



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity



Widening Access to Higher Education in Scotland:

The role of colleges in Scotland

Sheila Riddell

**Centre for Research in Education Inclusion and
Diversity,**

University of Edinburgh

www.creid.ed.ac.uk



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity

Scottish Government policy on widening access to higher education



‘A child born today in one of our most deprived communities should have no less a chance of entering higher education than a child born in one of our least deprived. We want every child – whatever their background – to have an equal chance of attending university’. Angela Constance, Former Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.

This implies an increase in HE participation by those from less socially advantaged backgrounds – and colleges are seen as having a vital role to play.



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity

Focus of presentation



- The role of Scottish colleges in widening access to HE generally and for less advantaged groups specifically.
- Comparisons are made between Scotland and England, and between different types of institutions in Scotland, using data on Higher Education Initial Participation Rates (HEIPR) compiled by the SFC and BIS.
- This analysis is based on research funded by the Sutton Trust on Access in Scotland (Hunter Blackburn et al., 2016)
http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Access-in-Scotland_May2016.pdf



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity



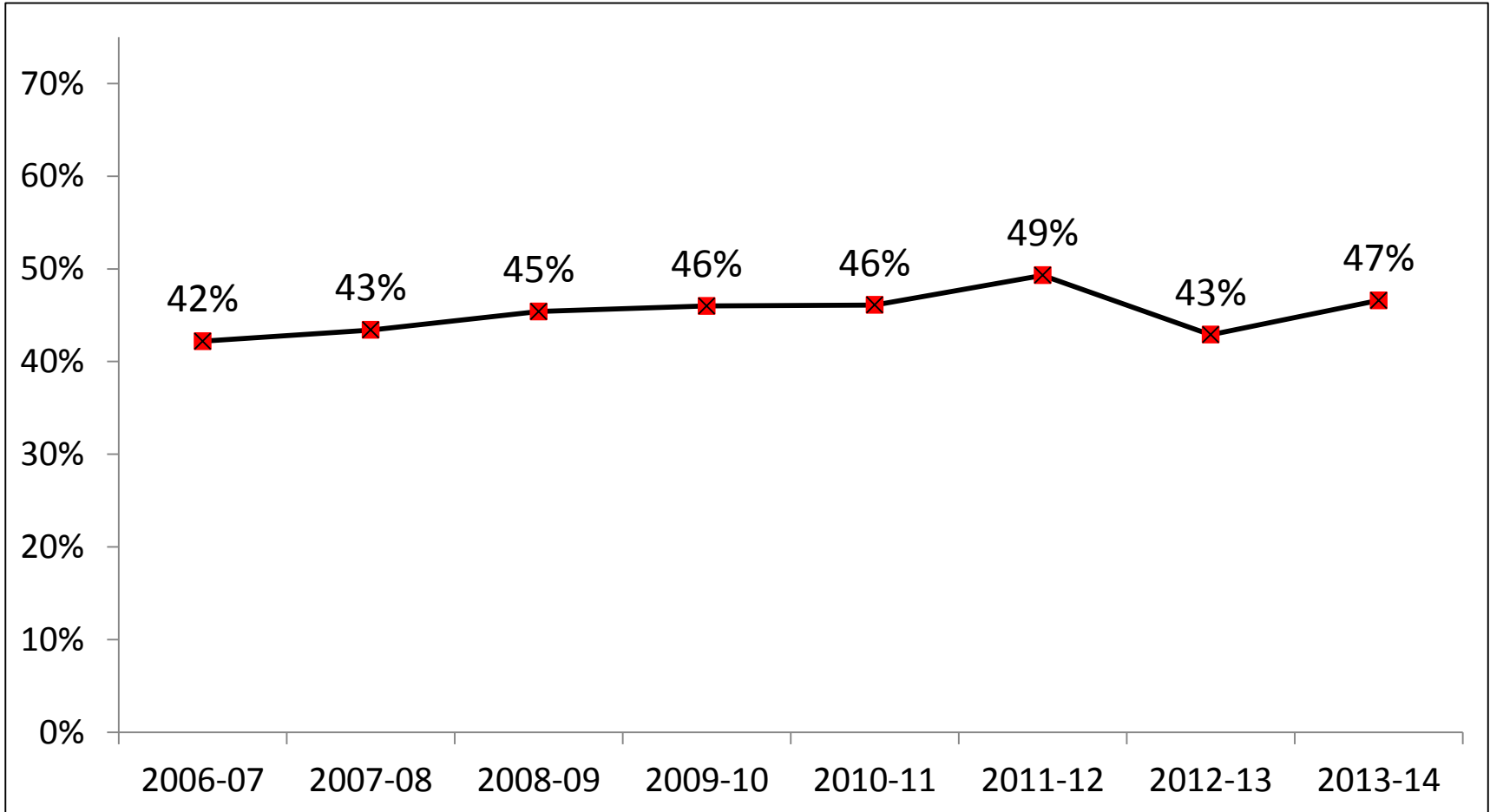
Source	UK government (BIS) and Scottish Government (SFC)
Countries	England and Scotland
Age	Sum of the entry rate at each age up to 30 (17 – 30 in Scotland, 18 - 30 in England).
Institution	All providers
Includes	Initial entrants on HE courses at any level. Full-time and part-time, lasting at least 6 months, who attend for at least 6 months.
Excludes	Re-entrants, who have already been counted in previous years.



Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (to age 30) England - all



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity



Source: BIS

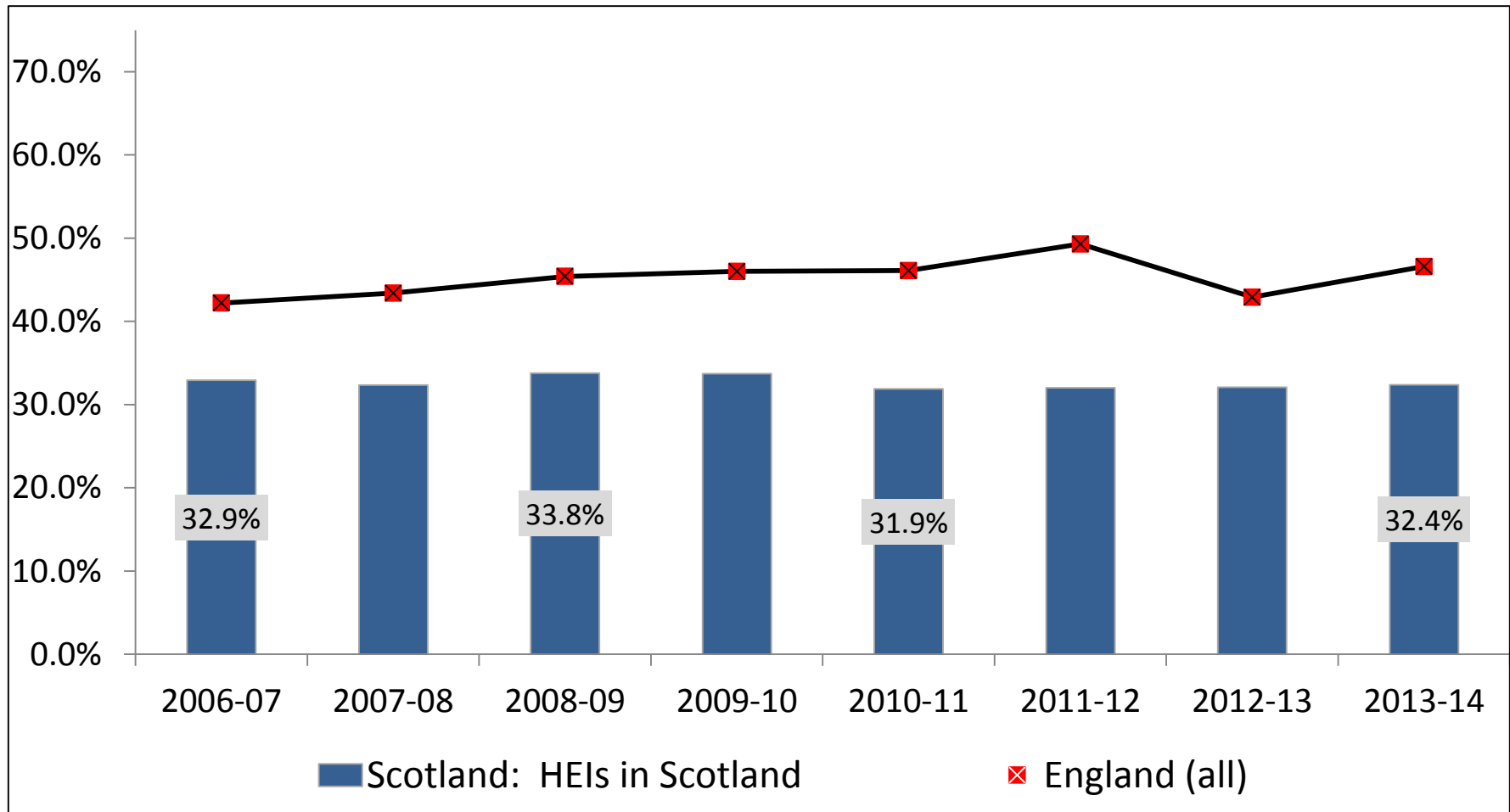


Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity

Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (to age 30)



Scotland – HEIs in Scotland; England - all



Source: SFC, BIS

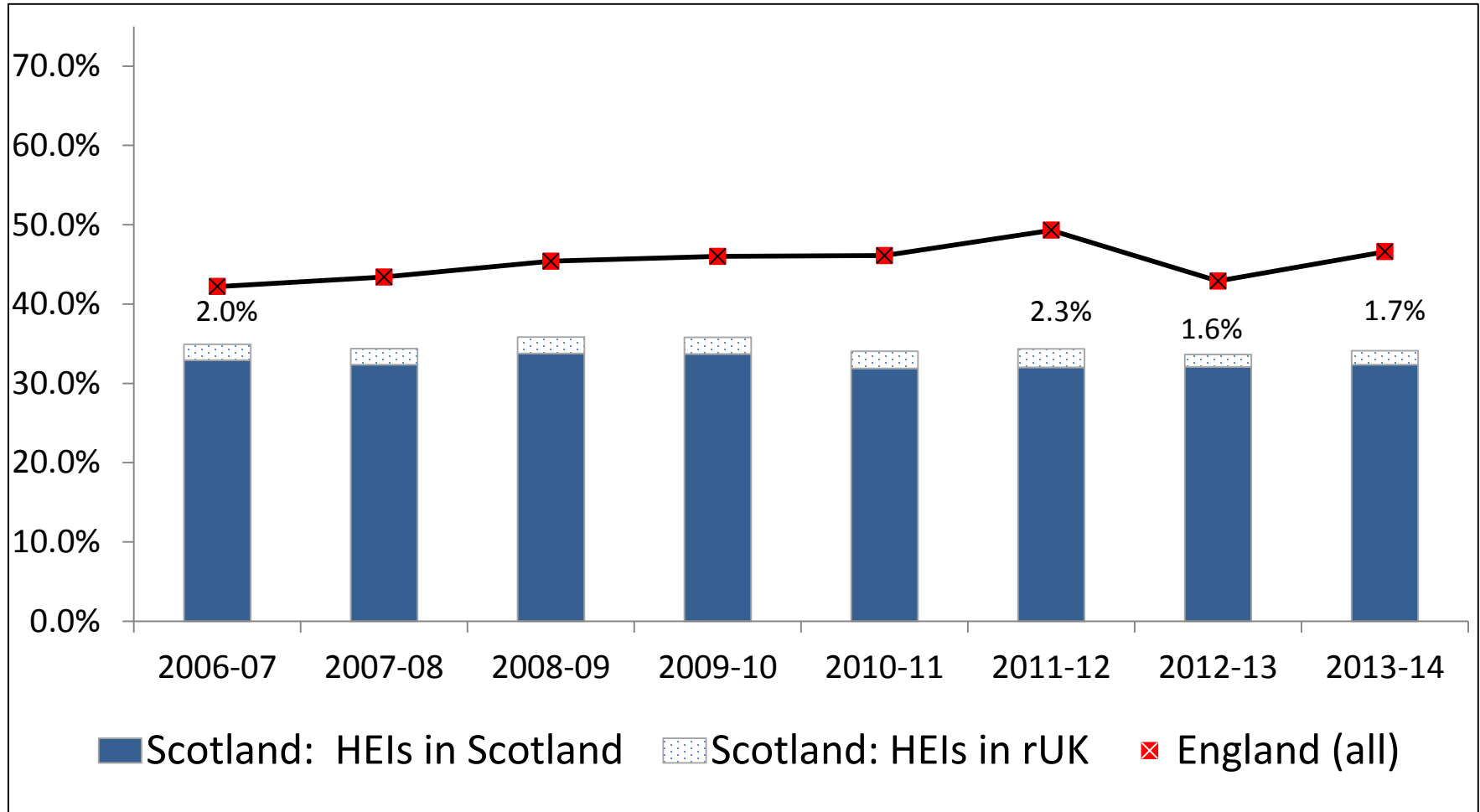


Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (to age 30)



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity

Scotland – HEIs; England - all



Source: SFC, BIS

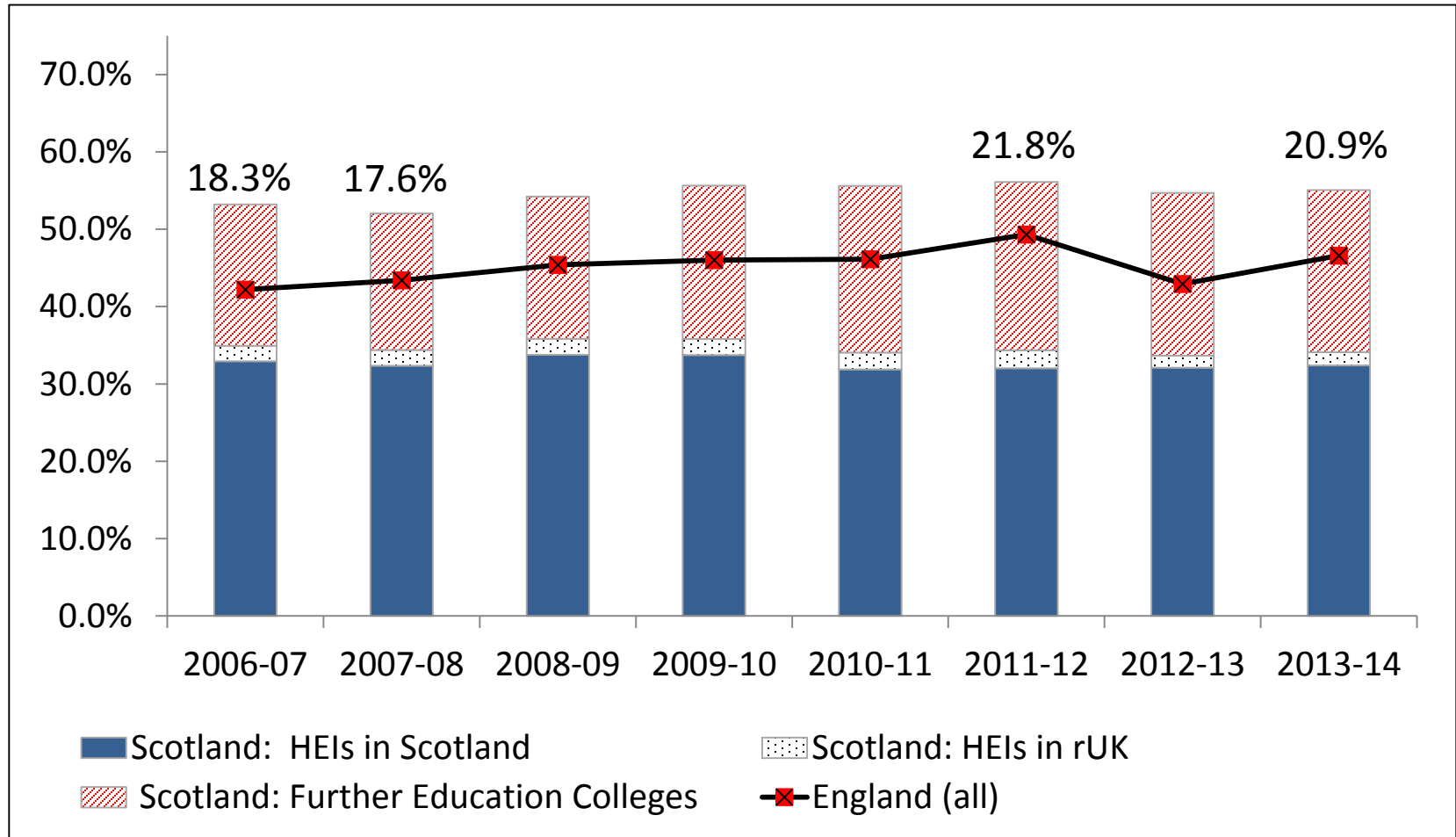


Centre for Research in Education Inclusion and Diversity

Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (to age 30)



Scotland – HEIs and Colleges; England - all



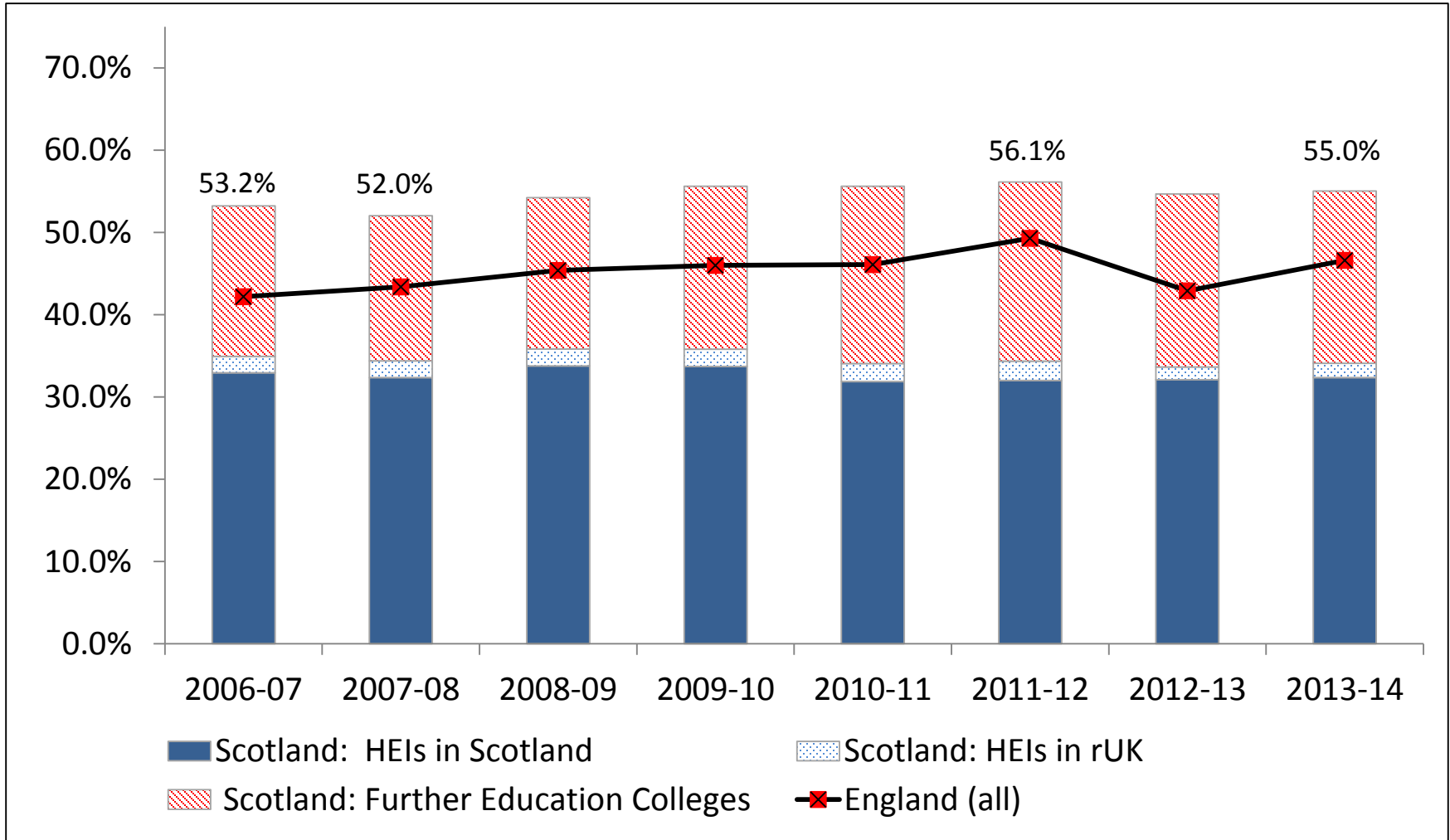
Source: SFC, BIS



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity

Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (to age 30)

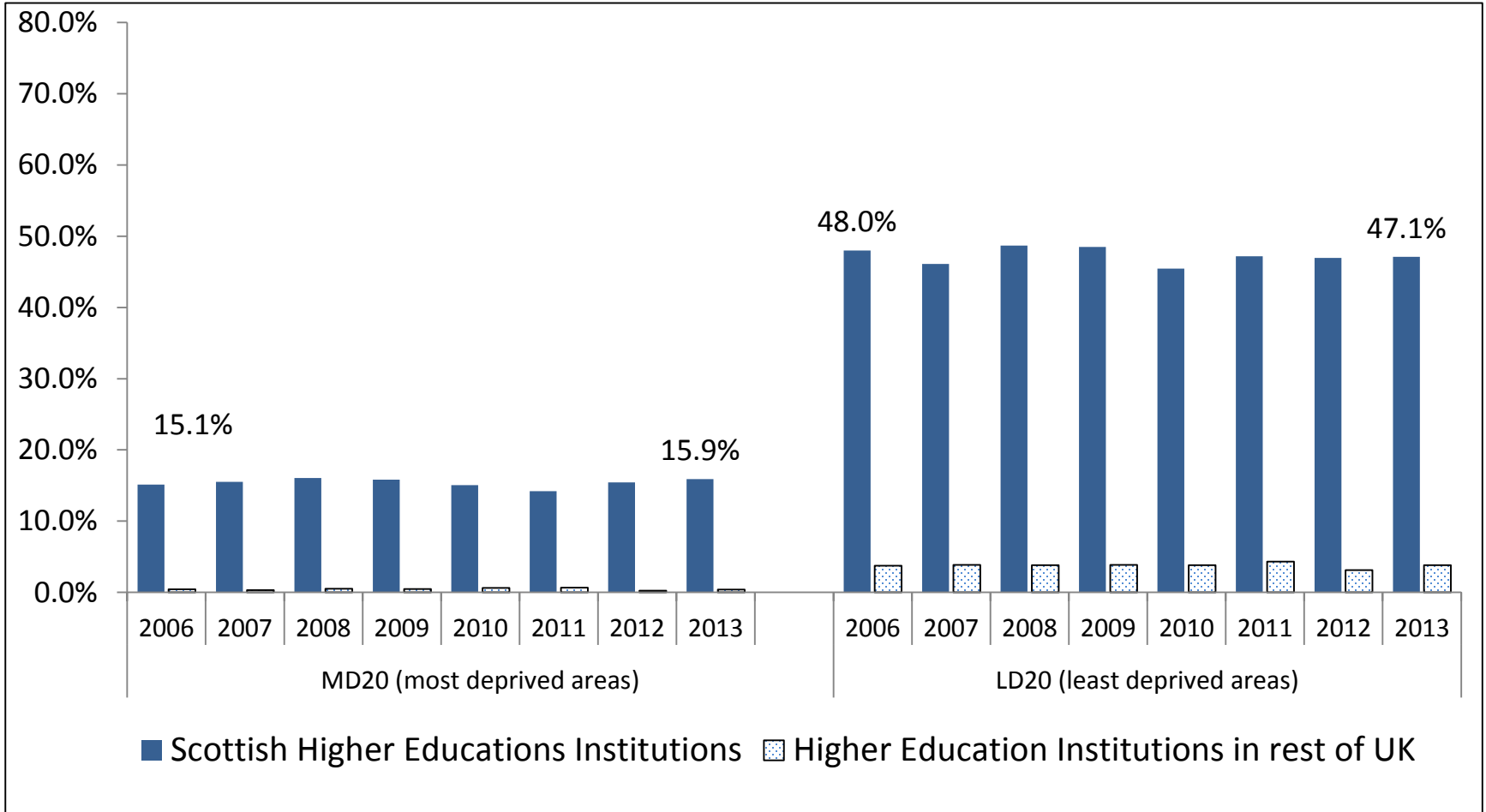
Scotland – HEIs and FECs; England - all





Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity

Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (to age 30) Scotland – by most and least deprived 20%: higher education institutions

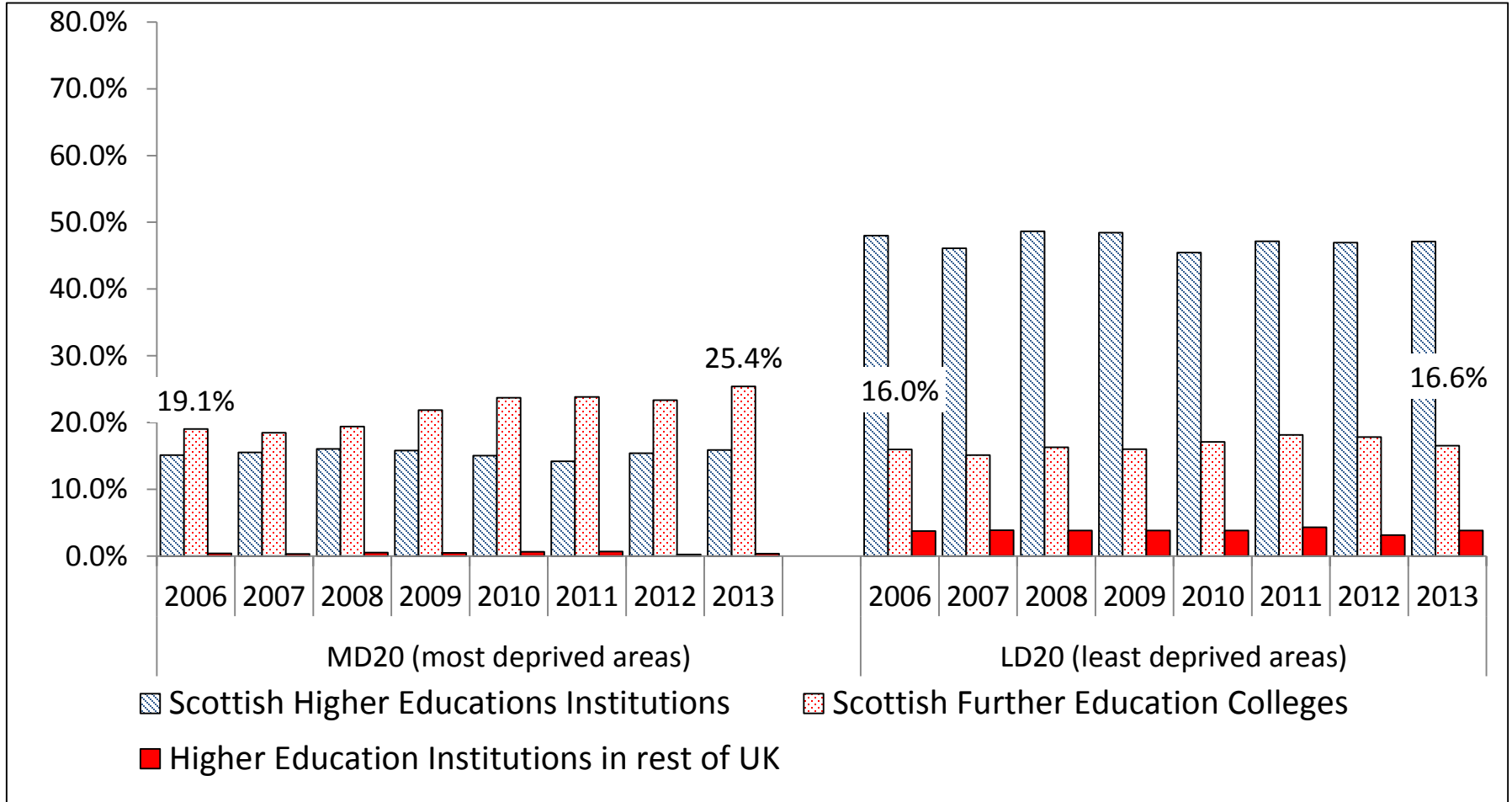


Source: SFC



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity

Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (to age 30) Scotland – by most and least deprived 20%: all entrance routes



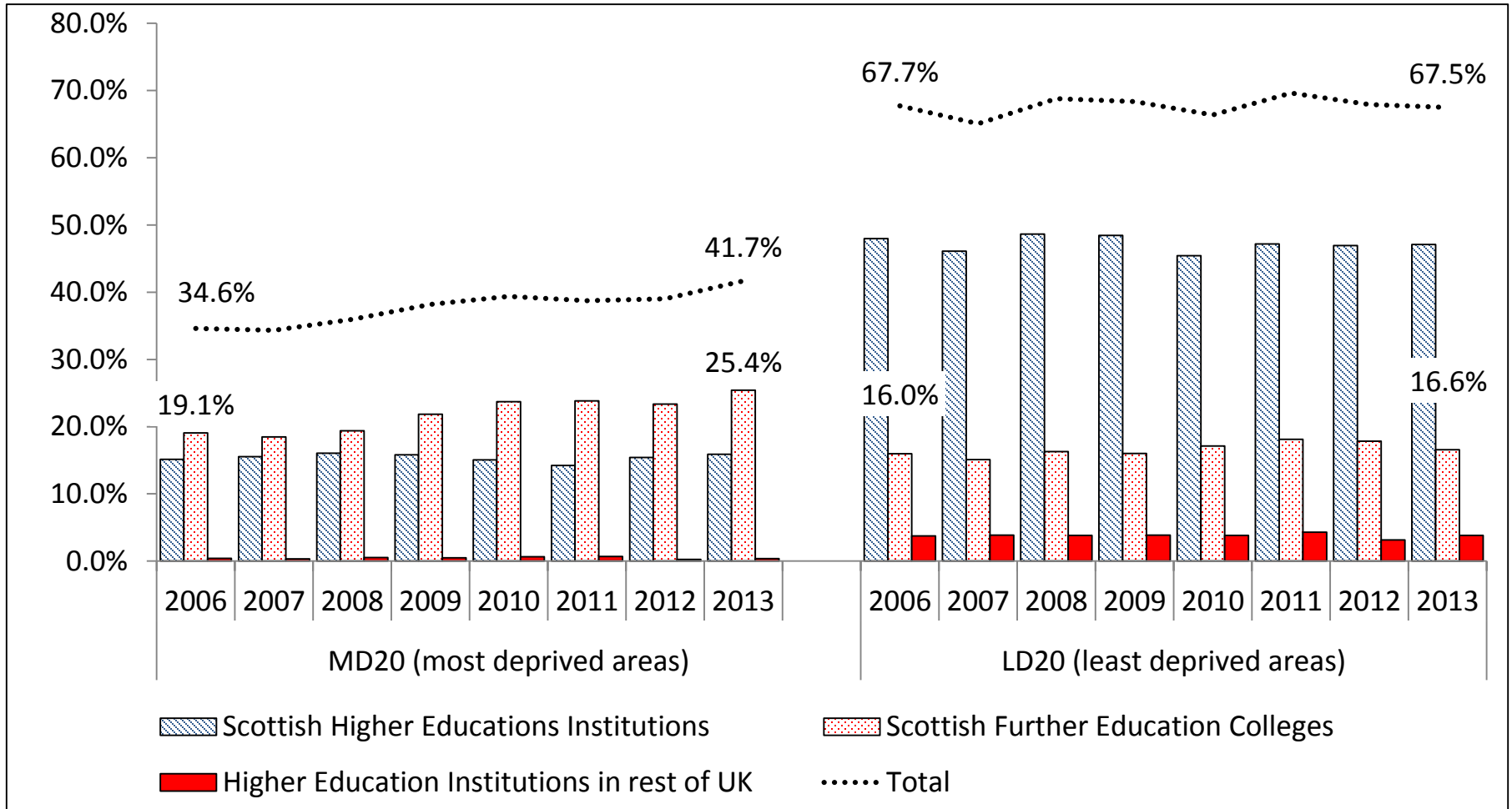
Source: SFC



Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (to age 30) Scotland – by most and least deprived 20%: all entrance routes



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity



Source: SFC



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity

Entry to HE through Colleges: equivalence issues with direct entry to university



- HN-level qualifications alone: lower earnings gains, access not enabled to the same range of occupations, particularly the professions.
- For the remainder who transfer to university:
 - Around 50% of these will obtain no credit or only partial credit, requiring repeat years (particularly if moving onto one of the older universities), leading to higher direct and opportunity costs.
 - For those obtaining full credit, more limited subject and institutional choice.
 - Potential transitional challenges - social/cultural/pedagogical.



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity

Implications of expanding HE in the college sector



- HEIPR in Scotland is higher than in the rest of the UK because it includes those on HN programmes in college as well as those on degree programmes in university.
- Compared with students from most deprived backgrounds, those from least deprived backgrounds are three times as likely to go straight to university rather than college.
- 90% of the overall growth in HEIPR for the most disadvantaged in Scotland has been due to increased entry into college level higher education.
- Colleges may offer familiar environment in home communities and cheaper for government. But some issues still to be resolved.



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity



Questions to consider

- Is there scope for tighter articulation between colleges and universities? What might this involve?
- Most articulation routes are between colleges and post-92 universities – should there be more emphasis in articulation between colleges and pre-92/ancient universities?
- Should there be clearer designation of some HN provision as the first two years of a university degree?
- Should colleges be empowered to offer full degree programmes?
- Should we be concerned that students from less advantaged backgrounds are far more likely to go to college than university compared with those from more advantaged backgrounds?