



Issue 342 15 July, 2020

# 14 - 19 Learning and Skills Bulletin

## The Chancellor's plan for Jobs

**D**uring his Economic Update on jobs in the House of Commons, the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, said that in particular he wanted to provide for young people, who would be hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis. He pointed out that over 700,000 people were leaving education this year and many more would be starting out in their careers.

But the Chancellor stressed that under 25s would be two and a half times as likely to work in a sector that had been closed. Mr Sunak said announced that his Kickstart Scheme would give hundreds of thousands of young people, in every region and nation of Britain, the best possible chance of getting on and getting a job, as it would directly pay employers to create new jobs for any 16 to 24-year-old who was at risk of long-term unemployment. He stressed that the new jobs funding would be conditional on the business proving that the jobs were additional.

The Chancellor said that the “decent jobs” would be a minimum of 25 hours per week and the pay would be “at least” the National Minimum Wage. He added that the good quality jobs would also include employers providing Kickstarters with training and support to find a permanent job. Mr Sunak explained that if employers met the conditions, the Government would pay young people’s wages for six months, plus an amount to cover overheads, which meant, for a 24-year-old, the grant would be around £6,500.

He said that employers could apply to be part of the scheme from August and the first “Kickstarters” would be in their new jobs by the autumn.

The Chancellor said that to encourage every employer, big or small, national or local, to hire as many Kickstarters as possible, an initial £2 billion would fund hundreds of thousands of jobs. He added that there would be no

***“The Chancellor said that the Government would directly pay employers to create new jobs for any 16 to 24-year-old who was at risk of long-term unemployment.”***

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## The global long haul

**A**s schools and colleges plan for a return for all pupils in the new academic year, as people drift back to work and, with the occasional fine summer's day seeing folk flock to the beach or off to the pub, or for their first hair cut in months, there is a feeling that, although the pandemic is not over yet, things are at least starting to get back to some sort of normal.

Certainly the Government hopes this is so, as the economy has already taken a massive hit with Boris Johnson being prepared to spend what he called Rooseveltian levels of money to keep the ship of state steady during what is as much an economic crisis as a health one. (As so often with Boris, the claim was an exaggeration. Roosevelt spent vastly more money than Boris is planning to, but Boris is going far further than any previous Conservative government in peacetime.)

Last week we looked at the domestic situation and warned that Boris Johnson was taking a big risk in opening up the economy and schools before ensuring that essential health measures like a fully functioning track and trace system were operational. As Professor Sir Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Foundation and a member of SAGE, warned a couple of weeks ago, "we're on a knife edge. It is very precarious." The R rate is inching up to a position above 1. If it reaches 2 or 3, one academic model published last week predicted up to another 120,000 people in the UK could die. Yet Boris has the luck of the devil. His gamble might just come off. How likely is that?

Sadly the answer is, not very. Last week the World Health Organisation reported that while COVID-19 was in retreat in Europe it was still reaching new highs in the world as a whole. It is still raging across the USA, which has the largest number of cases and deaths in the world, and Brazil, which is just behind it. Cases are rising throughout Latin America and Africa. In Europe and Asia, which were the first to succumb to the virus and the first to seem to recover from it, there have been new outbreaks even in countries like Germany and South Korea, which were very successful in containing the virus first time round. The figures are sobering. In the last 24 hours the UK saw another 138 deaths and 398 new cases, which looks good. Yet in the whole world there were 3,938 deaths and 168,466 new cases during the same time period. Our totals of at least 44,968 dead and at least 291,373 cases are dwarfed by the global totals of 576,980 dead and 13,271,756 cases. International comparisons are of limited value, and are under-estimated by varying amounts in different countries depending on how much testing they are doing and how far COVID-19 cases are reported as something else. The point of giving the global figures here is to emphasise just how different the picture looks both globally and in other continents.

As we found out when the pandemic first hit us, we can't isolate ourselves from the rest of the world. The English Channel is not wide enough, and as America found out neither is the Atlantic or the Pacific. This is a global pandemic and we are part of the globe.

A number of international organisations have realised this and are planning for the long haul. In our international section we look at five global organisations - the WHO, UNESCO, the World Bank, the OECD and Education International - and the warnings they are giving. As the World Bank report, *The COVID-19 Pandemic: Shocks to Education and Policy Responses*, published in May, noted "Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was living a learning crisis ... the Learning Poverty rate in low-and middle-income countries was 53 percent—meaning that over half of all 10-year-old children couldn't read and understand a simple age appropriate story." Now, on top of this, there are likely to be several more waves of the COVID-19 virus circling the world, as there were in previous pandemics from 1918 onwards. That will mean many school systems being closed several times over the next two years.

As the OECD has observed, "planning is taking place on two timescales: the short-term challenges in the return to school, and the challenges over the next 18-24 months as systems work to build resilience and adaptability for the future." How much the British government is planning for closing schools again, perhaps several times over the next two years, is not clear. While its main focus is naturally on reopening schools in September, it must also give thought to preparations for multiple closures whether of individual schools, towns or even nationally. This is going to be the reality for much of the world for some time.

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cap on the number of places available.

Mr Sunak said that traineeships had been proven to get young people ready for work, and therefore for the first time, the Government would pay employers £1,000 to take on new trainees and the places available would be tripled. He pointed out that to support 18-19-year olds who were leaving school or college to find work in high-demand sectors like engineering, construction and social care, the Government would provide £100 million to create more places on Level 2 and 3 courses. The Chancellor said that as the was evidence that careers advice worked, the Government would fund it, to enable new careers advisers to support over a quarter of a million more people.

He said that the Government's universal skills offer would be expanded and because Sector-Based Work Academies, which provided training, work placements, and a guaranteed job interview in high-demand sectors, worked, the Government would expand then and triple the number of places.

Mr Sunak pointed out that because apprenticeships worked, too, for the next six months, the Government would pay employers to create new apprenticeships at £2,000 per head. He said that the Government would introduce a new bonus for businesses to hire apprentices aged 25 and over, with a payment of £1,500.

Responding to the Economic Update debate, Dr Fiona Aldridge, director for policy and research at the Learning and Work Institute, said that there had been much to welcome in the economic statement, as the institute had been calling on the Government to introduce an ambitious Plan for Jobs including: a youth guarantee to prevent a rise in long-term youth unemployment. But she stressed that as more job losses were being announced daily, and 700,000 young people were about to leave education, the new measures must be implemented quickly.

The Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges, David Hughes, said that while the Chancellor had served up a raft of actions and investments which showed his commitment to facing up to the economic crisis, more details of how it would all fit together would be needed, particularly in terms of how education and skills provision would be part of the package within the kickstart scheme and for adults. He warned that for young people, for adults, for advisers and for employers the range of incentives would be potentially bewildering. But Mr Hughes pledged to work with colleges and with DfE and DWP to make the plan more coherent, so that the incentives would work for the widest range of people and employers in all circumstances.

He said that it had been disappointing that there had been little for adult education and despite the Chancellor's bonus to retain furloughed workers, many expected to be facing redundancy in the autumn. Mr Hughes argued that for that group and unemployed adults, he wanted to see a stronger package of training to help them be successful in a very different post-pandemic labour market. He stressed that their needs were different to young people and funding would be needed for more intensive training, higher level skills, and support to move sector.

Mr Hughes said that the AoC remained deeply concerned about the financial health of colleges, as leaders would need certainty that the right rules, regulations and funding would be in place to flexibly support young people, adults and employers to get what they needed.

Kathleen Henehan, Economist at the Resolution Foundation, agreed that young people had been hit hardest by Britain's growing jobs crisis, as three-in-ten 18-24-year-olds had been furloughed, and one-in-

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ten had already lost their jobs. She stressed that action would be needed to keep youth unemployment down and avoid lasting damage to careers that were just getting started.

Ms Henehan welcomed the Government's "bold and ambitious" scheme, which would see £2 billion potentially creating jobs for around 350,000 young people. But she stressed the need for the jobs to be created quickly, and local authorities would be crucial in making that happen. Ms Henehan added that as 350,000 new jobs would be three times as many as had been created under the Future Jobs Fund following the financial crisis, delivery on such a scale would be a huge challenge.

Dame Carolyn Fairbairn, CBI Director-General, said that the Chancellor had been absolutely right to prioritise jobs in his summer statement, as flattening the daunting unemployment curve that was about to hit the country could not be more important. She warned that joblessness scarred lives and it hit the young and most disadvantaged hardest.

Dame Carolyn said that the jobs plan was an important step forward and for young people, the Kickstarter Scheme would help to create jobs in the short-run that could turn into opportunities for the long-run. She added that firms would look forward to working with the Government to get the scheme up and running quickly and well.

Jenny Coles, ADCS President, said that beyond creating jobs, she wanted to see bold action from the Government to support and protect children, families and the services they relied on, to help them to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 as well as long term strategies to address the stark inequalities that had been laid bare by the virus. She added that without that, children would be in danger of becoming the long-term victims of the pandemic.

Dr Joe Marshall, Chief Executive of the National Centre for Universities and Business, said that skilled graduates in particular were the pipeline of future talent that businesses needed, and they would undoubtedly play a crucial part in the economic recovery post Covid. He stressed that a skills-led recovery would be the only way to ensure that every community and all parts of the country would begin to recover economically. Dr Marshall added that, in the long run, successful innovation that led to economic growth would be reliant on the flow of graduates into businesses of all kinds and sizes.

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## A final year like no other for school leavers

**T**he Prime Minister Boris Johnson, recorded a video message to those who had missed out on school leaving events. He said that their final year would be like no other, and he urged those who were stepping out of school, without any of the usual leavers' rites of passage, to "rugby tackle the opportunity to the floor".

Mr Johnson also warned that school leavers that there would always be people who would want to pour a bucket of cold water on their ideas. In a recorded YouTube and Facebook video, the Prime Minister said that while teenagers had missed out on a lot of fun this summer, their sacrifice had saved lives.

Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, responds to the Prime Minister's address to school leavers, he said that the Prime Minister had been right to recognise the sacrifices made by young people because of the coronavirus pandemic, as they had missed out on rites of passage that were important parts of the normal journey to adulthood.

# MPs warn that young people will risk missing out on deserved results in this year's system for awarding grades

**P**upils could miss out on the exam results they deserve this summer as the system for awarding and moderating grades is at risk of inaccuracy and bias against young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, according to MPs. The Education Committee's report, *Getting the Grades They've Earned*, had acknowledged the swift response of the exam regulator Ofqual and the Government in rising to the immense challenge of devising alternative arrangements for awarding grades after the cancellation of national exams due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Committee also acknowledged that teachers had also done their best in exceptional circumstances to provide grades for their pupils. However, the report found that this year's system had raised three significant concerns:

In terms of fairness, the Committee had received numerous submissions on the potential for unconscious bias to affect calculated grades and how particular groups, including pupils from low-income backgrounds, black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, could be adversely affected.

While Ofqual's standardisation model aimed to adjust grades to ensure that they were broadly in line with previous years, there was a risk of using historic data, which may not be fair for newer schools, or for improving and turnaround schools which were on an upward trajectory.

The appeals system favoured the "well-heeled and sharp-elbowed" who knew how to navigate the system and the criteria of bias and discrimination set out by Ofqual would be incredibly difficult for individual students to ascertain and to prove. After pressure from the Committee, Ofqual had agreed to a helpline but it would not go far enough to level the playing field.

Pupils with SEND, or their families, must be able to see the evidence used to calculate their grade. If the right access arrangements were not in place for the work used or if evidence from SEND specialists was not used if appropriate, the pupil should be able to appeal on the basis of malpractice or maladministration.

Turning to the lack of support for students sitting autumn exams, the Committee said it was pleased that dates for the autumn exam series had been confirmed on Thursday 9th June, as it had called for in the report. But the Committee called on the Department for Education to set out how students would be supported with teaching ahead of sitting the exams.

In terms of the Catch-up funding that would be unavailable for post-16 pupils, the Committee argued that the pandemic's impact on learning loss would not stop when pupils turned 16, and post-16 learners, whether they were resitting key English and Maths GCSEs, or preparing to sit final exams before entering higher education or the workplace, they deserved proper catch-up support. Therefore, the Government must extend catch-up funding to include disadvantaged post-16 pupils.

Robert Halfon MP, Chairman of the Education Committee, said that the cross-party committee had recognised the enormous work that had been undertaken by the Department for Education and Ofqual during the coronavirus pandemic and it accepted that no system developed for awarding grades would be perfect. But he stressed that the Committee had serious concerns about the fairness of the model that had been developed by Ofqual. Mr Halfon said that there was a risk that it would lead to unfair bias and

***"Robert Halfon MP, Chairman of the Education Committee, said that the cross-party committee had serious concerns about the fairness of the model that had been developed by Ofqual."***

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discrimination against already disadvantaged groups and the Committee had been far from convinced that the appeal system, which would be more important than ever this year, would be fair. He added that there was potential for the system to resemble the “Wild West” of appeals as different systems would be used by different exam boards.

***“Mr Halfon said the because if the lack of guaranteed support from the DfE for pupils and students undertaking autumn exams, there would not be a level playing field for the students and the absence of a post 16 catch up fund would exacerbate the problems.”***

Mr Halfon said that the lack of guaranteed support from the DfE for pupils and students undertaking autumn exams would mean that there would not be a level playing field for the students and the absence of a post 16 catch up fund would exacerbate the problems.

He urged Ofqual to be fully transparent about its standardisation model and develop a state-of-the-art appeals system that would be genuinely fair to all students whatever their background. Mr Halfon added that there was still hope that all young people would get what they had earned but Ofqual and the Government must act so that the generation could go on to flourish in their future work and education.

Commenting on the House of Commons Education Committee report, Getting the grades they've earned, Dr Mary Bousted, Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union, said that faced with the disruption to this year's GCSE and A-level exams, Ofqual had been left with very little option other than to award grades this year based on teacher judgement and historical data on school performance in the qualifications.

She argued that GCSE and A-level qualifications were over reliant on exams and if they could not be taken, because of a pandemic, exam boards would need to use other evidence on which to base pupils' grades. Dr Bousted said that any sensible qualification system would draw from a range of evidence, including teacher assessment and extended pupil projects. She added that if that had been in place this year, there would be less concern on the part of the Education Select Committee, and parents and pupils, about the awarding of grades this year.

Dr Bousted said that the Education Select Committee had been right to be concerned about the potential for already disadvantaged pupils to be disproportionately negatively affected by Ofqual's system of calculating grades this year. She stressed that Ofqual must respond to the Select Committee's concerns, by showing how the processes they had adopted for this year would not discriminate against pupils who already struggled to realise their potential in the education system.

Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, argued that schools and colleges had gone about the task of deciding centre-assessed grades in extraordinarily difficult circumstances and with the utmost diligence. He added that they knew their students well and they had done their very best to ensure that the grades submitted to the exam boards were fair and accurate.

Mr Barton pointed out that the exam boards would now apply a process called “standardisation” to these grades, which would take into account factors such as the past performance of centres, and it would make adjustments accordingly. He added that the purpose of the exercise would be to ensure that the distribution of grades awarded nationally this year would be consistent with previous years. But Mr Barton stressed that it had raised a significant concern that students in schools and colleges which would have performed better in exams this year would lose out. He added that ASCL agreed with the Education Committee that Ofqual must be completely transparent about its standardisation model and publish it immediately.

Mr Barton stressed that everybody in education understood the limitations of the system that was being used this year, and he said that sixth forms, colleges, and universities would all show a spirit of generosity in determining applications, because they all wanted to see students progress in the normal way.



# Compulsory RSE from September

**T**he Department for Education will be introducing compulsory Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education for secondary pupils from September 2020. From this September it will also be compulsory for all schools to teach Health Education. However, the Department for Education has pointed out that schools that were not ready to teach the subjects, or were unable to meet the requirements because of the challenging circumstances, should aim to start preparations as soon as possible and begin teaching the new curriculum by at least the start of the summer term 2021.

Schools will be required to consult with parents when developing and reviewing their policies for Relationships Education and RSE, which will inform schools' decisions on when and how certain content would be covered. But the DfE stressed that when and how content was taught would ultimately be a decision for the school, and consultation would not provide a parental veto on curriculum content.

A school's policies for the subjects must be published online, and must be available to any individual free of charge. Schools should also ensure that, when they engaged parents, they would provide examples of the resources they planned to use. While there will not be compulsory sex education at primary school, Relationships Education would be introduced as building blocks for positive and safe relationships of all kinds. This will start with family and friends, how to treat each other with kindness, and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships.

In all schools, the religious background of pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that topics were appropriately handled. Schools with a religious character could build on the core required content by reflecting their beliefs in their teaching.

***“The Department said that pupils should receive teaching on LGBT content during their school years and primary schools will be “strongly encouraged and enabled” to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families.”***

## Withdrawing children

Parents will continue to have a right to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools which, unless there were exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their child turned 16. At that point, if a child wished to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements for that to happen in one of the three terms before the child turned 16, the legal age of sexual consent.

There will be no right to withdraw from Relationships Education at primary or secondary as the DfE believes that the contents of the subjects, such as family, friendship, safety (including online safety), should be taught to all children. The Department said that pupils should receive teaching on LGBT content during their school years and primary schools will be “strongly encouraged and enabled” to cover LGBT content when teaching about different types of families. Secondary schools should cover LGBT content in their RSE teaching and RSE should meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their developing sexuality or identity, which should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law.

The DfE said it would invest in a central support package to help teachers introduce the subjects well and with confidence, which would include a new online service, featuring access to high quality resources, innovative training materials, case studies and an implementation guide, that would be available from Spring 2020. Training will also be available for teachers through existing regional networks.

# The future of area special educational needs and disabilities inspections

**O**fsted's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, has acknowledged the challenges facing the SEND system, and she has revealed Ofsted and CQC's future role. Ms Spielman stressed that there was "no doubt" that children and people with special educational needs and/or disabilities had been affected significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

She pointed out that a recent report, *Left in lockdown*, published by the Disabled Children's Partnership, had indicated that children and young people's friendships, learning, and mental and physical health had been negatively impacted and it had highlighted concerns that disruption to essential education, health and care services, combined with increasing financial pressures, had left many families feeling exhausted and anxious.

The Chief Inspector pointed out that the report had showed that three quarters of families were no longer able to access the vital care and support that they had relied on during the pandemic, and half of parents whose children received therapies or extra support had seen it, while many families had experienced delays in statutory processes, such as annual reviews of education, health and care plans.

Ms Spielman said that the number of children and young people with EHC plans attending their school had increased steadily in recent weeks and about a quarter had attended at the end of June. But she pointed out that many parents had chosen not to take up the offer of a school place, due to concerns about their children's health or because they had not been confident that the right provision would be available at school. The Chief Inspector added that understandably, parents wanted the return of all education, health and care services to be well planned and carefully managed, including their children's return to school.

But she pointed out that many of the problems in the SEND system preceded the COVID-19 pandemic, as before lockdown, Ofsted and Care Quality Commission area SEND inspections had identified a number of recurring weaknesses across local areas in England, including:

- Flaws, inconsistencies and delays in the identification of children and young people's needs.
- Not enough of a system-wide focus on providing high-quality universal education, health and care services.
- A lack of clarity in terms of who was responsible for what between organisations, which had resulted in fractures in the way professionals in the services worked together
- Area arrangements for identifying, assessing and meeting children and young people's education, health and care needs had frequently been slow. And it had felt like a "battle" for families as their concerns escalated. Too often, families had been left feeling dissatisfied with their experience of area SEND arrangements because the quality of services and support had failed to live up to what had been envisaged in their children's EHC plans.

Ms Spielman said that while area SEND inspections were important to children, young people and families because they provided valuable insights into how the SEND system was working for them, they were not currently taking place, as the current levels of disruption to education, health and care services, as well as changing expectations of local areas during the pandemic, would make it impossible to make fair, valid and consistent inspection judgements. She said that while it would be right not to return to area SEND inspections in the autumn, a focus on other ways could strengthen the SEND system in the future. The Chief Inspector said in the interim period before area SEND inspections restarted, Ofsted and CQC would work collaboratively with local areas through a series of visits to:

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- Understand children and young people's experience and learn from what had worked well for them.
- Support local areas to prioritise and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in the context of the pandemic.
- Enable learning for all local areas, government and stakeholders on how best to strengthen the SEND system in future through a series of national reports.

Ms Spielman said that the visits would give an insight into how well the system was working and which local areas would be ready to re-start full inspections. She stressed that the visits were not inspections, nor would they replace the current area SEND inspection cycle. The Chief Inspector added that the visits would start in the autumn term, while the inspection cycle remained suspended. She added that there would be no formal judgement or published reports on individual local areas.

Commenting on Ofsted's plan to visit schools and colleges in the autumn term, Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said that many leaders would need a lot of convincing that the visits would bring value or otherwise they would simply be a distraction. He added that as such, the rationale, consistency and tone set by inspectors would be more important than ever. Mr Barton warned that the visits must not turn into inspection by another name, at a time when schools and colleges would have so much to deal with.

He said that ASCL was not convinced that talking about a longer term plan to bring back full inspections in January was wise at this stage, as it would be likely that schools and colleges would be periodically dealing with coronavirus outbreaks, continuing to manage extensive safety measures, and supporting children whose learning had been disrupted, including many who would be taking GCSEs and A-levels next summer.

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## Comprehensive Future calls for the 11-plus to be cancelled

**Comprehensive Future has written to the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson, along with MPs and councillors in selective local authorities, to call on grammar schools to abandon 11-plus testing this year. Comprehensive Future's Chairman, Dr Nuala Burgess, said it would be wrong that in a year where every formal exam had been cancelled the 11-plus test would be allowed to go ahead.**

The letter highlighted the significant disruption to children's education caused by the COVID pandemic. While most grammar schools are planning to move 11-plus tests from September to mid-October, the campaign group's letter argued that a month of classroom lessons could not compensate for children missing almost four months of education.

Dr Burgess said there were many reasons why the test should be cancelled as there was still far too much uncertainty over how schools would be run once they had opened in September. She added that the need for localised lockdowns, such as in Leicester, would create chaos in selective areas where the 11-plus was an essential part of the schools admission system.

But Dr Burgess stressed that more importantly, children's education had been hugely unequal during lockdown and some children came from families who had suffered hardship during the pandemic. She argued that the lack of face-to-face teaching in schools had left some children in need of a far longer recovery period to get back on their feet, and to run the test would add further disadvantage to already disadvantaged pupils.

# Close the digital divide to enable a “digital first” FE sector

**I**n an open to letter to Education Secretary, the Chief Executives of the Association of Colleges, Association of Employment and Learning Providers and HOLEX have asked the Secretary of State, Gavin Williamson about the allowance of safe opening for adult education and skills immediately. The letter pointed out that while Adult Education Services/Centres, Independent Providers and Colleges had moved to online provision in a remarkable way, they were keen to open their buildings in a safe way because they wanted to serve their communities and employers, and start to reskill individuals to support the economic recovery plans.

The leaders stressed that providers had drafted their safety-first opening plans, developed their risk registers, ordered their signage and PPE and were ready to start to bring back adult students who had been struggling with the digital offer or they needed to complete assessments. The letter stressed that providers were keen to support the recovery programme and they had been encouraged by the Prime Minister’s comments about an enhanced infrastructure plan, which would now be at risk, because it would be impossible to implement the plan if colleges and providers could not train the staff they needed to work on it.

The CEOs pointed out that providers had already shown that they could successfully open to young students and because they were fully aware of the risks, they were prepared to open to adults in a safe and controlled manner. The authors argued that providers were also under pressure to open from other organisations, such as, awarding bodies for assessments, DWP and Jobcentre Plus working with the unemployed to help them back into work and from Social Services to provide for the socially isolated. The letter added that adult students themselves were also keen to return as they were worried about their job prospects and there were only certain types of learning that could be done online.

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## Ofsted replaces online website

**O**fsted had announced that, as part of the continuing improvements and updates it was making to its online systems, application forms for new services and guidance had been moved to GOV.UK following the closure of the outdated Ofsted Online site. Ofsted said that the new pages would provide access to all its childcare and early years forms and its social care forms, which could be used to: register with Ofsted; tell Ofsted about changes; report a serious incident or accident; and pay an Ofsted invoice.

Ofsted said that GOV.UK was a much easier-to-use site and the change would provide a number of improvements to the service:

- The information would be easier to view on a mobile phone and the site could be used on any browser.
- Guidance for each form would appear on the page, rather than on a separate site.
- The application forms had been updated to a step-by-step process.
- A more secure method of payment had been introduced for independent schools, childcare and social care providers to pay their Ofsted invoices.

As Ofsted Online is no longer available, any browser bookmarks or references to the old site will need to be updated with the new GOV.UK links.

# British Academy argues that language learning is vital to pandemic recovery

**A** coalition of partners has urged the Government to create a strategy to boost language learning, which has fallen drastically in recent years. The British Academy, the British Council, Universities UK and the Association of School and College Leaders believe that strategy will be essential to the economic and social strength of the UK as it emerges from COVID-19.

The coalition argued that the economic cost of the UK's linguistic underperformance, in terms of lost trade and investment had been estimated at 3.5% of GDP, and languages were vital for fostering effective international cooperation and commercial links, as well as for improving educational performance, cognitive function and skills, opportunity, intercultural understanding, and social cohesion.

Towards a National Languages Strategy: Education and Skills, a UK-wide languages initiative, consists of short and medium-term actions for schools, colleges, universities, employers and others and it takes account of the different language and policy landscapes of the UK's four jurisdictions.

The proposals, which the coalition said would require only modest funding and it would be easy-to-implement, included:

- Creating a central point of access for language learning resources in a new “Languages UK” portal.
- Reviewing grading and content for GCSE and A-level language exams to ensure a level playing field for students.
- Encouraging take up of languages post-16, through financial support and new qualifications.
- Determining best practice approaches for languages in primary schools and enabling teachers to deliver them.
- Creating further intensive schemes for language learning.
- Extending ambassador and mentor schemes.

The coalition pointed out that despite the Government's aim for 90% of pupils in England to take a language (modern or ancient) at GCSE by 2025, fewer than half of them did so and in the UK, the number of undergraduates in modern languages had fallen by 54% between 2008–9 and 2017–18. As fewer students were applying, at least 10 modern languages departments had closed in the last decade, and a further nine had significantly downsized. The British Academy and partners will host a webinar on 20 July to discuss the recommendations.

# Lost generation of vulnerable teenagers falling through gaps in the school and social care systems

**A**nne Longfield, the Children’s Commissioner for England, has published analysis that showed that thousands of teenagers in England were falling through the gaps in the school and social care system. The report sets out the risks affecting tens of thousands of teenagers including persistent absence from school, exclusions, alternative provision, dropping out of the school system in Year 11, or going missing from care.

The Children’s Commissioner highlighted the heightened impact of lockdown on the 120,000 teenagers in England, one in 25 of all teens, who had already been slipping out of sight before coronavirus. She warned that the children already at risk could be joined by many more who were struggling to adapt to a return to “normal” after six months out of school. Ms Longfield warned that, unless the children were re-engaged in society, a whole generation of vulnerable teens could stay at risk of educational failure and unemployment, or crime or exploitation.

In her report, *Teenagers Falling Through the Gaps*, the Commissioner voiced her concerns that the teenagers, who had been slipping through existing gaps in the system, would remain “invisible” even after the lockdown restrictions had eased. She added that such children who were likely to have needs which schools struggled to meet, often did not reach the threshold for social service involvement.

The report called on councils to work with schools and police to focus resources on the teenagers at risk of becoming “invisible” to services or who had gone missing under lockdown. Ms Longfield pointed out that the children were easy prey to criminal gangs and were at very high risk of becoming NEET. The Commissioner argued that ensuring that they had a way of getting back into education, training or work would be crucial for any economic recovery from COVID-19, and that many already vulnerable children who had been missing the structure that school brought would need extra support.

The Commissioner called on the Government, schools, local authorities, police forces and safeguarding partnerships to work together on a plan to identify, track, support and ultimately re-engage the children. The report also called for summer schemes, including sports clubs, play schemes, holiday clubs and youth clubs, to give young people a range of safe, positive, structured activities to take part in, led by trusted adults and role models. But Ms Longfield said that the Government would need to work with local areas to remove any barriers to delivering the schemes. She also called on the Government to advise schools to support the schemes from within their additional £650 million “catch up” funding.

The Children’s Commissioner said that she was particularly concerned about the subset of the children who may not be getting the right level of help and may become removed from the systems intended to support them. She defined the “falling through the gaps group” as children who had:

- Multiple Child In Need referrals during the year but had not ended up on a CIN plan.
- SEND and multiple exclusions from school during the year.
- A permanent exclusion but had not entered a PRU during the year.
- In care and living in an unregulated placement.
- In care and had multiple placement changes during the year.
- A permanent exclusion.

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*(Continued from page 14.)*

- High levels of unauthorised absence.
- Dropped out of the school system in Year 11.
- Missed at least an entire term of school in the previous two years.
- Been in care but had gone missing from their placement multiple times in a year.

The Commissioner pointed out that in 2017/18 around 81,000 teenagers in England had met at least one of the criteria, including 13,000 who had met two or more criteria. She added that, another 42,000 teenagers had been NEET. Ms Longfield said that the figures meant that 123,000 teens in England had been falling through gaps in mainstream provision and becoming invisible to services in 2017/18, which was 4 in every 100 teenagers aged 13-17 and around 1 in 25 teens.

Responding to the analysis by the Children's Commissioner for England, Cat Smith MP, Shadow Minister for Young People, said that as the Conservatives had decimated youth services over the last decade, young people had nowhere to turn for professional support during the current difficult times. She pointed out that youth services in England had fallen by £1 billion since 2010, which was a reduction of 73%. Ms Smith argued that the report had showed that the Government must urgently invest in youth services, to support and re-engage vulnerable young people who were emerging from lockdown.

Cllr Judith Blake, Chairman of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People Board, said that councils shared the Commissioner's concerns about the impact of the coronavirus crisis on vulnerable teenagers. But she pointed out that children's social care referrals had fallen by more than half in some areas, from an average of almost 1,800 per day, which had raised concerns that not all young people were getting the support they needed. She said that councils had been working with their partners and communities to try to identify children who may be at risk. But she added that councils needed funding to support children, young people and families as part of the national recovery.

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## **Schools must not have to foot the bill for additional COVID-19 costs**

**D**ata from the union NAHT has revealed the financial costs associated with making schools safe for pupils during the Coronavirus crisis, as the average total estimated additional cost to a school that had and/or would be incurred to allow pupils to return to school was £9,990, which the average total estimated value of lost income, such as rental or lettings, to a school as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic was £15,915.

The NAHT said that while messages from the Government had suggested that schools could expect to be fully reimbursed for the additional costs they had incurred as a result of the current crisis, costs incurred by schools to meet the Government's guidance on the safe readmittance of pupils were not covered. They included buying more hand washing stations, implementing additional cleaning regimes and additional staff requirements.

NAHT General Secretary, Paul Whiteman, said that although the money being made available for new school buildings and to support those pupils who had suffered most during lockdown was certainly welcome, the investment must not be undermined by a failure to support schools facing significant costs as a result of introducing the safety measures required by the Government. He pointed out that schools leaders had had to quickly implement measures to make their schools safe for pupils, which had included sourcing additional hand washing facilities, PPE equipment and implementing extensive cleaning regimes. Mr Whiteman added that on top of that, schools had spent thousands of pounds providing free school meals for pupils when the national system had failed to work.

# Scotland's approach to dealing with COVID-19

**S**cotland has two groups considering the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. **Coronavirus (COVID 19): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues** is an expert group modelled on SAGE to advise on specifically Scottish issues. It met last Tuesday for the second time. The sub-group discussed the likely publication of their advice on physical distancing and school transport. They covered questions of prevalence, surveillance, monitoring and testing issues briefly in preparation for a fuller discussion at today's meeting.

The sub-group again considered school transport. Relevant evidence from SAGE and Scotland's COVID-19 Advisory Group, of which this group is a sub-committee, was considered. Members reflected on potential differential approaches to dedicated school transport versus public transport. Evidence on the merits of different mitigations were discussed. The sub-group covered issues of physical distancing, face coverings, hygiene issues, ventilation, the significance of the age of children and young people, staggered starts, behavioural factors, and the safety of adults on both dedicated school transport and public transport. It was proposed as desirable that travel in dedicated school transport might be seen as subject to the same rules as in a school environment. The importance of simplicity and clarity of messaging was agreed. It was noted that approaches needed to remain flexible, and the prevalence of the virus in the general population should be considered when reviewing mitigations. There should be support for active travel (walking and cycling) wherever possible.

The sub-group considered early learning and childcare and looked at evidence on infection rates for young children and infants. It was noted that many control measures are particularly challenging for young children. In that context, the sub-group reflected on good practice learned from hubs, family learning, outdoor learning, what young children need to thrive, and the importance of strong leadership, as well as appropriate mitigations.

## COVID-19 ERG

While the experts met in the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues, the leaders of Scottish education were meeting in the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group. This brings together stakeholders at chief executive/general secretary level and is chaired by John Swinney MSP, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. His deputy, Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Children and Young People, attended, as did leaders from the local government organisation CoSLA, the president of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, teacher union general secretaries including the EIS and a clutch of professors from the universities of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Queen Margaret University.

The meeting held at the beginning of July began with a presentation from Prof Carol Tannahill, chairman of the sub-group of the COVID-19 Advisory Group that specialises on education and children's issues. She is also the Chief Social Policy Adviser to the Scottish Government. Her presentation included physical distancing and the developing advice based on this evidence. A brief overview of the virus progression in Scotland was given, as well as some international comparisons and data. Professor Tannahill was joined in the discussion by another member of the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues, Professor Marion Bain, who is also Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Scotland. Both the Education Recovery Group and the expert COVID-19 Advisory Group are looking at a continuum of risk and how the wider context of social economic and health risks are being considered, to make balanced judgements in line with overall health advice.

The group also considered physical distancing in children and young people, mitigations to consider, transition groups, and those that may be at higher risk from the virus. The importance of clear, continued communications to ensure understanding and confidence can be built up was highlighted. Following the presentation, the Education Recovery Group members had the opportunity to raise further questions. There were a number of queries around early years, including the practically and longer term impacts of this group. Further discussion and consideration was given to whether senior school pupils should be regarded as adults or children, how they might move safely around the school, and during social periods of the school day.



## SMC interim chairmen appointment

**S**andra Wallace and Steven Cooper have been appointed as interim chairmen of the Social Mobility Commission on a job-share basis until the conclusion of an open recruitment process to appoint a substantive chairman following the resignation of Martina Millburn on 29 April 2020. Ms Wallace is a current SMC commissioner, Managing Partner UK and Joint Managing Director Europe at DLA Piper.

She is one of the most senior female lawyers in the UK and she has previously headed DLA Piper's UK Employment group. Steven Cooper is a SMC commissioner and chief executive officer at C. Hoare & Co. He has 32 years' banking experience, most recently as CEO of Barclaycard Business. He had been CEO of personal banking at Barclays for the UK and Europe and prior to that, CEO Business Banking.

Mr Cooper sits on several advisory boards. He is a non-executive director at Robert Walters Plc and the Financial Services Compensations Scheme and he is an Alumnus of Harvard Business School. The interim appointment, which will not exceed 9 months, will involve a commitment to attend SMC meetings, sub-committee meetings and other ad-hoc meetings as required.

## New Ofsted chairman announced

**T**he Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, has announced the appointment of Dame Christine Ryan as next chairman of Ofsted. He said that as former CEO and Chief Inspector for the Independent Schools Inspectorate, Dame Christine had significant experience in the education sector. Dame Christine is a board member of Ofqual and chairman of TalentEd, an educational charity for disadvantaged young people.

She replaces Professor Julius Weinberg and she will take up her new role at Ofsted from 1 August.

## ESFA senior staff changes

**T**he Education and Skills Funding Agency's Director of Funding, Kate Josephs, has been asked to take up a Director General role in the Cabinet Office dealing with the Government response to COVID-19, with immediate effect. Ms Josephs has been responsible for leading and overseeing the creation and operation of a single Funding Operations Centre of Excellence responsible for schools, academies and post-16 funding, the allocation of all schools and academies funding including the national funding formula, the post-16 funding agenda, apprenticeships funding and adults skills funding.

In addition to her role of Director of Funding, Ms Josephs has also been the lead Director of ESFA's COVID-19 core team. John Edwards, the Regional Schools Commissioner for East Midlands and the Humber, has joined ESFA as the new Director of Funding.

## New member announced for Ofqual Board

**O**fqual has announced that Dr Catherine McClellan has joined its Board. Dr McClellan is Director of Assessment & Psychometric Research at the Australian Council for Educational Research, a not-for-profit research organisation that aims to create and promote research-based knowledge, products and services that can be used to improve learning across the lifespan.

She has also worked internationally in various research and development roles including the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. Ofqual board members sit for term of 3 years.

## Education Secretary plans to build “German-style” FE system

In a virtual speech hosted by the Social Market Foundation, the Education Secretary announced how Further Education would level up the nation. Gavin Williamson said that the unprecedented challenge posed by the pandemic had made it even more important to invest in long-term change and to think seriously about the post-16 education system that the country needed.

He said that while so much was right with the education system, when it came to further education, too many people did not value it as much as they should. Mr Williamson said that, through the pandemic, colleges and other FE providers had enabled learning to continue by moving courses online, supporting learners and apprentices and delivering meals to disadvantaged young people. He added that the proportion of learners that colleges had managed to keep engaged had been astounding, and while the challenge of moving learning online had been formidable, the success it had achieved demonstrated the vast potential of digital learning and the potential to transform education as the pace of technological change continued to accelerate.

*“Mr Williamson stressed that local colleges, firmly tapped into local business needs, would get Britain working again.”*

The Secretary of State welcomed the Prime Minister’s recent announcement that an “Opportunity Guarantee” would give every young person the chance of an apprenticeship or an in-work placement and he pointed out that the Chancellor had announced a £2 billion “kickstart scheme” to make sure that no young person would be left behind as a result of coronavirus, which would see a £111m for the largest- expansion in traineeships; doubling of front line staff at job centres, as well as an extra £32m for recruiting extra careers advisers and £17m for work academies in England.

Mr Williamson said that the Government would also provide £101 million to support school and college leavers to take high value Level 2 and Level 3 courses, where employment opportunities were not available to them. He pointed out that there would also be a boost to apprenticeships as businesses that signed up to employ new apprentices aged 16-24 between 1 August 2020 and the 31 January 2021 would receive an additional cash payment of £2000 per new apprentice hired, and £1500 if they hired a new apprentice aged 25 plus. Mr Williams argued that that together with the fast-tracking of £200m of capital funding, which had been announced in June, the investment represented a vote of confidence by the Government in further education.

### Technical and vocational skills

He stressed that the development of technical and vocational skills, the greater embedding of digital skills, would be vital to charting a course to recovery. The Secretary of State said that there would be a “tremendous” need for upskilling, reskilling and retraining and getting people back into work as quickly as possible. He said that further education would be at the very heart of that mission as its ability to offer flexible, practical training that would lead directly to jobs was exactly what the country needed. Mr Williamson stressed that local colleges, firmly tapped into local business needs, would get Britain working again.

He said that to transform many of the left-behind towns and regions, instead of investing more money solely in universities, it should be invested in the local college, which was the beating heart of so many towns. The Secretary said that he had been “shocked” to discover that while the number of people

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going to university had increased, the total number of adults in education had actually fallen. He pointed out that the number of adult learners in Further Education had plummeted, from 3.1 million to 2.1 million, and there had been a systemic decline in higher technical qualifications. Mr Williamson said that while there had been well over 100,000 people doing Higher National Certificates and Diplomas in 2000, the figure had dropped to less than 35,000.

The Secretary of State said that within Higher Education Institutes, foundation degrees had declined from a high of 81,000, to approximately 30,000 and undergraduate part-time study in higher education had also fallen significantly, from nearly 250,000 in 2010 to under 100,000. He stressed that for those who had not achieved the equivalent of A-Levels by the age of 18, the chances of proceeding to higher levels of qualifications was, as Philip Augar's report had put it, "virtually non-existent."

Mr Williamson pointed out that unlike almost every other OECD nation, young people were no more likely to have basic literacy and numeracy skills than those over 55. He argued that unless the country changed course, people would be condemned to low productivity and lost opportunity for a generation. The Secretary of State said that for decades, governments had failed to give further education the investment it deserved. He pointed out that consistently across countries, there was evidence of filtering down in the labour market, which meant that graduates were competing for jobs that used to be, and could still be, undertaken by non-graduates. Mr Williamson added that a significant proportion of graduates failed to gain much advantage from going to university at all, and employers had said that too often, graduates did not have the skills they needed, whether that was practical know-how or basic numeracy and literacy. He pointed out that productivity was only 4% higher than the level in 2008 and businesses were crying out for skilled technicians.

***“The Secretary of State said that a significant proportion of graduates failed to gain much advantage from going to university at all.”***

## **Adults**

The Secretary of State stressed that only 10% of all adults aged 18-65 held a Higher Technical Qualification as their highest qualification, which compared to 20% of adults in Germany and 34% in Canada. He added that skilled trade and professional occupations, in sectors such as manufacturing and construction, had reported some of the highest skills shortages, as many of the occupations required intermediate or higher technical qualifications, which were not being taught.

Mr Williamson pointed out that five years after completion, the average Higher Technical Apprentice earned more than the average graduate, and a work-based, technical apprenticeship, which lasted 2 years, gave greater returns than the typical three-year bachelor's degree. He argued that for too long, people had been training for jobs that did not exist, instead of training for jobs that did exist and would exist in the future.

The Secretary of State called for an end the focus on qualifications for qualifications sake and fundamentally reform wholesale to rebalance towards further and technical education. He added that across the entire post-16 sector, there would need to be a much stronger alignment with the economic and societal needs of the nation.

Mr Williamson said that his personal commitment would be to put further and technical education at the heart of the post-16 education system, and create and support opportunities for those who did not want to go to university, rather than writing them off, or driving them down a path that, could all too often, end with graduates not having the skills they needed to find meaningful work.

He said that while there had been some progress, such as the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and the move to employer-led standards; the Sainsbury Review, and the introduction of T-Levels, the country would need to go further and faster to remove qualifications that were just not fit for purpose;

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tackle low quality higher education; and give colleges the powers and resources that they needed to truly drive change.

The Secretary of State pointed out that in the autumn, he would publish a White Paper to set out plans to build a world-class, German-style further education system in Britain, and level up skills and opportunities. He stressed that it would not be about incremental change, but a comprehensive plan to change the fundamentals of England's further education landscape, inspired by the best models from around the world. He explained that the new system would be centred on:

- High-quality qualifications based on employer-led standards. All apprenticeships starts would be based on such standards from August 2020 and the standards would be at the heart of the whole technical education system.
- Colleges would play a leading role in developing skills in their areas, by driving an ambitious agenda that would respond to local economic need and acting as centres for businesses and their development.

***“ASCL said that the most recent example of the neglect of further education had been the Government’s recent announcement of a £1 billion education catch-up fund in which it had decided that no money should go to the post-16 sector.”***

Mr Williamson said that currently, there were more than 12 thousand different qualifications at level 3 and below, which was “a ridiculous number”. He pointed out that his Department was carrying out a review, to simplify the system so that young people and adults could have a simpler and consistently high-quality set of choices, which would have a clear line of sight to study at higher levels. The Secretary of State said that qualifications which no-one wanted to take, or that were poor quality, would be likely to go in their thousands, and later in the year, a detailed plan for the implementation of the reform would be announced.

Responding to the speech, Association of Colleges Chief Executive, David Hughes, said that the Education Secretary’s speech had been a rallying call for a stronger, more coherent education and skills system that would work for everyone, support productivity and would help areas to recover from the pandemic and flourish in the future. But he added that it would require strong, confident and well-resourced colleges, universities, and schools.

Mr Hughes argued that the current pandemic had shown how important it was to support people to train and retrain, to be able to move quickly into new jobs and sectors, and to be protected from long term economic scarring. He said that while colleges were uniquely positioned to be able to do that, it must not detract from the vital role universities played in the economy and recovery. Mr Hughes stressed that the FE white paper and the investment to make up for a decade of neglect had the potential to be a turning point for colleges, if it was bold and ambitious.

### **Warm words**

Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said he hoped that the Education Secretary’s warm words about the importance of further education would be backed up with adequate funding. He warned that as colleges had been woefully underfunded by the Government over the last decade, the current situation was so serious that the Government had introduced an insolvency system because of the risk of them going bust.

Mr Barton said that the most recent example of the neglect of further education had been the Government’s recent announcement of a £1 billion education catch-up fund in which it had decided that

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no money should go to the post-16 sector. He added that ASCL was also not sure why the Education Secretary had felt it necessary to denigrate the value of higher education in setting out his ambition for further education.

Mr Barton called for an end to the “false and pervasive divide” that saw academic routes as superior to technical routes. He pointed out that the Government’s relentless focus on insisting that academic qualifications in a set of traditional subjects were the gold standard for all children had helped to reinforce the perception. Mr Barton added that young people needed to be provided with a wider range of equally valued academic and technical qualifications.

Kate Green MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Education, said that calling for a German-style education system would be no replacement for investment the sector needed. She argued that while any new support for further education would be welcome, but was a bit rich for the Government to complain about a crisis in FE that it had created.

Ms Green stressed that funding had been slashed by billions of pounds and support for learners had been scrapped and she argued that attempts to set up further and higher education against each other would be damaging and counterproductive. Ms Green said that anyone in post-16 education would argue that what would be needed would be collaboration across both sectors to maximise opportunities for lifelong learning so people could develop new skills and have fulfilling lives.

#### **FE in dire need of funding**

UCU general secretary Jo Grady said that further education was in dire need of funding because the Conservative governments of the last decade had decimated it. She argued that hearing Gavin Williamson lament the lack of funding for colleges had been as astonishing as it had been to hear universities minister Michelle Donelan complain the previous week about record student debt levels on the back of £9,250 annual tuition fees introduced by the Conservatives.

Ms Grady argued that the Government should be encouraging people to attend all forms of education, not picking artificial winners in a market that it had created, nor denigrating university education at a time when the sector desperately needed support.

Josh Hardie, CBI Deputy Director-General, said that colleges were the engines of levelling up, as they equipped people of all ages with the skills they needed to succeed at work and they drove regional prosperity. But he argued that as they had been underfunded for a generation, renewed Government support for the further education system would be warmly welcomed by business.

Mr Hardie warned that the reforms must go hand-in-hand with support for the UK’s world-leading and highly-respected universities that were struggling so acutely in the face of coronavirus. He suggested that the FE white paper would be a golden opportunity to join up higher and technical education, drive inclusion and prosperity to deliver the high-skilled, high-paid jobs that communities needed now and in the future.

***“Kate Green MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Education, said that calling for a German-style education system would be no replacement for investment the sector needed. She argued that while any new support for further education would be welcome, but was a bit rich for the Government to complain about a crisis in FE that it had created.”***

## Halifax Helpers founder wins Commonwealth Points of Light award from H M the Queen

**R**ebeccah Raphael, founder of The Halifax Helpers, has been recognised by Her Majesty The Queen with the Commonwealth Points of Light award for service during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Queen makes the awards as Head of the Commonwealth, although she is also Queen of both Canada and the UK.

Rebeccah is the founder of 'The Halifax Helpers', a free online-tutoring service providing educational support to students in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under Rebeccah's leadership, the group has grown to 50 tutors, hosting 300 sessions a week in English, French, maths, science, and music. Rebeccah is planning to continue the project beyond the pandemic, expanding to students outside Nova Scotia.

As part of the legacy of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, known as a CHOGM, in London IN 2018, Her Majesty The Queen - as Head of the Commonwealth - is thanking inspirational volunteers across the 54 Commonwealth nations for the difference they are making in their communities and beyond, by recognising one volunteer from each Commonwealth country every week. By sharing these stories of service, the Commonwealth Points of Light awards celebrate inspirational acts of volunteering across the Commonwealth and help inspire others to make their own contribution to tackling some of the greatest social challenges of our time, including the current COVID-19 pandemic.



*Rebeccah Raphael*

The Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, said: "I am delighted to participate in the Commonwealth Points of Light Award presentation to the founder of 'The Halifax Helpers', Rebeccah Raphael. During the difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic, she chose not to sit-out the period of isolation and social distancing and she established a wonderful online tutoring program that has made a difference in her community. 'The Halifax Helpers' group of volunteers has led to elementary and junior high school students receiving educational support during uncertain times when schools were closed.

Rebeccah's leadership is indeed inspiring and truly reflects the intention of the Award that was created by Her Majesty The Queen."

Rebeccah Raphael said: "Working with the volunteers at 'The Halifax Helpers' has shown me how much we can accomplish with passion, drive and kindness. The youth who make up our team are some of the most dedicated and genuine folks out there. I'm incredibly proud of the way together we've maximized our impact in our community and beyond."

The UK High Commissioner to Canada, Susan le Jeune d'Allegre, said: "Rebeccah richly deserves this award for her exceptional work to support students during very difficult times. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, she has inspired us all by stepping up to ensure students have access to the learning support they need from the safety of their own homes. Her work will help to ensure that no student is disadvantaged, or loses out on opportunities in the future because of the pandemic. 'Halifax Helpers' is a fantastic initiative, and a great example of what young people can contribute to society in even the most difficult circumstances. I am delighted that her work has been recognised by Her Majesty the Queen."

# COVID-19 on a global scale

**P**erhaps inevitably, we tend to be focused on the effects of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the COVID-19 coronavirus illness that it leads to on our own country, or perhaps we take in some of the things we see or read about from the other countries in the UK. Yet just as COVID-19 has impacted massively on schools and colleges in Britain, so it has on almost every country in the world. In England, we have had the Children's Commissioner among others pointing out that those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds will suffer the most. That is also true on a global scale, both in terms of individual children and whole countries.

Each country's leaders have adopted policies that they hope will serve them or their people best, although some countries have diverged considerably from the consensus. Yet all have had access to the same scientific data. One of the most misleading statements has been "we need to follow the science", when what the science has said, especially early on in the pandemic, is that, to quote from one of the papers from The Wider Environment Group (TWEG), one of the groups that feeds into the UK's Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies (SAGE), quoted in the research section of this issue, there are "a number of significant evidence gaps (that) hamper assessment of transmission risk of SARS-CoV-2". There was a lot the scientists did not know and much of their data was poor.

Working quietly behind the scenes five global organisations have been coordinating activity, from research to best practice information. Not all countries have accepted all the advice, but for those who have eyes with which to see, these five organisations have recently produced some interesting reports. The five organisations are the World Health Organisation (WHO), whose focus is naturally mainly on health policies, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which runs educational research programmes like PISA and TALIS, and the global teacher union confederation Education International (EI).

The World Bank, in its report, *The COVID-19 Pandemic: Shocks to Education and Policy Responses*, published in May, outlined the scale of the problem. "Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was living a learning crisis. Before the pandemic, 258 million children and youth of primary- and secondary-school age were out of school. And low schooling quality meant many who were in school learned too little. The Learning Poverty rate in low- and middle-income countries was 53 percent—meaning that over half of all 10-year-old children couldn't read and understand a simple age appropriate story. Even worse, the crisis was not equally distributed: the most disadvantaged children and youth had the worst access to schooling, highest dropout rates, and the largest learning deficits. All this means that the world was already far off track for meeting Sustainable Development Goal 4, which commits all nations to ensure that, among other ambitious targets, 'all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.' The COVID-19 pandemic now threatens to make education outcomes even worse."

The damage will become even more severe as the health emergency translates into a deep global recession. As the World Bank report notes, "it is possible to counter those shocks, and to turn crisis into opportunity. The first step is to cope successfully with the school closures, by protecting health and safety and doing what they can to prevent students' learning loss using remote learning. At the same time, countries need to start planning for school reopening. That means preventing dropout, ensuring healthy school conditions, and using new techniques to promote rapid learning recovery in key areas once students are back in school." As the World Bank advises: "As the school system stabilizes, countries can use the focus and innovativeness of the recovery period to 'build back better'." The key: don't replicate the failures of the pre-COVID systems, but instead build toward improved systems and accelerated learning for all students."

While policy is inevitably focused on reopening schools and colleges for the new school year in August or September, the reality is that we will not be returning to normal any time soon. As the OECD warns us, in *Coronavirus Special Edition: Back to School*, produced by its Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI): "As the first shock passes, planning is taking place on two timescales: the short-term challenges in the return to school, and the challenges over the next 18-24 months as systems work to build resilience and adaptability for the future."

It is the long-term planning that is critical. In a private draft paper circulated within EI and seen by

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*Education Journal*, its senior special consultant John Bangs, who also chairs the Education and Skills Working Group of the Trade Union Advisory Committee at the OECD and was an Assistant Secretary at the NUT where he headed its Education Department, outlines “how teachers, support staff and their unions can seize the policy initiative in order to protect and promote public education in a post-COVID-19 social and economic landscape.” Trade unions will naturally seek to advance the interests of their members, but most teacher unions combine this with an interest in promoting the wellbeing of the children they teach. The OECD was one of the first to notice that cooperation and partnership with unions actually gets better results for children. In a report published earlier this year, and reported in *Education Journal*, it recommended countries should establish cooperative forums with stakeholders to plan the response to the pandemic. Within the UK the Scottish Government took this advice and established a COVID-19 Education Recovery Group. All the main stakeholder groups were involved, with membership at chief executive/general secretary level with the group chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Education (who is also the Deputy First Minister.) The UK government, operating in education as the government for England, did not follow OECD guidance on this. It did establish a consultation mechanism, but it was more top down rather than consensual. The result was greater stakeholder buy-in of the final policy in Scotland, which most observers think has handled the education part of the pandemic better than Westminster.

### **Education International**

The Bangs paper, *Restoring and Strengthening Education Systems in the time of the Pandemic*, circulated within EI yesterday (Monday), makes a similar point to that of the OECD. “Many education systems were not sufficiently prepared to respond to the impact of coronavirus. As educational institutions begin to open, education systems should not simply return gradually to business-as-usual. Rather, governments should take concrete measures to make education systems better prepared for possible future closures, both in the short and long term, as well as better able to promote health and wellness.”

The WHO has warned that, as with previous virus pandemics from 1918 onwards, the world will most likely face several waves of COVID-19. That will mean some school systems being closed, reopened, and closed again several times. Few governments have thought through how to support learners over a two-year or longer period when schooling will be repeatedly disrupted.

EI has been thinking about this, as has the OECD. EI has updated its policy advice to unions around the world. In *Forward to School: Guidance, Considerations and Resources for and from Education Unions to Inform Decision-Making in Times of COVID-19*, published yesterday (Monday), EI incorporates the advice of the WHO. It emphasises a five pillar approach. In the first pillar, engaging in social and policy dialogue, it sets out the essential process of discussion and agreement that must take place for students’ successful return to school. Speaking recently, EI President Susan Hopgood described the conditions for return: “It’s not only the quality of the dialogue between education unions and governments. It is the quality of the partnership. Quite simply governments are not in a position to decide on their own what phased return looks like. What does the successful phased return of students look like? Uncontroversial is the answer! Why? Because unions and governments have sat down together and worked out in detail how it can be done with the minimum of risk.”

In the second pillar, ensuring the health and safety of education communities, the EI document notes that ensuring the health and safety of education communities is a pressing concern that is currently front and centre of both government and education unions’ work as countries seek to reopen schools in the context of the pandemic. As economic considerations move up the agenda of many governments, there is a danger that the physical threat to health posed by reopening schools will be down-played as children are less affected by COVID-19 than adults. While this is true, several papers from SAGE, including those reported in *Education Journal*, stress the full effects of getting COVID-19 are still not known and for a small number of children they are severe. As we report in this issue (see the research section) the issue of transmission from children to adults has not yet been fully resolved. It may be a significantly greater problem than policymakers at present admit.

The EI report notes: “In order for education institutions to reopen safely it is clear that a whole-

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school and whole-community approach is necessary. Governments and employers must meet their obligations to guarantee occupational health and safety; the policy approach taken must be developed with education workers and their unions in consultation with other stakeholders such as parents and students”.

In its third pillar, making equity a top priority, EI echoes the concerns of all the other international organisations. “The return to school will not be an immediate return to normal. Because of the need to respect social distancing measures, the transition to onsite education is likely to be gradual and involve a blend of onsite and remote teaching and learning, which will prolong and deepen structures of inequity.”

UNESCO has produced a useful guide to reopening schools. *Framework for Reopening Schools*, published in April, was produced in association with UNICEF, the World Bank and the World Food Programme. It followed the establishment of the Global Education Coalition to support governments in strengthening distance learning and facilitating the reopening of schools. The UNESCO report analysis advises on how to prioritise risk mitigation measures. It notes that “decision-making should be done together with subnational stakeholders so that actions are based on an analysis of each local context.”

*Framework for Reopening Schools* notes that decisions on reopening will require countries to quickly gather critical information on how schools, teachers, students and communities are coping with closures and the pandemic. Rapid response surveys of school and local leaders, teachers, students and parents can help provide this information. “Decision makers must then assess how learning and wellbeing can best be supported in each context, with special consideration of the benefits of classroom-based instruction vis-à-vis remote learning, against risk factors related to reopening of schools, noting the inconclusive evidence around the infection risks related to school attendance.”

The UNESCO report poses the question: “How essential is classroom instruction to achieve the respective learning outcomes (foundational, transferable, digital, job-specific), recognizing issues such as the importance of direct interaction with teachers for play-based learning with younger children and developing foundational skills?” It goes on to ask: “How available and accessible is high-quality remote learning (for respective learning outcomes, age groups and for marginalized groups)?” These questions matter in countries with weak public health infrastructure which may see repeated closure of school systems over the next couple of years.

### **It’s not over yet**

In the UK there is a feeling that we are at last returning to something like normal. Death rates, infection rates, hospitalisation and intensive care unit occupancy are all much lower than earlier in the year and are largely heading down still further. However, the UK’s Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser have been noticeably less enthusiastic about the future than the Prime Minister. Boris Johnson is naturally an optimist and has good reason to want to see the economy bounce back and job losses kept to a minimum. He has therefore taken a real risk in opening up the economy before sufficiently depressing the pandemic or putting in place an effective test and trace system. Again, the Scots have done rather better on both counts. The public response to the rather confused messaging of the UK government has been to flock to the beach, join Black Lives Matter protests and to shop once more. Those activities that are in the open are less dangerous than going back to work and school that have to be indoors for most people. Infection rates will go back up. The all-important R rate is already hovering around 1. It won’t take much more for it to rise and for the virus to surge back. How prepared are we for the “new normal” in the UK of cautious reopening to be slammed into reverse? On a global scale, the virus is accelerating. It is still very much swirling around the planet with at least a couple of years to go before it is beaten, and that assumes a vaccine arriving at some time next year. We are very far from seeing the back of COVID-19.

As the OECD’s *Back to School* notes: “One of the challenges to effective planning is that scientific knowledge about COVID-19 is constantly evolving. Operating under enormous pressure in an emergency, Ministries must take decisions, often in the face of competing arguments and with many unknowns. Gaps in our knowledge mean that decisions taken at one point in time may need to be revised as more is understood about the virus. More than ever we see the importance of supporting robust research and development systems, in education as well as public health.” The global nature of this pandemic is obvious. As John Bangs noted in closing his report, governments must “ensure that health education, including basic hygiene management, and global citizenship education are included in national curricula”.

# The importance of “school belonging”

By Kelly-Ann Allen

Lecturer in Educational Psychology at Monash University, Australia

**S**chools have the potential to offer a predictable, universal, and unerring place to belong for many students, and for some students, the only place where they belong. However, it is reported that 1 in 3 secondary school students do not feel a sense of belonging to the school. And this figure has been growing globally for over a decade.

School belonging is defined as the feeling that one is accepted, included, and respected within a school environment (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). The 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) revealed that in the United Kingdom, 16% of students feel lonely at school, 33% of students feel like they do not belong at school, and 35% of students feel like they are an outsider. These figures are well above the OECD averages. The findings also revealed that those who reported having positive feelings were found to be the students who also reported a stronger sense of school belonging (OECD, 2019).

During COVID-19, students were disconnected from school, including their peers and teachers. Given that school attendance is strongly linked to a student’s sense of belonging to school, recent COVID-19



*Kelly-Ann Allen*

***“School belonging is critical for students’ school success and wellbeing and it has been found to be positively correlated with academic achievement, motivation, self-concept, self-efficacy, and behavioural engagements while negatively correlated with depression, absenteeism and school dropout rates.”***

restrictions on school attendance may have led students to question their sense of school belonging. This is of concern given that many students did not feel a sense of belonging to school before COVID-19, a situation that may now persist or worsen as schools begin to reopen.

School belonging is critical for students’ school success and wellbeing. Moreover, it has been found to be positively correlated with academic achievement, motivation, self-concept, self-efficacy, and behavioural engagements while negatively correlated with depression, absenteeism and school dropout rates (Korpershoek et al., 2019; Parr et al., 2020). In fact, the majority of people incarcerated in the UK have not completed high school and men between the ages of 21 and 25 without an educational qualification are 8 times more likely to be incarcerated than those who completed school (Johnson, 2019). A positive sense of school belonging provides long- and short-term benefits for students’ psychosocial health and functioning at school that can extend well into adulthood, in fact up to

13 years post school (Steiner et al., 2019). A focus on school belonging may well indeed be the most effective thing schools can do to grow healthy functional adults in society (O’Connor et al., 2012).

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COVID-19 has created a social pressure that has questioned whether schools will remain a common and reliable place of belonging for many students. Going forward it is critical schools focus on their student's sense of school belonging. The research evidence is too clear to ignore – it is critical that governments, policy makers and schools set about to create an urgent agenda that addresses the lack of belonging to school in many of our high school students today.

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# Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and mitigating measures

By Demitri Coryton  
Editor, Education Journal

*Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and Mitigating Measures, EMG-SAGE 4th June 2020*, update paper prepared by the Environmental and Modelling Group (EMG) on transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and mitigating measures. The paper was considered by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) at its 40th meeting on COVID-19 on 4 June 2020. It was published on Friday 10 July 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transmission-of-sars-cov-2-and-mitigating-measures-update-4-june-2020>

*Evidence of Wider Environmental Transmission of SARS-CoV-2, Evidence summary for SAGE (12th June 2020). Assessing risk of transmission through outdoor air, water, outdoor surfaces, and food.*

Paper prepared by the Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in the Wider Environment Group (TWEG) and considered by TWEG on 12 June 2020 and by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) at its 42th meeting on COVID-19 on 18 June 2020. The paper was published on Friday 10 July 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tweg-evidence-of-wider-environmental-transmission-of-sars-cov-2-12-june-2020>

**T**here were no SAGE papers published last week that were specifically about children or young people, but there were a couple on the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and that are therefore relevant to the reopening of schools. We report on these two papers, the details of which are given above. In the next article we also look at the latest research on COVID-19 and BAME people.

These two papers, from EMG and TWEG, looked at the way the SARS-CoV-2 virus is transmitted. As with all the research papers that go before SAGE, the caveat has to be made that COVID-19 is a disease that we know very little about. Our knowledge is increasing rapidly, and we do know some things, but we are learning new things all the time and things may have moved on from the time when these papers were written. While they are based on the best science available at the time they were written, as the paper from TWEG made clear, there are “a number of significant evidence gaps (that) hamper assessment of transmission risk of SARS-CoV-2”.

Right at the start of their paper EMG state that “transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is most strongly associated with close and prolonged contact in indoor environments. The highest risks of transmission are in crowded spaces over extended periods (high confidence).” That pretty well describes school and college classrooms, especially when students are being kept in the same room all day because of COVID-19, and all pupils are returning so the half empty classrooms of the summer term will no longer be an option.

As children and young people have to return to school and college in August (in Scotland) and September (the rest of the UK), educational settings will have to find ways of mitigating the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus as much as possible.

The second point in the EMG paper is: “Physical distancing is an important mitigation measure (high confidence). Where a situation means that 2m face-to-face distancing cannot be achieved it is strongly recommended that additional mitigation measures including (but not limited to) face coverings and minimising duration of exposure are adopted (medium confidence).” This gives education two problems. The first is that 2m physical distancing will not be possible within a “bubble” or classroom. The second is that the Government’s present advice is that teachers and other school staff will not need to wear personal

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protective equipment (PPE) which includes face covering, and neither will pupils (except in exceptional circumstances).

The EMG paper is about the general population and not specifically schools. Two weeks ago we published a report on a paper for SAGE by Edinburgh University, *Review: What is the evidence for transmission of COVID-19 by children [or in schools]?* (*Education Journal* No. 418, 30 June 2020, page 22.)

That paper came up with four broad answers.

- No high quality studies directly addressing the study question were identified, so the evidence is limited.
- “There are no reported outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools or nurseries.” (Since then there have been a few cases in England, including Leicester.)
- It is estimated that the number of infected children with latent asymptomatic or with mild symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal illness is higher than in adults. Available evidence also suggests that children may have more upper respiratory tract (including nasopharyngeal carriage) than lower respiratory tract involvement. Their prognosis is generally better than that in adults.
- “There has been no confirmed evidence or reports of paediatric cases as the main source of infection. However, there is risk of transmission by infected children (with virus in nasal secretions and stools) and some evidence of faecal-oral transmission in asymptomatic paediatric cases. This limited evidence may have substantial implications for community spread in day-care centres, schools, and homes.”

So, children are less at risk than adults but those who work in school are at risk from children as children transmit the virus, although the degree to which they do that is unclear. It must be a concern for school and college leaders and policy makers that the two mitigating factors that EMG believes are the most important, physical distancing and face coverings, will not be available in schools.

The third point in the executive summary of the EMG paper is that the “election of prevention and mitigation measures should consider all the potential transmission routes and need to be bespoke to a setting and the activities carried out (high confidence).” There are other mitigating factors that are available in schools, like frequent hand washing, more frequent cleaning and reducing and where possible eliminating the common use of equipment. These remain essential and will give some protection in the absence of adequate social distancing and face coverings.

### **Understanding transmission**

The EMG paper noted that transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is most strongly associated with close and prolonged contact, suggesting that close-range direct person-to-person transmission (droplets) and indirect contact transmission (via surfaces and objects) are the most important routes of transmission. The paper states that there is weak evidence that aerosol transmission may play a role under some conditions such as in poorly ventilated crowded environments. This evidence is predominately from one outbreak investigation. Since the paper was written, more evidence has emerged that suggests that aerosol transmission is more important than was first thought. Laboratory bio-aerosol experiments show that SARS-CoV-2 can survive in the aerosol state for over one hour.

There is evidence for asymptomatic transmission and weak but evolving evidence for superspreading events where a small number of people infect large numbers of others. Given that these people may be asymptomatic (and thus not coughing or sneezing) it is possible that they are able to disperse large amounts of virus through normal respiratory activities.

When it comes to the role of physical distancing, there is a non-linear relation between the risk of transmission and distance of separation for face-to-face contact. Duration of this contact is also important with risk proportional to time. Given the uncertainties about transmission and dose-response it is not possible to say with certainty what a safe distance of separation is, but best current evidence suggests that one metre carries between 2 and 10 times the risk of two metres of separation. The Government’s shift to favouring one metre where possible rather than two metres is for economic and not health reasons.

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The EMG paper notes that where it is necessary for people to be closer than two metres face-to-face for a prolonged period or where someone has multiple frequent interactions with others at shorter distance, additional measures will be required to disrupt close-range transmission. “In most cases this is likely to be based on limiting duration of contact, using face coverings and orientation of people.” The EMG notes that “countries that specify a separation distance below 2m generally mandate other mitigation measures, usually face masks or face coverings as a minimum.” These mitigating factors are largely not realistic in a school setting.

Outdoor transmission remains low risk through aerosol and indirect contact routes, but face-to-face exposure (e.g.  $\leq 2\text{m}$  for a prolonged period) should still be considered a potential risk for transmission via respiratory droplets.

### **Prevention and mitigation measures**

The EMG paper recommends that selecting prevention and mitigation measures should use a “hierarchy of control” approach. “It is important to ensure that measures are in place to cover all the transmission routes, and groups of measures are likely to be needed to ensure this is achieved.” Evidence relating to hand-hygiene and face coverings includes a number of randomised trials and meta-analyses. A recent meta-analysis study has also considered the role of distance in transmission and is consistent with existing analysis around this measure.

The limited amount of knowledge that we have about COVID-19 is illustrated by the advice that EMG gives. “Given the very recent origin of this novel virus, very few engineering or environmental mitigation measures have strong evidence to support their effectiveness. A number have data from idealised studies to show theoretical efficacy, but there are very few real-world studies. Decisions on selection of engineering controls will inevitably need to be based on incomplete evidence as “do nothing” is not an option. Appropriate controls should be identified through collaborative risk assessments carried out between employers and employees.”

### **Overview of modes of transmission**

Transmission is still thought to occur through three main mechanisms. The first of these identified by EMG is close-range direct person-to-person transmission, which happens when someone is directly exposed to the respiratory droplets emitted by another person. These virus carrying droplets and aerosols can lead to virus entering the body through eyes, nasal membranes, oral mucosa, or the respiratory system. Close range transmission can also be through direct physical contact with the infectious person.

The second method is indirect surface contact transmission, which happens when someone touches a surface that has been contaminated with the virus. They may then become infected when they touch their nose, eyes or mouth with a contaminated hand or object (fomite). Surfaces can be contaminated through the deposition of respiratory droplets and by people who are infectious touching surfaces with their hands.

The third method is aerosol transmission, which occurs when small virus containing respiratory droplets evaporate to less than five micron diameter particles (droplet nuclei) and are carried by the air, where they are subsequently inhaled. This may be released from respiratory actions (breathing, talking, coughing etc) as well as through aerosol generating procedures in a hospital or dental environment. These particles principally transit infection over short distances but potentially could transmit over longer distances ( $< 2\text{m}$ ) too.

Infection requires inoculation by sufficient number of viral particles to cause infection – the number of particles required to cause infection is not yet known. However, the infectious dose received depends on the quantity of infectious virus times the duration of exposure, and hence both must be considered when evaluating risk.

Risk of transmission depends on a number of factors. The key factors are:

- The highest risk for close-range transmission is when someone is face-to-face with an

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infectious person at a distance of 2m or less for a prolonged period. The risk increases with the amount of time spent in close proximity to the infectious person and with the reduction of distance. When people are side-to-side or behind one another risk is via aerosols and so is determined by the influence of ventilation; at 1m the exposure risks would be similar to 2m when face-to-face in an indoor environment

- Risk of contact transmission increases with the proximity to the infectious person (surfaces close by are more likely to be contaminated), the number of surfaces touched, virus survival on hands and surfaces, and higher frequency face touching behaviour. Frequent cleaning of hand touch surfaces and good hand hygiene reduce risk. The virus is not likely to survive for long periods of time on outdoor surfaces in sunlight, but may survive for more than 24 hours in indoor environments.
- Risk of aerosol transmission is highest when people share poorly ventilated spaces where the viral aerosols can build up rather than being diluted and removed by the ventilation. Risk increases with time spent in the same shared air. Risk is generally higher closer to the infectious person, but beyond this close proximity the concentration of aerosols that a susceptible person will be exposed to depends on the ventilation in the room. Transmission by aerosol can happen at distances beyond 2m in the same enclosed space especially if the ventilation is poor and duration of exposure is sufficient. It is possible but unlikely that aerosol transmission can happen between people in different rooms (via ventilation systems). Aerosol transmission risk is considered to be very low outdoors due to high dilution of virus carrying aerosols and UV inactivation of the virus.
- The amount of virus released by an infected person and its dispersion characteristics facilitates the transmission. Dispersion is governed by complex flow physics. Key factors include the type of respiratory activity (a sneeze generates the most particles, breathing and talking produce less), the velocity of the release (a cough or a sneeze is more violent than breathing or talking and hence the droplets can travel further and with higher momentum). Virus could also be introduced via nasal discharge through contamination on hands. The point at which the exposure occurs in the disease progression of the infected individual may also be important. There is evidence that viral shedding depends on the progression of the disease and may be highest the day prior to symptom onset. No viable virus has been recovered from air samples taken in hospitals from patients who generally are at a more advanced stage of infection. Viral RNA has only been recovered occasionally at low levels, although one study suggests it is higher for patients in the first week of illness. There is limited quantitative data yet to indicate how this varies between people.
- Transmission may also be influenced by environmental conditions. The virus is stable on surfaces and in air under laboratory conditions that simulate indoor environments. The virus survives better under colder, drier conditions with survival times of hours to days. Experiments under simulated sunlight suggests that high exposure to UV in outdoor environments will reduce the survival time to the order of minutes, however this will depend on the time of year and the cloud cover.

All of the issues identified above are important to consider when developing a risk assessment. Given each job comprises a mix of individual work activities, it will be important to identify the factors that influence risk and the appropriate mix of prevention and mitigation at the level of the work activity to reduce these risks to levels which are as low as reasonably practicable. This underlines the need for front line employees as well as managers to be involved in risk assessment preparation.

Evidence that transmission is predominantly occurring in indoor spaces where people are in close proximity continues to grow. EMG believe that an increase in work place contacts will increase risk of infection, and is thus likely lead to further household transmission. This must apply to schools, although possibly at a lower level than adult-only environments.

There are growing numbers of anecdotal reports of outbreak clusters, where one person is responsible for localised clusters (super-spreading events involving multiple highly overdispersed numbers of secondary cases ), sometimes over a relatively short time period (typically hours). . There is good evidence that presymptomatic and asymptomatic transmission occurs, and may underpin some of these clusters. These people are not necessarily coughing and sneezing, but they are shedding sufficient virus to

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cause multiple secondary cases through normal respiratory activities and/or through contamination of surfaces.

A new meta-analysis study considered influence of distance and the application of face masks and eye protection (face shields) on the transmission of SARS, MERS and SARS-CoV-2. This does not provide detail on the mechanisms for transmission, but shows how these factors influence the risk of exposure. The paper reports that a physical distance of more than one metre probably results in a large reduction in virus infection. The paper considers masks and eye protection as exposure controls only and shows both reduce risk but with low certainty in the evidence. It should be noted that many of the papers within this meta-analysis are from healthcare settings and all are based on indoor environments.

Two recent computational studies have modelled dispersion of respiratory droplets in outdoor conditions and shown that the wind can carry droplets further than two metres. Neither of these studies have been validated in a real-world context and neither take account of the infectious dose needed to initiate infection, but one showed that the fraction of respiratory droplets that deposited on a person at a distance of six feet (1.83m) doubled at a wind speed of 4 m/s compared to 0 m/s. There is no further evidence for transmission outdoors, and EMG believe that the risk outdoors remains very low. However EMG remain of the view that face-to-face transmission could be possible and the ability for wind to keep droplets airborne means that it recommends that people continue to observe a distance of two metres when face to face and avoid prolonged exposure to other people. This advice would be difficult for teachers at school to follow.

Many gaps in knowledge remain about the importance of different transmission modes and factors that influence them. EMG recommend that the investigation of outbreaks to a standardised protocol that includes environmental factors should be a priority in order to understand how transmission is happening across different settings.

### **Evidence of Wider Environmental Transmission of SARS-CoV-2**

in its paper, *Evidence of Wider Environmental Transmission of SARS-CoV-2, Evidence summary for SAGE (12th June 2020). Assessing risk of transmission through outdoor air, water, outdoor surfaces, and food*, The Wider Environment Group (TWEG) started with the sort of caveat that is common in papers of this kind. “A number of significant evidence gaps hamper assessment of transmission risk of SARS-CoV-2 through environmental pathways. While various studies have detected viral RNA signatures from environmental samples (from air, water, treated effluents and sewage and surfaces) using RT-PCR, infectivity has not been assessed in most cases. Very few studies have investigated the presence of infective virus using culture techniques. In addition, the infective dose of SARS-CoV-2 is still uncertain. Assessments of risk and uncertainty therefore draw heavily on expert judgement and knowledge of other pathogens throughout this document. The level of risk of catching SARS-CoV-2 from the environment is highly dependent on the levels of infective SARS-CoV-2 circulating in the population and its geographical spread.”

The highest risk of outdoor transmission is through aerosols and droplets when people are in prolonged close, face-to-face contact within two metres. This is likely to be lower than indoor settings but remains a risk especially in crowded areas. TWEG concludes that beyond two meters, risk is likely to progressively decrease. By ten metres risk of outdoor aerosol or droplet person-to-person transmission is very low with medium uncertainty.

Based on current epidemiological evidence, the risk of long-range (more than ten metres) aerosol or droplet person-to-person transmission outdoors is negligible with low uncertainty, due largely to dispersion effects. The risk of acquiring virus from infrequently touched outdoor surfaces is very low to negligible with medium uncertainty, particularly if surfaces are exposed to sunshine on a daily basis.

Surfaces that are frequent touch points such as outer door handles, outside shutters, door knockers and door bells are likely to be slightly higher risk, i.e. low with medium uncertainty. Recent modelling of the solar inactivation of SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces indicates that the virus could remain infectious for long time periods when light levels are low. Modelling survival time in direct midday sunlight at the latitude of London showed that the time for 90% infectivity reduction is likely to be around 30 minutes in mid-summer

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but extended to 300 minutes in mid-winter. The virucidal effect of UV may be halved on a cloudy day or in the shade. In practice, this means that the risk of outdoor fomite transmission (and reaerosolisation) could be elevated under UK winter conditions (December-March).

Communal toilets represent a potential SARS-CoV-2 exposure point for a number of reasons. Primary amongst these is that they contain many touch surfaces which could be contaminated with infective nasopharyngeal fluids or faecal material and to which many people are exposed in a short time period. Toilets also represent the point at which the amount of infectious virus might be greatest in waste water. Aerosol, faecal/ocular, and faecal/oral transmission risks have been hypothesised based on virus presence and evidence exists based on previous SARS-CoV outbreaks. In addition, toilets may be a contact hub point in the school or college community where transmission can occur between users through face-to-face droplet transmission, in the toilet building itself, and in proximity. Thorough and frequent cleaning is likely to reduce risk. Toilet users, cleaning staff and plumbers may also be exposed to contaminated surfaces or sewage. The level of risk is medium with high uncertainty.

Once wastewater is treated, effluent discharged to receiving waters will contain very little coronavirus (few studies have detected virus in wastewater treatment effluents), and the risk of this being a route of infection is negligible with medium uncertainty.

Recreational use of waters, particularly fresh waters many of which are not designated bathing waters (e.g. rivers, lakes and canals) presents a theoretical risk, but there is no evidence of coronavirus transmission by this route. The level of risk is very low to negligible with medium uncertainty.

Airborne droplet transmission between bathers in close proximity (less than two metres) is likely to be a more significant risk than from waste water sources. Waterborne transmission between bathers beyond two metres is a negligible risk with medium uncertainty.

Risk of infection from mains-supplied drinking water is negligible with low uncertainty. Risks from private water supplies may locally be very low to low with high uncertainty, due primarily to contamination from septic tanks.

The probability of exposure of UK consumers to SARS-CoV-2 via food is very low with high uncertainty. The uncertainty associated with this estimate is high as there is still no evidence to confirm or refute the hypothesis that people can be infected by ingesting SARS-CoV-2 in food.

### **Key variables to be taken into account when developing risk assessments**

Environmental factors that may elevate the likelihood of virus remaining infectious include: colder temperatures (e.g. cold weather, refrigeration); absence of sunlight; high rainfall could either increase risk (triggering combined sewage overflows and speeding up transition time in the sewerage network) or reduce it (increasing dilution); turbidity - the virus may be protected by organic material aggregates in wastewater, though subsequent treatment would probably reduce the risk of its penetration through to effluent; particulate matter in the atmosphere could either increase risk (shielding virus particles from UV light) or decrease it (exposure to heavy metals or other chemicals); and humidity.

Robust systems are in place in the UK's food, water and waste systems to protect staff and the public from harmful pathogens. Any breakdown of these systems caused by equipment shortages, staff shortages or additional pressures may increase the risk levels reported here.

Weather conditions may also affect the behaviour of students, staff and parents and their potential exposure to infection. This could include congregation of people outside school gates, retreat to indoor spaces due to unexpected rain, and the degree to which people adhere to social distancing.

# Ethnicity and COVID-19

*Ethnicity and COVID-19 – endorsed view as of SAGE 40 – 04/06/2020*, paper prepared by the Government Office for Science (GOS) for the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE). It was considered by SAGE at its 40th meeting on COVID-19 on 4 June 2020 and published on Friday 10 July 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethnicity-and-covid-19-preliminary-meeting-for-sage-2-june-2020>

**This paper on ethnicity and COVID-19 is not specifically about BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) staff in schools and colleges, their BAME students or the BAME communities from which they come. It is about the BAME population in general. Yet for many schools with a significant BAME student body, or with BAME staff, knowing how much more at risk they might be compared to the white community and what measures can be taken to protect them, over and above measures to protect students and staff in general, is a significant consideration.**

We therefore reproduce this paper from the Government Office for Science, plus its annex, in its entirety.

## Ethnicity and COVID-19 – endorsed view as of SAGE 40 – 04/06/2020

The below is a summary of a discussion on ethnicity and COVID-19 risk, endorsed by SAGE in its 40th meeting. The papers considered as input are listed in Annex A. It was noted that there was a high level of consistency between the papers.

- Evidence suggests a significantly higher likelihood of being tested, testing positive (i.e. increased chance of catching COVID-19), admission to critical care, and death for ethnic minorities, particularly Black and South Asian groups (high confidence). A significant part of the increased risk of contracting COVID-19 is likely to be due to a complex, interconnected range of factors including socioeconomic deprivation, involvement in high contact/risk occupations, geography, household size and composition, and comorbidities (high confidence).
- For hospitalised patients, even with similar disease severity and duration of symptoms on admission, and after adjustment for deprivation and comorbidities, there is an increased risk of critical care admission for South Asian, Black and Other Ethnic Minority groups. The South Asian group has higher mortality which is partly mediated by pre-existing diabetes (medium confidence). This in-hospital effect is not explained by socioeconomic factors and may be due to biological factors including increased cardiovascular disease risk. BAME patients have tended to be younger and have higher rates of diabetes (type 1 and 2).
- There remains uncertainty around the risk not attributable to known factors such as deprivation and comorbidity, and more work is needed to understand this, particularly:
  - Data linkage and analysis to further understand any links to high risk occupations, household composition and size, faith practices, geography and others.
  - Further research on potential biological differences impacting outcome, for example the role of cardiovascular risk factors, including subsequent/longer-term risks.
- All-cause mortality (COVID-19 and non-COVID deaths) is also elevated in BAME groups. This is the opposite of previous years (2014-18) where rates of death from all causes are higher in the White group.
- The quality and granularity of data available is a significant issue – for example data on exposure risk in individual occupations may not capture differences within occupations. ONS will be able to update analysis with occupation data for mid-June and hold useful information such as the proximity measure.

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Considerable differences also exist within current ethnic categories such as 'South Asian'.

- The importance of social science research, as well as qualitative data and engagement to provide context to quantitative analysis was noted. Work was discussed that highlighted the importance of faith practices, differences in patterns of healthcare usage, willingness of communities to engage with prevention, and other factors such as access to outdoor space. Different messaging, including health messages tailored specifically for different ethnic groups was highlighted as being particularly important.
- The importance of increased engagement with and participation of communities during research was noted.
- It was noted by SAGE that tailored messaging alone cannot overcome all structural obstacles and fundamental sociological factors that may contribute to increased risk. Important issues to understand include health-seeking behaviours within BAME groups; discrimination within occupations and healthcare roles (e.g. differential access to PPE); and trust, social stigmatisation and their behavioural impacts during and after the epidemic (including for social cohesion, inclusion, job seeking, in employment).
- In general, COVID-19 has increased all health inequalities – of which those related to ethnicity are one important example.
- Consideration of any targeted protective measures should take into account (i) likelihood of catching the disease is mostly due to the wider socioeconomic and occupational factors (ii) the higher in hospital morbidity and mortality is more likely to represent a biological increased risk (iii) the impact of any measures, and subsequent impacts on behaviour or other factors, regarding any potential COVID-19 related stigmatisation.

### **Annex A: Summary of papers considered**

#### **CO-CIN - Ethnicity and outcomes from COVID-19: the ISARIC CCP-UK prospective observational cohort study of hospitalised patients (submitted, Lancet)**

- Covers 34,986 hospitalised patients in England, Wales and Scotland (40% inpatient population). All results /analyses are for this population only (i.e. not patients prior to hospital admission). Ethnic minority and white groups had similar disease severity on admission and similar duration of symptoms. Ethnic minorities (recorded South Asian, East Asian, Black, Other Ethnic Minority) were younger and more likely to have diabetes (type 1/type 2) but had fewer other comorbidities (e.g. dementia or chronic heart disease) than the white group.
- Critical care admission was more common in South Asian (OR 1.28; 95% CI 1.09-1.52), Black (1.36; 1.14-1.62) and Other Ethnic Minority (1.29; 1.13-1.47) groups compared to the white group after adjusting for age, sex and location. This was broadly unchanged after adjustment for deprivation and comorbidities. Higher adjusted mortality was seen in the South Asian group compared to the white group (HR 1.19; 95% CI 1.05-1.36), but not in other groups. 18% (95% CI, 9-56%) of excess mortality in South Asians was mediated by pre-existing diabetes.

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### **ONS - 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by ethnic group, England and Wales: 2 March 2020 to 10 April 2020'**

- Comparison of deaths where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate by age, sex and ethnic group using linked census and mortality records. Controlled for geography, level of deprivation in the area, household composition, socio-economic characteristics, and some measures of health.
- After taking account of several socio-demographic characteristics, the risk of a COVID-19-related death for those of Black ethnicity was 1.9 times more likely than for those of White ethnicity. Similarly, males in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic group were 1.8 times more likely to have a COVID-19-related death than White males.
- People of Bangladeshi and Pakistani, Indian, and Mixed ethnicities also had statistically significant raised risk of death involving COVID-19 compared with those of White ethnicity.

### **PHE – COVID-19 Review of Disparities in Risks and Outcomes**

- Findings are based on surveillance data available to PHE to mid-May including linkage to health data sets. Analyses account for age, sex, deprivation but not occupation or comorbidities (inc. obesity).
- People from Black ethnic groups were most likely to be diagnosed. Death rates from COVID-19 were highest among people of Black and Asian ethnic groups. This is the opposite of what is seen in previous years, when the mortality rates were lower in Asian and Black ethnic groups than White ethnic groups.
- An analysis of survival among confirmed COVID-19 cases and using more detailed ethnic groups, shows that after accounting for the effect of sex, age, deprivation and region, people of Bangladeshi ethnicity had around twice the risk of death than people of White British ethnicity. People of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Caribbean and Other Black ethnicity had between 10 and 50% higher risk of death when compared to White British.

### **Niedzwiedz et al. - Ethnic and socioeconomic differences in SARS-CoV-2 infection: prospective cohort study using UK Biobank**

- Data from 392,116 people who took part in UK Biobank were linked to PHE test results. Analysis investigated if ethnicity and socioeconomic position were associated with having a positive test. Adjustment was made for covariates including age, sex, social variables, behavioural risk factors and baseline health.
- Black and south Asian groups were more likely to test positive (RR 3.35 (95% CI 2.48–4.53) and RR 2.42 (95% CI 1.75–3.36) respectively), with Pakistani ethnicity at highest risk within the south Asian group (RR 3.24 (95% CI 1.73–6.07)). These ethnic groups were more likely to be hospital cases compared to the white British. Adjustment for baseline health and behavioural risk factors led to little change, with only modest attenuation when accounting for socioeconomic variables.

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**Willamson et al. - OpenSAFELY: factors associated with COVID-19-related hospital death in the linked electronic health records of 17 million adult NHS patients.**

- Electronic health care records of 17.4m people linked to patient-level data were analysed (1st Feb-25th April 2020) to investigate death in hospital among people with confirmed COVID-19. An age/sex adjusted model was used as well as multiple adjustment for wider co-variables selected prospectively based on clinical interest (inc. BMI, deprivation).
- Compared to people with ethnicity recorded as white, black people were at higher risk of death, with only partial attenuation in hazard ratios from the fully adjusted model (age-sex adjusted HR 2.17 95% CI 1.84-2.57; fully adjusted HR 1.71 95% CI 1.44-2.02); with similar findings for Asian people (age-sex adjusted HR 1.95 95% CI 1.73-2.18; fully adjusted HR 1.62 95% CI 1.43-1.82).

**Alaa et al. – Ethnicity and Outcomes of COVID-19 Patients in England**

- Five data sets were linked covering 72,358 COVID-19 patients with ethnicity information and analysed to investigate relationship between ethnic group (White, Asian, Black, and Other Ethnic Background) and outcome to April 20th 2020.
- Compared to the overall population, individuals from a BAME background were more likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19, more likely to be admitted to hospital and intensive care, and more likely to die. Findings suggest that increased prevalence of COVID-19 amongst individuals from a BAME background is at least partially explained by the geographical distribution of COVID in England, deprivation and occupational exposure. The findings also suggest that BAME patients, and particularly those with an Asian background, are at an elevated risk of mortality.

## Dave Hill CBE

**W**e report with regret the death of Dave Hill CBE, Director of Children’s Services at Surrey County Council, at the age of 61. Mr. Hill was president of the Association of Directors of Children’s Services in 2015-16 and took an active part in ADCS affairs before and after this. He gave evidence as an expert witness to the Education Select Committee of the House of Commons. He was awarded the CBE for services to children’s social care in 2018.

Mr Hill attended drama school in the 1970s and became a professional actor. He was offered a role in a West End musical, but as much as the bright lights of the entertainment business appealed to him he had found a greater passion in working with children.

Mr Hill had an unusually long career as a director of children’s services which spanned 15 years and four local authorities, all in the South East of England from where he came. Like most DCSs these days he started his career in social work, working in a children’s home in the London Borough of Southwark from 1977. He trained as a social worker between 1981 and 1983, before working across five different London boroughs.

Mr Hill was assistant director of children’s services at Tower Hamlets council from 2000 to 2005. The man who was Director of Social Services in the borough, Ian Wilson, said: “The transformation of Tower Hamlets children’s social care services from arguably the worst in the country to arguably the best, was led by Dave and delivered by the extraordinary team that he attracted to the borough. He understood, better than anyone I ever met, what eye-wateringly good services looked like. He unflinchingly, and good heartedly pursued that standard wherever he went.”

Mr Hill then served as Director of Children’s Services at the small London Borough of Merton from 2005 to 2008 and at the larger London Borough of Croydon from 2008 to 2010. In 2010 he made the big jump to DCS at Essex, one of the biggest counties of England, where he served for eight years. He brought Essex from an ‘inadequate’ Ofsted grade to the brink of an ‘outstanding’ in 2019, achieved the year after he left. It was while he was DCS at Essex that he played an increasingly national role. He was appointed by the Department for Education as a commissioner supporting improvement in Norfolk and Birmingham. Birmingham was a real challenge. It had been a poorly performing authority in children’s services for a decade. Ministers and officials despaired of turning the authority round, and part of the process of trying was the creation of the Birmingham Children’s Trust to run children’s services in the city. With help from Dave Hill, it finally began to improve and moved from its longstanding ‘inadequate’ status to ‘requires improvement’.

Yet his greatest challenge was in turning around another big English county, Surrey, which he joined in 2018. Surrey was one of the great counties of England and had had an excellent education department for decades. Although a permanently Conservative authority it had a reputation for innovation. It’s chairman of the education committee in the 1930s was the Labour politician and former teacher James Chuter Ede, who was R A Butler’s junior education minister during the war-time coalition that created the Education Act 1944. Ede remained an Alderman on Tory Surrey throughout this time, standing down when he became Home Secretary after the war. Surrey was one of the first authorities to go comprehensive, deciding to do so in 1945 although stopped from doing so then by the Labour government of 1944 that thought grammar schools were egalitarian. Surrey regularly produced outstanding results in its schools.

Pretty well the opposite was the case in its social services department, which was always the poor relation and was as under funded as education was generously funded. When the Children Act 2004 required the merging of children’s social services and education, Surrey tried to merge the whole of social services with education. The result was a disaster, and although this decision was reversed the authority was still in trouble when Dave Hill arrived. As Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Culture at Surrey County Council he was responsible for the rapid and wholesale improvement in Children’s Services in the County, which had had two ‘inadequate’ inspections from Ofsted before he arrived.

Dave Hill, who died on 24 June, is survived by his wife Jo and daughters Laurel and Lydia.

# The Swarm

By Professor Jan Willem de Graaf

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

**S**ometimes religion and science are mentioned in one breath; both provide an explanatory framework for phenomena like uncertainty, chance or fate. In the meantime, science, or rather technology, has become a world religion. It's a world religion, because technology connects: religion comes from the Latin "Relegere" (literally re-assemble, connect).

But the great advantage of science over religion - in principle science is value-free - also seems to be its greatest weakness. Technology, supported by constantly new (or at least refreshed) scientific insights, has conquered the world, increased the scale enormously and forged one comprehensive humanity from various tribes, peoples and religions. Digital and data technology are now turning individuals into one human swarm, like a bee swarm colonizing the entire planet, ruthlessly in a worth-free (worthless) gesture. What's up with that?

Inventions are no longer the work of one woman, such as the mathematician Ada Lovelace (1815-1852), who designed the very first computer program for an analytical machine, which still had to be built, or one man, such as the philosopher and mathematician Charles Babbage (1791-1871) who invented the first programmable calculator on which Lady Lovelace's programmed punched cards could run. Where history is often read as the succession of mainly great men and a single big woman, contemporary inventions are increasingly emerging results of whole teams, who are connected (digitally) by knowledge platforms to work on new ideas and solutions. Plan-do-check-act instead of individual brilliance, semantic web engineering instead of individual mastery.

Brilliant masters - individuals pur sang like Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage - are outdated. Modern knowledge systems, such as design thinking (human centred design), PDCA system, the semantic web and knowledge forum are designed to exploit the wisdom of the crowd. Mechanical leadership from command and control is also outdated. Modern leadership, on the other hand, focuses on transformation, from the individual level to the system as a whole - the entire "beehive" - to which each individual contributes and is subordinate.

So technology has connected us worldwide. But from a greater distance, there is a huge difference between a humanity that fears a God (ancient religion) and a humanity that thinks itself to be a deity (science / technology). This goes beyond the difference between being driven by ideology (conservative - Christian - political parties) and being driven by neoliberal / free market-oriented thinking. In practice, there is no difference, they amount to the same thing: value-free future technology. The ancient religions sought God or gods and therefore had direction. Science operates as a swarm (modern humanity): the essence is in the swarm, which is held together rationally, but is not in itself rationally. After all we destroy our environment/planet, "we dance into the fire", or in Bowie terms, "we're putting out the fire with gasoline"!

Watching swarms means meeting contradictions: extremely strong coordination (no collisions, the swarm as a whole behaves as one individual) and at the same time arbitrariness and directionlessness. In the Dutch online magazine *de Correspondent* I read that the Corona crisis initially offered a great opportunity to replace a brutal economic principle with a more sustainable and fairer variant. But instead, with the help of government funds around the world, the environmentally damaging economic engine has been further fuelled and we are already at a "peak" in environmental pollution emissions. The swarm is ruled by economy. Science is value-free. Economy is value-less, which means "worthless". As an atheist, I find it hard to write this down, but perhaps religion is more promising than science, in helping to give humans a more sustainable place in the ecology of the planet ...

## Exams and calculated grades

*Getting the Grades They've Earned. COVID-19: The cancellation of exams and 'calculated' grades*, House of Commons Education Select Committee, First Report of Session 2019–21. Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report. HC 617. Published on 11 July 2020 by the Stationery Office Limited.  
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1834/documents/17976/default/>

**T**he report by the House of Commons Education Select Committee examined the fairness, transparency and accessibility of the 2020 exam arrangements. The Committee considered arrangements for GCSEs and A-levels, as well as vocational and technical qualifications. The report pointed out that while Ofqual in particular should be commended for stepping up to the immense challenge of devising the exceptional arrangements, the Committee had been concerned that the system described by Ofqual as the “fairest possible in the circumstances” could be unfair for groups including disadvantaged pupils, BAME pupils, children looked after, and pupils with SEND.

The Committee had welcomed Ofqual’s commitment to publish a full programme of evaluation in the autumn, but, until it did so, there will be no answers about the fairness of the system. The report stressed that Ofqual’s evaluation must include comprehensive data on attainment, by characteristics including gender, ethnicity, SEND, children looked after, and FSM eligibility, to find out whether there were statistically significant differences between attainment in 2020 compared with previous years.

The report concluded that, given the potential risks of bias in calculated grades, standardisation would be a crucial part of ensuring fairness. However, the Committee voiced its extreme concern that Ofqual’s standardisation model had not included any mechanism to identify whether groups such as BAME pupils, FSM eligible pupils, children looked after, and pupils with SEND had been systematically disadvantaged by calculated grades, and if that was the case, Ofqual would need to be completely transparent about its standardisation model and publish the model immediately to allow time for scrutiny.

The Committee also asked Ofqual to publish an explanatory memorandum on decisions and assumptions that had been made during the model’s development, which should include how it had ensured fairness for schools without three years of historic data, and for settings with small, variable cohorts.

The Committee said that Ofqual would also need to collect and publish anonymised data at the conclusion of the appeals process on where it had received appeals from, including, as a minimum, type of school attended, region, gender, ethnicity, SEND status, children looked after (including children supported by virtual schools), and FSM eligibility. The Committee added that as part of its evaluation Ofqual must publish comprehensive data on vocational and technical qualifications, by characteristics including gender, ethnicity, SEND, children looked after, and FSM eligibility, to provide full transparency on whether there were statistically significant differences between attainment in 2020, compared with previous years.

The report pointed out that where calculated grades had been used to award vocational and technical qualifications in 2020, Ofqual must identify whether the evidence was that groups such as BAME pupils, FSM eligible pupils, children looked after, and pupils with SEND had been systematically disadvantaged by calculated grades, and if that was the case, Ofqual’s standardisation model must adjust the grades of the pupils affected upwards.

### Extremely concerned

The Committee said it was extremely concerned that pupils would require evidence of bias or discrimination to raise a complaint about their grades, even though it would be unrealistic and unfair to put the onus on pupils to have, or to be able to gather, evidence of bias or discrimination. It added that such a system would also favour more affluent pupils and families with resources and knowledge of the system. The Committee called on Ofqual to urgently publish the evidence thresholds for proving bias or

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discrimination, and set out what evidence would be required, including example case studies, which must be communicated to parents and pupils in advance of results day.

Where pupils with SEND, or their families, had concerns about their grade, the Committee insisted that they must be allowed to see the evidence, such as past work or mock exams, that had been used by teachers to arrive at their calculated grade. The Committee pointed out that, if appropriate access arrangements were not in place for the work used, or if their school did not use evidence from SEND specialists if that was appropriate, the pupil must be allowed to appeal on the basis of malpractice or maladministration.

The report noted that both Ofqual and the National Careers Service would be offering helplines to provide support and advice on and after results day. However, the Committee warned that two helplines must not mean a two-tier system, as it would be imperative that whichever number pupils rang, they would be provided with the same gold-standard, professional advice.

The Committee called on Ofqual to ensure that advice and support would be easily accessible for all pupils who were unhappy with their grades, and both of the helplines provided by Ofqual and the National Careers Service must be freephone lines, which were staffed by dedicated professionals who had the training to provide sound and impartial step-by-step advice and support on appeals.

The report stressed that Ofqual must issue guidance to schools and colleges about the options available for pupils unhappy with their results, and it added that letters to pupils should be sent out by schools and colleges, to ensure that they were aware of their options, including the standard of evidence required to bring an appeal on the basis of bias or discrimination. The Committee said that schools and colleges should communicate to pupils and families which staff member would be their point of contact for discussions about the next steps and fairness and accessibility must be the guiding principles of an autumn exam series.

### **Directing Ofsted**

Having directed Ofqual to provide pupils with “an opportunity to sit an exam at the earliest reasonable opportunity”, the Committee said that the Department must not now wash its hands of further responsibility. The report pointed out that the Department must provide guidance for schools and colleges, outlining minimum requirements for provision of teaching support for pupils opting for an autumn exam. It added that the Department must support schools and colleges to manage the logistics of the series, by providing concrete solutions on how the burden of an additional series could be minimised.

The report noted that at 30 June 2020, Ofqual had merely stated it would “confirm the exact timing of the exams in due course”. However, given the potential disruption for schools and colleges, and the need for pupils and teachers to know when their exams would take place, the Committee said that Ofqual’s statement had not been good enough. It called on Ofqual to urgently publish dates for the autumn exam series and end uncertainty for pupils, teachers, schools and colleges.

The Committee warned that modifications to assessments would lead to an erosion of standards, and the 2021 cohort of exam-takers could be disadvantaged by a perception that their exams had not been as rigorous as those that had been taken by other cohorts. The Committee said it would support a short delay for exams in summer 2021 as it would be preferable to modifications to exam content. But the Committee stressed that any delay must be a matter of weeks, not months, and Ofqual must publish details of the 2021 exam series as soon as possible, and before the end of the summer term.

The report pointed out that the pandemic’s impact on learning loss would not stop when pupils turned 16, and post-16 learners, whether they were resitting key English and Maths GCSEs, or preparing to sit final exams before entering higher education or the workplace, deserved proper catch-up support. The Committee therefore insisted that the Government must extend catch-up funding to include disadvantaged post-16 pupils, which should be done by doubling the disadvantage element in the 16–19 funding formula for pupils in Year 12, for at least the next year. The Committee added that any post-16 pupils attending Alternative Provision and Pupil Referral Units, and those training for basic skills, must also be eligible for catch-up funding.

# FE needs “revolutionary change”

*Revolutionary Forces: Shaping the Post-16 White Paper*, edited by Julia Wright, published by NCFE and Campaign for Learning (CfL), on Monday 6 July, 2020. <https://www.ncfe.org.uk/>

**F**urther education is facing revolutionary forces currently impacting the economy, labour market and post-16 education, following on from the COVID-19 pandemic, and two organisations with a long history in the sector have just produced a report that calls for a “revolutionary change” in FE to meet the challenges.

In *Revolutionary Forces: Shaping the Post-16 White Paper*, NCFE and Campaign for Learning (CfL) argue for a revolutionary post-16 White Paper to address these changing circumstances. The report claims that Government recommendations for further education need to be sufficiently flexible to meet the revolutionary changes bearing down on the UK.

Anticipating a comprehensive document which will cover all aspects of post-16 education, including further and higher education, apprenticeships and adult and community learning, the discussion paper from NCFE and CfL features a collection of articles penned by experts from the FE sector, as well as labour market economics, employment and mental health. The authors explore some of the key challenges facing the nation throughout the 2020s which the DfE needs to take into consideration when writing their recommendations. In the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is easy to forget that there were wider revolutionary forces at work before the virus outbreak. The virus has simply brought issues such as Brexit, automation, longer working lives, and poor UK productivity into even sharper focus. The FE sector needs the revolutionary post-16 white paper that has been promised now more than ever.

Michael Lemin, senior policy specialist at NCFE, in a final chapter summing up the report, argues for 13 key messages that an FE White Paper would have to address. These are:

1. The changing structure of the UK economy.
2. Lower demand for unskilled labour.
3. No over supply of unskilled labour.
4. Managing youth unemployment when there are more 16-24 year-olds.
5. An earlier and different adult training and retraining revolution.
6. Atypical employment, low pay and more ‘gig’ jobs.
7. Lower employer investment in training.
8. Reviewing the Apprenticeship Levy in England.
9. Lower adult participation in skills.
10. Combined efforts of colleges and universities.
11. A mental health crisis.
12. Making learning from home more sustainable.
13. Further Education: helpful but not squeezed.

Mr Lemin, and this paper, argues that further education can be helpful to the government, in meeting the short-term challenges caused by the pandemic, and longer-term recovery in growth and employment. But, the FE sector has been the poor relation in funding compared to schools and universities. An FE White Paper will be judged by the degree to which this continues to be the case or whether FE will at last be properly funded.

Reacting to the paper, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, Gillian Keegan MP, commented: “We welcome the findings of *Revolutionary Forces* as we develop these important reforms. We are absolutely committed to levelling up opportunity across the country, and will continue to do all we can to make sure no-one is left behind as a result of coronavirus.” Shadow Minister for Apprentices and Lifelong Learning, Toby Perkins MP, added: “This is a crucial time for the Further Education sector. It is vital we come together and act now to ensure its recovery and stability for years to come.”

## Consultations published last week

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

## Government advice on COVID-19

**T**here was a significant decrease in the number of advice documents and other information about young people made available to schools and other education settings on COVID-19 last week, with 25 communications to educational settings or about education and young people, compared to 42 the week before. Of these 15 were issued by the Government of the United Kingdom, almost entirely concerned with England, or UK government institutions like SAGE (compared to 29 last week). Eight documents were published by the Scottish government (compared to six the week before), none by the Welsh government (five the week before) and two by the Northern Ireland Executive (two the week before).

The period covered by this section is 6 to 12 July 2020.

### *Guidance for Parents and Carers of Children Attending Out-of-school Settings During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak*

**Date:** Friday 10 July 2020

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** Guidance for parents and carers of children attending community activities, holiday or after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings. This guidance is for parents and carers and covers changes to after-school clubs, holiday clubs, tuition, community activities and other out-of-school settings for children and young people over the age of 5 during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This is updated guidance of advice first published on 1 July. The update makes clear that children will be able to attend all types of dance classes. Also, that clubs and activities for children will only be able to operate in those premises legally able to open.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm\\_source=bbe9b699-d375-41f2-ba77-609cc78e7026&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_source=bbe9b699-d375-41f2-ba77-609cc78e7026&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### *Protective Measures for Holiday or After-school Clubs and Other Out-of-school Settings for Children During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak*

**Date:** Friday 10 July 2020

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** Protective measures for providers of community activities, holiday or after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings offering provision to children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Providers of out-of-school and holiday activities operate from a range of premises including schools and other regulated educational institutions, by arrangement with the proprietors of those institutions, and other community premises such as village halls, by arrangement with the owners or managers of those premises. The Department for Education wants to ensure, with these protective measures, that all providers are able to open in:

- Their own premises.
- Education premises, such as schools or colleges (where providers would be using them outside of school hours, or when closed over school holiday periods).
- Community-facing premises including village halls, community centres and places of worship.

This is updated guidance to that first published on 1 July. This updates content on considering group sizes

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*(Continued from page 44.)*

(including the position for early years settings which provide care for both those under and over the age of 5). Added information on the opening of indoor sports facilities, and when providers will be able to use these venues. The DfE also made clear that providers should only be operating in premises legally able to open. Added links to further relevant guidance providers may need to have regard to.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm\\_source=b1c7da0e-8daf-41da-b0df-2cd8217d9a4a&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_source=b1c7da0e-8daf-41da-b0df-2cd8217d9a4a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### ***What Parents and Carers Need to Know About Early Years Providers, Schools and Colleges During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak***

**Date:** Friday 10 July 2020

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** Information for parents and carers about the opening of early years providers, schools and colleges, safety in schools, attendance, transport, school meals and exams. Information for parents and carers of children at:

- Registered childcare providers (including nurseries and childminders).
- Primary and secondary schools (including independent schools, maintained schools, academy trusts, free schools and special schools).
- Colleges (for the purposes of this guidance 'colleges' means publicly funded sixth form and further education colleges, independent training providers and special post-16 institutions).

This guidance is an update of previously published guidance. It updates the transport section in the guidance for this summer term – 'What parents and carers need to know about nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges until August 2020'. These changes ensure consistency with guidance from the Department for Transport.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm\\_source=4dfe1546-6616-44d8-9dbf-70189fd00213&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_source=4dfe1546-6616-44d8-9dbf-70189fd00213&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### ***School Funding: Exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19)***

**Date:** Friday 10 July 2020

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** Guidance on funding available to schools to support them with costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19). This guidance gives details on additional funding available to schools to cover costs related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. It covers the period up to the end of the 2019 to 2020 summer term.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools?utm\\_source=1a4ea74d-f8d4-408d-b045-939432e729d7&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools?utm_source=1a4ea74d-f8d4-408d-b045-939432e729d7&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### ***Coronavirus (COVID-19): Reducing Burdens on Education and Care Settings***

**Date:** Friday 10 July 2020

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** List of data collections, services or requests which will be cancelled, paused or will continue. This is

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*(Continued from page 45.)*

an update to previously published guidance. It has moved 'ITT Trainee Number Census' from deferred collections and services to data collections which will continue. Schools and local authorities should continue to check this document which will be updated as soon as further decisions are made.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reducing-burdens-on-educational-and-care-settings?utm\\_source=581e4d49-e4fa-4c2d-acc0-600ac7fb82a5&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reducing-burdens-on-educational-and-care-settings?utm_source=581e4d49-e4fa-4c2d-acc0-600ac7fb82a5&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

***Provision of Summer Schools to Help Children with their Learning Impacted by COVID-19***

**Date:** Friday 10 July 2020

**Source:** Department of Education (Northern Ireland)

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** Northern Ireland

**Details:** Additional support measures for children during summer 2020 and beyond.

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/provision-summer-schools-help-children-their-learning-impacted-by-covid-19>

***Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Colleges***

**Date:** Thursday 9 July 2020

**Source:** Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** Scotland

**Details:** Guidance for universities in helping to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-colleges/>

***Coronavirus (COVID-19): Statement by the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science – 9 June 2020***

**Date:** Thursday 9 July 2020

**Source:** Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate

**Document type:** Parliamentary statement

**Geographical coverage:** Scotland

**Details:** Statement to Parliament given by the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science Richard Lochhead: 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): Supporting Further and Higher Education'. The date in the title of this statement is given as 9 June 2020. This is a mistake, as the statement was given on 9 July 2020.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-minister-further-education-higher-education-science-9-june-2020/>

***Coronavirus (COVID-19): Further and Higher Education Sustainability Plan***

**Date:** Thursday 9 July 2020

**Source:** Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate

**Document type:** Strategy plan

**Geographical coverage:** Scotland

**Details:** This plan provides a summary of the actions taken and those to be implemented, to help address the immediate issues that colleges and universities in Scotland are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-further-higher-education-sustainability-plan/>

***Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues Minutes: 7 July 2020***

**Date:** Thursday 9 July 2020

**Source:** Scottish Government Learning Directorate

**Document type:** Minutes

*(Continued on page 47.)*

*(Continued from page 46.)*

**Geographical coverage:** Scotland

**Details:** Minutes from the second meeting of the COVID-19 Advisory Group held on Tuesday 7 July 2020. The sub-group discussed the likely publication of their advice on physical distancing and school transport. It also considered further its commission relating to school transport.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advisory-sub-group-on-education-and-childrens-issues-minutes-7-july-2020/>

### ***Actions for FE Colleges and Providers During the Coronavirus Outbreak***

**Date:** Wednesday 8 July 2020

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** Guidance for further education (FE) providers on maintaining education and skills training, changes to funding arrangements, data collections and assessment.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision?utm\\_source=f5ab861b-2eb5-48e4-b753-8b04f0cd7408&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision?utm_source=f5ab861b-2eb5-48e4-b753-8b04f0cd7408&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### ***Local Lockdowns: Guidance for Education and Childcare Settings***

**Date:** Wednesday 8 July 2020

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** What schools, colleges, nurseries, childminders, early years and other educational settings need to do if there's a local lockdown during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This guidance is for all education and childcare settings in the Leicester area including:

- all schools and colleges
- early years and childcare settings
- further education providers
- higher education providers
- local authorities

It may also be useful for:

- parents and carers
- students and young people

The DfE will update this guidance as it has further information available.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-lockdowns-guidance-for-education-and-childcare-settings?utm\\_source=7b0066a5-86bc-4497-a073-e899bec62b38&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-lockdowns-guidance-for-education-and-childcare-settings?utm_source=7b0066a5-86bc-4497-a073-e899bec62b38&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### ***COVID-19 Education Recovery Group Minutes: 6 July 2020***

**Date:** Wednesday 8 July 2020

**Source:** Scottish Government

**Document type:** Minutes

**Geographical coverage:** Scotland

**Details:** Minutes and papers from 6 July 2020 meeting of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-education-recovery-group-minutes-06-july-2020/>

### ***Attendance in Education and Early Years Settings During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak: 23 March to July 2020***

**Date:** Tuesday 7 July 2020

*(Continued on page 48.)*

*(Continued from page 47.)*

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** A summary of attendance in education settings since Monday 23 March and early years settings since Thursday 16 April. This is original guidance.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak-23-march-to-1-july-2020?utm\\_source=042176e0-0f6a-49f9-86ef-a942e506eb14&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak-23-march-to-1-july-2020?utm_source=042176e0-0f6a-49f9-86ef-a942e506eb14&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### ***Requirements for the Calculation of Results in Summer 2020***

**Date:** Tuesday 7 July 2020

**Source:** Ofqual

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** Requirements and guidance to exam boards in relation to the calculation of results to be issued for general qualifications in summer 2020. Condition GQCov3.2(a)(i) allows Ofqual to specify requirements and guidance in relation to the calculation of results to be issued for GQ Qualifications in summer 2020. This document, together with the annexes to it, sets out Ofqual's requirements for the purposes of Condition GQCov3.2(a)(i). An awarding organisation must comply with these requirements in calculating each result for a GQ Qualification that it issues under Condition GQCov3.1. This is original guidance.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/requirements-for-the-calculation-of-results-in-summer-2020?utm\\_source=a940c110-b426-4fae-8eac-0c95e080419e&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/requirements-for-the-calculation-of-results-in-summer-2020?utm_source=a940c110-b426-4fae-8eac-0c95e080419e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### ***Managing School Premises During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak***

**Date:** Tuesday 7 July 2020

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** Guidance for schools and other educational settings on managing premises during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This is an update on previously issued guidance. It includes minor amends to the ventilation and fire safety sections.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-school-premises-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak?utm\\_source=e80531df-190f-4b23-b812-5b0846a10658&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-school-premises-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak?utm_source=e80531df-190f-4b23-b812-5b0846a10658&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

### ***Awarding Qualifications in Summer 2020***

**Date:** Thursday 2 July 2020

**Source:** Ofqual

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** These 12 files give information for schools, students and parents on how GCSE, AS, A level, vocational and technical qualifications will be graded and awarded in summer 2020. This is an update of previously published guidance that indicates summer 2020 grades for GCSE, AS and A level, Extended Project Qualification and Advanced Extension Award in maths: Guidance for teachers, students, parents and carers document updated to reflect autumn 2020 consultation decision outcomes and 2021 exam series consultation proposals

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020?utm\\_source=d631d694-40d4-45b0-924e-620d1581dcf7&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020?utm_source=d631d694-40d4-45b0-924e-620d1581dcf7&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

*(Continued on page 49.)*



*(Continued from page 48.)*

***Majority of Children No Longer Need to Shield***

**Date:** Monday 6 July 2020

**Source:** Department of Health and Social Care

**Document type:** Press release

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** The majority of children currently considered extremely clinical vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19) will be able to be removed from the shielded patient list.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/majority-of-children-no-longer-need-to-shield?utm\\_source=48c78ca9-42ee-4c8d-9023-40ed76abc650&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/majority-of-children-no-longer-need-to-shield?utm_source=48c78ca9-42ee-4c8d-9023-40ed76abc650&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

***Changes to the Law on Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments and Plans Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19)***

**Date:** Monday 6 July 2020

**Source:** Department for Education

**Document type:** Guidance

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Details:** Guidance on temporary changes to special educational needs and disability legislation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This guidance is an update to reflect announcement on 2 July that, unless the evidence changes, the DfE will not be issuing further national notices to modify section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus?utm\\_source=ec51ee6a-d61e-43b1-a50a-f2e1442484a4&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus?utm_source=ec51ee6a-d61e-43b1-a50a-f2e1442484a4&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

## Policy papers published over the last week

### ***School Buildings and Capital Funding***

**Authors:** Robert Long and Shadi Danechi

**Source:** House of Commons Library

**Document type:** Commons Research Briefing

**Published:** Friday 10 July, 2020

**Reference:** CBP-07375

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Description:** This paper provides information on the levels of funding available for capital projects in English schools, as well as on the streams of funding schools may access. The Priority School Building Programme, implemented by the Coalition Government as a replacement for the previous Building Schools for the Future programme, is discussed in a separate section. The briefing includes an overview of the June 2020 announcements of a '10-year, multi-wave, rebuilding programme' for schools. Details of the funding, and the projects that will be supported, are yet to be announced. The paper also includes an overview of the National Audit Office report on capital funding in schools, published in February 2017.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7375/>

### ***Funding of Health Care Students in England***

**Authors:** Paul Bolton and Susan Hubble

**Source:** House of Commons Library

**Document type:** House of Commons Research Briefing

**Published:** Wednesday 8 July, 2020

**Reference:** CBP 8655

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Description:** This House of Commons briefing paper outlines the current funding system for: healthcare students, medical and dentistry students and paramedics and discusses the impact of the 2017 reforms on entrants to healthcare degrees. It also outlines new funding arrangements for nursing, midwifery, healthcare students and paramedics from September 2020.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8655/>

### ***Getting the Grades They've Earned: COVID-19 - The cancellation of exams and 'calculated' grades***

**Authors:** -

**Source:** House of Commons Education Select Committee

**Document type:** Select Committee Report

**Published:** Saturday 11 July, 2020

**Reference:** HC 617

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Description:** The Education Select Committee's First Report of Session 2019/21.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1834/documents/17976/default/>

### ***Revolutionary Forces: Shaping the Post-16 White Paper***

**Author:** -

**Source:** NCFE and Campaign for Learning (CfL)

**Document type:** Policy report

**Published:** Monday 6 July, 2020

**Reference:** -

*(Continued on page 51.)*

*(Continued from page 50.)*

**Geographical coverage:** England

**Description:** Further education is facing revolutionary forces currently impacting the economy, labour market and post-16 education, following on from the COVID-19 pandemic, and two organisations with a long history in the sector have just produced a report that calls for a “revolutionary change” in FE to meet the challenges.

<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/>

## Education statistics

**E**very week the Government publishes a wide range of statistics about every aspect of its many activities. We list here those reports that are relevant to 14 to 19 education. This will cover official statistics, national statistics, statistical data sets, transparency data and guidance about statistics. Information will be taken from the Department for Education, the devolved administrations, other Government departments and Government agencies involved in education.

In the table that follows, the title of the document is given in red, followed by the date of publication, the issuing authority, the classification of information covered and, where there is one, a reference code. On the next line is a brief description of the data, followed by a web link to the statistics. The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced the number of statistical reports published in recent weeks as, with schools closed, not all statistics can be compiled.

### ***Further Education and Skills Inspections and Outcomes as at 29 February 2020***

10 July 2020                                      Ofsted                                      Official statistics

These files give data for inspections and outcomes as at 29 February 2020 including data for inspections carried out between 1 September 2019 and 29 February 2020. These inspections of further education and skills in England statistics are made up of:

- main findings
- tables, charts and individual provider-level data
- quality and methodology report
- pre-release access list

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-29-february-2020>

### ***Further Education and Skills Inspections and Outcomes: Management information from September 2019 to August 2020***

10 July 2020                                      Ofsted                                      Statistical data set

These 30 files give management information showing in-year and most recent inspection outcomes.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information-from-september-2019-to-august-2020>

### ***State-funded School Inspections and Outcomes: Management information***

7 July 2020                                      Ofsted                                      Statistical data set

These statistics give management information aggregated and published monthly, and a one-off publication of inspections and outcomes from 2005 to 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsted-school-inspections-outcomes>

### ***Attendance in Education and Early Years Settings During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak: 23 March to 2 July 2020***

7 July 2020                                      DfE                                      Official statistics

These statistics give a summary of attendance in education settings since Monday 23 March and early years settings since Thursday 16 April. All education settings were closed except for vulnerable children and the children of key workers due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak from Friday 20 March 2020. From 1 June, the government asked schools to welcome back children in nursery, reception and years 1 and 6, alongside children of critical workers and vulnerable children. From 15 June, secondary schools,

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sixth form and further education colleges were asked to begin providing face-to-face support to students in year 10 and 12 to supplement their learning from home, alongside full time provision for students from priority groups. The data on Explore education statistics shows attendance in education settings since Monday 23 March and in early years settings since Thursday 16 April. The summary explains the responses for a set time frame. The data is collected from a daily education settings survey and a weekly local authority early years survey.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak-23-march-to-1-july-2020>

## **Abbreviations**

DfE	Department for Education
DfE(NI)	Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland)
DoH(NI)	Department of Health (Northern Ireland)
DfI(NI)	Department for Infrastructure (Northern Ireland)
DoE(NI)	Department of Education (Northern Ireland)
DoJ(NI)	Department of Justice (Northern Ireland)
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
NIE	Northern Ireland Executive
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SGALSD	Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate
SGLD	Scottish Government Learning Directorate
SLC	Student Loans Company
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
STA	Standards and Testing Agency
SW	StatsWales
WG	Welsh Government

## Statutory instruments issued last week

### ***The Secure Training Centre (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Rules 2020***

**Year and number:** 2020/664

**Enabling power:** Prison Act 1952, s. 47 (1).

**Issued:** 06.07.2020.

**Sifted:** -.

**Made:** 25.06.2020.

**Laid:** 01.07.2020.

**Coming into force:** 02.07.2020.

**Effect:** S.I. 1998/472 temporarily modified.

**Geographical coverage:** England and Wales.

**Classification:** General.

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

**ISBN:** 9780348209204.

**Details:** These Rules temporarily modify the Secure Training Centre Rules 1998 (S.I. 1998/472) (“the STC Rules”). The modifications are in response to the effect of the coronavirus pandemic in Secure Training Centres and apply during a transmission control period.

Rule 1 provides that the modifications made by these Rules cease to have effect on 25th March 2022.

Rule 2(2) inserts new definitions into the STC Rules including defining a “transmission control period”.

Rule 2(3) modifies rule 11 of the STC Rules to insert a rule 11(1A) which allows the Secretary of State to suspend a trainee’s statutory entitlement to visitors where necessary as a result of effects arising from the coronavirus.

Rules 2(4) and (5) modify rules 27 and 28 of the STC Rules to provide greater flexibility to comply with the requirements of these rules during a transmission control period.

A full impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no, or no significant, impact on the private, voluntary or public sectors is foreseen.

### ***The Registration of Independent Schools (Prescribed Person) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2020***

**Year and number:** 2020/205

**Enabling power:** Education (Scotland) Act 1980, ss. 98A (6), 133 (2D) (b).

**Issued:** 09.07.2020.

**Made:** 03.07.2020.

**Laid before the Scottish Parliament:** -.

**Coming into force:** In accord. with reg. 1.

**Effect:** SSI. 2017/259 amended.

**Geographical coverage:** Scotland.

**Classification:** General. Supersedes draft SSI (ISBN 9780111045367) issued 22.05.2020.

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

**ISBN:** 9780111045817.

**Detail:** These Regulations amend regulation 3 of the Registration of Independent Schools (Prescribed Person) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 to provide that the requirement for a person employed as a teacher by an independent school on or before 1 October 2017 to register with the General Teaching Council for

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Scotland will take effect from 1 June 2021. The change made by these Regulations is necessary as a result of disruption caused by coronavirus (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)).

***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (correction slip)***

**Year and number:** 2020/544 Correction slip

**Correction slip to** (ISBN 9780111196434) dated June 2020.

**Price of print and electronic editions:** Free

***The Education (Recognised Bodies) (England) Order 2020 (correction slip)***

**Year and number:** 2020/573 Correction slip

**Correction slip to** (ISBN 9780111196694) dated June 2020.

**Price of print and electronic editions:** Free

***The School Teachers' Incentive Payments (England) (Amendment) Order 2020***

**Year and number:** 2020/690

**Enabling power:** Education Act 2002, s. 123 (4) (a).

**Issued:** 10.07.2020.

**Sifted:** -.

**Made:** 04.07.2020.

**Laid:** 07.07.2020.

**Coming into force:** 01.09.2020.

**Effect:** S.I. 2019/1133 amended.

**Geographical coverage:** England.

**Classification:** General.

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

**ISBN:** 9780348209501.

**Details:** This Order amends the School Teachers' Incentive Payments (England) Order 2019 (S.I. 2019/1133). It substitutes, in the list of schemes payment under which is not to be treated as remuneration for the purposes of section 122(1) of the Education Act 2002 (c. 32), the scheme known as the Early-Career Payments Pilot for the scheme known as the Mathematics Early-Career Payments Pilot. That scheme is now incorporated into the Early-Career Payments Pilot.

An impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as it has no impact on business or civil society organisations. The instrument has minimal impact on the public sector.

***The Professional Qualifications and Services (Amendments and Miscellaneous Provisions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020***

**Year and number:** 2020/Draft

**Enabling power:** European Communities Act 1972, s. 2 (2) and European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, s. 8 (1), sch. 7, para. 21 and European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020, ss. 12, 14, 41 (1), sch. 4, para. 12.

**Issued:** 10.07.2020.

**Sifted:** -.

**Made:** -.

**Laid:** -.

**Coming into force:** In accord. with reg. 1. Effect: S.I. 2015/2059; 2018/1329; S.I. 2019/312, 454, 457, 717, 810 amended.

**Geographical coverage:** United Kingdom.

**Classification:** EC note: Commission Delegated Decisions (EU) 2017/2113l; 2019/608; Commission

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Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/907 revoked. For approval by resolution of each House of Parliament.

**Price of print edition:** £6.90. (The electronic edition is free.)

**ISBN:** 9780348209471.

**Details:** These Regulations (except Part 2) are made in exercise of the powers conferred by—

- section 8(1) of, and paragraph 21 of Schedule 7 to, the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (c. 16) (“the 2018 Act”), in order to address failures of retained EU law to operate effectively and other deficiencies arising from the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union (and in particular, the deficiencies under paragraphs (c), (d), (e) and (g) of section 8(2), and paragraph (a) of section 8(3) of that Act);
- sections 12 and 41 of, and paragraph 12 of Schedule 4 to, the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 (c.1).

Part 2 amends the European Union (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2015 (S.I. 2015/2059) (“the 2015 Regulations”) in exercise of powers conferred by the European Communities Act 1972 (c. 68).

Part 3 amends EU Exit S.I.s. In particular, the amendments make transitional provision relating to the following agreements made between the United Kingdom and the European Union, and the United Kingdom and the EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland)—

- the Withdrawal Agreement signed at Brussels and London on 24th January 2020 between the United Kingdom and the EU under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union which sets out the arrangements for the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the EU;
- the EEA EFTA separation agreement signed at London on 2 April 2019 on arrangements between Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway and the United Kingdom following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the EEA Agreement and other agreements applicable between the United Kingdom and the EEA EFTA States by virtue of the United Kingdom’s membership of the European Union; and
- the Swiss citizens’ rights agreement signed at Bern on 25 February 2019 between the United Kingdom and the Swiss Confederation on citizens’ rights following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, and the free movement of persons agreement, so far as those agreements relate to the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and the temporary and occasional provision of professional services.

Regulation 3 amends the Provision of Services (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 2018/1329) to change references to “exit day” to “IP completion day”.

Regulation 4 and Schedule 1 amend the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/312) (“the 2019 Regulations”) to –

- make minor corrections to amendments to the 2015 Regulations coming into force on IP completion day, and to change references to “exit day” to “IP completion day”;
- replace the existing transitional provisions, in particular to make further provision for administrative cooperation in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement, EEA EFTA separation agreement and Swiss citizens’ rights agreement, and for extended rights to provide professional services and for recognition of a professional qualification in accordance with the Swiss citizens’ rights agreement; and
- amend provisions amending the Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/1662).

Regulation 5 and Schedule 2 amend the Veterinary Surgeons and Animal Welfare (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/454) to make transitional provision relating to the recognition of veterinary qualifications held by Swiss citizens’ rights agreement entitled persons.

Regulation 6 amends the Farriers and Animal Health (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/457) to make transitional provision relating to the recognition of farriery qualifications held by Swiss citizens’ rights agreement entitled persons.

Regulations 7 and 8 and Schedule 3 make amendments to the modifications made to the Architects

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Act 1997 (c. 22) by the Architects Act 1997 (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/717), and the amendments to those Regulations by the Architects Act 1997 (Swiss Qualifications) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/810), to replace the references to “exit day” with “IP completion day”.

In Part 4, regulation 10 provides that certain provisions on free movement of workers, so far as they relate to the recognition of professional qualifications, which continue as directly effective rights in domestic law by virtue of section 4 of the 2018 Act, cease. These provisions derive from the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and the Agreement on the European Economic Area.

Regulation 11 provides that any directly effective rights in domestic law which continue by virtue of section 4 of the 2018 Act, and which are derived from certain provisions on recognition of professional qualifications in the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States and the Swiss Confederation on the free movement of persons, cease.

Regulation 12 provides that the prohibitions on discrimination on the grounds of nationality in the agreements listed in regulations 10 and 11 cease to be recognised so far as those prohibitions relate to the cessation of the provisions on free movement of workers and recognition of professional qualifications provided for in regulations 10 and 11.

Part 5 revokes retained direct EU legislation.

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

## Parliamentary calendar

### Debates and answers to oral questions that took place in Parliament last week and early this week

<u>Date</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Subject</u>
7.7.20	Commons	Oral questions, Treasury	School funding
7.7.20	Commons	Estimates Day	Support for left-behind children
8.7.20	Commons	Chancellor of the Exchequer	Financial Statement
8.7.20	Commons	Debate on the economy	Education & skills
8.7.20	Commons	Adjournment debate	Free travel for under 18s in London
8.7.20	Lords	Ministerial statement	Autumn opening of educational settings
9.7.20	Commons	Oral questions, DCMS	Youth projects
14.7.20	Lords	Oral question	Ethnic diversity in teaching and learning

### Future debates and oral questions sessions

<u>Date</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Subject</u>
15.7.20	Lords	Oral question	Reducing the number of children in poverty
20.7.20	Lords	Oral question debate	School leavers being ready for work
21.7.20	Commons	Recess	At close of business House rises for the summer
21.7.20	Lords	Oral question debate	Impact of COVID-19 on social mobility
21.7.20	Lords	Oral question debate	Impact of COVID-19 on the childcare sector
22.7.20	Lords	Oral question debate	Impact of COVID-19 on UN Sustainable Goals
22.7.20	Lords	Oral question debate	Teaching of arts post COVID-19
23.7.20	Lords	Oral question debate	Reimbursing tuition fees for medical staff
27.7.20	Lords	Oral question debate	Making learning English compulsory
29.7.20	Lords	Recess	At close of business House rises for the summer
2.9.20	Lords	Recess	House returns from the Summer recess
8.9.20	Commons	Recess	House returns from the Summer recess
17.9.20	Commons	Recess	At close of business House rises for conferences
17.9.20	Lords	Recess	At close of business House rises for conferences
13.10.20	Commons	Recess	House returns from conferences recess
13.10.20	Lords	Recess	House returns from conferences recess

### Committee meetings that took place in Parliament last week and early this week

<u>Date</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Subject or type of activity</u>
6.7.20	Lords	Science & Technology (Lords)	COVID-19
7.7.20	Commons	Education	Private meeting
8.7.20	Commons	Education	COVID-19, apprenticeships and skills
8.7.20	Lords	Public Services	COVID-19 and lessons for public services
11.7.20	Commons	Education	Published report on exams and grades
14.7.20	Commons	Justice	Children and young people in custody

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### **Future committee meetings**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Subject</u>
15.7.20	Commons	Education	Accountability meeting with HE minister
15.7.20	Lords	Public Services	COVID-19 and lessons for public services
16.7.20	Commons	Science & Technology	COVID-19
17.7.20	Lords	Science & Technology (Lords)	COVID-19
21.7.20	Lords	Science & Technology (Lords)	COVID-19
22.7.20	Lords	Public Services	COVID-19 and lessons for public services

### **Abbreviations**

DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
DfE	Department for Education
HE	Higher Education
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
PMQs	Oral questions to the Prime Minister (Prime Minister's Questions)
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
UN	United Nations
UTC	University Technical College

## Support for left-behind young people

**T**his was the first day of debate on the estimates, with the first debate being on the Estimates of the Department for Education. (House of Commons, debate on the Education Estimates, 7 July 2020.) The Backbench Members' Committee, which selects the subjects to be debated under the broad departmental heading, had selected support for left-behind young people as the subject of debate under the heading of DfE Estimates.

In one of the quirky ways in which Parliament works, the debate was introduced by Nick Gibb, the long-standing Minister of State for School Standards, who proposed a motion on what the education budget should be. In a way that the quirky becomes the weird in these difficult times, the idea was that the chairman of the Education Select Committee, Robert Halfon (Con, Harlow) would introduce the actual debate on support for left-behind young people, a subject dear to his heart. But with social distancing reducing the number of MPs who can sit in the chamber drastically, to 50 seats for all parties, Mr Halfon had failed to secure a place. He therefore asked another member of the committee, Christian Wakeford (Con, Bury South), who had, to introduce the debate on behalf of the committee.

The Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb (Con, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton) proposed that, for the year ending 31 March 2021, for expenditure by the Department for Education:

- (1) further resources, not exceeding £33,747,284,000 should be authorised for use for current purposes as set out in HC 293 of Session 2019–21,
- (2) further resources, not exceeding £16,006,682,000 would be authorised for use for capital purposes as so set out, and
- (3) a further sum, not exceeding £50,339,978,000 would be granted to Her Majesty to be issued by the Treasury out of the Consolidated Fund and applied for expenditure on the use of resources authorised by Parliament.

Christian Wakeford (Con, Bury South) then introduced the debate on support for disadvantaged young people, on behalf of the Education Committee. He pointed out that the Government's extra spending on education over the next three years would add up to £14.5 billion, which would return spending on schools in England to the levels that had been seen a decade ago.

Mr Wakeford noted that in October 2019, the Government had announced a one-off cash injection of £780 million to support children with special educational needs over the 2020-21 academic year in their response to the Committee's report. He asked Nick Gibb to confirm that the commitment to school and college spending rises that had been announced in the spring budget would stand and be met in the coming academic year. Mr Wakeford welcomed the £1 billion that had been announced to fund the first 50 projects of a 10-year school-building programme as well as the £1.5 billion for the refurbishment of further education colleges over the next five years. He added that on top of that, an extra £1 billion of catch-up funding would tackle the devastating effects of lockdown on many children's learning and wellbeing.

Mr Wakeford said that the extra funding would provide extra tuition for them and level up their learning opportunities to those of children from wealthier families. He asked the minister how the £650 million that would go directly to schools, would reach the most disadvantaged children. Mr Wakeford asked whether the funding would be targeted at areas with the highest levels of deprivation, whether schools would have complete autonomy, or whether the Department would have oversight of spending. He also asked whether ministers would allow the Education Endowment Foundation to signpost non-academic catch-up support to schools, including pastoral care, safeguarding and intervention, to look after children who may have spent many months in difficult home circumstances.

Mr Wakeford welcomed the news of the £650 million catch-up fund for schools to host summer schools. But he stressed that schools' approaches to remote learning had been highly variable, as UCL's Institute of Education had estimated that a fifth of children, or over two million, had undertaken no schoolwork at home and they had managed less than an hour a day during lockdown. He added that

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another report by the National Foundation for Educational Research had indicated that four in 10 pupils had not been in regular contact with their teacher during lockdown.

Mr Wakeford said that the Education Committee had questioned why there had not been stricter guidance for schools on what would be expected of them in supporting remote learning and checking on children, which the September for Schools working group, co-ordinated by parents, had called for. He argued that, given Ofsted's oversight of schools, it should have taken a leading role in setting out expectations, instead of its "badger approach", which had seen it "hibernating" during the difficult months.

Mr Wakeford pointed out that while Her Majesty's Chief Inspector would respond by saying that employees had been encouraged to take up civil service and volunteering roles, the fact remained that the latest plans for Ofsted would not see inspections resume until January 2021. Mr Wakeford also questioned why the Department for Education had not undertaken any analysis of its own to consider the impact of school closures on children's learning, which had been confirmed by the Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb, during a Committee meeting on 27 May.

He argued that as school closures had been widely expected in the weeks before lockdown, the Department should have published its central guidance earlier. Mr Wakeford pointed out that it had not been wholly clear what local authorities had been meant to be doing either. He argued that, ahead of any further disruption, schools must be set minimum standards for the provision of remote learning and for checking on those who were not taking part in lessons.

Mr Wakeford asked the minister to explain whether there were any separate plans in the offing to support early years, and he added that the UK's further education sector had been left behind for decades. He said that the Prime Minister had committed to offering every young person an opportunity guarantee, so that they had the chance of an apprenticeship or an in-work placement. Mr Wakeford said it was time to refocus the apprenticeship levy so that it could be used primarily on apprenticeships for 16 to 24-year-olds and to tackle disadvantage. But he added that it would also be important to enable the public sector to lead the way with a massive increase in jobs and apprenticeship opportunities.

Mr Wakeford called for the £3.3 billion national skills fund to be used towards covering training costs and the first year of salary costs for small and medium-sized businesses that were taking on young apprentices. He argued that the levy should be recalibrated, to give employers an incentive to spend more on taking on younger degree apprentices, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those in disciplines that met the country's skills needs, rather than funding middle management apprenticeships.

Mr Wakeford stressed the need for proper targets for schools to encourage pupils to go on to apprenticeships, as well as much tougher inspections by Ofsted to ensure that schools were encouraging pupils to go on to apprenticeships and further education. He argued that as the NHS had a long-term plan, so, too, should education, and the 10-year plan would need to be focused on closing the disadvantage gap and ensuring that those left-behind pupils, who had suffered enormously during coronavirus, would be able to catch up.

Wera Hobhouse (LDP, Bath) said it had been concerning that 16 to 18-year-olds had not been included in the Government's catch-up tuition plans.

### **Extracurricular activities**

The former Education Secretary, Damian Hinds (Con, East Hampshire) urged the minister and his colleagues to look closely at the full range of extracurricular activities and maximise the range that children could take part in, not only more sports but debating and public speaking, drama, school orchestras and school choirs, all of which played such an important role.

Tim Farron (LDP, Westmorland and Lonsdale) pointed out that, currently, schools were forced to fund the first 11 hours of support for an education, health and care plan for special educational needs students. He stressed the need to ensure that special educational needs support would always be funded from the centre, which would advantage those schools and those children who had the greatest need.

The Shadow Secretary for Education, Kate Green (Lab, Stretford and Urmston) said that while the scale of the challenge to come was immense, post-16 education funding was already in difficulty, as the FE

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*(Continued from page 61.)*

sector was expecting a £2 billion funding shortfall in 2021, and colleges had already begun to make redundancies. She questioned why post-16 had been excluded from the catch-up funding and she pointed out that the House of Commons Petitions Committee had called for an urgent review of funding for the childcare sector.

Ms Green said that while she welcomed the catch-up funding, she argued that more details were needed, including, how much schools would receive; whether it would be per pupil or grant based; which pupils would be eligible for the national tutoring fund; and how much support would it provide to disadvantaged children. She asked the minister about plans to recruit newly qualifying PGCE graduates into the classroom after the summer, and she also asked when he would respond to the School Teachers' Review Body recommendations.

The Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb (Con, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton) said that in 2020-21, the Department for Education resource budget would be around £72 billion, an increase of £3.5 billion since last year. He added that, of that £72 billion, £57.1 billion had been earmarked for early years and schools; £14.1 billion would primarily be for post-16 and skills; and £400 million would be for social care, mobility and disadvantage.

Mr Gibb said that sixth-form colleges had not been included in the catch-up premium, but the Department would continue to work with sixth-form colleges and other post-16 institutions to establish the best way to make up the disruption due to COVID-19. He pointed out that on 19 June, a £1 billion COVID catch-up package had been announced to directly tackle the impact of lost teaching time, including £650 million directly to schools over the 2020-21 academic year. The minister said that the Education Endowment Foundation would provide evidence-based advice on the most effective approaches to helping children catch up, but the discretion would lie at school level, with the teachers and headteachers.

He explained that the catch-up package also included a national tutoring programme worth £350 million to increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people. Mr Gibb pointed out that the £1 billion package would be on top of the three-year £14.4 billion funding increase that had been announced last year and the £2.4 billion pupil premium. He added that the Government had also committed more than £100 million to supporting remote education.

The minister said that following the announcement last year, the Government would increase core schools funding by £2.6 billion in the current academic year, by £4.8 billion and £7.1 billion by 2021-22 and 2022-23 respectively, compared to 2019-20, including additional funding for children with special needs and disabilities. He pointed out that, on top of that, £1.5 billion per year would fund additional pension costs for teachers, which would mean that overall, the schools budget would be £52.2 billion by 2022-23. Mr Gibb said that overall funding allocations to local authorities had increased year on year, and high-needs funding would be £7.2 billion this year, up from £5 billion in 2013.

He stressed that creating more school places was a key part of the Government's plan to ensure that every child had the opportunity of a place at a good school, whatever their background. The minister said that the Government had committed £7 billion for school places between 2015 and 2021, on top of the free schools programme, which would mean that the Government would be on track to create one million school places this decade, which would be the largest increase in school capacity for at least two generations.

Mr Gibb pointed out that more than £7.4 billion had been allocated since 2015 to maintain and improve school buildings. He added that on 29 June, the Prime Minister had announced over £1 billion to fund the first 50 projects of a new 10-year school rebuilding programme as part of radical plans that would invest in school and college buildings.

# Economic update

**D**uring his Financial Statement, not quite a Budget speech but more than a standard ministerial statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak (Con, Richmond Yorkshire) said that to support jobs, the Government wanted to provide for younger people, who would be hardest hit by this crisis, as under-25s were two and a half times as likely to work in a sector that had been closed. He announced that the kick-start scheme, which was a new programme to give hundreds of thousands of young people in every region and every nation of Britain the best possible chance of getting a job.

The Chancellor explained that the kick-start scheme would pay employers directly to create new jobs for any 16 to 24-year-old who were at risk of long-term unemployment. The new jobs would be funded on the condition that businesses could prove that the jobs were additional. Mr Sunak pointed out that the jobs would involve a minimum of 25 hours per week and the pay would be at least the national minimum wage. He added that the employers that provided the kick-starter good-quality jobs would also include training and support to find a permanent job.

The Chancellor said that if employers met the conditions, the Government would pay young people's wages for six months, as well as an amount to cover overheads, which would mean that, for a 24-year-old, the grant would be around £6,500. He pointed out that employers could apply to be part of the scheme from August, and the first kick-starters would be in their new jobs by the autumn. Mr Sunak urged every employer, big or small, national or local, to hire as many kick-starters as possible. He added that he would make an initial £2 billion available, which would be enough to fund hundreds of thousands of jobs, as there would be no cap on the number of places available. The Chancellor said that because traineeships were a proven scheme to get young people ready for work, for the first time, the Government would pay employers £1,000 to take on new trainees, to triple the number of places. To help 18 to 19-year-olds leaving school or college to find work in high-demand sectors, such as engineering, construction and social care, the Government would provide £100 million to create more places on level 2 and 3 courses.

Alison Thewliss (SNP, Glasgow Central) argued that the UK's bright, talented young people were worth much more than 25 hours a week on minimum wage. She noted that the Chancellor had cited a higher band of pay for a 24-year-old, rather than the £6.45 an hour for younger people or the £4.55 that 16 and 17-year-olds received. Rishi Sunak explained that the Government would introduce a payment to businesses to take on apprentices over the age of 25, because while most people thought that apprentices were young people, around 44% of new apprentice starts were actually over the age of 25.

Emma Hardy (Lab, Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) pointed out that the Institute for Fiscal Studies had warned that 13 universities could go bust as a result of COVID-19, which would not only reduce choice and opportunity, but it would create unemployment and damage the local economies where they resided. She asked the Chancellor to commit to build back better and support social mobility by confirming that no university would be allowed to collapse. Rishi Sunak said that the Education Secretary and the Business Secretary had already outlined proposals to engage with universities where they faced difficulty. He added that in particular, they had introduced measures to deal with the issue of fewer overseas students and to protect the higher education research base.

The chairman of the Commons Education Committee, Robert Halfon (Con, Harlow) said he was "over the moon with the Chancellor's statement", as he was rebuilding an apprenticeships and skills nation to ensure that young people could climb the ladder of opportunity. Mr Halfon urged the Chancellor to raise the public sector target for apprenticeships from 2.3% to 5%, which would create 4,000 new apprenticeships in 2020-21, based on hiring 50,000 new members of staff in the public sector. Rishi Sunak said he would look forward to discussing Mr Halfon's "interesting suggestions" further. Lucy Allan (Con, Telford) pointed out that the kick-start scheme was for an initial six months. She therefore asked the Chancellor whether he would reconsider and review it at the end of the period. Rishi Sunak said that the kick-start scheme would be for longer than six months, as the scheme would run at least until the end of 2021. Stephen Crabb (Con, Preseli Pembrokeshire) said that there had been too many examples of young people in work placements who were not doing meaningful work. Rishi Sunak said that there would be no point in creating the scheme if the work placements were of low quality. He added that it would be important to get it right during the bidding process.

The following written questions were answered in Parliament last week.

## House of Commons

### Department for Education

#### Free School Meals

**Tulip Siddiq:** [64982] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children with No Recourse to Public Funds have been in receipt of free school meals since his Department extended provision to that group.

**Vicky Ford:** As both my right hon. Friends, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID-19. Our latest guidance for schools on free school meals is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-mealsguidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>. During the COVID-19 outbreak, we are temporarily extending free school meal eligibility to include some children of groups who have no recourse to public funds. As per our published guidance, the extension is temporarily in place to support families facing difficulties due to the current unique circumstances.

These extensions will end when schools have reopened to all children. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-mealsguidance/guidance-for-the-temporary-extension-of-free-school-meals-eligibility-tonrpf-groups>. We do not hold information on the number of children of groups who have no recourse to public funds that have received free school meals since we extended eligibility during this period. These are rapidly developing circumstances. We continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

*Monday 6 July 2020*

#### Free School Meals: Coronavirus

**Dan Jarvis:** [67656] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 4 May 2020 to Question 40618 on Free School Meals: Coronavirus, what recent discussions he has had with Edenred on establishing a freephone helpline.

**Vicky Ford:** An Edenred phone number (0333 400 5932) has been set up specifically for the national voucher scheme for free school meals. Calling this number costs no more than the national rate and therefore is included within mobile phone contract 'inclusive minutes' and charged at the national rate thereafter. We are working with mobile phone operators to ensure that the Edenred website is exempt from data charges.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [67713] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to communicate to schools that the maximum earnings threshold for free school meal eligibility for children with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is £16,190 rather than the £7,400 that was incorrectly stated on the guidance for Coronavirus (COVID-19): temporary extension of free school meals eligibility to NRPF groups from 25 June to 30 June 2020.



**Vicky Ford:** During the COVID-19 outbreak, we are temporarily extending free school meal eligibility to include some children of groups who have no recourse to public funds. The guidance has been updated and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-mealsguidance/guidance-for-the-temporary-extension-of-free-school-meals-eligibility-tonrpf-groups>.

*Monday 6 July 2020*

### **Free School Meals: Immigrants**

**Kate Osamor:** [62530] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children of families who are subject to the no recourse to public funds condition have received free school meals in each month since May 2020.

**Kate Osamor:** [62531] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of permanently extending eligibility for free school meals to pupils with no recourse to public funds.

**Kate Osamor:** [62532] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of ending the temporary extension of free school meals eligibility on child (a) hunger and (b) malnutrition.

**Kate Osamor:** [62533] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on permanently extending free school meals eligibility to children from families with no recourse to public funds.

**Vicky Ford:** During the COVID-19 outbreak we are temporarily extending free school meals eligibility to include some groups who have no recourse to public funds. We do not currently hold estimates for the cost of permanently extending eligibility on this basis. The Department does not currently collect data regarding the take up of free school meals from children of families who are subject to a no recourse to public funds condition. The Department has engaged in discussion with Home Office colleagues throughout the policy-making process.

*Monday 6 July 2020*

### **Further Education: Capital Investment**

**William Wragg:** [67686] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Written Statement of 29 June 2020, HCWS319, on Capital Update, whether capital funding for further education can be used for information technology upgrades on college campuses.

**Gillian Keegan:** In March this year, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor, announced that we are going to transform further education colleges across the country, investing £1.5 billion of new capital over the next five years, starting in 2021. On 29 June, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced that the Department for Education will bring forward £200 million of this capital funding this year to further education colleges in England. This will enable colleges to undertake immediate remedial work in this financial year to upgrade the condition of their estates and infrastructure. We will announce further details about how this funding will be allocated in due course.

*Monday 6 July 2020*

## Grammar Schools: Coronavirus

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:** [67498] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to delay the Secondary Transfer Test for Grammar school admissions in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:** Arrangements for selecting pupils by ability are for selective schools admission authorities to decide. We are aware admission authorities are considering what changes they will need to make to their arrangements in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department has discussed this issue with the sector and guidance will be published in due course.

*Monday 6 July 2020*

## Further Education: Capital Investment

**William Wragg:** [67686] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Written Statement of 29 June 2020, HCWS319, on Capital Update, whether capital funding for further education can be used for information technology upgrades on college campuses.

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*Monday 6 July 2020*

## Secondary Education: Coronavirus

**Peter Kyle:** [65174] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if guidance for the September 2020 reopening of secondary schools will be available to (a) local authorities and (b) other school providers by the end of this school term.

**Nick Gibb:** We want to get all children and young people back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know how important it is for their wellbeing to have social interactions with their teachers and friends. As such we have announced that all children will return to school from September. The guidance on the full opening of schools can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

*Monday 6 July 2020*

## Social Mobility Commission

**Karin Smyth:** [63392] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Social Mobility Commission's proposal to set up a dedicated government unit to co-ordinate action and ensure the recommendations of the commission are delivered.

**Vicky Ford:** We welcome the Social Mobility Commission's annual report, which recognises progress in areas such as improving life chances for people, boosting mental health support for young people, and keeping disadvantaged pupils in education for longer. On the specific recommendation of establishing a social mobility unit, we do not believe creating another government body is the solution – as it risks adding bureaucracy and distracting from addressing the issues at hand. Government's policy to level up opportunity across the country is already championed across Whitehall and most government departments have a part to play. The new Equality Hub in the Cabinet Office, comprising the Government Equalities Office, the Race Disparity Unit and the Disability Unit, will be broadening their work to look more widely at barriers to opportunity and working across government to support delivery on this agenda.

*Monday 6 July 2020*

### **British National (Overseas): Students**

**Lisa Nandy:** [68342] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to ensure that dependents accepted under the proposed bespoke immigration route for British Nationals (Overseas) passport holders from Hong Kong will be treated as home students for the purpose of tuition fees.

**Michelle Donelan:** To qualify for home fee status in England, a person must have settled status or a recognised connection to the UK. This includes those who are covered by EU law, have long residence in this country or who have been granted international protection by the Home Office. There are also requirements associated with ordinary residence in the UK. Subject to meeting the normal eligibility requirements, British Nationals (Overseas) status holders will be able to qualify for home fee status once they have acquired settled status in the UK. The same applies to their dependants.

*Tuesday 7 July 2020*

### **Education: Standards**

**Nadia Whittome:** [68455] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the educational attainment gap between pupils of different (a) ethnic and (b) socio-economic backgrounds.

**Vicky Ford:** The department publishes an analysis of pupil performance at the key stage 2 and key stage 4 assessment points each year. These analyses show that attainment at the end of key stage 2 varies between different ethnic groups. Consistent with previous years, Chinese pupils were the highest achieving group in 2019, with 80% of Chinese pupils reaching the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths, which is 15 percentage points above the national average. The pattern of attainment across the ethnic major groups has remained largely the same compared to the previous years. Chinese pupils were the highest attaining ethnic group, while black pupils and white pupils were the lowest attaining ethnic groups. At the end of key stage 4, as in 2018, Chinese, mixed and Asian pupils had Attainment 8 scores above the national average (46.7 in 2019). Average Attainment 8 scores for white pupils and black pupils both remained below the national average. The latest key stage 2 analysis is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-keystage-2-2019-revised>. The latest key stage 4 analysis is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/key-stage-4-performance-2019-revised>.

*Tuesday 7 July 2020*

## Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

**Tulip Siddiq:** [68393] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with Edenred on providing technical support to families trying to access and use vouchers for the Covid Summer Food Fund throughout the summer holidays.

**Vicky Ford:** Provision for free school meals is ordinarily term time only. However, owing to the COVID-19 outbreak the government understands that children and parents face an entirely unprecedented situation over the summer. To reflect this, we will be providing additional funding for a COVID Summer Food Fund which will enable families with children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals to receive food vouchers covering the six-week holiday period. Our guidance on the COVID Summer Food Fund is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-summer-food-fund>.

Through the COVID Summer Food Fund, schools can support eligible pupils with a £90 voucher to cover the six-week holiday period. Schools must order the vouchers at least one week before their school term ends, and they will be issued to families within 7 days. This is in recognition that school offices will be closed in the summer holidays. If a school receives a claim for an eligible child during the final week before the school's summer holidays, it will be possible for the school to place an exceptional order for that child via our supplier Edenred. Customer service support will continue to be available throughout the summer holidays.

*Tuesday 7 July 2020*

## Headteachers: Ethnic Groups

**Matthew Offord:** [59437] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) primary and (b) secondary school head teachers in the state-funded sector identify as non-white.

**Nick Gibb:** Information on the number of ethnic minority headteachers in state funded primary and secondary schools in England as of November 2019 is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/42308de0-93ca-405d-854b-8a23c70b6c64>.

Please note: Ethnic Minority includes all ethnic groups apart from White British.

*Tuesday 7 July 2020*

## History: Curriculum

**Darren Henry:** [66228] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to include Black British history in the national curriculum for primary and secondary school pupils.

**Nick Gibb:** The Department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces diversity and supports all pupils and students to tackle racism and have the knowledge and tools to do so. 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 Black British history can already be included in the teaching of the curriculum. For example, at key stage 1, schools can teach about

the lives of key Black historical figures such as Mary Seacole or others; at key stage 2, pupils can be taught about Black Romans, as part of teaching that era in history or Black history within the requirement for a study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066; and at key stage 3, we give an example for a more in-depth study on the topic of the impact through time of the migration of people to, from and within the British Isles, and this key stage can include the development and end of the British Empire and Britain's transatlantic slave trade, its effects and its eventual abolition. Additionally, local history is an element across key stages. The teaching of Black history need not be limited to these examples.

*Tuesday 7 July 2020*

### **After School Clubs: Social Distancing**

**Royston Smith:** [66925] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of effect on the feasibility of social distancing due to the covid-19 outbreak at after-school clubs operating at schools from September of the (a) number of children attending and (b) the number of children from different school bubbles attending those clubs.

**Royston Smith:** [66926] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued to schools running after-school clubs on the reopening of schools during the covid-19 outbreak in September.

**Nick Gibb:** The Department has published guidance on the full opening of schools from September. It advises that schools should consider resuming any breakfast and afterschool provision, where possible, from the start of the autumn term. Such provision will help ensure pupils have opportunities to re-engage with their peers and with the school, ensure vulnerable children have a healthy breakfast and are ready to focus on their lessons, provide enrichment activities, and also support working parents. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

We recognise that this will be logistically challenging for schools. Schools should carefully consider how they can make such provision work alongside the wider protective measures the guidance supports them to put in place, including keeping children within the year groups or smaller bubbles they are in during the school day, where possible. If it is not possible to maintain bubbles being used during the school day then schools should use small, consistent groups in their breakfast and afterschool activities. Schools can consult the guidance produced for summer holiday childcare, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>, as much of this will be useful in planning extracurricular provision. This includes schools advising parents to limit the number of different wraparound providers they access, as far as possible.

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **Assessments: Coronavirus**

**Layla Moran:** [63473] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 4 May 2020 to Question 41160 on Assessments: Coronavirus, if he will publish the feedback from stakeholders on the range of options available to his Department on the Reception Baseline Assessment.

**Nick Gibb:** The Department has listened to the feedback from stakeholders about the difficult circumstances faced by schools in the context of COVID-19 and the particular impact this has had on schools preparedness for the implementation of the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) in September 2020. Taking into account that feedback, the Department has confirmed that the statutory implementation of the RBA will be postponed until autumn 2021. Instead, schools have the option of taking part in the RBA early adopter year and can sign up to participate via a survey sent to all eligible schools. The Department remains committed to implementing the RBA.

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **Black Curriculum**

**Virendra Sharma:** [68686] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many requests he has received to meet with The Black Curriculum; and what plans he has to meet with that organisation.

**Nick Gibb:** My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education received a request directly from The Black Curriculum organisation asking for a meeting and a response has been sent. At this stage, the Department's work responding to the COVID-19 outbreak and other diary pressures make it difficult for the Secretary of State to arrange a meeting. However, the Secretary of State's reply makes clear that officials have met with the organisation previously and are happy to meet with them again to discuss these matters.

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **Free School Meals**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [67714] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of extending eligibility for universal free school meals to primary school children in all year groups.

**Vicky Ford:** All children in Reception, year 1 and year 2 in England's state-funded schools receive a free meal. We spend around £600 million per year ensuring 1.4 million infants enjoy a free, healthy and nutritious meal at lunchtime following the introduction of the universal infant free school meals policy in 2014. We have not estimated the cost of extending eligibility to primary school children in all year groups.

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **Further Education: Coronavirus**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [66825] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional financial support his Department is providing to colleges during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Gillian Keegan:** We have protected grant funding to the further education sector - the Education Skills and Funding Agency will continue to pay grant funded providers their scheduled monthly profiled payments for the remainder of the 2019/20 funding year and for 2020/21. For colleges in significant financial difficulties the existing support arrangements remain in place, including short-term emergency funding. The College Collaboration Fund (CCF) has been adapted to support colleges to respond to current challenges including developing new ways of working. We will let providers know the outcome of their application after 10 July.

We will be increasing investment in education and training of 16 to 19-year-olds by £400 million for the 2020/21 academic year, including an increased base rate, and more funding for high cost and high value subjects. We are also investing £1.5 billion over five years in capital spending for further education colleges. On 29 June, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced a transformative ten-year construction programme to deliver the world-class education and training needed to get Britain back on its feet. This includes £200 million for urgent repairs and upgrades to further education colleges this year.

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **Schools: Attendance**

**Hilary Benn:** [68664] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the children of parents who are shielding will be required to attend school from September 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:** Our intention is for all children to return to school from September. On 2 July we published guidance to help schools plan for a full return. Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of COVID-19. This means that even the small number of pupils who remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. The current advice on shielding can be read at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protectingextremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protectingextremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>. The guidance on the full opening of schools can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-thecoronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **Schools: Ethnic Groups**

**Apsana Begum:** [66989] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2020 to Questions 61818, 61819 and 61820 on Children: Ethnic Groups and with reference to his statement in that Answer that his Department does not centrally hold that information, how his Department has assessed the effect of schools' policies on BAME people; and if he will place a copy of the methodology and conclusions of that assessment in the Library.

**Apsana Begum:** [67802] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2020 to Questions 61818, 61819 and 61820 on Children: Ethnic Groups and with reference to his statement in that Answer that his Department does not centrally hold that information, for what reasons the information is not held centrally; and whether his Department plans to gather and hold that information in the future.

**Nick Gibb:** When making decisions about asking schools to welcome back more children, Ministers have had due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not, as required by section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. We continue to keep our assessment of those matters under review. This has been an in depth and ongoing assessment of the impacts of the Government's policy, including on groups with protected characteristics such as race. The assessments continue to form an active part of the

decision-making process. Importantly, we know that some staff, parents and pupils may be anxious about returning to school.

Where individuals are concerned about their comparatively increased risk from coronavirus, due to factors including ethnicity, age, sex and comorbidities, we are asking school leaders to discuss concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk, in line with our guidance.

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **Schools: Standards**

**Charles Walker:** [64103] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to inform schools of the outcome of their Condition Improvement Fund bid; and if he will make statement.

**Nick Gibb:** The outcome of the Condition Improvement Fund 2020-21 bidding round was announced on Monday 29 June. The list of successful applications can be found on here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/condition-improvement-fund-2020-to2021-outcome>

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **GCSE: Ethnic Groups**

**Neil O'Brien:** [69680] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of (a) White British, (b) Indian, (c) Bangladeshi, (d) Pakistani, (e) Black African, (f) Black Caribbean, (g) mixed ethnicity and (h) all pupils achieved five good passes at GCSE in each of the last 20 years.

**Nick Gibb:** The attached table shows the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs (including English and mathematics) at grades A\*-C (or equivalent) at the end of Key Stage 4 by ethnic grouping. The time series runs from 2004/05 to 2018/19 (the latest available). Care should be taken when comparing results over time due to the way the measures have changed in response to various reforms, e.g. Professor Alison Wolf's Review of Vocational Education.

The Government is committed to ensuring that every child, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their full potential and our ambitious programme of reform is transforming the education landscape to ensure we deliver the world-class education that every young person deserves.  
Attachments: 1. GCSE results by ethnicity [69680\_GCSE\_results\_by\_ethnicity.xlsx]

*Thursday 9 July 2020*

### **Education: Staff**

**Diana Johnson:** [68298] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his oral statement of 12 May 2020 on the extension of the coronavirus job retention scheme, whether term-time workers in education are eligible for furlough during July and August.

**Nick Gibb:** State funded schools have continued to receive their budgets as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. That will ensure that they are able to continue to pay their staff, and meet their other regular financial commitments, as we move through these extraordinary times. As public funds continue to be paid, HMRC's guidance for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (



<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-thecoronavirus-job-retention-scheme> ) states that public bodies, including schools, should not furlough staff via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme if their wages are paid from public funds. Staff in schools whose wages are not paid from public funds, and whose employer has already furloughed, may continue to be furloughed via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, subject to criteria set out here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-supportfor-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financialsupport-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care#state-funded-schools>.

*Friday 10 July 2020*

### **Schools: Coronavirus**

**Rachael Maskell:** [68377] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what volume of hand sanitiser will be made available to each school from September 2020.

**Nick Gibb:** Guidance for the full opening of schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-thecoronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>), published 2 July, includes advice on handwashing and use of hand sanitiser as part of a system of controls. Schools remain responsible for the products that they require and, as with other cleaning products, schools can access hand sanitiser through their existing supply chains.

We are also recommending additional sourcing options which include using the Crown Commercial Service 'Safer Working Supplies' Portal (<https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/covid-19/covid-19-buyer-information/saferworking-supplies/>) and accessing Public Sector Buying Organisations' e-catalogues.

*Friday 10 July 2020*

### **Schools: Period Poverty**

**Janet Daby:** [68427] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to eradicate period poverty in schools.

**Vicky Ford:** On 20 January 2020, the department launched a new scheme which makes free period products available in state-funded primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England. This is an important step to ensure that menstruation does not present a barrier to learning and that no one is held back from reaching their potential. We are continuing to monitor schools' engagement with the scheme during the COVID-19 outbreak. All schools and colleges continue to be able to order period products and to distribute them to learners according to their own local arrangements.

*Friday 10 July 2020*

### **Teachers: Holiday Leave**

**Rachael Maskell:** [62517] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that teachers and school leaders are able to take leave over the 2020 summer holidays.

**Nick Gibb:** We are not asking schools to open over the summer holidays and there is not an expectation that schools should open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers over this period. Teachers,

support staff and headteachers deserve a break, to recharge and rest. We are aware that some headteachers may be considering using their catch-up premium to provide summer school activities for their pupils. Where this is the case, they have the flexibility, discretion and autonomy to decide how they want to do this.

To support schools in planning how to use the catch-up premium, the Education Endowment Foundation has produced a guide which includes advice on summer schools and contains a link to a Teach First toolkit specifically focused on summer schools, for schools that choose to do this. A link to the guide can be found here: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/covid-19-supportguide-for-schools/>

*Friday 10 July 2020*

## Department of Health and Social Care

### Mental Health Services: Schools

**Andrew Mitchell:** [64083] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to mental health services in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools.

**Nadine Dorries:** We remain committed to investing at least £2.3 billion of extra funding a year into mental health services by 2023-24 through the NHS Long Term Plan. This will see an additional 345,000 children and young people able to access support through National Health Service-funded services or school- and college-based mental health support teams.

Mental health support teams, which we are introducing in line with our children and young people's mental health Green Paper, are part of this service expansion and transformation. We remain committed to delivering the other core proposals of the Green Paper, which will pilot a four-week waiting time for specialist NHS services, so that there is swifter access to specialist NHS services.

*Tuesday 7 July 2020*

### Pupil Premium: Coronavirus

**Alexander Stafford:** [61632] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the potential merits of a catch-up pupil premium for schools.

**Jo Churchill:** The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care routinely meets with the Secretary of State for Education to discuss a wide range of cross-cutting issues. The Government have announced a £1 billion COVID-19 "catch-up" package to directly tackle the impact of lost teaching time. On 19 June the Education Endowment Foundation published a guide to help school leaders and staff decide how to use this universal funding to best support their pupils. Further information is available at the following link: [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid19\\_Resources/Covid-19\\_support\\_guide\\_for\\_schools.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid19_Resources/Covid-19_support_guide_for_schools.pdf)

*Tuesday 7 July 2020*

# House of Lords

## History: Curriculum

**Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the merits of including Black British history in the national curriculum in England. [HL6024]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces diversity and supports all pupils and students to tackle racism and have the knowledge and tools to do so. 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 Black British history can already be included in the teaching of the curriculum.

*Monday 6 July 2020*

## Further Education: Coronavirus

**Lord Jones of Cheltenham:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to enable colleges to reopen safely; and what assessment they have made of the remarks by the Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges that colleges face a £2 billion income loss next year and some will go bankrupt unless they receive emergency help. [HL6129]

**Lord Jones of Cheltenham:** To ask Her Majesty's Government why colleges were not included in the £1 billion student catch-up programme. [HL6130]

**Baroness Berridge:** Many further education providers are already open for 16 to 19 learners on the first year of a two-year study programme and all learners under 19 years old can be offered a face-to-face meeting before the end of the summer term - subject to the required safety measures being met. Our guidance on how to phase the return of learners in further education is underpinned by our latest understanding of COVID-19 and we will continue to be led by the scientific evidence.

From Autumn 2020, all learners, including those who are 16 to 19 and adults will return to a full high-quality education programme delivered by their college or post 16 learning provider. This is as well as continuing to reintroduce face to-face support for 16 to 19 learners who are:

- in their first year of a study programme
  - taking their exams next year
- Colleges should plan on the basis that, from September 2020, all learners will return to a full high-quality education programme.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will continue to pay grant funded providers their scheduled monthly profiled payments for the remainder of the 2019/20 funding year and for 2020/21 which should give colleges the security of their agreed funding allocations. For colleges that are experiencing significant financial difficulties, the existing support arrangements remain in place, including short-term emergency funding. The further education commissioner and his highly experienced team are able to talk through plans, concerns and issues as are local ESFA teams.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced a £1 billion support package for schools to help pupils catch up on lost teaching time. It is our ambition that all students have the chance to make up for

lost education and where breaks in learning have been required, we want to ensure learners can resume their 'classroom' learning and continue to a successful completion. We will continue to work with the sector to establish the best way to support students to make up for the disruption due to COVID-19.

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **History: Curriculum**

**Lord Taylor of Warwick:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to diversify the curriculum in schools to include a broader range of culture heritage history. [HL6093]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces diversity. 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 specific 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.

We want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. We also want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. Schools are required to actively promote fundamental British values, including democracy as well as the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faith and beliefs. As part of a broad and balanced curriculum in history, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain.

*Wednesday 8 July 2020*

### **GCE A-level and GCSE: Assessments**

**Lord Watson of Invergowrie:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have put in place to facilitate permanently home-schooled children being awarded the grades required to allow the take up of college and university places in the 2020/21 academic year. [HL6186]

**Lord Watson of Invergowrie:** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the appeals system for grades awarded this year for GCSE, AS Level and A-Level exams will operate to a timetable that will ensure that students do not have to defer the next stage of their education by a full year. [HL6188] **Baroness Berridge:** This is a matter for Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. I have asked its Chief Regulator, Sally Collier, to write to the noble Lord and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

*Thursday 9 July 2020*

### **Sevenoaks School**

**Lord Watson of Invergowrie:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Sevenoaks School following reports that teaching staff are routinely asked to increase predicted grades on UCAS applications for students who may be in danger of missing out on their preferred degree course. [HL6189]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department is aware of a complaint that Sevenoaks School has increased predicted grades on Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS) applications for some students. The school's handling of the complaint will be considered when it is next inspected. UCAS provides guidance for all schools to support them in making predicted grades and the school has been reminded about these guidelines.

Schools should not be inflating predicted grades and we expect teachers to use their best judgement to predict grades for students which most accurately reflect their abilities. If this is not the case in any school, we expect them to change their policies.

*Thursday 9 July 2020*

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# 14-19

## Learning and Skills Bulletin

Issue Number 342

15 July, 2020

### Subscription rates

One year subscription, worldwide: **£96**

Two year subscription, worldwide: **£156**

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ISSN: 1475-8660

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Published by  
The Education Publishing Company Ltd., Devon.  
Weekly every Wednesday except during academic  
holidays.

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*14-19 Learning & Skills Bulletin* was first published as a print newsletter produced three times a year in November 2006 by Simon Boyd Publishing Ltd of Cambridge. It was acquired by EPC in April 2010 and became a weekly magazine in 2012. The print edition has now been discontinued and *14-19 Learning & Skills Bulletin* is now published as an electronic title weekly except during August and the academic holidays of Christmas and Easter. It is available as a PDF file sent by email or accessible from our website.

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