

Young People's Education and Skills

Item 4. Policy Update

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Contact: Peter O'Brien

Telephone: 020 7934 9743 **Email:** peter.obrien@londoncouncils.gov.uk

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 to peter.obrien@londoncouncils.gov.uk.

1 **Introduction**

1.1 Since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, while meetings have not been held regularly, we have been producing regular updates to Young People's Education and Skills Board members and councillors and officers in London's local authorities. Meetings have resumed since the start of 2021, albeit in an on-line format until the situation permits face-to-face meetings (or 'hybrid' meetings). We are therefore returning to the practice of providing Policy Updates for termly meetings of the Young People's Education and Skills Board that will capture the main developments in post-16 education and skills; policies and strategies of major stakeholders and other significant research in this field. We will continue to circulate this paper widely.

2 **Context**

2.1 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. Annex 1 provides a list of sources of official guidance.

2.2 Two bodies have been established to ensure that London moves smoothly out of the lockdown arrangements:

- London Transition Board¹
- London Recovery Board² (you can sign up to [receive updates from the London Recovery Board](#)). The London Recovery Board aims to: reverse the pattern of rising unemployment and lost economic growth caused by the economic scarring of Covid-19; support our communities, including those most impacted by the virus; help young people to flourish with access to support and opportunities; narrow social, economic and health inequalities; accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London. The Board has committed to taking a missions-based approach to the Recovery Programme³.

3 Data

3.1 The House of Commons Library⁴, 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.

3.2 The Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)⁵ produced by the DfE, is an interactive spreadsheet comparing data about children and young people across all local authorities in England and has also been updated with the latest published data.

3.3 During the pandemic, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published a wide variety of data and analysis across various themes and topics on a dedicated Covid-19 web page. It has introduced new surveys, developed new insight, used new data sources and published new cross-cutting

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/london-s-Covid-19-transition-board-meets-for-the-first-time>

² <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/londons-recovery-coronavirus-crisis/london-recovery-board>

³ <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/londons-recovery-coronavirus-crisis/recovery-context>

⁴ <https://www.parliament.uk/commons-library>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>

analysis in response to demands for high quality, trustworthy and up-to-date statistics throughout the pandemic, while maintaining and developing existing statistics to assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. It has launched a web page that brings together information on the pandemic by theme⁶, from which individual reports can be downloaded. Each theme provides an overall narrative on the subject matter based on what has been published to date and provides links to more detailed data and analysis along with the relevant contact points.

- 3.4 Data specific to London is published monthly by Greater London Authority (GLA) Economics⁷ and Intelligent London⁸ is also updated frequently with the latest available data. The GLA's City Intelligence Unit has been publishing a series of digests of external research that offer short summaries of major research reports and a deep dive into one or two topics⁹. London Councils' Executive discussed a paper that provides an overview of the current state of London's economy and the steps being taken to overcome the current challenges.¹⁰
- 3.5 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. (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).

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19reviewdataandanalysismarchtooctober2020/2020-10-28>

⁷ <https://data.london.gov.uk/gla-economics/>

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

⁹ <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/bc4f5f36-95a2-4a02-b13d-ef8e18ab0ffb/summaries-of-external-research-on-covid-19>

¹⁰ <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/download/file/fid/27120>

Part One: Current Issues

4 Government Announcements

- 4.1 On 4 January 2021 the Prime Minister announced new national restrictions which now include the closure of school and college buildings, except to the children of key workers and vulnerable children. The new plans from the government will see primary school, secondary school and college buildings closed for the majority of pupils until February, while also confirming that not all exams will go ahead as planned in the summer. The government has resumed daily Covid-19 briefings and its response addresses the constantly changing situation.
- 4.2 In a Statement to the House of Commons, the Education Secretary confirmed the arrangements for the partial closure of education settings and for the award of qualifications in summer 2021¹².
- 4.3 As a consequence of the decision that there should not be GCSE and A level exams this year, there was an exchange of correspondence between the Education Secretary and Simon Lebus, Ofqual's Chief Regulator, to reach agreement on the replacement process and a rapid consultation addressed principally to the students affected.

5 Parliament/Education Select Committee

- 5.1 A Westminster Hall debate on the 'Support for pupils' education during school closures' was held on Wednesday 13 January 2021¹³. The debate has been initiated by Matt Western MP and the House of Commons Library produced a briefing ahead of the debate¹⁴.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/46-billion-in-new-lockdown-grants-to-support-businesses-and-protect-jobs>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-statement-to-parliament-on-national-lockdown>

¹³ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-01-13/debates/EDA06425-FC24-46E9-917D-954A142825A7/SchoolClosuresSupportForPupils>

¹⁴ https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2021-0004/?utm_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm_campaign=20f74d670b-

5.2 Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Commons Education Committee, set out his suggestion for an educational roadmap out of Covid-19 in an article in inews on 7 January¹⁵.

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

6.1 Free support, to help local authorities engage and support young people at risk of NEET, is still available through the ASK (Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge) Service¹⁶. The support includes:

- Supporting activities organised through the authority to engage and support young people who are at risk of becoming, or have already become, NEET. This can include awareness presentations to employability skills workshops.
- Supporting activities for teachers, careers advisors and parents that are organised through the council.
- Staff training workshop for teams within the authority to develop knowledge on apprenticeships, traineeships and T Levels.

6.2 The Education Policy Institute has released its analysis of school attendance among local authorities throughout the autumn term, for both primary and secondary schools¹⁷. The analysis shows that average attendance among secondary schools was around 80-85% throughout most of the term – though there was significant variation within this, and large fluctuations in attendance among individual areas from week to week. Attendance changed dramatically in the last week of term, just before Christmas: average secondary attendance dropped to 72 per cent, driven by the upsurge in infections from mid-December. The drop was considerable around London and the Thames

[EMAIL CAMPAIGN 2021 01 06 08 00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9da1c9b17-20f74d670b-102517489&mc_cid=20f74d670b&mc_eid=d34cbf25d7](https://inews.co.uk/opinion/to-save-our-childrens-futures-from-coronavirus-we-need-a-proper-educational-plan-819999)

¹⁵ <https://inews.co.uk/opinion/to-save-our-childrens-futures-from-coronavirus-we-need-a-proper-educational-plan-819999>

¹⁶ <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/local-authorities/how-ask-works-with-local-authorities/>

¹⁷ <https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Analysis-Autumn-Attendance-EPI.pdf>

estuary, with secondary attendance falling to about 40 to 45 per cent in Bexley, Bromley, Enfield, Reading and Greenwich, about 35 per cent in Medway and Kent, and under 25 per cent in Redbridge, Thurrock and Havering.

7 Apprenticeships

- 7.1 The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is further extending apprenticeship flexibilities (previously announced in November 2020) until at least the end of August 2021¹⁸. This is to help apprentices continue their training and complete wherever possible during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 7.2 The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), responding to the gardening boom during the pandemic, is offering 40 new apprenticeships in one of its five gardens in 2021¹⁹.

8 T Levels

- 8.1 Second wave T Level technical qualifications (TQs) have been published by awarding organisations (AOs) in preparation for them being taught to the first students from September 2021²⁰. Overseen by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) following an extensive procurement exercise, these qualifications have been developed by the AOs with the support of providers and employers. They have been accredited by Ofqual and published for construction by City & Guilds and digital by NCFE.
- 8.2 upgrade classrooms and buildings in readiness for students starting courses in September 2022²¹. Part of this funding will also be made available to pay for specialist kit such as surveying equipment and engineering tools to make

¹⁸ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/newshub/news-events/apprenticeship-flexibilities-extended-until-end-of-august/>

¹⁹ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/qualifications-and-training/work-based-training/rhs-apprenticeships>

²⁰ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/newshub/news-events/wave-2-t-level-technical-qualifications-tqs-approved/>

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-levels-capital-fund-wave-2-successful-applications>

sure students have access to the industry standard devices they need to be ready for the workplace. These changes are reflected in an updated version of the T level action plan²².

- 8.3 Gatsby has designed a set of online materials to help employers and staff give mentoring support for students on T-level industry placements.²³

9 Quality and Standards

- 9.1 To support the renewed move to online learning, BBC Bitesize has increased its output covering all stages of learning²⁶ and in support of these resources the Science Museum Group has released complementary materials²⁷, including talks, activities, games and apps to explore from home. The British Education Suppliers Association (BESA) has also compiled a range of resources to help teachers deliver remote learning effectively²⁸ and the Education and Training Foundation has released 14 new educational technology (EdTech) training modules on the Enhance Digital Teaching Platform²⁹. The aim is to support teachers and trainers across the sector with digital content creation and delivery at a time when remote working is required.
- 9.2 Oak National Academy, which has provided more than 28 million lessons accessed by over 4 million pupils since the start of January, has partnered with the National Literary Trust to provide a free digital library.

²² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951488/T_Level_Action_Plan_2020_.pdf

²³ <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/latest/new-support-materials-for-industry-placement-mentors>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hundreds-of-thousands-more-laptops-to-support-disadvantaged-pupils-learn-at-home>

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-your-remote-education-provision>

²⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

²⁷ <https://learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/resources/?type=at-home>

²⁸ <https://www.besa.org.uk/news/besa-announces-free-support-for-teachers-during-national-lockdown/>

²⁹ <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/news/new-bite-size-edtech-modules-to-support-digital-learning/>

- 9.3 Research by Sutton Trust³⁰ has found that the digital divide has not improved since March, with two-thirds of heads saying they have had to source devices for pupils themselves while waiting for government support.
- 9.4 The Education and Training Foundation has launched a new two-strand development programme for FE and Sixth Form Colleges governing bodies that will be delivered by the AoC. The first strand³¹ is for those relatively new to the role and the second³² is for those with more experience.

10 Progressions - the Labour Market

- 10.1 London government (the Mayor / GLA and London Councils) has produced an online roadmap to safe and full reopening of London's economy³³, which sets out the conditions for each phase of reopening and the actions that need to be taken to achieve progress from one step to the next. The website is updated regularly.
- 10.2 Labour market experts EMSI have published *UK Regional Labour Market Outlook: Evaluating 2020 and anticipating 2021*³⁴. It is possible to ask for the main report, which relies on visualisations to show key facts, and local analyses.
- 10.3 The World Economic Forum's annual Global Competitiveness Report³⁵ focuses exclusively on the world-wide response to Covid-19. Broadly looking at the impact of the pandemic, social and economic revival and the capacity for transformation, the report comments on debt, human capital, markets, innovation and resilience.
- 10.4 CV-Library, an employment website that boasts of hosting the UK's largest CV database, has published the most in demand candidates of 2020 based

³⁰ <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/remote-learning-the-digital-divide/>

³¹ <https://booking.etfoundation.co.uk/course/details/1049>

³² <https://booking.etfoundation.co.uk/course/details/1050>

³³ <https://www.london.gov.uk/publications/roadmap-safe-and-full-reopening-londons-economy-next-12-months>

³⁴ <https://www.economicmodelling.co.uk/uk-regional-outlook/>

³⁵ https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2020?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2738721_Agenda_weekly-18December2020&utm_term=&emailType=Newsletter

on jobs posted by recruiters. The list includes: Warehouse Operative, Support Worker, Registered Nurse, Care Assistant, Labourer, Customer Delivery Driver, Cleaner, Production Operative, Project Manager and Maintenance Engineer.

- 10.5 The Resolution Foundation has considered the implications of the UK's new immigration system on the labour market in its report Home and away: the UK labour market in a post Brexit world³⁶. In particular, the report comments on the reliance of some UK-based companies on overseas labour and the ability of the domestic labour market to fill what may become labour shortages. Taken together with other pressures as a result of Covid-19, it speculates on whether business models that existed before the UK left the European Union (EU) may continue in the new relationship and how adept enforcement may be in the event of irregular migration and employment. Further analysis on how the UK labour market is likely to change can be found in the Resolution Foundation report A Changing Labour Market.
- 10.6 The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has highlighted the challenging state of the youth labour market, examined the response of the government and proposed additional measures to support apprenticeships, traineeships and work placements³⁸.
- 10.7 The Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) explored the effects of negative labour market shocks experienced by parents during Covid-19 on their children and the potential for widening existing inequalities in child outcomes³⁹.
- 10.8 The think-tank Onward has produced a report⁴⁰, backed by charities and leading MPs, that is calling on the government to pay young people to work for charities, to mitigate against the long-term scarring of unemployment

³⁶ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/12/Home-and-away.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/12/Home-and-away.pdf>

³⁸ https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/covid-19-youth-labour-market_tcm18-88287.pdf#_ga=2.208055570.1644239645.1608135523-864504974.1595425456?platform=hootsuite

³⁹ <https://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cepcovid-19-015.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

⁴⁰ <https://www.ukonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-Policies-of-Belonging-1.pdf>

caused by Covid-19. The report says that the move would help charities better support their local communities as well as provide employment for NEET young people. Under the 'year in service' proposal, young people aged between 18 and 24 would be offered national minimum wage jobs at charities for a year, with their salaries met by the government. Work suggested in the report includes tutoring young children, supporting care home residents, tree planting and teaching English to migrants. The suggests that the charity jobs initiative could be developed within the government's Kickstart scheme, which covers wages and administrative costs for employers taking on young workers.

- 10.9 As a larger section of the population has gained experience of on-line learning activities, the Open University sees great potential for individuals to have new, inclusive opportunities to develop their skills and improve their performance in work (or gain the chance to improve their career)⁴¹.

11 Progression to Further and Higher Education

- 11.1 The House of Commons Education Select Committee published its four pillar approach to revolutionise Adult skills and lifelong learning⁴². The report is the culmination of the Committee's inquiry into Adult skills and lifelong learning that was relaunched in March 2020 following on from the work of the previous Committee. It makes recommendations on areas including: community learning, individual learning accounts, part-time education and employer-led training. The report calls for community learning centres in every town, individual learning accounts and boosting part-time Higher Education and employer-led training, which should be at the centre of an adult education revolution to tackle social injustice and revitalise the country's economy.
- 11.2 The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) 2020 End of Cycle report: *What happened to the COVID cohort?*⁴³ shows record numbers

⁴¹ <http://www.open.ac.uk/business/learning-as-a-benefit>

⁴² <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmeduc/278/27802.htm>

⁴³ <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-reports/2020-end-cycle-report>

of acceptances from the lowest participation areas and some progress in widening access and participation. In addition, there have been more students than ever declaring disabilities accepted. UCAS said that the UK's 38 most selective universities would each only need to admit an additional 70 students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds in England every year to close the collective equality gap in their admissions by 2030.

- 11.3 Students from disadvantaged backgrounds who fail to meet the University of Cambridge's entry requirements will be given a chance to study at the institution⁴⁴. A free foundation year – for talented students who miss out on the top grades at A-level – will be introduced next year in an attempt to diversify the student population at Cambridge. The launch comes amid concerns that disadvantaged students are likely to have felt the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic disproportionately amid lengthy school closures and a switch to remote learning. Young people who have been in care, who are estranged from their families and those who have missed significant periods of learning because of health issues are among the groups the scheme aims to reach.
- 11.4 Please see paragraph 13.1 for information about the Preparing for Adulthood programme's work.

12 Careers Guidance

- 12.1 Engineering UK has proposed improvements in careers education relating to science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), including better employer engagement and tailored careers advice⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ <https://www.cam.ac.uk/news/cambridge-foundation-year-offers-new-route-to-undergraduate-study-for-educationally-and-socially>

⁴⁵ <https://www.engineeringuk.com/media/232356/our-careers-our-future-briefing.pdf>

13 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- 13.1 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs)⁴⁶ shows that schools are experiencing significant difficulties in providing support to pupils with SEND during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 13.2 The Preparing for Adulthood programme (PfA) is delivered by the National Development Team for inclusion (NDTi) and funded by the DfE as part of the Delivering Better Outcomes Together consortium. PfA has provided an updated selection of resources and useful information for young people thinking about starting higher education (HE).
- 13.3 In Planning, commissioning, funding, and supporting provision for post-16 high needs students⁴⁷, acl consulting – commissioned by the Local Government Association in collaboration with NATSPEC- presents a reformed model for High-Needs Funding covering planning, commissioning, transition and collaboration that builds on good practice and aims deliver a stronger and more robust approach to high needs learning.

14 Funding

- 14.1 London Councils has said that it is disappointed with this year's local government financial settlement as it does not go far enough to cover London boroughs' additional costs and lost income during the pandemic⁴⁸.
- 14.2 The Institute of Fiscal Studies' (IFS) assessment⁴⁹ of the provisional settlement is that the majority of the increase in core funding is expected to come from increased council tax and that the core funding per person is set to be lower than in 2015-16. It suggests that funding should be seen in the light of anticipated increase in demand for services in the coming financial year and continued pressure of local authority income.

⁴⁶ <https://nasen.org.uk/news/senco-workforce-survey>

⁴⁷ https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Planning-commissioning-funding-supporting-provision-for-post-16-high-needs-students-report_0.pdf

⁴⁸ <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/press-release/21-december-2020/disappointing-settlement-after-councils-pushed-themselves-limit-help>

⁴⁹ <https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN314-Assessing-England%27s-2021-22-Local-Government-Finance-Settlement-5.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

- 14.3 *Assessing Covid-19 cost pressures on schools*, a report by the Education Policy Institute (EPI)⁵⁰, finds that fewer than a third (31%) of the additional costs facing schools as a result of the pandemic are covered by the government's support fund. The research finds that virtually all schools have had to spend more this year in order to operate in a 'Covid-safe' environment, with half of schools having to use their reserves and half unlikely to balance their budget by the end of the year. The analysis, which is based on responses from over 700 schools covering March to November 2020, distributed through the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), finds that almost all schools reported extra expenditure on PPE and cleaning supplies, while a large majority faced additional costs from signage, digital equipment and handwashing facilities.
- 14.4 The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)'s report *The implications of COVID-19 on the school funding landscape*⁵¹ explores the implications of Covid-19 on the funding of mainstream primary and secondary schools in England, highlighting the additional cost pressures on schools resulting from implementing Covid-19 measures in the 2020/21 academic year. It considers the extent to which schools were in a position to meet unexpected costs before Covid-19 and looks at whether the additional funding provided by central government for COVID-19 has been sufficient, suggesting that it is unlikely to ease pressures on school finances. Its recommendations include the need for emergency support to help schools in deprived areas meet their extra costs.

⁵⁰ <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/covid-19-cost-pressures-on-schools/>

⁵¹ https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4225/the_implications_of_covid_19_on_the_school_funding_landscape.pdf

15 Equality, Race and Social Justice

- 15.1 The Institute of Health Equity, supported by the Health Foundation, published *Build Back Fairer: The Pandemic, Socioeconomic and Health Inequalities in England (The Marmot Review)*⁵², which examines the impact both of Covid-19 and the societal response to the pandemic to show inequalities in terms of the risks of infection and mortality. It demonstrates the effects of these inequalities in social determinants of health, including early life, education and more widely on children and young people.
- 15.2 The Institute for Fiscal Studies, in a New Year's message update on its review of inequalities⁵³, has said the most vulnerable – those on lower incomes, the young, the least-educated and people from minoritised ethnic backgrounds – had been hit hardest by the crisis. The report finds that:
- The COVID crisis has exacerbated inequalities between the high- and low-paid and between graduates and non-graduates.
 - The crisis has hit the self-employed and others in insecure and non-traditional forms of employment especially hard.
 - Educational inequalities will almost certainly have been exacerbated by the crisis.
 - Between March and July 2020, mortality rates from COVID-19 were twice as high in the most deprived areas as in the least deprived.
 - The crisis has had very different impacts on different ethnic groups.
 - Through 2020, pensioners have on average reported becoming financially better off, whilst the young have borne the brunt of job and income loss.

⁵² <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review-full-report.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

⁵³ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/inequality/the-ifs-deaton-review-of-inequalities-a-new-years-message/>

- 15.3 The Resolution Foundation has commented on the gap in wealth between different ethnic groups that has been highlighted during Covid-19⁵⁴. Analysing official data, the report finds that Black African and Bangladeshi families are more likely to fall into the low wealth category and outlines the factors that drive wealth inequalities, including educational attainment. The report concludes that wealth gaps based on ethnicity are large and persistent and reforms of taxation, changes in tenancy law and support for new business ventures may reduce these inequalities.
- 15.4 The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)'s annual report on poverty in the UK⁵⁵ finds that families in poverty start 2021 are reeling from a triple financial blow: Before coronavirus, incomes were falling – and falling fastest – for people with the lowest incomes because the value of benefit payments decreased, meaning millions were financially exposed when the pandemic hit. People already trapped in poverty were worst affected by the economic storm caused by COVID-19, as they were more likely to be working in the hardest hit sectors. Unless the Government makes the right decisions now, there is a risk that families in poverty find it much harder to recover from the economic shock of a long third lockdown as the UK looks to rebuild its economy.

16 Social Mobility

- 16.1 This years' report on poverty in the UK by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁵⁶ highlights early indications of how poverty has changed since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, as well as the situation revealed by the latest poverty data collected before the outbreak. It examines overall changes to poverty, with sections looking at the impact of work, the social security system and housing.

⁵⁴ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/12/A-gap-that-wont-close.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

⁵⁵ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2020-21>

⁵⁶ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2020-21?platform=hootsuite>

17 Mental Health, Anxiety and Homelessness

- 17.1 A package of reforms has been set out in a wide-ranging new Reforming the Mental Health Act white paper⁵⁷, which builds on the recommendations made by Sir Simon Wessely's Independent Review of the Mental Health Act in 2018.
- 17.2 Centrepoin has published its annual Youth Homelessness Databank⁵⁸, which shows that over 120,000 young people sought help as they were homeless or at risk of homelessness in 2019-20. Made up of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to local and devolved authorities across the UK, the Databank shows how many young people are seeking support and what - if any - assistance they received from their local council. This year's Databank found that 121,000 young people approached their local authority for housing support in 2019/20, with over 23,000 facing homelessness over the winter period alone. However, almost six in ten young people did not receive any recorded positive outcome - meaning that their homelessness was not prevented or relieved, and they were not offered accommodation under the main homelessness duty.
- 17.3 The Local Government Association has warned that 127,240 children are now living in temporary accommodation and called on central government to take urgent action⁵⁹.

18 Youth Work

- 18.1 Partnership for Young London (PYL) is looking to conduct one of the largest studies of young Londoners to help inform its work ahead of the election. PYL will be talking to more than 5,000 young people on a range of subjects and is consulting with organisations and young Londoners about designing the questions. PYL is inviting organisations to inform them of any topic that they would like to explore through this survey, or specific questions on which

⁵⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-reform-of-mental-health-laws>

⁵⁸ <https://centrepoin.org.uk/databank/>

⁵⁹ <https://www.local.gov.uk/around-450-primary-schools-worth-children-stuck-temporary-accommodation-during-lockdown>

they want to know the views of young Londoners (contact matthew.walsham@cityoflondon.gov.uk).

19 London

- 19.1 Reaching Higher's leadership programme, which helps vulnerable young people in Croydon boost their career and life prospects, will triple the size of its operation thanks to new funding. The Youth charity's scheme currently supports 20 teenagers at risk of being excluded from school or drawn into a spiral of criminal activity or gang involvement. Now, the South Norwood-based organisation will be able to help an additional 40 young people a year, thanks to a £143,750 grant from City Bridge Trust – the City of London Corporation's charity funder. The five-year funding will support a series of workshops on topics such as relationship-building, self-esteem and financial literacy, alongside mentoring, work experience and volunteering opportunities.
- 19.2 People with mental health issues in Tower Hamlets will support each other in a new scheme aimed at targeting hard-to-reach groups and tackling 'hidden homelessness'. The project will see support groups set up in 12 wards across the borough, while people with experience of mental ill health will be trained as 'peer leaders' to offer face-to-face and online support to others. It will particularly target people in minoritised communities and homeless people, including those forced to 'sofa surf' or stay with families or in other insecure accommodation. The scheme, which hopes to reach hundreds of people across the borough, is being run by Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham, with £107,800 funding from City Bridge Trust.
- 19.3 *London Recovery Manifesto*⁶⁰, the Centre for London presents the polarised effects of the pandemic on different economic sectors and the knock-on effects on different people. It highlights evidence of community solidarity and establishment of local support networks and among its recommendations to help recovery are: introducing support for better jobs and a fairer labour

⁶⁰ <https://www.centreforlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Centre-for-London-London-recovery-manifesto.pdf>

market – including support targeted at people at risk of long-term unemployment and young people, in particular disadvantaged or disabled young people and revitalising governance and resetting devolution – towns and cities should be given the capacity to create their own recoveries, such as through new devolution deals, and London’s town centres need new governance models that bring residents and businesses together to plan and realise their future.

20 Summary: the key issues for the recovery of Young People's Education and Skills in London

- 20.1 The lift in the national mood that was palpable at the end of last year when news of vaccines against Covid-19 made the headlines, bringing the prospect of a more sociable Christmas and New Year, was dashed by the emergence of variant strains of the virus, including one believed to have arisen in Kent. Inevitably as the infection rate rose, a new national lockdown commenced in January, which led to fresh restrictions on the children and young people who were expected to attend educational settings – although the definition of ‘key worker’ in the latest lockdown means more children and young people are able to attend their educational setting now than in spring 2020. The DfE and Ofqual are consulting on measures to replace summer academic and vocational written exams with a teacher-assessed model that learns the lessons from the 2020 award process. The safe, full re-opening of all educational settings and the fairness of awarding qualifications this year are the key priorities for the immediate future.
- 20.2 More excellent resources are becoming available to support on-line teaching and learning, but the ‘digital divide’ is still a major issue to address.
- 20.3 The youth labour market is still badly affected by uncertainties in the economy, though the London Recovery Board, through its mission-based programme, is overseeing a co-ordinated effort to address youth unemployment in London.

Part Two: Policy Update

This part of the Briefing Note covers policies and reports that have been received since mid-December 2020.

21 Recognition

- 21.1 Those recognised in the New Years' Honours List from the wider FE and skills sector include Nicki Hay, vice chair of the board at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers and chief operating officer at Estio Training Ltd, who received an MBE and Mark Siswick, Headteacher at Chesterton Primary School, who also received an MBE.
- 21.2 The TES named membership organisations (including the AoC, AELP and ASCL represented on the Young People's Education and Skills Board) and our Board member Sam Parrett OBE among its people of the year 2020.

22 Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth⁶¹

- 22.1 *Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth*, is the White Paper that sets out the government's reforms to post-16 technical education and training to support people to develop the skills needed to get good jobs and improve national productivity. The measures it proposes include:
- Business groups, including Chambers of Commerce, working alongside colleges to develop tailored skills plans to meet local training needs; supported by a £65 million Strategic Development Fund to put the plans into action and establish new College Business Centres to drive innovation and enhanced collaboration with employers.
 - Giving employers a central role in designing almost all technical courses by 2030, to ensure that the education and training people receive is directly linked to the skills needed for real jobs.

⁶¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth>

- Boosting the quality and uptake of Higher Technical Qualifications - that provide the skills that many employers say they need and that can lead to higher wages – by introducing newly approved qualifications from September 2022 supported by a government-backed brand and quality mark.
- Changing the law so that from 2025 people can access flexible student finance so they can train and retrain throughout their lives, supported by funding in 21/22 to test ways to boost access to more modular and flexible learning.
- Launching a nationwide recruitment campaign to get more talented individuals to teach in further education and investing in high quality professional development including a new Workforce Industry Exchange Programme.
- Overhauling the funding and accountability rules, so funding is better targeted at supporting high quality education and training that meets the needs of employers; and introducing new powers to intervene when colleges are failing to deliver good outcomes for the communities they serve.

23 New relationship with the European Union

23.1 The UK and the EU reached an agreement on their long-term relationship, including a Trade and Cooperation Agreement that came into effect when the Transition Period of the UK's exit from the UK expired on 31 December 2020⁶². The UK decided not to participate in the EU's Erasmus+ Programme and has instead established a new Turing Programme to allow international educational exchanges to take place⁶³.

⁶² https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agreements-reached-between-the-united-kingdom-of-great-britain-and-northern-ireland-and-the-european-union?utm_source=bd1c78db-4723-4a24-8253-aa98454abb53&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

⁶³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-turing-scheme-to-support-thousands-of-students-to-study-and-work-abroad>

24 Youth Engagement

24.1 The Co-op Foundation is set to award £1.8m to organisations which empower young people to help their local community, support their peers and improve their wellbeing⁶⁴.

25 Institute of Teaching⁶⁵

25.1 The DfE has announced that a new Institute of Teaching is set to be established in England to provide teachers and school leaders with “prestigious training and development” throughout their career. Training will be delivered through at least four regional campuses, launching in September 2022, with the Institute being the first of its kind in the world. The national initiative will deliver evidence-based approaches to teacher training, and also include mentoring and early career support, alongside leadership courses and continued professional development, building on existing high-quality provision. The Institute will be funded as part of £22 million for teacher quality agreed at the Spending Review, which also includes funding for mentor time for early career teachers as part of the Early Career Framework reforms.

26 Commission on Education and Employment Opportunities for Young People⁶⁶

26.1 The final report of the Commission on Education and Employment Opportunities for Young People makes a case for improvements and among its recommendations are devolution of education responsibilities, increasing

⁶⁴ <https://www.coopfoundation.org.uk/news/iwill-funding-awarded-2021/>

⁶⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-institute-of-teaching-set-to-be-established?utm_source=7404f0e1-6ee5-4bc6-95e1-c676084678a0&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

⁶⁶ <https://learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Youth-Commission-report-6-Unleashing-talent.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

the post-16 funding rate to £5,000, a Careers Advancement Service and creating learning accounts.

27 National Graduate Development Programme⁶⁷

27.1 The local government NGDP programme has recruited its biggest and most diverse cohort to date in 2020, with 149 graduate places around the country, of whom 28 per cent identified as minoritised ethnic and of whom more than ever before felt able to disclose a disability. The LGA has received a record of over 7,400 applications for 2021 placements. Councils interested in signing up and hosting graduates can visit the webpage or email helen.reeves@local.gov.uk for an informal conversation.

28 Appointments

28.1 The Education Secretary has named Lord Wharton of Yarm as his preferred candidate to be the next Chair of the Office for Students, following approval by the Prime Minister⁶⁸. Lord Wharton will now go on to attend a pre-appointment hearing before the Education Select Committee on a date to be confirmed by the Committee.

⁶⁷ <https://www.local.gov.uk/national-graduate-development-programme>

⁶⁸ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/statement-on-preferred-candidate-for-ofs-chair/>

Part Three: Performance Update

This part of the Briefing Note includes the latest data on performance. The DfE is trialling a new service to enable its statistical data to be viewed and used⁶⁹.

29 Participation

Attendance

29.1 The figures on schools and colleges attendance published by DfE⁷⁰ are as follows:

- In the week commencing proportion of open state schools including schools on INSET was 98.5% (down from 99.2% on 10 December) and Attendance in all state schools was 79.2% (Down from 84.6% on 10 December).
- In the week commencing 11 January overall attendance was 13.9 per cent.

(Thursday is the usual 'spot' day on which weekly attendance is counted, but this was changed to Wednesday 16 December in the week before the Christmas break).

Young people not in education, employment or training

29.2 Publication of the September Guarantee figures has been delayed and the Annual NEET Report is now expected in March.

30 Achievement

30.1 Updated figures for Key stages 4 and 5 are now expected to be published in March.

⁶⁹ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/neet-statistics-annual-brief>

⁷⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

31 Progression

31.1 The revised figures for 2018/19 are now expected to be published in March.

32 Intelligent London⁷¹

32.1 Intelligent London makes the very best of data analysis and visualisation techniques so that those with an interest in supporting and promoting the interests of young people can easily access reliable and up-to-date data.

33 Recommendation

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

⁷¹ <http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/>

Annex: Sources of Official Guidance

The general guidance on Covid-19 and the government's response⁷²

Specific guidance on education⁷³

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), which supports government at all levels with relevant data and intelligence⁷⁴.

NHS information on coronavirus: ⁷⁵

Q&A from Public Health England on coronavirus: ⁷⁶. **Please note:** The National Institute for Health Protection (NIHP) has been set up to bring together Public Health England (PHE), NHS Test and Trace and the analytical capability of the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) under a single leadership team. This is the first step towards becoming a single organisation focused on tackling COVID-19 and protecting the nation's health.

⁷² <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

⁷³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-Covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>

⁷⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics>

⁷⁵ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

⁷⁶ <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>