

Young People's Education and Skills

Briefing Note – Update 2

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Summary This paper provides an update on young people's education and skills issues.

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

1 Introduction

1.1 This is the second update on Young People's Education and Skills issues in London (the previous papers are available on our dedicated webpage¹). These updates provide a means of providing information to the Young People's Education and Skills Board, lead councillors and officers in London boroughs and other partners and stakeholders at a time when regular meetings are not taking place.

2 Context

2.1 The government provides national guidance on Covid-19 that, given the fast-changing pace of events, is subject to frequent change. This includes:

- general guidance on Covid-19 and the government's response²

¹ <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/37307>

² <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

- specific guidance on education³ (the government uses the term “education settings” to describe any institution in which learning takes place - for consistency, we use the same term in this paper).
- 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 Education (DfE) but considers some of the main effects on different aspects of the education and skills sector in London.
- 2.3 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) supports government at all levels with relevant data and intelligence⁴.
- 2.4 The House of Commons Library⁵, though primarily aimed at Members of Parliament, produces briefing papers that bring together research, data and opinions about various aspects of the country’s response to Covid-19, government policies and our future emergence from the lockdown.
- 2.5 Two new bodies have been established to ensure that London moves smoothly out of the lockdown arrangements:
- London Transition Board⁶
 - London Recovery Board⁷ (you can sign up to receive updates from the London Recovery Board <https://www.london.gov.uk/sign-receive-updates-london-recovery-board>)
- 2.6 Data specific to London is published monthly by GLA Economics⁸ and Intelligent London⁹ is also updated frequently with the latest available data.
- 2.7 This paper is in three parts: Part One covers current issues, Part Two provides a short general policy update and Part Three includes a brief performance update.

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

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics>

⁵ <https://www.parliament.uk/commons-library>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/london-s-Covid-19-transition-board-meets-for-the-first-time>

⁷ <https://www.onlondon.co.uk/london-recovery-board-meets-for-first-time/>

⁸ <https://data.london.gov.uk/gla-economics/>

⁹ <http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/>

Part One: Current Issues

3 Government Announcements

- 3.1 As previously announced, education settings for some children and young people opened during June (following advice by The Independent Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE)¹⁰- the government has also started to publish the other advice upon which its decisions are based¹¹). The effects of this decision are covered in paragraph 5.
- 3.2 Amid concerns about the continued effects of the lockdown on learning (for example, University College London¹² found that, on average, young people were studying at home for two and a half hours a day and approximately two million young people have done little or no school work since the lockdown), a £1bn Covid catch-up plan was announced on 19 June¹³. Although having previously suggested that the plan would cover children and young people in all education settings, the announcement only included primary and secondary schools. This change was highlighted – and criticised – by the Association of Colleges (AoC) and others, who pointed out that the government’s plan therefore excludes approximately 700,000 young people¹⁴. The catch-up plan has two elements:
- £650m will be paid directly to schools in the 2020-21 academic year
 - £350m will fund a National Tutoring Programme¹⁵.

¹⁰ <https://www.independentsage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Independent-Sage-Brief-Report-on-Schools.pdf>

¹¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impact-of-school-closures-18-march-2020?utm_source=d3556184-afdb-4e34-9482-dd6bb2dbb3bd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

¹² <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2020/jun/children-doing-25-hours-schoolwork-day-average>

¹³ https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-covid-catch-up-plan-to-tackle-impact-of-lost-teaching-time?utm_source=f5cb6d8f-1bae-4cb0-a91f-28a6ab03ca58&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

¹⁴ <https://www.aoc.co.uk/news/catch-funding-ignores-two-thirds-16-18-year-olds>

¹⁵ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/300m-national-tutoring-programme-launched/>

- 3.3 The government also announced an expansion of the (refocused) Edtech Demonstrator School Programme¹⁶ to help share good practice on using technology to support remote teaching.
- 3.4 The Mayor of London¹⁷ and several organisations have expressed concern about the effects of the suspension of free travel for young people under 18 years old in London.
- 3.5 The government announced a ten-year rebuilding programme for schools¹⁸ – the first such programme to be launched since 2014, schools will benefit from substantial additional investment. The rebuilding programme will start in 2020-21 with the first 50 projects, supported by over £1 billion in funding. Further details of the new, multi-wave ten-year construction programme will be set out at the next Spending Review. Investment will be targeted at school buildings in the worst condition across England – including substantial investment in the North and the Midlands – as part of the policy to level up opportunity for all.
- 3.6 The government is also making £200 million of its £1.5 billion college capital funding pot available from this September – a year earlier than planned. The cash for repairs and upgrades to college buildings and estates was promised by chancellor Rishi Sunak in his March budget but the five-year project was supposed to start in 2021.

4 Education Select Committee

- 4.1 The House of Commons Education Select Committee is holding an inquiry¹⁹ to look at how the outbreak of COVID-19 is affecting all aspects of the education sector and children's social care system and will scrutinise how the DfE is dealing with the situation. It will examine both short term impacts, such

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/edtech-demonstrator-schools-and-colleges-successful-applicants>

¹⁷ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-calls-for-under-18s-free-travel-to-remain>

¹⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-transformative-school-rebuilding-programme?utm_source=d50fb3e9-dae4-484f-856c-5f2090d115cf&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

¹⁹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/202/the-impact-of-covid19-on-education-and-childrens-services/>

as the effects of school closures and exam cancellations, as well as longer-term implications particularly for the most vulnerable children. Evidence can be submitted until 21 July 2020.

4.2 The Committee is also holding inquiries on Left Behind White Pupils from Disadvantaged Backgrounds²⁰ and Adult Skills and Lifelong Learning²¹.

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

5.1 Statistics from the DfE are now in Part Three of this paper.

5.2 June saw the return to education settings for some children and young people:

- From 1 June, in addition to those children that had continued in their education setting during the lockdown, children in Reception Year and Years 1 and 6 returned.
- From 15 June, Years 10 and 12 and equivalent FE students aged between 16 and 19 returned on a part-time basis.

5.3 These returns were not without controversy with arguments ranging from concerns about safety of students, their families and teaching/support staff to the limited nature of the return meaning that many children continued to suffer the negative effects of a lack of education and implications for mental health during the lockdown. The business group London First²² has included an early opening of educational settings as part of its package of measures to achieve immediate and long-term return to growth. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)'s research found that many school leaders believed that they were unable to open their school safely²³.

5.4 Having previously signalled that these returns to education would herald a further phased approach for all pupils and students to return to education

²⁰ <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/237/left-behind-white-pupils-from-disadvantaged-backgrounds/>

²¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/234/adult-skills-and-lifelong-learning/>

²² <https://www.londonfirst.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-06/GettingBackToGrowth.pdf>

²³ https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4060/schools_responses_to_covid_19_early_report_final.pdf?platform=hootsuite

before the end of the Academic Year, the government subsequently announced that the main effort should now be to ensure that educational settings could reopen safely from September. Possible 'summer schools' have been mooted as an option for those students who need support in catching up with the education that they have lost during the lockdown, though this idea has received a very mixed response throughout the sector. There is also some uncertainty about the nature of a September return to educational settings.

- 5.5 *Learning during the lockdown: real-time data on children's experiences during home learning*²⁴ by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) presents initial evidence on how children are spending their time during the lockdown, with a focus on home learning activities and the home learning resources available in different families. Through an online survey of parents of children aged four to fifteen between 29 April and 12 May 2020, the IFS found that primary and secondary students were each spending about five hours a day on average on home learning (though the later survey undertaken by UCL cited in paragraph 3 suggested that this may be as low as two and a half hours) and noted that higher-income parents were much more likely than the less well-off to report that their child's school provided online classes and access to online video conferencing with teachers. The report says that children from better-off families spent 30 per cent more time on home learning than are those from poorer families and that better-off students have access to more resources for home learning. It further reveals that many parents of both primary and secondary school students are struggling with supporting home learning and suggests that school closures are almost certain to increase educational inequalities. It concludes that, whatever strategy the government pursues for reopening schools, it must deal with how to address the gaps in education that the crisis is widening.

²⁴ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN288-Learning-during-the-lockdown-1.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

- 5.6 The report's findings about different levels of engagement based on deprivation are supported by research undertaken by the NFER (*Pupil engagement in remote learning*²⁵).
- 5.7 The NFER found that the vast majority of teachers (90 per cent) say their pupils are doing less or much less work than they would normally at this time of the year, head teachers believe around a third of pupils are not engaging with set work and limited or no access to technology was a problem for around a quarter (23 per cent) of pupils.
- 5.8 The Child Poverty Action Group, using interim findings from its on-going research²⁶, expressed concern about the resources needed to support remote learning.
- 5.9 Adoption UK²⁷ highlights that a third of adopted young people who started a college course within one year of leaving school, were unable to complete it and a similar proportion were not in education, employment or training (NEET) at some point between the ages of 16 and 24 – three times the national average.
- 5.10 Thousands of excluded pupils who are at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation have no school, college or training place to go to in September because of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 crisis according to a survey of Alternative Provision carried out by the Centre for Social Justice and the charity The Difference²⁸

6 Attainment/Achievement

- 6.1 The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)'s rapid evidence assessment (*Best evidence on impact of school closures on the attainment gap*) examines the potential impact of school closures on the attainment gap, based on a

²⁵ <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/schools-responses-to-Covid-19-pupil-engagement-in-remote-learning/>

²⁶ <https://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/media/1527/cpag-interim-survey-findings.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

²⁷ <https://www.adoptionuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c855be0f-f29c-4b3e-b6c9-0fe195e9490f>

²⁸ https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CSJ-Post-16_Support_in_Alternative-Provision_v5.pdf

systematic search of existing literature. Its key findings and implications include:

- School closures are likely to reverse progress made to close the gap in the last decade since 2011.
- Supporting effective remote learning will mitigate the extent to which the gap widens.
- Sustained support will be needed to help disadvantaged pupils catch up.

6.2 The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) has announced how vocational qualifications, including Functional Skills, will predominantly be assessed using calculated grades this summer²⁹. The Ofqual exceptional regulatory framework is based on the proposal which they recently sought public consultation on and provides awarding bodies and assessing centres with confirmation and information they require to provide grades.

7 Apprenticeships

7.1 The latest updates to the government's guidance on Apprenticeships³⁰ covered:

- New information on which apprentices should be prioritised in the offer of face-to-face training in line with the Prime Minister's announcement that further education providers can broaden the number of 16-19 learners attending on-site delivery from 15 June. The guidance covers apprentices returning to work and states that remote training should remain the predominant mode of learning for most apprentices. There is also greater clarity on apprentices returning to undertake End-Point Assessment (EPA) within assessment centres. For apprentices returning to train in an education setting:

²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofqual-decisions-on-awarding-vocational-and-technical-qualifications-this-summer>

³⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-Covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response/coronavirus-Covid-19-guidance-for-apprentices-employers-training-providers-end-point-assessment-organisations-and-external-quality-assurance-pro>

- the number of FE learners attending at any one time is limited to a quarter of those on the first year of a two-year 16-19 study programme
 - apprenticeship training taking place in educational settings should also be prioritised for 16-19 apprentices. We support offering face-to-face contact to any 16-19 apprentice
 - providers can choose to allow apprentices who are over 19 to attend
- There is also new EPA flexibility for Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs), with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) putting in place a new temporary policy that enables apprentices to take their EPA ahead of receiving their calculated FSQ results later in the summer. This flexibility will enable apprentices otherwise stuck at gateway pending their FSQ to pass through and take their EPA. The flexibility is effective immediately and applies to:
- All apprentices due to take an FSQ test and receive a result in the period between 20 March and 31 July (Apprentices will only achieve their apprenticeship once they have passed EPA and received their FSQ pass; training providers will therefore be expected to provide prompt confirmation of the apprentice's FSQ calculated results to EPA Organisations once these have been awarded).
- An end to funding for Apprenticeships at level 8.

7.2 The Local Government Association (LGA) hosts an Apprenticeship Support Programme³¹ that provides officers at London's councils with access to support, advice, good practice guidance and webinars.

7.3 *Degree apprenticeships: levelling up?*³² by The Sutton Trust looks at the progress of the Degree Apprenticeship scheme in becoming a driver for social mobility and examines emerging data on Degree and Degree Level Apprenticeships to analyse what is being offered, by what institutions and who is taking them up. Using data from the DfE's Further Education Data Library, the Higher Education Statistics Authority and surveys of employers, teachers and young people the report examines Degree Level Apprenticeship numbers

³¹ <https://www.local.gov.uk/apprenticeship-support-programme>

³² <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Degree-Apprenticeships-Levelling-Up.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

and characteristics in terms of age, standards, existing employees and new starters, degree apprenticeship providers, geographical spread, and employers. The report highlights that just 13 per cent of degree apprenticeships come from neighbourhoods in the bottom fifth of deprivation, whereas, over twice as many (27 per cent) come from the most advantaged backgrounds. This pattern is the opposite of those undertaking the lowest level apprenticeships. The report makes recommendations in relation to the apprenticeship levy, access, and information, advice and guidance.

8 T Levels

8.1 There was mixed news on the plans to introduce T levels. The Education Secretary announced that 88 more further education providers had been selected to deliver T levels from September 2022³³, taking the total to over 180 across England, while the Press reported that four providers that had been due to start delivery from September 2020 have now withdrawn their plans to do so³⁴.

9 Funding

9.1 Leading figures in London government, businesses and academia have written an open letter, published in the Evening Standard, supporting FE and Higher Education in London³⁵.

9.2 *Rebuild: a skills led recovery plan*³⁶ published by the AoC is calling on government for another “bold and necessary course of action to reduce the post post-furlough shock, minimise the risk of economic scarring, and prepare the country for the rebuild” through a package of actions costing £3.6 billion and delivering incentives to businesses and a flexible offer for students. The

³³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-accelerates-t-level-roll-out>

³⁴ <https://feweek.co.uk/2020/06/11/t-level-wobble-as-another-four-providers-cancel-september-launch-plans/>

³⁵ <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/letters/the-reader-support-further-education-to-help-london-recover-a4472931.html>

³⁶ https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/REBUILD%20-%20A%20skills%20led%20recovery%20plan%20%28full%20doc%29%20FINAL_0.pdf

AoC is confident that colleges are ready to deliver in every community across the country “to ensure that nobody is left behind, and that we build back better through one of the best prepared future-ready work forces”. The AoC’s proposals include:

- Guaranteeing a high quality, education or training place for every 16 to 18 year old, funded to meet their needs and the learning lost
- Offering a suite of work focussed training programmes, including expanded traineeships and apprenticeships designed to get young people into jobs as soon as they become available. This should include a comprehensive bursary system and incentives for employers
- Providing support for adults who lose their jobs to train or retrain flexibly up to higher level technical / professional level, aimed at getting them back into the workforce as quickly as possible, with additional training to manage their transition once back in work.

9.3 The Association of Employment and Learning providers (AELP) has called on the government to provide an £8.6 billion skills package to boost the post-pandemic economy³⁷.

9.4 The National Children’s Bureau³⁸ has highlighted the effects of cutbacks in spending on children’s services that have occurred since 2010.

10 Progressions - the Labour Market

10.1 In our previous two Briefings, we cited a considerable body of research from which we summarised a consensus view of the current issues for young people's education and skills in the UK and London. For ease of reference, we are repeating that view here:

- 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.

³⁷ <https://www.aelp.org.uk/news/news/press-releases/86bn-skills-package-needed-to-boost-the-post-pandemic-economy/>

³⁸ <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/pressures-on-childrens-and-young-peoples-services-a-deep-dive.pdf>

- Despite the support available to businesses and other employers, some enterprises may not survive, some activities may cease and some – possibly 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. Particular concern is being expressed about families living on the breadline and young people entering the labour market, especially those with low attainment.

10.2 In the future we do not intend to give coverage to research that reinforces this consensus. Instead, we will include reports that highlight those who are particularly at risk during the lockdown and as the country emerges from it. For example:

- *Class of 2020: education leavers in the current crisis*³⁹, the Resolution Foundation demonstrates that past recessions have affected the employment prospects of those leaving full-time education more severely than other sections of society, particularly those who have left with lower level qualifications. It suggests that the current economic crisis could prove even more difficult for education leavers than previous recessions and advocates policies to help young people to stay in education and/or deal with the labour market, including job guarantees and priority access to apprenticeships
- *Impact of Covid-19 research: UK findings (how the Covid-19 outbreak is affecting families raising disabled or seriously ill children in the UK)*⁴⁰ by the Family Fund shows the wide-ranging impacts of Covid-19, and consequent concerns and needs on families raising disabled or seriously ill children in the UK. The report highlights that the biggest concerns for families are around educating and entertaining their children at home and their children's health and wellbeing.

³⁹ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/05/Class-of-2020.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0dcffffe-f803-41de-9a4a-ccc8fef282d4>

- 10.3 UK (and some London-level) data are available from the Office for National Statistics; while *The London Intelligence*⁴¹ produced by the Centre for London, though scoping the broad effect of Covid-19 on London since January 2020, provides some useful information about impacts on the labour market (including employment levels and new job postings), business confidence and specific sectors. The latest set of statistics on the UK and London economy and labour market suggest that the predicted effects of Covid-19 are proving to be accurate.
- 10.4 The Centre for London's *City Skills: Strengthening London's Further Education Offer*⁴² has been well received. It reflects on the achievements of the FE sector in contributing to London's economic and social life, while highlighting three main challenges:
- Firstly, the FE sector has been under funded and under resourced, leading to falling participation – and this is in stark contrast to higher education where both funding and learner numbers have increased. In London, after considering population increases, since 2004/5 the proportion of working-age Londoners engaging with the Further Education system has decreased from 13.6 per cent to 7.5 per cent, while numbers of HE learners have been rising.
 - Additionally, for learners, further progression between lower and higher-level learning is relatively rare, with the balance tipped towards the provision of lower level qualifications and a lack of intermediate qualifications to facilitate this development. Indeed, three quarters of London's funded FE learners take courses at level 2 and below, compared to only one per cent at level 4 and above.
 - Finally, despite the sector's best efforts, it has struggled to meet changing demand for skills, with a persistent mismatch between learner skills and employer needs in the capital, with the number of cases where employers have been unable to fill a vacancy due to a skills shortage more than

⁴¹ <https://www.centreforlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/The-London-Intelligence-May-2020.pdf>

⁴² <https://www.centreforlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Centre-for-London-City-Skills-Report.pdf>

doubling since 2011 (rising from 14,000 to 37,000). As this suggests, despite great potential, the further education system faces some serious challenges in meeting the needs of Londoners.

10.5 Taking these factors into account, the report calls for:

- Resourcing London’s further education sector with a government-backed support package, including boosting teaching grants for subjects relevant to skills shortages, free tuition for first courses and lifelong learning loan allowances for higher level courses.
- The Mayor of London, with support from DfE, should map pathways for learner progression, evaluate effectiveness of courses and apprenticeships, and research barriers for those not in education employment or training.
- The Mayor should lead a strategic approach to London’s FE offer, to encourage innovation and expansion of delivery in areas of skills shortages.

10.6 *Help wanted: getting Britain back to work*⁴³ from the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) sets out priorities, evidence and proposals for how the government might design and deliver its employment and skills response to the downturn caused during the lockdown so that people can get back to work as soon as possible. The report outlines the main impacts that the crisis is having on the labour market and some of challenges and uncertainties ahead. Its proposed solution includes:

- targeted tapering of emergency support, ensuring that the withdrawal of the coronavirus Job Retention Scheme between August and October minimises the risks of a second spike of unemployment
- rapid back to work support for those newly unemployed, mobilising Jobcentre Plus work coaches, the recruitment industry and local and

⁴³ https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/Help_Wanted_Getting_Britain_Back_to_Work.pdf?platform=hootsuite

voluntary sector employment services to provide support to the newly unemployed

- targeted support for the long-term unemployed, providing employment services that give personalised support alongside access to training, volunteering and specialist help
- education and employment promise for young people, making sure everyone leaving education is guaranteed support to find work or a place in education or training, with a Jobs Guarantee for those out-of-work for a longer period of time
- building for the future, planning to build more joined-up employment and skills support and to increase access to well paid, high quality work, based on understanding the future of the labour market (the report proposes learning from initiatives put in place after the 2008 crash and draws from their evaluation, especially the Future Jobs Fund).

10.7 *Levelling up: we can't afford not to*⁴⁴ from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation links the government's "levelling-up" agenda to post-Covid emergence. It argues that levelling up the economy to create opportunities for everyone across the country will still be the greatest national challenge - and more important than ever. It explains that levelling up needs to tackle the twin challenges of productivity and living standards.

10.8 The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) published *Rescue, recover, reform: a framework for new local economic practice in the era of Covid-19*⁴⁵, which explores the potential impact of Covid-19 on the local economic landscape and presents a framework for action to rebuild fairer, more inclusive and more secure local economies.

10.9 The National Education Union (NEU) set out its plan for re-opening schools and colleges and for students to catch-up on learning⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/levelling-economy-we-cant-afford-not>

⁴⁵ <https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Rescue-recover-reform-FINAL.pdf>

⁴⁶ <https://neu.org.uk/coronavirus-neu-national-recovery-plan-education>

11 Progression to Further and Higher Education

- 11.1 In *Care-experienced young people and Higher Education*⁴⁷ the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care explores the expectations and experiences of care-experienced young people in accessing HE, drawing on analysis of existing datasets and interviews with young people. The report indicates that care-experienced young people remain significantly disadvantaged in the education system and much less likely to go to university as shown by coverage of their different expectations of HE and experiences in applying for a place in HE and attending university. It discusses the implications of the findings and makes recommendations aimed at supporting better educational progress by care-experienced young people. These have resonance with the prioritisation in London of closing gaps in educational outcomes based on family background and circumstances.
- 11.2 *Pathways to Potential: A roadmap for tackling educational inequality and improving access to Higher Education*.⁴⁸ This paper from The Russell Group of top universities sets out a roadmap to ensure there are no barriers to anyone fulfilling their potential, regardless of their background or where they live. Its recommendations are informed by interviews with representatives from higher education, charities and students themselves.

12 Special Needs

- 12.1 The government is consulting on changes to school admissions rules⁴⁹ which would mean schools cannot reject pupils with special educational needs. Its consultation on changes aims to make sure schools admit pupils with SEND under Fair Access Protocols or during in-year admissions.

⁴⁷ https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WWCSC_Care-experienced_Young_People_and_Higher_Education_report_May2020.pdf

⁴⁸ <https://pathwaysforpotential.russellgroup.ac.uk/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-school-admissions-code--4>

13 Race Equality and Social Justice

- 13.1 No More Exclusions (NME), a Black-led and community-based grassroots coalition movement, submitted evidence to the House of Commons Education Select Committee's inquiry into the impact of Covid-19⁵⁰. NME has a race equality and an inclusion focus in education; it works to address institutional racism, unconscious bias, negative stereotyping, and low teachers' expectations as well as wider structures and practices that create the context within which school exclusions exist. NME's submission, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Education and Children's Services*⁵¹, includes recommendations that: young people's voice be a core part of decision making; a committee of educators and practitioners conduct an urgent review of the primacy of high stakes testing which facilitates a discriminatory 'one glove fits all' approach to learning and assessment; young people and families should not be labelled as 'vulnerable' based on a predesignated checklist of 'risk factors'; equality data be collected and published by all institutions (including academies) and local authorities monthly in relation to exclusions (including internal exclusions) and managed moves.
- 13.2 *Racial Injustice in the COVID-19 response*⁵². This paper provides an overview of the risks and impact of COVID-19 on racial inequalities within the UK. It outlines an urgent call to action, including specific recommendations for civil society and its funders to put Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities at the heart of their response to ensure it addresses root issues and maximises impact.

14 Social Mobility

- 14.1 *Covid-19 and Social Mobility*⁵³. The Covid generation faces a "dark age" of entrenched low social mobility, according to this report on the unprecedented

⁵⁰ <https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/97/the-impact-of-covid19-on-education-and-childrens-services/>

⁵¹ <https://nomoreexclusions.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Final-NME-Final-Report-on-Impact-of-COVID-19-on-Education-and-Childrens-Services.pdf>

⁵² <https://charitysowhite.org/covid19>

⁵³ <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cepCovid-19-004.pdf>

economic and educational shocks of the pandemic. The pandemic will damage the life prospects of all Britons aged under 25, regardless of their background. The report says young people are now less likely to fare better than past generations, less likely to climb the income ladder and less likely to fulfil their potential, regardless of their background. The authors (the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics and Political Science) call for the introduction of job guarantees for people who are unemployed for more than 12 months, a one-off progressive wealth tax on the net worth of the top one per cent of richest individuals and living wages for key workers.

15 Mental Health and Anxiety

- 15.1 Schooldash and Edukit are collaborating to conduct a Covid-19 Home-school Survey to provide real-time information on how pupils are coping with the lockdown. At 27 May, 9,000 students across the UK had taken a survey and the findings⁵⁴ show that many younger students report feeling stressed that they felt they had too much work to do and most older students are struggling with loneliness. Leaders of educational settings may wish to participate in the free survey⁵⁵ so that they can understand how their students are coping and compare results with national trends.
- 15.2 Partnership for Young London, Tik Tok and Healthy London Partnership have been collaborating on a project to run a bi-weekly listening project with young people aged 14 to 24 in and around London to better understand their experience of Covid-19. The latest published report⁵⁶ is therefore part of an ongoing research programme into how young people are getting on during lockdown and provides particularly helpful insight into how young people feel about going outside. It finds that:

⁵⁴ <https://www.schooldash.com/blog.html#20200527>

⁵⁵ <https://form.jotform.com/201042883487054?schoolName=ABC%20Academy&urn=10000>

⁵⁶ https://3532bf5a-d879-4481-8c8f-127da8c44deb.usrfiles.com/ugd/3532bf_7c20f5f6ef1e4c25afd7be462efa4126.pdf

- Young people may be less vulnerable to coronavirus infection, but they have been disproportionately affected by the wider impacts of the pandemic. Black and minority ethnic groups, young carers, young people leaving care and those with pre-existing mental health conditions have been hardest hit of all.
- Young people face an uncertain future; academic and career opportunities previous generations took for granted have been curtailed or have disappeared entirely.
- Young people are (like many of us) feeling overwhelmed and need support. This support ranges from practical financial advice to enhanced mental health provisions.
- Despite the challenges, young people are doing their absolute best to stay positive. They have an inspiring sense of personal and civic responsibility and are doing amazing things to support each other, their families and their wider communities.

15.3 The *Mental Health in Schools Toolkit*⁵⁷ has been developed by the Healthy London Partnership and the Greater London Authority. School leaders and staff, health care professionals and commissioners are encouraged to use the toolkit for a wide range of information and guidance on how to promote emotional wellbeing and mental health within schools.

15.4 *Impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's mental health: results of survey with parents and carers*⁵⁸ by Young Minds provides the results of a survey carried out in April and May 2020. It reports that two thirds of respondents were concerned about the impact of coronavirus on their child's mental health; many parents and carers did not know who to turn to for support during the crisis; and that children who were receiving mental health support prior to the crisis were no longer receiving it.

⁵⁷ <https://www.healthylondon.org/resource/schools-mental-health-toolkit/>

⁵⁸ <https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3774/youngminds-survey-with-parents-and-carers-summary-of-results.pdf>

15.5 *What children are saying to Childline about coronavirus*⁵⁹ adds to the overall picture of the declining state of young people's mental health.

15.6 There appear to be two main issues:

- The scale of the problem. Immediate fear of ill-health, uncertainty over current education and anxiety over future prospects 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.

16 Youth Work Guidance

16.1 The National Youth Agency (NYA) has produced guidance⁶⁰ in consultation with Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive to support local providers, youth sector leaders, volunteers and young people to remain safe when engaging with youth sector activities (this document will be updated on a regular basis and must be used in conjunction with the readiness framework, which will be updated weekly according to the readiness level, and existing safeguarding policies and procedures). There is also a short video to explain the measures needed and the readiness framework⁶¹.

16.2 The Federation for Detached Youth Work has published guidance on delivering detached work with young people⁶² (if youth workers are delivering detached work it is critical that they have letters of support from local authorities and councils are asked to offer a letter or statement in support of organisations delivering safe street based, detached and outreach work).

⁵⁹ <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2020/childline-briefing-coronavirus>

⁶⁰ <https://nya.org.uk/guidance/>

⁶¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HrejeUFjg8&feature=youtu.be>

⁶² <https://nya.org.uk/resource/detached-youth-work-guidance/>

16.3 Further resources on how to deliver children and youth services during Covid-19 are also available⁶³ .

⁶³ <https://youthworksupport.co.uk/>

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.

17 Hidden in Plain Sight⁶⁴

17.1 This report from the NYA highlights the risks and needs of vulnerable young people and focuses on the way criminal gangs in England have adapted. The net result is an increase in the exploitation of young people. The importance of youth services has been stressed by national police chiefs, the Children's Commissioner for England and recent national inquiries. NYA is calling for:

- Youth services to be classified as an essential service and youth workers given key worker status.
- Clear Home Office guidance to embed youth services in Violence Reduction Units and other agencies now to meet immediate needs and sustained over time.
- A Youth Service Guarantee, recommended by the Home Affairs Select Committee, to secure long-term funding and greatly increase the number of youth workers

18 Moves to scrap GCSEs

18.1 On 11 June 2020, the Times Education Supplement reported⁶⁵ that Lord Baker is heading a group that intends to publish a manifesto calling for an end to GCSE exams.

19 Trends in Learning 2020⁶⁶

19.1 The Open University's annual workplace learning report identifies four key trends shaping the future of learning:

⁶⁴ <https://nya.org.uk/resource/hidden-in-plain-sight-gangs-and-exploitation/>

⁶⁵ <https://www.tes.com/news/state-and-private-schools-movement-scrap-gcses>

⁶⁶ <http://www.open.ac.uk/business/trends-in-learning-2020>

- Artificial Intelligence in education / learning
- Learning through open data
- Engaging with data ethics
- Learning from animations.

Part Three: Performance Update

This part of the Briefing Note includes the latest data on performance.

20 Participation

20.1 Statistics from the DfE⁶⁷ are now updated regularly. They show that:

- in the week commencing 25 May, the attendance rate for pupils in education settings in England on 28 May was 1.2 per cent compared with 2.6 per cent for the previous week. Approximately 52 per cent of education settings were open on that day compared with 80 per cent on 21 May (note: this would have been half-term in normal circumstances and the return rate upon which these statistics are based fell from 70 per cent to 33 per cent - The DfE has adjusted the figures to allow like-for-like comparisons and therefore cautions about their accuracy).
- From the week commencing 1 June 2020, the government asked schools to welcome back children in nursery, reception and years 1 and 6, alongside children of critical workers and vulnerable children. Approximately 91 per cent of settings were open in some capacity on 4 June. Around half of settings (52 per cent) that normally accept at least one of these year groups were estimated to be open to children in nursery, reception, year 1 or year 6 on 4 June. The number of children attending an education setting who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was 42,000, up from 23,000 on 21 May. The number of children attending who have a social worker was 47,000, up from 37,000 on 21 May.
- Approximately 92 per cent of settings were open in some capacity on 11 June, with an estimated 9.1 per cent of pupils (868,000) in attendance. Approximately 67 per cent of settings usually open to children in nursery, reception, year 1 or year 6 were open to at least one of these year groups on 11 June. Around 18 per cent of children with an EHCP or a social worker were attending an education setting on 11 June.

⁶⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-Covid-19-attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings>

- Approximately 92 per cent of settings were open in some capacity on 18 June, with an estimated 12.2 per cent of pupils (1,160,000) in attendance at education settings in England on 18 June. 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. The government estimates that 78 per cent of settings were open to at least one of these year groups on 18 June (attendance was highest in year 6, with approximately 34 per cent of all year 6 children in attendance on 18 June, while attendance was around 26 per cent in year 1 and 29 per cent in reception. 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. It is estimated that 60 per cent of settings were open to at least one of these year groups on 18 June, excluding FE colleges and special post-16 institutions. Approximately 10 per cent of year 10 and year 12 students were in attendance on 18 June, excluding students in FE colleges and special post-16 institutions (DfE's guidance states that settings are able to have a quarter of the year 10 and year 12 cohort in attendance at any one time to reduce the risk of transmission). Around 22 per cent of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a social worker were attending an education setting on 18 June.

20.2 Statistics from the DfE⁶⁸ show that, even before the lockdown took effect, the absence rate for UK pupils had increased; it rose over the autumn term in 2019-20 (autumn absence rates are a reasonable indicator the trend for the whole year), from 4.3 per cent overall during the same period in 2018-19 to 4.93 per cent – the highest overall rate since 2012-13 when it was 5.2 per cent. The unauthorised absence rate increased from 1.2 per cent to 1.32 per cent in the same period and the percentage of persistent absentee pupils across all schools increased from 10.9 per cent to 13.14 per cent. According to the DfE, illness is the most common reason for absence, accounting for 58 per cent of

⁶⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-term-2019>

all absences, and the main driver for an increase in pupil absences in the 2019 autumn term, with the number of days missed due to illness increasing by 22 per cent.

- 20.3 The national participation statistics (updated for 2018 and provisional for 2019)⁶⁹ show that in England participation in education and training was at record highs for 16 and 17 year-olds in 2019 (94.0 and 87.6 per cent respectively) and a near record level of 63.4 per cent for 18 year-olds. In all three age groups there had been slight reductions in participation in Apprenticeships and other training. The proportion of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) was at a near record low, with the increases in participation offset by an increase in the proportion of young not in any education and training and a decrease in the employment rate for these young people. The statistics are for England only and are not broken down by region or local authority area.
- 20.4 The government has published *Local Authority School Places Scorecards 2019*⁷⁰. Each scorecard displays a snapshot of the progress local authorities are making in delivering good quality school places. With regard to provision for 16 to 18 year-olds, Local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision. Where councils feel that there is a specific gap in provision, that cannot be addressed by existing providers, there is a process to bring this to the attention of the Education and Skills Funding Agency for consideration and action as appropriate. This process is mentioned at paragraph 14 of the participation Guidance, which includes a link to the 16-19 Education Market Entry Guidance⁷¹.
- 20.5 The main trends in provisional entries for GCSE and GCE (AS and A level) for the summer 2020 exam series⁷² are:

⁶⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-employment-2019>

⁷⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-school-places-scorecards-2019>

⁷¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-market-entry>

⁷² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2020-exam-series>

- GCSE entries increased by two per cent this year, mostly due to an increase in entry for English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects. The increase corresponds with an increase of three per cent in the size of the 16-year-old cohort this year.
- The largest increases in EBacc entry numbers are in combined science, mathematics & English language.
- A level entries for the summer 2020 exam series decreased by two per cent overall compared to last year, in line with a decrease in the size of the 18-year-old cohort (which fell by three per cent).
- The overall entry for AS in summer 2020 decreased by 26 per cent.

21 Achievement

21.1 The statistics for level 2 and level 3 attainment at age 19 were published on 29 April. These statistics are up to 2019. In summary:

- 85.4 per cent of 19 year-olds in London had achieved level 2 (81.8 per cent in England), a marginally lower proportion than in 2018 (85.5 per cent in London, 82.2 per cent nationally)
- The gap between those who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) who achieved level 2 (75.8 per cent) and those who were not eligible for FSM (87.7 per cent) had closed slightly from 2018 to 11.9 percentage points (the national gap was 22.1 percentage points)
- The gap between those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and those with no identified SEN at level 2 was 28.1 percentage points in London (90.0 per cent of those with no identified SEN achieved level 2 and 61.9 per cent of those with SEN). The national gap was 33.9 percentage points.
- 65.6 per cent of 19 year-olds in London has achieved level 3 (56.9 per cent in England) compared with 65.7 per cent in 2018 (57.4 per cent in England)
- The gap between those who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) who achieved level 3 (52.0 per cent) and those who were not eligible for FSM (68.8 per cent) had increased fractionally from 2018 to 16.8 percentage points (the national gap was 25.2 percentage points)

- The gap between those with SEN and those with no identified SEN at level 3 was 35.0 percentage points in London (71.3 per cent of those with no identified SEN achieved level 3 and 36.3 per cent of those with SEN). The national gap was 36.3 percentage points.

22 Intelligent London

- 22.1 Intelligent London⁷³ is updated frequently with the latest available data.
- 22.2 The latest updates include level 2 and 3 by 19 for 2019, absence in secondary schools for 2018/19 (full year), and updated GLA population projections.
- 22.3 Additionally, all borough Local Overviews and the London Summary have been updated.

23 Recommendation

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

⁷³ <http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/>