

# Options with regard to the use of linked pre-HE administrative data in the UKPIs

## UKPITG 13/12

### Issue

1. Pre-higher education administrative data (such as the National Pupil Database, or Pupil Attainment Data) could be used in the UK Performance Indicators methodology to enhance the information reported on the HESA student record.

### Discussion

2. Over recent years, more and more individualised administrative data has been collected and made available. This has been particularly prevalent in the school sectors. The availability of individualised data means that HESA student records can potentially be linked to the pre-higher education administrative data to enhance the information reported by institutions.

3. The 2013 UKPI Review identified this was an area of interest by a number of stakeholders. For example, one sector stakeholder is quoted

*'I think there are more opportunities. I mean there's more data around than there was when the PIs were developed. I suppose there's more of an opportunity to link data, you get a better idea from the national pupil database and the data on people at universities... Maybe there is a strong case for exploring different datasets and the different ways that data's been linked. There may be better indicators that we can now generate.'*

4. The Review also found that the resources required by institutions to collect, process and return individual-level information are significant; and with the current focus on efficiency and driving down costs, there is a strong desire not to collect any further information and/or make additional data returns. It will be important to learn lessons from Big Data<sup>1</sup>, to make use of the data already (and routinely) collected and also that which arises incidentally.

5. This topic was initially discussed at the PITG meeting in February 2013, and the group asked for more detailed options on what might be explored, and the feasibility of such options. The following options have been identified through that meeting, subsequent discussions, and the 2013 UKPI Review.

### Initial options identified

6. For quality improvement in benchmarking calculations,
  - a. enhancement of Key Stage 5 qualification on entry information through individual level linking to school and further education records in each of the four nations;
  - b. enhancement of Key Stage 4 and earlier qualification on entry information through individual level linking to school and further education records in each of the four nations.
7. For quality improvement of the indicator relating to,

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<sup>1</sup> Big data is the term used for a collection of data sets so large and complex that it becomes difficult to process using commonly used software tools.

- a. the state school marker, enhanced identification of pre-higher education institutions through individual level linking to school and further education records in each of the four nations;
  - b. the Low Participation Neighbourhood marker and any subsequent postcode related markers, enhanced postcode data through individual level linking to appropriate administrative data.
8. For exploration of potential new indicators,
- a. examination of additional information on pre-higher education institutions (such as relative school performance) through institutional level linking to the administrative school and further education data in each of the four nations;
  - b. examination of free school meal information or similar measures of individual disadvantage through individual level linking to the administrative school and further education data in each of the four nations;
  - c. examination of alternative disabilities measures through individual level linking to the administrative school and further education data in each of the four nations;
  - d. examination of competitive measures (such as applications per place) though linking to UCAS and other relevant administrative data;
  - e. examination of information held on the Student Loan Records for a post-admission<sup>2</sup> assessment of the financial position of students through individual level linking.
9. For extending the scope of existing and new indicators in terms of HE institutional coverage (such as further education colleges and alternative providers) by indirectly accessing information not provided directly by the institution.

## Outcomes

10. The UK Performance Indicators Technical Group to identify other approaches that might be taken forward, prioritise the options identified and consider the optimal way to take forward these options.

## Further information

18. For further information contact Mark Gittoes (Phone: 0117 931 7052; e-mail: [m.gittoes@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:m.gittoes@hefce.ac.uk)).

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<sup>2</sup> Although the source is not a pre-HE source, the information obtained would be related to the pre- and within- HE characteristics of the individual. Other non pre-HE sources are not discussed in this paper (such as sources relating to employment outcomes) but some of the issues/barriers for linking are similar.