

## Collaboration for Widening Participation: Within and beyond higher education

The move towards increased collaboration and regional organisation for widening participation initiatives announced by the OfS in June 2025 opens up a range of opportunities for higher education. This new approach to partnerships could support a shared national purpose by coordinating the work of providers in tackling local and regional challenges to achieve a greater collective impact. The possibility of more productive links with employers and communities, support for collaborative work with younger age groups and enhanced careers provision would all be facilitated. But at times of change it is also vital that we recognise and learn from the success of existing partnerships. The NERUPI Convention will give you the opportunity to:

- engage with wider perspectives on regional development
- increase your understanding of OfS intentions and requirements
- consider ways to retain existing partnership activities
- explore strategies for developing new collaborative initiatives

**8.45 Coffee & Registration**

**9.15 Welcome**

**9.30 John Blake, Director of Access and Participation, Office for Students**

Our first keynote speaker at the Convention will update us on OfS plans for regional collaboration and respond to questions from participants.

**10.10 Professor Joyce Liddle, Durham University**

In this session Joyce will use the session to set widening participation, knowledge exchange and collaborative partnerships for place transformation in a context of civic and place leadership role for HEIs.

**10.50 Coffee**

**11.20 NERUPI Members' Presentations**

**12.30 Lunch**

**1.30 Presentation Panel:**

**Jo Davies**, University of Bath, Geographies of Widening Participation; The importance of a fair geographic distribution of WP opportunities

**Dr Femi Owolade**, Sheffield Hallam University, Aligning Civic Purpose with Widening Participation; How HEIs can align their WP efforts with the civic university mission

**Scott Atkinson**, Royal Academy of Engineering, Networking for Collaboration; The Importance of networking in regional projects;

**Vicky Spink, HeppSY UniConnect Partnership**; A regional strategy for building enduring partnerships.

**2.30 Sam Dunnett, Head of WP at Sussex and the Sussex Learning Network Regional Planning Workshop**

**3.30 Report Back**

**4.00 Close**