts & Media Champions working in schools and colleges

4 ✓

Higher and Degree Apprenticeship specialists

OUR WORK WITH STUDENTS



Throughout East Anglia, the Take Your Place programme works with young people with little or no experience of university to explore the world of higher education. Our front-facing team include our Higher Education Champions, who have continued to raise the aspirations of young people in 2019 through the delivery of outreach and widening participation activities designed to encourage conversation, understanding and progression into higher education.

Our partners across East Anglia all play a dedicated role in improving the outlook for those who would otherwise struggle to access options available to them. In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, The Take Your Place team has been working with 18 schools to deliver a huge variety of workshops, assemblies and mentoring sessions. Our Higher Education Champions have developed fantastic relationships with many of our schools and encouraged hundreds of students to consider higher education and all their options with far greater insight than before.

Take Your Place uses a detailed progression framework in order to deliver activities to schools and sixth forms which ensures that crucial information is shared with students at key times during their school lives. This includes several strands, each addressing our students' identified needs and aims to increase progression to higher education. These identified needs include improving their understanding and preparedness towards applying, and improving their passion and ambition towards the idea of going to university.

A good example of our direct work with students is the 'Advice with a Slice' sessions, where students can drop in for guidance and receive some pizza as a bonus for engaging at lunch or break time. We offer personal statement workshops for students applying to university and one-to-one mentoring advice for those whose direction is less certain.

There has been a notable impact on our work in school sixth forms. St Peter's School in Huntingdon reporting a **50%** increase in numbers this year and at Neale Wade **75%** of students are now choosing to continue in to sixth form since Take Your Place began working with the school, a significant rise on previous years.

Paul Roberts

County Coordinator | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

ITV Apprenticeship

Working with the Take Your Place team at City College Norwich has allowed me the opportunity to explore a variety of options.

I thoroughly enjoyed applying for the ITV Broadcast Operator Apprenticeship where I made it through to the second stage. This was achieved through several appointments with Hannah, our Higher Education Advisor and Jenna, our Apprenticeship Advisor at CCN who supported the process of my application.

The application involved a Skype interview, however I don't have access to a computer or microphone at home, therefore Hannah and Jenna helped me to find a place in college where I could do the interview.

The help I've received through Take Your Place has given me the confidence to apply for other options in the future and has broadened my horizon for what I can achieve. I'd advise other students that there are suitable options for them and to remain open minded.

Bruna Soares

City College Norwich Student



Our staff in schools, sixth forms and Further Education Colleges worked with target students in delivering

5,636
contact hours



WORKING WITH PARENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

In 2019 Take Your Place established a team of 15 Suffolk-based parent ambassadors in collaboration with the University of Suffolk and the Ipswich Opportunity Area.

Parents play a major role in a young person's decisions about their future and it's important to support and guide families who are new to the world of higher education.

Our parent ambassadors have helped their children go on to university or a degree apprenticeship and are perfectly placed to give a parent's perspective on topics like student finance and UCAS. They share their experiences with parents at school, university, and community events in Ipswich, Lowestoft, Haverhill, and Stowmarket.

Dr Jack Massie

Higher Education Parent/ Carer Champion

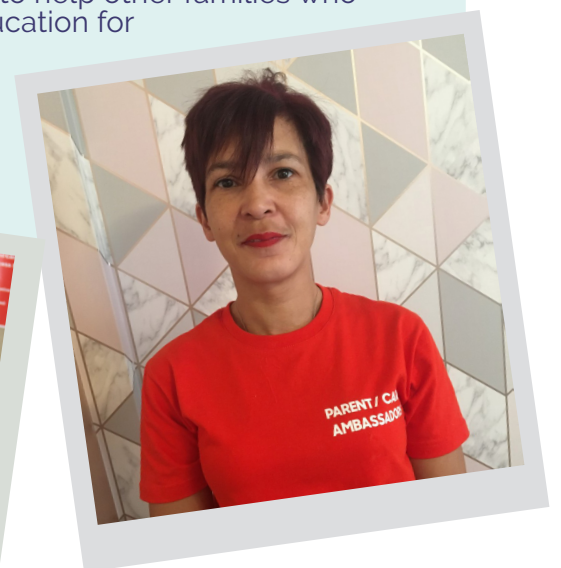


Parent Ambassadors

As a parent ambassador I'm able to show parents that children from all backgrounds have every right to go on to higher education. I was a young parent with limited experiences of education and my children were eligible for free school meals.

Three of them have now graduated and are reaping the rewards in the workplace, with a newfound self-belief in themselves and their goals. I couldn't be prouder of their success and I want to help other families who are looking at higher education for the first time.

Gwen Clarke
Parent Ambassador

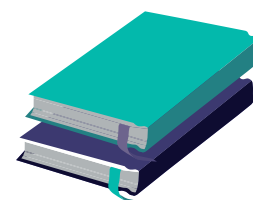


SUPPORTING SCHOOLS & SIXTH FORMS

neaco
works with

104

schools and sixth forms



2019 saw the continuation of our grant scheme, with 16 grants awarded to schools across East Anglia, awarding a total of £27,525 for an array of projects aligned to neaco's mission and values.

Grants enabled schools to deliver exciting and engaging trips, the experience of which could be embedded back into the curriculum – Caister Academy in Norfolk even receiving a letter from Sir David Attenborough in response to their "Environment and the Community" activity!

Our funding also enabled investment in on site workshops and training for students – Stanground Academy in Peterborough engaged a professional dance company to provide backstage and production training to post-16 target pupils – not only increasing their skills and knowledge of performing arts pathways, but also allowing them to support school productions and pass their knowledge on to future students too. Meanwhile, Northgate Academy in Suffolk carried out focus groups with their year 12s to help identify what workshops and experiences would be of most value to them in better understanding their Higher Education options.

Thomas Deacon Academy in Peterborough, and Marshland High School in Norfolk were successful in their bids for additional resources and equipment, which they could implement to improve their student's knowledge of oracy and design, and make use of in the years to come.

Across the region, neaco was able to fund grants that in total enabled 112 activities to be delivered, reaching over 1600 pupils. The grants have created several successful outcomes for neaco including the appreciation of new opportunities, increased recognition of the support and services neaco provides within schools, and new perspectives on creating engaging activities for target pupils – outcomes that will benefit the schools long after the activities themselves.

Rachel Barker, Assistant Principal & Head of Sixth Form at Jane Austen College



Take Your Place provide our sixth form students with invaluable support.

This includes personalised one-to-one support for students with personal statements and applications for conservatoires and apprenticeships. They have also run several workshops, providing students with all the answers to everything university-related, such as student finance and accommodation.

In addition to student workshops, they have also delivered parent workshops as well as staff training; providing all of us with a greater understanding of the UCAS process and options after sixth form. Take Your Place have also brought in external agencies, such as guest speakers from local universities, as well as holding a careers carousel. We really appreciate all the opportunities provided by the programme and enjoy working with them in fulfilling the Gatsby benchmarks.

Thanks to their support, 3 of our students have gone on to receive offers to study from the University of East Anglia, Norwich University of the Arts and Anglia Ruskin University for 2020.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



The Take Your Place project works collaboratively with five universities in East Anglia; University of Suffolk, University of East Anglia, Anglia Ruskin University, University of Cambridge and Norwich University of the Arts. Our collaborative approach enables our Higher Education Champions to further support the target students they work with in their schools; providing students with the right level of guidance and information about their post-18 educational choices for them to make confident decisions about their future.

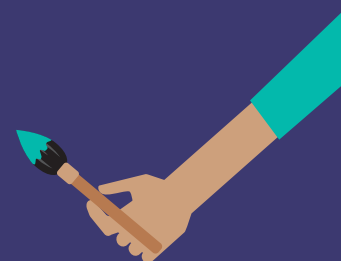
The University of Suffolk and Take Your Place work closely with different departments across the campus to enable a fully rounded approach, with the longer lasting effect of the project meaning that schools in the area are aware of what outreach is available to them. We work with leads of subject departments and academics to plan campus visits for students that demonstrate the different options available when choosing a university.

A good example of our collaboration saw students visiting the Business school and the Health Care department. This allowed them to take part in a university taster session designed by an academic, and then ask questions to current students on those courses. One of our key objectives is opening the opportunities of higher education to under-represented young people across East Anglia and we are pleased to be a part of a widening collaboration programme with four other universities, resulting in students being fully aware of the different course and institutions available to them, both now and beyond the Take Your Place legacy.

Daisy Robinson

County Coordinator | Suffolk

GETTING CREATIVE



Thetford Academy

"Take Your Place provide amazing opportunities for all students to be able to aspire for a job in the creative industries, by inviting real and professional artists to schools to provide exciting workshops and talks."

"From a technician perspective, the Take Your Place team are always highly organised, with great communication and also offer support with resources making it even simpler to fit external workshops into the busy school day."

"The Take Your Place team can assist directly with the trip helping to support staff to student ratios allowing what is for many students their first experience of a gallery."

Abi Reeder

Art Technician

From 23rd – 26th July 2019 Norwich University of the Arts ran an Arts Residential in collaboration with the University of Suffolk. This collaborative event was the most popular activity amongst our students and added a great deal of value in making new friends and exploring higher education.

The residential offered eighteen Year 11 and 12 students from East Anglia the opportunity to take part in academic taster workshops and social activities at both universities, and stay overnight in student halls, to experience different pathways and possibilities of pursuing a creative subject at degree level.

We have also run a range of workshops focusing on printing and different production techniques that have offered students a taste of the industry they could study and eventually work in.

This particular workshop proved to be very successful because many schools do not have the equipment or the budget to run this activity in the classroom. It is a technique that can be developed at higher levels that produces professional and finished results.

Annabel Osborn

Arts & Media Champion

WORKING WITH FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

FE colleges continue to be a key setting for neaco. In 2019 we have been able to align our Take Your Place programme alongside the understanding we have gained of each college's unique progression needs in their area, and the needs of their wider communities.

FE staff employed by neaco work with subject tutors, to support students with their ambitions. The colleges plan their Take Your Place delivery in accordance to the most effective approach for each FE college.

FE already creates progression routes according to the needs of their area. The traditions of FE are responsiveness, and creating second chances and sometimes third chances for a wide range of students heading into

adulthood. We have begun to develop activities with a wider range of students, including those aged 19+, whilst still ensuring the same quality of support for our Level 2 & 3 courses.

The work carried out for students in our region who are under-represented in HE but are capable of HE, is very much in synergy with the special work and patterns of delivery in FE colleges.

neaco partners with

9

Further Education Colleges across 13 sites.

neaco funds

16

staff members



"The work of FECs and neaco together has been a pleasure to witness as it has grown, and I am proud to be supporting the work of the staff on the front line in FE colleges".

"Take Your Place and neaco's goals align beautifully with the work of FECs as they are basically a safety net and ambition factory for our under represented students."

Helen Treutler
FEC Coordinator





Peterborough Regional College

"Take Your Place has shown me the kind of support and guidance I didn't think I would receive."

"During the programme I've been to trips relating to my course which helped me to decide on what path I want to follow. Also, recently I was funded to go to an interview for my chosen course in a university which I am absolutely grateful for."

What aspects of the Take Your Place programme have you enjoyed the most?

"For me personally, I enjoyed meeting students who were also a part of the programme and I even made some friends. I feel that without Take Your Place and the support from Ruth Hovell, I probably would've not considered going to university."

"Ruth helped me realise that this opportunity is worth taking and the programme gave me a push towards my dreams."

Greta Belskaite

Peterborough Regional College Student



INTRODUCING OUR NEW PARTNER



New College Stamford

New College Stamford (NCS) joined the neaco partnership in July 2019 ready for the start of the second phase of Uni Connect. Although the college is situated in Lincolnshire, the greatest number of target postcodes are within Peterborough and Cambridgeshire areas supported by neaco and Take Your Place. Joining neaco affirmed our ambition to support our students' aspirations to make informed decisions about their progression after college.

Early impact for students has been an increase in opportunities made available to them from Anglia Ruskin University- promotion of Open Days and subject specific Taster Days have been passed on to students. The ARU Schools and Colleges team have delivered outreach sessions on Student Finance and building professional networks between them and our staff.

A positive impact to students has also been achieved through Take Your Place led activities. This includes supporting a group of Level 3, Year 2 Motor Vehicle students to attend Coventry University and groups of Level 3 Year 1 and 2 Sport students to visit the English Institute of Sport and Chris Moody Centre. Further events are planned for A-level students to visit Salford Uni and Media City and is also planned for student sessions on budgeting and renting accommodation.

Neaco have also invested in a new Take Your Place library collection related to raising aspiration and reflecting the diversity of our student community. This will benefit all students and staff and is a sustainable resource for 2020 and beyond.

NCS has become an active member of neaco in a short period of time. Joining neaco has broadened our networking and collaborative opportunities. College-staff have attended an evaluation workshop at the University of Cambridge, and Anglia Ruskin University will be offering outreach to Peterborough schools about subject specific HE qualifications. Being part of neaco and the work of the Access & Participation Officer has raised the awareness within NCS of what the Office for Students are trying to achieve and as an HE provider it dovetails with the HE Access and Participation plan targets. As the merger of NCS with Peterborough Regional College is planned for summer 2020, there will be even more opportunities for our second year as part of neaco.

Helen Janes

Access Participation and Bid Writing Officer, New College Stamford

EVALUATION



Central to the neaco mandate is assessing and understanding the difference our activities make to the pupils we work with. Through research and evaluation we are able to improve the evidence base of widening participation work and help inform practice within neaco as well as the broader outreach landscape.

Tracking students' engagement with Take Your Place programming is at the core of our evaluation work. In 2019, we recorded 3,437 individual outreach activities delivered by our project partners on our Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) database. Across these activities, we worked with 32,436 individual students, of whom 13,025 were target students. Using the HEAT database, we have been able to follow students as they progress through their educational journey, and are beginning to conduct analysis examining how participation in our activities impacts their progression.

A key component of our local evaluation is the integration with the national evaluation of the Uni Connect project (formerly NCOP). Since 2017, neaco has helped deliver an annual survey of students age 13-19. These surveys include questions designed by the central Uni Connect project, as well as neaco specific questions to help further our own evaluation.

Together, the results from these national and local questions provide key information about the knowledge and attitudes students have about higher education; these help us understand their decision-making around higher education, what factors influence these, and how they may change over time. In 2019, neaco collected responses from 23,743 students. Now that the survey is in its third year, we are able to compare results to the baseline survey from 2017, as well as the follow-up responses from 2018. Additionally, for those

pupils we are tracking in HEAT, we are able to link the survey responses these students' activity and progression records in HEAT. This combined data from the annual surveys and HEAT database provides a rich dataset that enables us to evaluate the impact of Take Your Place programming.

During the past year, the evaluation team at neaco has also reported findings from evaluation earlier in the life of the partnership. In collaboration with CFE Research and the Behavioral Insights Team, neaco completed three randomised controlled trials during 2018 and 2019. Each trial tested an intervention consisting of a series of text messages, delivered to students in Year 11 or Year 13. The messages were designed to nudge recipients to make better-informed choices about their future study options (Year 11), or apply to higher education via UCAS (Year 13, 2 trials).

Collecting data from Year 11 students proved a challenge, but the Year 13 trials saw data collected about a vast majority of participants. Across all three trials, the evaluation found that receiving the messages did not lead to any meaningful change in either knowledge of education options, or higher education application rates. While there was no observed effect of these interventions, the evaluation team has been sharing the findings, and learning about trialling in general with the sector, demonstrating the ability for robust evaluation work to take place within the larger context of neaco programming. Going forward, the evaluation team will continue to communicate our research findings and methodological strategies among both academics and practitioners in the widening participation field.



"The current evaluation approach builds on learning from the earlier years of neaco. Addressing a sector-wide need and as part of neaco's capacity building, we have developed a meso-evaluation project in which the evaluation team trains the neaco HECs to implement and evaluate one of their own programmes using sophisticated methodological approaches."

Through a full-day workshop, along with continued guidance from the evaluation team, these practitioners will plan, and implement evaluations of how one of their ongoing programmes impacts the pupils they work with. These findings will be shared with other neaco stakeholders and help build the evidence base regarding specific programmes. The findings will sit alongside indications of overall programme impact gleaned from the national survey, as well as micro-scale evidence on individual outreach and engagement sessions delivered by HECs."

Dr. Sonia Ilie
Senior Research Fellow | University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

FINANCE



neaco is funded by the Office for Students (OfS), as part of the Uni Connect programme.

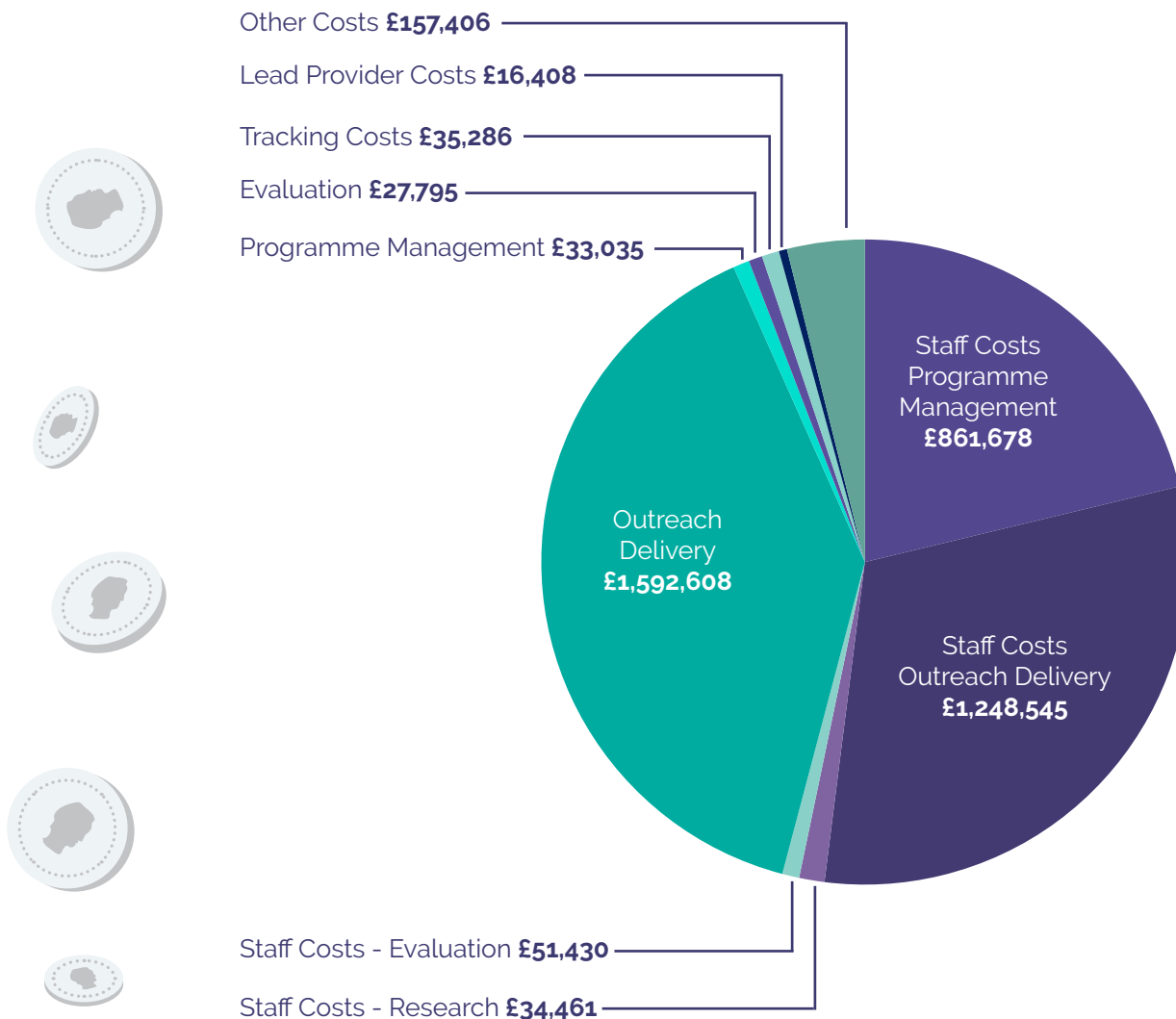
In March 2019, the OfS board agreed to extend funding for NCOP for a further two academic years. The OfS have allocated neaco a total of £8.99m in funding for period August 2019 – July 2021. This is comprised of £7.99m to support targeted outreach activity and £1.00m to support the development and delivery of an Outreach hub.

During the 2019 calendar year our total expenditure was £4.06m. This is a 26% decrease compared to 2018, as costs were reduced to a more sustainable level in line with the funding allocated by the OfS.

Our primary expenditure has been on staff costs (£2.20m, an increase of 3% compared to 2018). This includes £1.25m spent on outreach delivery staff, which enables us to employ 39 staff based in schools and colleges delivering outreach activity to our target young people. The other major area of expenditure is outreach delivery costs (£1.59m) which has covered the delivery of the Take Your Place programme by our universities, Further Education Colleges and charities in our partnership.

£4,058,654

Total Expenditure in 2019



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