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Calls grow for additional COVID safety measures in schools and colleges

With COVID very far from over and around 40,000 new cases per day, pupil and staff absences are growing. So are calls from teachers and support staff for more Government advice and action to help try and bring the deadly virus under control.

Confirmed COVID-19 cases amongst school-aged children surged to 102,000 on 30 September, a 67% rise since 16 September. Over 204,000 pupils were absent from school on 30 September for COVID-related reasons. Staff absence is also impacting on education, with some children suffering disruption as a result of staff being off sick or having to look after their own children.

A growing number of local authorities are now using the freedoms they have under the Department for Education guidance to bring in additional mitigations in schools. This reflects their responsibilities for public health, and also under health and safety legislation.

Staffordshire County Council, for example, is encouraging all schools to introduce a range of measures including to stop whole-school assemblies and bring back classroom bubbles and face coverings; all close contacts to get a PCR test; and reintroduction of staggered start, finish and lunch times because it is "time to be proactive" about rising cases.

Additional mitigations have been recommended in areas including Cambridgeshire County Council, City of Wolverhampton Council, Cumbria County Council and in some London boroughs. For example, in Cumbria, siblings of children diagnosed with COVID should be kept at home until their test comes back negative.

On Friday, the leaders of five teacher and support staff unions wrote to the new Education Secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, and asked him to reconsider the reintroduction of additional safety measures in schools and colleges. The five unions – GMB, NASUWT, NEU, UNISON and UNITE – will also be writing to all local authorities and directors of public health asking them to consider measures in their local areas.

Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretary of the NEU, said: "We are concerned that the Government is standing by while COVID cases surge across schools. It is evident that more needs to be done, and sooner rather than later."

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Parliament was in recess last week. The House of Lords returned on Monday, with answers to written questions from then.

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Lessons learned

The report of the House of Commons select committees on Health & Social Care and Science & Technology, *Coronavirus: Lessons learned to date*, published yesterday (HC 92, Tuesday 12 October 2021) makes for sober reading. Not surprisingly for a report on a health emergency the report is mainly about health, but there are important lessons about the way government does business that really matter to education. After the NHS itself and care homes, schools and colleges, and the children and young people in them, were about the worst hit by the pandemic. Many have still not recovered, and it will be years if ever before all do.

Perhaps the most important message from the report is that pandemics like COVID will occur with greater frequency. The one we are in now was the first of its scale since the flu pandemic of 1918, a hundred years ago. We will not have to wait another hundred years for the next one. In addition, there are other challenges, like climate change, that another report published yesterday made clear we are not ready to cope with. That means that lessons learned is not just an academic exercise, but an urgent necessity to better deal with major threats that are not that far off.

It can be taken as read that the pandemic was an exceptional challenge that everyone did their best to deal with, that Government got some hugely important things right and that every government in the world struggled with COVID. That said, as the select committees report makes clear, there were quite a lot of things that the Government got seriously wrong. It is worth remembering that both the select committees that produced this report were led by Conservative chairmen who had previously been Cabinet Ministers, that the committees had Conservative majorities and that the report, produced by a group of MPs drawn from three parties - Conservative, Labour and the SNP - was unanimous.

The bottom line is that the system of government in the British state did not work well enough. The structure of government was found wanting. This poses a problem for all areas of government, including education and skills, as it is not confined to COVID. In December 2019 British ministers thought that they were presiding over a country that was well run with institutions that worked. Indeed, just before the pandemic broke, an international survey of pandemic planning ranked the UK as having the second best pandemic planning in the world, just one place behind the USA. That's not how things worked out for either country. The British state does have some advantages of a world class nature. The invention of the Oxford vaccine illustrates the quality of those of our universities that are world class. In fairness to the Government, the way it went about funding research for a vaccine and organising its production was, as the report acknowledges, a massive success that goes some way to mitigate other failures. Despite the phenomenally expensive fiasco of Test and Trace, we do have a world-beating testing capacity. Yet one of the lessons that the report recommends that we learn is that the Government was too centralised. It poured billions into the centralised Test and Trace, while investing a fraction of that in increasing the capacity of local directors of public health would have got a better result more quickly.

One of the key issues of the levelling up agenda that remains unclear is how far the rhetoric of giving power to local authorities or mayors to decide local priorities will happen. No government likes to relinquish power, and so far the power of the centre looks as if it will have a far larger role than that of the local. That would be to not learn one of the most important lessons from COVID.

The machinery of government was also not as good as ministers thought. There was a lack of ability to challenge and too much capacity for groupthink. The much vaunted COBRA did not have anything like the capacity for a modern disaster control and coordination facility. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, SAGE, was very UK focused and could have done with a greater degree of international involvement. The British government needs a scoping mechanism to scan the horizon for threats and a greater ability to see how other countries are dealing with them. That will need appropriate funding.

COVID was the greatest challenge in peacetime for a century, the report states. It was also the greatest failure of the British state. Lessons must indeed be learned, but for all sectors of government and not just health.

Improving employment opportunities for learners with SEND

The Education and Training Foundation has announced the extension of its Centres for Excellence in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities offer by commissioning eight new employer spokes across the country, which are being hosted by eight Further Education providers that had particularly strong relationships with a wide range of employers, including those with a track record of employing learners with SEND.

The aim will be to bring together FE providers and employers from different industry sectors to show how businesses can benefit from diversifying their workforce. The new eight employer spokes are being led by the following FE providers:

- LTE Group with an offer led by NHS and start-up businesses.
- Oldham College with an offer led by a range of trend-setting SMEs.
- National Star with an offer led by wealth management, facilities management and learner self-employment.
- Luminate Group with an offer led by museums and art galleries.
- Activate Learning with an offer led by National Grid and their learning companies.
- Hampshire County Council with an offer led by construction (highways) and employment hubs.
- London South East Colleges with an offer led by theatres and sports.
- Dynamic Training with an offer led by health and social care with a specific focus on supported apprenticeships.

The spokes will be hosting a number of activities and events up until March 2022 at which employers will talk about the difference employing learners with SEND has made to their business and workforce. They will also discuss the benefits of working closely with FE providers to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the modern workplace. Learners with SEND will also host one of the activities to showcase their skills. They will be open to all employers and FE providers to help them to improve the employability prospects of their learners.

Teresa Carroll, National Head of Inclusion at ETF explained that, as the country recovered from the effects of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, those with SEND were a huge untapped resource to employers and businesses. She pointed out that 81% of non-disabled people were employed whilst only 52% of people with disabilities were employed, which meant that hiring people with SEND was not just the right thing to do, but it also made good business sense.

The CfE SEND programme provides support for leaders, managers and practitioners who wish to put learners with SEND at the centre of their organisation as part of a Department for Education funded national programme. The Centres are hosted by Weston College, Derby College and City College Norwich. The programme had begun in 2019.

East Midlands education sector supporting the Armed Forces community

Six East Midlands education sector institutions have received a Silver Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Award, and one has achieved the Gold Award in 2020, which has shown how education and defence can achieve results by working together. In April 2019 the then Universities Minister and Defence Minister had called for all UK universities to step up and support ex-service personnel and their families, as the participation rate for young people from military service families in the higher education sector is 24%, compared to the rate for the whole population of around 43%.

While Bishop Grosseteste and Nottingham Trent University have earned Silver Awards in 2020, and the University of Leicester had achieved the Gold Award, colleges and schools have reported seeing the benefits of supporting the Armed Forces, in terms of recruitment, involvement with the community and the level of training and skills ex-military people and their families bring.

Bishop Grosseteste University, in Lincoln, the heart of RAF country, is aware of the challenges of a military career and its effects on the family, such as frequent moves, absence on deployment of serving personnel and managing home life, which means that military spouses have little career stability. However, they also have exceptional organisational skills, are flexible, and used to adapting to new situations quickly. In recognition, Bishop Grosseteste offers an uncapped leave scheme and flexible working, which has aided staff retention.

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) makes sure that its wider recruitment team are aware of the relevance of military skills to the civilian work environment, and it is willing to change and adapt recruitment and work environments to lower barriers for those who are considered disabled, which includes wounded, injured and sick service leavers. Its Medical Technologies Innovation Facility helps to develop rehabilitative technologies and cell-based therapies, which are of particular relevance to the wounded and injured veterans of the armed forces.

“The Air and Defence College run by Lincoln College offers an employer-led, career-focused education and technical training course for 16 to 19-year-olds and it also ensures that students benefit from the leadership and expertise of the armed forces by supporting service leavers to retrain as Further Education Teachers and make the transition to the classroom where they can share their expertise with the next generation.”

Max Bardwell, Senior Business Development Manager at Nottingham Trent University’s Medical Technologies Innovation Facility, and former Reservist, said that the Armed Forces Covenant is fundamentally about enabling wider participation in higher education and higher education employment; by lowering barriers for those who might otherwise find it prohibitively difficult to engage.

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Primary schools have also created new programmes, and William Alvey School in Lincolnshire has over 50 children in its “Bluey Club”, a service set up to address the emotional and social well-being of forces children. The school offers a safe environment in which to discuss feelings and experiences, through group activities, discussions and one to one support.

The fourth wave of T-Levels on their way

Contracts have been signed with leading awarding organisations for the fourth wave of T-Levels to be taught from 2023. Following a bidding process overseen by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, City & Guilds will develop, deliver and award qualifications in: Animal Care and Management, Agriculture, Land Management and Production.

NCFE will develop, deliver and award qualifications in: Craft and Design, Media, Broadcast and Production, Hair, Beauty and Aesthetics. Highfield will develop, deliver and award qualifications in: Catering.

Jason Sprenger, chief executive at Highfield Qualifications, said that the Catering T-Level Technical Qualification had been recognised as one of the most significant developments in hospitality education within the last decade. He added that Highfield had originally been founded to support learners to achieve their educational aspirations in the sector almost 40 years ago.

OfS cracks down on poor spelling and grammar

Universities and colleges should consider students' spelling, punctuation and grammar when marking exams and assessments, according to a report published by the Office for Students, **Assessment practices in English higher education providers: Spelling, punctuation and grammar, which considers approaches to assessment at a small number of universities, some of which had policies which meant that proficiency in written English was often not assessed.**

In deciding their approach to assessment, the universities involved in the review had often pointed to a desire to achieve or promote inclusivity. However, the report sets out the OfS's view that students should be assessed on spelling, punctuation and grammar, to maintain quality and protect standards.

Susan Lapworth, director of regulation at the Office for Students, said that because students should be able to communicate their ideas effectively, their written work must be of a high standard, including correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. She stressed that it was not possible to analyse and explore complex theories and arguments without being able to write well, and universities should recognise that as they assessed their students.

Ms Lapworth argued that while some universities and colleges asked academics to ignore poor spelling, punctuation and grammar to make assessment more inclusive, the idea that they should expect less from certain groups of students was patronising, and it threatens to undermine standards as well as public confidence in the value of a degree. She warned that it also risked placing new graduates at a disadvantage in the labour market, and could leave employers spending time and money training graduates in basic written English. But Ms Lapworth added that universities and colleges could, and should, ensure that they supported students with additional needs, including making reasonable adjustments for disabled students, while maintaining academic rigour.

She said that the common features that had been seen in assessment policies, suggested that poor spelling, punctuation and grammar may be accepted across the sector. But Ms Lapworth stressed that in publishing the report, the OfS was making sure that universities and colleges understood that they must change. She pointed out that effective assessment should take into account all aspects of a student's work, which included their ability to express themselves effectively and correctly in written English.

Ms Lapworth pointed out that the OfS recognised that making changes to assessment policies could take time, and it would therefore revisit the issues in a year. But she added that from October 2022, the OfS would expect to take action where it found assessment practices that lacked rigour, including in the ways identified in the report.

Michelle Donelan, Minister for Higher and Further Education, said that the Government was determined to drive up standards at universities so that every student could benefit from a quality education which would lead to good outcomes, and it was right that the Office for Students had put universities which disregard poor written English on notice.

EEF publishes new guidance on professional development

In its latest guidance report, *Effective Professional Development*, The EEF recommends that school leaders should focus on the key mechanisms of effective professional development, such as goal setting, feedback or revisiting prior learning, when selecting or designing new training for teaching staff. The report aims to help schools make sure that professional development is of the highest possible quality, and that it had the biggest possible impact on teaching practice and pupil outcomes.

The report focuses on three overarching principles for effective professional development:

- When designing and selecting professional development programmes, school leaders should focus on the mechanisms for development, such as feedback or goal setting.
- Ensure that professional development effectively builds knowledge, motivates staff, develops teaching techniques, and embeds practice.
- Implement professional development programmes with care, taking into consideration the context and needs of the school.

The EEF pointed out that the recommendations in the report had been drawn from a systematic review of the best available international evidence, a review of current practice in English schools, and in consultation with a panel of expert practitioners and academics.

The new report offers guidance for senior leaders and department leads in all educational settings, from the early years to post-16, as well as programme designers, so they can ensure that their approach to professional development aligns with the evidence base.

Professor Becky Francis, chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, said that there was “a real appetite” amongst teachers to hone their practice to consistently meet the needs of all their pupils. She added that in the aftermath of the partial school closures, effective professional development had never been more important.

Mentoring webinars for leaders, mentors, and mentees

Following the launch of its *Mentoring Framework and Guides* in June, the Education and Training Foundation has developed 60-minute CPD webinars for leaders/managers, mentors and mentees to support or enact high-quality mentoring and coaching. The sessions, aimed at leaders and managers who have responsibility for mentoring and coaching schemes for teachers/trainers take place on Tuesday 12 October (4pm) and Friday 15 October (1pm).

They will aim to help participants recognise the features of an organisational infrastructure for developmental mentoring, analyse the role of the mentoring co-ordinator and understand the importance of training for all parties involved.

The sessions for mentees who are working with a mentor, or preparing to do so, are on Monday 29 November (4pm) and Friday 3 December (4pm). The sessions will describe effective practice in developmental mentoring and analyse effective mentee behaviour and mindsets.

All of the webinars are free to attend and places can be reserved via the ETF booking system.

Value Education, Value Educators campaign

The National Education Union has launched its Value Education, Value Educators campaign. Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union, said that ensuring schools and colleges had the funding and support to address historically high-class sizes and underfunding and the further issues that had arisen through the pandemic was essential.

He added that the country needed to see the Government introducing effective, well-funded proposals, as most children and young people had one chance at education. The NEU argued that to value education, the Government would need to increase funding and invest in recovery, as the costs of COVID-19 had been borne by schools and colleges, and the amount pledged by the Government to compensate for lost learning amounted to just £310 per pupil, while other countries had been spending far more, £1,830 per young person in the US and £2,090 in the Netherlands.

The campaign argued that:

- Child poverty must end, as 4.3 million children were living in poverty in the UK, which was 31 per cent of children, or nine in every class of 30. An estimated nine per cent of UK families did not have a laptop, tablet or desktop computer. Two million households did not have access to the internet. Forty per cent of the education attainment gap was set in stone before children even started school. And 70 per cent of children growing up in poverty lived in a household where at least one person worked.
- High-stakes testing must be replaced with assessments fit for the future. The English education system topped international league tables for the number of tests pupils take. Children entering education in 2021 would be young adults in 2033, and for schools to prepare them for jobs that had not yet been created, as well as technologies that had not yet been invented, the curriculum and assessment system must enable children to make and do as well as reading and writing.

ASCL Cymru comments on National Education Workforce Survey report

Following the results of the 2021 *National Education Workforce Survey* report, Eithne Hughes, Director of ASCL Cymru, said that the findings in the survey had showed that more than a quarter of Welsh school leaders were considering leaving their role, moving to a different educational setting or retiring. She argued that as the new curriculum was a landmark moment for education and potentially a game-changer for learners in Wales, it would be vital for the process not to be derailed and there would need to be a very clear focus on the additional resource and time needed to introduce it and make it work following the disruption to education due to the pandemic.

But Ms Hughes added that the task would be significantly more challenging if leaders moved to different roles or left the profession in the sort of numbers the survey had indicated. She stressed that senior leaders were overwhelmed by the amount of work they were required to do, with limited staffing and within very limited budgets.

Ms Hughes warned that education in Wales was at a critical point and the Government must recognise the incredible commitment and professionalism that school leaders had demonstrated in the survey and engage with them directly to discuss changes that could be made to their working lives to ensure they did not leave the profession.

Covid-19 Education Recovery Group - Infographic

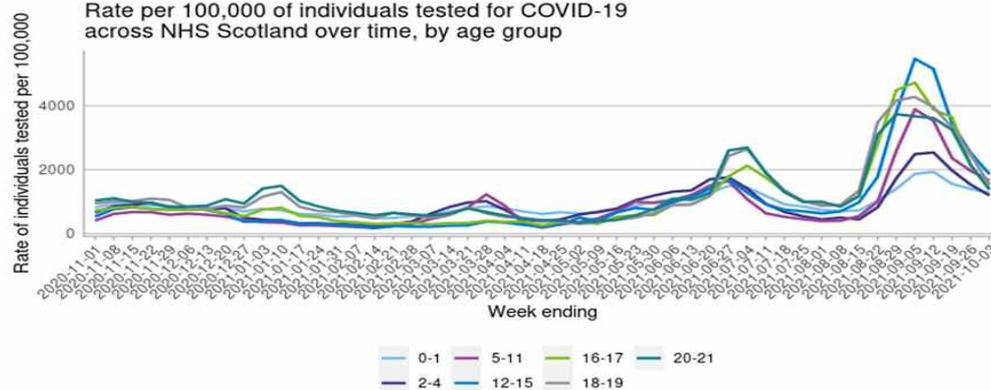
In the week ending 3rd October 2021:

- The rate of testing was 1,441.9 per 100,000 children and young people aged 2-17 years.
- The percentage of tests that were positive was 17.9% in those aged 2-17 years; a decrease from 18.8% last week.
- The identified COVID-19 positive cases reflected a rate of 168.2 cases per 100,000 2-4 year olds, 715.3 cases per 100,000 5-11 year olds, 883.3 per 100,000 12-15 year olds and 445.8 cases per 100,000 16-17 year olds. The rate of cases per 100,000 of the general population was 308.5.

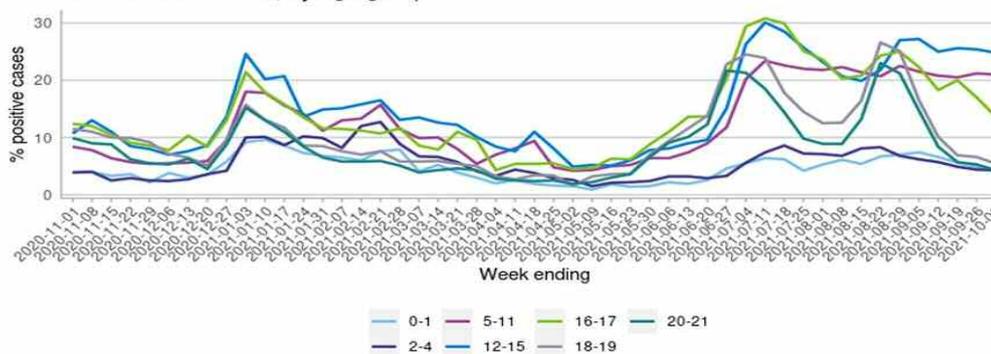
On 5th October:

- Attendance in local authority schools was 89.7%, whilst the percentages of openings recorded as pupils not in school (non Covid-19 reasons) was 8.2%, and for not in school (Covid-19 related reasons) was 2.1%.
- 14,414 pupils were not in school either all or part of the day because of Covid-19 related reasons. Of these, 3,736 were not in school because of a Covid-19 related sickness.

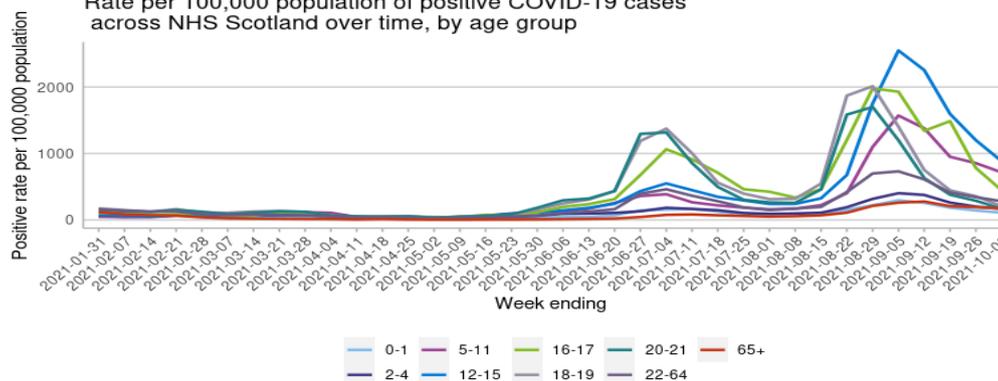
Rate per 100,000 of individuals tested for COVID-19 across NHS Scotland over time, by age group



Percentage of tests that had a positive result for COVID-19 over time, by age group

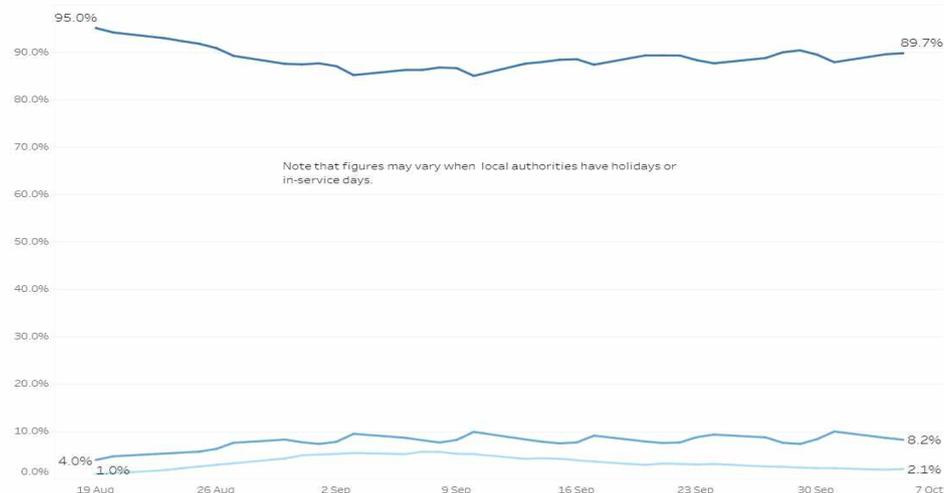


Rate per 100,000 population of positive COVID-19 cases across NHS Scotland over time, by age group



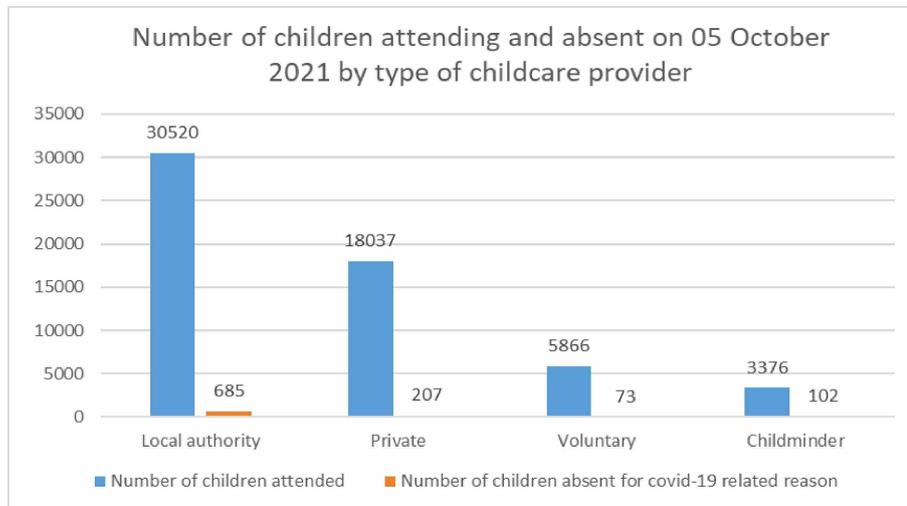
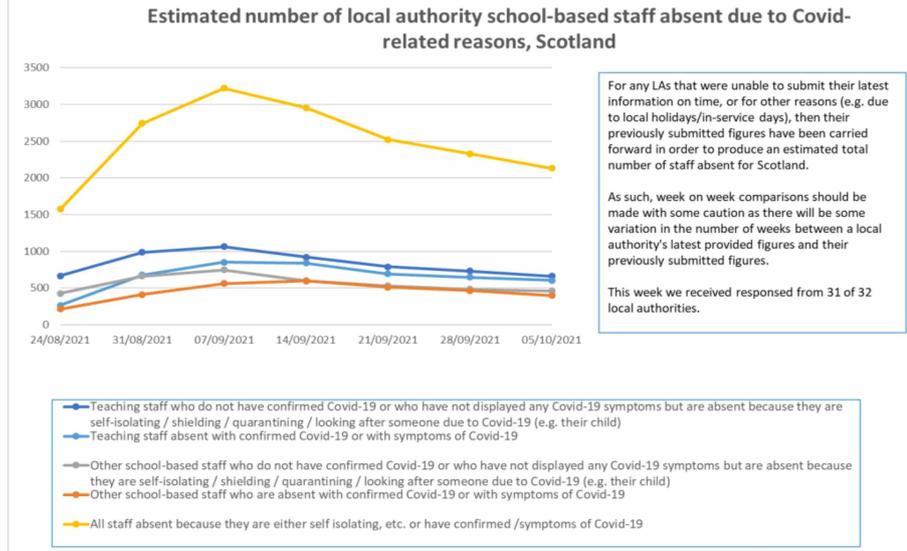
School Attendance and Absence over time

- Percentage Attendance
- Percentage of openings showing pupils were not in school because of any Covid-19 related reason
- Percentage of openings showing pupils were not in school because of non-Covid-19 reasons



Covid-19 Education Recovery Group - Infographic

- 2,130 staff were absent due to Covid-19 related reasons, of which, 1,267 were teaching staff and 863 were other school-based staff.
- 57,779 children were attending a childcare setting and 1,067 had a Covid-19 related absence. Note that not all open settings completed the survey and that these figures are an underestimate of the actual number of open settings and children attending.
- This week, 422 (1.9%) childcare staff were absent due to Covid-19 related reasons [based on a 53% response rate].



Scottish COVID-19 Education Recovery Group - COVID situation in Scottish schools

Primary school wins International School award

The British Council's International School Award celebrates international studies being included within not only a school's curriculum but their culture. The award is only given to schools that can demonstrate that their school fosters an international ethos and embeds international studies in their classrooms. Activities included investigating cultural differences in the experience of major historical events, as well as events dedicated to the food, culture, and sport of a particular country.

The latest school to win an International School Award is Race Leys Junior School, Bedworth, Warwickshire, which yesterday announced that it had won a foundation level International School Award. Sue-Ellen Lamb, Head of School, said: "I'm very proud of our staff and students at Race Leys Junior School for working hard to achieve the International School Award and would like to especially thank the teachers who went above and beyond to ensure children embraced the proud traditions of other cultures."

Race Leys Junior School is already working towards winning the intermediate level of the award by working collaboratively with Spanish speaking schools in different countries. Sue-Ellen Lamb adds: "Partnering with Spanish-speaking schools will allow us to widen horizons and further the knowledge of our students, allowing them to directly collaborate with international students."

New Black History Tube map

Transport for London has teamed up with the Black Cultural Archives to launch the first ever Black History Tube map, based on the famous London Underground map. The station names are replaced by the names of Black people who have made a contribution to London and the UK from pre-Tudor times to the present day.

The Black Cultural Archives is the home of Black British History, conceived in 1981 as a monument to hold space and collect, preserve and celebrate the histories of people of African and Caribbean descent in the UK to inspire and give strength to individuals, communities and society.

To take just a couple of examples, Ladbroke Grove station on the Circle Line is replaced by George Bridgetower (1779-1860), a virtuoso violinist. As a child George gave successful violin concerts in Paris, London and Bath. In 1791, the Prince Regent, the future George IV, took an interest in him and oversaw his musical education. His playing impressed Beethoven so much he composed Sonata 9 for him – a sonata considered by today’s violinists as being the Mount Everest of violin sonatas. In 1807 he was elected to the Royal Society of Musicians.

Princess Omo-Oba Adenrele Ademola (Rickmansworth station) was a Nigerian princess. She trained as a nurse in London in the 1930s. Her nursing career spanned 30 years, including through World War II. She was the subject of a film, *Nurse Ademola*, made by the Colonial Film Unit. It was screened across West Africa and inspired many African viewers to join in the imperial war effort.

Posters of the map are available from Transport for London.



Courts shut down rogue education publisher

A Manchester publisher of school booklets on knife crime and bullying has been forced out of business by the courts for inappropriate sales techniques which secured over £1.6 million. The Prevention Foundation C.I.C., a community interest company, has been wound-up by the High Court, after complaints regarding misleading sales tactics. Businesses were misled into paying for sponsorship of anti-knife crime, anti-bullying, and fire and road safety educational booklets sent to schools.

The men behind this business were Robin David Reid, 50, of Bradshaw, Bolton, and his fellow director Matthew Ralphs, 38, of Oldham. Their registered address was at Hamill House, Chorley New Road, Bolton, BL1 4DH. They set up a number of companies that lasted a couple of years before being shut down. They did not file accounts.

Investigating complaints about Prevention Foundation, the Insolvency Service established that it operated substantially the same business as Safety Guide, another company that had gone out of business after a short time, targeting small businesses with unsolicited sales calls and using misleading sales tactics to obtain sponsorship.

Prevention Foundation's directors failed to co-operate with the investigation and failed to provide any company accounts or records. The investigation established that Prevention Foundation secured more than £1.6 million by February 2021, but due to the lack of co-operation it was impossible to account for over £1 million worth of expenditure.

As a result, Prevention Foundation was wound up in the public interest by the High Court in Manchester before District Judge Bever on 1 October 2021. The Official Receiver has been appointed as the Liquidator.

David Hope, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said: "This company abused its status as a community interest company. It used dubious sales tactics to elicit significant funds from small businesses without providing any recognisable community benefit. Prevention Foundation also demonstrated a wilful disregard for its obligations by obstructing our investigation. Thankfully the court recognised the severity of the misconduct. Now it's been wound-up, the Official Receiver can make further enquiries into Prevention Foundation's practices and the conduct of its directors."

Robin Reid started Safe Start Academy Ltd. on 29 October 2019. By the end of the year it had assets of only £1. The company changed its name to Safe Start Education Ltd. on 7 September 2020, but the Insolvency Service still closed them down two months later. On 12 February 2019 Reid and Ralphs established the Safety Guide Foundation as a community interest company, which in June 2020 changed its name to the Prevention Foundation. All these companies had nominal capital, usually of £250.

The investigation was carried out by Company Investigations, part of the Insolvency Service, using powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. ,

The Insolvency Service will pursue civil enforcement measures if misconduct is found, as in this case. Where there is evidence of criminal wrongdoing then its civil investigators will pass their evidence on to its criminal investigation team within the Insolvency Service, the police, or other relevant regulators, investigation agencies, and prosecuting authorities. While these investigations are under way, it would not be appropriate for us to comment further.

"This company abused its status as a community interest company. It used dubious sales tactics to elicit significant funds from small businesses without providing any recognisable community benefit. Prevention Foundation also demonstrated a wilful disregard for its obligations by obstructing our investigation."

No referral early support hubs needed to tackle rise in mental health issues in young people

Early support hubs which allow young people to access mental health support without referrals should be made available nationwide to help tackle a rise in mental health issues during the pandemic, according to the Local Government Association. The LGA pointed out that the centres would bring together various services to support young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing, such as youth services; sexual health, drug and alcohol, health and wellbeing practitioners; and mental health practitioners, before they hit crisis point.

The LGA said that the hubs, which would be accessed without referrals from doctors or schools and offer support up to the age of 25, already existed in some areas, and some of the hubs were reporting social and economic benefit returns of more than triple the money they had invested.

The LGA, is urging the Spending Review to provide long-term investment so the hubs could be rolled out by councils and local health leaders nationwide. The LGA said that the hubs, which would prioritise an early intervention approach, would help to provide alternative support models to current school-based interventions, and they would also help to plug gaps in support, especially for those whose needs were not "mild to moderate".

The LGA said that councils, which had a lead role in managing the hubs, should be seen as partners in tackling the mental health demand of the population, which should not be seen solely as an NHS issue. As well as calling for long term funding to support a national roll-out of early support hubs, the LGA is also urging the Government to make its £500 million Youth Investment Fund, which had been announced two years ago in September 2019, available as soon as possible to enable councils have enough funding to ensure that youth services were available for local young people to help their mental health.

ITT reform, more reflection needed

Reforming Teacher Training: Expert Perspectives, a body of essays to inform the current debate about the future of Initial Teacher Training, has been published by Gatsby Education. The nine contributors come from a range of institutions, from academia to schools, universities and subject associations, and they all share experience of and/or expertise in ITT.

In publishing the collection, Gatsby aims to highlight some of the many views held by those with a stake in ITT. The contributions suggest that teacher training in England is rich and complex, with a plethora of routes and providers. Gatsby pointed out that the question at the heart of the Government review was how to improve the system, ensure that the best provision was allowed to continue whilst ensuring that all trainees had access to high-quality training. Gatsby stressed that there seemed to be no consensus over the right things to do or even if change was necessary, as several Essay contributors had suggested. Gatsby argued that the uncertainty was a reason to slow down and assess the options and their implications in detail before identifying the long-term solution.

The foreword was penned by Jenni French, Head of Teacher Supply Programmes, and Sir John Holman, Senior Advisor to Gatsby Education and former headteacher, and the essayists are: Tim Oates, Cambridge Assessment, Dame Alison Peacock, Chartered College of Teaching, Charles Tracy, Institute of Physics, James de Winter, University of Cambridge, Hannah Stanwix, Rosebery School, Ben Rogers, Paradigm Trust, Dr Alex Sinclair, St Mary's University, Michelle Palmer, Royal Society of Chemistry and Dr Sam Sims, UCL Institute of Education.

T-levels one year on

T-levels are celebrating their first anniversary. The vocational equivalent of A-levels were introduced at the start of the last academic year. So, how have the new technical qualifications gone down? Nicolette Dryden is a lecturer at Havant and South Down College in Hampshire. Nicolette has found her first year of teaching T-levels have shown the potential to boost skills in the UK's key growing sectors. She has only one female student in her class and would love more young women to join the industry where there are so many opportunities with design tech in a way that suits women.

Becca Catterall, an 18 year old student from Lancashire, is studying a T Level in digital production, design and development at Runshaw College. Becca, who discovered her passion for coding while studying computer science at GCSE, will use her T Level as a stepping stone to university and is hoping to pursue a degree apprenticeship in software engineering following her T Level.

Becca said, "I did computer science at GCSE and that's when we really started diving into the proper theory and coding behind how computers work. I fell in love with it and despite having a number of options available I knew I wanted to be a software engineer. I like the logic of it all and the fact you have a set number of rules to follow to make things work."

Romilly Horner, a 17 year old student from Norwich, is studying a T Level in Education and Childcare at Thorpe St Andrew Sixth Form. After being inspired by her mum who is a teacher, Romilly decided to pursue a career in education and childcare, a sector she has been passionate about since a young age. Romilly said, "When I was younger I always wanted to be a teacher because I really like the thought of teaching the basic needs of life to a child. A primary school teacher gives children opportunities to learn counting, numbers, and colours – it's so important to their early development and gives them the foundation of skills they need for life. I like the idea of having a positive impact on a child's early years."

Sam Corneby, an 18 year old student from Ipswich, is studying a T Level in Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction at Suffolk New College. Sam was inspired by famous architectural work CopenHill, the ski centre-come-waste incinerator in Copenhagen, because of the way it perfectly combined society, lifestyle, sustainability and functionality.

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Supply teaching skills gap in the primary sector

By Esme Bianchi-Barry
CEO of Affinity Workforce Solutions

Across the UK, schools are seeing an acute shortage of qualified primary school teachers. [1] With a decreasing amount of full-time teaching applicants, schools and MATs are increasingly relying on supply teachers to fill the gap. Supply teachers provide an essential, cost-effective solution across a tightly funded sector; however, it is vital that teaching quality remains high and that the absence of permanent teachers at a primary school level does not impact the learning taking place.

With five children in a classroom of 30 likely to have a mental health problem, and one in 10 primary school children having been diagnosed with a mental health disorder [2], it is integral that any teacher entering a classroom is trained sufficiently in dealing with mental health issues and identifying those who are suffering.

At Affinity Workforce Solutions, we have been helping schools to recruit great teachers for more than 25 years. However, we have seen over the past decade that there is a growing disparity between the training that supply teachers receive compared to that of full-time teaching staff.

While full-time teachers benefit from five inset days of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) per academic year, supply teachers are often only provided with mandatory training as a standard through their agencies. This means there is potential for them to miss crucial information such as new teaching methodologies and curriculum developments.

This is why the focus on CPD training for short-term positions is vital to lessen the skills gap and provide schools with access to a flexible and highly qualified workforce.

The requirement for up-to-date training has been highlighted more than ever due to COVID-19. With multiple lockdowns and being under enormous pressure, teachers of all ages and experience levels have had to tackle the switch to digital learning. However, some teachers have struggled with their digital capabilities, which has presented an important learning opportunity within the sector as a whole.

The potential of digital technology in teaching is huge and, with the right training in place, teachers will be able to deliver on it. Upskilling staff will not only build confidence in teaching via remote learning platforms but will also have a positive impact in the classroom. Teachers will be able to nurture tech skills in their pupils, leading to better online learning outcomes and building students' digital knowledge to enable them to thrive in tomorrow's workplace.

Critically, primary schools need to have access to supply candidates who have completed the most up-to-date training within education, so they can provide exceptional teaching and support. An example of this would be our innovative CPD course aimed at upskilling the supply teaching sector and addressing the current skills shortage. Candidates have access to our 'CPD Supply Toolkit' which consists of 10 live online training sessions delivered by experienced and qualified trainers who have worked in the education sector for more than 30 years. This training is currently delivered within schools, so all candidates will have up-to-date knowledge and an understanding of new classroom practices. Topics include new ways of working post-pandemic from Google Classrooms, remote learning platforms and e-safety, to supporting children's mental health in a school setting.

As agencies are under no obligation to provide the same level of training for their short-term candidates as they do their permanent teachers, the skills gap is at risk of widening, which will impact teaching delivery and fundamentally the education of children and young people. Supply teachers who have access to a CPD programme will feel more prepared and empowered to teach a class using the latest training, which is crucial, whatever their level, age or experience.

[1] <https://educationbusinessuk.net/features/long-and-short-%c2%a0-uk-teacher-crisis>

[2] <https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2019/02/07/childrens-mental-health-understanding-the-issues/>

Education Secretary pledges to work hard and be honest

During his first speech to a union conference as Secretary of State for Education, at the NAHT's Policy Conference last weekend, Nadhim Zahawi, thanked school leaders for their work throughout the pandemic and their continued dedication to improving the life chances of young people. He told delegates that they had gone above and beyond to support children, families and communities in the most challenging of circumstances.

Mr Zahawi said that he knew, more than most, how much difference a person's work could make, as he had been born in Baghdad in 1967 and had fled with his family from Saddam Hussein's regime in the 1970s. He pointed out that because he had not been able to speak English, when he arrived in the UK, in any other country, he may have been left behind, forgotten about, and his future could have vanished before he had even finished school.

But the Secretary of State said that his teachers had never given up on him, and every day, they had challenged him to do better and they had supported him along the way, to enable him to make the best of the opportunities he had been given. He pointed out that many children in classrooms today had their own tales to tell, and he added that he wanted to work with the education sector to make sure that such stories would end in opportunity, not a closed door. Mr Zahawi pledged to listen to and work with the sector, and be honest.

He said that as a former Children and Families Minister, he believed that the earliest years of a child's life was crucially important, and the Government was committed to improving services in the first 1001 days, by championing family hubs, and helping parents to provide the best home-learning environment for their children.

The minister stressed that high-quality education at an early stage could boost children's outcomes later in life, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. He said that one of the reasons he had been able to succeed at school as an 11-year-old without English, had been due to fantastic teachers, and parents who always urged him on and who understood the value of education. Mr Zahawi added that he felt very strongly that he had a responsibility to stand up for every child, especially those who may not have the same advantages that he had, which meant that the Government and the profession must ensure that schools were the very best in the world, and that they had the very best teachers.

He pointed out that to get the very best teachers, they would need the very best training, which was why the Government had delivered the Early Career Framework and why it was rolling out a suite of National Professional Qualifications to support teachers and leaders as part of a fundamental overhaul of how teachers were trained. The Secretary of State said that the aim was for the country to be looked up

“The Secretary of State said that the aim was to create a skilled and agile workforce, which could help the country to power through the aftermath of the pandemic, which would mean no easing up on the Government's plans to ensure that any child who had fallen behind during the pandemic could make up their lost learning, by building on the recovery programmes that were already in place.”

(Continued on page 18.)

(Continued from page 17.)

to around the world as one of the best places a teacher could learn and master their craft. He added that the job was to create a skilled and agile workforce, which could help the country to power through the aftermath of the pandemic, which would mean no easing up on the Government's plans to ensure that any child who had fallen behind during the pandemic could make up their lost learning, by building on the recovery programmes that were already in place.

Mr Zahawi stressed that one-to-one tutoring would no longer be something that the children of wealthy parents could fall back on, but the right of every child, and he added that a hundred million hours of one-to-one tutoring would be delivered in the current parliament.

He confirmed that the Government would introduce a Schools White Paper to ensure brilliant teachers at every stage; high standards in every classroom and strong schools with excellent leaders and robust systems. The minister said that illiteracy and innumeracy must end, as no child should leave primary school unable to read or without a grasp of mathematics, and a relentless focus on literacy and numeracy would continue throughout secondary school. He pointed out that to ensure that excellent teachers got the recognition they deserved, the Prime Minister had announced that those who were in the early years of their careers would be eligible for salary boosts of up to £3,000 tax-free to teach maths, physics, chemistry and computing. Mr Zahawi argued that the move would boost the number of teachers in subjects that were facing the greatest shortfall, and it would also build on the "ground breaking" teacher recruitment and retention reforms.

“Mr Zahawi confirmed that the Government would introduce a Schools White Paper to ensure brilliant teachers at every stage; high standards in every classroom and strong schools with excellent leaders and robust systems.”

The Secretary of State said that the Government had already started to transform how young people gained the skills they needed for a meaningful and satisfying job with the T-level and apprenticeship programmes, which it wanted to be as highly thought of as A-levels.

But he argued that one of the most crucial commitments, as far as he was concerned, was to do far more for vulnerable children and make sure they had the support they needed to succeed by getting as many opportunities as their peers. Mr Zahawi stressed that the disadvantage gap must close and the focus must be on the outcomes for every single child, which would mean that mental health must be better understood and support must be provided where it was needed. He added that wellbeing must be at the centre of everything that was done in schools alongside as well as a drive for rigorous standards and high performance.

However, he pointed out that nothing could be done if children were not at school, and therefore, another key priority for him would be to get to the root of what had been causing children to be persistently absent and then tackling it head on.

The Secretary of State said that the Government would continue to invest record sums in children's education, and he added that while he would not provide a running commentary on the spending review, he stressed that he would not stop making the case for investing in children and young people.

Commenting on Nadhim Zahawi's speech at the NAHT's Policy Conference, Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the union, said that broadly, what Mr Zahawi had said had been encouraging. But he added that the real test would be what he would be prepared to do immediately, to prise more investment from the Treasury in the Comprehensive Spending Review, and then how he would choose to develop policy.

Mr Whiteman pointed out that Mr Zahawi had taken questions on funding, the move to turn more schools into academies and the need to see a more diverse group of people becoming school leaders. He welcomed the Secretary of State's commitment to engage the NAHT and to take an evidence-based approach. Mr Whiteman added that, from his position on the conference platform, he had seen a genuine desire from Mr Zahawi to be true to his words.

NAHT has the Government in its sights

At his Union's Policy Conference Speech, Paul Whiteman, General Secretary of the NAHT, argued that if school leadership thrived, everything else followed. He said that the NAHT had focused on three things: Growth, Community and Voice, and through communities, branch networks, and regional structure the NAHT had been able to create safe spaces for fellow professionals to gain mutual support and mutual reassurance.

Mr Whiteman pointed out that when the profession had faced its greatest test over the last 19 months, a sense of mutual strength and collective endeavour had appealed right across school leadership. He said that the sense of mutual support and collective endeavour had seen an unprecedented increase in the NAHT'S branch activity, which was the true test of how vibrant democracy was.

Mr Whiteman said that having moved the NAHT'S registered office from Haywards Heath to the Millbank Tower, just across the river in the heart of Westminster, had planting the union's flag next the seat of the UK government had been more than a mere convenience, as it was a signal, along with a growing membership and vibrant democracy that the union had emerged stronger than ever to renew the commitment to campaign for the changes that education needed.

He said that while his remarks today had been directed at everyone in the conference room, he had also been speaking to the politicians across the land. Mr Whiteman pointed out that, while he had been encouraged by the language of levelling up, the language that no child should be left behind, and the language of just how important education was, he had continually been left disappointed that the rhetoric had not been backed up by action. He said that as the NAHT was a politically independent union, it would work with all parties, and he wanted to see all of them talking with the highest level of ambition for education across the UK.

Mr Whiteman argued that although there had been intense debate about "education recovery" in recent months, in terms of what form it should take, what pupils had missed out on, and what it would cost. But he added that he was concerned about how narrow the discussion sounded. Mr Whiteman pointed out that the NAHT had put forward an Education Blueprint for the future, which urged policy makers to focus on seven key areas:

- Prioritising Early Years funding and support.
- Improving support for mental health and wellbeing.
- Investing in the teaching profession.
- Providing targeted academic support for pupils who need it.
- Expanding extra-curricular provision.
- Investing in technology.
- Removing unnecessary accountability and bureaucracy.

He said that while the new Secretary of State had many matters to attend to, none was more important than delivering on the Prime Minister's promise that no child would be left behind. Mr Whiteman said that, lately, he had been able to get back to one of his favourite activities, which was visiting schools and seeing young people in class. But he added that on those visits, he had felt a mixture of emotions, and while he had been reassured by the ambition of the staff he had met, he was worried about the fragility of the education systems. Mr Whiteman warned that without stability, what kind of platform was there for recovery and reform.

Culture and Education in the 21st Century

What part do teachers play?

Monday 18th October: 14.30 to 17.30

“Culture and education are complex phenomena and their causal relationship is of a “chicken or the egg” character.”

Meşeci Giorgetti

Where 'culture' comes from and how it develops is a complex issue: the impact of formal education, and the role of the teacher, on culture has changed over time and will continue to do so.

The 21st Century has seen a dramatic change in the relative importance of different cultural influences, particularly on children and young people, who have access to their own culture but also unfettered access to 'adult culture'.

It could be argued – legitimately – that the influence of the teacher, the curriculum and attendance at school combined, is much less significant than that of: the internet; social media; or peer group.

However, what happens in schools is now the only influence on children and young people that the Government has any direct control over. It is understandable, therefore, that politicians are keen to exert as much control as they can over schooling.

This seminar will look at

- the reforms that have been introduced in the first two decades of the 21st Century, with particular reference to:
 - * school education
 - * teacher education
 - * further and higher education
- the reforms currently under consideration by the Government
- the implications of the proposed reforms for what schooling could look like in England, and the impact of schooling upon culture

Contributors to the seminar include:

Ian Mearns MP
Professor Tanya Ovenden-Hope
Dr Mick Walker
Professor Susan Robertson
Professor Mick Waters

This seminar will take place virtually, to enable delegates to attend without the need to travel and to reduce costs to a minimum.

All delegates will receive a copy of the papers presented at the seminar, together with a transcript of the Panel Discussion.

If you would like to reserve a place at the seminar, at a cost of £75, please complete the attached form and email it to:

Kate@waterman.education



EPI research on school efficiency, needs your feedback

The Education Policy Institute has launched a research project to understand how to improve efficiency in England's school system. The EPI School Groups Efficiency Project aims to develop the most robust measure of efficiency among school groups to date. Developed in collaboration with the sector, the research aims to become an essential resource that can be used to inform key decisions of both school leaders and policymakers.

The new project includes a working paper published with preliminary findings on efficiency among school groups in England, which have been identified by researchers as achieving high outcomes, but without a higher level of resources. The research considers school efficiency in academy trusts, local authorities, and other school groups. Alongside the findings, EPI has set up a national consultation to seek feedback from education leaders and sector experts.

EPI pointed out that every year, the UK Government spends around £45 billion on schools in England, and school leaders and other education authorities are responsible for deploying the resource efficiently and sustainably. But it added that one of the greatest challenges was to establish whether schools and trusts were run efficiently, and which of them had the most efficient operating models, so that best practice could be shared among individual schools and wider school groups.

EPI stressed that understanding school efficiency was also increasingly important in the context of real-terms cuts to pupil funding over the last decade. In that context, EPI said that it wanted to understand how existing resources might be best used in the school system, to identify practices that bring genuine efficiencies, without compromising the school workforce or the quality of pupils' education.

To give feedback on EPI's findings and methodology on school efficiency, please send your responses in a written email or document to feedback@epi.org.uk. When you contact EPI, please provide details of the organisation that you are representing, for example, a school, academy trust or university faculty. The closing date for feedback is 16th November 2021.

New teacher support research

The Education and Training Foundation has been working on a research project with Sheffield Hallam University to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on new teachers and the support they need, as well as the support given to ITE teachers and trainers by their employers and how it could be enhanced.

The EDF is asking for help to identify what support was already available in the sector and how it could be extended. It is looking for people from the following groups who would be willing to participate in an online interview as part of a small focus group:

- Teachers or trainers who had completed a teaching qualification, level 3 or above, after April 2020.
- Senior leaders of FE providers who had recruited newly qualified teachers or trainers since April 2020.
- Senior leaders of ITE providers.
- ITE teachers and trainers.

Participants are being sought across FE Colleges, sixth form colleges, adult education services, independent training providers, and other parts of the FE sector. To join a focus group, please contact Naomi Dixon, ETF Performance Manager.

Push-back against IMF advice to cut public sector spending

The International Monetary Fund has for some years been advising many developing countries to cut back on their spending on staff in an attempt to help them balance their books. Now three international organisations with affiliates in developing countries are pushing back. One is Action Aid, a charity working on poverty and justice issues including climate change. The other two are Education International and Public Services International, whose national affiliates represent some of the public sector workers involved.

The three organisations analysed 69 IMF loan and Article IV documents (Article IV reports provide policy advice which shape countries' economies in the medium to long term) for 15 developing countries, ten of which are Commonwealth members, from 2016 onwards. They produced a report, *The Public Versus Austerity: Why Public Sector wage constraints must end*, which was published yesterday (12 October) to coincide with the annual meeting of the IMF.

The report claimed that cutting budgets used to pay public sector workers is undermining progress on health, education, and gender equality while blocking COVID-19 responses and the transformations needed to address the climate crisis. The report found that countries with wildly different spending on public sector wages as a percentage of GDP were all advised to make cuts, from Zimbabwe with 17% of GDP to Nigeria with just 1.8% of GDP. Despite these huge variations, the IMF's advice is consistently to cut spending.

Some of the recommendations were:

- Despite IMF claims that wage bill containment is only ever temporary, all of the 15 countries studied were given a steer to cut and/or freeze the public sector wage bill for three or more years, and eight of them for up to six years.
- In just those 15 countries, the recommended IMF cuts add up to nearly US\$ 10 billion – the equivalent of cutting over 3 million frontline public sector workers.
- In just those 15 countries, a one-point rise in the percentage of GDP spent on the public sector wage bill would allow for the recruitment of 8 million nurses, teachers and other workers.
- The latest IMF medium-term advice is to drive every country below the global average for public sector wage bill spending as a percentage of GDP, contributing to a long-term downwards spiral.
- Despite claims that public sector wage cuts should be accompanied with action to expand tax revenues, most countries experienced decreasing, stagnating and/ or inadequate tax-to-GDP ratios. Even the few countries that expanded tax revenues were advised to cut spending on the public sector wage bill.
- Public sector wage bill constraints undermine progress on health and education, and other SDGs.
- The impact is felt triply and most acutely by women and girls, as they are more likely to be excluded from accessing basic services, to lose opportunities for decent work in the public sector, and to bear a disproportionate share of the unpaid care and domestic work that rises when public services fail.

David Edwards, General Secretary at Education International, the global teacher union confederation, said: "Public sector wage bill constraints have a devastating effect in the education sector. When the teacher wage bill is cut, students' right to quality education is threatened by a lack of qualified teachers and unacceptably large class sizes. Given the global teacher shortage and rising attrition levels due to the pandemic, the IMF should be supporting low and lower-middle income countries to recruit and retain more well trained and highly qualified teachers rather than pushing for countries to reduce their spending on these workers that are so crucial for countries' post-pandemic recovery. Teachers are key for quality education and are crucial for achieving the global goal to ensure inclusive education for all."

Extremes

By Professor Jan Willem de Graaf

Professor of Brain and Technology, Saxion University of Applied Sciences, Deventer, Netherlands

Our world is one of extremes. On the one hand, huge numbers of people live in relative prosperity, and we have become more than ever free of racial discrimination and women's oppression, even though there is still a way to go to live in a fully emancipated world. On the other hand, the Enlightenment thinking and praxis that underlies these great achievements – the economic imperative from a logical-scientific framework – is disastrous for the planet in terms of (biodiversity) diversity, environment and climate. Last Friday I gave a lecture on (neuro) psychology in relation to design, architecture and styling, where one of the attendees commented that nowadays almost all buildings and landscapes (including parks and forests) are designed. The architect concluded that because of this, designers are the most important employees of our planet. However, the extremes, both our human merits and our problems, lie in the human competence to design.

Each design starts from a more or less specific perspective, to avert one particular (type of) problem. However, there is always an infinite number of conceivable perspectives; it is precisely because of the preoccupation with the designed perspective that new problems will arise in one of these conceivable perspectives, which have not been thought about beforehand. This, of course, also applies to new conditions that arise naturally, that are not "designed", in which something can thrive, unbalance itself or something else and thus force change often through chaos (dynamical systems). Species appear and disappear. For example, what is a species from one perspective, may be a germ from another perspective. In nature, the transition from one balance to another creates chaos, from which a new (temporary) balance will always arise. As human beings, we protect ourselves against nature through technology and (logically) we do not accept chaos (illness, cold, attackers). We intervene by designing: coats, fire, spears and, for example, also by designing a vaccine with which we tackle a virus that is wreaking havoc in our world.

Averting threats

In the short term, human design can successfully tackle or avert threats. Yet in the long run we are certainly no better than nature at restoring balance. For example, purebred dogs are 'designed' for certain characteristics and on average invariably more vulnerable to disease and ailments than mongrel dogs. Optimal from one perspective - large or strong - while the "design" never takes into account an infinite number of long-term aspects. Innovating for the sake of innovation is actually mainly good as an exercise in perspective change, but not for ultimately creating an ideal perspective on an ideal world.

As Richard Rorty (1932-2007) and Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1922-1996) have stated, a perspective that transcends all other perspectives on reality is impossible. It is therefore impossible to determine which perspective is correct or true. In the natural sciences too, paradigms can only be compared in a partial way, with which natural science must also be seen as a social and cultural phenomenon, equivalent to art and politics.

Humanity has created a world where many people can live in relative wealth at the same time (7.2% of all people who have ever lived are alive right now!) It's fantastic that mass communication has made global inequality painfully visible, resulting in increasingly one humanity. But at the same time, we must become aware that the road to this human success – infinite growth from finite resources – gradually threatens almost every kind of diversity (cultural, biological). We can't go back, but at the same time we really can't go on like this. We can buy time by stopping meat consumption worldwide. At present, 96% of all mammalian biomass is related to our direct survival: humans = 36%, beef cattle (sheep, cows and pigs) = 60%. So only 4% is the mass of all other mammals. Ecological imbalance. So optimistically, there are both great merits and great concerns in our world of extremes!

Spending gap between private and state pupils doubles in a decade

The Growing Gap Between State School and Private School Spending, by Luke Sibieta, IFS Observation, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Nuffield Foundation, published on Friday 8 October 2021.

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15672>

The Gap in spending per student between private and state schools has more than doubled over the last decade, according to a report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies, “The growing gap between state school and private school spending”, which revealed that in the most recent year (2020-21), average private school fees had been about £13,600, which was £6,500, or over 90%, higher than total state school spending per pupil in England in the same year (£7,100).

The gap had more than doubled over the last decade and is comparable to a gap of £3,100, or 39%, in 2009-10 (£11,100 for private school fees compared with £8,000 spending per student in state schools). Private school fees have grown by more than 20% after inflation since 2009-10, while, core or day-to-day state school spending per pupil in England had fallen by 9% in real-terms, or by 14% if the effects of cuts to capital spending were included.

However, the report, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, pointed out that figures for private school fees had been shown net of bursaries and discounts, and they had excluded the cost of accommodation and boarding. The figures for state schools related to both day-to-day and capital spending in England, and they were all in 2021-22 prices.

Luke Sibieta, IFS Research Fellow and author, said that private school fees were currently over 90% higher than average spending per student in state schools in England, and fees in private sixth forms were about three times higher than per student funding in state sixth forms. He pointed out that while day-to-day state school spending per student had fallen by 9% in real-terms over the last decade, private school fees had gone up by 20%. Mr Sibieta added that, at the same time, numbers of pupils in private schools had remained pretty much constant. He therefore warned that longstanding concerns about inequalities between private and state school pupils, which had come into sharp focus during the pandemic, would not begin to be addressed while the sectors had such different levels of resourcing.

Reaction

Responding to the report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Kate Green MP, Labour’s Shadow Education Secretary said that because school budgets had been hammered over the last decade, children were being held back. She added that, as state school class sizes had soared and enriching activities, such as art, sport, music, drama, had been cut back, which had made the gap with private schools wider than ever. Ms Green pointed out that Labour’s recovery plan would extend the school day to introduce new activities for all. She added that, by ending private school’s tax exemptions, state schools would have 6,500 new teachers, careers advice and work experience.

Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said it was “outrageous” that the Government had cut funding in real terms to schools and colleges over the past decade while independent school fees had increased over the same period. He argued that, while state schools and colleges had been forced to cut back on subject choices, pastoral support, and extra-curricular activities, independent schools had been able to improve their provision in all those areas.

Mr Barton said that although the Government had invested more in schools over a three-year period through to 2023, it still fell short of what was needed, funding for post-16 education was lamentable, and there were serious problems with special needs funding which the Government had still not addressed despite announcing a review two years ago.

Policy papers published last week

Skills and Post-16 Education Bill: Impact assessment and JCHR memorandum

Author: -.

Source: Department for Education.

Document type: Impact assessment.

Published: 18 May 2021, updated on Thursday 7 October, 2021 with a supplementary policy note.

Reference: -.

Geographical coverage: England.

Details: Information on additional measures set out in the Skills and Post-16 Bill as it will go into committee in the House of Lords later this month.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-and-post-16-education-bill-impact-assessment-and-jchr-memorandum#history>

Higher Education Restructuring Regime (HERR)

Author: -.

Source: Department for Education.

Document type: Policy paper.

Published: 16 July 2020, updated Wednesday 6 October 2021 to give notice that the regime will close to new applications on 31 December 2021, with applications to be processed to a conclusion by the end of the financial year 2021 to 2022.

Reference: -.

Geographical coverage: England.

Details: This is a scheme for higher education providers in England facing financial difficulties as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). This document outlines the higher education restructuring regime for higher education providers in England who are at risk of insolvency as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). The scheme will review providers' circumstances and assess the case for restructuring support, including last resort financial support, through repayable loans. Any support will come with strict conditions and must be aligned with the government's wider priorities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-restructuring-regime#history>

Student Finance Eligibility: 2021 to 2022 academic year

Author: -.

Source: Department for Education.

Document type: Policy paper.

Published: 21 December 2020, updated Wednesday 6 October 2021 with an added policy notes on the rights to home fee status and student support for people covered by the Withdrawal Agreements who make a valid late application to the EU Settlement Scheme, and rights for joining family members under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Reference: -.

Geographical coverage: England.

Details: Information on who is eligible for undergraduate, postgraduate and further education financial support from Student Finance England.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-finance-eligibility-2021-to-2022-academic-year#history>

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Inequalities of Region and Places

Author: James Tobin.

Source: House of Lords Library.

Document type: Research briefing.

Published: Friday 8 October, 2021.

Reference: LLN-2021-0027

Geographical coverage: England.

Details: The House of Lords is due to debate inequalities of region and place on 14 October 2021. This briefing has been prepared ahead of that debate, providing analytical measures of inequality and summarising the Government's response as part of its 'levelling up' agenda.

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/lln-2021-0027/>

School Inspections in England: Ofsted

Authors: Nerys Roberts and Rosemary Hill.

Source: House of Commons Library.

Document type: Research briefing.

Published: Monday 4 October, 2021.

Reference: SN 07091

Geographical coverage: England.

Details: This briefing note provides background on Ofsted inspections of state-funded schools in England. Updated for Autumn 2021 term.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn07091/>

The Growing Gap Between State School and Private School Spending

Author: Luke Sibieta.

Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Document type: IFS Observation.

Published: Friday 8 October, 2021.

Reference:

Geographical coverage: England.

Details: This research note observes that the gap between state and privately funded schools continues to increase.

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15672>

Consultations published last week

There were no education consultations or consultation outcomes published last week.

Statutory instruments issued last week

The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (England) Order 2021

Year and number: 2021/1101

Enabling power: Education Act 2002, ss. 122 (1), 123, 124.

Issued: 01.10.2021.

Sifted: -.

Made: 29.09.2021.

Laid: 01.10.2021.

Coming into force: 22.10.2021.

Effect: SI. 2020/1020; 2021/806 amended.

Geographical coverage: England.

Classification: General.

Price of print edition: £4.90. (The electronic edition is free.)

ISBN: 9780348227826.

Details: This Order makes provision for the determination of the remuneration of school teachers (within the meaning of section 122 of the Education Act 2002) in England and other conditions of employment of school teachers which relate to their professional duties and working time.

The Order makes this provision by reference to Section 2 of a document entitled "School teachers' pay and conditions document 2021 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions" ("the Document"). It can be accessed on the Government website, at www.gov.uk. Copies are available to purchase from TSO Customer Services, PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN, telephone 0333 202 5070 or for inspection at reasonable times at the offices of the Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.

The Order makes retrospective provision, under section 123(3) of the Education Act 2002, to provide that the provisions in Section 2 of the Document have effect on and after 1st September 2021 notwithstanding that the Order comes into force after that date.

The Order revokes the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (England) Order 2020 (S.I. 2020/1020) and the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Order 2021 (S.I. 2021/806). An impact assessment has not been prepared for this Order as no impact on businesses or civil society organisations is foreseen. The impact on the public sector is minimal.

The Inspectors of Education, Children's Services and Skills (No. 3) Order 2021

Year and number: 2021/1104

Enabling power: Education and Inspections Act 2006, s. 114 (1).

Issued: 05.10.2021.

Sifted: -.

Made: 29.09.2021.

Laid: -.

Coming into force: 30.09.2021.

Effect: None.

Geographical coverage: England.

Classification: General.

Price of print edition: £4.90. (The electronic edition is free.)

ISBN: 9780348227840.

Details: This Order appoints the persons named in the Schedule as Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education, Children's Services and Skills.

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The Education Tribunal for Wales (Amendment) Regulations 2021

Year and number: 2021/1121 (W.272).

Enabling power: Equality Act 2010, s. 207 (4), sch. 17, para. 6 (2).

Issued: 08.10.2021.

Sifted: -.

Made: 06.10.2021.

Laid before Senedd Cymru: -.

Coming into force: 08.10.2021.

Effect: S.I. 2021/406 (W. 132) amended.

Geographical coverage: Wales.

Classification: General.

Price of print edition: £4.90. (The electronic edition is free.)

ISBN: 9780348391312.

Details: These Regulations make amendments to the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015 (“the 2015 Regulations”) and to the Independent School Standards, as set out in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (“the 2014 Regulations”).

These Regulations amend the 2015 Regulations in relation to the suitability of the chair of the governing body. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, it has become more difficult for the Department for Education to countersign applications for Disclosure and Barring Service checks which the Secretary of State requires to be carried out. The Regulations allow for alternative methods of requesting such checks which include a “registered person” making the request instead of the Department for Education. A registered person is a person listed in a register to be maintained by the Disclosure and Barring Service and reference to a registered person is made in 2(3)(c) of these Regulations. Consequently, regulation 2(2) of these Regulations inserts a definition of “registered person” in regulation 2 (interpretation) of the 2015 Regulations. Regulation 2(2) also amends the definition of “enhanced criminal record check” to ensure that it includes certificates obtained through the electronic transmission process.

Regulation 2(3) will permit the Secretary of State to request that an application for an enhanced criminal record check is countersigned or transmitted by or on behalf of another registered person rather than the Secretary of State countersigning the application. It also introduces provisions for identity checks and checks for the right to work in the UK to be carried out by another person at the behest of the Secretary of State.

Regulation 2(4) makes consequential amendments.

Regulation 3(2) makes amendments to paragraphs 20(3) and (5) of the Schedule to the 2014 Regulations. Paragraphs 20(3) and (5) require, amongst other things, checks to be made by the Secretary of State to confirm the identity and right to work in the United Kingdom, respectively, of individual proprietors of independent schools and alternative provision Academies, and of chairs of proprietor bodies of such educational institutions. The amendments ensure that these checks may be carried out by a third party at the behest of the Secretary of State. Regulation 3(2) also makes consequential changes.

An impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no, or no significant, impact on the private or voluntary sector is foreseen.

The Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) and Independent School Standards (Amendment) Regulations 2021

Year and number: 2021/1124.

Enabling power: Education Act 1996, ss. 342 (2) (4) (a), 569 (4) and Education and Skills Act 2008, ss. 94 (1) (d) (2) (a), 166 (6) (a).

Issued: 08.10.2021.

Sifted: -.

Made: 07.10.2021.

(Continued on page 30.)

(Continued from page 29.)

Laid: 08.10.2021.

Coming into force: 01.11.2021.

Effect: S.I. 2014/3283; 2015/728 amended.

Geographical coverage: Wales.

Classification: General.

Price of print edition: £4.90. (The electronic edition is free.)

ISBN: 9780348227970.

Details: These Regulations amend the Education Tribunal for Wales Regulations 2021 (“the Tribunal Regulations”).

Regulation 2 of these Regulations substitutes a new regulation 17(2) of the Tribunal Regulations to provide that the case statement period for a claimant making a claim under the Equality Act 2010 is 8 weeks beginning on the date that the acknowledgement of receipt of a claim is received.

The Welsh Ministers’ Code of Practice on the carrying out of Regulatory Impact Assessments was considered in relation to these Regulations. As a result, it was not considered necessary to carry out a regulatory impact assessment as to the likely costs and benefits of complying with these Regulations.

The Education Tribunal for Wales (Amendment) Regulations 2021

Year and number: 2021/1121 (W.272).

Enabling power: Equality Act 2010, s. 207 (4), sch. 17, para. 6 (2).

Issued: 08.10.2021.

Sifted: -.

Made: 06.10.2021.

Laid before Senedd Cymru: -.

Coming into force: 08.10.2021.

Effect: S.I. 2021/406 (W. 132) amended.

Geographical coverage: Wales.

Classification: General.

Price of print edition: £4.90. (The electronic edition is free.)

ISBN: 9780348391312.

Details: These Regulations amend the Education Tribunal for Wales Regulations 2021 (“the Tribunal Regulations”).

Regulation 2 of these Regulations substitutes a new regulation 17(2) of the Tribunal Regulations to provide that the case statement period for a claimant making a claim under the Equality Act 2010 is 8 weeks beginning on the date that the acknowledgement of receipt of a claim is received.

The Welsh Ministers’ Code of Practice on the carrying out of Regulatory Impact Assessments was considered in relation to these Regulations. As a result, it was not considered necessary to carry out a regulatory impact assessment as to the likely costs and benefits of complying with these Regulations.

Skills and Post-16 Education Bill

Parliament was in recess last week, and the House of Commons still is this week. The House of Lords returned from the party conference recess this week, and yesterday debated the report stage of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill. The debate began with a series of Government amendments proposed by Baroness Barran, in her first appearance as the new Department for Education Parliamentary Under Secretary in the Lords. While her appointment was announced in the reshuffle a few days ago, her predecessor, Baroness Berridge, had made clear her intention to return to the back benches before the summer recess.

A full report on this debate will be carried in next week's issue, once the corrected report appears in *Hansard* later today.

The following written questions and their answers were published in *Hansard* yesterday.

House of Commons

The House of Commons was in recess last week and is still in recess this week. There are therefore no answers to written questions from the Commons.

House of Lords

The House of Lords was in recess last week, but returned this week. The following written questions were answered this Monday.

Apprentices: Taxation

Lord Taylor of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reform the apprenticeship levy and use part of the levy funds to support pre-apprenticeship programmes to help young people at school build confidence. [HL2558]

Baroness Barran: The apprenticeships levy was created to support the uptake and delivery of high-quality apprenticeships, allowing employers to make a long-term, sustainable investment in the skills they need, and has been set at a level to fund this employer demand. The department currently has no plans to review what apprenticeship levy funds can be spent on. As part of the government's Plan for Jobs, we are providing a range of support and funding to help prepare young people for the world of work. The department is investing £126 million in the 2021/22 academic year to support the largest ever expansion of traineeships and we continue to rollout T Levels.

Monday 11 October 2021

Culture and English Language: Afghanistan

Baroness Hodgson of Abinger: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide teaching and mentoring in English language and culture to recently arrived Afghan refugees; and how they plan to deliver this. [HL2706]

Baroness Barran: We know that language skills are crucial to help people integrate into life in England, as well as to break down barriers to work and career progression. This is why we want to support all new arrivals to England to secure the English language skills they need. All Afghans being resettled through both the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will be granted 'indefinite leave to remain' and therefore are eligible from arrival for funding through the Adult Education Budget, including English language courses. They will also receive a package of integration support to help them acclimatise, learn English and find work, which will enable rapid self-sufficiency and social integration. We will be working with the private, voluntary and community sectors to harness a whole of society effort to address this challenge.

Monday 11 October 2021

Cybercrime: Education

Lord Taylor of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce cybersecurity education to Key Stage 1 children in order to educate them on tech literacy and online safety. [HL2517]

Baroness Barran: The introduction of e-safety content in key stage 1 reflects the fact that children are increasingly accessing the internet from a young age. As part of the computing curriculum, pupils are taught the fundamental principles of e-safety and cyber security. These fundamental principles include how to use technology safely and respectfully, how to keep personal information private, recognise unacceptable behaviour, and identify a range of ways to report concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies. Cybersecurity knowledge is then developed right through a pupil's time in school, with progression in content throughout each key stage to reflect the different and escalating risks that children face throughout life.

To support the delivery of computing in schools, the department launched the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) in November 2018, which is backed by £84 million of government funding, to ensure teachers have the knowledge and expertise to deliver all aspects of the computing curriculum with confidence at each key stage, including e-safety and cyber security. As part of their core offer, the NCCE are delivering online courses on cyber security and a range of resources on e-safety for each key stage. This includes a unit of learning on being a competent, confident and respectful user of IT for key stage 1 pupils.

Monday 11 October 2021

Department for Education: Ofsted

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: To ask Her Majesty's Government what was their response to the letter from Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, about Ofsted's monitoring of inspectorates for independent schools, sent to the Secretary of State for Education on 6 November 2018. [HL2742]

Baroness Barran: In her letter of 6 November 2018, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) recommended a review of the monitoring arrangements in place at the time and that new ones should be put in their place. Such a review was carried out by departmental officials, working alongside officials in Ofsted and at the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Following this review, new directions were issued to HMCI on 4 November 2019. The new arrangements outlined above were aimed at giving greater flexibility to Ofsted and ISI to develop a joint programme of work to exchange and develop their mutual knowledge and understanding of inspecting independent schools.

It is worth noting that the School Inspection Service, which previously undertook inspections of some independent schools, has now closed and that there is now only one independent inspectorate, ISI. As such, and given the new directions issued on 4 November 2019, HMCI should no longer have regard to the matters in the February 2015 directions, which were the subject of the 6 November 2018 letter.

Monday 11 October 2021

Employment and Further Education: Young People

Lord Jones of Cheltenham: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of research into young people's views on COVID-19 conducted by the Co-op, The Ghosted Generation, published 9 on September, which found that (1) two-thirds said job competition had increased during the pandemic, and (2) almost one third felt less likely to continue with further education due to it; and what steps they intend to take to reverse this trend. [HL2582]

Lord Jones of Cheltenham: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to respond to the recommendation of the Co-op report *The Ghosted Generation*, published on 9 September, to appoint a Youth Minister. [HL2583]

Baroness Barran: At the end of 2020, 57.2% of 16 to 24-year-olds were in education and training, the highest proportion on record. Whilst 11.5% of this age group were not in education, employment, or training (NEET), at the end of 2020, it is one of the lowest rates on record, the lowest being 11% at the end of 2017. Ministers at the Department for Education are aware of, and addressing, the issues highlighted by the Co-op report. The Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions are working jointly to monitor NEET rates, considering ways to support young people to continue developing the skills they will need for the future. Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and support young people who are NEET. All 16 and 17-year-olds are entitled to an offer of a suitable place in education or training under the September Guarantee, regardless of qualifications gained.

A range of provision is available for young people aged 16 to 24 to equip them with the skills and experience they need to progress. This includes traineeships that prepare young people for apprenticeships and work through a combination of sector-focused skills development and work experience, and supported internships offering tailored support for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools and Colleges programme provides targeted local and regional support on NEET prevention, to raise aspirations of young people in areas of disadvantage and support their post-education progression. It also offers support for local authorities to help them support young people during this time. This includes support activities for staff, teachers, and careers advisors to engage young people, and training workshops to develop knowledge.

Monday 11 October 2021

Free School Meals

Lord Taylor of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to expand Free School Meal eligibility (1) to all children aged seven to 18 in households earning £20,000 per annum or less after benefits, and (2) to children that are undocumented or living in households as part of the no recourse to public funds immigration system. [HL2560]

Baroness Barran: Under this government, eligibility for free school meals (FSM) has been extended several times and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half a century. We think it is important that FSM support is targeted at those that need it most. FSM is an integral part of our provision for families on low incomes, and our wider actions to promote social mobility.

The government is considering the recommendations in the National Food Strategy and will respond in due course. We are currently working with departments across government to evaluate access to FSM for families with no recourse to public funds. In the meantime, the existing temporary extension of eligibility will continue until a decision on long-term eligibility is made. Guidance on this extension can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/guidance-for-the-temporary-extension-of-free-school-meals-eligibility-to-nrpf-groups>.

Monday 11 October 2021

Health Professions: Training

Lord Taylor of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase investment in the medical workforce to fund (1) foundation programmes, and (2) specialty training places. [HL2723]

Lord Kamall: The forthcoming Spending Review will set out further details of the Government's spending plans for the National Health Service workforce.

Monday 11 October 2021

History: Curriculum

Lord Storey: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that Black history is a mandatory part of the curriculum in all schools, including those which are not required to teach the National Curriculum. [HL2760]

Baroness Barran: The department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces diversity. We support all pupils and students in tackling racism and to have the knowledge and tools to do so. The government believes that all children and young people should acquire a firm grasp of history, including how different events and periods relate to each other. That is why it is compulsory for maintained schools from key stages 1 to 3, and why academies are expected to teach a curriculum which is as broad and ambitious as the national curriculum. This expectation is set out in the Ofsted school inspection handbook, as part of their education inspection framework introduced in September 2019. The national curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the department expects schools to cover in each subject. The curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught. The department believes teachers should be able to use their own knowledge and expertise to determine how they teach their pupils, and to make choices about what they teach. As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain, and this can include the voices and experience of Black people.

The flexibility within the history curriculum means that there is the opportunity for teachers to teach about Black history across the spectrum of themes and eras set out in the curriculum. For example, at key stage 1, schools can teach about the lives of key Black historical figures such as Mary Seacole, Rosa Parks, or others. At key stage 3, schools can cover the development and end of the British Empire and Britain's transatlantic slave trade, its effects and eventual abolition. The teaching of Black history need not be limited to these examples. There is scope to include Black history and experience in other national curriculum subjects such as English and citizenship, and in the non-statutory subject personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education.

It is positive that teachers and schools are responding directly to the renewed attention on history teaching to ensure knowledge-based subject teaching. More history teachers reflected commitments in the most recent survey of history teachers by the Historical Association to develop more content in their teaching on Black and diverse histories. This change will provide pupils with more breadth and depth in their understanding of history.

Monday 11 October 2021

Kickstart Scheme: Job Creation

Baroness Wilcox of Newport: To ask Her Majesty's Government how many jobs have been created by the Kickstart Scheme in (1) England, and (2) each English region. [HL2605]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: We are pleased to say that, as of the 8th September, over 69,000 young people have started Kickstart jobs. Over 188,000 jobs have been made available for young people to apply for through the Kickstart Scheme with over 281,000 jobs approved for funding by the Scheme. In England, over

163,000 jobs have been made available for young people to apply for as well as over 59,000 starts. The table below lists the number of Kickstart jobs which have been made available and started by young people to date by English region. The figures used are correct as of the 8th September and these figures have been rounded according to departmental standards. Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system, which has been developed quickly. The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency. Work is ongoing to improve the quality of information available for the programme.

Location	Jobs Made Available	Total Jobs Started
East Midlands	11,900	4,170
East of England	14,900	4,870
London	38,400	15,170
North East	7,500	3,170
North West	24,000	8,830
South East	21,700	7,460
South West	14,000	4,660
West Midlands	16,900	6,150
Yorkshire and The Humber	14,600	5,250

Monday 11 October 2021

Libraries: Electronic Equipment

Lord Taylor of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce loan schemes at libraries for electronic devices to encourage citizens to become more digitally capable. [HL2765]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The provision of public library services in England is a matter for local authorities to determine. The responsibility for libraries in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales rests with the respective devolved administration. Local authorities in England have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. They are responsible for determining the delivery of a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities.

In considering how best to deliver this statutory duty, each local authority can, if they wish, consider the provision of loaning out electronic devices. Whilst this is not a matter for the department to require, we understand that the provision of portable devices to lend is something library services are increasingly delivering. We know that at least a quarter of library services in England already provide portable electronic devices for loan, generally targeted to those more likely to be digitally disadvantaged. I learned about an example of this at Manchester Central Library in my visit during Libraries Week.

Monday 11 October 2021

Local Skills Improvement Plans

Baroness Morris of Yardley: To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they had prior to the announcement of the Skills Accelerator: Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazers and Strategic Development Fund pilot areas with (1) the mayor of Teeside, (2) the mayors from other trailblazer areas,

and (3) council leaders from trailblazer areas. [HL2799]

Baroness Barran: The Skills Accelerator programme was launched on 20 April 2021 with a prospectus inviting expressions of interest from employer representative bodies to lead a Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazer. The successful Local Skills Improvement Plan Trailblazers were subsequently announced on 15 July 2021. During this time period, there were no discussions regarding the Skills Accelerator programme or Local Skills Improvement Plans between the former Secretary of State for Education, my right hon. Friend for South Staffordshire; the former Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, my hon. Friend for Chichester; Special Advisors; or officials with mayors or council leaders in any of the areas which were subsequently announced as Trailblazers.

Over the same time period, the former Secretary of State for Education met the Mayor of Tees Valley on 20 May 2021. This was a political meeting in his capacity as a Member of Parliament for South Staffordshire, not on departmental business.

Monday 11 October 2021

Mathematics: Education

Baroness Meyer: To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Programme for International Student Assessment global ranking in Mathematics from 2019 showing British teenagers in 18th place, what plans, if any, they have to support students to reach the top ten [HL2550]

Baroness Barran: The department has not set specific targets for mathematics rankings in international comparison studies. However, we are taking action to help our pupils excel in mathematics on the international stage. For example, our previous reform of the mathematics curriculum and GCSE examinations in England sought to match the standards set by high performing East Asian jurisdictions. Building on this work, our network of 40 school-led Maths Hubs across England is also helping local schools improve the quality of their mathematics teaching. This includes the delivery of the £100 million Teaching for Mastery programme, which is bringing teaching practice from those same high performing jurisdictions to 11,000 primary and secondary schools across England by 2023.

In July the department announced a new multi-million-pound scheme to support mathematics catch-up and boost numeracy skills for pupils starting primary and secondary school. This offer will be led by the National Centre for Excellence in the teaching of mathematics in partnership with Maths Hubs. The scheme will provide teacher training and materials to thousands of schools across England this academic year based on Teaching for Mastery approaches. The UK performed significantly above the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development average in mathematics in the latest Programme for International Student Assessment tests in 2018, the results of which were reported in 2019, with a significant improvement in average score compared to 2015.

England's average mathematics score also significantly improved, accompanied by a decrease in the number of countries that scored significantly above England from 19 in 2015 to 12 in 2018. Across the UK, Wales's average mathematics score improved between 2012 and 2018. Average mathematics performance in Scotland remained stable between 2015 and 2018, but decreased compared to 2006, and has remained stable in Northern Ireland since 2006. Education policy is devolved, and the devolved administrations are responsible for standards in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Monday 11 October 2021

Mathematics: Universities

Baroness Garden of Frognal: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to protect, and (2) to increase, the funding available for all forms of mathematics at universities. [HL2487]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government strongly supports all forms of mathematics in higher education. We are pleased many students chose to take up courses in mathematical sciences (39,210 students in England [1]) and that many more enrol on courses involving elements of mathematical study such as engineering, computer science, and accounting.

Our student loan system supports students who have the qualifications to benefit from higher education to access higher education, including a range of mathematics courses. Additionally, the government also supports a number of mathematics-based courses via the Strategic Priorities Grant, a funding pot to support the provision of higher education. This includes high-cost subject funding – extra money given to providers to deliver expensive subjects. Mathematical subjects that attract high-cost subject funding are those which have typically higher delivery costs that are not met by tuition fees alone. This includes courses involving the study and application of specialist mathematics such as civil engineering and physics.

For the academic year 2021/22, these subjects are in price group B and their high-cost subject funding rate will be £1,515. This is an increase of 4% from the previous academic year – part of our reprioritisation of Strategic Priorities Grant funding towards high-cost subjects which support the NHS and wider healthcare policy, high-cost science, technology and engineering subjects, and subjects meeting specific labour market needs. [1] Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student data, Table 49: Table 49- HE student enrolments by HE provider and subject of study 2019/20 | HESA (English providers only). Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to promote the study and research of mathematics at universities in England. [HL2488]

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to support the research of all forms of mathematics at universities in England. [HL2489]

Lord Callanan: In academic year 2020-21, Research England allocated £66.4 million to Mathematical Sciences. This financial year the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), is forecasting a spend of £50.975 million on Mathematical Sciences research in English universities. Plans for funding for future years will be dependent on the outcome of the recently announced Spending Review.

Monday 11 October 2021

Refugees: English Language

Lord Blunkett: To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional funding they are providing to (1) mayoral combined authorities, and (2) upper tier local authorities in England, to facilitate the teaching of English to individuals and families arriving from Afghanistan. [HL2405]

Baroness Barran: Work is underway across governmental departments, and with charities and local authorities, to ensure Afghans are properly supported so they can rebuild their lives. Further detail on the support we provide to those we bring to the UK, including levels of funding, will be made available in due course. In his statement on 6 September 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, set out a commitment that adults will be able to access English language courses free of charge through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-to-the-house-on-afghanistan-6-september-2021>.

Afghans being supported through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizens

Resettlement Scheme will be granted 'indefinite leave to remain', which means that those who are over 19 are also immediately eligible for English for Speakers of Other Languages and other further education provision through the Adult Education Budget (AEB). This is in line with current AEB funding rules, details of which are available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1010290/AEB_2021_to_2022_funding_rules_v2_FINALAugust2021.pdf.

Monday 11 October 2021

Schools: Mental Health Services

Lord Taylor of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide mental health support for students and staff returning to school. [HL2461]

Baroness Barran: Mental health and wellbeing are a priority for the government. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, we have prioritised keeping schools open above all else because they are vital for young people's wellbeing, as well as their education. We are investing £3 billion to boost learning, including £950 million in additional funding for schools which they can use to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

In May, as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, we announced more than £17 million of mental health funding to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. This includes £7 million additional funding for local authorities to deliver the Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme. This builds on our £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme in 2020/21, which provided free expert training, support and resources for staff dealing with children and young people experiencing additional pressures from the last year. Wellbeing for Education Return has been used by more than 90% of councils since its launch last summer:

https://www.minded.org.uk/Catalogue/Index?HierarchyId=0_48943_49165&programmeld=48943.

Up to 7,800 schools and colleges in England will be offered funding worth £9.5 million to train a senior mental health lead from their staff in the next academic year, which is part of the government's commitment to offering this training to all state schools and colleges by 2025. Training will provide senior leads with the knowledge and skills to develop or introduce a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in their setting. It will encourage staff to develop their own understanding of issues affecting their pupils, giving young people a voice in how their school or college addresses wellbeing and working with parents and monitoring pupils where appropriate. This support for practice in schools is in addition to the £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support we announced in March, which will include increasing the number of Mental Health Support Teams.

The support teams - which provide early intervention on mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in schools and colleges - will grow from the 59 set up by last March to around 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children. The department has brought together all its sources of advice for schools and colleges into a single site, which includes signposting to external sources of mental health and wellbeing support: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges#mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>.

In May, we published the first ever Education Staff Wellbeing Charter: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter>.

The charter sets out the actions that government and other organisations, including Ofsted, will take to improve wellbeing of staff in schools and colleges. Since June 2020, we have funded peer-support and one-to-one telephone supervision from experts, which has supported over 300 school leaders. This June, we launched an invitation to tender seeking a contractor to provide peer support and one-to-one counselling to at least 2,000 school leaders, starting in the autumn 2021. We know flexible working opportunities can promote staff wellbeing and have appointed the training provider 'Timewise' to train school leaders to implement flexible working practices in schools.

Lord McNicol of West Kilbride: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional resources to schools for addressing mental health issues experienced by young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL2548]

Baroness Barran: Mental health and wellbeing are a priority for the government. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, we have prioritised keeping schools open above all else because they are vital for children and young people's wellbeing, as well as their education. We are investing £3 billion to boost learning, including £950 million in additional funding for schools which they can use to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

In May, as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, we announced more than £17 million of mental health funding to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. This includes £7 million additional funding for local authorities to deliver the Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme. This builds on our £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme in 2020/21, which provided free expert training, support and resources for staff dealing with children and young people experiencing additional pressures from the last year.

Wellbeing for Education Return has been used by more than 90% of councils since its launch last summer. Up to 7,800 schools and colleges in England will be offered funding worth £9.5 million to train a senior mental health lead from their staff in the next academic year, which is part of the government's commitment to offering this training to all state schools and colleges by 2025. Training will provide senior leads with the knowledge and skills to develop or introduce a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in their setting. It will encourage staff to develop their own understanding of issues affecting their pupils, giving young people a voice in how their school or college addresses wellbeing and working with parents and monitoring pupils where appropriate.

Additionally, our Mental Health in Education Action Group, has worked to identify and put in place further specific help to education settings to provide support for children and young people's mental wellbeing at this critical time, and in the longer term. This support for practice in schools is in addition to the £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support we announced in March, which will include increasing the number of Mental Health Support Teams. The support teams - which provide early intervention on mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in schools and colleges - will grow from the 59 set up by last March to around 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children.

The department has recently brought together all its sources of advice or schools and colleges into a single site, which includes signposting to external sources of mental health and wellbeing support for teachers, school staff and school leaders: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges#mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>.

This also includes guidance to support relationships, sex and health education curriculum planning, covering of the key issues children and young people have been concerned about throughout the COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing>.

Monday 11 October 2021

Schools: Radicalism

Lord Taylor of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the University College London report Addressing Extremism Through the Classroom, published on 7 September; and what steps are they taking to provide schools with the training and tools to teach pupils how to reject extremist views. [HL2519]

Baroness Barran: Officials in the Department for Education have reviewed the report with interest and are engaged with the research team at University College London. The government is committed to supporting the education sector to equip pupils and staff to understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments. The 'School Snapshot

Survey: Winter 2017' report indicated that 98% of leaders and teachers were confident that their school effectively teaches the values of respect and tolerance of those from different backgrounds, and that 94% of teachers were confident in their responsibilities to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Our 'Educate Against Hate' website provides teachers, school leaders and parents with the information, guidance and support they need to challenge radical views and keep their children safe, including from online extremist influences. The School Snapshot Survey: Winter 2017, published in 2018, highlights that 85% of school leaders and teachers that used Educate Against Hate thought it helped them to understand how to raise a concern. Additionally, 82% felt it helped them to identify signs of radicalisation and 79% stated it helped them promote mutual respect tolerance and understanding of those with different faiths. The department continues to identify and produce high-quality resources to assist teachers to build pupils' resilience to extremist ideologies. This includes hosting resources from the charity 'Since 9/11', who the department has worked with to develop teaching materials ahead of the 20th anniversary of September 11th attacks. The department works closely with and supports the network of Prevent Education Officers based in local authorities, who play an important role in supporting schools. This network provides support and guidance to schools, develops bespoke lesson resources, and provides training to school staff, empowering teachers to approach extremism in the classroom. These practitioners help to inform the development of policy and practice nationally.

Monday 11 October 2021

Schools: Uniforms

Baroness Lister of Burtersett: To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish the statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms under the Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021. [HL2440]

Baroness Barran: The Department plans to publish the statutory guidance in Autumn 2021. Schools do not need to make any changes before the guidance is released. The Department want schools to implement changes in a timely and considered manner to ensure that parents do not incur additional costs from sudden uniform changes. Once the guidance is published, all schools will need to review their uniform policies and make necessary changes as soon as possible to ensure that parents see the benefits of the guidance.

Monday 11 October 2021

Students: Plagiarism

Lord Storey: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the growth of essay mill companies during the COVID-19 pandemic; and whether this growth has caused an increase in students cheating. [HL2516]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government has consistently made it clear that using essay mill services is unacceptable. We have worked with the higher education sector to clamp down on essay mills and to support students who might be targeted by these services. We have also committed to supporting a legislative solution to criminalise essay mill companies. Essay mills are online entities operating across the globe and it is difficult to determine exactly how many are currently in operation – the Office for Students (OfS) recently estimated this figure could be close to 1,000[1].

The COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to online learning and assessment appears to have led to a recent increase in the number of websites targeting their services at students in the UK. We have

challenged companies from the technology sector to identify how anti-cheating software can tackle the growth of essay mills, and we have worked alongside the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), Universities UK and the National Union of Students to produce guidance for providers on how to combat the threat of 'contract cheating' and guidance for students to make them better aware of the consequences of contract cheating, sending a clear message that these services are not legitimate. The OfS has published information and guidance for providers and students, and the QAA has also published a series of guides to support providers to secure academic standards, and to support student achievement during the pandemic. This includes QAA guidance for providers on how to assess digital delivery with integrity. We expect educational institutions to do everything in their power to prevent students being tempted by these companies and to detect and address cheating. [1]
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/trouble-at-mill-protecting-students-from-contract-cheating/>.

Monday 11 October 2021

Students: Quarantine

Baroness Morgan of Huyton: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the differences between the COVID-19 self-isolation rules applying to domestic and international students who are fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved for use in this country; and what is the scientific or clinical basis for these differences. [HL2663]

Lord Kamall: No such assessment has been made as domestic and international students are treated in the same way as any other individual. All those testing positive must self-isolate, regardless of vaccination status or where they were vaccinated. Those fully vaccinated in the United Kingdom are exempt from self-isolation if identified as a close contact. Those vaccinated abroad, are required to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

Monday 11 October 2021

Universities: Admissions

Lord Storey: To ask Her Majesty's Government how many students have been paid to defer their university course for 12 months; and what the total amount of money spent is. [HL2515]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Throughout this year's admissions cycle, we have encouraged providers to do everything they can to enable students who wish to enter higher education this year to do so. In a small number of cases, providers have seen more students meet the terms of their offers than they have capacity to accommodate, and these providers have agreed alternatives with these students, which may include a place on another course or an incentivised deferral. We do not record the number of students who have accepted incentivised deferrals at providers: this is a private arrangement between the provider and the individual student. In any year, some students choose to defer for a number of reasons.

The latest data for the admissions cycle (as at 28 days after A level results day) show that the total number of English students accepted has increased compared with 2020 and 2019, with both deferrals and non-deferrals increasing. The proportion of successful English applicants deferring this year is 0.7 percentage points greater than in 2019. No funding has been provided by the government for incentivised deferrals. Rather, we have provided funding to increase capacity so that more students can take up their places this year, making available up to £10 million in additional grant funding to higher education providers through the Office for Students to help them to increase capacity in medical, dental, nursing,

science, technology, engineering, maths, and other high-cost subjects. The government has also provided funding to provide incentives to students to switch from oversubscribed providers to providers with capacity in medicine and dentistry.

Alongside this, we have worked with universities, Health Education England, the Medical Schools Council and the General Medical Council to assess and agree how many additional places on medical and dentistry courses could be provided. Students who held a firm or insurance offer at an oversubscribed medical or dental school were contacted by their current university about a £10,000 incentive to change schools under the 2021 Medical School Student Incentivised Transfer Scheme. Students were given the opportunity to transfer to an alternative university which has space and to receive a financial incentive to do so. Participation in the scheme was entirely optional. This has supported more than 80 students to move from oversubscribed medical and dental schools to those which had additional capacity.

Monday 11 October 2021

Universities: China

Lord Alton of Liverpool: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have provided any financial support to universities which have chartered flights to the UK to ensure that students from China are able to return for in-person studies in the UK. [HL2470]

Lord Alton of Liverpool: To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what assessment they have made of the cost for universities to charter flights to ensure that students from China are able to return for in-person studies in the UK, and (2) what details it holds on the universities which have chartered these flights. [HL2471]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government has provided no financial support to higher education providers for the purpose of chartering flights for international higher education students from China to travel to the UK, for the academic year 2021/22. The government has received applications from Queen's University Belfast, as well as three consortia of higher education providers seeking approvals for charter flights for Chinese students while scheduled direct flights remain suspended between the UK and mainland China.

The three consortia comprise 16, 24, and 55 named higher education providers respectively. The airlines involved have chartered the planes to travel companies, which sell tickets to the students. The airlines and travel agencies take the financial risk. The government is proud that so many international students choose to study here and is looking forward to safely welcoming them in the new academic year. We have worked closely with the sector to ensure that international students will be appropriately supported and welcomed, including with quarantine requirements. Universities UK International has published bespoke self-isolation guidance for higher education providers to help them prepare for the arrival of students.

Monday 11 October 2021

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