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More funding for schools

The Government continued to pour money into schools with yesterday's announcement of an extra £4.8 billion for schools in England (and, in addition, correspondingly more for schools in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) for 2021 compared to 2019. The Government published National Funding Formula figures showing provisional allocations for the schools, high needs and central school services blocks from 2021 to 2022.

These tables are mainly for schools and local authorities. The figures show the second instalment of the Government's school funding settlement worth a total of £14.4 billion over three years – the biggest increase in a decade. This year saw an increase of £2.6 billion. In addition, the Government is making available a £1 billion COVID catch-up package for the next academic year.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, said: "I want to again thank teachers, childcare workers and support staff for the brilliant work they have done throughout the pandemic, and for the preparations underway to welcome back all children from September. Our £1 billion covid catch-up package, on top of these increases in per pupil funding, will help head teachers support those who have fallen behind while out of school, and deliver a superb education for all children across the country."

The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, said: "This year has been incredibly challenging for schools, teachers, and students due to the COVID-19 outbreak, with everyone working in education going to incredible lengths to support children and ensure they can get back to the classroom. Not only are we confirming another year of increased and better targeted funding for our schools, but with our transformative national funding formula we are making sure the money is distributed fairly across the country so all schools can drive up standards. With two thirds of local authorities now having moved towards the national funding formula, it is time for the remainder to follow suit and ensure fairness for every child."

Each secondary school will attract a minimum of £5,150 per pupil and each primary a minimum of £4,000 per pupil under the national funding formula from 2021, up from the £5,000 and £3,750 which schools are receiving this year in the first year of the funding settlement. Extra funding for small and remote

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Summer holiday

As usual *Education Journal* takes a break during the academic summer holidays and our next regular issue will be in September. However, these are not usual times so we will monitor what is happening over August and if necessary bring out a special issue if there are any dramatic developments that can't wait until September for us to report.

Who do you believe?

“It is my strong and sincere hope that we will be able to review the outstanding restrictions and allow a more significant return to normality from November at the earliest – possibly in time for Christmas ... By November at the earliest ... it may conceivably be possible to move away from the social distancing measures, from the 1m rule.”

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister, speaking at the No. 10 Downing Street press conference, Friday 17 July, 2020.

“Modelling of our reasonable worst case scenario ... suggests a peak in hospital admissions and deaths in January/February 2021 of a similar magnitude to that of the first wave in Spring 2020, coinciding with a period of peak demand in the NHS.”

The Academy of Medical Sciences, statement issued on Friday 17 July, 2020.

Optimism is a wonderful thing, and has its place in the armoury of a leader. As we all know, Boris Johnson is an optimist. He also has good reason to want to see the economy recover and in fairness, his statement in Downing Street on Friday also contained caveats and the warning that if necessary, and reluctantly, the Government would reimpose lockdown if circumstances demanded it. Yet it was the optimism that made the headlines.

I am sure that it is everyone’s strong and sincere hope that we can return to normal in time for Christmas. But how realistic is this? Those who have responsibility for leading the education service, for running schools, colleges and universities, can’t plan on the basis of optimism. They need a realistic assessment of what may happen over the next few months, indeed the next year or two.

Within hours of Mr Johnson’s statement in Downing Street the Government’s Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, and Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, were giving evidence to the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee inquiry into COVID-19. Their message was starkly different to the Prime Minister’s. Professor Whitty said: “The reality is distancing remains an important part of this mix ... It [the virus] has not gone away. [They] need to continue for a long period of time.” Sir Patrick Vallance told the peers that “social distancing and hygiene measures will be necessary” given it was “highly likely” the virus would return. He made the same point that many scientists, including those on the Government’s Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) have. Vallance stressed it was just a matter of when, not if, COVID “comes back in force” in several waves.

Last week we carried a lengthy article in our international section outlining the policy views of five international organisations, including the OECD and the World Bank. Since then, we have reached new records of daily global infection and death rates. Globally, COVID-19 has not yet reached its peak.

Since the beginning of this pandemic we have expanded our research section to give our readers the growing body of work from scientists about COVID-19 and the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and in particular its impact on education settings. We have reported on papers presented to SAGE, reproducing some of them in their entirety. In this issue we bring you papers from the Scottish equivalent of SAGE.

Far from this dreadful virus being over by Christmas all the evidence we have is that it will remain with us until a vaccine is discovered. This may never happen, although the teams at both Oxford University and Imperial College, London, are getting encouraging results from their research into a vaccine. Even if they, or someone else, succeeds it will be well into next year at the earliest before it becomes widely available. Until then, education leaders must plan for the possibility of multiple school closures, for blended learning with more help for the most disadvantaged, and continuing to stress hand hygiene and social distancing whatever the Prime Minister may say.

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schools will increase by over 60 per cent, reflecting the financial challenges that these schools can face, and the unique role they play in local communities. An additional protection built into the funding formula means every pupil, regardless of the amount of funding they currently receive, will attract a year-on-year increase of at least two per cent. Most local authorities will see increases of over three per cent in the funding allocated per pupil, with only historically highly funded authorities seeing smaller increases. The Institute for Fiscal Studies pointed out that government spending per pupil was still below that in 2010.

Comments on school funding settlement

Following the announcement of the school funding settlement for 2021, Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said that ASCL was pleased that the Government was delivering on its promise to improve school funding with the second year of its three-year plan for extra investment.

But he added that it had been disappointing that it had so far failed to recognise the impending financial impact on schools of safely bringing back pupils from September. Mr Barton argued that the Government had no plans to reimburse additional costs incurred as a result of implementing the safety measures which must be introduced to enable the return of all pupils, which would include extensive cleaning schedules, large quantities of hand sanitisers, extra hand-washing facilities, and cover for staff who would be unable to attend because they were self-isolating.

He said that ASCL understood that the Government believed it was doing its best for schools, the seemingly enormous sums were spread across more than 21,000 schools and eight million pupils, and they came against a background of severe real-terms cuts in recent years, and costs which were rising above the rate of inflation. Mr Barton argued that school finances continued to be stretched to breaking point, and the situation was even worse in sixth forms and colleges where the level of funding was completely inadequate.

Nick Brook, deputy general secretary of school leaders' union, NAHT, said that the NAHT had been pleased to see that the Government had recognised the particular pressures on both small schools and SEND funding in determining funding allocations for 2020/21. But he added that it would be important to look carefully at the details to ensure that the money would actually get through to the schools that desperately needed it.

Mr Brook said that the NAHT had also welcomed the commitment of an additional £650m "catch up premium", to fund additional programmes to help address pupils needs. He noted that the Government had confirmed that the amount that each school would receive would be determined by the number of pupils on roll. Mr Brook argued that a per-pupil allocation would take account of the size of the school but would be unlikely to reflect the scale of the challenge faced. He warned that schools serving the most deprived communities may find that additional funding may not go far enough to address the true cost of the crisis, and it may yet be the case that their children would need additional support from the Government, once schools had had the chance to assess the needs of all their pupils.

Mr Brook said that in the long-term, the NAHT hoped that the National Tutoring Programme would become a trusted source of support to schools, in helping to address the needs of pupils that had fallen behind. But he added that it would require sustained commitment and increased investment from the Government, beyond the current year. Mr Brook pointed out that, in the short-term, the tutoring programme would be unlikely to figure in many schools' plans for "catch-up", simply because additional support would be likely to arrive too late for most. He said that schools would be working from day one to assess and address the needs of their pupils, and while the Government had told schools to plan on the basis that their curriculum should return to normal by the start of the summer term, the tutoring programme would only start ramping up in Spring 2021.

Changes to Ofsted's post-inspection processes and complaints handling

Ofsted is revising its post-inspection and complaints-handling arrangements to ensure that any queries or concerns about an inspection could be dealt with quickly and before an inspection report had been finalised. The move followed a public consultation, published in March 2020, when Ofsted had received over 600 responses from a wide range of respondents, including early years providers, schools, further education and skills providers, social care providers and parents.

Ofsted said that it would:

- Introduce greater consistency in post-inspection arrangements across inspection remits.
- Standardise at 5 working days the period allowed for providers to review their draft report and raise any issues of factual accuracy and about the inspection process.
- Consider and respond to formal complaints from inspected providers before publish an inspection report, if the complaints had been submitted within 5 working days of Ofsted issuing the final report.
- Retain current arrangements for internal reviews into complaints handling, including the scrutiny panel.

Ofsted said that most respondents had supported the proposals and responses had been broadly consistent across all the different areas that Ofsted inspected. After considering all the consultation responses received, Ofsted said that it planned to implement the new arrangements, including providing more time for formal complaints to be submitted.

Following the publication of the consultation outcome, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said she had been pleased with the positive responses to the consultation. She stressed that Ofsted needed to be able to deal quickly and effectively with queries and concerns before finalising and publishing an inspection report. Ms Spielman added that the changes would help to make sure the Ofsted's processes were efficient, fair and responsive to the providers inspected.

OECD postpones PISA

The OECD and its member countries have decided to postpone the three-yearly PISA surveys of 15-year-olds, that have become the main international benchmark of secondary education performance. Because of the COVID-19 crisis the OECD has postponed the next two rounds. Students will now take the test in 2022, not 2021, and the results will be published in December 2023.

The following PISA survey will then be published in 2026, not 2025.

Inspection reports are popular with parents

The latest YouGov survey, published on the same day as Ofsted's annual report and accounts, found that inspection reports had been well-received by parents, as over 4 in 5 parents believed that Ofsted's inspection reports were useful. Ofsted said that its interim findings from its own survey of schools, colleges and further education and skills providers had been similarly positive.

The findings had been published in Ofsted's annual report and accounts 2019–20. Almost 9 out of 10 had reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the inspection experience and that the feedback would help them to improve. Eight out of 10 parents had said that the inspection report they had read had portrayed the school (or other type of provider) accurately. The survey also found that three-quarters of parents said that the information Ofsted had provide had been reliable and two-thirds of parents had agreed that Ofsted's work helped to improve the standard of education.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said she was pleased that Ofsted remained a trusted voice for parents when it came to their children's education and that they saw Ofsted as a force for improvement in schools. She added that it had been heartening that nearly 9 out of 10 school and college leaders had said that the feedback they had received through their inspection would help them to improve. This is the fifth year that Ofsted has carried out the research. YouGov had carried out the survey of 1,101 parents between 12 and 25 February.

The Ofsted annual report and accounts 2019-20 showed that 3,200 school inspections, 8,500 early years inspections and 200 further education and skills inspections had been carried out under the education inspection framework. It also showed that Ofsted had carried out 3,167 social care inspections; 25 local area inspections, along with the Care Quality Commission; and 15 initial teacher education inspections.

Ofqual support for reform of Higher Technical Qualifications

The Government has confirmed its proposals for reforming higher technical education to improve the opportunities for employers to have input into the Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications. Ofqual stressed that employer contributions would be important to the shape and success of the qualifications, which were vital for sustaining future workforces across the economy.

Phil Beach, CBE, Executive Director of Vocational and Technical Qualifications at Ofqual, said that Ofqual was delighted to support the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to achieve its aims for the important qualifications. He stressed that need for employers to have the same confidence in the qualifications as they did in others.

Mr Beach said that alignment with employer-led occupational standards would be an important feature of Higher Technical Qualifications, and he added that recognised awarding organisations would want to play an active part in delivering them.

The Government's reforms retain the established regulatory framework. Awarding organisations will need to be recognised by Ofqual or the Office for Students in order to submit qualifications to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education for approval. Ofqual will provide advice to the Institute during the approvals process and it will implement a regulatory approach to support the expected quality standards.

Ofsted's review of online education during coronavirus

Ofsted has published a review of online education during COVID-19 in the further education and skills sector. The short review which had been conducted at the suggestion of the Association of Colleges, showed what had been working well and what could be improved in online education. Inspectors said that colleges and their students had embraced online teaching overall, but the digital divide in student access to suitable technology at home remained a significant issue.

While the inspectors had seen some of the most digitally enabled colleges, across the sector there more investment was needed in infrastructure, content and professional development to support online teaching. There was also a need for investment in re-engagement, support and “catch up” provision for the most disadvantaged post-16 students.

Ofsted inspectors had sampled 20 colleges and other providers. They had had discussions with college staff and they had observed online lessons, sessions and other interactions. The inspectors had also asked learners about their experience of the online education they had received and they had commented on the process of managing the transition to online education.

In many cases, learners had reported a good overall experience, although learners' experiences had varied considerably. In many cases, staff had spoken to learners as frequently as they had before the pandemic and learners had received similar amounts of tuition and pastoral time as they had before. Learners said that they had preferred “live” online lessons to recorded lessons and they missed the face-to-face contact of the classroom, although some had found online education to be more convenient.

“In general, learners at levels 1 and 2 had engaged less well than those at level 3 and some online teaching had resulted in learners becoming disengaged. As some learners had admitted to being frequently distracted, teachers had dealt with the problem by checking on their engagement.”

In general, learners at levels 1 and 2 had engaged less well than those at level 3 and some online teaching had resulted in learners becoming disengaged. As some learners had admitted being frequently distracted, teachers had dealt with the problem by checking on their engagement. The inspectors found that teachers did not always use online teaching sessions effectively to check on and develop learning.

While there had been a degree of variability, the inspectors had been impressed by the determination and tenacity of leaders in the sector and what they had managed to achieve for learners. The success of the transition to online learning in lockdown had depended on how well-prepared managers, staff and learners had been and how well the transition had been planned. The inspectors found that colleges had made considerable efforts to support learners in accessing online education, but the lack of suitable technology connectivity at home had remained a problem for a significant minority of learners.

Colleges had shown ingenuity in enabling learners to carry out practical work at home, where it was safe, and many providers had reinforced the message to learners about keeping safe online and protocols had been developed to help to ensure online safety in live teaching sessions.

The inspectors found that the varying competence and confidence of staff in terms of information technology had affected providers' success in making the transition to online learning. Materials had often been non-interactive and teachers had not always used them well to help learners learn more. In many cases, teaching staff and their managers had met regularly to discuss and modify their online programmes.

More radical plan needed for next year's exams

The proposed changes to next summer's GCSEs and A-levels have failed to fully recognise the disruption to students of the coronavirus pandemic and they amount to no more than “tinkering at the edges”, according to the Association of School and College Leaders. ASCL had also warned that there was also no back-up plan in the event of further serious disruption which could make a full exam series next summer impossible for students who had to self-isolate or who were affected by lockdowns.

In response to a consultation by exam regulator Ofqual on its proposals for exams in 2021, ASCL has called for more radical changes to the exams to make them fairer on students, as well as contingency plans if there were local or national outbreaks of coronavirus. ASCL's response included:

- Consideration should be given to increased choice within exams over the questions that students could answer so that those who had missed out on chunks of content because of CORONA-19 disruption would be less likely to be disadvantaged.
- Consideration should also be given to approaches such as open book exams in English, or formula sheets in maths and science exams, in recognition that students would have had less time to learn the large amount of content required.
- ASCL supports the idea of moving the start of the exam series next year from May to after the half term in June as long as it would not affect the normal timing of results days which would take place in August.
- There should be a parallel centre-assessed grading process, similar to that used in 2020, which could be used to inform a student's grades in the event of them not being able to sit an exam as planned. This might involve staged assessment opportunities, so that students could “bank” a proportion of their grade over the course of the year.

NAHT comments on proposed phonics check in Year 2

Nick Brook, deputy general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT, said that the NAHT did not support the proposal the Government had made when it came to administering the phonics check in year two which would just add an unnecessary bureaucratic burden and provide no educational benefit to pupils. He argued that all year groups in the new academic year would need to be able to move on with a curriculum that would meet their needs, and teachers would, as they did every year, work with all pupils to fill any gaps in their learning, including their reading skills, to allow them to progress in their current year group.

Mr Brook said that government proposals would mean that all Year 2 children would be expected to take a phonics test in the second half of the autumn term and schools would need to report the data to their local authority, which would be “entirely unnecessary”. He stressed that as school leaders and their staff were facing unprecedented challenges as they tried to recover, rebuild their school community and support pupils, parents and carers, both academically and pastorally, no unnecessary obstacles should be put in their path.

Government commits to build stronger relationships with colleges

Proposals to strengthen relationships with colleges and promote better planning to make sure that communities got the skills they needed, have been published by the Department for Education. The new “strategic vision” for the college sector followed Dame Mary Ney’s Independent Review, which had been initiated after Hadlow and West Kent & Ashford Colleges had been placed in education administration in 2019.

The review, which was had been completed in October and has now been published today, looked at how the Government monitored colleges’ finances and financial management, including examining the work of the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the Further Education Commissioner’s team.

Following the report’s recommendations, the Government responded by setting out a number of actions including:

- Strengthened alignment between the Further Education Commissioner and ESFA.
- A regular strategic dialogue led by the ESFA and Further Education Commissioner’s team with all college boards on priorities, starting from September.
- New whistle-blowing requirements for colleges, including the publication of policies on college websites.
- A review of governance guidance to improve transparency.
- A new College Collaboration Fund round.

Further changes will be announced as part of the FE White Paper after the summer. Gillian Keegan, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, said now more than ever, it would be vital for colleges to ensure that students gained the skills they needed to progress and meet the needs of businesses and their local communities. The minister welcomed the independent review by Dame Mary Ney and her call for a clear vision for the sector.

She said that her Department had begun to make the changes that would address many of the recommendations in the report, including strengthening oversight of the financial health of the sector and increasing the alignment between the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the FE Commissioner. Dame Mary Ney, author of the review, said that the overarching finding from her review had been the need to promote the strategic role of the sector and nurture and support all colleges on an individual basis to reduce the risk of financial problems recurring. She added that she had been encouraged that the recommendations from the review were being taken forward by the Department, as part of the development of an ambitious strategy for the sector.

The publication of the review, and the Government’s response, followed the Education Secretary’s FE speech where he had pledged to publish a White Paper that would set out the Government’s plans to build a world-class, “German-style” further education system in Britain, which would aim toward high-quality qualifications based on employer-led standards.

Responding to the report of Dame Mary Ney’s review of financial oversight arrangements for further education and sixth form colleges, with recommendations for improvement, Association of Colleges Deputy Chief Executive, Julian Gravatt, said it was “helpful” that the DfE had finally published Dame Mary Ney’s review on the financial oversight of colleges. He argued that while Dame Mary had concluded her work in autumn 2019 at a time when many colleges had been on an improving trajectory, she had described a system which had been complex, backward-looking and not really focused on the key tasks. Mr

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Gravatt added that the COVID-19 crisis had stopped the financial improvement in its tracks, caused deficits in 2019-20 and opened up large financial problems for colleges in 2020-1.

He said that while the Government and colleges should take the review's recommendations seriously and work out which of them would still make sense nine months on, the AoC did not agree with the suggestion that Ofsted should join the long line of regulators assessing college financial health, but it did agree that the existing arrangements required improvement.

Mr Gravatt welcomed the Skills minister's statement that there would be an FE white paper, as it would be an opportunity to tackle some long-standing issues and put colleges on a firmer footing. He stressed that greater strategic relationships with colleges was needed across the wider education system along with businesses and local communities.

90% of colleges warn that bursary funds would not meet students' needs

The Association of Colleges has released a follow up survey to the one it had published in early May on the profound impact of COVID-19 on colleges, staff and students. The survey revealed that in many colleges all or most students under 19 had continued their learning remotely in the summer term and over half of planned learning hours had been delivered remotely. Other Key findings included:

- Most of the colleges had report that teaching staff had been confident in delivering remote learning.
- High-quality digital resources had mostly been available for Maths, Computing and IT, Business and Health and Social Care.
- The vast majority of colleges had plans to enrol students online and would be offering online college induction in September.
- Many colleges had seen evidence of increased student hardship and they had warned that their bursary / hardship funds had been under more pressure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as an average of an additional £300,000 had been required per college.
- Over half of colleges had reported that their existing and additional bursary funding from DfE had not enabled them to purchase laptops and/or connectivity to support all their disadvantaged learners.
- Three out of four colleges said that they would need additional resources to support the provision of free college meal vouchers to current eligible students over the summer.
- Four out of five colleges anticipated major transport difficulties in September, when they re-opened.
- The vast majority of colleges had experienced additional demand for mental health and wellbeing services for students during the COVID-19 pandemic and they had put additional mental health and wellbeing support in place for their students.
- Just under half of colleges were planning to make redundancies by the end of the autumn term 2020 and a fifth would have made redundancies by September 2020.

England's school leadership drought risks harming pupil outcomes

As many schools were breaking up for the summer, NAHT published its latest research into the pay and wellbeing of staff. Paul Whiteman, NAHT's general secretary, said that while schools needed leaders, there were currently too few of them. He warned that school leadership had become an unattractive career proposition, which was a huge problem in a system that already had the least experienced workforce in the OECD.

Mr Whiteman said that the NAHT was concerned that the challenges of lockdown may exacerbate the "leadership drought" which already existed. He said that currently, too few high-quality graduates and career-changers were choosing to enter the profession, too many experienced professionals were quitting before their time and too few wanted to step up to leadership.

Mr Whiteman said that the crisis in leadership supply had been under-recognised and under-reported, but the reality was that many schools were struggling to assemble a quality field from which to recruit new heads, deputies and assistants. The NAHT's report, *A Career in Education*, found that:

- 73% of the 1,238 respondents had been aware of at least one member of staff leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement, which was a substantial increase on the two-thirds of respondents who had reported the same in 2018 (67%) and 2017 (66%).
- The key drivers cited by respondents had remained consistent with previous findings, as three-quarters (75%) had cited workload as the main reason for leaving.
- 65% of leaders had said that more competitive pay across the profession would make teaching a more attractive career.

The NAHT's report had recommended that the Government should:

- Increase the quality of applicants into teaching.
- Tackle the workload crisis.
- Improve the attractiveness of teaching and provide incentives to move into leadership.
- Provide leadership support and mentoring training.
- Remove disincentives that drive leaders out of the profession.
- Create new opportunities for late-career teachers and leaders.

Mr Whiteman said that the NAHT would like to see the Government providing an "Early Leadership Framework" alongside the "Early Career Framework" that was already being trialled. He added that involving experienced leaders as mentors in the framework, would serve the dual purpose of providing support for new leaders whilst creating a new pathway for experienced leaders.

Parents want more say on how their child returns to school

Parentkind has released the findings from its third survey as it continues to monitor parents' opinions and concerns throughout the coronavirus pandemic and school closures. As the academic year 2019/20 came to a close, the latest Parentkind survey updated parental experiences of home-learning, and their fears that the disruption to school life would have an effect on their child.

The survey found that parents had been more engaged in their child's learning and they wanted the right to decide on their return.

- More than 9/10 (91%) would like to be consulted (65%), or they had already been consulted (26%) by the school on how the arrangements for their child's return would work.
- Almost three quarters (74%) would like the right to decide whether their child attended school next term (19% did not).
- More than two thirds (68%) would like the Government to provide minimum standards of home learning provision that all schools should be expected to meet (17% would not).
- 53% were engaged in their child's learning, and 35% were quite engaged, which mean that 88% were engaged overall.
- More than half (53%) were more engaged in their child's learning than they had been before lockdown, as only 10% had been less engaged, and 37% had indicating no change.
- Despite that, a third of parents (33%) felt that their child had been quite or very disengaged with their learning (compared to 55% who had said that their child had been very or quite engaged in learning). More than half (57%) felt that their child had been less engaged in their learning compared to before lockdown.
- More than a quarter (26%) had not decided (23%) or they had decided that they would not (3%) send their child back to school at the start of the next academic year, compared to 74% who would.
- Concern about how social distancing would be managed, selected by two thirds or 67% of parents, had been the main reason why parents had been undecided about their child's return.
- Parents in Wales had been the most likely to be happy to return their child to school without social distancing measures in place (53%) compared to England (33%) and Northern Ireland (46%). On average across the three nations, 40% of parents would not be happy for their child to return with no social distancing measures in place.

Parents and carers had been asked to prioritise three things that schools should focus on when they reopened to more pupils. The top five had been:

- Mental wellbeing: 70%.
- Curriculum learning: 57%.
- Establishing/rebuilding relationships with peers and staff: 50%.
- Social skills: 21%.
- Physical wellbeing: 21%.

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Although almost half (48%) had said that the average amount of time their child had spent on school work had been “about right”, an alarmingly high proportion of 42% said it had been “too little”. This was in spite of 45% of parents overseeing their child's school work for more than 75% of the time.

More than half had not been very (11%) or not at all satisfied (42%) with the number of online lessons that had been provided by the school, while 20% had said that they had been very or quite satisfied. Forty per cent had not been very or not at all satisfied with the teaching that had been given to support work set by their child's school, but 44% had been very or quite satisfied.

Whilst 41% of parents had been satisfied with the availability of teachers to check in with their child, 45% of parents had not been satisfied. Almost 3/10 parents (29%) had been not very or not at all satisfied with the volume of work that had been given to their child by their school in the most recent half term. More than half (55%) had been very or quite satisfied.

Parents' biggest concern about school closures (% of parents ranking it as their number one concern had been):

- Impact on my child's education – 35%.
- Impact on my child's mental health – 30%.
- Risk of my child catching COVID-19 – 19%.
- My child not seeing school friends – 12%.
- My ability to juggle work and home schooling – 10%.

“CEO of Parentkind, John Jolly, said that as a significant number of parents remained undecided about returning their children to school next term, the Government would need to understand parent's legitimate concerns, and talking about fining them would not be helpful.”

CEO of Parentkind, John Jolly, said that as a significant number of parents remained undecided about returning their children to school next term, the Government would need to understand parent's legitimate concerns, and talking about fining them would not be helpful. He said that for that reason, Parentkind had welcomed the Welsh government's decision to respect parents' wishes in the next academic term and it urged the English government to do the same, by allowing parents and carers to make the right decision for them and their families without fear of financial penalties until at least December 2020.

Commenting on the survey of over 4,800 parents commissioned by Parentkind, Dr Mary Bousted, Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union, said that the survey had showed that parents were placing far greater trust in school leaders than Government, but she stressed that both those bonds would be essential to achieve full opening from September. She argued that instead of threatening parents with fines, the Prime Minister should be doing a great deal more to prove that his strategy was right. Dr Bousted said that while schools were doing their best to make good on existing guidance and create safe school environments, the lack of a plan B from Whitehall was far from reassuring.

Nick Brook, deputy general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT, said that while the desire to bring everyone back to school, as soon as it was safe to do so, was right, fines were too blunt a way of making it happen as they would drive a wedge between schools and families at the best of times. He stressed that the reality was that if a parent was concerned enough about their child's safety to keep them off school, the threat of a fine would be unlikely to change their minds.

Mr Brook said that as many parents did not feel that the Government had explained how and why it would be safe for pupils to go back in the autumn term, it would be up to the Government to mount a substantial public information campaign over the summer to make families aware of the evidence it had based its decisions on.

Children’s Commissioner calls on Government to make early years central to COVID-19 fight-back with a new “Best Beginnings” guarantee

Anne Longfield, the Children’s Commissioner for England, has published a report on the provision of early years services for children, alongside a warning that many nurseries were at risk of closure, which would hit the life chances of some of the most vulnerable children and hold back the economic recovery following lockdown.

The report, *Best Beginnings*, described a system that was disjointed and had often failed to target those disadvantaged children with development problems who most needed early help. The report highlighted the need for an overhaul of the early years system in England, as too many children, particularly those growing up in disadvantaged families, were already behind by the time they started formal education.

The Commissioner’s office analysed data on all children in England who had not met the expected level on half of their early learning goals at age 5 and tracked them through to the end of primary school. The children had been found to be:

- Five times as likely to end up being excluded by the age of 10.
- Twice as likely to have had contact with children’s social care by the age of 11.
- Three times more likely to be struggling with reading at the age of 11.
- Four times more likely to be struggling with writing at the age of 11.

The Children’s Commissioner called for a new “Best Beginnings” early years investment plan, which would range from Children and Family hubs to midwives and health visitors, to tackle problems at the beginning of a child’s life rather than waiting until the crises developed in later years.

Ms Longfield said that while some foundations of an excellent early years service were already in place, she urged the Government to bring together and “turbocharge” the services into one system which would provide first class provision that would work for families and ensure that all children, including the most disadvantaged, would get the best possible start in life. The Children’s Commissioner had made a number of recommendations including:

- An emergency recovery package for the childcare providers whose finances had been worst affected by COVID-19. The Government should also reconsider the design of Universal Credit which made it difficult for lower earning families to get help with childcare, as parents had to pay costs upfront and then wait to be repaid.
- An expanded offer of 30 hours free childcare and early education for all children aged two, three and four, and 15 free hours for all one-year-olds, so that early years education would be seen as part of ordinary life, in the same way that school was.
- A cross-government “Best Beginnings” strategy led by a Cabinet Minister for the Early Years. This would set out how a revitalised and extended Healthy Child Programme, the Early Years Foundation Stage, Children and Family Hubs, antenatal services and the Troubled Families Programme would work together.

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- A Family Guarantee of support for under-fives and their families delivered by health visitors, early help and Troubled Families workers, family nurses or family support workers based in Family Hubs.
- A national infrastructure of Children and Family Hubs, which would be a centre point of support for children and families and act as a gateway to multiple services. Each hub would be a base for universal services so that every child would be reached.
- A Government review of early education and childcare funding to ensure it was working as effectively as possible to help children and families who needed it most.
- A single system for supporting families with early years education and childcare, where fees would be charged in relation to families' incomes as they were in Sweden and Norway.
- A national workforce strategy for the early years, which would focus on staffing across existing health, local government and early years settings.
- Better sharing of data between different services, so that children who needed help would not fall through the gaps or go unidentified. This should include more effective use of a child's NHS number and Unique Pupil Number so that it would be possible to match children in different databases.

“Not only would maintained nursery schools not be able to access the Government’s financial compensation scheme, but they had also been excluded from the £1bn catch-up funding as well.”

Responding to the Children Commissioner for England's report on early years services and call for an emergency rescue package to prevent thousands of nurseries from going under, Tulip Siddiq MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Children and Early Years, said the report had confirmed that the Government's chronic underfunding of early years had hit disadvantaged children the hardest. She warned that the childcare sector was “on the brink of collapse” due to COVID-19, and nurseries in deprived areas were the most likely to close.

James Bowen, director of policy for school leaders' union NAHT, said that while many maintained nursery schools had remained open throughout the COVID-19 crisis to provide care and support for some of the most vulnerable children in society, they had been hit with a double whammy of government neglect. He added that not only would they not be able to access the Government's financial compensation scheme, but they had also been excluded from the £1bn “catch-up” funding as well.

Mr Bowen argued that the decision seemed illogical given that it had been widely accepted that early intervention was one of the most effective strategies to address gaps in learning.

Cllr Judith Blake, Chairman of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People Board, said that councils supported calls for a review of the early years system and they were pleased the Commissioner had reinforcing their calls for long-term investment in councils' public health and early intervention services. She pointed out that with long-term sustainable funding, councils would be able to ensure that every child would have the best possible start in life, children's health would be protected and widening health inequalities resulting from COVID-19 would be reduced.

Cllr Blake pointed out that while high-quality early years provision made a difference to young children and had been proven to break the cycle of disadvantage, the current offer did not give parents clarity about the best options for their children and there were growing concerns about the provision for disadvantaged children, those with special needs, and significant challenges that faced the workforce. She added that COVID-19 had also exacerbated the financial challenges facing early years providers and there remained an urgent need for additional funding to support them.

Government offers universities financial help, with conditions

A government scheme has been launched to support English universities at risk of insolvency. The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, said that universities facing severe financial difficulties as a result of the coronavirus would be able to apply for further Government support. Eligible providers will be able to seek the additional support to develop cost effective restructuring plans and conditions will be designed to focus the sector towards the future needs of the country, such as delivering high-quality courses with good graduate outcomes.

Mr Williamson said that as the country recovered from the pandemic, the world-leading UK higher education would have an important role to play. He stressed that universities would need to achieve value for money, by delivering the skills and workforce that would drive the economy and nation to thrive in the years ahead.

The Secretary of State stressed that his priority would be student welfare, not vice-chancellor salaries. He pointed out that as a condition for taking part in the scheme, universities would be required to make changes to meet wider Government objectives, which, depending on the individual provider's circumstances, could include delivering high-quality courses with strong graduate outcomes, improving their offer of qualifications available, and focusing resources on the front line by reducing administrative costs, including vice-chancellor pay.

Mr Williamson pointed out that an independently-chaired Higher Education Restructuring Regime Board would be established, which would include input from members with specialist knowledge external to Government. He added that he would draw on the expertise of the Board on individual cases before making a decision on whether to intervene.

The Secretary of State stressed that financial support in the form of repayable loans would only be provided if there was a case to do so, and there would not be a guarantee that no organisation would go into insolvency. He said that the support would be offered as a last resort measure and the specific conditions would align with wider Government objectives. Mr Williamson added that it would also require assurance that providers were fully complying with their legal duties to secure freedom of speech.

Commenting on the publication of the higher education restructuring regime, Kate Green MP, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary, said that while COVID-19 had had a devastating impact on universities, they continued to provide the research and skills that the country needed to move past the crisis. She said that the Government's announcement had showed a willingness to allow cherished institutions to fail, which would have catastrophic consequences for local and regional economies. Ms Green argued that, instead of using the crisis as an excuse to centralise control over universities and force through cuts to courses, the Government should pledge that no university would be allowed to go bust.

The University and Colleges Union and the National Union of Students have called on the Government to stand up for the university sector. They argued that the Government seemed to be prepared to "exploit universities' financial difficulties" during the COVID-19 crisis so that it could impose its "evidence-free" agenda. The unions stressed that what the sector needed was a guarantee that institutions would be protected, not subjected to loans with ideologically driven conditions. They added that anything short of that would have "a disastrous knock-on effect" on local communities.

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Apprenticeship assessment flexibilities to remain into 2021

The special measures that had allowed thousands of people to complete their apprenticeships through the COVID-19 lockdown will be retained into the new year. The Institute's for Apprenticeships and technical Education's Chief Executive, Jennifer Coupland, had made the commitment to continuing flexibilities for the delivery of end point assessments until at least the start of 2021, in a series of webinars with the sector.

The flexibilities had been rolled out for more than 100 apprenticeships to ensure that learners were still able to complete their studies. In most cases they had allowed for high-quality remote rather than face-to-face assessment. But as workplaces were starting to reopen, the Institute wanted to reassure the sector that there would be no imminent plans to drop the temporary measures.

Ms Coupland said that the assessment flexibilities would continue as people gradually returned to work-places and face-to-face learning and assessment became more viable. She pointed out that the Institute would start looking from September at where to go next with the flexibilities, but she confirmed that the Institute was not planning to make any changes before the new year to give everyone a degree of stability.

New quality marks for higher technical qualifications

Higher technical qualifications will receive a new quality mark from the Institute for Apprenticeships and technical Education from September 2022, as part of government reforms. The mark will aim to help set out qualifications that would fit in with the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers needed. The move is part of wider government changes to higher technical education at Level 4 and 5 in England, to increase take-up.

In England, currently only 1 in 10 people have a level 4 or 5 as their highest qualification. The Institute said it was pleased to be playing a central part in the reforms and as with its existing processes for apprenticeships and T-Levels, employers would be at the heart of decision-making.

In the first year, the focus will be exclusively on digital qualifications, leading to occupations like network engineer, cyber-security technologist and software developer. Qualifications will be compared to the new digital standards at level 4 and 5 which had been subject to the Institute's recent route review of quality, which will be available shortly on its website. During the first wave of approval on digital qualifications, the Institute will work collaboratively with awarding bodies and its partners to learn lessons for future waves.

"In the first year, the focus will be exclusively on digital qualifications."

The first qualifications that will be available from September 2022, will provide opportunities for students starting the first digital T- Level. Attention will then turn to qualifications on the Construction and Health and Science routes which will be available from 2023. The Institute will provide full details of the approval process to interested awarding organisations and universities when the window for submission of qualifications opens in September.

OfS proposes tougher measures to protect students if universities run into financial trouble

The Office for Students is consulting on a new targeted condition of registration that would allow it to intervene more quickly in cases where universities or colleges were at material risk of closure, as 396 registered universities and other higher education providers in England may close or cease to provide higher education even in normal times.

But the OfS pointed out that the challenging circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic meant that some providers would experience particular financial difficulties.

Under the proposals, the OfS would be able to require universities and colleges to comply with specific directions to take action to protect students. Measures to protect students in such circumstances could include:

- Continuing to teach existing students before closing.
- Making arrangements to transfer students to appropriate courses at other universities and colleges.
- Awarding credit for partially completed courses and awarding qualifications where courses had been completed.
- Offering impartial information, advice and guidance to students on their options and next steps.
- Enabling students to make complaints and apply for refunds or compensation where appropriate.
- Archiving records so that students could access evidence of their academic attainment in the future.

The new condition would apply in addition to the existing requirements all universities and colleges must meet on an ongoing basis to remain registered with the OfS, but those in good financial health would not have to take any additional action to satisfy it.

Scots consider transport and social distancing

Scotland's scientific expert Coronavirus (COVID 19): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues, a Scottish version of the UK government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), met last Tuesday. The sub-group was joined by the Senior Medical Adviser in Paediatrics for a discussion on the prevalence of the virus in children, particularly infants. The sub-group noted the low prevalence in children, the mild response of almost all children who had tested positive for the virus, and the specific concerns for children within BAME communities and those with exceptional health needs.

The sub-group discussed two papers that have since been published, and which we report in our research section. One was on physical distancing in schools and the other was on school transport. The discussions noted the current levels of infection in Scotland, and it was agreed that the advice was dependent on continuing low levels of community transmission. The size of groups and gatherings, use of face coverings, handwashing and other mitigations, and requirements of children with additional support needs travelling to school were also discussed.

The sub-group considered further its commission relating to physical distancing in early learning and childcare settings. Additional advice was provided for this commission which was further developed before being shared with Ministers later last week.

The work of Public Health Scotland and Directors of Public Health, and their key role in monitoring, surveillance, test and protect, and outbreak management was shared with the sub-group. Public Health Scotland experts provided an overview of emerging enhanced surveillance plans, including for school staff, children and young people. The proposals will help build understanding of the epidemiology and transmission of COVID-19 in educational settings. The importance of the well-established test and protect system in reassuring educational staff was highlighted.

These subjects were also discussed by the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group of senior stakeholders, a group chaired by John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Education Cabinet Secretary.

Investing in education and accelerating action on the SDGs

At a UN High-Level Political Forum event on accelerating action on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office minister, Baroness Sugg, CBE, said that in challenging times, it would be especially crucial to maintain and strengthen efforts on the SDGs. The UK's Special Envoy for Girls' Education, focused on the education commitments that had been made, and she updated the group on some of the work that the UK had been leading in the critical area over the last year.

Baroness Sugg stressed that to achieve the SDGs and recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic, standing up for the right of every girl in the world to 12 years of quality education would be more important than ever. She argued that to truly Build Back Better, there would need to be progress on SDG 4, so that the children of the world would have hope for the future and the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The minister said that last year, the UK Prime Minister, had underlined his personal commitment, when he had announced £515 million of UK aid to support over 12 million children, half of them girls, in school. She pointed out that the package had included setting up a new £215 million education quality programme in Africa, including analysing which measures increased the proportion of girls making the transition from primary school to secondary school; investing £300 million in the new International Finance Facility for Education to help to unlock an additional \$5 billion of financial support to education projects in lower-middle income countries and girls and the most marginalised children had been at the heart of the facility's work and investments.

“Baroness Sugg confirmed that the mobilisation of the first programme was on track, and following the launch in early next year, the programme would work with communities to ensure that girls remained in school and that they transitioned to secondary education successfully. She reported that there had also been progress on the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd), which would be hosted in London.”

Baroness Sugg confirmed that the mobilisation of the first programme was on track, and following the launch in early next year, the programme would work with communities to ensure that girls remained in school and that they transitioned to secondary education successfully. She reported that there had also been progress on the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd), which would be hosted in London. The minister said that prior to COVID-19, 60% of the world's out-of-school girls lived in the countries eligible for IFFEd's support; and by multiplying the impact of donor contributions, IFFEd could make a difference to the lives of many more girls than would otherwise be possible.

She explained that more broadly, girls' education had been placed even more at the forefront of the UK's global development offer over the last year, which recognised the power of educating girls in its own right and its potential for unlocking progress against all the SDGs.

Baroness Sugg warned that the world was already facing a global learning crisis as the

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COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in 1.3 billion children, 650 million girls, being out of primary and secondary education at the peak of school closures. She explained that the impact, both short and long-term, risked being hardest felt by the most marginalised, and by women and girls, including the potential for what had been called a “shadow pandemic” of gender-based violence. The minister stressed that, across the board, there would be as risk of losing recent hard-won progress that had been made towards achieving the SDGs by 2030.

She pointed out that in the last three months, the UK had adapted and reprioritised its education programmes in 18 countries to support education systems and keep pupils safe during the pandemic. Baroness Sugg said that the UK had also provided more funding to the DFID/World Bank Education Technology hub to expand its help-desk facility for education ministries. The minister added that at a global level the UK had committed additional funding of £20 million to UNICEF for child protection, and an additional £5 million grant to Education Cannot Wait, to keep the most vulnerable children in 26 countries safe and learning.

But she said that because collective effort was essential, the UK strongly supported efforts, including the UNICEF Opening Up Better campaign, to ensure that all children, including 650 million girls, could get back to school when it was safe to do so. Baroness Sugg stressed that the needs of the most vulnerable children must be at the heart of the process and she encourage others, at all levels, to join the efforts. Turning to the longer term, she said it would be necessary to build education systems back better and to place girls’ education, and gender equality, at the heart of the global recovery after COVID-19.

The minister pointed out that as Governments all around the world faced budgetary pressure, it would be important to ensure that education spend continued to be a priority, as the need was for more financing for education, not less. She added that institutions such as the International Finance Facility for Education could help, and she encouraged everyone to support it.

In conclusion Baroness Sugg said that the SDGs and leave no one behind would not be achieved if SDG 4 was not got back on track to address the wider impacts of school closures. She pointed out that, following the West Africa Ebola epidemic, there had been sexual exploitation, child marriage and increased poverty.

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The future content of courses on teaching early reading in initial teacher education in England: evidence-based or controlled by government?

By Professor Margaret M. Clark OBE

Since 2006 there has been a growing insistence by government in England that in the teaching of reading, primary schools must focus on systematic synthetic phonics, not just as one of a range of strategies, but as the method of teaching all children to read. In 2012 it was announced that Ofsted would start a series of unannounced inspections of providers of initial teacher education focusing solely on the training of phonics teaching. Over the following years, the government, backed by Ofsted, has increased its hold over policy and practice on early reading in state primary schools, in institutions providing initial teacher education and courses offering further professional development for teachers. Claimed to be an evidence-based policy, contrary evidence has been ignored. A Phonics Screening Check (PSC) was introduced in 2012 as a mandatory assessment for all children in state primary schools in England at the end of year 1 (for children about six-years-of-age). This assessment of children's ability to decode has become a high stakes test with a school's percentage pass a major criterion in Ofsted inspections. Ofsted requires that institutions involved in initial teacher education in their courses present systematic synthetic phonics as the way to teach all children to read.

The education policy analysed here refers to England, not Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland as education is a devolved power in The United Kingdom. However, similar moves have been apparent in both Australia and in The United States (See Allington, 2002 and Clark 2017 and 2018). In all three countries an increasing role in policy decisions on early literacy is being played by consultants, to the exclusion of professionals. Many of these consultants have commercial interests in producing materials to implement the policies.

The future content of courses on early reading in initial teacher education in England

In January 2020, Ofsted issued a consultation document on initial teacher education with the new framework and handbook to be published in June 2020 and implemented in September 2020 (Ofsted, 2020a). Responses to the consultation document were to be submitted by 3 April 2020. There are numerous statements in the draft document referring to the need for institutions to require systematic synthetic phonics as the only way to teach early reading (Clark 2020a and b). One such statement was: "An institution will be deemed Inadequate if: Primary training does not ensure that trainees only learn to teach reading using systematic synthetic phonics." (44) (Ofsted, 2020a)

In a recent article I reported research based on observations in classrooms on the effects of the government phonics policy on early years classrooms in primary schools in England (Clark, 2020a). I also drew attention to the reservations of many teachers and parents on the Phonics Screening Check based on our research (Clark and Glazzard, 2018). In a further article I summarised the findings of our independent research from a survey which received 38 responses together with interviews of ten of the respondents, showing the constraints already felt by those involved in initial teacher education (Clark, 2020b). In that article I included a number of quotations from the consultation document. I expressed concern that should these changes be implemented these would place even greater constraints on the content of literacy courses on institutions in England if institutions wished to retain the right to train teachers. I also pointed out that in the consultation document there were no such edicts for any other subjects in primary or secondary schools. Our research was published in April 2020 and can be read and downloaded from the

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Newman University website (Clark et al, 2020). The article summarising the research is also available on that site and an announcement about the research and the summary have been sent to Ofsted and members of The Education Select Committee. On 10 June 2020 written questions were asked in parliament referring to our research, whether it had implications for policy and whether there were lessons we could learn from other countries. In his replies Nick Gibb, the School Standards Minister, responded that: 'Providers in their training are therefore obliged to ensure their courses will ensure their trainees are able to demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics'. In his lengthy responses he ignored the question as to whether trainees might profit from learning approaches to literacy which have been successful in other countries and other parts of UK (see *Education Journal* Issue 416: 67).

It would appear that, decoding, and in particular synthetic phonics, and preparation for the Phonics Screening Check may continue to dominate reading in reception classes and years 1 and 2 in England, and teachers will have had their initial teacher education courses, and their observations in schools, dominated by synthetic phonics.

Evidence on recent developments in initial teacher education in England

Evidence from professionals involved in initial teacher education and from newly qualified teachers reveals that many institutions involved in initial teacher education have already narrowed their literacy courses to comply with government policy and Ofsted requirements. Hendry in a recent article reported a study in which she observed teachers in training and interviewed them as they became newly qualified teachers (Hendry, 2020). Her study commenced in 2013 which she claims marked an important change in the delivery of ITE in England: "University-led postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) routes were required to increase the number of days that student teachers spent in school from 90 to 120 in their 38 week courses.... This change reflected government scepticism about universities' contribution to teacher preparation...and an emphasis on school led professional training rather than education for future teachers... As a consequence, university based time to engage with theory and pedagogy for teaching early reading was limited and the role of the school-based mentor became increasingly significant." (Hendry, 2020: 58)

In her study she found that: "The participants' experiences highlighted the focus on phonics teaching as the main priority in the teaching of reading in the 20 schools involved in the study. As a consequence the student teachers received limited examples of wider pedagogy and a rich environment for teaching reading....With one or two exceptions reading experiences were focused on phonetically decodable texts and phonics schemes."

She concluded that: "In essence when assessment and curriculum guidance prioritise one method for teaching reading, universities must work with schools, students and NQTs to re-establish a broader understanding of what it means to be an effective teacher of early reading." (Hendry: 67)

Research evidence relevant to the government's synthetic phonics policy

Learning to be Literate: Insights from research for policy and practice, Part IV has evidence from research relevant to the questions posed below (Clark, 2016). Several of my recent articles critiquing government policy insisting synthetic phonics be mandated as the only way to teach early reading in primary schools in England were reprinted in a Special Issue of *Education Journal* (Clark, 2019). In two edited books (Clark, 2017 and 2018), there are contributors from the United Kingdom, the United States, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. A further two articles (Clark, 2020a and b) summarise more recent research. Below are a number of questions where claims have been made by the government yet relevant research has gone unacknowledged.

1. Is there one best method of teaching reading to all children? There is a lack of such evidence. See chapter 14 in Clark, 2016 and chapter 6 in Clark 2017.
2. Did the Rose report in 2006 provide convincing evidence for the superiority of synthetic phonics? See chapter 13 in Clark 2016 and chapters 7 and 8 in Clark 2017, also Torgerson et al. 2019 for the latest review of the research evidence suggesting there is not convincing evidence for synthetic phonics as the

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best method.

3. Is there evidence that synthetic phonics should be the only method of teaching reading to all children? There is extensive evidence against that view (see Clark, 2016).

In the most recent of a series of reviews of the experimental research on phonics, Torgerson and her co-authors, repeat their assertion that Rose overstated the case for synthetic phonics and that: “there remains insufficient evidence to justify a ‘phonics only’ teaching policy’.... and that there is little evidence of the superiority of one phonics approach over any other.” Torgerson et al., 2019: 234.

In 2005-6 Greg Brooks was a member of Jim Rose’s committee and with Carole Torgerson a member of a team contracted to produce a systematic review of the research evidence on phonics (see Brooks, 2017).

4. Are academics anti phonics? This was not the case in 2006 when the government in England was still making this claim. See Appendices I and 2 in Clark 2017 where the response to that claim by the national literacy associations in the United Kingdom and Australia are reproduced.

5. Was phonics part of the teaching of reading in classrooms in England prior to 2012? A large national research project based on observation in classrooms showed that a significant amount of time in early years classrooms was devoted to a diverse range of phonics activities in England even by 1994. Such evidence was disregarded, according to Bridie Raban who directed the research, and for political reasons. See Raban, chapter 10 in Clark, 2018 where she compares developments in England and Australia.

6. Do the results of PIRLS 2016 prove the success of the government’s policy as these ten-year-old children were the first to have sat the Phonics Screening Check in 2012? These claims seem exaggerated as discussed in Part II of Clark, 2018.

There is little evidence of any improvement in attainment other than on the actual check that can clearly be attributed to this policy, though the government does cite the results of PIRLS 2016. The minister made no reference to cautions in the reports on PIRLS against drawing causal relationships from the data, nor possible alternative explanations for this rise in ranking from joint 10th to joint 8th (Clark, 2018, Part II).

7. Is either the research in Clackmannanshire in Scotland in 2005 or The National Reading Panel Report in the United States in 2000 a sufficient evidence-base to justify adoption of synthetic phonics as the only method of teaching all children to read? These are the two researches cited by Nick Gibb as the evidence-base for adopting synthetic phonics as the only way to teach children to read and Ofsted also cites the Clackmannanshire research. These researches have both been criticised by researchers, the Clackmannanshire study by Ellis and Moss 2014, and the evidence is summarised in Clark, 2016 and 2019. Allington, in his edited book has contributions from members of the panel expressing concern at the way the phonics aspect had been reported (Allington, 2002 and 2018, Clark, 2016 and 2019)

8. Do the results and effects of the Phonics Screening Check justify its continuation as a statutory assessment, and does it provide useful diagnostic information? The majority of the teachers and parents in our research project did not feel the PSC should continue as a statutory assessment, criticising many aspects of it. (2018). While consulting on other aspects of assessment policy, the Department for Education has not consulted either teachers or parents as to whether they regard the PSC as providing valuable information, or about whether the PSC should remain statutory (See Clark and Glazzard, 2018 and in particular Appendix 1 on lack of consultation).

9. Should all institutions training primary teachers be required to insist that their literacy courses promote synthetic phonics as the way to teach all children to read? (See Clark et al., 2020) and recommendations by the Education Endowment Foundation below.

A balanced policy for early reading

Like most academics I do not deny the importance of phonics in learning to read. However, there is evidence that this is better practised within context rather than in isolation. Time spent decoding words in isolation, or as in many schools in England, on practising pseudo words to enable schools to achieve a high percentage pass on the PSC, might be better spent studying the features of real written English.

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In a recent valuable guidance publication for teachers, the Education Endowment Foundation lists key recommendations for the teaching of literacy at Key Stage 1 (EEF, 2017). ‘EEF aims to support teachers and senior leaders by providing evidence-based resources designed to improve practice and boost learning’ (see educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk). It is therefore perverse that the government ignores its evidence-based recommendations for effective teaching of reading. Three of the key recommendations are:

1. Develop pupils’ speaking and listening skills and wider understanding of language.
2. Use a balanced and engaging approach to developing reading, which integrates both decoding and comprehension skills.
3. Effectively implement a systematic phonics programme.

Note the emphasis is on ‘integration of decoding and comprehension’ and that the reference is to a systematic phonics programme, not to synthetic phonics as the only approach as currently required in England.

Given the extensive research which points to the need for a balanced approach to early reading development, it is crucial that teacher education courses support trainees to critically interrogate government literacy policy and that trainees are introduced to approaches that have been successful in other countries.

The future content of courses on early reading in initial teacher education in England

After the completion of our research, in January 2020, Ofsted issued a consultation document on initial teacher education with the new policy to be announced in June 2020 and implemented in September 2020 (Ofsted, 2020a). Responses to the consultation document were to be submitted by 3 April 2020. There are numerous statements in the consultation document referring to the need for institutions to require systematic synthetic phonics as the only way to teach early reading. I quoted a number of these statements in Clark, 2020a and b. Most of these statements remain in the final document, with only minor changes in wording, though not in intent. One such statement repeated in virtually identical words in the final version is: “In primary phase programmes, training ensures that trainees learn to teach early reading using systematic synthetic phonics as outlined in the ITT core content framework and that trainees are not taught to teach competing approaches to early reading. (Ofsted, 2020b: 38). NB in the consultation document this was followed by ‘that are not supported by the most up-to-date evidence...Ofsted, 2020b 39).”

The statement is now followed on the same page by ‘Trainees are taught the importance of providing pupils with enough structured practice to secure fluency in both reading and numeracy work’. Note the emphasis is on ‘fluency’, rather than understanding.

An institution will be deemed inadequate if: “EY and primary training does not ensure that trainees only learn to teach decoding using systematic synthetic phonics as part of early reading (Ofsted, 2020b: 44).”

In the consultation document, and in the final document there are no such edicts for any other subjects in primary or secondary schools. Indeed, No references are cited justifying this policy, removing as it does from professionals any freedom of choice in their presentation of literacy. Associated Ofsted/ DfE documents have long, and in some cases dated reference lists. None of the references refer specifically to evidence on synthetic phonics (DfE, 2019). It would appear that now and in the future, decoding, and in particular synthetic phonics, and preparation for the Phonics Screening Check may dominate reading in reception classes and years 1 and 2 in England, and recently trained teachers will have had their initial teacher education courses in the institutions, and their observations in schools, dominated by synthetic phonics.

Ofsted states in the final document, as in the consultation document, that systematic synthetic phonics should be the only method advocated for teaching decoding in early reading (see pages 38, 44, 47, 49, 53, 55 for quotations) There were over 300 responses to the survey on the consultation document and it is claimed that these were in general favourable. Concern was expressed by some respondents on the

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focus on systematic synthetic phonics. However, the response is that: 'Teaching SSP is a requirement of the primary national curriculum' and that 'the clear expectation in the ITE inspection is that partnerships will train trainees to teach SSP in line with government expectations' (Ofsted, 2020c: 12).

There is however a conflict in the final document as it is also stated that an institution will be regarded as inadequate if: 'Trainees do not know about up-to-date or pertinent research and so are unable to apply this knowledge in their subject and phase' Ofsted, 2020b: 44).

Furthermore, there is a clear statement that: Ofsted does **not** advocate that any particular teaching approach should be used exclusively with trainees (Ofsted, 2020b: 22.)

I have here listed issues on which there is research evidence that challenges the stance taken by both the government and Ofsted and cited sources where students could evaluate these researches for themselves. This could form the basis for a research module in institutions training early years and primary school teachers. Trainees could then emerge from training as professionals equipped to critique new policies but also with the expertise and knowledge to evaluate current policy. They would also be made aware, and appreciate the very different literacy policies in other successful countries. Only then could they become true professionals with the knowledge and information to better critique the repeated claims by the current government and on occasion Ofsted that current policy is evidence based and that all criticism are merely ideology.

Conclusions

The proposed changes in initial teacher education in England in September 2020 will mean that:

- Tutors involved in early reading courses in initial teacher education will retain little control over the content of their literacy courses.
- Early years and primary teachers will not know about important aspects of early reading.
- Future primary teachers may have little awareness of the approach to literacy teaching in other countries, or even that the policies may be different (even in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland).

One must question the role of Ofsted in England and whether it remains an independent non-ministerial government department reporting to parliament or as Scott suggested merely an enforcer of government policy (Scott, 2018).

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Cost of missed learning has been greater for some year groups

Analysis published by the National Foundation for Educational Research, has highlighted differences in the cost of lost learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for certain year groups to receive additional targeted support next academic year. The report, *Home Learning During COVID-19: Findings from the Understanding Society longitudinal study*, had been based on responses from the parents of over 4,000 school-aged children in the UK who had taken part in the Understanding Society COVID-19 survey, which had been carried out in late April 2020.

Although almost all pupils had received some remote learning tasks from their teachers, around half of exam-year pupils in Years 11 and 13 had not been provided with work by their school (due to the cancellation of the summer's exams). This meant that, in September, many of the pupils would not have engaged with education for up to six months. The report pointed out that a return to education may therefore prove challenging for many, especially if it was in a new educational setting, and targeted support may be needed.

The report also estimated that at least one in twenty pupils lived with a clinically extremely vulnerable adult, while other pupils (unmeasured in the survey) would themselves have underlying conditions that would put them at increased risk from COVID-19. The report warned that for the small number of children from very high-risk households, imposing fines for non-attendance at school in September may be counterproductive.

NFER suggested that more effective approaches would be to delay the enforcement of fines until community infection rates were lower and/or facilitate additional safety measures for such children, while recognising that remote or hybrid learning may need to continue for some. Other key findings from the report included:

- Just over half of all pupils taught remotely did not usually have any online lessons, defined as live or real-time lessons. Offline provision, such as worksheets or recorded video, had been much more common than "live" online lessons.
- Most pupils had spent less than three hours per day on remote learning activities. Pupils from higher-income households, and whose parents had higher levels of education, had spent the most time on school work at home, particularly at secondary level.
- In contrast, parents from the lowest-income households had spent the most amount of time supporting their child with school work. Parental education had been largely unrelated to the amount of time parents had spent helping with their child's school work. Parents of primary school children had spent more time providing support than parents of secondary school children.
- At least five per cent of pupils had been living with an adult who had been at very high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable) of serious illness related to COVID-19. A further 19 per cent had been living with an adult who had been at high risk (clinically vulnerable). The estimates had excluded any non-responding adults or any pupils who might themselves be at increased risk, which meant that the true percentages were likely to be higher.
- Pupils from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background (defined as those with at least one BAME parent) and those whose households had fallen into the lowest income quartile, had been significantly more likely to live with an at-risk adult.

Jack Worth, Lead Economist at NFER, said that the findings had supported the growing evidence base which had highlighted the risk of the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers widening as a result of the pandemic. He added that it had been "particularly concerning" that so many Year 11 and 13 pupils had spent little or no time engaging in learning activities. Mr Worth said that while the NFER had welcomed the Government's significant catch-up funding, pupils who were set to start college or sixth form in September would not be included in the package. He added that it would therefore be crucial to consider

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a support package to ensure that young people, whatever their background, would have the same opportunities as other children.

Commenting on the analysis, Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union, said that heads and teachers were all too aware of the disparity in home learning and the lack of engagement that remote learning could foster. He added that for some families the situation was exacerbated by the impact of poverty and unsuitable home environments such as lack of space and IT equipment. Mr Courtney argued that the Government's effort to meet IT need had been "sluggish and inconsistent".

He accused the Department for Education of displaying a curious silence in terms of how schools were supposed to be able to provide enough targeted support, and address the amount of learning time that had been missed. Mr Courtney pointed out that the NEU wanted the Government to do much more to make targeted support possible, which would require small class sizes and groups, additional teachers and a flexible curriculum.

Nick Brook, deputy general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT, said that almost overnight schools had had to find ways to try and provide remote learning opportunities for pupils, when each pupil's circumstance would have been different.

He argued that differing levels of parental support, access to technology and the age of pupils would have had an impact in terms of how much they had been able to engage in the offer. Mr Brook pointed out that the current situation had reinforced what had always been known: that however good the technology, it could not replace the personal impact that a teacher had. He said that in September, it would be the teachers and school leaders who would support pupils with their transition back into school. Mr Brook pointed out that the report had showed that pupils would be returning to school, having had a very different experience of lockdown.

What do PhD students really want?

The Higher Education Policy Institute has published a report on the career ambitions of PhD students. *PhD Students and their Careers*, by Bethan Cornell, used previously unpublished data to find out how PhD students believed that their doctorate had impacted on their career choices. The key findings included:

- Most PhD students (88%) believed that their doctorate would positively impact their career prospects.
- PhD students had been equally more (33%) and less (32%) likely to pursue a research career now than before they had started their PhD, and the majority had chosen academic research (67%) or research within industry (64%) as a probable career path.
- PhD students believed that they were well trained in analytical (83%), data (82%) and technical (71%) skills, along with presenting to specialist audiences (81%) and writing for peer-reviewed journals (64%).
- They are less confident of their training in managing people (26%), finding career satisfaction (26%), applying for funding (22%) and managing budgets (11%).
- When considering future careers, PhD students were more likely to attend career workshops (76%) and networking events (60%) or to do their own research (64%) than to discuss options with an institutional careers consultant

The author of the report, Bethan Cornell, who is currently studying for a PhD in Physics, said it had been concerning to find that, while PhD students may be getting good technical training, they did not feel supported in many other key skills that they would need to gain a successful academic career, such as managing people, dealing with budgets and applying for funding. She added that it had also been discouraging that PhD students had been more likely to seek 1:1 careers advice from their supervisors than trained careers consultants, who were better placed to help them.

COVID-19 and school transport

School Transport. Advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues, Scottish Government COVID-19 Advisory Group, COVID-19 Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues, published by the Scottish Government on Thursday 16 July 2020.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advisory-sub-group-on-education-and-childrens-issues---advisory-note-on-school-transport/>

The Scottish Government established its own version of SAGE, the UK Government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, to give it additional scientific advice, as well as that received from SAGE, specifically on the Scottish dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Advisory Group then established a sub-group on education and children's issues and the sub-group was asked to advise on school transport.

The sub-group state that the best and safest way to re-open schools is in the context of low community transmission and with a clear strategy towards driving case numbers continually towards zero. Given Scotland's current low prevalence, the advice given here on school transport is appropriate. However, the sub-group warns that if the further unlocking of restrictions, including indoor settings and tourism, results in an increase in cases in late July and into August, there will need to be flexibility in the use of this advice and variation among areas depending on transmission in their local community. This could mean that distancing may be required, and the use of face coverings introduced in school transport if prevalence increases. However the overall objective is to continue to push incidence and prevalence down across Scotland and to re-establish school transport as normally and fully as COVID-19 prevalence makes possible. Flexibility is necessary within local areas to make the best decisions based on local data on community transmission.

Key messages

- As far as it is safe to do so, children and their parents/carers should be encouraged to travel to school on foot, bike or scooter.
- Dedicated school transport should be regarded as an extension of the school estate and physical distancing measures between pupils are not necessary (subject to continued low levels of infection within Scotland). We recognise that school transport will involve mixed age groups of pupils, but still consider the risk of transmission to be acceptably low when mitigations are in place.
- Important mitigations include: hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes including regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing. Hand sanitising should be required for everyone on every entry to dedicated school transport.
- Where public transport (including buses, taxi, trams, subway, trains, ferries and air) is required for school-aged children to attend school, the general advice and guidance from the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland should be followed. This currently includes the mandatory use of face coverings and physical distancing where possible.
- Drivers and staff on public transport, and to a lesser extent on school transport, are at relatively higher risk of exposure and particular attention should be paid to ensuring that they are protected from airborne and surface transmission.
- Local authorities should continue to work with public transport providers to increase capacity as far as is reasonably possible and consider the introduction of staggered start/finish times.
- The advice that follows is contingent on there being low levels of infection in the Scottish population and on systems being in place for close monitoring, rapid testing and tracing of suspected cases.
- Measures put in place as precautions may become more relaxed as the prevalence and incidence of COVID-19 in Scotland reduce. Conversely, measures may need to be strengthened or reintroduced if there is evidence of a resurgence, or in the light of localised outbreaks. Where other relevant new evidence has

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implications for this advice, it will also need to be taken into account.

- This advice is based on a balance of evidence, bringing evidence specifically about COVID-19 together with evidence relating to the wider wellbeing of children and benefits of education.

Context

- In May, the SAGE Environment and Modelling Group published advice on the transmission and control of SARS-CoV-2 on public transport, recognising that there is an enhanced risk of transmission for both passengers and transport workers on public transport.

- The most recent Scottish Household Survey data show that about 14% of children in full-time education in Scotland usually travel to school by school bus, and a further 6% by public transport (either service bus or rail). The recent *Hands Up Scotland* survey published in June 2020 shows a similar picture, with 16% of pupils reporting travelling by bus.

- Active travel (such as walking or cycling) to school is the most prevalent school travel mode and brings a range of benefits including for children's health. It is also the mode of travel that carries least risk of transmission of coronavirus. Schools and local authorities are therefore urged to encourage children and their parents/carers to travel to school on foot, by bike or scooter as far as it is safe to do so. The same applies to staff.

- Transport Scotland's latest summary statistics note that from 2007-2017, between 23% and 27% of all bus journeys were taken by people who were permanently retired. Public bus journeys are therefore likely to bring together those at lower risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 (younger people) with those at higher risk. Such a situation is unlikely to occur on bus travel that is provided for school pupils only.

- Transport Scotland has published advice on staying travel safe during COVID-19. This advice is regularly updated in line with progress through Scotland's routemap through and out of the crisis.

“The sub-group recommends that dedicated school transport is considered to be part of the greater school estate and therefore all mitigations which apply in school should also apply on dedicated school transport. The sub-group noted that adult members of the public do not travel on dedicated school buses and therefore the physical distancing measures that should be applied are those relating to distances between pupils.”

1. Whether, how and when can physical distancing be reduced for school-age children on dedicated school transport and other modes (private hire vehicles, etc.), including what mitigation measures (if any) would be required in the event of a reduction in physical distancing?

- The sub-group's advice on physical distancing in schools, issued in previous advice, states: “Subject to continued suppression of the virus and to surveillance and mitigations being in place, the balance of the evidence suggests that no distancing should be required between children in primary schools. The evidence is less clear for older pupils but at present we support the same approach being taken in secondary schools on the basis of the balance of known risks and the effectiveness of mitigations. Two metre distancing should remain in place wherever possible between adults, and between adults and children who are not from the same household.”

- The sub-group recommends that dedicated school transport is considered to be part of the greater school estate and therefore all mitigations which apply in school should also apply on dedicated school

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transport. The sub-group noted that adult members of the public do not travel on dedicated school buses and therefore the physical distancing measures that should be applied are those relating to distances between pupils. Specific circumstances to protect drivers are addressed later.

- Mitigations include: hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes within dedicated school transport, including regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing. Hand sanitising should be required for everyone on every entry to dedicated school transport. Schools should regularly reinforce the importance of this key message with all children and young people. Hand washing/hand sanitising should be done regularly throughout the day including on each and every entry to the school building and school bus. The sub-group recommends that as far as possible school-aged children are assigned seats which they use consistently; and that the consumption – and especially the sharing – of food and drink (including snacks) is not allowed.

- Children or young people must not board dedicated school or public transport if they, or a member of their household, have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). If a child or young person develops symptoms while at school they will be sent home. They must not travel on regular home-to-school transport. The school should contact the parent/carer who should make appropriate and safe arrangements to collect the child or young person. In this situation, we strongly advise the wearing of a face covering by the child or young person on the journey home.

- For school-aged children travelling on dedicated school transport or public transport, schools should reinforce the importance of social responsibility in line with the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence* and the development of responsible citizens.

- As a way to increase school transport capacity, local authorities are encouraged to continue to work with transport providers to support staggered start and finish times in the school day. Other additional capacity should be sought where practical.

“For school-aged children travelling on dedicated school transport or public transport, schools should reinforce the importance of social responsibility in line with the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and the development of responsible citizens.”

2. Would this advice differ by age of the child or young person, and what should be the position for drivers and/or other adults travelling with school-age children on dedicated school transport?

- In line with the advice on physical distancing, this advice would apply to all school-aged children travelling on dedicated school transport.

- Where it is possible and practical to do so, family groups should travel together, and children and young people from the same class groupings should travel together. This will reduce unnecessary mixing and is one way to further lower risk. As a primarily preventive measure, we would advise against schools sharing school buses if possible at this point in time.

- Any adults travelling by dedicated school transport should conform with the requirements for public transport (1 metre distancing with the wearing of face coverings, at the time of writing).

- We recognise that the circumstances of many children with Additional Support Needs require adult carers to travel with the children, often in close proximity. In general, it is advised that these adults should be very alert to symptoms, and should wear face coverings as a general rule. However, this should be balanced with the wellbeing and needs of the child, recognising that face coverings may limit communication and could cause distress to some children.

- Drivers and staff on public transport, and to a lesser extent on school transport, are at relatively higher risk of exposure and particular attention should be paid to ensuring that they are protected from

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airborne and surface transmission. In some situations environmental changes within a vehicle may be appropriate, such as the installation of protective barriers or safety screens between the driver and passengers. It is for the relevant licensing authorities, operators and the firm or individual to make decisions on whether changes within a vehicle are required, based on their own assessment of risk.

- Drivers and other staff assistants should follow general hygiene guidance. Where hand washing is not possible hand sanitiser should be used regularly throughout the journey, in particular after performing any tasks that involve touching a surface that may have been touched by someone else.

- Drivers and other staff must not continue to work if they have symptoms, or if someone in their household has symptoms. They should make appropriate arrangements to go home as soon as possible if they begin displaying symptoms while at work, and should follow the Test and Protect system guidance.

3. What implications might any such advice have for school-age children travelling on public transport to/from schools?

- The advice of the sub-group is that school-aged children on public transport should follow the generic guidance from Transport Scotland. This includes wearing face coverings and physical distancing where possible. The effective use of mounted sanitizers, wipes and touch-free bins should be viewed as essential to reduce the transmission of the virus. The sub-group recommends that schools work with all children and young people to develop their capacities as responsible citizens particularly when on public transport.

- Local authorities should work with transport providers to increase capacity and introduce dedicated seating/carriages for school-aged children where possible, so that school-aged children may be grouped together.

- Local authorities are recommended to work with transport providers to gain assurance that infection prevention and control measures are in place.

4. Should face coverings be advised or mandatory for those travelling on dedicated school transport (under current or reduced physical distancing)?

- Face coverings should not be required for most children (those clinically advised to wear a covering would be an exception) travelling on dedicated school transport. This is the current statutory position as stated in The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020¹¹, in which it is noted that the requirement to wear a face covering on public transport does not apply on a school transport service.

- Similarly, a person providing a passenger transport service is not required to wear a face covering where there is a partition between the person/employee and members of the public.

- Where adults are travelling with school-age children, face coverings should be worn. The particular circumstances of adults travelling with children with additional support needs has been mentioned above.

“The advice of the sub-group is that school-aged children on public transport should follow the generic guidance from Transport Scotland. This includes wearing face coverings and physical distancing where possible. The effective use of mounted sanitizers, wipes and touch-free bins should be viewed as essential to reduce the transmission of the virus.”

Physical distancing in schools

Physical Distancing in Schools, Advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues, Scottish Government COVID-19 Advisory Group, COVID-19 Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues, published by the Scottish Government on Thursday 16 July 2020.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advisory-sub-group-on-education-and-childrens-issues---advisory-note-on-physical-distancing-in-schools/>

This is the second paper from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children's Issues published by the Scottish Government last Thursday. This one investigates physical distancing in schools. It is written in the context of Scotland's position on and with COVID-19. Scotland has a lower incidence of COVID-19 and is following a policy of eliminating the virus, which is not the same policy objective as the Westminster government has. Nevertheless, the situation in Scotland is sufficiently similar to that in the rest of the UK for this paper to be of interest to all our readers where ever they are. We are reproducing the paper in its entirety, except for foot notes and web links. Anyone needing these can follow the link above to the original document and obtain them from that.

Physical distancing in schools

The best and safest way to re-open schools is in the context of low community transmission and with a clear strategy towards driving case numbers continually towards zero. Given Scotland's current low prevalence, the advice given here on physical distancing in schools is appropriate. If the further unlocking of restrictions, including indoor settings and tourism, results in an increase in cases in late July and into August, there will need to be flexibility in the use of this advice and variation among areas depending on transmission in their local community.

This could mean that distancing and greater use of face coverings may be required if prevalence increases. However, the overall objective is to continue to push incidence and prevalence down across Scotland and to re-open schools as normally and fully as COVID-19 prevalence makes possible. Flexibility is necessary within local areas to make the best decisions based on local data on community transmission.

Key messages

- Subject to continued suppression of the virus, and to surveillance and mitigations being in place, the balance of the evidence suggests that no distancing should be required between children in primary schools. The evidence is less clear for older pupils but at present we support the same approach being taken in secondary schools on the basis of the balance of known risks, the effectiveness of mitigations and the benefits to young people of being able to attend school.
- Two metre distancing should remain in place wherever possible between adults, and between adults and children who are not from the same household.
- Face coverings are not required for most children (those clinically advised to wear a covering would be an exception). Adults in schools do not need to wear face coverings as long as they can retain two metre distancing. Where adults cannot keep two metre distance, are interacting face-to-face and for about 15 minutes or more, face coverings should be worn.
- No additional general protections are proposed for particular categories of children or staff, such as those with underlying health conditions. Instead, requirements should be put in place to reflect individual circumstances in line with any specific clinical advice.
- The concerns within BAME communities must be recognised and individual requests for additional protections should be supported where possible. Care should be taken to ensure that BAME staff, pupils

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and families are involved in decisions about additional protections.

- Teachers should be provided with support and back-up in how to assess and meet the needs of children who have experienced neglect during the period of school closures.
- A package of measures must be put in place to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus:
 - There should be an increased emphasis on hand hygiene and surface cleaning. Hand washing/sanitising should be required for everyone on every entry to the school.
 - As close as possible to zero tolerance of symptoms should be in place, and strict compliance with the Test and Protect system.
 - In both primary and secondary settings, the preference should be to avoid large gatherings and crowded spaces and, as much as possible, to keep pupils within the same groups for the duration of the school day.
 - Sharing of equipment/utensils/toys/books should be minimised; and smaller groups and more outdoor activities put in place.
 - Movement between schools - of children, and of temporary/ supply/peripatetic staff etc. - should be kept to an absolute minimum.
- Co-ordination with wider easing is vital, and the approach needs to feel coherent to children and adults. The sub-group emphasises that connectivity with transport issues will be critical.

General comments

COVID-19 and children

- Globally, COVID-19 has been reported in children and young people of all ages, but there have been many fewer confirmed cases in children than adults.
- In Scotland, as at 12 July 2020, 151 (0.8%) of a total 18,365 positive cases were among people aged under 15. This is a rate of less than 20 per 100,000 of the population in that age group.
- There have been no deaths among people under 16 years of age, but in the absence of high quality sero-surveillance we cannot be certain how many children and young people have ultimately been infected. (NB. There have been no deaths of children under 16 in Scotland, but there have been a very small number in England.)
- The infection appears to take a milder course in children than in adults; clinical signs are very similar to other childhood respiratory infections and very few infected children develop severe disease.
- There is emerging evidence that children may be less likely to acquire COVID-19 than adults; and some evidence that children have a limited role in transmitting the virus – but the evidence is still developing.

Overall approach

Impacts resulting directly from COVID-19 need to be considered in relation to wider impacts on children and young people. This advice is based on a balance of evidence, bringing evidence specifically about COVID-19 together with evidence relating to the wider wellbeing of children.

- The pandemic and the consequences of lockdown have magnified existing inequalities. There is an anticipated high level of need for support for vulnerable children and families as lockdown eases and schools reopen.

- Schools are not closed systems. The effects of decisions in these settings need to be understood in the context of wider changes and levels of adherence.

- Decisions relating to schools need to attend to the safety of the adults in these settings, as well as the

“The pandemic and the consequences of lockdown have magnified existing inequalities. There is an anticipated high level of need for support for vulnerable children and families as lockdown eases and schools reopen.”

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safety of children.

- There is an evidence-base relating to how changes are introduced and communicated, which needs to be considered alongside the evidence on transmission and risk.
- The advice that follows is contingent on there being low levels of infection in the Scottish population and on systems being in place for close monitoring, rapid testing and tracing of suspected cases. Where incremental changes can be made and the impacts of these monitored, that would be recommended.
- Measures put in place as precautions may become more relaxed as the prevalence and incidence of COVID-19 in Scotland reduce. Conversely, measures may need to be strengthened or reintroduced if there is evidence of a resurgence, or in the light of localised outbreaks. Where other relevant new evidence has implications for this advice, it will also need to be taken into account.

1. Given the latest evidence/health analytics about the suppression of the virus and children's role in transmission, what implications does this have for our approach to physical distancing in schools?

- Scottish Government modelling suggests there are currently between 40 and 90 new infections per day and an infectious pool of approximately 700 people (data for 10 July 2020).
- We note that this is a much more positive position than was the case when the *Strategic Framework for Reopening Schools and Early Learning and Childcare Provision in Scotland* was published on 21 May. These figures are expected to reduce further in coming weeks, but the impacts of the phase 1 and phase 2 routemap easing are not yet clear. Any decisions about re-opening the school estate should be contingent on a continued low incidence (new infections each day), low prevalence (proportion of the population infected) and low reproduction rate (indicating whether the epidemic is growing or shrinking).
- The role of children in transmission is understood to be limited, both between children and from children to adults.
- Most transmission is between adults. The situation in relation to older, secondary school students is less clear.
- Evidence from other settings and other epidemics highlights the role played in transmission by people moving between institutions. This learning should be applied to decisions about school re-opening, highlighting the need for particular attention to student teachers and other professionals (social workers, psychologists, voluntary organisation staff etc) who come in and out of the school estate on an interim basis and move between settings. This also extends to children and young people who move between settings e.g. students who attend other schools/colleges to study particular subjects in the senior phase and those in shared headship schools.
- General evidence is clear that two metre distancing is significantly more protective than one metre. This is particularly important for those at higher risk and is therefore more important for adults than for children. The benefits of distancing are also dependent on other factors. For example, distancing is more important indoors than outdoors, and for face-to-face interactions. This point about heterogeneity of risk is set out in the COVID-19 Advisory Group's advice on physical distancing.
- There is evidence from polling data that compliance with distancing is falling in the population as a

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whole and is less easily sustained among children and young people than among the adult and older populations.

- Risks to children go beyond those directly associated with COVID-19 infection. Although there is not yet evidence of the specific effects of COVID-related social distancing on children's development, the psychological literature unequivocally shows that children rely on social interaction with their peers to meet their broad developmental needs including learning, well-being and positive mental health outcomes.
- Childhood is also an important life stage for the foundations for good mental health – and conversely for the development of mental health difficulties. Concerns about mental health are at the top of the issues highlighted by children and young people in response to the pandemic. Early onset of mental health difficulties is associated with more severe symptoms.
- There are particular impacts for children with additional support needs, for whom opportunities to interact regularly with their peers are especially important to facilitate social skills development and personal wellbeing.
- There is also some evidence of increased domestic abuse and concerns about vulnerable children and their safety.
- Learning loss will be felt by all children and all age groups but is particularly significant for secondary school pupils and for children from high-poverty settings.
- As schools reopen, there needs to be a clear focus on targeting the learning loss of our children and young people. The focus should not only be on the narrow domains of literacy and numeracy attainment but also targeted at creating the conditions for learning by focusing on children's social, emotional, health and wellbeing.
- In summary, children's development – academic learning, peer relationships, safety, wellbeing and mental health – is at risk from school closures and from social distancing.
- We conclude that - subject to continued suppression of the virus and to surveillance and mitigations being in place - the balance of the evidence suggests that no distancing should be required between children in primary schools. The evidence is less clear for secondary schools but at present we would support the same approach being taken in secondary schools on the basis of the balance of known risks and the effectiveness of mitigations.
- In both primary and secondary settings, the preference would always be to avoid large gatherings and crowded spaces and, wherever possible, to keep children and young people within the same groups for the duration of the school day. In giving this advice we recognise the practical challenges. Where possible, timetabling should be reviewed to reduce movement of groups of pupils around the school estate as much as possible. However, movement around corridors is less likely to result in transmission than is a large gathering in a single enclosed space (such as an assembly hall). The general guidance about the maximum size of gatherings allowed in Scotland would provide a suitable benchmark for the advisable maximum size of a single group activity within a school at the time of re-opening.
- We conclude that on balance two metre distancing should remain in place wherever possible between adults, and between adults and children who are not from the same household.
- Clarity of message and consistency with wider advice on distancing is essential.

“In summary, children's development – academic learning, peer relationships, safety, wellbeing and mental health – is at risk from school closures and from social distancing.”

2. Are there any special considerations for different age groups of children? And what, if any, protections might be considered for particular categories of children considered to be at greatest risk of severe cases of the virus?

- As noted above, comparatively few children have been infected by COVID-19 and infection appears to

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take a milder course in children than in adults. There are, however, no clear cut-off points where risk increases in a step-wise manner. Behaviours, compliance, and wider contextual factors (living conditions, movement, etc) therefore become very significant considerations alongside age and clinical vulnerability. There is also the rare, delayed presentation of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children who have had COVID-19.

- Rates of positive cases in Scotland rise with age among children and young people, but are largely constant for those aged under 15. Those aged 0-4 have a rate of confirmed cases of 16.2/100,000 compared to 18.0 for those aged 5-14. This rises to 70.9/100,000 for 15-19 year olds and 213.8 for the 20-24 age group. Note, however, that these rates cannot be taken as representative of true population prevalence figures – they come only from those who have undertaken a test for whatever reason. Asymptomatic children and young people are unlikely to have been tested.
- As at 6 July 2020, 2% (3,867) of the people in Scotland identified as at high clinical risk of COVID-19 and advised to shield, are children under the age of 16.
- We are aware that Shielding guidance for children and young people is being updated, proposing that not all children and young people currently advised to shield will need to continue to do so. This will bring benefits for many children, including those with conditions such as cerebral palsy and scoliosis, for whom the benefits of school – in terms of access to therapies and developmental support – far outweigh the risk of infection. Clinical conversations will be held with families in advance of the proposed return to school in August.
- In light of this, no additional general protections are proposed as necessary for these children. Requirements should be put in place to reflect individual circumstances in line with any specific clinical advice.
- There is some wider evidence that children and adults from a BAME background who are infected seem to be at higher risk of severe disease from COVID-19. The evidence base relating to the Scottish population is very limited and Public Health England has not identified teachers as an occupation at high risk.
- However, the recent report by the National Records of Scotland on the breakdown of COVID-19 deaths in Scotland by ethnic group concludes that over the course of the pandemic to date, COVID-19 was a relatively more common cause of death for people in the South Asian ethnic group compared to people in the white ethnic group (Odds ratio of 1.9). That conclusion is reached after accounting for age, sex, deprivation and whether people live in urban or rural areas.
- In light of this, the concerns within BAME communities must be recognised and individual requests for additional protections should be supported where possible. Care should be taken to ensure that BAME staff, pupils and families are involved in decisions about additional protections.
- In addition, given that teachers have not been working collectively from schools, with normal routines and class sizes during the pandemic, the situation will need to be monitored as schools return.
- Looking at risk more generally, the evidence about the impacts of lockdown and loss of learning varies by age group but demonstrates that all age groups have experienced negative impacts – these impacts being greatest for secondary school children and lowest for those in early primary school year groups. School closures are almost certain to increase educational, and other, inequalities. Teachers should be provided with support and back-up in how to assess and meet the needs of children who have experienced neglect during the period of school closures. Relationships with others providing holistic family support will be crucial, and means of providing this safely need to be considered.

“There is some wider evidence that children and adults from a BAME background who are infected seem to be at higher risk of severe disease from COVID-19. The evidence base relating to the Scottish population is very limited and Public Health England has not identified teachers as an occupation at high risk.”

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- Considerations by age group and for particular categories need to avoid additional stigma or exclusions. Chronological age is not always the best indicator of capacity to comply with complex requirements.
- Adherence will be lower where student needs/wants are not sufficiently considered or where they feel alienated by top-down regulation (more likely among older children).

3. What role might mitigations (such as face masks) or other enhanced hygiene measures play in consideration of physical distancing?

• There is well-established evidence²⁴ that distancing should be adapted and used alongside other strategies to reduce transmission, such as ventilation, effective handwashing and regular surface cleaning. Guidance exists on how these should be considered in the school setting.

• The Advisory Group and sub-group have both also recognised the importance of staff and students being actively engaged in agreeing and establishing new practices and routines; and of public health (including good hygiene) becoming a core part of curricula and induction processes.

• Important mitigations include respiratory hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes within schools, including regular cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing. Greatest emphasis should be on hand hygiene and surface cleaning. Hand washing/sanitising should be required for everyone on every entry to the school. It will be important to teach all children good hand hygiene technique, and emphasise the importance of putting it into practice. Children who experience neglect may also need additional support in practising these hygiene measures.

Provision for washing of clothing in schools may be beneficial.

• As close as possible to zero tolerance of symptoms should be in place – anyone with a high temperature, new continuous cough, loss of (or change in) sense of smell or taste, or who has had contact with a family/community member with symptoms should not attend/should be asked to return home and be tested. They should remain at home and everyone in the household should self-isolate until they receive their test results. If the test is negative, everyone can stop isolating (and return to school). If the test is positive, the index case must isolate for 7 days and those in the household for 14 days. Contact tracing should be undertaken, and this will have implications for the whole school community.

• Evidence is becoming clearer about the role of face coverings in reducing transmission. Face coverings should not be required for most children (those clinically advised to wear a covering would be an exception). Adults in schools (including in the school environment, such as at the school gate) should not need to wear face coverings as long as they can retain two metre distancing with other adults or pupils. Where adults cannot keep two metre distance, are interacting face-to-face and for about 15 minutes or more, face coverings should be worn. Some children may need additional support/reassurance about the reasons for adults wearing face coverings.

• Anyone (whether pupil or adult) wishing to wear face protection should be enabled to do so. As the wearing of face coverings/masks becomes more commonplace in Scotland, it is possible that more people may choose to wear a face covering in the school setting. Should the prevalence of the virus in the population start rising, nationally or in parts of Scotland, we would advise that consideration be given to encouraging the wearing of face coverings, especially among adults and older pupils in secondary schools, as part of an enhanced system of approaches to reduce transmission.

• Some aspects of school life should not be reintroduced straight away. We recommend incremental

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reintroduction of collective activities that cross classes and age groups, and of higher-risk activities such as assemblies, choirs, drama, gym etc.

- Early reintroduction of the supports that particularly benefit children who are more vulnerable should be a priority, subject to application of the infection prevention and control measures. Breakfast clubs within class groups would be one example, as well as smaller groups, nurture groups, 1-1 time, outreach to parents and carers, multi-disciplinary work around child planning, tutoring etc. At least initially, however,

movement between settings (e.g. of children and of temporary/ supply/peripatetic staff etc) should be kept to an absolute minimum, including attendance at school of those who visit, including psychologists, nurses, social workers. Recognising the importance of holistic support for children, every effort should be made to secure these wider inputs through lower risk methods such as digital/virtual means or outdoor settings.

- Sharing of equipment/utensils/toys/books should be minimised; and smaller groups and more outdoor activities put in place. The COVID-related benefits of being outdoors provide a stimulus to maximise the use of outdoor learning. Research highlights the strong link between outdoor learning and health outcomes, and some evidence regarding positive impact on academic performance. There is potential to learn about infection control in these contexts from the practices in outdoor nurseries. Guidance is in place for these.

“.. movement between settings (e.g. of children and of temporary/ supply/peripatetic staff etc) should be kept to an absolute minimum, including attendance at school of those who visit, including psychologists, nurses, social workers. Recognising the importance of holistic support for children, every effort should be made to secure these wider inputs through lower risk methods such as digital/virtual means or outdoor settings.”

4. What further advice could be given to avoid teacher to teacher transmission in schools (such as avoiding congregating in staffrooms, sharing tea/coffee facilities etc)?

- Many aspects have been covered in response to Q3 above. The sub-group emphasises that transmission between adults should be a critical area of focus and should go beyond teacher-to-teacher interactions, including all adults within the school estate and those on the periphery (eg parents/carers at the school gate).
- Staff should be engaged in arrangements to minimise transmission. Systems and processes should be put in place to encourage staff to feel responsible – such as establishing a local team or champion, and working collectively to develop local solutions to the behavioural and staff movement problems.
- Schools should be encouraged to develop their plans for staff wellbeing and approaches to minimising transmission, and to share these within their school clusters for mutual support.
- As well as preserving a two metre distance between staff and adopting a strict approach to absence and testing when symptomatic, specific actions should include introducing regular ‘pauses’ in the staff routine during the day, specifically for handwashing and for cleaning of hard surfaces; and removing furniture in communal areas to ensure distancing happens (eg in staff rooms, eating areas etc).
- Special consideration should be given to supply cover, student teachers and NQTs/probationer teachers who will be new to schools. Inductions should include guidance on the school approach to ensuring distancing by adults as well as routines to ensure good infection prevention and control. The absence of serial and familiarisation days means that student teachers and NQTs will not have been able to get to

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know the school prior to their arrival. Additionally, Health and Safety Risk Assessments, which student teachers complete when they go on placement, should explicitly reference an understanding of the COVID-19 measures in place.

- Teachers who have underlying health conditions or who have been shielding will, like pupils, be subject to individualised clinical advice about appropriate action in their circumstances. There may be opportunities for such staff to support children in a similar position through remote learning and support.

5. To what extent would the evidence support a move to a one metre distance or no distance between children with continued two metre distance between adults, and two metre distance adult to child, given the educational benefits of the increased amount of time in school that this would enable? What can we learn from other countries who are implementing this approach (e.g. Northern Ireland, Netherlands, Jersey, France, Belgium)?

- As stated earlier, given the current trajectory of infection in Scotland and the balance of evidence overall, we recommend that no distancing should be required between pupils and that 2 metre distancing should be required between adults and in adult child/pupil interactions.

- Experience and approaches of other countries can be instructive, but cognisance must be taken of wider societal measures, other mitigating measures in schools, and the overall COVID-19 situation in the country at that time.

- In that context, we note that a number of countries including Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Switzerland and Taiwan are all easing physical distancing in schools. Of these countries, many have concluded that maintaining social distancing should be the aim but that approach can be eased if not practical.

- There is a degree of commonality in basing such approaches on evidence of the low transmission rates between children and the mild forms of the disease showing in children

where the virus is confirmed. There is similar commonality in the introduction of mitigating measures such as class “bubbles”, staggered arrival/departure times and a role for face coverings.

- Other countries, for example China, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, and Sweden are not planning to ease physical distancing in schools at this time. For these countries, increased handwashing and cleaning remains the norm, with additional measures such as masks, temperature checks, class ‘bubbles’, screen partitions and staggered lunchtimes and school starts and finishes in place.

- Many countries continue to apply distancing requirements between adults (aligned to broader national guidance) and between pupils and adults.

- In general (though not universally the case) countries have reopened secondary schools when incidence is lower, either later than primary reopening or at the same time if incidence was lower in general. For example, Denmark reopened primary schools when there were 193 cases per day, but secondary schools when the figure was 69. Austria had 14 new cases when both primary and secondary schools were reopened, and Germany opened all schools with a rate of 679 new cases per day.

- There is growing international evidence relating to the effects of re-opening schools on wider community transmission. This evidence requires careful monitoring, but to date studies from Scandinavian countries, Ireland, France and the Netherlands indicate that school opening has made no discernible difference to community transmission and there is little or no onwards transmission in school settings.

- Co-ordination with wider easing is vital, and the approach needs to feel coherent to adults and children. The sub-group emphasises that connectivity with transport issues will be critical.

“... to date studies from Scandinavian countries, Ireland, France and the Netherlands indicate that school opening has made no discernible difference to community transmission and there is little or no onwards transmission in school settings.”

Class of COVID-19 – what next for education?

By Professor Margaret M Clark

On 18 July a session at the Virtual Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival was devoted to education. The theme of the hour-long session was that ‘Classrooms will not be the same after COVID’. Five speakers discussed their concerns and aspirations for the future of education. Each speaker was given an opportunity to speak briefly to open the session, to respond to questions submitted by participants and to make a short closing statement.

Unfortunately, there was time for only a few of the many questions submitted. One of the questions concerned the idea of ‘bubbles’ which speakers felt to be a flawed concept. Hannah Packham of the National Education Union was in the chair and three of the speakers were from other unions: Patrick Roach of NASUWT, Mary Boustead of NEU and Jo Grady of UCU.

Jo expressed concern for the underfunding of post 16 education in universities and further education, and the uncertain future for students and staff. The other two speakers were Kate Green and Gemma Haley. Gemma Haley, a parent, speaking as a member of More than a Score, an association of parents and professionals campaigning against the current testing and accountability regime in England. Gemma, as a parent of two children, a younger child and an older autistic child, expressed her concern at what will face young children when they return to school in September. She was relieved that the government had succumbed to pressure and was postponing until 2021 the introduction of baseline assessment of reception class children, but was disturbed at the requirement that year 2 children sit the Phonics Screening Check during the Autumn term which had to be cancelled in 2020.

Patrick Roach and others stressed the need for a plan that ensures children and staff will be safe when they return to school and one that wins parents to reconnect. The other speaker Kate Green, the recently appointed Shadow Education Minister, stressed the need for emotional support for the children and staff.

All the speakers expressed concern at the lack of clarity in the government’s plans only released on 2 July, missed opportunities to use empty buildings, not enough concern for the safety of the children and staff. Kate Green commented on the missed opportunity over the summer, an ideal time to prepare parents and children to return to school in September through activities. The already widened disparity between the more and less advantaged children following home schooling disturbed the speakers, who were, however, concerned at the stress mainly on ‘Catch Up’ expressed by the Secretary of State for Education.

The emphasis in schools on testing, accountability and rote learning in England left children susceptible to fake news and unable to synthesize new knowledge, it was claimed. Lockdown and home schooling, while it had disturbing effects for some children, had, it was claimed, led to a greater respect for teachers and creative learning experiences for some children. It was hoped that lessons would be learnt and schools remain or become centres for their community.

The speakers did highlight that during the pandemic it was realised that schools are at the centre of the community. It was felt that opportunities had been missed to utilise empty buildings and that recently released government plans for reopening schools in September were vague and unrealistic. The speakers expressed the hope that with collaboration between the different agencies and insight from academics a richer more creative education could be developed post COVID. While accepting the need to close the increasing attainment gap they argued that this should not be at the cost of wellbeing. There would be the need for a different labour market, and education would need to change and move away from the current obsession with testing and examinations. The crisis they felt, gives an opportunity to consider what we teach and what is needed. These speakers questioned whether indeed the government does have a coherent plan.

BBC Radio Four on *The Moral Maze* recently also featured education with the title ‘How and why we educate’.

Summer of 2020

By Professor Jan Willem de Graaf

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

Summer vacation has come much earlier than I could imagine. Due to the so-called backward telescoping effect, one year ago seems a century ago, especially now that the second half did pass so special. Online lectures from my living room, which I turned into amateur documentaries, with thanks to Vegas (movie app) and a lot of time (every 45 minute lecture took me about 12 hours to edit). In addition, there were many online meetings, which started slowly but steadily from March onwards. All of this caused a kind of fear of the unknown. Will we ever overcome this Corona crisis? Isn't it much worse than it is shown? Certainly it feels like after a nightmare. Unfortunately, I believe everyone knows someone who has succumbed to the virus or has been permanently damaged.

However, it certainly was also an interesting time. We could observe a diversity of coping strategies people (including myself) use to keep perspective. Denial, resignation, rebellion, accusation ... Actually it is fairly easy to recognize the 5 stages of grief model of Kübler-Ross: 1. denial, 2. anger, 3. bargaining, 4. depression and, finally, 5. acceptance. However, the sequence does not seem to correspond to this: we started with acceptance (Initially, we all went into lockdown with almost no protest, and we followed the rules quite intrinsically). Now the rules are being ignored by whole groups of people, and there are large groups of people who believe in conspiracy "theories". To quote the Beatles, "living is easy with eyes closed, misunderstanding all you see .." (*Strawberry Fields Forever*). Somehow it feels that this applies to all of us. After all, we, humanity, stack the burden of great diversity and environmental problems as comfortably as possible for posterity, who must have very powerful personalities and leadership to keep human life on Earth still possible in 200 years. Unfortunately, the opportunity to use the Corona crisis as a wake-up call to start "to make it better" (to quote another Beatles song) seems to have been missed... Thanks to politics and especially the media.

"The crisis has shown that we can change quickly. The fact that politicians and the media lack momentum does not mean that we as human beings cannot or should not take our own responsibility towards a simpler life, with less technology, and belief in science and with much more belief in each other!"

It is also interesting to see how uncritically the Dutch media and press pretend that 'science' gets everything under control. What is hidden? What else is hidden? We are also much worse off in terms of sustainability / environment than is suggested. People who point this out are ignored unless they do criminal / nasty things like the Unabomber, or like the German Rambo now hiding in the forest. He is ridiculed in the media for showing his disbelief in technology in a manifesto. Can we still trust the media at all?

Nevertheless, I believe that we as humans are a special species. The crisis has shown that we can change quickly. The fact that politicians and the media lack momentum does not mean that we as human beings cannot or should not take our own responsibility towards a simpler life, with less technology, and belief in science and with much more belief in each other! Together we can face the future, we only have to accept that we must be much less uncritically in accepting new technological (scientific) disruptions. I wish you a very nice summer holiday, in which we can try to take our lives a bit easier, which is, in my opinion, a good direction to ensure our survival, now there is time to practice!

HE restructuring in response to COVID-19

Establishment of a Higher Education Restructuring Regime in Response to COVID-19, Department for Education. Published on Wednesday 16 July 2020.

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

This policy paper outlines a scheme for higher education providers in England facing financial difficulties as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). The scheme will review providers' circumstances and assess the case for restructuring support, including last resort financial support, through repayable loans. Any support will come with strict conditions.

The Government has three clear and overarching objectives which will guide the Department's assessment of cases:

- Protecting the welfare of current students.
- Preserving the sector's internationally outstanding science base.
- Supporting the role that higher education providers play in regional and local economies through the provision of high quality courses aligned with economic and societal needs.

The Regime does not represent a taxpayer-funded bail-out of the individual organisations which make up the higher education sector. It is not a guarantee that no organisation will fail – though current students would be supported to complete their studies, either at that institution or another.

The report notes that COVID-19 has already brought very significant financial challenges across the higher education (HE) sector with losses of income across teaching, research, commercial and other activities. Greater impacts may be felt in the forthcoming academic year, starting this autumn. This may have consequences on HE providers' viability due to reduced student numbers, both international and domestic, alongside continuing disruption to commercial income and increases in some operational costs.

Government is actively considering how to reduce the burden of bureaucracy imposed by Government and regulators. A very high level of uncertainty remains around the scale of problems that providers, as a whole and individually, may face in 2020/21 and beyond. Providers in scope for consideration for government support through the restructuring regime are those that are on the Office for Students register in the approved (fee cap) category.

Intervention will be considered provided the following conditions are met:

- There is a clear economic and value for money case for intervention: not all providers will be prevented from exiting the market. Any intervention should be a last resort measure after all other finance options have been exhausted - including the government-backed business support schemes.
- The problems are related to COVID-19 and there is a clear and sustainable model for future provision as a result of restructuring, meaning that the provider should not need further assistance.
- The failure of the provider would cause significant harm to the national or local economy or society (for example, this could be the loss of high-quality research or teaching provision, a disruption to COVID-19 research or healthcare provision or overall disruption to policy objectives including a significant impact on outcomes for students).

Any public funding offered to support restructuring would come with conditions to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Any financial support provided will be in the form of a repayable loan. An assessment of the provider's business model will determine the precise terms and conditions. The Government will also require assurance that providers are fully complying with their legal duties to secure freedom of speech under section 43 Education (No.2) Act 1986.

An independently chaired Higher Education Restructuring Regime Board will review the provider assessment and make recommendations to the Secretary of State for Education on whether to intervene in the case of a particular provider.

Learner resilience in Wales

Learner Resilience - Building Resilience in Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Pupil Referral Units, Welsh Government response to a report by Estyn (the Welsh School Inspectorate), commissioned by the Welsh Government's Education Directorate to understand more about how pupils' resilience is being supported in primary and secondary schools and pupil referral units and to highlight best practice case studies to be shared across Wales. Published on Wednesday 15 July 2020.

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports>

Estyn found that schools that are good at building the resilience of their learners are those that promote the emotional wellbeing and support the mental health of all their learners. As well as having a whole-school approach to wellbeing, these schools also provide specific interventions for learners who are particularly in need of support. In many instances, new whole-school approaches are adopted following the successful implementation of a particular strategy on a smaller scale.

Inspection outcomes for providers inspected under the new common inspection framework (2017-2019) suggest that there is strong practice in schools in supporting pupils' wellbeing. The standard of care, support and guidance for pupils is good or better in most primary schools and a majority of secondary schools.

Schools that are successful in building pupils' resilience have leaders that have developed a strong vision, supported by core values around promoting the wellbeing of all pupils. The vision is shared by all of the schools' stakeholders. They provide interventions for those pupils that need them the most as well as implementing successful strategies for whole-class situations when appropriate. These schools also place a strong emphasis on the wellbeing of their staff.

School leaders rarely talk of building resilience as a main aim or objective. Resilience is often strengthened as a consequence of implementing strategies to target pupils' other needs. Schools recognise that there is no easy way to building resilience in pupils. They understand that it is a process that takes considerable investment in time, energy and resources.

A common feature of nearly all schools that are successful in building resilience in pupils is that there are very few, if any, fixed term exclusions over a long period. They have a strong inclusive ethos. They strive to understand and get to the root cause of particular challenges facing pupils and are willing to try different approaches to address the issues.

Good schools share information between the relevant professionals and adults involved with particular pupils effectively and in a timely manner. They know that the earlier they can identify and support pupils who are struggling with their self-esteem and resilience, the more effective the intervention will be. They have processes for ensuring that all the relevant adults within the school are made aware of any concerns quickly and accurately.

The most successful schools understand that building resilience is a continual process that begins with developing good relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves. They understand that pupils' emotional wellbeing is the responsibility of all staff and that every interaction and engagement with pupils has an impact on their sense of worth. Staff know that all their words, actions and attitudes affect pupils' wellbeing. Where pupils feel a sense of belonging and connection, they are more likely to be feel secure, safe and emotionally resilient.

It is important that pupils have regular opportunities to express their emotions and share their feelings at school. Good schools have clear approaches for listening to and addressing pupils' concerns in a timely manner. They are alert to how pupils are feeling during the day, and work with pupils to identify particular staff members to whom they can turn if needed.

Good schools use the expertise of relevant external agencies to supplement their work. External agencies can bring skills and expert knowledge that are not always available within schools and, when the relationship between all parties is strong, they work together in the pupils' best interest, strengthening their resilience and improving their lives.

The report contains no recommendations for the Welsh Government, local authorities or schools. The Welsh Government accepted the findings of the Estyn report.

Children post COVID-19

Building a Country that Works for All. Children Post COVID-19, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) discussion paper. Published on Tuesday 14 July, 2020.

https://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS_Building_a_country_that_works_for_all_children_post_covid-19.pdf

In its report, the ADCS pointed out that the purpose of the short discussion paper had been to put children, young people and their experiences of COVID-19 at the forefront of national recovery planning, by pointing out what would be needed to restore the public support services they relied on; and, to capture the positives and gains that had been made during a very complex national and global emergency.

The discussion paper stressed that the pandemic, ensuing lockdown and enduring social distancing measures, had exposed and heightened the impact of stark disparities between disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers, from ill-health and poor-quality housing, to children's access to technology and their opportunities to learn at home. The ADCS argued that without urgent action, COVID-19 would cast a long shadow over the children, young people and families who would rely on the support of schools, the health and social care system and the voluntary sector for many years to come.

The report cited the Prime Minister's recently announced vision for recovery, which had included a commitment to tackling the country's "great unresolved challenges." The ADCS said that while investments in infrastructure and housing had been welcome, its members believe that the crisis had created an opportunity to be bold and tackle head on the inequalities and the structural barriers many children and families faced, particularly those from the most deprived areas and from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, and bring about meaningful and lasting change.

The ADCS said that although children had been less affected by the virus in terms of infection and mortality rates, members had concerns about increased exposure to "hidden harms" as well as lost learning and the impact of social distancing on children and young people's development and on their mental and emotional health and wellbeing. The report added that the vulnerability of specific cohorts, including care leavers, young carers, children and young people in conflict with the law and families with no recourse to public funds, had been heightened during the period.

The report pointed out that COVID-19 had disrupted professionals' relationships with children and families and the longer-term impact on the voluntary and charitable sector, was unknown. ADCS felt that the sustainability of the early years and childcare sector was of growing concern, and it would be important to recognise the heightened risk of the workforce experiencing trauma, burnout and fatigue, and changes to practice that would have taken months or even years to realise had become the norm in a matter of weeks.

ADCS suggested that as the impact of the COVID-19 experience had galvanised the work of public services, the strengthening of civic society could provide an impetus for a new way of working with communities. It pointed out that the shared responsibility of safeguarding had been underlined and some parts of the system had largely paused or slowed down in recent months, including mental health referrals and non-urgent hearings in both the family and magistrate courts, which could store up significant risks for the future.

The report stressed that COVID-19 had also disrupted the education and schooling of all children and young people, including those who had continued to attend school in person, who had had a far from normal experience. The ADCS pointed out that before the pandemic, most local authorities had been faced with growing levels of need in their communities and year-on-year funding reductions. It added that implementing new ways of working, reconfiguring services to meet evolving social distancing requirements and offering emergency support to the most vulnerable residents had resulted in significant additional costs. ADCS members had voiced their concern that when the peak of activity arrived later in the year, there would be no emergency funding left.

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ADCS said that locally, the provision of services for children and families relied upon a range of partners while multiple government departments, agencies and bodies had oversight of children and family-related policies nationally.

The report pointed out that moving into the recovery phase, would create myriad strategic and practical considerations as well as risks that would require careful coordination and ongoing dialogue. The ADCS stressed that the absence of a single national forum to discuss what COVID-19 meant for children, young people and their families continued to be keenly felt, and ADCS members believed that a rapid review of the response to the first phase of the pandemic would be needed to improve preparedness for future waves and spikes of infection. The report stressed that the experiences of practitioners and of children and families must be part of the process, as the vital importance of public health and the value of prevention and early intervention had been underlined during the crisis and COVID-19 had also triggered a public debate about health inequalities, deprivation and ethnicity.

As the recovery phase would also offer the Government an opportunity to further its “levelling up” agenda, the ADCS said that it would support the principle recommendation in *Health Inequality in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on* (The Health Foundation, 2020), the initiation of an ambitious, world leading health inequalities strategy, to making wellbeing rather than straightforward economic performance the central goal of policy that would create a better society with better health and greater health equity.

“The ADCS stressed that the absence of a single national forum to discuss what COVID-19 meant for children, young people and their families continued to be keenly felt ...”

ADCS President

Jenny Coles, ADCS President, said: “Although COVID-19 appears to pose a lower risk of infection to children and young people, we are concerned about the secondary impacts of the virus on them. Surveys undertaken in lockdown highlight increased fear, anxiety and loneliness amongst children and young people and many children have been unable to access support services they rely on. Children are in danger of being the long term victims of the disease, like they have been with austerity. This is why ADCS is calling on government to put children and their outcomes at the core of national recovery planning.

She went on to say: “Every child and young person has been affected by COVID-19, but their experiences will vary and will not be evenly spread. Some families will have benefited from this time together, but we are also seeing families we haven’t worked with before becoming vulnerable for the first time because of jobs losses but also domestic abuse and neglect, as well as those who were already known to children’s services presenting with additional challenges that we will need to meet. The entire children’s workforce has been incredible during this period, social workers and staff in residential children’s homes have embraced new ways of working to support children and families and colleagues in schools and early years settings have worked hard to keep children learning during lockdown. But the peak of activity in children’s services is only just beginning – this is when children and families will need us the most. We are clear that harms to children have not simply gone away but will become visible as restrictions ease and children are seen by schools and other settings that are likely to raise safeguarding concerns.”

Jenny Coles concluded: “To achieve a country that works for all children in a post-COVID-19 world, long term strategies to close the gap in terms of education, health and poverty are urgently needed. Just before the pandemic transformed our way of life and laid bare the inequalities in this country, Sir Michael Marmot published a review of the health of the nation which found a deterioration usually only evident following a ‘catastrophic’ economic or political shock, such as the breakup of the Soviet Union. The report suggests austerity is driving rising levels of child poverty and stalling life expectancies outside of London. The key recommendation was the initiation of an ambitious health inequalities strategy, led by the Prime Minister and a Cabinet-level cross-departmental committee. There can be no delay in levelling up the inequalities faced. Children’s life chances and all of our futures depend on it.”

Government advice on COVID-19

After a couple of weeks of decline in the number of pieces of guidance and information on children and young people, the numbers were up again last week. As usual, it was the Westminster government that was pumping stuff out. While the other countries of the UK are much smaller than England in population terms, they all have to do much the same things with their schools and colleges. Yet the devolved administrations manage to do this with a fraction of the paperwork that the UK government, acting for England, churns out. It is not immediately clear that the messaging from Westminster is clearer or better than that in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Last week there were 37 communications to educational settings or about education and young people dealing with COVID-19, compared to 25 the week before. Of these 22 were issued by the Government of the United Kingdom, almost entirely concerned with England, or UK government institutions like SAGE (compared to 15 last week). Seven documents were published by the Scottish government (compared to eight the week before), six by the Welsh government (none the week before) and two by the Northern Ireland Executive (two the week before). The period covered by this section is Monday 13 to midnight on Sunday 19 July 2020.

Student Number Controls

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: The measures to protect students and universities during the coronavirus outbreak, including temporary student number controls and additional places. An outline of the plans, announced on 4 May 2020, to allow higher education providers in England to recruit full-time undergraduate students up to a temporary level. This is an update of previously published guidance.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-number-controls?utm_source=ed67c994-dfa8-4e88-bfa1-c17c6859b71c&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Coronavirus (COVID-19) : Reducing burdens on educational and care settings

Date: Friday 17 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. Schools and local authorities should continue to check this document which will be updated as soon as further decisions are made. This is an update of previously published guidance.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reducing-burdens-on-educational-and-care-settings?utm_source=b8b0af0b-206f-4364-b963-32325a3e5783&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

School Governance Update

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: News and communications from the Department for Education (DfE) relating to governance in

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maintained schools and academy trusts in England. These updates are for anyone involved in school and trust governance who wants to know the latest messages from the DfE, such as:

- governors
- trustees
- chairs
- governance professionals
- members

This is also for anyone else involved in the governance of schools and trusts in England. This is an update of previously issued guidance.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update?utm_source=7ac4a66f-40ae-4495-a5e7-d8159938ca3a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Higher Education: Reopening buildings and campuses

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Guidance for higher education providers in England on when and how to reopen their campuses and buildings.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campus?utm_source=8a3868c6-5380-417c-87c9-a52f286612b0&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

COVID-19 Education Recovery Group Minutes: 01 July 2020

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government

Document type: Minutes

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Minutes and papers from 1 July 2020 meeting of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-education-recovery-group-minutes-1-july-2020/>

COVID-19 Education Recovery Group Minutes: 25 June 2020

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government

Document type: Minutes

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Minutes and papers from 25 June 2020 meeting of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-education-recovery-group-minutes-25-june-2020/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) : Guidance on College, University and Purpose Built Student Accommodation

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate

Document type: Advice and guidance

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Guidance on safe re-opening during the coronavirus pandemic for college, university and purpose built student accommodation (PBSA). This guidance is for university and college halls of residence and Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), hereafter 'providers'. It comes into effect on 22 July 2020 and will be updated and renewed as circumstances change. It sets out the current advice and guidance for the safe restart of university and college halls of residence and PBSA, in helping to minimise the risk of

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transmission of COVID-19. It is one of a set of Scottish Government sectoral guidance on Safer Workplaces which are applicable as we progress through the phases described in Coronavirus (COVID-19): Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis (21 May 2020), and any subsequent updates. The route map provides an indication of the order in which the Scottish Government will carefully and gradually seek to lift restrictions across Scottish society. It states the criteria used to decide movement between phases with a commitment to review and report every three weeks. Phase 1 commenced on 28 May 2020, with the First Minister announcing her intentions on Phase 2 on 18 June 2020, and the indicative dates for the remainder of Phase 2 and early Phase 3 on 24 June 2020.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-college-university-and-purpose-built-student-accommodation/>

COVID-19 Education Recovery Group Minutes: 18 June 2020

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government

Document type: Minutes

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Minutes and papers from 18 June 2020 meeting of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-education-recovery-group-minutes-18-june-2020/>

FE Circular 04/20 – FE Grants 2020/21

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Northern Ireland Executive

Document type: Circular

Geographical coverage: Northern Ireland

Details: This circular provides information and guidance on further education grants (formerly further education awards). It supersedes FE Circular 04/19 and covers the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/fe-circular-0420-fe-grants-202021>

FE Circular 05/20 – Hardship Fund

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Northern Ireland Executive

Document type: Circular

Geographical coverage: Northern Ireland

Details: This circular sets out terms and conditions for the payment of the Hardship Fund (Discretionary) from 1 August 2020. It supersedes FE Circular 05/19 and covers the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/fe-circular-0520-hardship-fund>

Qualifications in COVID-19 support packages

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Education and Skills Funding Agency

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: The qualifications Education and Skills Funding Agency will fund to support economic recovery following the COVID-19 outbreak. The Chancellor has agreed a package of measures to boost skills and support the labour market to recover from the COVID-19 outbreak. The package will:

- support young people at added risk of unemployment and help them access training to boost their employability
- sit alongside the guidance already issued for further education colleges

On 8 July 2020, the Chancellor announced exceptional funding as part of the wider COVID-19 skills recovery response. We are prioritising getting young people into work, an apprentice or other work-based training.

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Where these are not available, this is an offer of additional one-year courses in high value subjects to prevent students aged 18 and 19 from becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training).

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifications-in-covid-19-support-packages?utm_source=94e8fb88-2c74-404e-be36-b10fe4f67594&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Delivery of the HPV Vaccine and Impact of School Closures: Statement from the JCVI

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Department of Health and Social Care

Document type: Independent report

Geographical coverage: United Kingdom

Details: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's (JCVI) statement on delivery of the human papillomavirus (HPV) programme in light of school closures associated with coronavirus (COVID-19). This statement has been developed by the JCVI to acknowledge that the 2019 to 2020 vaccination programme has been disrupted due to COVID-19 and that now the priority of the programme is for all eligible children to receive at least the first dose of the HPV vaccine.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivery-of-the-hpv-vaccine-and-impact-of-school-closures-statement-from-the-jcvi?utm_source=8ae69e91-e530-4bc4-8fcf-46e61298cbcd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Help Children with SEND Continue their Education During Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Advice for parents and carers looking after children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Staying at home can be more disruptive to the lives and routines of children with special educational needs and disabilities. No one expects parents to act as teachers or childcare providers, or to provide the activities and feedback that a school or nursery would. Parents and carers should do their best to help and support their children with their learning while they are at home. If your child usually goes to school but is currently at home, their school should be working to provide them with work and giving them feedback in a format that meets their needs. Contact the school if you are not already in touch. We have been working with a range of other organisations to create extra resources to help you.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-with-send-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=67154f47-8b28-4f1c-98a0-9649cd594005&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Help Children Aged 2 to 4 Learn at Home During Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Advice for parents and carers of early years children who have not yet started school. No one expects parents to act as teachers or childcare providers. Or to be able to provide all the activities that a nursery might. While children gain a lot from nursery, things that parents do at home can help their development more.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=41c4c8b8-fb8f-4003-8180-7639fdf40e80&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

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Ten Top Tips to Encourage Children to Read

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Promotional material

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Short tips for parents of primary-aged children to make reading enjoyable during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-top-tips-to-encourage-children-to-read?utm_source=2320ec48-9777-43be-8336-ca691bbb9cfe&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Help Primary School Children Continue Their Education During Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Advice for parents and carers looking after primary school children. This guidance is an update to previously published advice. The updated information is about the re-opening of libraries and added link to *10 Top Tips to Encourage Children to Read*. This latest update includes:

- updated information on the re-opening of libraries
- a link to top tips to encourage children to read

While staying at home due to coronavirus (COVID-19), parents and carers may be concerned about their children's education and the effect of missing school. No one expects parents to act as teachers, or to provide the activities and feedback that a school would. Speak to your school, which will be planning work for your child to do. Parents and carers should do their best to help children and support their learning.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=13cf98ac-e634-4ab1-b375-cbdfb625bd56&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Help Secondary School Children Continue Their Education During Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Advice for parents and carers supporting the home learning of secondary school children (year 7 to 11). While staying at home due to coronavirus, parents and carers may be concerned about their children's education and the effect of missing school. Parents of year 11 students may also be worried about GCSEs and their child moving on to the next stage in life. No one expects parents to act as teachers, or to provide the activities and feedback that a school would. Speak to your school – your child's education is still their responsibility and they should be planning:

- achievable work for your child to do
- ways to give them feedback on their work
- ways to check on their overall progress

Schools are working quickly to adapt to the current situation, producing new materials and ways of teaching. If you have any concerns about your child's education or how work is being set for them, do not hesitate to speak to the school and let them know. This guidance is an update on previous advice. The addition is a banner updated with information about pupils returning to school in the autumn term.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-secondary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=66f412a7-b452-464d-bb0e-e593e77c657e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

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Supporting Your Children's Education During Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Information, guidance and support for parents and carers of children who are learning at home. This guidance is an update to previous advice. The change is a banner updated with information about pupils returning to school in the autumn term.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-your-childrens-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=fb7c5ed3-c5fc-482c-86de-85027b30b828&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Government Scheme to Help Universities in Financial Difficulties

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Press release

Geographical coverage: England

Details: New government scheme launched to support English universities at risk of insolvency. Universities facing severe financial difficulties as a result of the coronavirus will now be able to apply for further Government support, the Education Secretary has announced.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-scheme-to-help-universities-in-financial-difficulties?utm_source=7628aaf8-9d50-436d-a66e-41f1f7dbc958&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Higher Education Restructuring Regime

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Department of Education

Document type: Policy paper

Geographical coverage: England

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

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-restructuring-regime?utm_source=c6b5657a-9761-4d97-9c08-6df1e17cd536&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advisory Group on Education and Children's Issues – Advisory note on school transport

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government

Document type: Advice and Guidance

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Advisory note from the Coronavirus (COVID 19): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues about school transport.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advisory-sub-group-on-education-and-childrens-issues---advisory-note-on-school-transport/>

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Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advisory Group on Education and Children's Issues – Advisory note on physical distancing in schools

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government Learning Directorate

Document type: Advice and Guidance

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Advisory note from the Coronavirus (COVID 19): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues advice on physical distancing in schools.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advisory-sub-group-on-education-and-childrens-issues---advisory-note-on-physical-distancing-in-schools/>

Technical Advisory Group: Advice on Return to Schools

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Welsh Government

Document type: Report

Geographical coverage: Wales

Details: Advice recommending that schools in Wales plan to open in September proposed by the Children and Education subgroup on 7 July 2020.

<https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-advice-return-school>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children's Social Care Services

Date: Wednesday 15 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Advice about coronavirus (COVID-19) for local authorities and their partners to help support and protect vulnerable children. This guidance is for:

- local authorities
- those who have corporate parenting responsibilities
- local safeguarding partnerships
- social workers
- residential care providers and staff

This guidance is an update of previous advice. It updates the amendments to regulations section of the guidance for children's social care services.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services?utm_source=b9e0748d-84d6-4d31-b8da-a1ac3b527371&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Actions for FE Colleges and Providers During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

Date: Wednesday 15 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. This advice is for:

- post-16 further education (FE) provider
- FE college
- sixth form college
- other FE provider

The advice explains what you'll need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to maintain

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provision. This guidance updates previous advice giving added guidance on supporting vulnerable young people and specific advice for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to 'What FE colleges and providers will need to do from the start of the 2020 autumn term'.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision?utm_source=70fdc55c-eb20-4dbe-a717-806fdf749a0a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Providing Free School Meals During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

Date: Wednesday 15 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Guidance for schools and local authorities on free school meals arrangements during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This guidance will help schools and local authorities to continue providing free school meals to eligible pupils where:

- the pupil has to stay at home because they and/or wider family members are displaying coronavirus (COVID-19) related symptoms
- the school is only open for certain groups

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance?utm_source=e602537a-9ac2-489b-a734-a286b76503c7&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advisory Sub-group on Education and Children Issues Minutes: 14 July 2020

Date: Wednesday 15 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Minutes

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Minutes from the second meeting of the COVID-19 Advisory Group held on Tuesday 14 July 2020.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advisory-sub-group-on-education-and-childrens-issues-minutes-14-july-2020/>

Technical Advisory Group: Repeat Antibody Testing of School Staff

Date: Wednesday 15 July 2020

Source: Welsh Government

Document type: Report

Geographical coverage: Wales

Details: Statement on repeat antibody testing for school staff.

<https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-repeat-antibody-testing-school-staff>

Providing Apprenticeships During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

Date: Tuesday 14 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: This document sets out guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations in response to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is a difficult time for apprentices, employers and providers of apprenticeship training, assessment and external assurance. The government is committed to supporting apprentices, and employers continue to build the skills capabilities the country needs now and in the future. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responding by taking steps to ensure that, wherever possible, apprentices can continue and complete their apprenticeship, despite

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any break they need to take as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), and to support providers during this challenging time. This document sets out guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations in response to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19). It outlines the changes that the Education and Skills Funding Agency is making to the apprenticeship programme during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. With the introduction of urgent government measures to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and a rapidly developing situation, these guidelines reflect arrangements applied at the current time.

developments.https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response?utm_source=6afd8180-d3e9-4688-bdb4-085b119b15af&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Initial Teacher Training (ITT)

Date: Tuesday 14 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Information for providers about managing initial teacher training courses impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19). It covers:

- how to manage courses for current trainees in the 2019 to 2020 academic year
- how to make recommendations for qualified teacher status
- how to manage the delivery of different routes
- guidance on recruitment and selection for the 2020 to 2021 academic year

This guidance is an update of previously published advice.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-initial-teacher-training-itt?utm_source=75e5d370-4bc1-4597-b489-dcac3a080839&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Attendance in Education and Early Years Settings During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak: 23 March to 9 July 2020

Date: Tuesday 14 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Official statistics

Geographical coverage: England

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

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak-23-march-to-9-july-2020?utm_source=620aea92-7a6b-4d16-bf15-837e6c7f3a75&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

The Relaxation of School Reporting Requirements (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020

Date: Tuesday 14 July 2020

Source: Welsh Government

Document type: Delegated legislation

Geographical coverage: Wales

Details: These Regulations relax a number of requirements on schools as a result of COVID-19.

<https://gov.wales/relaxation-school-reporting-requirements-wales-coronavirus-regulations-2020>

Guidance on Testing and Contact Tracing in Education Settings

Date: Tuesday 14 July 2020

Source: Welsh Government

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Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: Wales

Details: Information on the antigen (swab) and antibody (blood) tests and contact tracing. This guidance is an update to that issued on 3 July.

<https://gov.wales/guidance-testing-and-contact-tracing-education-settings>

Taking Exams During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

Date: Monday 13 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: What schools, colleges and students need to know about cancelled GCSEs, AS and A levels and other qualifications in 2020, and the plans for taking future exams. This guidance is an update on previously published advice. It removes some questions relating to outdated information, included a new question with more detail on centre assessment grades, added detail on timings, added detail on the autumn series of exams added new section on 2021 exams arrangements.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020?utm_source=b51c5880-157a-4ac2-8155-57d2c526ff9e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

COVID Summer Food Fund

Date: Monday 13 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Guidance for schools and local authorities on providing vouchers to support pupils eligible for free school meals over the summer holiday period during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

This guidance is an update on previously published advice.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-summer-food-fund?utm_source=84db8db6-6acd-446d-a99c-0b15def622fa&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Guidance on Learning in Schools and Settings from the Autumn Term: Keep Education Safe (COVID-19)

Date: Monday 13 July 2020

Source: Welsh Government

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: Wales

Details: This guidance provides advice on learning and teaching that schools and settings may wish to provide from the autumn term. It is original guidance.

<https://gov.wales/guidance-learning-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

Operational Guidance for Schools and Settings from the Autumn Term: Keep Education Safe (COVID-19)

Date: Monday 13 July 2020

Source: Welsh Government

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: Wales

Details: How schools and other providers can make their sites safe for staff and learners.

<https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

Policy papers published last week

Higher Education Restructuring Regime

Author: -

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Policy paper

Published: Thursday 16 July, 2020

Reference: DfE-00121-2020

Geographical coverage: England

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

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

Apprenticeship Funding

Author: -

Source: Education and Skills Funding Agency

Document type: Policy paper

Published: Tuesday 14 July, 2020

Reference:

Geographical coverage: England

Description: These five documents show how the government funds apprenticeships in England, including details of funding bands and the apprenticeship levy, dating back to reforms that were introduced in May 2017. Each paper explains the apprenticeship funding policy that applies to apprentices that started after a specific date.

- *Apprenticeship funding in England (from August 2020)* applies to apprentices who started after 1 August 2020.
- *Apprenticeship funding for employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy (from January 2020)* outlines changes to the way employers who do not pay the levy arrange their apprenticeships.
- *Apprenticeship funding in England (from April 2019)* applies to apprentices who started after 1 April 2019.
- *Apprenticeship funding in England (from August 2018)* applies to apprentices who started after 1 August 2018.
- *Apprenticeship funding in England (from May 2017)* applies to apprentices who started after 1 May 2017 up to 31 July 2018.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding>

Statutory Notice to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

Author: Gillian Keegan MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Apprenticeships and Skills

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Policy paper in the form of a statutory letter

Published: Tuesday 14 July, 2020

Reference:

Geographical coverage: England

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Description: The Government has issued supplementary statutory notice to IfATE for the financial year 2020 to 2021 following the government's response to the consultation on improving higher technical education.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/899804/Statutory_notice_IfATE.pdf

Higher Technical Education Reforms

Author: -

Document type: Policy paper outlines what the government will do to reform higher technical education following a consultation held in 2019.

Published: Tuesday 14 July, 2020

Reference:

Geographical coverage: England

Description: This paper shows what the government will do to reform higher technical education following a consultation held in 2019. It explains the government's plans to introduce a national scheme to approve higher technical qualifications following a consultation, held in 2019, on Improving higher technical education and an independent consultation analysis published in July 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-technical-education-reforms>

Traineeships

Author: Andy Powell

Source: House of Commons Library

Document type: House of Commons Research Briefing

Published: Friday 17 July, 2020

Reference: CBP-7305

Geographical coverage: England

Description: This note provides background on traineeships: what they are, what they entail, how they are funded, and guidance for prospective employers and providers.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7305/>

Youth Unemployment Statistics

Authors: Andy Powell, Brigid Francis-Devine and Niamh Foley

Source: House of Commons Library

Document type: House of Commons Research Briefing/Statistical Note

Published: Thursday 16 July, 2020

Reference: SN 05871

Geographical coverage: England

Description: This paper presents the latest statistics on youth unemployment in the UK as well as comparisons with other EU countries.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05871/>

Higher Education Student Numbers

Author: Paul Bolton

Source: House of Commons Library

Document type: Commons Research Briefing

Published: Tuesday 14 July, 2020

Reference: CBP 7857

Geographical coverage: England

Description: Headline student numbers have increased to new records following a short dip after to the 2012 reforms. There are however ongoing concerns about numbers outside this group where trends have not been so positive, including part-time undergraduates, some postgraduates students, overseas students

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from some countries, especially Nigeria and Malaysia, mature students and some disadvantaged groups. There is also considerable concern about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and student numbers, particularly those from overseas and uncertainty about the impact of Brexit on EU student numbers.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7857/>

Summer Born Children: Starting school

Author: Robert Long

Source: House of Commons Library

Document type: House of Commons Research Brief

Published: Monday 13 July, 2020

Reference: CBP 7272

Geographical coverage: England

Description: This House of Commons Library briefing paper provides an overview of the flexibility for parents of summer-born children in England to request for their children to be admitted to school outside of their normal age group, and potential future changes.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7272/>

Funding for Healthcare Students in England

Authors: Paul Bolton and Susan Hubble

Source: House of Commons Library

Document type: House of Commons Research Brief

Published: Monday 13 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/>

Building a Country That Works for All Children Post COVID-19

Author: -

Source: Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS)

Document type: Policy discussion paper

Published: Tuesday 14 July, 2020

Reference: -

Geographical coverage: England

Description: This discussion paper focuses on the impacts of COVID-19 on children and their families, in order to put their lived experiences front and centre in national recovery planning whilst also articulating what is needed to restore and reset the support services they rely on. It is reviewed on pages 46 and 47 above.

<https://adcs.org.uk/general-subject/article/building-a-country-that-works-for-all-children-post-covid-19>

Consultations published last week

There were no consultations on education, training or children's services published last week, but there were two consultation outcomes published.

Changes to Ofsted's Post-inspection Processes and Complaints Handling: Proposed improvements

This is a report on the outcomes of the consultation on the proposals for changes to Ofsted's post-inspection arrangements and complaints handling. In total, Ofsted received 622 online responses to the consultation from external bodies. This includes responses from provider-representative bodies, individual providers and other service users. It also received a small number of additional responses to the proposals from provider-representative bodies in correspondence. This response level is significantly higher than when Ofsted last consulted on proposed changes to its complaints-handling arrangements in 2012. After considering all the consultation responses received, Ofsted plans to implement the new arrangements. In response to consultation feedback, this includes providing additional time for formal complaints to be submitted from that originally proposed, now allowing providers five working days to do so.

Reference: -

Department or agency: Ofsted

Geographical coverage: England

Document type: Consultation outcome document.

This consultation response published: Thursday 16 July 2020

The original consultation ran from 3 March to 30 April 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-ofsteds-post-inspection-processes-and-complaints-handling-proposed-improvements/outcome/changes-to-ofsteds-post-inspection-processes-and-complaints-handling-report-on-the-responses-to-the-consultation>

Improving Higher Technical Education

The DfE claims that there is clear and growing employer demand for the skills that higher technical education (HTE) provides, and there are good economic outcomes for students completing higher technical courses. Despite this, participation is low compared to other levels of education and many of our international competitors. In England, only 1 in 10 people has a level 4 or 5 qualification as their highest qualification; in Germany it's double that. As the Augar report set out: "England needs a stronger technical and vocational education system at sub-degree levels to meet the structural skills shortages that are in all probability contributing to the UK's weak productivity performance".

Last September the government held an online public consultation on its proposals to address these issues and reform classroom-based HTE in England. This was supplemented by six consultation events across the country and a user insights project carried out in autumn 2019. These plans are one part of the government's reform agenda. It will be bringing forward a further education white paper in the autumn and is also considering its response to the Augar report as part of the Spending Review.

Reference: -

Department or agency: Department for Education

Geographical coverage: England

Document type: Consultation outcome document.

This consultation response published: Tuesday 14 July 2020

The original consultation ran from 8 July to 29 September 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/899544/Higher_technical_education_government_response_to_the_consulation.pdf

Education and children statistics

Every 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 education and children's services. 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.

Children Order January to March 2020

17 July 2020 NISRA, NICTS and DoJ(NI) Official statistics

The Order creates a code of law governing the care, protection and upbringing of children and the provision of services to them and their families. It confers concurrent jurisdiction on all three tiers of the courts (High Court, county courts and magistrates' courts) so that any court can make any of the orders available under the Order. This bulletin provides information on throughput of Children Order business in Northern Ireland across the magistrates (Family Proceedings Courts), county (Family Care Centre) and High courts. This bulletin covers the period January to March 2020 and commentary on trends observed for this quarter in each year from 2010.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-order-january-to-march-2020>

Education and Training

16 July 2020 DfE Statistical data set

These files give Information on education and training by participation and achievements, including offender learning. This statistical data set includes information on education and training participation and achievements broken down into a number of reports including sector subject areas, participation by gender, age, ethnicity and disability participation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-education-and-training>

Apprenticeships and Traineeships Data

16 July 2020 DfE Statistical data set

These files give information on the number of apprenticeship starts, achievements, and participation, and additional traineeship measures. These tables also include additional learner information such as:

- sector subject area (SSA)
- frameworks and standards
- geography (region, LAD, PCON)
- demographics (e.g. gender, age, LDD, ethnicity)
- provider information

This section also includes tables for traineeships, reporting starts, completions and progressions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

Further Education and Skills Data

16 July 2020 DfE and ESFA Statistical data set

These files give information on learners, learning programmes and learner achievement. This includes information on learners who are studying on a course at a further education college, learners

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studying courses within their local community, employees undertaking an apprenticeship, and employees undertaking other qualifications in the workplace. Note: data on providers is only published annually.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-further-education-and-skills>

National Pupil Projections: July 2020

16 July 2020

DfE

Official statistics

This single file gives national projections for the number of pupils in schools by type of school and age group. Actual and projected figures for the pupil population for most school types within England. The release also sets out overall actual and projected figures by age group.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-pupil-projections-july-2020>

Academy Transfers and Funding

16 July 2020

DfE

Official statistics

These four files give information on grant funding for academies that have changed trust in the past seven financial years. The report analyses the number of academies that have moved trusts from the financial year 2013 to 2014 to 2019 to 2020 and the total grant funding provided. It will also compare the reason that academies move trust. The spreadsheet lists all the academies that have moved trusts and the funding provided for the same period, along with the reason for moving trust.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/academy-transfers-and-funding>

Further Education and Skills: July 2020

16 July 2020

DfE

National statistics

These 19 files provide further education and skills data, including apprenticeships, for the first three quarters of the 2019 to 2020 academic year in England (August 2019 to April 2020, reported to date). This comprises adult (aged 19 and over) government-funded further education (excluding schools and higher education) comprising:

- education and training
- English and maths
- community learning

Additional data relating to all age apprenticeships (participation and achievements) are also being published for the first time in this release along with further breakdowns of the apprenticeship starts covering this same time frame, as published in the Apprenticeship and traineeships: June 2020 statistics publication. Headline further education figures include traineeships and apprenticeships where appropriate. Further breakdowns of these data are available in the FE data library. Commentary and statistics specific to the last full academic year can be found in the Further education and skills: November 2019 statistics publication.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-july-2020>

Attendance at Local Authority Settings During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: 6 to 10 July 2020

16 July 2020

WG

Welsh Government statistics

Attendance of children and staff on weekdays (excluding bank holidays) at local authority settings during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic for 6 to 10 July 2020. This is an update of the report last published two days earlier. Data has now been provided by three further authorities: Wrexham, Blaenau Gwent and Cardiff. This report contains data collected from local authorities on the attendance of children at schools. This is the second week since 23 March that schools were open for children other than vulnerable children or children of critical workers. We are publishing this data to support transparency and understanding of the process of reopening schools in Wales.

<https://gov.wales/attendance-local-authority-settings-during-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-6-10-july-2020>

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State-funded School Inspections and Outcomes: Management information

15 July 2020

DfE

Statistical data set

These files provide 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 9 July 2020

14 July 2020

DfE

Official statistics

These two files provide 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, 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-9-july-2020>

Abbreviations

BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
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
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
NHS	National Health 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
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PHE	Public Health England

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QW	Qualifications Wales
SfW	Statistics for Wales
SGALSD	Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate
SGCED	Scottish Government Chief Economist Directorate
SGCFD	Scottish Government Children and Families Directorate
SGELCPD	Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare Directorate
SGMHD	Scottish Government Mental Health Directorate
SGPHD	Scottish Government Public Health Directorate
SGLD	Scottish Government Learning Directorate
SLC	Student Loans Company
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
STA	Standards and Testing Agency
SW	StatsWales
YJANI	Youth Justice Agency for Northern Ireland
YJBEW	Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
WG	Welsh Government

Statutory instruments issued last week

The Early Years Foundation Stage (Exemption from Learning and Development Requirements) and Childcare (Exemption from Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

Year and number: 2020/700

Enabling power: Childcare Act 2006, ss. 33 (2) (3), 34 (3) (4), 46 (1) (1A), 52 (2) (3), 53 (3) (4).

Issued: 13.07.2020.

Sifted: -.

Made: 06.07.2020.

Laid: 08.07.2020.

Coming into force: In accord. with reg. 1 (2) (3).

Effect: S.I. 2008/979 amended.

Geographical coverage: England.

Classification: General.

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

ISBN: 9780348209624.

Details: These Regulations provide for an exemption to the learning and development requirements as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (“the Framework Document”) for schools taking part in the EYFS Reforms Early Adopters Scheme (“the Scheme”).

Regulation 2 enables the Secretary of State to direct that the learning and development requirements set out in sections 1 and 2 of the Framework Document do not apply, or apply with modifications, to schools providing early years provision who are participating in the Scheme.

Regulation 3 prescribes that only schools who have agreed to participate in the Scheme may be granted an exemption.

Regulation 4 provides that a direction may only apply for the period commencing on 1st September 2020 and ending on 31st August 2021 and that schools will only be exempt from section 1 and part of section 2 of the Framework Document.

Regulation 5 provides for the Secretary of State to impose conditions to a direction exempting a school from the learning and development requirements.

Regulation 6 amends Article 6(2)(a) of the Childcare (Exemptions from Registration) Order 2008 relating to exempt activity-based provision. This clarifies that the whole period covering the early years provision, including the activity listed under article 6(3) of the 2008 Order, must be four hours or less per day otherwise the exemption does not apply. This change takes effect from 1 October 2020.

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

The Education (Student Support) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) (No. 2) Regulations 2020

Year and number: 2020/708 (W.159)

Enabling power: Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998, ss. 22 (2) (a) (e) (g), 42 (6).

Issued: 14.07.2020.

Sifted: -.

Made: 08.07.2020.

Laid before Senedd Cymru: 09.07.2020.

Coming into force: 31.07.2020.

Effect: S.I. 2017/47 (W. 21); 2018/191 (W. 42) amended.

Geographical coverage: Wales

Classification: General.

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

ISBN: 9780348205824.

Details: These Regulations are made under the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 (“the 1998 Act”) and they amend—

(a) The Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (“the 2017 Regulations”), and

(b) The Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 (“the 2018 Regulations”).

The 2017 Regulations provide for financial support for eligible students taking designated higher education courses which begin before 1 September 2018. Part 2 of these Regulations amends regulation 62 of the 2017 Regulations which concerns, amongst other things, the recovery by the Welsh Ministers of overpayments of loans for living costs. The way in which the Welsh Ministers may recover such overpayments no longer depends on whether a student has failed to provide information or has provided inaccurate information. Regulation 62 also enables the Welsh Ministers to require a student to repay an overpayment in accordance with regulations made under section 22 of the 1998 Act.

The 2018 Regulations provide for financial support for eligible students taking designated higher education courses which begin on or after 1 September 2018. Part 3 of these Regulations amends the 2018 Regulations.

Regulation 5 amends regulation 19 (early termination of eligibility) so that a student undertaking a distance learning course outside the United Kingdom for a reason related to coronavirus will remain eligible for funding.

Regulation 6 amends regulation 39 (qualifying conditions for tuition fee loan) to remove the requirement for a student undertaking a distance learning course to be in Wales on the first day of that course, in cases where the absence relates to coronavirus.

Regulation 7 amends regulation 44 (qualifying conditions for base grant and maintenance grant) to remove the requirement for a student undertaking a distance learning course to be in Wales on the first day of that course, in cases where the absence relates to coronavirus.

Regulation 8 amends regulation 54 (qualifying conditions for maintenance loan) to remove the requirement for a student undertaking a distance learning course to be in Wales on the first day of that course, in cases where the absence relates to coronavirus.

Regulation 9 amends regulation 62 (qualifying conditions for disabled student’s grant) to remove the requirement for a student undertaking a distance learning course to be in Wales on the first day of that course, in cases where the absence relates to coronavirus.

Regulation 10 substitutes a new regulation 91 (recovery of overpayments of maintenance loans) into the 2018 Regulations. The way in which the Welsh Ministers may recover such overpayments no longer depends on whether a student has failed to provide information or has provided inaccurate information. Regulation 91 also enables the Welsh Ministers to require a student to repay an overpayment in accordance with regulations made under section 22 of the 1998 Act.

The Welsh Ministers’ Code of Practice on the carrying out of Regulatory Impact Assessments was considered in relation to these Regulations. As a result, a regulatory impact assessment has been prepared as to the likely costs and benefits of complying with these Regulations. A copy can be obtained from the Higher Education Division, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ.

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The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

Year and number: 2020/712

Enabling power: Childcare Act 2016, ss. 1 (2) (4), 2 (1) (2), 4 (2).

Issued: 15.07.2020.

Sifted: -.

Made: 08.07.2020.

Laid: 10.07.2020.

Coming into force: 31.07.2020.

Effect: S.I. 2016/1257 amended.

Geographical coverage: England.

Classification: General.

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

ISBN: 9780348209716.

Details: These Regulations amend the Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016 (“the 2016 Regulations”) which set out detailed requirements that a person must satisfy in order to receive free childcare for children of working parents in England pursuant to the Childcare Act 2016 (c.5) (the “2016 Act”).

Under regulation 4(5) of the 2016 Regulations, to be eligible for the 30 hours free childcare provided for in section 1(1) of the 2016 Act the adjusted net income of a parent (or the partner of the parent) must not be expected to exceed £100,000 in a given tax year. The amendment in regulation 4 of these Regulations changes that eligibility condition in relation to the 2020-21 tax year so that it can be met by a parent (or the partner of the parent) who expects their adjusted net income to exceed £100,000 but not to exceed £150,000, provided the parent (or the partner of the parent) is a critical worker and all the income exceeding £100,000 is mainly attributable to earnings from work undertaken directly or indirectly as a result of coronavirus.

The amendment in regulation 5 makes provisions for foster parents which are similar to the provisions made for parents and any partner of the parent in regulation 4.

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

An Explanatory Memorandum is published alongside this instrument on www.legislation.gov.uk.

The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

Year and number: 2020/136

Enabling power: S.I. 1984/1159 (N.I. 9), arts 23 (2)(3), 24 (3) (4).

Issued: 15.07.2020.

Made: 08.07.2020.

Laid: 09.07.2020.

Coming into operation: 31.08.2020.

Effect: None.

Geographical coverage: Northern Ireland.

Classification: General. Statutory Rule of Northern Ireland.

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

ISBN: 9780338013163.

Details: This Order gives effect to proposals submitted by the Construction Industry Training Board to the Department for the Economy for the imposition of a further levy upon employers in the construction industry for the purpose of raising money towards the expenses of the Board.

The levy is to be imposed in respect of the fifty-sixth levy period, commencing on 1st September

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2020 and ending on 31st August 2021. The levy will be assessed by the Board and will be payable in two instalments. There will be a right of appeal against an assessment to an industrial tribunal.

The levy rate of 0.55% in respect of relevant earnings remains the same as the rate operating during the preceding levy period which expires on 31st August 2020 (see Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 (S.R. 2019 No. 155)).

As in the previous levy period there will be no remission of levy given to employers in the industry.

An employer will be exempt from levy in the fifty-sixth levy period where the relevant earnings are less than £80,000.

Parliamentary calendar

Debates and answers to oral questions that took place in Parliament last week and yesterday

<u>Date</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Subject</u>
14.7.20	Lords	Oral question	Ethnic diversity in teaching and learning
15.7.20	Commons	Oral questions, DfID	Education aid after COVID-19
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

Future debates and oral questions sessions

<u>Date</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Subject</u>
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 yesterday

<u>Date</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Subject or type of activity</u>
14.7.20	Commons	Justice	Children and young people in custody
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

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Future committee meetings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Subject</u>
21.7.20	Commons	Science & Technology	COVID-19
21.7.20	Lords	Science & Technology (Lords)	COVID-19
22.7.20	Commons	Education	COVID-19 and education and children's services
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

Returning to education after COVID-19

David Evennett (Con, Bexleyheath and Crayford) asked the Secretary of State what steps her Department was taking to help children in developing countries to return to education after the COVID-19 pandemic. (House of Commons, oral questions to the Department for International Development, 15 July 2020.) The Secretary of State for International Development, Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Con, Berwick-upon-Tweed) said that her Department had recently announced £5.3 million of new funding to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to enable over 5,000 teachers to provide education in 10 refugee hosting countries.

David Evennett asked how the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office would assist the Global Partnership for Education replenishment in 2021. Anne-Marie Trevelyan said that the UK was the largest bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education, as it had committed up to £225 million over a three-year period. She pointed out that as a major education multilateral, the UK Government had a key role in tackling the global learning crisis. Ms Trevelyan pointed out that the GPE was flexing about £400 million to support education stability, and the UK was keen to play an active part in the 2021 replenishment. She added that the UK Government was currently exploring the possibility of co-hosting the replenishment.

Sarah Champion (Lab, Rotherham) pointed out that IMC Worldwide had been commissioned by DfID to build 31,000 classrooms in Pakistan for a fee of £107 million. But she added that while it had renegotiated to only build a fifth, it had kept 58% of the initial fee. Ms Champion said that the majority of the classrooms that had been built had been substandard and they presented a risk to children, and by October 2019, only a quarter had been retrofitted. She asked the Secretary of State to put the two DfID reviews into what had gone wrong in the public domain and why the same classroom design was being used in other countries.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan said that as soon as DfID had been alerted to the problem, it had taken urgent action to ensure that all schools knew that the buildings should not be used, while the Department worked with the contractor to agree a plan for retrofitting the affected buildings. She said that while COVID-19 has caused some delays, the first of the buildings would be handed over shortly, in a state that had been considered acceptable.

Ethnic diversity in medical teaching

Baroness Thornton (Lab) asked the Government what steps it was taking to ensure that ethnic diversity would be fully reflected in all aspects of medical teaching and learning. (House of Lords, oral question debate, 14 July 2020.) The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care, Lord Bethell (Con) said that the General Medical Council had set standards to ensure that students and doctors in training had the opportunity to understand the needs of patients from diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. He added that Health Education England provided a learning module on equality, diversity and human rights for all health and social care staff.

Baroness Thornton said that while society was multiracial, training of doctors, nurses and medical technicians did not reflect this, and she questioned whether current clinical language and learning had exacerbated the dangers to patients from a BAME background during the pandemic. Lord Bethell said that diversity awareness had been built into training and extra programmes would be added to the People Plan that would be published shortly. Lord Boateng (Lab) said that in health education, there was underrepresentation of the black British community in student entry, among academic staff and in attainment. Lord Bethell said that the recruitment of new nurses, GPs and new trainees into our medical colleges would be undertaken with a much greater focus on attracting those from BAME communities.

The following written questions were answered in Parliament last week.

House of Commons

Department for Education

Academic Year: Free School Meals

Stuart Anderson: [68793] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress the Government has made on allocating funding through the Holiday Activities and Food scheme.

Vicky Ford: The Holiday Activities and Food programme are integral to our approach to provide healthy food to children over the summer. It will ensure thousands of disadvantaged children have access to healthy meals and holiday activities in summer 2020 – building on the success of the 2018 and 2019 programmes – and remaining committed to supporting children and families through the disruption caused by COVID-19. On Monday 22 June the Department for Education published an announcement with the details of the Holiday Activities and Food programme and the areas that were successful in receiving the funding for 2020. Grant funding was allocated based on a competitive bidding process. The successful bidders and areas are:

- StreetGames (Newcastle, North East region);
- Gateshead Council (Gateshead - North East region);
- Edsential (Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Wirral - North West region);
- Spring North (Blackburn with Darwen - North West);
- Leeds Community Foundation (Leeds and Bradford - Yorkshire & the Humber region);
- Voluntary Action Sheffield (Sheffield - Yorkshire & the Humber region);
- Suffolk County Council (Suffolk - East of England region);
- Mayor's Fund for London (Lambeth and Southwark - London);
- Tower Hamlets Local Authority (Tower Hamlets - London);
- The Romsey School (Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight - South East region).

Monday 13 July 2020

Black Curriculum

Harriet Harman: [70951] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will implement the recommendations of the Black Curriculum.

Nick Gibb: The Department has responded directly to The Black Curriculum's campaign. The reply sets out in detail how the history curriculum already enables the teaching of Black history, as do other curriculums across other subject areas. The substance of our reply to The Black Curriculum is based on the national curriculum's history programmes of study, available at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-historyprogrammes-of-study>.

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.

Monday 13 July 2020

Children and Young People: Internet

Helen Hayes: [71112] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for how long his Department plans to pay for internet access, through broadband or 4G routers, for children and young people eligible for technology support.

Nick Gibb: The Government has committed over £100 million to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children in England to access remote education and online social care services, including by providing laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers. Where care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school and disadvantaged children in year 10 do not have internet connections, we have provided 4G wireless routers to them so that they can learn at home. The 4G wireless routers will provide paid-for internet access for six months from when they are delivered to the local authority or academy trust. The Department has launched a service to provide children and young people free access to BT wi-fi hotspots until the end of December – this date will remain under review. 10,000 families will initially be able to access the scheme. This offer is currently being piloted and will be rolled out across England in the coming months. We are currently working with BT to expand this offer to allow more children to access the internet through their network of BT wi-fi hotspots. We are also working with the major telecommunications companies to improve internet connectivity for disadvantaged and vulnerable families. For families who rely on a mobile internet connection, mobile network operators are working to provide access to free additional data while COVID-19 requires children to learn from home and more social care services are being delivered online.

Monday 13 July 2020

COVID-19 Education Catch-up Fund

Nick Fletcher: [67816] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether academies attended by 16 to 19-year-olds will have access to the £1 billion support package to tackle the impact of lost teaching time.

Nick Gibb: The £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package is made up of £650 million to be shared across state primary and secondary schools over the 2020/21 academic year, and a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, which will increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged pupils over the 2020/21 academic year.

We will announce further details of how these will operate as soon as possible. We are committed to supporting all children and young people to make up for time spent out of education. We know that remote education has been working well for many students in post-16 education, and 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.

Monday 13 July 2020

Foreign Students: Fees and Charges

Simon Baynes: [70523] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the numbers of overseas students of the difference in tuition fees for British nationals living in Britain and those who have lived overseas for longer than three years.

Michelle Donelan: To qualify for home fee status in England, a person must have settled status or a recognised connection to the United Kingdom and meet the relevant ordinary residence requirements. Most persons must have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands or, in some cases, the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the 3 years prior to the first day of the first academic year of their course, excluding periods of temporary absence. No assessment has been made of the number of British nationals who do not qualify for home fee status in England by virtue of their residence.

Monday 13 July 2020

Free School Meals: Immigrants

Stephen Timms: [70952] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what criteria he plans to use to determine for how long families with No Recourse to Public Funds will have access to free school meals; and if he will make a statement.

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 extension of free school meal eligibility to these groups will continue while the COVID-19 outbreak impacts upon schools, and it includes access to the COVID Summer Food Fund.

Monday 13 July 2020

Music: Education

Diana Johnson: [63253] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) education providers undertake appropriate risk assessments in relation to teaching music in education settings which are (i) shared with all staff and their representatives before any individual can be required to return to work during the covid-19 outbreak and (ii) take account of risks arising from (A) choirs and singing, (B) wind ensembles and (C) other circumstances specific to music teaching and (b) no music teacher is penalised or suffers detriment for raising or acting on health and safety concerns in respect of that outbreak.

Nick Gibb: On 2 July we published guidance to help schools plan for a full return of all pupils in September, which includes guidance on music lessons. Schools are advised to note that there may be an additional risk of infection in environments where individuals are singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments or shouting. This applies even if individuals are at a distance.

Schools should consider how to reduce the risk, particularly when pupils are playing instruments or singing in small groups such as in music lessons by, for example, physical distancing and playing outside wherever possible, limiting group sizes to no more than 15, positioning pupils back-to-back or side-to-side, avoiding sharing of instruments, and ensuring good ventilation. Singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as school choirs and ensembles, or school assemblies. The Department plans to publish further guidance regarding music lessons shortly. The guidance for full opening of schools in September can be read at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during->

Monday 13 July 2020

National Careers Service: Finance

Chi Onwurah: [71048] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government's policy paper, A plan for jobs, published on 8 July 2020, how the additional £32 million for the National Careers Service will be funded; and whether that funding will be used to encourage STEM career paths.

Gillian Keegan: HM Treasury will provide £32 million in additional funding to the Department for Education over the next two years. The funding will ensure that 269,000 more people in England will receive impartial and tailored information, advice and guidance to meet their individual needs and circumstances within the context of current economic circumstances. The careers advice provided will draw on labour market trends and growth areas including opportunities available in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers.

Monday 13 July 2020

Overseas Students: USA

Emma Hardy: [70486] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the recent decision of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement that international students offered only online university courses in that country must leave the US, whether he plans to take steps to encourage international students to study in the UK.

Michelle Donelan: The government has been clear that our world-leading universities, which thrive on being global institutions, will always be open to international students. Engaging closely with the devolved administrations and the higher education sector, we are working to reassure prospective international students that UK higher education is 'open for business', remains-world class and is a safe place to study. This includes continued work with Study UK (the government's international student recruitment campaign led by the British Council), support for the sector-led #WeAreTogether campaign and a package of bespoke communications that will directly target prospective international students, making clear our world-leading offer.

We are also taking steps to promote the new graduate route, which will provide a non-extendable period of leave to stay and work in the UK at any skill level. The government announced on 1 July, as part of the new graduate route, that international students who complete a PhD from summer 2021 can stay in the UK for 3 years after study to live and work. Students who have successfully completed undergraduate and master's degrees will be able to stay for 2 years. This represents a significant improvement in our offer to international students and will help ensure our higher education sector remains competitive internationally.

Furthermore, on 22 June, with my counterparts in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, I wrote to prospective international students to outline the support and guidance available to international students who are considering studying in the UK from the autumn:

https://studyuk.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/letter_to_prospective_international_students.pdf

This letter reiterates a number of flexibilities that the government has already announced for international students including, amongst other mitigations, confirmation that distance/blended learning will be permitted for the 2020/21 academic year provided that international students' sponsors intend to transition to face-to-face learning as soon as circumstances allow, and that international students present

in the UK before 6 April 2021 will be eligible for the graduate route if they meet the other requirements of the route when it is introduced in summer 2021.

Guidance published on 24 March provides a temporary work-around for students who need to undertake distance learning due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This is reiterated in guidance for short-term and Tier 4 students updated on 1 June: www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tier-4-sponsors-migrants-and-short-term-students.

The government is also in discussions with Universities UK and other sector representatives on a regular basis to ensure we are united in welcoming international students to the UK. In particular, we expect international students to be appropriately supported upon arrival by their chosen university during these unprecedented times – especially those who will be subject to the 14-day self-isolation period.

The UK's new International Education Champion, Sir Steve Smith, will assist with opening up export growth opportunities for the whole UK education sector, which will include attracting international students to UK universities. Alongside Sir Steve's appointment, our review of the International Education Strategy this autumn will respond to the new context and the challenges posed by COVID-19 across all education settings to ensure we can continue to welcome international students in the future.

Monday 13 July 2020

Supply Teachers: Coronavirus

Layla Moran: [71154] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with supply teaching agencies on (a) furlough and (b) income support for supply teachers over the 2020 summer holidays.

Nick Gibb: 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. The Government has provided clear guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in relation to agencies and agency workers. This guidance can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-which-employees-you-can-put-on-furlough-to-use-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme#agency-workers-including-those-employed-by-umbrella-companies>.

Schools are under no obligation to continue to pay supply teachers that they directly hire or hire via agencies once the supply teacher's contract has ended. Typically, supply teachers are not contracted to work over the summer holidays when schools are closed. Supply teachers employed via an agency who had previously been furloughed via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for at least 3 consecutive weeks, taking place any time between 1 March 2020 and 30 June, can continue to be furloughed until the scheme ends on 31 October, so long as their employer chooses to continue to furlough them.

Monday 13 July 2020

Children: Coronavirus

Thangam Debbonaire: [69596] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he will take to ensure that there is adequate home-school provision and support for children who are unable to return to school in September 2020 because they are shielding.

Nick Gibb: We now know much more about COVID-19 and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. 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 will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should monitor engagement with this activity. Further information is available in our guidance on the full reopening of schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Construction Industry Training Board

Alex Norris: [69651] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of ending the Construction Industry Training Board levy.

Gillian Keegan: There is no assessment planned with regards to the merits of ending the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) levy. The most recent assessment completed as a tailored review, was undertaken, and published in November 2017. As well as providing several recommendations to CITB, it concluded that the current levy process was the most appropriate way to specifically support and incentivise the sector.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Students: Transport

Gareth Davies: [69749] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that students in (a) Lincolnshire and (b) other rural areas have an adequate transport service to reach their place of work under the T-level requirement to do 315 hours of work experience.

Gillian Keegan: Decisions about transport, including in Lincolnshire, are a matter for local transport authorities, working with transport operators. However, students should not be prevented from undertaking a T Level industry placement due to the additional transport costs. Therefore, we are taking a number of steps to ensure that students are able to access placements regardless of where they live. We have increased the travel bursaries that young people can draw on to help with travel costs and providers can use the T Level Capacity and Delivery Fund to help with travel costs.

Additionally, the National Apprenticeships Service has been looking to encourage more employers including small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to offer placements as SMEs make up the majority of employers in rural areas. We are also looking at imaginative and innovative approaches to student transport which already exist and enable greater access to placements, in particular for students in rural areas, and how we can foster these approaches more widely for T Levels.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Universities: Scotland

Mhairi Black: [70430] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he made an assessment of the

implications for Scottish universities of his policy on student number controls announced on 4 May 2020.

Mhairi Black: [70431] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he had with the (a) Scottish Government and (b) Scottish Funding Council prior to his announcement of 4 May 2020 that student number controls would be implemented in Scottish universities.

Michelle Donelan: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and I have regular meetings with Scottish ministers, and ministers from all the devolved administrations, about higher education issues. These discussions have included the development of student number controls policy. Departmental officials also have regular meetings and discussions with their counterparts. Student number controls are a direct response to COVID-19. They are designed to minimise the impact to the financial threat posed by the outbreak and form a key part of the package of measures to stabilise the admissions system.

We want to make sure that university places are available to all who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so. These controls are a temporary measure and will be in place for one academic year only. Student number controls for institutions in the devolved administrations only apply to the number of English-domiciled entrants who will be supported with their tuition fees through the Student Loans Company, and are set at a level which will allow every institution to take more first year English students than they took last year.

The funding of English-domiciled students is not a devolved matter, and it is right and fair that this policy should apply as consistently as possible wherever they are studying in the UK. Ministers will continue to work closely with the devolved administrations on strengthening and stabilising the higher education system following the COVID-19 outbreak.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Children: Academic Year

Alex Cunningham: [70392] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to his oral contribution of 16 June 2020, Official Report column 713, when he plans to confirm (a) how, (b) where and (c) over what period the £1 billion fund to create more high-quality childcare, after-school clubs and support during holidays will be allocated.

Vicky Ford: The department wants to give parents the freedom, support and choice to look after their children in the way that works best for them. That is why from 2021, the government will be investing up to £1 billion to help create more high-quality wraparound and holiday childcare places. We will announce further details on this new investment in due course.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

COVID-19 Education Catch-up Fund

Karin Smyth: [64242] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the £1 billion support package to tackle the impact of lost teaching time announced on 19 June 2020 will include funding for 16-19 providers.

Gillian Keegan: My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced a £1 billion support package for schools to help pupils catch up on lost teaching time. Many FE providers are already open for 16-19 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 16-19 and adults will return to a full high-quality education programme delivered by their college or post 16 learning provider. Colleges should plan on the basis that, from September 2020, all learners will return to a full high-quality education programme. We are currently working through the implications of the COVID-19 disruption and are reviewing options on how students can be supported to make up for the disruption to their learning.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Further Education: Coronavirus

Emma Hardy: [70484] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of covid-19 outbreak on agricultural colleges. Emma Hardy: [70485] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to provide bespoke support to agricultural colleges during the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan: We are aware of the financial impact COVID-19 has had on post-16 providers, including Agricultural Colleges. We will continue to pay grant funded providers, including Agricultural Colleges, their scheduled monthly profiled payments for the remainder of the 2019/20 funding year and funding allocations for 2020/21 have been confirmed. Payments will be made in line with the national profile. The funding system also provides a programme cost weighting uplift for agriculture courses delivered in eligible land-based settings, reflecting their higher costs. For colleges in significant financial difficulties the exiting support arrangements remain in place, including short-term solvency support via emergency funding. The further education commissioner and his highly experienced team are able to talk through plans, concerns and issues. The department's pool of National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) are also able to offer support. Local Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) teams are also providing support and enquiries can be submitted through the ESFA enquiries service.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Further Education: Free School Meals

Andrew Rosindell: [66823] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what financial support his Department will provide to colleges providing free school meals to students over the summer holidays in 2020.

Vicky Ford: Due to the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, we are providing extra funding to enable further education institutions to continue to provide free school meals for the 2020 summer holidays. The funding is for students who were eligible and claiming for free meals in further education institutions in the 2019-20 academic year. Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-fundingfree-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-for-2019-to-2020#coronaviruscovid-19-specific-update>.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Holiday Play Schemes: Disadvantaged

Alex Cunningham: [70389] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's press release of 22 June 2020 entitled Thousands of children to benefit from free meals and activities, what recent estimate he has made of the number of disadvantaged children in (a) Stockton-on-Tees, (b) the North East and (c) England who will be unable to access free holiday activity provision in summer 2020.

Alex Cunningham: [70390] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's press release of 22 June 2020 entitled Thousands of children to benefit from free meals and activities, what support his Department is providing to local authorities that were not allocated funding from the £9 million Holiday Activities and Food programme to be able to offer free holiday activity provision to disadvantaged children in summer 2020.

Alex Cunningham: [70391] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's press release of 22 June 2020 entitled Thousands of children to benefit from free meals and activities, by what date he plans to announce whether the Holiday and Activities and Food programme will continue beyond summer 2020.

Vicky Ford: Our Holiday Activities and Food programme is integral to our approach to provide healthy food and activities to children over the summer. We have announced 17 local authority areas that will benefit from this programme, providing thousands of children with access to healthy meals and enriching activities, and build on the success of the 2018 and 2019 programmes. Grant funding was allocated based on a competitive bidding process. We have worked with our Holiday Activities and Food coordinators to ensure that the programmes will support children and families through the disruption caused by COVID-19. We will set our future plans for this area in due course. Provision for free school meals is ordinarily term time only. However, owing to the COVID-19 outbreak, we fully understand that children and parents face an unprecedented situation over the summer. To reflect this, we will be providing additional funding for a COVID Summer Food Fund. This will support families with children who are eligible for free school meals to receive food vouchers covering the 6-week holiday period. The department's guidance on providing free school meals during the COVID-19 outbreak is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-mealsguidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

We have also recently announced a £1 billion COVID catch-up package to directly tackle the impact of lost teaching time. £650 million will be shared across state primary, secondary and special schools over the 2020-2021 academic year. Schools are best placed to decide how this money is spent, but that can include, where appropriate, running summer schools. Following the confirmation from my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, that holiday clubs will now be allowed to reopen during the summer holidays, we have published guidance on community activities, holiday and after-school clubs, as well as other out-of-school provision for children over the age of 5. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-afterschool-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronaviruscovid-19-outbreak>.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Music: Coronavirus

Tracy Brabin: [66156] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance the Government plans to provide for (a) singing and (b) wind instrument teachers to enable them to safely return to work as COVID-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Nick Gibb: The Department has published detailed guidance for schools to prepare for all children and

young people to return to full-time education from September 2020. The guidance published on 2 July outlines that there may be an additional risk of infection in environments where you or others are singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments or shouting, and provides further information on steps that schools should take to keep staff and pupils safe. The guidance can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-and-colleges-to-reopen-in-full-inseptember>.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Schools: Food

Tulip Siddiq: [66139] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the COVID Summer Food Fund, whether the alternative support of up to £90 per pupil can be used to (a) make cash payments to families, (b) pay for the production and distribution of meals and (c) provide free school meal support in other ways.

Vicky Ford: Provision for free school meals is ordinarily term-time only. However, owing to the COVID-19 outbreak, the government fully 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 6-week holiday period. Our guidance on the COVID Summer Food Fund is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-summerfood-fund>.

Schools can order vouchers for the COVID Summer Food Fund through the same Edenred portal that was created for our national free school meals voucher scheme during term time. The department will meet the cost of vouchers ordered through this portal, and a wide range of supermarkets are participating: Aldi, Asda, Company Shop Group, Iceland (including The Food Warehouse Stores), Marks & Spencer, McColl's, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose.

Since the scheme's launch in March, the department and Edenred have continually upgraded this system, and over 18,500 schools had placed orders through this site as of 30 June. Thousands of families are receiving free school meals vouchers through this system. Overall, over £238 million worth of voucher codes has been redeemed into supermarket e-gift cards by schools and families through the scheme, as of 10 July.

Many parents will be able to access one or more of the supermarkets on our national scheme. However, if a school considers that its families cannot access any of these supermarkets, they can make alternative voucher arrangements with a local supermarket or they can arrange food parcels for collection or delivery to eligible children. Schools can claim for the costs through the department's exceptional fund. Where schools are ordering alternative vouchers for the summer holidays, these orders must be placed one week before the school summer term ends.

If schools arrange food parcels in the summer holidays, these can only be ordered for children in receipt of free school meals before the summer holidays begin. The guidance on the exceptional costs fund is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-supportfor-schools/school-funding-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19-for-the-period-march-to-july-2020>.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Assessments: Coronavirus

Ben Lake: [68774] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what financial support he plans to allocate to (a) exam invigilators and (b) moderators appointed by examination boards who have been unable to work

during the covid-19 outbreak; and what discussions he has had with representatives from the Welsh Government on that support.

Nick Gibb: Invigilators are mostly employed directly by school and other exam centres, while moderators are employed by exam boards. The Department's guidance states that where schools or local authorities had expected to use their public funding to engage workers, and had budgeted for this, but work is no longer needed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we encourage them to follow the approach for casual workers set out in paragraph 20 of the Procurement Policy Note 02/20 and 4/20 on contingent workers. This will ensure that directly hired casual workers have access to the same levels of support as casual agency workers on live assignment during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The guidance sets out that in certain circumstances, public bodies can make payments of up to 80% of previously agreed rates to contingent workers. Whilst we encourage schools to follow this guidance, including for invigilators where appropriate, it is advisory and does not mandate or prescribe what schools should do in individual circumstances. The exam boards that employ moderators are independent organisations. As such, they are responsible for deciding on payment arrangements and discussing with HMRC as appropriate. The situation is complex given the status of different examiners, but we know that the boards are providing information and updates to those involved.

Given that invigilators and moderators are employed by either exam centers or exam boards and covered by general Government guidance as set out above, we have not discussed this specific issue with the Welsh Government.

Thursday 16 July 2020

Confucius Institutes

Tim Loughton: [72747] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which (a) schools and (b) higher education establishments (i) host a Confucius Institute and (ii) are in receipt of funds from the Chinese Government.

Michelle Donelan: Higher education establishments are independent, autonomous organisations and the government does not collect data of this sort. A number of UK higher education providers host and publicise their Confucius Institutes and are responsible for ensuring their partnerships are managed appropriately with the right due diligence in place. The government does not collect data on which education establishments host a Confucius institute.

Thursday 16 July 2020

COVID-19 Education Catch-up Fund

Emma Lewell-Buck: [68712] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to make available funding from the £1 billion catch-up fund for tutoring school pupils; and what the criteria is for the allocation of those funds.

Nick Gibb: The £350 million National Tutoring Programme will increase the availability of high-quality tutoring across England, enabling schools to access provision for disadvantaged pupils at a subsidised rate. It will also place high-calibre graduate coaches in the most disadvantaged schools across the country to support pupils to catch up in key subjects. We will say more about the programme in due course. The wider £650 million catch-up fund recognises that all pupils, irrespective of their background or location, have lost time in education.

Whilst school leaders will decide how it is used, the intention is that this money will be spent on the most effective interventions. 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.

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid19_Resources/Covid-19_support_guide_for_schools.pdf

We will announce more details, including allocations, in due course.

Thursday 16 July 2020

Dance: Coronavirus

Lilian Greenwood: [63315] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when dance schools will be permitted to reopen as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Lilian Greenwood: [63316] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to permit the re-opening of dance schools as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Nick Gibb: A dance school which operates for fewer than 18 hours per week would generally be considered to be an out-of-school setting. As my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, confirmed in his announcement on 23 June, out-of-school settings which run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children can operate over the summer holiday, with safety measures in place. Providers of these settings have been able to open since 4 July, provided that they follow the protective measures set out by Government. However, providers should check the latest government guidelines on which businesses and venues can open and for which purposes as some premises may only be able to open for certain limited purposes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>.

As announced on the 9 July, indoor gyms, sports courts and fitness and dance studios will be able to reopen from 25 July. They cannot be used for holiday clubs and activities for children until that point. Protective measures guidance for out-of-school settings can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-afterschool-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>. Providers who offer indoor sports activities for children should also refer to the guidance for keeping workers, volunteers and customers safe during COVID-19 for providers of grassroots sports, gym or leisure facilities:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-grassroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities>.

Thursday 16 July 2020

Education: Standards

Neil O'Brien: [72279] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils in (a) state and (b) independent schools achieved the equivalent of AAA or better in each English region in each year since 2005.

Nick Gibb: The information requested is not available in the format requested. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 9 July 2020 to Question 69679, which covered the percentage of pupils achieving 3 A*-A grades or better at A level by region between 2009-10 and 2018-19.

Thursday 16 July 2020

Higher Education: Finance

Neil O'Brien: [70489] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, after accounting for changes to the classification of student loans, how much (a) was spent on higher education in each of the last 10 years and (b) has been allocated in each year of the forecast period.

Michelle Donelan: Higher education spending is reflected in the national accounts in different ways. Net spending by government on higher education over the year contributes to Public Sector Net Borrowing (PSNB), also known as the deficit. Grants to students and providers are government spending and increase the deficit. The recent classification decision by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) changed the way that student loans contribute to the deficit. Under the reclassification, the part of the maintenance and tuition loan which is not expected to be repaid is considered spending and increases the deficit. Any accruing interest which is expected to be repaid is considered as income, decreasing the deficit. The difference between spending on loans which are not expected to be repaid and expected interest income represents the net spending by the government on student loans over the year. More detail on the reclassification by the ONS is at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/methodologies/studentloansinthepublicsectorfinancesamethodologicalguide>.

A table summarising the total deficit cost of higher education is attached. Figures are not yet available for the 2019/20 academic year. Historic information on student loans is published by the Student Loans Company and available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/student-loanscompany/about/statistics>.

The Office for Students (OfS) is responsible for distributing funding to the sector on behalf of the department. Details of future teaching grant allocation budgets from the department to the OfS are published at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/adviceand-guidance/regulation/guidance-from-government/>.

The Office for Budget Responsibility publishes the forecast impact of student loans on PSNB. This is available in table 3.24 of the 'March 2020 Economic and Fiscal Outlook': https://cdn.obr.uk/EFO_March-2020_Accessible.pdf. These figures include student loans funded by the devolved administrations and the department. Attachments: 1. 70489_table [70489-table-showing-higher-education-spending-from-2009-to-2019.pdf]

Thursday 16 July 2020

History: Education

Fleur Anderson: [73120] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with external organisations on the inclusion of Black British history in the national curriculum.

Nick Gibb: On behalf of the Department, my officials have discussed the flexible scope of the history curriculum with a range of organisations such as the Historical Association, Runnymede Trust and The Black Curriculum. The national curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the Department expects schools to cover in each subject. The curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught.

The Department believes teachers should be able to use their own knowledge and expertise to determine how they teach their pupils, and to make choices about what they teach. As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain, and this can include the voices and experience of Black people. The flexibility within the history curriculum means that there is the opportunity for teachers to teach about Black history across the spectrum of themes and eras set out in the curriculum. We will continue to explore what more we can do to support the teaching of Black history and welcome the perspectives of committed

individuals and groups, building on previous discussions.

Thursday 16 July 2020

Outdoor Education: Coronavirus

Hywel Williams: [72170] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of his Department's advice on overnight stays on outdoor activity centres in (a) England and (b) Wales.

Hywel Williams: [72171] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department has had with HM Treasury on Government support for the outdoor activity sector following his Department's advice on overnight stays.

Tulip Siddiq: [72238] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent guidance his Department has issued on the operation of (a) Scouts, (b) Guides and (c) other children's extra-curricular activities as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Nick Gibb: The Department has published guidance for providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children over the age of 5, setting out the safety measures that must be in place to ensure they can operate over the summer holiday: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-afterschool-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronaviruscovid-19-outbreak>.

This follows confirmation from my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, that from Saturday 4 July these providers can operate, with safety measures in place. The guidance advises that children and young people can take part in outdoor activities in small, consistent groups of no more than 15 with at least one staff member. Out-of-school provision should not, however, offer overnight or residential provision for the time-being. This is consistent with the latest government guidance on meeting people from outside your household, (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july>) which advises that you should not stay overnight away from your home with members of more than 2 households. Outdoor activity providers who have been adversely affected by COVID-19 can find out what financial support is available for their business here: <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>. They may be eligible for tax relief, loans or cash grants through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme or the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for example depending on their circumstances.

Thursday 16 July 2020

Secondary Education: Pupils

Neil O'Brien: [72259] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils there were in (a) year 11 and (b) year 13 in (i) state and (ii) independent schools in each English region in each year since 2003.

Nick Gibb: The number of pupils by year group is available in the National statistics publication 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-and-pupil-numbers>. This includes the number of pupils by national curriculum year group for state-funded schools. National curriculum year group is not collected for independent schools, however the same publication contains the number of pupils by age at school, local authority, region and national level.

Thursday 16 July 2020

Student Loans Company

Emma Hardy: [73061] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the most recent Annual Performance and Resource Agreement Letter from the Government to the Student Loans Company.

Emma Hardy: [73062] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the most recent Ministerial letter from his Department to the Chair of the Student Loans Company sent as part of the Annual Performance and Resource Agreement process.

Michelle Donelan: The department has issued the Annual Performance and Resource Agreement to the Student Loans Company (SLC), however there was a delay in issuing it this year due to the impact of COVID-19. The Annual Performance and Resource Agreement will be published by the SLC later in the year. The department does not publish the Ministerial letter, however the SLC's 'Corporate Strategy 2019-20 to 2021-22' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/corporate-strategy>) sets out the medium-term direction and strategy in line with shareholders' priorities.

Thursday 16 July 2020

Overseas Students: Cyprus

Fabian Hamilton: [70983] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Government's decision to remove home student status from Cypriot students will not deter Cypriots from attending university and further education in the UK.

Michelle Donelan: International students make a vital contribution to UK universities. Our institutions thrive on being global institutions and will always be open to international students – this includes the thousands of highly valued Cypriot students, as well as EU students, who study at UK universities each year. The government will also be implementing the new graduate route in summer 2021 to support providers in attracting overseas students. This will allow international students in the UK who are on a Tier 4 visa at the time it is introduced the options to stay and work in the UK at any skill level for 2 years.

EU citizens and their family members who start courses in England in the 2020/21 academic year or before will remain eligible for undergraduate and postgraduate financial support or an Advanced Learner Loan from Student Finance England as well as further education funding for students aged 19 and over for the full duration of their course provided that they meet the residency requirements.

Friday 17 July 2020

Overseas Students: EU Nationals

Fabian Hamilton: [71663] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Government's decision to remove home student status from EU students will not adversely affect UK universities income.

Michelle Donelan: As a consequence of EU exit, the UK will no longer have a justification to provide home fee status and student support to EU nationals. It is therefore right that EU students, other than those from Ireland, should in future be treated the same as other international students. Students from Ireland will be able to access student support on a reciprocal basis through the Common Travel Area arrangement. We now look forward to being truly open to the rest of the world. EU citizens and their family members starting courses in England in the 2020/21 academic year or before will remain eligible for undergraduate

and postgraduate financial support for the duration of their course. International students make a vital contribution to UK universities. Our institutions thrive on being global institutions and will always be open to international students, including the thousands of highly valued EU students that study at UK universities each year.

The government is committed to continuing to improve our UK's world-class offer to international students, which is why we have announced the new graduate route, to be introduced in summer 2021. The graduate route will be simple and light-touch and will permit graduates at undergraduate and masters level to remain in the UK for 2 years and PhD graduates to remain in the UK for 3 years after they have finished their studies and to work or look for work at any skill level - a significant improvement in our offer.

The UK's new International Education Champion, Sir Steve Smith, will assist with opening up export growth opportunities for the whole UK education sector, which will include attracting EU students to UK universities. The government is also working alongside stakeholders to support students and the UK higher education (HE) workforce to manage the transition period. This involves working to solidify existing and establish important new global relationships and promoting an open and welcoming message to all international – EU and non-EU – students wishing to come to the UK to study at our world-class education institutions.

The government has acted to help HE providers deal with the financial impacts of COVID-19 through the combination of the HE stabilisation package announced on 4 May which reprofiled public funding and introduced measures to stabilise admissions, the broader government-backed business support schemes and the research stabilisation package announced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on 27 June.

Friday 17 July 2020

Department of Health and Social Care

Schools: Coronavirus

Apsana Begum: [66991] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on trends in the level of acute respiratory outbreaks in schools among (a) Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils and (b) pupils with other protected characteristics; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill: [Holding answer 6 July 2020]: Data on the number and proportion of people recorded within acute respiratory outbreaks in schools are not available in the format requested. Public Health England provides information on the number of acute respiratory outbreaks in schools in its weekly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) surveillance report, available to view at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/weekly-covid-19-surveillance-report-published>

Monday 13 July 2020

Smoking: Young People

Helen Hayes: [66130] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish his Department's response to the potential funding options for programmes to reduce smoking uptake amongst young people in the Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s consultation, which closed on 14 October 2019.

Jo Churchill: [Holding answer 2 July 2020]: Reducing youth smoking rates is a key part of the current Tobacco Control Plan 2017-2022 for England which aims to see the smoking rate in 15-year-olds reduced to

3% or less by the end of 2022. Youth smoking rates are continuing to decline. In 2018, 5.3% of 15-year-olds were regular smokers. 2% of 11-15-year-olds were regular smokers, and 16% had ever smoked. The Government remains committed to its vision of smokefree 2030. We intend to publish the Government response to the Prevention Green Paper, 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s' in due course and key steps and ambitions to deliver smokefree 2030 after this.

Monday 13 July 2020

Scotland Office

Universities: Scotland

Mhairi Black: [70432] To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with Scottish universities on the Government's 4 May 2020 announcement on student number controls.

Alister Jack: Funding decisions affecting students who live in England are for the Department of Education to determine, however Scotland Office Ministers and officials have had a number of discussions with Universities Scotland on this matter. In those discussions we have reiterated the point that the Scottish Government has a responsibility to ensure that the university sector in Scotland is properly funded.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Department for Transport

Transport: Schools

Janet Daby: [71881] To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made on the effect on trends in the level of (a) school and (b) college attendance of the suspension of free and discounted travel for under 18's in London.

Rachel Maclean: The £1.6 billion Extraordinary Funding and Financing Agreement to enable Transport for London (TfL) to continue operating services contained a series of conditions to facilitate safe travel on public transport in London, including the temporary suspension of free travel for under 18s. The Department is working closely with TfL and the Department for Education on how the temporary suspension can be operationalised.

Any child eligible for free home to school travel under the Education Act 1996 will still receive this. The Department is also completing an Equality Impact Assessment, which will consider whether there are further categories of children that should receive free transport.

Thursday 16 July 2020

House of Lords

Schools: Coronavirus

Lord Watson of Invergowrie: To ask Her Majesty's Government how many members of the COVID-19 Response School Stakeholder Advisory Group have been asked to sign personal confidentiality agreements by the Department for Education. [HL6185]

Baroness Berridge: Members of the COVID-19 Response School Stakeholder Advisory Group are not required to sign personal confidentiality agreements.

Monday 13 July 2020

Countryside: Education

Lord Greaves: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require all schools to ensure that children know the Countryside Code and the need to adhere to it. [HL6305]

Baroness Berridge: Maintained schools are required to teach the national curriculum as part of their wider school curriculum. Details of the national curriculum subjects and content of programmes of study for each can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/nationalcurriculum. Academies are not required to follow the national curriculum, though they are expected to teach a curriculum that is similar in breadth and ambition, and are required by their funding agreements to teach English, mathematics, science and religious education. All schools are required to teach a balanced and broadly based curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. While it is not a prescribed topic in the national curriculum, all state-funded schools have the flexibility within their school curriculum to teach about the Countryside Code if they choose to do so, through for example:

- Citizenship teaches young people about their responsibilities as adults also includes opportunities for active citizenship, for example, forms of volunteering to support a cause or their local community.
- As part of the science curriculum, children are taught about the scientific concepts that relate to the environment. In primary science, pupils are taught about habitats of plants and animals and about how environments can change. This can include positive and negative impact of human actions, such as nature reserves or littering. This is further developed in secondary science, where pupils are taught about ecosystems and biodiversity.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Erasmus+ Programme

Lord Bassam of Brighton: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial losses and impact on the Higher Education sector should the UK fail to agree continued participation in the Erasmus+ programme. [HL6200]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The UK's participation in the next Erasmus+ programme (2021– 2027) is a matter for our ongoing negotiations with the EU. The government remains open to considering participation in elements of the next Erasmus+ programme, provided that the terms are in the UK's interests. It would not be appropriate to pre-empt the outcome of those negotiations.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Music: Education

Lord Lingfield: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment has been made of trends in the number of pupils learning lesser-played instruments such as the (1) bassoon, (2) French horn, and (3) double bass, through school music tuition. [HL6229]

Baroness Berridge: The government believes all pupils should have access to an excellent, well-rounded education and the arts and music are central to this. The government does not hold information on individual school music tuition. However, music is included in the national curriculum and is compulsory in all maintained schools from the age of 5 to 14. Post-14, all pupils in maintained schools must be offered the opportunity to study at least one subject in the arts.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Teachers: Coronavirus

Lord Blencathra: To ask Her Majesty's Government how many teachers have been in receipt of full pay and (1) have not had to teach, and (2) have had to teach for less than two days a week, as a result of the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6400]

Baroness Berridge: State-funded schools have continued to receive their budgets for the year, as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. This has ensured that schools have been able to continue to pay their staff in full and meet their other regular financial commitments. The specific information requested at (1) and (2) is not held centrally by the department.

Thursday 16 July 2020

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