



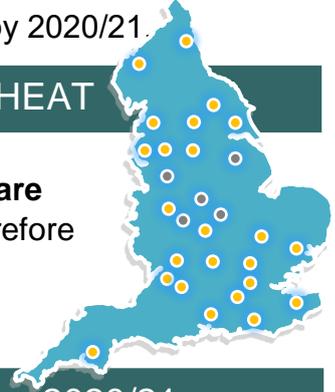
# What can HEAT data tell us about the impact of Uni Connect?

This infographic provides a summary of the outreach engagement recorded by Uni Connect Partnerships using HEAT and examines its impact on Higher Education (HE) progression. An overview of the coverage of Uni Connect and volume of delivery since its launch is shown, before drawing on a quasi-experimental matched cohort design of tracked Uni Connect outreach participants expected to enter HE in 2019/20 to explore progression to HE by 2020/21.

The majority of Uni Connect delivery is captured on HEAT

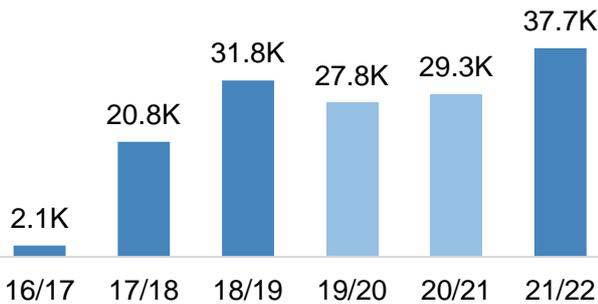
**25 of 29** partnerships use HEAT

Over **86%** of Uni Connect partnerships are recording their data on HEAT. We are therefore in a good position to examine delivery programme-wide.

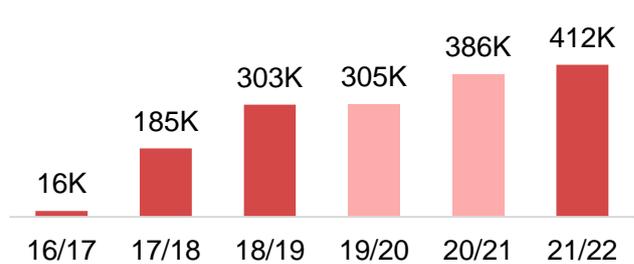


Uni Connect activity delivery has increased by 29% since 2020/21

Number of Uni Connect Activities



Number of learners engaged in Uni Connect activity

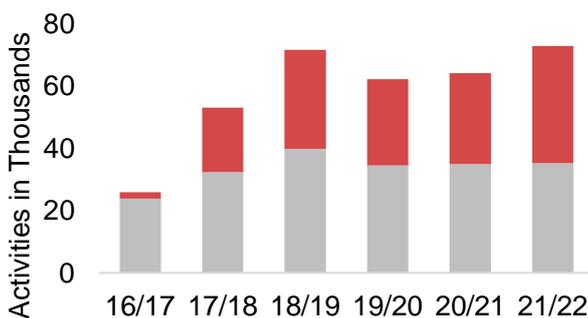


Uni Connect delivery increased in 2021/22, recovering from reduced delivery during the **COVID-19** pandemic. In 2021/22 Uni Connect supported even more of the **most disadvantaged learners**, who are likely to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic and recent cost of living crisis, than before. Overall, almost **150,000 activities** and over **1 million learners** were recorded on HEAT since the launch of Uni Connect in late 2016/17.

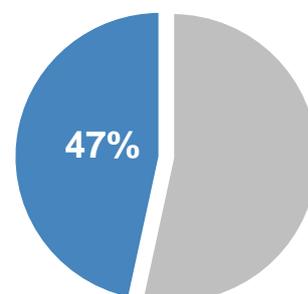
Uni Connect accounts for a large proportion of all outreach delivered

Uni Connect delivery continues to account for a large proportion of all outreach activities recorded on HEAT since 2018/19.

■ Uni Connect Activities  
■ Non-Uni Connect Activities



Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, Uni Connect was involved in **47%** of outreach activities recorded on HEAT.



## Rates of HE entry by 2020/21 show a positive effect on access to HE

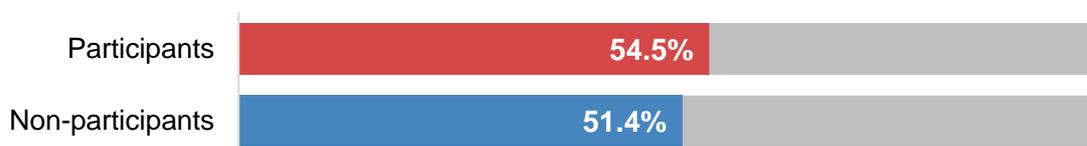
In this section, we explore the progression rates of Uni Connect participants who were **expected to enter HE in 2019/20**, and who did so by 2020/21. These learners will have had a maximum of two years of engagement in Uni Connect activity, while in post-16 education (see timeline below). Learners who took part in Uni Connect activity in earlier year groups are yet to be tracked into HE.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Cohort	Cohort in Year 11	Cohort in Year 12 or FE equivalent	Cohort in Year 13 or FE equivalent	Cohort may enter HE by age 18	Cohort may enter HE by age 19
Uni Connect	Starts in Summer 2017	Cohort engaged for 1 year max.	Cohort engaged for 2 years max.		

**Participants** are compared to a matched group of non-participants. They are defined as those who had at least three contact hours of high intensity<sup>ii</sup> activity types. **Non-participants** are those in receipt of fewer than three contact hours in any activity type or in receipt of only one low intensity activity, which may exceed three contact hours. **Participants were matched to non-participants** based on sex, ethnicity, socio-economic markers, and school markers<sup>iii</sup>.

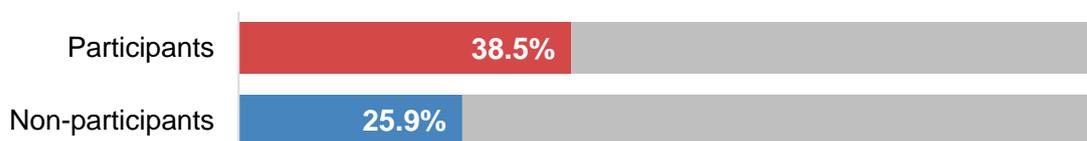
Tracking outreach participants from schools into HE shows that participants expected to be ready for HE in 2019/20 were **3.1 percentage points\*iv** more likely to enter HE by 2020/21 than a closely matched comparison group.

### School students progressed to HE by 2020/21



Tracking outreach participants from FE colleges into HE shows that participants expected to be ready for HE in 2019/20 were **12.6 percentage points\*** more likely to enter HE by 2020/21 than a closely matched comparison group.

### College students progressed to HE by 2020/21



Participants from both types of institutions are more likely to progress to HE than non-participants. This suggests that the **Uni Connect Programme is contributing to reducing the gap in HE participation** between the most and least represented groups by contributing to increased progression to HE of its outreach participants.

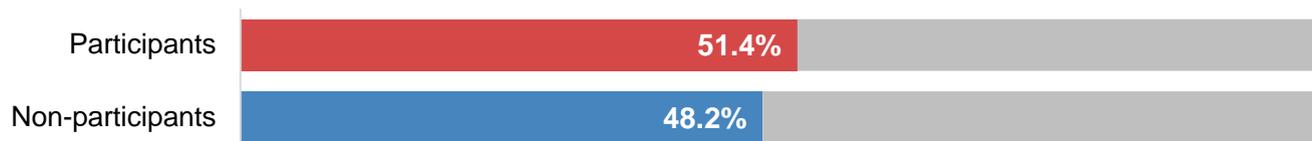
The gap between participants and non-participants is larger for college students than school students. This may partly be due to engagement having been limited to students already in post-16 education. National data shows that students in school sixth forms, are more likely to already be on a trajectory towards HE than their peers studying in FE colleges. Future cohorts will have received Uni Connect activity earlier (pre-16) and over a longer period, which will enable us to assess the impact of more sustained and progressive engagement with Uni Connect on HE entry.

## Uni Connect outreach appears to make a difference for the most disadvantaged

In this final section, we focus on the HE progression of **the most disadvantaged students**. These are learners from areas specifically targeted by the Uni Connect programme due to their low progression rates.

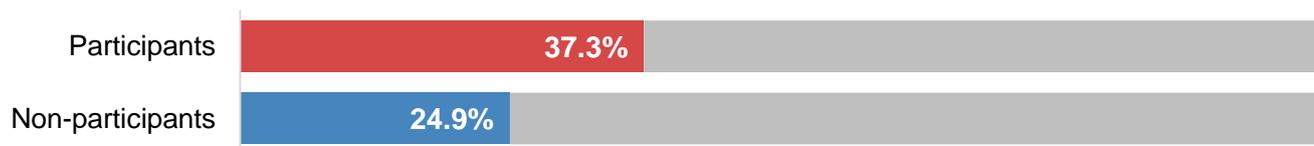
Using the same matched comparator group as above, the data shows that Uni Connect outreach participants living in Uni Connect target areas who last participated in outreach when at a secondary **school were 3.2 percentage points more likely to enter HE** by 2020/21 than their non-participating peers.

### School students from Uni Connect areas who progressed by 2020/21



Participants from Uni Connect areas who last participated in outreach when at a **FE college were 12.4\* percentage points more likely to enter HE** by 2020/21 than their non-participating peers who also live in target wards.

### College students from Uni Connect areas who progressed by 2020/21



For school students, the gap between participants and non-participants who live in target areas exceeds the overall gap for school students, suggesting that outreach delivered by Uni Connect partnerships may be proving marginally **more effective for learners from specifically targeted areas of disadvantage**. This may be due to the most intensive and sustained outreach programmes having been carefully designed for learners from target areas in line with the priorities of the Uni Connect programme.

Similar to the overall gap between participating and non-participating FE students, the gap for learners from target areas is significantly larger than for school students. Participation in Uni Connect activity **appears beneficial to HE progression of college learners**, both for the overall cohort and for learners in target areas.

With learners who were engaged in Uni Connect activity pre-16 yet to be tracked into HE, we look forward to exploring the impact of even more sustained and progressive programmes, implemented over time, in future analyses.

<sup>i</sup> The expected HE entry year is either calculated based on date of birth or manually recorded by the HEAT member.

<sup>ii</sup> High intensity activity types are Mentoring, Summer School, HE Campus Visit, HE Subject Insight, Skills and Attainment. They are considered 'high intensity' based on an evaluation of student to staff ratio of HEAT activity data. General HE Information and Exhibition types are considered 'low intensity'. Other types are omitted in this analysis.

<sup>iii</sup> These variables are known to influence progression to HE. Socio-economic markers used are POLAR4 quintile, IMD decile, EST quintile, and whether the student lived in a Uni Connect target area. School markers used are school KS4 performance decile and college HE progression decile. Match tolerances were applied to allow for fuzzy matching on KS4 attainment, college HE progression and IMD.

<sup>iv</sup> Differences between progression rates have been tested for statistical significance. An asterisk (\*) indicates statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$ .