

Young People's Education and Skills

Briefing Note – update 1

Date: 29 May 2020

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Summary This paper provides an update to the Briefing Note sent to the Young People's Education and Skills Board on 30 April 2020.

Recommendation Recipients are asked to note the content of this report and submit any comments by email.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In place of the meeting of the Young People's Education and Skills Board meeting scheduled for 30 April 2020, the Board was sent a briefing note¹. This update provides details of the information that has been published since the briefing note was drafted.
- 1.2 The Young People's Education and Skills team intends to publish updates frequently during the present situation and distribute them widely.

2 Context

- 2.1 The government guidance on the virus² is subject to frequent change, as is the guidance for education settings³. One recent addition is on remote education⁴.
- 2.2 This paper does not seek to summarise or further explain the government's general guidance on covid-19 or the specific guidance from the Department for

¹ Our briefings can be found on our [website](#)

² <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Education but considers some of the main effects on different aspects of the education and skills sector in London. The Local Government Association (LGA) has produced a useful guide⁵, *Changes to local authority powers and duties resulting from the Coronavirus Act 2020* and the National Audit Office has published a summary of the government's response to Covid-19⁶.

- 2.3 London's response to the pandemic is spearheaded by the London Resilience Forum and Strategic Coordination Group.
- 2.4 The April edition of London's Economy Today (published by GLA Economics)⁷ reported on the broader impact in London of Covid-19 and provides a useful backdrop to this paper (you can [sign up to receive London's Economy Today](#) each month).
- 2.5 Intelligent London⁸ is also updated frequently with the latest available data.
- 2.6 This paper is in two parts: Part One covers current issues and Part Two provides a short general policy update.

⁵ <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Changes%20to%20local%20authority%20powers%20and%20duties%20resulting%20from%20the%20Coronavirus%20Act%202020%20WEB.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/summary-of-uk-governments-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

⁷ https://airdrive-secure.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/london/dataset/london-economy-today/2020-04-30T14%3A25%3A39/londons_economy_today_no212_300420.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAJJDIMAIVZJDICKHA%2F20200511%2F%2F%2F%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20200511T091459Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-Signature=d2bd24e15f5aef0d685898792f62619ba9214a107a0eed84e68ddd4ae81d9582&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host

⁸ <http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/>

Part One: Current Issues

3 Prime Minister's Announcements

- 3.1 The Prime Minister made a televised address to the nation on Sunday 10 May and followed this up with a statement to the Commons and Press Conference the following day, when the government's roadmap for adjusting the national response to Covid-19 was published⁹. The new guidance heralds a relaxation of some aspects of the lockdown and the government's intention that some children may (if the rates of infection and mortality improved) be allowed to return to primary school (Reception Year and Years 1 and 6) from 1 June and that some pupils in secondary schools and colleges may be allowed back before the end of the school year. The response to this policy change has been mixed.
- 3.2 He further announced on 24 May, alongside further easing of restrictions, that the phased opening of primary schools was 'on track' and that learning institutions should plan for the return of some secondary students (Years 10 and 12 and the equivalent students aged 16 to 19 in colleges) to help them prepare for exams next year. It is expected that this will begin from 15 June, with around a quarter of these students in attendance at any one point.

4 Education Select Committee

- 4.1 The Secretary of State for Education appeared at a select committee hearing on 29 April. The main points arising were
- The emergency arrangements put in place for Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans may become permanent.
 - students could sit shortened GCSE papers in the autumn term if they think they could get a higher grade than they achieved through the centre-based assessment method.
- 4.2 This is a reminder that the deadline for submitting evidence to the House of Commons Education Select Committee's inquiry looking at how the outbreak of

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>

Covid-19 is affecting all aspects of the education sector and children's social care system is 31 May.¹⁰

5 Participation and the risk of young people being not in education, employment or training (NEET)

5.1 Statistics from the Department for Education (DfE)¹¹ are now updated regularly. They show that:

- in the week commencing 27 April, the attendance rate amongst pupils in educational settings in England continued to increase gradually following the end of the Easter break, reaching 2.1 per cent. Around 80 per cent of settings were open on 30 April 2020, an increase from 79 per cent the week before. The number of children attending an educational setting who are classed as vulnerable was higher, with 58,000 vulnerable children in attendance on Thursday 30 April, up from 50,000 the Thursday before.
- In the week commencing 4 May 2020, the attendance rate amongst pupils in educational settings in England continued to increase, reaching 2.4 per cent, the highest rate since late March. Around 80 per cent of settings were open on 7 May 2020, the same as the Thursday before. Attendance of children classed as vulnerable peaked mid-week at 70,000.
- In the week commencing 11 May, the attendance rate among pupils in educational settings was again 2.4 per cent and the proportion of settings that were open remained at 80 per cent. Attendance by children classed as vulnerable was 73,000.
- In the week commencing 18 May, the attendance rate amongst pupils in education settings in England continued to gradually increase to 2.6 per cent while the proportion of setting that were open remained at 80 per cent and 75,000 vulnerable children attended.

¹⁰ https://committees.parliament.uk/work/202/the-impact-of-covid19-on-education-and-childrens-services/?dm_i=4R3K,BSON,10I091,1B4FU,1

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings>

- 5.2 There are some significant concerns over the effects of the lockdown. The Children's Society's *The Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Young People*¹² emphasises the needs of children in poverty, refugee and migrant children, young people at risk and children's mental health and wellbeing in general; while the Children's Commissioner's *Tackling the disadvantage gap during the Covid-19 crisis* – though acknowledging the emphasis on vulnerable young people – has as its focus a broader range of young people, such as children who: live in overcrowded and/or noisy homes without a quiet space to learn; without adequate access to the internet; have parents/carers who are less able to support their children to learn (for example, because they have to continue to work, have to care for other children or family members, have low levels of literacy and/or numeracy themselves, and/or be less confident or motivated to help); children in families on low incomes that are above the threshold for free school meals (FSMs); and young carers. These lines of argument are supported by the Sutton Trust's *Social Mobility and COVID-19: implications of the Covid-19 crisis for educational inequality work*.¹³
- 5.3 The House of Commons Library Service has produced a summary of the implications of the government's response to Covid-19¹⁴. It includes information on the Government support packages, online delivery of undergraduate courses in 2020/21 and the re-opening of colleges.

¹² <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/cv-19-impact-on-children-report-from-the-childrens-society.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

¹³ <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-and-Social-Mobility-1.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

¹⁴ https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8908/?utm_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm_campaign=078630c36c-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_05_23_08_51&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9da1c9b17-078630c36c-102517489&mc_cid=078630c36c&mc_eid=d34cbf25d7

6 Attainment/Achievement

- 6.1 Fears that the attainment gap between different groups of students will increase this year continue to be reported (the Association of Schools and College Leaders (ASCL) is among the sources quoted in the Press)¹⁵.
- 6.2 The potential impact of the temporary school closures introduced during the pandemic on children's educational attainment is the focus of *Covid-19 school shutdowns: what will they do to our children's education?*¹⁶ from the Centre for Economic Performance. It outlines the context for the study and identifies the key evidence points from academic literature about the effects of unexpected school shutdowns in other countries on educational achievement and earnings. The report discusses the availability, benefits and shortcomings of online teaching platforms and learning from home methods, highlighting the potential adverse effects on children from disadvantaged backgrounds. It considers ways to make up any achievement deficit resulting from school closures, including extending school hours to allow more teaching and increasing resources to schools to enable more effective teaching.
- 6.3 *Children in need and children in care: educational attainment and progress*¹⁷ by The University of Bristol and others for the Nuffield Foundation describes some of the factors that might explain the attainment gap for Children in Need (CIN) – those receiving social work services due to concerns over their health or development, or because they are disabled – and Children in Care (CIC). Its approach uses quantitative analysis of data from a whole birth cohort of children born in England in 2000-2001, starting school in 2006-2007 and tracked through to their General Certificate of Education (GCSE) exams in 2017, and interviews with children, parents, carers and professionals. It considers the educational attainments and progress of children who experience being in need or in care at some stage of their schooling compared with all pupils and examines the factors associated with attainment at Key Stage 4. The report sets out factors

¹⁵ <https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-gcse-attainment-gaps-inevitable-year-say-heads>

¹⁶ <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cep-covid-19-001.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

¹⁷ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/policybristol/briefings-and-reports-pdfs/Final%20Report%20Nuffield.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

that help account for children who succeed in their educational attainments at 16 years despite experiencing severe early adversity requiring social work intervention.

- 6.4 *Preventing the disadvantage gap from increasing during and after the Covid-19 pandemic*¹⁸ is the subject of a study by the Education Policy Institute. The report comprises a series of proposals designed to prevent a significant widening of the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and the rest of the pupil population following the pandemic. It suggests that the pandemic will increase the risk of the attainment gap widening and summarises proposals for preventative action in the context of wider services that support vulnerable children and young people. It outlines the likely effects of the pandemic on early years education and the impact of the cancellation of the summer 2020 formal exams. Its proposals include support for the most vulnerable groups, support for young people in post-16 vocational and higher education and ways to improve the resilience of the education sector to deal with future national emergencies.

7 Apprenticeships

- 7.1 FE Week has reported that there has been a significant drop in apprenticeship starts¹⁹.
- 7.2 The Office for Students (OfS)²⁰ has written a report to highlight key changes in the apprenticeship landscape since 2016-17 at levels 6 and 7. It includes an analysis of how many of these apprenticeships require completion of a degree (otherwise known as degree apprenticeships), the subject areas they cover and their geographic coverage. It also explores the characteristics of the apprentices themselves, comparing them with students entering higher education who are studying in similar subject areas in order to highlight any differences.

¹⁸ https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EPI-Policy-paper-Impact-of-Covid-19_docx.pdf?platform=hootsuite

¹⁹ <https://feweek.co.uk/2020/04/30/revealed-covid-19-hit-to-apprenticeship-starts/>

²⁰ https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/d830aa0e-432d-4043-a538-36857ffc2073/analysis-of-level-6-and-7-apprenticeships_finalforweb.pdf

8 Quality and Standards

8.1 The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and Institute of Education have presented an early analysis of how children are spending their time during the lockdown, with a focus on home learning activities and the home learning resources available in different families²¹. Its key findings are:

- Primary and secondary students are each spending about 5 hours a day on average on home learning. However, secondary school children are more likely to have online classes and to spend their leisure time online.
- Higher-income parents are much more likely than the less well-off to report that their child's school provides online classes and access to online videoconferencing with teachers.
- Children from better-off families are spending 30% more time on home learning than are those from poorer families.
- Better-off students have access to more resources for home learning.
- Many parents of both primary and secondary school students report struggling with supporting home learning.
- School closures are almost certain to increase educational inequalities. i

8.2 The University for Industry (Ufi) and Association of Colleges (AoC) have come together to fund a new partnership programme to put in place an ed-tech strategy for the future that leaves no learner behind. The strategy aims to improve the delivery of digital teaching and assessment²².

8.3 The DfE published the *Further Education Skills Index*²³, which shows how the aggregate value (judged by the estimated value-added of adult learners and apprentices who have completed their education) of the skills supplied by the FE system each year has changed over time. It finds that the index, covering

²¹ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN288-Learning-during-the-lockdown-1.pdf>

²² <https://www.aoc.co.uk/news/ufi-funds-new-partnership-programme-aoc-create-ed-tech-strategy-the-future-leaves-no-learner-behind#overlay-context=news/ufi-funds-new-partnership-programme-aoc-create-ed-tech-strategy-the-future-leaves-no-learner-behind>

²³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881948/FE_Skills_Index_-_April_2020.pdf

both apprenticeships and classroom-based learning, has decreased each year from 2012/13 to 2016/17, with a slight rise in 2017/18 followed by a steeper fall in 2018/19, of 17 per cent compared to the previous year. The large fall in 2018/19 has mainly been driven by a decline in apprenticeship achievements, which fell by a third compared to 2017/18. Achievements in classroom-based learning were more stable in 2018/19, falling by two per cent from the previous year. However, as apprenticeships make a larger contribution to the overall Skills Index than classroom-based training, the larger fall in apprenticeship achievements has had more of an impact on the 2018/19 Skills Index than the smaller fall in classroom-based achievements.

9 Funding

9.1 The AoC is predicting that half of the new labour market entrants (approximately 100,000 16 to 25-year olds) will struggle to find meaningful employment as the economic shocks of Covid19 continue to be felt. It believes that, for this year's school and college leavers, there are likely to be fewer job and apprenticeship opportunities and there will be major challenges in re-starting education and training after months of lockdown. In a depressed labour market, they will also be competing against recent graduates and more experienced staff who have lost their jobs. Consequently, AoCs Chief Executive, David Hughes, has asked the Secretary of State for Education, calling on him to deliver a new '*September Promise*' guaranteeing access to high quality education or training places this Autumn to every young person who wants one.

9.2 The AoC estimates that there are:

- 30,000 16- and 17-year olds in England who would usually expect to start an apprenticeship or work-based learning programme in the coming academic year who will now need alternate provision
- 70,000 18- and 19-year olds in England who would usually be headed for employer-based training, or the labour market who will now need alternative provision
- Other pressures on available state-funding post-16 education places, including a rising population of young people, potential increases in transfers

from private to state provision, and the inevitable space constraints created by social distancing.

9.3 The AoC is calling for the September Promise to particularly target those from low income families, and those who would normally be starting apprenticeships in September. There should also be a dedicated focus on 'catch up' to reduce the impact COVID19 is likely to have on achievement and attainment rates.

9.4 Other recommendations from the AoC include:

- A national skills and retraining programme that brings together the adult education budget, national skills fund (due to start in 2021), national retraining scheme and shared prosperity fund into a coherent, easily managed and understandable fund that works for every adult, in every situation, in every community.
- Bringing forward some of the £1.5bn announced in the March 2020 budget for college capital investment so that it can be used to purchase IT equipment and software, as well as making necessary building modifications to embed a mixture of online and in person learning.

10 Progressions - the Labour Market

10.1 Although primarily intended for Members of Parliament, the House of Commons Library has compiled a briefing on Coronavirus: Impact on the labour market that brings together data and analysis from government and other reliable sources²⁴ (please note, this publication will be updated regularly).

10.2 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produced *Coronavirus and the effects on UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP)*, which states: "Forecasters expect the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to lead to a contraction in the UK and global economy this year, reflecting how it has led to a reduction in the demand for goods and services and the impact on the ability of businesses to supply those products. The impact is expected to reflect the length of the pandemic as well as the public health restrictions imposed and other voluntary social distancing measures." It outlines how the current strictures also impact on the ability to

²⁴ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8898/CBP-8898.pdf>

produce statistics and ONS' mitigation effort. These forecasts appear to have been borne out, as the first quarterly estimate of GDP showed that it fell by 2 per cent compared with the previous quarter (the lockdown came into effect during the final week of the quarter)²⁵.

- 10.3 The consequences on the labour market are evident from the official statistics for May 2020²⁶. They show that, while the UK employment rate in the three months to March 2020 was estimated at a joint-record high of 76.6 per cent (0.6 percentage points higher than a year earlier and 0.2 percentage points up on the previous quarter), the UK unemployment rate for the three months to March 2020 was estimated at 3.9 per cent (0.1 percentage points higher than a year earlier and 0.1 percentage points higher than the previous quarter). The authors note that staff on furlough still count as being employed. More importantly, the report also highlights that the total number of weekly hours worked in the three months to March 2020 was 1,040.6 million, 12.4 million hours less than the previous year.
- 10.4 More than a fifth of UK employers plan to make redundancies over the next three months, according to the latest labour market outlook from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey²⁷. It shows many more employers had only been able to avoid lay-offs by freezing pay, putting a stop to hiring, cutting bonuses and making extensive use of the government's furlough scheme. The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Small Business Index for quarter one of 2020²⁸ points to specific concerns of the small and medium sized business sector in London.
- 10.5 *Risky business: economic impacts of the coronavirus crisis on different groups of workers* from The Resolution Foundation* explores the economic impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on different groups of workers in the UK. It identifies four main groups of workers affected by the crisis: key workers facing the biggest health risks, particularly where social distancing is difficult; workers in shutdown

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-first-quarterly-estimate-uk-january-to-march-2020>

²⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/may2020/pdf>

²⁷ <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/work/trends/labour-market-outlook>

²⁸ <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/fsb-q1-2020-small-business-index.html>

sectors - likely to be feeling the economic effects of the crisis; those working outside the home; and those working from home. The report suggests that key workers (health, retail etc), and workers in shutdown sectors, subject to job losses or furloughing, are experiencing the most acute consequences of the crisis. It finds that: the low paid, young and female workers stand out as the groups putting their lives at risk by working in close proximity to others, and are most likely to be experiencing financial loss; workers in shutdown sectors are the lowest paid across the workforce - £348 a week compared to £707 a week for those able to work from home; those in shutdown sectors are younger – their average age of 39 is four years below the average age of those who can work from home (16-24-year-olds are twice as likely to work in this part of the economy); workers with little job security (e.g. zero hours contracts) are particularly vulnerable; and parents having to reduce hours to care for children are also at risk. *Inequality in The Impact Of The Coronavirus Shock: New Survey Evidence For The UK*²⁹ from the Institute of New Economic Thinking at the University of Cambridge notes that younger workers and those at the lower end of the income distribution had been hit hardest by the economic downturn and also expected to be hardest hit in the future. It also recognises that the self-employed and those on un-salaried variable contracts are also vulnerable to unemployment.

**Note: The Resolution Foundation has conducted a significant body of research into the effects of Covid-19 (and the government's response to it) on low- and middle-income families and other identified disadvantaged groups including young people*³⁰.

- 10.6 *Supporting disadvantaged young people into meaningful work: an initial evidence review to identify what works*³¹ by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) examines the effectiveness of approaches, and identifies good practice in supporting disadvantaged young people into employment. The report outlines the background to the study, including the obstacles to labour market

²⁹ <https://www.inet.econ.cam.ac.uk/working-paper-pdfs/wp2010.pdf>

³⁰ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/our-work/coronavirus/>

³¹ <https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/v14-IES-evidence-review-FINAL.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

participation for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and describes the methods used. It presents the evidence on what works and identifies good practice in terms of: identification and engagement; advisory support; increasing capacity and removing barriers; employer-focused strategies; retention and progression strategies; nature and scale of impact; and economic and social returns. Its conclusions highlight some examples of good practice.

10.7 *Which local areas are most at risk in terms of impacts of coronavirus on employment*³² are identified in a paper by the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) that looks at the impact of Covid-19 on the labour market by drawing on the results of the Business Impact of Covid-19 Survey. It reports on the percentage of employees in different sectors who have been furloughed finding that 80 per cent of workers in the accommodation and food services sector are in this position. The paper examines the geographical divide in how Covid-19 could impact local labour markets, with rural areas and coastal towns most at risk of high job losses especially those in the north and south-west of England. Within the parameters of the definitions used in the analysis, the paper finds that most of the least vulnerable areas are in or near London. The paper also reports on the impact on different demographic groups, noting that younger age groups are disproportionately affected. It concludes by outlining ways affected workers could be supported, such as using Universal Basic Income or Personal Learning Accounts.

10.8 Looking forward, the opinions of various commentators, think tanks and lobbyists appear to have, in summary, coalesced around the following:

- It is likely that the country will have to adapt to cope with Covid-19 for some time and may need to adopt permanently some of the ways of working to which we are now becoming accustomed.
- Despite the support available to businesses and other employers, some enterprises may not survive, some activities may cease and some – possibly

³² <https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/reports/2020/briefing-coronavirus-impact-on-employment-local-areas.pdf>

very many – redundancies may occur; and it may take a considerable amount of time before the economy and labour market stabilise.

- In the interim, the effects of recovery will not be felt equally by all industrial sectors, localities or sections of society. Concern is being expressed about families living on the breadline and young people entering the labour market, especially those with low attainment.

10.9 In *Workforce strategies for post COVID-19 recovery*, Deloitte³³ explores strategies organisations can use to recover from the impact that the Covid-19 crisis has had on them. It suggests that there are three phases that leaders will face amidst the crisis (respond; recover; and thrive), considers that organisations should think of the recovery process as a spectrum of options and suggests that they should be adaptable to different situations within different countries and industries worldwide. The report expresses the belief that workforce related strategies in the recovery are best orchestrated through five critical actions: reflect; recommit; re-engage; rethink; and reboot. It develops the five actions by outlining issues that employees, leaders and organisations are likely to face. It concludes that organisations have an opportunity to rebuild and position themselves for the future rather than falling back on old working methods.

10.10 School leavers and graduates entering the labour market this year will find it harder to find employment as firms cut entry-level jobs by nearly a quarter, according to research by the Institute of Student Employers (ISE)³⁴. All types of entry-level roles have been reduced this year because of Covid-19. Employers are hiring 32 per cent fewer people onto apprentice or school leaver programmes than planned this year and graduate jobs have been cut by 12 per cent. The number of internships and placements available will also fall - by 40 per cent. The report also shows that 14 per cent of survey respondents were not able to provide clarity about their recruitment numbers for this year, demonstrating how volatile the labour market is at present. How this group of

³³ <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/covid-19/covid-19-workforce-strategies-for-post-covid-recovery.html>

³⁴ The report is available to ISE members only <https://ise.org.uk/page/ISEPublications>

employers behave could make a substantial difference to the number of students hired in the autumn. Looking ahead, the labour market for young people could shrink further in 2021 with 15 per cent of employers already anticipating that they would reduce entry-level hiring next year. Employers are responding to the crisis in atypical ways and the report conjectures that students have found that job offers are not as secure as they perhaps believed. One in seven employers reported that they have already withdrawn offers and a further 14 per cent may renege in the coming weeks. Almost a third of employers (31 per cent) are delaying start dates and more than half are planning to induct new starters remotely. Health & pharmaceuticals was found to be the only sector set to increase entry-level recruitment this year while the built environment, finance, professional services, energy and engineering were making the largest reductions in hiring. Students are more likely to find jobs in large organisations as SMEs reported that they had reduced their entry-level job opportunities more than larger firms. The report also showed how recruitment and selection has been affected by the lockdown with talks, workshops, interviews and assessment centres largely moved online.

10.11 The IFS has contributed to the debate about how the labour market needs to be adjusted as a result of our experiences of Covid-19 in *Getting people back into work*³⁵, which draws on evidence from official statistics such as the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, and responses to an Office for National Statistics survey carried out in March/April 2020 on workers furloughed by businesses. From an analysis of the data, the report examines some of the factors that might be considered when thinking about restarting the economy such as: working from home - the ability to work from home; occupations that can be carried out at home; commuting; safety in the workplace – ability to socially isolate at work; helping businesses adapt to make social distancing easier; and individual – or household-level constraints or risks to going out to work (for example age, or living with a keyworker or with children in the household). The report discusses job availability, which firms will want or be able to employ workers as the economy restarts and issues around supply chains and productivity.

³⁵ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN286-Getting-people-back-into-work-1.pdf>

10.12 Employment experts have launched discussion document calling for a “**Youth Guarantee**”³⁶ (not to be confused with the existing Youth Guarantee that was created by the European Union). The group propose:

- Targeted tapering of emergency support.
- Investing up to £800 million to scale up back-to-work support for the newly unemployed.
- Ensure the long-term unemployed and disadvantaged are not left behind by investing up to £2.4 billion in personalised support alongside access to training, volunteering and other specialist help.
- Education and employment promise for young people (see also paragraph 9)
- Building for the future - level up access to well paid, high quality work based

10.13 The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has put forward a “*Post-Covid employment and skills recovery package*”, calling for combined cross-departmental and devolved approach. The AELP’s proposed framework has identified the following priority groups who require support:

- those NEET / long term unemployed before the crisis, who will be pushed even further away from job opportunities
- low skilled, recently unemployed individuals as a consequence of the Covid-19 crisis
- higher skilled workers displaced by the crisis primarily due to a shrinking in the economy
- young talent (16-24) many of whom are entering the workforce for the first time
- economically inactive going back into the workforce

³⁶ https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Help-wanted-discussion-paper_FINAL-3.pdf

11 Progression to Further and Higher Education

- 11.1 The Further Education sector has an opportunity to redefine itself and negotiate a new government funding deal to secure its future, according to a report published by the Edge Foundation³⁷. It says that FE has a golden opportunity to secure a key role in the country's future. Against a backdrop of a changing economy, growing skills shortages, Brexit and now the Covid-19 crisis, the FE sector urgently needs to define a clear and positive way forward following a period of "policy confusion and inconsistency".
- 11.2 London Economics, in research for the University and College Union³⁸, draws attention the risks to Higher Education associated with Covid-19 including the potential loss of overseas students and fees.
- 11.3 The Russell Group has set out a series of new commitments to transform opportunities for disadvantaged and under-represented students³⁹. The Group recognises that the Covid-19 crisis facing the country has the potential to affect disproportionately those students who are already disadvantaged, and says that Russell Group universities have taken steps to provide targeted financial support and equipment to those in need, as well as to maintain high-quality widening access programmes, such as schools outreach, mentoring, parental engagement and teacher conferences. It also makes recommendations to the Office for Students and the government.

12 Careers Guidance

- 12.1 The National Careers Service(NCS) is providing a range of tailored services during the lockdown, including free support directly to any workers on furlough, Skills Health Checks to businesses of their existing workforce and advice on future recruitment/training, including online learning such as though the newly launched Skills Toolkit. NCS services also include one-to-one redundancy support, career planning and advice/guidance for all staff at risk of redundancy,

³⁷ https://www.edge.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020_fe_brochure_web-2.pdf

³⁸ <http://londoneconomics.co.uk/blog/publication/impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-univers-ity-finances-april-2020/>

³⁹ <https://pathwaysforpotential.russellgroup.ac.uk/>

including matching employees for new job and learning opportunities. The NCS invites employers to undertake a survey to help identify which of the services they offer best meet the employer's needs⁴⁰

13 Special Needs

- 13.1 The government has published *Special educational needs and disability: an analysis and summary of data sources*⁴¹, which provides a combination of analysis and links to the key data sources on children and young people with special educational needs and / or a disability (SEND), some of which is local authority level data. Commentary on the data trends and more detailed analysis is also available.

14 Mental Health and Anxiety

- 14.1 London Councils and the Young People's Education and Skills Board had for some time, been alive to the risk to young people's effective participation in learning, their achievement and progression to positive destinations posed by mental ill-health, stress and anxiety. The prevalence of mental ill-health among young people had been evident as an increasingly urgent issue before the arrival of Covid-19. Since the lockdown, the issue has escalated.
- 14.2 London Councils participates in the Partnership for Young London (PYL⁴²), the strategic 'umbrella' body that pulls together central, regional and local government, voluntary youth organisations and young Londoners to support, promote and improve services for young people across London. As London's Regional Youth Unit, it hosts the London Policy Network and acts as a hub for youth-related issues in London. PYL has a powerful voice in London's response to Covid-19 and reflects the interests of young people and the organisations that support them in determining pan-London policy. In considering young Londoners' mental health, PYL has reviewed:

⁴⁰ <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/NCS-LDN-CR20-ES/>

⁴¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882802/Special_educational_needs_and_disability_-_an_analysis_and_summary_of_data_sources.pdf

⁴² <https://www.partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk/>

- *Out of Sight*⁴³ , a report from the National Youth Agency (NYA) - which highlights, increased mental health problems among young people, those missing from education and those at risk at home (especially through the ‘toxic trio’ of addiction, mental health and domestic abuse) as its main concerns – and the NYA’s ‘survey of surveys’⁴⁴
- *Take the Temperature*⁴⁵, a report based on a survey of 1,500 young people that both explains what most affects young people’s state of mind during the lockdown and points to the need for public authorities - at all levels - to engage with young people during the pandemic and afterwards
- *Young People in Lockdown*⁴⁶, a report by The Prince’s Trust
- Regular short surveys conducted by the Centre for Youth Impact⁴⁷
- London Community Response Surveys (published weekly on London Datastore)⁴⁸

14.3 There appear to be two main issues to consider:

- The scale of the problem. Immediate fear of ill-health, uncertainty over current education and anxiety over future prospects – together with the ‘toxic trio’ (para 14.2) – result in an as yet unquantifiable increase in the number of young people in need of support and in both the nature and severity of the mental health issues that need to be addressed.
- The practical difficulties in addressing young people’s problems during the lockdown and mobilising support during gradual emergence, especially by detached youth work.

⁴³ <https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Out-of-Sight-COVID-19-report-Web-version.pdf>

⁴⁴ <https://nya.org.uk/available-surveys-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.beatfreeskyouthtrends.com/take-the-temperature>

⁴⁶ https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/Document_News_YPIL.pdf

⁴⁷ <https://www.youthimpact.uk/>

⁴⁸ <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/london-community-response-survey>

Part Two: Policy Update

This part of the Briefing Note covers policies and reports that have been issued since the Briefing Note of 30 April was prepared.

15 European Social Fund

15.1 The Grant Award Process for Round 3 of The Mayor's European Social Fund (ESF) 2019-23 Programme has now been launched⁴⁹ (the closing date for applications is 10 July). This programme will support Londoners with complex needs to gain skills and find (or remain in) work, education or training. These are Londoners who already face disadvantage, and who are likely to be further disadvantaged by the impact of Covid-19 on London's economy. The programme consists of the following projects:

- Early Years Sector Skills (one pan-London Grant of £2m)
- Creative Sector Skills (one pan-London Grant of £2m)
- STEM Sector Skills (one pan-London Grant of £2m)
- SEND NEET (three pan-London Grants of c.£2.2m)
- Gangs Prevention (one pan-London Grant of £3m)
- Careers Clusters (five pan-London Grants of £400k)
- Targeted NEET (two sub-regional grants totalling c.£2.6m)

16 New generation: preventing young adults being caught in the revolving door⁵⁰

16.1 This report examines the latest evidence on young adults in, what the author describes as, the revolving door of crime and personal crisis, and makes the case for targeting resources at them. It suggests that the system fails to recognise the combined impact of trauma and poverty on the lives of young adults entering the revolving door, and therefore to break the cycle of crisis and

⁴⁹ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/funding/european-social-fund/funding-opportunities>

⁵⁰ <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/file/2451/download?token=XT3bl7VL>

crime and argues that a lack of intervention risks people cycling through the system for a decade or more. It recommends intervening earlier and stabilising the bridge to adulthood, thus cutting crime and reducing demand on police, the courts, probation, prisons and many other local services.

17 A training opportunity in the crisis: how the Covid-19 response can help sort out Britain's training mess⁵¹

17.1 This report from Policy Exchange considers how the current crisis could be an opportunity to better align the education and training system with the economic and social needs of the UK and outlines some of the failings of the current system, arguing that there are too many graduates and too few skilled trades-people. It suggests that we may be moving into a period of high unemployment, requiring a radical rethink of policy. It argues that the system currently lets down two groups: non-university bound school-leavers and adult re-trainers. It makes three recommendations:

- a new 'Opportunity Grant' of at least £3,000 is made available to everybody for training or re-training
- the apprentice levy should be closed to new entrants and replaced by a simplified model aimed at school leavers
- a group of 'applied universities' should be created for vocational courses.

17.2 It suggests also that universities could make their online courses free to everyone over aged 25 and concludes that British people need to get back to the right work, with higher levels of general competence in the bottom part of the labour market and a better alignment of skills and labour market demand at the middle and higher ends.

18 Recommendation

18.1 Recipients are asked to note the content of this report and submit any comments by email: peter.obrien@londoncouncils.gov.uk

⁵¹ <https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/A-training-opportunity-in-the-crisis-.pdf>