

Young People's Education and Skills Operational Sub-Group

Policy Update

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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 to peter.obrien@londoncouncils.gov.uk.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper is primarily intended to inform the Young People's Education and Skills Operational Sub-Group (OSG) at its meeting on 25 March 2021. After the meeting, an addendum will be added to cover the period to the end of March and this combined document will be circulated to the Young People's Education and Skills Board, leading councillors in London, borough officers and other partners and stakeholders in London's education and skills system. Please see our dedicated webpage for the briefings and policy updates that have been produced since March 2020.¹

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

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

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 Board²
- London Recovery Board³ (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 Programme⁴.

2.3 On 16 March 2021 the Mayor of London hosted a summit to provide an update on London's recovery⁵.

3 Data

3.1 The House of Commons Library⁶, 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. Among the House of Commons Library's publications in March was a retrospective analysis of how Covid-19 affected pupils in state funded schools in England

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/london-s-Covid-19-transition-board-meets-for-the-first-time>

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

⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/londons-recovery-coronavirus-crisis/recovery-context>

⁵ <https://www.london.gov.uk/events/2021-03-16/virtual-summit-londons-road-recovery-livestream>

⁶ <https://www.parliament.uk/commons-library>

during autumn term 2020⁷ and an overview of the Turing Scheme⁸, which replaces the Erasmus+ programme to provide funding for participants in universities, colleges and schools to go on study and work placements across the world from September.

- 3.2 The Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)⁹ 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 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 theme¹⁰, 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) Economics¹¹ and Intelligent London¹² is also updated frequently with the latest available data. The GLA's City Intelligence Unit has been

⁷ https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/autumn-term-2020-how-covid-19-affected-englands-state-funded-schools/?utm_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm_campaign=993d1d2048-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_03_09_08_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9da1c9b17-993d1d2048-102517489&mc_cid=993d1d2048&mc_eid=d34cbf25d7

⁸ https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9141/?utm_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm_campaign=fe8ad36c1a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_03_19_08_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9da1c9b17-fe8ad36c1a-102517489&mc_cid=fe8ad36c1a&mc_eid=d34cbf25d7

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>

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

¹¹ <https://data.london.gov.uk/gla-economics/>

¹² <http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/>

publishing a series of digests of external research that offer short summaries of major research reports and a deep dive into one or two topics¹³.

- 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).

¹³ <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/bc4f5f36-95a2-4a02-b13d-ef8e18ab0ffb/summaries-of-external-research-on-covid-19>

Part One: Current Issues

4 Government Announcements

- 4.1 The Chancellor delivered the Spring Budget on 3 March under the theme of “Build Back Better”¹⁴. Most commentators reported that it concentrated on the immediate economic issues facing the country rather than resolving long-term and structural issues. The Budget confirmed funding for the major education programmes announced in the run-up to the Chancellor’s statement, but there were some new measures relating to skills, including
- Cash incentives for employers to hire new apprentices doubled and an extra £126million for traineeships
 - new ‘portable’ apprenticeships (also called ‘flexi-jobs’ apprenticeships) to be launched
 - new ‘help to grow’ initiative to support skills in small businesses.
- 4.2 The National Audit Office (NAO)’s report *Support for children’s education during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic*¹⁵ examines the role of the DfE and finds that the pandemic presented the DfE with an unprecedented challenge in the form of wholesale disruption to schooling across the country. With no pre-existing plan for dealing with disruption on this scale, the approach was largely reactive. In the early months of the pandemic, it allowed schools considerable discretion in how they supported in-school and remote learning. This helped to reduce the demands on schools at a very difficult time, but also contributed to wide variation in the education and support that children received. The report adds that the DfE took action to support schools and pupils, including ensuring that schools remained open for vulnerable children and funding online resources for those learning at home. The report also says that aspects of the DfE’s response, however, could have been done better or more quickly, and therefore been more effective in mitigating the learning pupils lost as a result of the disruption (for

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/budget-2021-documents>

¹⁵ https://www.nao.org.uk/report/support-for-childrens-education-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/?utm_campaign=support-for-childrens-education-during-the-covid-19-pandemic&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

example, it could have set clear expectations for in-school and remote learning earlier and addressed the barriers that disadvantaged children faced more effectively). The NAO concludes that it is crucial that the DfE now takes swift and effective action, including to learn wider lessons from its Covid-19 response and to ensure that the catch-up learning programme is effective and reaches the children who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

5 Parliament/Education Select Committee

- 5.1 The Education Select Committee held a formal evidence session on 2 March as part of inquiry into the impact of Covid-19 on education and children's services. Evidence was taken from Sir Kevan Collins (Education Recovery Commissioner, DfE), Professor Becky Francis (Chief Executive, Education Endowment Foundation), and Geoff Barton (General Secretary, Association of School and College Leaders) on the themes of Covid catch-up plans and awarding of student grades¹⁶.
- 5.2 In Parliament, a Petitions Committee Debate was held on 15 March on a series of petitions on the impact of Covid-19 on education¹⁷.

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

- 6.1 The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has reported on how home learning experiences changed during the progression of the first Covid-19 lockdown¹⁸. Having set up a panel of parents of school-aged children, the IFS could draw on real-time data between April and July 2020 to analyse children's use of time and the resources (from home or school) that they could use. The report says that children who returned to school before the end of the academic year had a different experience to those who did not and children did not adapt over time to school closures – learning time fell over the course of the

¹⁶ <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/3844/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/>

¹⁷ <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/326/petitions-committee/news/152054/mps-to-debate-petitions-relating-to-the-impact-of-covid19-on-education/>

¹⁸ <https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/WP202104-Inequalities-in-responses-to-school-closures-over-the-course-of-the-first-COVID-19-lockdown.pdf>

period covered by the research. However, the report provides further confirmation that children from better-off families coped better than more deprived children and were more likely to return to school when given the chance.

- 6.2 A new £20million fund has been launched to investigate how diversionary programmes can keep children aged 10 to 17 years-old out of the criminal justice system. *The Youth Endowment Fund - another chance: diversion from the criminal justice system*¹⁹ seeks to understand how offering alternatives to arrest, conviction and custody to children who have offended can sustainably prevent them from becoming involved in violence later in their lives. The fund, which is open to any organisation that receives referrals from a relevant statutory service will invest in 10 to 20 programmes. The fund will open for applications on 19 April until 14 May 2021.
- 6.3 FFT Datalabs published several articles in March²⁰, including:
- What are the most popular subject combinations at A-Level?
 - Has a GCSE grade C/4 lost its value?
 - How much school did Year 11 miss in the Autumn term?

7 Apprenticeships

- 7.1 The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has dismissed the Apprenticeship Levy as having failed on every measure and will undermine investment in skills and economic recovery without significant reform. The report argues that reforming the levy to a broader, more flexible training levy would boost employer skills investment and business performance, while supporting the government's further education reforms²¹.
- 7.2 A new briefing²² published by the Runnymede Trust and the Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) highlights the issues that apprenticeship

¹⁹ <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/themed-grant-round-diversion/>

²⁰ <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/>

²¹ <https://www.cipd.co.uk/about/media/press/010321apprenticeship-levy-reform-budget>

²² <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/currentPublications/publications-by-category/briefing-papers/covid-19-and-apprenticeship-policy-for-ethnic-minority-young-people.html>

schemes have in attracting ethnic minority apprentices, and in guiding them towards recognised achievement.

8 Quality and Standards

8.1 A senior officer at the DfE responsible for the Skills for Jobs White Paper confirmed in a webcast organised by FE Week that new legislation will enable the Education Secretary to intervene where colleges refuse to deliver courses decided through local skills improvement plans. The extent of the powers is still under consideration and ministers have not yet proposed when the regulations would come into effect.

9 Achievement

9.1 The DfE has confirmed that it will not publish accountability data based on students' attainment in 2020 (when exams did not take place) and instructs that "all those working with schools and colleges, such as Ofsted, Department for Education regional teams and local authorities, should use data from previous years when assessing school and college performance, and not the 2020 data"²³. Data for 2020 would normally have been released in January and March. Similar arrangements will apply to qualifications awarded in 2021²⁴, although some national, regional and local authority level data will be published for both years in the autumn.

9.2 The GLA has published research on higher level skills - levels 4 and 5 - in London²⁵. The main conclusions drawn are:

- Present-day provision is largely uncoordinated. As in other English regions, there has been a marked decline in the share of higher education taken at levels 4 and 5. Efforts to extend provision at these levels have coincided with highly competitive and unstable conditions, especially in London. Market-led reforms and popular demand for full-time bachelor

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-performance-measures/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-accountability-2019-to-2020>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-performance-measures/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-accountability-2020-to-2021>

²⁵ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_higher_skills_march.pdf

degrees have reduced the scope for collaboration and coordination. The entry of private providers has split rather than increased the market for sub-bachelor higher education.

- Institutes of technology are vehicles for collaboration and specialisation. Partnership between universities, colleges and employers, together with vertical integration of specialist provision at levels 4, 5 and 6, are among the design principles of new institutes of technology. Three have been approved and funded in the capital. The institutes are a policy experiment. They have attracted broad support.
- Smaller qualifications and shorter programmes are anticipated. Flexibilities in the structure, content and approval of qualifications at levels 4 and 5 are sought by employers and providers. There is frequently an under-appreciation of the modular structures and occupational specialisms in existing curriculum pathways. Full qualifications and long programmes are less suited to some training needs. In some sectors, the award of micro-qualifications is attractive. Graduates in the labour market are a potential new source of demand at levels 4 and 5, especially where change in the knowledge and skills base is rapid.
- Planned reforms call for enhanced policy intelligence. Incentives for providers and students to undertake approved higher technical qualifications are part of a government plan to reform technical education. The impact of changes will need to be closely monitored, especially their bearing on the choice-making of students, workers and employers. At levels 4 and 5, there are complexities attached to appraisal and analysis.

9.3 Recommendations are made for additional organisational hubs; for the safeguarding of provision in light of mergers, closures and restructuring; for a catalogue of courses and apprenticeships; for a needs analysis of the graduate workforce; and for the piloting of credit-based micro-qualifications.

9.4 A report by the Education Policy Institute (EPI), funded by the Nuffield Foundation, found that poorer students in sixth forms and colleges trail their more affluent peers by as many as three A level grades when taking qualifications at this level. This new exploratory research finds that the

disadvantage gap – the gap in educational attainment between poorer students and their peers – is substantial during the 16 to 19 education phase, with poorer students continuing to see far worse educational outcomes than their better off peers. The report points out that, to date, most research on the disadvantage gap in education has focused almost entirely on the outcomes of pupils at secondary school level and below. There has been very little understanding of what the gap is after this age, for those older students enrolling in sixth form or college²⁶.

10 Progressions - the Labour Market

10.1 GLA Economics has published its latest analysis of the economic situation in London²⁷, highlighting the revisions to the scenarios from the version in February reflecting the effects of the increased fiscal support announced in the Budget. Some key points from the paper include:

- The fall in economic activity has been less strong than originally feared.
- Recovery to pre-COVID levels of output is not expected to be until 2022.
- The extension of the furlough scheme to the Autumn, and after public health restrictions are much eased, is likely to dampen possible adverse effects on jobs and reduce scarring.
- Jobs recovery is likely to be moderate because of the effects of Brexit, and the disproportionate impact of social distancing on sectors such as the arts and hospitality.

10.2 The ONS published an article, *Coronavirus and Job Vulnerability*²⁸, which identifies the groups of employees who are most likely to see their wages impacted because of the pandemic. Using Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2020 data, the article analyses the level of risk likely to be

²⁶ https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Measuring-the-16-19-disadvantage-attainment-gap_EPI-2021.pdf

²⁷ https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/macro-economic-scenarios-for-london-s-economy-post-covid-19?utm_campaign=Macroeconomic%20scenarios%20for%20London%20-%20March%202021&utm_source=emailCampaign&utm_content=&utm_medium=email

²⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/coronavirusandjobvulnerability>

faced by different occupations, based on their ability to work from home and whether or not they are a key worker.

10.3 The March 2021 briefing by GLA Intelligence on the socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 on London²⁹ finds that:

- More than a million Londoners are now claiming Universal Credit.
- One in nine London households are going without or struggling financially as a result of the pandemic.
- Life satisfaction was slowly recovering during the summer but, with the advent of the second national lockdown in November, has fallen again.
- The second national lockdown meant that around half of Londoners reported not meeting in person with friends and family they did not live with during November.
- Around two thirds of London parents feel their child's academic progress has suffered to some extent since March.

10.4 The Learning and Work Institute's Youth Commission has published its latest report (*Unleashing Talent: Levelling up opportunity for young people*³⁰). Its key message is that every young person should have good education and employment prospects. Its main recommendations are:

- More employment and skills funding should be devolved to local areas, underpinned by outcome agreements showing how that will help more young people to find work, build careers and improve skills.
- One in three young people should participate in an apprenticeship, backed by new investment and better funding incentives.
- Kickstart should be extended beyond its planned end in December, eligibility widened to those not on benefits, and it should form the basis of a Job Guarantee for long-term unemployed young people.

²⁹ https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/socio-economic-impact-of-covid-19?utm_campaign=Socio-economic%20impact%20of%20Covid-19%20in%20London&utm_source=emailCampaign&utm_content=&utm_medium=email

³⁰ <https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/youth-commission-report-6-unleashing-talent-levelling-up-opportunity-for-young-people/>

- There should be a Youth Allowance so that young people on benefits can combine study with looking for work, not just jobsearch alone. That requires more flexible learning opportunities, new skills for Work Coaches, and including 16- and 17-year olds.
- Low pay should be eliminated by raising the minimum wage and focussing on good work with progression and development opportunities.

10.5 Mime Consulting (the lead data partner of London Councils' Young People's Education and Skills) produced a blog in which they analyse the destinations of disadvantaged young people at key stage 4 and key stage 5. The blog demonstrates a gap in progressions according to young people's circumstances and considers how the move to remote learning during the pandemic might affect this gap³¹.

11 Careers Guidance

11.1 In a letter to the Education Secretary, over 250 organisations and nearly 900 individuals have called for a Careers Guidance Guarantee³². The Guarantee would ensure that everyone aged 16 to 19 in education, all education leavers, those who are already NEET, and adults who are unemployed, would have access to quality personal career guidance to help them move on to further education, employment or to additional training and apprenticeships.

11.2 Improving career guidance in secondary schools and colleges can lead to better student outcomes, while also raising aspirations and increasing engagement with education, according to the final evaluation of a four year pilot³³. The evaluation, carried out by the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) at the University of Derby, followed 16 schools and colleges in the North East of England as they implemented a career guidance framework known as the Gatsby Benchmarks. Findings within the report include:

³¹ <https://www.mimeconsulting.co.uk/dfc-data-release-destinations-disadvantaged/>

³² https://www.thecdi.net/write/Open_Letter_Career_Guidance_Guarantee-signed-all-signatures-final.pdf

³³ <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/ne-pilot-evaluation-full-report.pdf>

- Student Career readiness scores (a measure of preparedness for work) showed significant increases in all year groups across the four years of the evaluation.
- The greater the number of Benchmarks held, the greater the number of GCSE passes at A*-C/9-4 were achieved by each learner, even when gender, ethnicity, SEND status, FSM status, looked after status and Ofsted rating were statistically controlled for.
- Between 2015 and 2019, learners at pilot colleges became increasingly more likely to achieve their learning outcomes, compared to learners at local colleges or all other colleges.
- As well as this, teaching staff observed real changes in learner's engagement in class. There was a reduction in learners querying the point of subjects or topics because they understood the relationship between knowledge/skills and their future career. Employers supporting the pilot also said that young people were better able to articulate their career ideas and talk about themselves and were better informed about their options as well as the types of jobs available.
- The pilot, begun in 2015, was set up to test how schools and colleges could use the Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance and what the impact would be on their students. The North East region was selected, and the North East Local Enterprise Partnership ran the pilot along with the Gatsby Foundation.
- Following early results from the pilot, the government adopted the Gatsby Benchmarks into their 2017 Careers Strategy for all schools and colleges in England and has recently renewed its commitment to having the Benchmarks as a part of national education strategy in the 'Skills for Jobs' White Paper.

12 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- 12.1 The Council for Science and Technology has published correspondence with the Prime Minister in which the Council provided advice on how science and

technology can help to enhance educational outcomes for learners with specific learning difficulties³⁴.

12.2 Ofsted will begin revisiting areas where “significant concerns about SEND provision” have been identified from April 2021, ahead of a return to full inspections of local areas from June³⁵.

12.3 A study from the Education Policy Institute (EPI), funded by the Nuffield Foundation³⁶, finds that there are “deeply concerning” inconsistencies in how children with SEND in England are identified and supported. The research, which is the first ever study to fully quantify how SEND support varies nationally, shows that access to support is decided by a “postcode lottery” – with the chances of receiving SEND support from the school or from the local authority largely dictated by the school that a child attends, rather than their individual circumstances. Its main policy recommendation is that the system for identifying and supporting pupils with SEND requires several careful reforms to improve consistency, accessibility, accountability and resource allocation, including:

- Improvements in assessing SEND within schools.
- Increased specialist training and support for teachers and school leaders.
- A national framework setting out minimum standards of support for children with SEND in mainstream schools.
- A greater focus in primary schools on the role of children’s personal, social and emotional development.
- Concerted efforts from authorities to reaching highly vulnerable children who require specialised learning support, who may be less visible in the system.
- A SEND funding system that is far more responsive to pupils’ needs.

³⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-educational-outcomes-for-learners-with-specific-learning-difficulties?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=4438cfce-575e-4300-bc1a-918a26af1b4a&utm_content=daily

³⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/area-send-inspections-to-restart>

³⁶ https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/SEND-Identification_2021-EPI.pdf

- 12.4 Evenbreak, the award-winning job board run by and for disabled people, has launched a brand new service. The Career Hive³⁷ offers relevant and accessible careers support to disabled people looking for new or better work, delivered by careers professionals with lived experience of disability.

13 Funding

- 13.1 The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) published new rules limiting sub-contracting by post-16 educational institutions to 25 per cent of their provision in any funding stream³⁸.
- 13.2 The DfE has updated its webpage that provides summaries of the projects developed using the College Collaboration Fund to include examples of remote education and work experience³⁹.

14 Race Equality and Social Justice

- 14.1 The Traveller Movement launched two pieces of research. The first outlines the issues and barriers to pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities achieving good educational outcomes in secondary school⁴⁰ and the second examines GRT access to FE⁴¹.
- 14.2 The DfE has published evidence about a programme to improve access to extra-curricular activities for disadvantaged children and young people⁴². The publication also includes a short, lessons learned report aimed at schools and providers of extra-curricular activities which focusses on lessons for practice based on the findings of the process evaluation.

³⁷ <https://hive.evenbreak.co.uk/>

³⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-details-about-reforms-to-subcontracting-education-for-learners-over-16?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=b4871560-8a58-45bd-8d65-56e143fc9335&utm_content=daily

³⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-collaboration-fund-ccf-projects/project-summaries-college-collaboration-fund-ccf>

⁴⁰ https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/TTM%20GRT%20in%20Secondary%20Education_2021.pdf

⁴¹ https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/TTM%20GRT%20access%20to%20Further%20Education_2021.pdf

⁴² https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-essential-life-skills-programme?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=ce13e1c7-55c5-4710-ba7f-03e692719509&utm_content=daily

15 Mental Health and Anxiety

15.1 A new coalition of health and education experts met for the first time on 9 March to look at the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and education staff across England⁴³. Education Secretary Gavin Williamson was joined by ministers from across government, as well as Youth Mental Health Ambassador Dr Alex George, to discuss how best to respond to the mental health issues of greatest concern including the increase in eating disorders and self-harm among young people, and how to help education staff manage their mental wellbeing. The coalition agreed to take forward more action across a range of areas, including boosting the support available to help children and young people move between schools and year groups, and looking at how schools and colleges can target funding and recovery support to ensure that support reaches pupils who need it the most.

15.2 The London Assembly Health Committee set out a new three-stage plan for supporting young people's mental health in the capital⁴⁴. Over 300 children and young people wrote to the London Assembly to share their experiences throughout the pandemic. The three-stage plan calls on the Mayor to help young people, through the Covid-19 recovery plans, by consulting with them and making it easier for them to get help:

- Consult: Put young people at the heart of Covid-19 recovery. Involve them in decision making and make sure their diverse views and varying needs are represented every step of the way.
- Make help easier: The Mayor should use his strategic role to improve access to the right mental health support and services, and there should be targeted strategies to deliver this in his Covid-19 recovery plans.
- No-one left behind: Many who have been hit hardest by the pandemic already had the poorest mental health. It is vital that they are not left behind in the recovery.

⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-action-group-to-boost-mental-health-education>

⁴⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk/assembly-publications/covid-19-impact-mental-health-children-and-young-people>

- 15.3 The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) predicts that poor mental health will be the biggest challenge facing young people by 2040.⁴⁵
- 15.4 The Campaign for Learning has written a paper that brings together specialists from mental health and post-16 education and employment who set out what needs to be done to prevent or limit a mental health crisis in 2021⁴⁶.
- 15.5 Barnardo's has launched its new Barnardo's Education Community – a resource aimed at teachers, lecturers and staff working in the education sector⁴⁷. Educators will be able to access trauma-informed resources, support and advice about how to help children and young people with their mental health and wellbeing, including coping with loss, grief and bereavement. It also provides a Community of Practice where education professionals can share and discuss best practice nationwide.
- 15.6 The government has provided £3million to open a new centre in the London Borough of Newham to provide young adults (18 to 25 year-olds) who are supervised by the probation service with specialist drug and mental health support, to support a reduction in reoffending⁴⁸. The hub, based at Newham Probation Office and developed by the Ministry of Justice and the Mayor for London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), will provide a model to be rolled out nationally if it proves successful.
- 15.7 The Home Secretary announced further funding to tackle serious violence and knife crime⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ <https://paediatrics2040.rcpch.ac.uk/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/understanding-and-overcoming-a-mental-health-crisis-in-2021>

⁴⁷ <https://www.educators-barnardos.org.uk/>

⁴⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/news/3-million-pilot-to-reduce-reoffending-by-young-adults?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=0b84eba5-686d-4b58-b327-50fd6af24e3a&utm_content=daily

⁴⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/355m-to-support-young-people-at-risk-of-involvement-in-serious-violence>

- 15.8 The Department of Health and Social Care is providing £79million to expand mental health support to children and young people⁵⁰ including: extra help to nearly three million children by mental health support teams in schools; approximately 22,500 more children and young people to access community mental health services; 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services.
- 15.9 The Baring Foundation’s Arts Programme has launched a new fund supporting projects that promote the use of art to address mental health problems in people from ethnically diverse backgrounds⁵¹. Grants of between £10,000 and £40,000 are available to charities and not-for-profit arts organisations that focus on offering creative opportunities to people living with mental health problems in ethnically diverse communities across the UK. The type of work that the programme will fund might include shadowing, internships/ apprenticeships, mentoring or free training opportunities. £500,000 is available in total, and the Foundation expects to award in the region of fifteen or more grants. The deadline for applications is 12pm on the 21 April 2021.
- 15.10 The National Association of Headteachers has published quality-assured information, advice and resources on mental health and well-being⁵².

16 Youth Work

- 16.1 Dame Rachel de Souza, the new Children’s Commissioner for England, has launched a “once-in-a-generation” review of the future of childhood⁵³. ‘The Childhood Commission’ will be inspired by the ambition of William Beveridge’s pioneering 1940s report, which laid the foundations of the post-War social security system. The Childhood Commission will identify the

⁵⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/news/79-million-to-boost-mental-health-support-for-children-and-young-people?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=6ef1399a-6bd9-46ee-8d10-2db545deb2dc&utm_content=daily

⁵¹ <https://baringfoundation.org.uk/news-story/new-funding-for-creativity-mental-health-and-people-from-ethnically-diverse-backgrounds/>

⁵² <https://www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/news/pupil-support-and-safeguarding-news/mentally-healthy-schools-advice-and-resources-on-mental-health-and-well-being/>

⁵³ <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/2021/03/16/were-launching-a-once-in-a-generation-beveridge-report-for-children-with-an-ambitious-call-to-rebuild-childhood-after-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

barriers preventing children from reaching their full potential, propose policy and services solutions and develop targets by which improvements can be monitored. At its heart will be 'The Big Ask' - the largest consultation ever held with children in England. The Children's Commissioner will ask children how the pandemic changed their lives for better or worse, what their aspirations are and the barriers to reaching them, how things are at home, how their communities and local environment could be improved, and how they feel about the future and the challenges facing the world. 'The Big Ask' consultation will take place after the Easter break.

- 16.2 The DfE has published data from wave 19 of local authority returns to the Vulnerable Children and Young People Survey⁵⁴, which was established to understand the impact of Covid-19 on children's social care. Wave 19 covers January and February 2021 and shows that: the number of children looked after was two per cent higher than the same time in 2019-20 and this has remained stable since the survey began; the proportion of social workers not working due to coronavirus has stabilised, with four per cent of local authorities reporting over 10 per cent of social workers unavailable due to Covid-19 in waves 18 and 19 - this is compared to a low of one per cent in wave 16 (14 to 16 December 2020) and a peak of 13 per cent in May 2020; the total number of referrals during wave 19 was 23 per cent lower than the usual number at that time of year.
- 16.3 UK Youth published data showing that youth services are failing to meet increasing demand during the pandemic, while facing a decline in funding⁵⁵.

17 London

- 17.1 The Mayor of London's Skills for Londoners Board has published its first Local Skills Report⁵⁶ for London in its capacity as the Skills Advisory Panel for London. The report covers:

⁵⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vulnerable-children-and-young-people-survey>

⁵⁵ <https://www.ukyouth.org/2021/02/uk-youth-report-reveals-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-youth-services/>

⁵⁶ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_-_locals_skills_report_london_160321.pdf?utm_campaign=Skills%20for%20Londoners%20Newsletter%20March%202021&utm_source=emailCampaign&utm_content=&utm_medium=email

- Skills strengths and needs
- Skills strategy
- Assessment of progress
- Case studies/positive impact stories
- Looking forward

17.2 Since the pandemic began, young people have been affected in a variety of complex ways. London Councils and Camden Council recently held an online event that invited young people to share their experiences and views⁵⁷. The session focused on political engagement, school, mental health and wellbeing, communication (the need for clarity), health concerns, job prospects, volunteering and positive activities, environment and climate change.

- Young people called for more, and more meaningful, opportunities to engage with local leaders. They called for more engagement by Members with local schools and youth groups/forums including local youth councils.
- All decisions makers, service providers and policy leads will need to consider the needs and concerns of young people as they respond to the pandemic and plan for London's recovery.

17.3 The GLA has launched a call for bidders for two Higher Level Skills projects. Each £2.5million grant is funded by European Social Funds (ESF)⁵⁸. They will help Londoners move into higher-level skilled training, qualifications and jobs. There is a focus on supporting Black and minoritised people and those in low paid work without a level 4, or above, qualification. These projects will provide targeted skills development and employment support to Londoners who are disadvantaged in the labour market, and likely to be further

⁵⁷ https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/members-area/member-briefings/children-and-young-people/youth-shout-out-event?utm_campaign=12230911_Member%20briefing%20768%3A%20Youth%20Shout%20Out%20Event&utm_medium=email&utm_source=London%20Councils&dm_i=192K,7A5FJ,71STJY,TJ0M0,1

⁵⁸ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/funding/european-social-fund/funding-opportunities>

disadvantaged by the impact of Covid-19 on London's economy. The deadline is Friday 14 May.

- 17.4 Brampton Manor Academy in Newham has secured 55 offers for students to attend Oxford or Cambridge universities this year – more than Eton College⁵⁹.

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

- 18.1 There had been many articles, blogs and opinion-pieces ahead of the full re-opening of educational settings on 8 March, with an almost equal number supporting the move and those that argued it would herald another surge in Covid-19 cases. Almost all provided their own advice on the precautions that educational settings need to take to ensure the health and wellbeing of students and staff. Allowing for the lag in infection and detection, there does not appear to have been the surge in cases that some had feared and the combination of social distancing and testing that are in place are enabling education settings to manage the risk of infection.
- 18.2 At the same time, considerable attention has been paid to the government's "Catch-up" plans and it has been confirmed that these will have an equal focus on pupil's wellbeing and lost learning. The precise manner of the delivery of catch-up has also been the subject of some debate.
- 18.3 A great deal of research is now being published about young people's mental health, while unemployment remains high on the agenda.

⁵⁹ <https://www.bramptonmanor.org/>

Part Two: Policy Update

This part of the Briefing Note covers policies and reports that have been received in March 2021.

19 Qualification Reform

19.1 Pearson is continuing its research into the future of qualifications and assessment⁶⁰, which has picked up on the opinions expressed by some significant voices in the sector that question the need for GCSEs. The Minister for Schools has given a strong indication that the government sees GCSEs as both necessary and robust⁶¹.

20 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

20.1 The latest analysis of the OECD's PISA 2018 research⁶² looks at life satisfaction and wellbeing of school pupils in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It highlights the relationship between life satisfaction, wellbeing and educational attainment and explains the motivation for the research. It considers the use of life satisfaction as a wellbeing measure and looks at the main drivers of life satisfaction. The report also explores the role of school culture in wellbeing, the importance of emotional parental support to wellbeing and the links between fear of failure and wellbeing. It presents conclusions and policy recommendations, including developing inclusive whole-school approaches to improving pupils' wellbeing and increasing pupils' perceived sense of belonging by ensuring their voices are being heard.

21 Skills for Life: A new strategy for English, maths, ESOL and digital⁶³

21.1 Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL) published *Skills for Life: A new strategy for English, maths, ESOL and digital*, in which it notes that

⁶⁰ <https://www.pearson.com/uk/news-and-policy/future-of-assessment.html>

⁶¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/3938/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/>

⁶² https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4325/pisa_2018_thematic_analysis_wellbeing.pdf?platform=hootsuite

⁶³ <https://fetl.org.uk/publications/skills-for-life-a-new-strategy-for-english-maths-esol-and-digital/>

progress made between 2001 and 2011 has not been sustained and there are an estimated nine million people in the workforce who lack basic skills. The report calls for sustained investment in improving basic skills for both social and economic reasons.

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 used⁶⁴.

22. Participation

Attendance

22.1 The figures on schools and colleges attendance published by DfE⁶⁵ are as follows:

- Attendance week commencing 22 February (spot date 25 February) in all state schools was 18.3 per cent.
- Week commencing 15 March (spot date 18 March), the proportion of students attending was 91.2 per cent and the proportion of educational settings open was 99.9 per cent.

(Thursday is the 'spot' day on which weekly attendance is counted)

Young people not in education, employment or training

22.2 The ONS and DfE published the annual estimates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) from the Labour Force Survey (LFS⁶⁶). The national position is:

- The percentage of all young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were NEET in October to December 2020 was estimated at 11.6 per cent; the proportion was up by 0.6 percentage points compared with July to September 2020 and up by 0.6 percentage points compared with October to December 2019.
- Of all young people in the UK who were NEET in October to December 2020, an estimated 44.3 per cent were looking for, and available for,

⁶⁴ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/neet-statistics-annual-brief>

⁶⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

⁶⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/march2021>

work and therefore classified as unemployed; the remainder were either not looking for work and/or not available for work and were classified as economically inactive.

- There were an estimated 797,000 young people in the UK who were NEET in October to December 2020; this increased by 39,000 compared with July to September 2020 and was up by 34,000 compared with October to December 2019.
- The quarterly increase of 39,000 was the largest since July to September 2011 and was almost entirely driven by economically inactive men.

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.

Annex: Sources of Official Guidance

The general guidance on Covid-19 and the government's response⁶⁷

Specific guidance on education⁶⁸

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), which supports government at all levels with relevant data and intelligence⁶⁹.

NHS information on coronavirus: ⁷⁰

Q&A from Public Health England on coronavirus: ⁷¹. **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.

⁶⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

⁶⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-Covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>

⁶⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics>

⁷⁰ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

⁷¹ <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

Young People's Education and Skills Operational Sub-Group

Policy Update - Addendum

Date: 31 March 2021

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.

24 Introduction

24.1 A comprehensive Policy Update was provided to the Young People's Education and Skills Operational Sub-Group meeting held on 25 March 2021. This paper provides additional information about material published during the period 25 to 31 March 2021. The previous updates and briefings we have provided since April 2020 can be found at our dedicated webpage⁷².

24.2 As with the main report, 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).

⁷² <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/37307>

Part One: Current Issues

25 Parliament/Education Select Committee

- 25.1 Bob Seely MP (Isle of Wight) called a Westminster Hall debate on Education After Covid-19⁷³.
- 25.2 The Education Select Committee held a formal session as part of its inquiry into home education, hearing evidence from Victor Shafiee (Deputy Director, unregistered and independent schools at Ofsted), Mrs Wendy Charles-Warner (Trustee at Education Otherwise), Dr Amber Fensham-Smith (Lecturer in Childhood and Youth Studies at The Open University) and Ellen Collier (Service Manager, Education Welfare Service, Social Care and Education, at Leicester City Council)⁷⁴. It also held a session with young people to hear from them about the impact of Covid-19 on their learning and well-being⁷⁵. The Committee also wrote to the Secretary of State for Education expressing concerns over the alternative arrangements for awarding student grades in 2021⁷⁶.
- 25.3 The House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee has invited submissions to its inquiry into Youth Unemployment, which is based on the hypothesis that youth unemployment is a longstanding issue in the UK that has been exacerbated by Covid-19. The call for evidence closes on 10 May 2021⁷⁷.

⁷³ <https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/aabed8ac-732e-421d-809c-c72798eff365>

⁷⁴ <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/4097/formal-meeting/>

⁷⁵ <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/203/education-committee/news/153664/young-people-tell-committee-impact-of-covid19-on-learning-and-wellbeing/>

⁷⁶ <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/203/education-committee/news/153160/awarding-of-student-grades-committee-writes-to-secretary-of-state-with-concerns-over-the-alternative-arrangements-for-2021/>

⁷⁷ <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/506/youth-unemployment-committee/news/153152/how-do-we-create-and-protect-jobs-for-young-people-committee-seeks-views/>

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

26.1 The government has published new guidance for secondary schools to help progress plans for summer schools⁷⁸, using the £200million funding announced in February. Summer schools will help pupils who have experienced the most disruption as a result of the pandemic. The guidance provides advice ranging from academic support to sports and activities, mental health and wellbeing advice, and using premises. Alongside this, the government intends to work with a national supply contractor to give extra support for councils to deliver the Government's expanded Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF), building on the foundations laid by councils, sporting organisations, charities and the voluntary sector.

27 Quality and Standards

27.1 Ofsted has been ordered to investigate schools' safeguarding policies⁷⁹. The Education Secretary announced that Ofsted will undertake an "immediate review" of child protection plans in both state and private schools across England. The review comes after more than 8,000 reports of sexual harassment and abuse within schools had been recorded on a website for survivors. There will also be a dedicated helpline at the NSPCC.

27.2 Applications are now open for the 2022/23 Technical Teaching Fellowships. The Fellowships are open to exceptional technical teachers in the FE and Training sector and are awarded by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) in partnership with the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, following a rigorous selection process. The deadline for applications is 5pm on 24 November 2021.

27.3 Further details and the application form are available on the [Technical Teaching Fellowships](#) programme page of the ETF website. Potential applicants can also contact ETF National Head of Technical Education [Cerian Ayres](#) to find out more.

⁷⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/kick-start-for-summer-school-and-activities>

⁷⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-review-into-sexual-abuse-in-schools>

28 Achievement

- 28.1 Following consultations, Ofqual has published frameworks for awarding qualifications this year. The frameworks are designed to achieve impartiality and fairness, while protecting teachers from pressure to influence the grades they award⁸⁰.

29 Progressions - the Labour Market

- 29.1 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published an article that examines the impacts on a person's chances of finding a job after a period out of work (*The scarring effect*)⁸¹.
- 29.2 A study conducted by the Learning and Work Institute and supported by HSBC UK shows⁸² how, while some areas of the economy might begin on the road to recovery, young workers are under-represented in these sectors and the industries that typically employ young people will be hardest hit in the long term. The report, based on new labour market analysis and surveys with employers and young people, also warns that the pandemic will continue to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities.
- 29.3 The Learning and Work Institute has also reported on the impact of Covid-19 and related restrictions on the labour market in the UK with proposals on how best to address them⁸³. It reports that the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits doubled to 2.6 million between March and May 2020 and explains that employment would have fallen by a further 2.5 million if it had matched the drop in economic output over 2020 (the report says that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) helped to protect millions of jobs), with total hours worked falling 20 per cent instead. The report notes that the impact of the pandemic has been unequal, creating new inequalities and exposing existing ones, with young people, older people,

⁸⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/frameworks-for-awarding-qualifications-in-2021-consultation-outcomes>

⁸¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/articles/which-groupsfindithardesttofindajobfollowingaperiodoutofwork/2021-03-30>

⁸² <https://learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Facing-the-future-employment-prospects-for-young-people-after-Coronavirus.pdf>

⁸³ <https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/one-year-on/?platform=hootsuite>

single parents, disabled people, as well as those from a BAME background, cities, and areas of the country with already high unemployment all experiencing greater impacts. It suggests that the government's Plan for Jobs contains many positive actions, but the speed and coherence of delivery will be the main challenge. The report argues that the government needs to go further to secure recovery from the pandemic and recommends five areas where the government should focus: committing to bringing back furlough if required; introducing a Youth Guarantee of a job, apprenticeship or training offer for all young people; making the £20 uplift in Universal Credit permanent, and cutting National Insurance (NI) for the lowest earners; expanding employment support capacity and introducing Job Guarantee for the long-term unemployed; and promoting employment growth and good work through NI cuts for low earners and increases in minimum wage

29.4 In their report *Outside, Looking In*⁸⁴, the National Youth Agency (NYA) and Youth Employment UK call on government to mobilise the youth workforce as part of a rapid response to the scarcity of jobs for young people. This includes a triple-lock commitment for youth work:

- Work ready: young people need skills for life and work; this requires more qualified youth workers to identify needs and provide early help before young people enter training or employment.
- Opportunity guarantee: young people need help into jobs, with a proactive youth service to remove barriers to work and sustain employment, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.
- Locked-in support: a youth work approach should be embedded in employment programmes and jobs support. This would include a Youth Premium to access youth work activities and put young people on a surer footing for work and throughout periods of underemployment.

⁸⁴ <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/1013-NYA-employment-report-Digital-Final-version-1.pdf>

30 Progression to Further and Higher Education

- 30.1 The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) has reported that approximately 40 per cent of HE students said they would have made better choices had they had better access to higher quality information and advice in school⁸⁵. Consequently, one in five students could not study a degree subject that interested them because they did not have the right subjects to progress. However, advantaged students are 1.4 times more likely to think about higher education in primary school than their disadvantaged peers.
- 30.2 The DfE has released official statistics concerning graduate outcomes, using the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data, to report on employment and earnings outcomes of higher education graduates by subject studied and graduate characteristics⁸⁶. This has been updated to include the 2018/19 tax year (before Covid-19).
- 30.3 Other research published by the DfE, *Undergraduate degrees: labour market returns by background characteristics*⁸⁷, provides an analysis of the earnings return at age 30 and the estimated lifetime earnings return to undergraduate degrees by socio-economic status and ethnicity.
- 30.4 Research from the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) and the Higher Education Access Tracker Service (HEAT) shows that students who attend summer schools are more likely to receive better grades and progress to HE⁸⁸.

31 Careers Guidance

- 31.1 The British Compressed Gases Association (BCGA) has joined forces with Primary Engineer to bridge the gap between education and industry. Primary Engineer⁸⁹ is an educational not for profit organisation that supports primary

⁸⁵ <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-data-resources-2020/2020-entry-ucas-undergraduate-report-where-next>

⁸⁶ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/graduate-outcomes-leo/2018-19>

⁸⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/undergraduate-degrees-labour-market-returns-by-background-characteristics>

⁸⁸ <https://taso.org.uk/news-item/students-who-participate-in-summer-schools-more-likely-to-attend-university/>

⁸⁹ https://www.bcgga.co.uk/pages/newsManager.cfm?page_id=4&news_id=605

and secondary schools across the UK with a range of programmes to inspire pupils and enable teachers to deliver curriculum mapped (from primary to FE), inclusive Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) learning. BCGA has joined the scheme as part of a wider drive to encourage younger talent into industry, while showcasing what the compressed gases sector has to offer. BCGA represents member companies that produce compressed gases and related equipment in the industrial, medical, food, transport and technology sectors, among others.

32 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- 32.1 The Education Policy Institute (EPI) has published research into which groups of children in England are most likely to access special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support, as well as where and in what circumstances fewer or more children than expected are identified with SEND⁹⁰. The report examines whether socio-economically disadvantaged children have fair access to support and which factors best predict whether a child is identified with SEND, how these factors differ between different need types/levels of SEND, socio-economic background, and geographically. It finds that there is a 'postcode lottery' at school level, with the primary school that a child attends making the greatest difference to their chances of being identified with SEND than anything about them as an individual, their experiences or what local authority they live in. The report notes that which school a child attends also matters in determining whether they receive SEND support at both the lower and higher levels. The report also finds that there is a mismatch between what schools focus on in assessing SEND needs and what local authorities focus on at the higher level of assessment, with schools focusing mostly on communication, language and literacy skills, and local authorities making decisions that are more aligned with personal, social and emotional development. The report says that academy schools are associated with depressed chances of being identified with SEND and

⁹⁰ <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/identifying-send/>

makes several recommendations to achieve greater quality and consistency in the identification and support of children with SEND.

33 Race Equality and Social Justice

- 33.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has launched the “next phase” of the government’s efforts to support some of the most vulnerable families in society. The newly named ‘Supporting Families’ programme (previously known as the ‘Troubled Families’ programme) includes work to support people to leave abusive relationships, get the right joined-up support for those with mental health issues and help people to find work. It comes with £165million funding⁹¹.
- 33.2 The proportion of children eligible for free school meals increased by 17.3 per cent in the 10 months between January and October last year, government statistics show⁹². There were 1,633,698 pupils eligible for free school meals in October last year - a jump of 302,397 since 23 March 2020 when lockdown restrictions were first introduced. Over the same time period a year previously, 208,525 children became eligible for free school meals. The figures reveal that almost a fifth (19.7 per cent) of all school pupils are now eligible for free school meals - an increase of 2.4 per cent compared with January last year.

34 Social Mobility

- 34.1 The Social Mobility Commission published the Social Mobility Barometer 2021, which provides up-to-date analysis of public perceptions and attitudes about social mobility, considering the effects of Covid-19⁹³.
- 34.2 Disadvantaged women are making course choices at 16 which can lead them to lower paid jobs than men, according to a report from the Social Mobility

⁹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/next-phase-of-165-million-programme-for-vulnerable-families-launched>

⁹² <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/free-school-meals-autumn-term/2020-21-autumn-term>

⁹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-barometer-2021?platform=hootsuite>

Commission⁹⁴. Regardless of how good their GCSE grades are, disadvantaged young women are the most likely to choose post-16 technical courses which lead to lower paid jobs in the UK, such as in retail, childcare, and social care; whereas disadvantaged men are prone to choosing technical subjects which lead to higher earnings, such as engineering and IT.

35 Youth Work

- 35.1 Statistics on outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities, in England have been updated to include figures for 2019 to 2020⁹⁵.
- 35.2 *Better connected: how local education and children's services in England have responded to the coronavirus pandemic*, a report by the ISOS Partnership for the Local Government Association (LGA)⁹⁶ examines joint working between education and children's services in local areas in responding to Covid-19. The report outlines the background to the study, research aims and the way it was carried out involving eight local authority areas in England. It examines the ways in which local areas responded to the different phases of the pandemic, highlighting the implications for individual services and sectors and identifies the factors that have shaped local areas' responses, including key conditions and enablers. It also considers the opportunities arising from the pandemic - including expansion of virtual working and a more sophisticated understanding of vulnerability in children – and identifies the broad sets of challenges faced by local leaders in developing their local systems and responses to the pandemic. It considers the implications of the pandemic so far and presents recommendations to enable local education and children's services to 'build back better'.

⁹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/disadvantaged-women-face-pay-penalty-due-to-their-subject-choice>

⁹⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=308ad07e-c65e-4054-ad2b-c5244999dd36&utm_content=daily

⁹⁶ https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ce55a5ad4c5c500016855ee/t/605b8c7c001c534b1a223885/1616612479198/LGA_CV19_final+report.pdf

36 London

36.1 Partnership for Young London has published its manifesto for 2021 to 2022⁹⁷. It has three key objectives:

- To build dynamic partnerships across organisations and networks who are responsive to the emerging needs of young people.
- To develop a cohesive cross-sector workforce addressing the needs of young people that is skilled and competent to meet the holistic needs of diverse groups of young people.
- To advocate and amplify the diverse voices and needs of young Londoners, influencing policy, resourcing and delivery.

⁹⁷ <https://www.partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk/manifesto>

Part Two: Policy Update

37 Times Education Commission⁹⁸

37.1 The Times has launched a new Education Commission with a remit including the curriculum, qualifications, social mobility, exclusions, new technology, lifelong learning and the number of people going to university. It will begin its work in June and will conclude in the summer of next year.

⁹⁸ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/6b05b642-8c18-11eb-a1a3-928d43a3bbc1?shareToken=57f36daff6509f17a0a1af6fa46dc9af>

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 used⁹⁹.

38 Participation

Attendance

- 38.1 The figures on schools and colleges attendance published by DfE¹⁰⁰ show that in the week commencing 23 March, the proportion of open settings was 99.8 per cent and 90.0 per cent of students were in attendance on 25 March. (Thursday is normally the 'spot' day on which weekly attendance is counted)

39 Recommendation

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

⁹⁹ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/neet-statistics-annual-brief>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>