
Reaching Wider Initiative

16 March 2007

Ref: W07/10HE

To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales;
Principals of directly funded further education colleges

Summary: This circular informs the sector of a £60k additional allocation to Reaching Wider Partnerships for data collection priorities related to retention and impact assessment and provides guidance for its use.

Response by: 9 November 2007

Further information: Emma King
Telephone: 02920682201
E-mail: Emma.King@hefcw.ac.uk

INTRODUCTION

1. This circular informs the sector of a £60k additional allocation to Reaching Wider Partnerships for data collection priorities related to retention and impact assessment and provides guidance for its use.
2. A report on Reaching Wider data collection processes, including an expenditure breakdown against this allocation, should be submitted to us by **Friday 9 November 2007**.

BACKGROUND

3. The Council has agreed to provide an additional 'on-off' total £60k from *Reaching Higher Reaching Wider* funding to support a review of Partnership data collection processes to support retention, impact measurement and to add value to widening access provision.
4. Our 2005-06 remit letter from the Welsh Assembly Government encouraged us to:

 'work closely with the partnerships ... to ensure a clear alignment between institutional widening access strategies and the partnerships' strategies to bring added value.'
5. In April 2006 we allocated funding to HEIs to develop Articulation Strategies with their Reaching Wider Partnership, and for other specific widening access priorities. To build on this alignment, and further add value to Partnerships' work, this new allocation will enable the Partnerships to review their Reaching Wider tracking and monitoring processes.
6. The recent Arad Consulting evaluation report on widening access funded activities and the Reaching Wider Initiative made recommendations about the sector's widening access data collection processes. These recommendations seem to us to be equally applicable to Reaching Wider Partnerships. In the longer term, the report suggested that the *Managing Information Across Partners* (MIAP) programme might provide information on student data sharing between providers. However, in the short term it highlighted the limitations of some individual institutions' widening access data collection processes. This allocation will enable Partnerships, working with HE and FE partners, to review Partnership tracking and monitoring processes and share good practice.

PURPOSE OF THE FUNDING

7. This allocation is for Reaching Wider Partnerships to review the effectiveness of their current tracking and monitoring systems for Reaching Wider participants and to identify and share good practice.
8. The Partnerships' review will further inform our understanding of widening access tracking and monitoring systems and it will form the basis of a programme of widening access actions to improve retention to and through higher education.
9. Partnerships will be invited to present their review findings at a HEFCW widening access tracking and monitoring event planned for November 2007.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

10. The Reaching Wider tracking and monitoring review period is between **1 April and 31 October 2007**.
11. **Annex A** provides a template for reporting.

FUNDING DISTRIBUTION AND MONITORING SCHEDULE

12. Funding will be allocated pro rata to 2006/07 Reaching Wider allocations at the end of **March 2007**. The allocations and monitoring schedule are attached as **Annex B**.
13. We reserve the right to withhold funding from 2007/08 Reaching Wider allocations if the data collection reports do not sufficiently consider the issues outlined in **Annex A** or fully account for funding.

REPORTING

14. Reaching Wider Partnerships' reports should be received, by email or post, by **Friday 9 November 2007**. Please reply to Emma King (emma.king@hefcw.ac.uk), Linden Court, The Orchards, Ilex Close, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5DZ. If you require any further information please contact Emma King on Tel: 029 2068 2201.

REACHING WIDER INITIATIVE TRACKING AND MONITORING REVIEW

Partnerships are invited to work with HE and FE partners to review Reaching Wider tracking and monitoring processes. Please use the reporting template below.

Reaching Wider Partnership Name:

I confirm that all Partnership members have had the opportunity to consider and contribute to this report.

Signed: Reaching Wider Partnership Chair:

Section A

The Purpose of the Partnership's Tracking and Monitoring Systems

- i. With all partners, identify the essential features of, and key barriers to, the effective tracking and monitoring of Reaching Wider participants.
- ii. Confirm that the Partnership works closely with higher education, further education and other partners to ensure that its student tracking and monitoring systems are open, transparent and meet the Partnership's needs.
- iii. State the aims and outcomes of the Partnership's participant tracking and monitoring processes. Has the Partnership revised the processes to accommodate new participant groups, for example, adults, workplace learners?
- iv. How do the Partnership's tracking and monitoring findings inform the Partnership's strategy and funding proposals?

Section B

Tracking and Monitoring Processes

- v. Outline current participant tracking and monitoring processes and consider whether the systems remain fit for purpose at this stage in the Initiative.
- vi. Outline how qualitative, as well as quantitative, data is collected and disseminated.
- vii. Confirm that data collection processes are fully compliant with lead HEIs' data protection policies and outline and deliver at least one staff development event for all Partnership officers on data protection requirements. (If staff have recently received such training, please confirm this.)

viii. Consider the strengths and limitations of the chosen data collection system to monitor impact and progression. For example: (i) How does the system track a participant through successive Reaching Wider activities?; (ii) How does the system track participants from large-scale events to assess these events' contribution to on-going participant engagement?

ix. Explain whether data collection systems can track students from Reaching Wider activities to partner activities, or vice versa.

x. Are there mechanisms in place to track and monitor Reaching Wider participants' participation in other Partnerships' activities, for example, participants living on Partnerships' borders or attending Wales-wide activities?

Section C Good Practice

xi. Are there examples of widening access tracking and monitoring from the Partnership, from Partnership members and/or from other projects that the Partnership considers to be good practice? Please provide examples.

xii. We would welcome any additional comments on tracking and monitoring. All responses will inform further actions to support retention to and through higher education. Please provide any additional views here.

Section D Allocation Expenditure

15. Please provide a breakdown of expenditure against this allocation. If this funding is used for staffing, please note that it is a 'one off' allocation.

Responses

16. Reaching Wider Partnerships' data collection reports should be received, by email or post, by **Friday 9 November 2007**. Please reply to Emma King (emma.king@hefcw.ac.uk) at Linden Court, The Orchards, Ilex Close, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5DZ. If you require further information please contact Emma King on Tel: 029 2068 2201.

**REACHING WIDER INITIATIVE
DISTRIBUTION OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING AND MONITORING SCHEDULE**

Funding will be allocated pro rata to 2006/07 Reaching Wider Partnership allocations.

Funding will be paid at the end of March 2007.

The tables below summarise the allocations and monitoring schedule.

Funding Allocations

| Partnership | RW 2006/07 Allocation | Additional Funding Allocation (pro rata based upon £60k) |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| | £ | £ |
| North Wales Reaching Wider Partnership | 389,000 | 12,600 |
| West and Mid Wales Reaching Wider Partnership | 382,500 | 12,000 |
| South West Wales Reaching Wider Partnership | 304,500 | 9,600 |
| South East Wales Reaching Wider Partnership | 819,375 | 25,800 |
| Totals | 1,895,375 | 60,000 |

Monitoring Schedule

| Date | Action |
|----------------------------|---|
| 30 March 2007 | HEFCW allocates additional funding to RW Partnerships |
| 1 April to 31 October 2007 | Partnerships undertake a review of Reaching Wider Partnership data collection processes |
| 9 November 2007 | Partnerships submit a report of their data collection review and expenditure. |
| November 2007 | HEFCW Widening Access Tracking and Monitoring Seminar |