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**Title**

Disadvantaged learners : who are we targeting? ; understanding the targeting of widening participation activity in the United Kingdom using geo-demographic data from Southwest England / Neil Harrison and Sue Hatt

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**Abstract**

This paper analyses the definition of the appropriate target group for widening participation activities advanced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in their Targeting Disadvantaged Learners advice to Aimhigher and higher education providers. This definition includes components of area deprivation and higher education participation rates, which are apparently intended to act as a proxy to reach learners from lower socio-economic groups. Through statistical analysis of geo-demographical data from the Southwest region of England, this paper questions whether the HEFCE targeting guidance is likely to meet the policy aims that underpin it and reach the 'disadvantaged learners' of its title. It is found that the geographical proxy tends to miss learners from lower socio-economic groups in areas of wider affluence and those in rural areas. The paper concludes by questioning whether the areas identified by a rigorous application of the targeting guidance are likely to be the most fruitful locations for outreach activities in the short-term given the

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ingrained, multi-faceted and multi-generational challenges which they face. (HRK / Abstract  
übernommen)