Participation in higher education

- The current participation indicator is the Higher Education Participation Rate (HEIPR). It measures initial participation for 17 to 30-year-old English domiciled first-time entrants to Higher Education.
- The overall HEIPR in England increased gradually from 39% in 1999/00 to 42% in 2005/06 before falling to 40% in 2006/07. The last Government's target was 50% by 2010.
- A new methodology was introduced in 2007/08 and the new series showed further increases to 2011/12 before a sharp drop in 2012/13. BIS says this was largely due to the fall in deferred entries in 2011/12 (the last year before higher fees).
- Under the old methodology participation among men was static or fell, while it increased among women. In recent years the gender gap has been 8-10 points.
- The HEIPR replaced the Age Participation Index which looked at entrants aged under 21 in Great Britain. This increased from 12% in 1979 to 30% in the early 1990s before increasing more gradually to 32% by the end of the 1990s.
- Since 2001/02 there have been only gradual increases in each under-represented group - those from state schools, socio-economic groups 4-7 and low participation neighbourhoods - as a proportion of all young entrants.
- Between 2005/06 and 2011/12 the proportion of English state school pupils eligible for free school meals going to higher education increased from 13% to 21%. In 2011/12 it was still only just over half the rate for pupils not eligible for free meals (39%).