

# Young People's Education and Skills Operational Sub-Group

## Policy Update June 2021

**Date:** 15 July 2021

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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](mailto:peter.obrien@londoncouncils.gov.uk).

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 This paper summarises policy developments and research about education and skills for 14 to 19 year-olds in London. It covers publications and announcements in June 2021 and is primarily aimed at the Young People's Education and Skills Operational Sub-Group meeting on 15 July but is also circulated to councillors, council officers and other partners and stakeholders with an interest in education and training in London. The other updates and briefings we have produced since the onset of Covid-19 are available on-line<sup>1</sup>

## 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

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<sup>1</sup> <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. The DfE regularly updates its webpage that contains information about education recovery support<sup>2</sup>.

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

- London Transition Board<sup>3</sup>
- London Recovery Board<sup>4</sup> (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 Programme<sup>5</sup>.

### 3 Data

3.1 The House of Commons Library<sup>6</sup>, 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. The following papers issued in June are of particular relevance:

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-recovery-support?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=18710820-e6c6-4a81-afef-d75c1a970cb3&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-recovery-support?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=18710820-e6c6-4a81-afef-d75c1a970cb3&utm_content=daily)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/london-s-Covid-19-transition-board-meets-for-the-first-time>

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

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/londons-recovery-coronavirus-crisis/recovery-context>

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

- an up dated briefing on children and young people’s mental health policy, services, funding and education<sup>7</sup>.
- a briefing about out of area placements for looked after children and placements in unregulated and unregistered accommodation<sup>8</sup>.
- a briefing<sup>9</sup> in which the Library Service collated statistics showing a stronger than expected recovery as the economy opened up.

3.2 The Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)<sup>10</sup> 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 theme<sup>11</sup>, from which individual reports can be downloaded. Each theme provides an overall

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<sup>7</sup> [https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7196/?utm\\_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm\\_campaign=58738a3aa2-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2021\\_06\\_16\\_08\\_00&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a9da1c9b17-58738a3aa2-102517489&mc\\_cid=58738a3aa2&mc\\_eid=d34cbf25d7](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7196/?utm_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm_campaign=58738a3aa2-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_06_16_08_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9da1c9b17-58738a3aa2-102517489&mc_cid=58738a3aa2&mc_eid=d34cbf25d7)

<sup>8</sup> [https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7560/?utm\\_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm\\_campaign=75b3d2d352-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2021\\_06\\_22\\_08\\_00&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a9da1c9b17-75b3d2d352-102517489&mc\\_cid=75b3d2d352&mc\\_eid=d34cbf25d7](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7560/?utm_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm_campaign=75b3d2d352-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_06_22_08_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9da1c9b17-75b3d2d352-102517489&mc_cid=75b3d2d352&mc_eid=d34cbf25d7)

<sup>9</sup> [https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/economic-update-strong-recovery-as-economy-opens-up/?utm\\_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm\\_campaign=48b814ffda-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2021\\_07\\_01\\_08\\_00&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a9da1c9b17-48b814ffda-102517489&mc\\_cid=48b814ffda&mc\\_eid=d34cbf25d7](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/economic-update-strong-recovery-as-economy-opens-up/?utm_source=HOC+Library+-+Research+alerts&utm_campaign=48b814ffda-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_07_01_08_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9da1c9b17-48b814ffda-102517489&mc_cid=48b814ffda&mc_eid=d34cbf25d7)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19reviewdataandanalysismarchtooctober2020/2020-10-28>

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 The DfE and ONS have issued the annual statistics on *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2021*<sup>12</sup>. This shows that there were over 8.9 million pupils in England in January 2021, a small increase from similar levels last year. Increases are seen in the number of pupils in secondary and special schools, while decreases are seen in all other school types. This is primarily driven by demographic changes, following a peak of births in 2013, with higher numbers of children reaching secondary age and lower numbers of pupils moving into primary school. The primary population is projected to decrease until 2030 whilst the secondary population is projected to increase until 2024. 20.8 per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals, representing 1.74 million pupils. This has increased from 17.3% in January 2020. Over 420,000 pupils have become eligible for free school meals since the first lockdown on 23 March 2020. This compares to 292,000 for the same period (March 2019 to Jan 2020) before the pandemic.
- 3.5 Data specific to London is published monthly by Greater London Authority (GLA) Economics<sup>13</sup> and Intelligent London<sup>14</sup> 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 topics<sup>15</sup>.
- 3.6 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).

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<sup>12</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>

<sup>13</sup> <https://data.london.gov.uk/gla-economics/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/bc4f5f36-95a2-4a02-b13d-ef8e18ab0ffb/summaries-of-external-research-on-covid-19>

(In response to feedback, the summary of the Policy Update (which has previously appeared at the end of Part Two of the paper) will in future appear at the end of Part One).

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

- 4.1 Together with all young Londoners, the sector is waiting anxiously for the results of this year's qualifications – which for the second year running have been awarded by exceptional means. Even before these results are published there is news that some modifications may be needed next year.
- 4.2 At the time of writing this update, news about the next stage in the government's roadmap to easing restrictions needed to combat Covid-19 is also awaited. Whatever decisions are made, different voices in the sector have opinions on the implications for staff, students and their families. In the meantime, this month's Policy Update reports on evidence of recoveries in the economy and labour market – though in both cases there is still considerable progress needed simply to return to pre-pandemic levels. However, there are also reports that the response to Covid-19 has exacerbated some longstanding issues in the country, for example there has been an increase in "working poverty" and students' eligibility for free-school meals.
- 4.3 More positively, it is welcoming to provide details of some solutions to young people's mental health issues that are being trialled and the valuable work on education recovery that is under way (please see paragraph 6.4 for a report on Reconnect London).
- 4.4 There has been an increase in Parliamentary activity this month, with the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill moving through the House of Lords. The opening debates show that there is a great deal of goodwill across parties (and independents) in support of the Bill's aims and a strong desire for it to deliver workable solutions. Further reports will be given as the Bill progresses.

## Part One: Current Issues

### 5 Government Announcements

- 5.1 Speaking at the Festival of Education 2021, Gavin Williamson set out his commitment to levelling up opportunities across the country for young people by prioritising the improvement of pupil behaviour and outcomes<sup>16</sup>.
- 5.2 The government announced £1.4 billion funding for education recovery<sup>17</sup> \*- £400, 000 of which is earmarked for 16 to 19 tuition<sup>18\*</sup> to mitigate the disruption caused by Covid-19. Many commentators and representatives of educational settings felt that this fell far short of what was required and, because this funding is for one year only, were disappointed that the government did not signal its intention to provide longer-term investment in education, while the institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) compared the government's planned spending with its assessment of the investment required and spending levels in other countries<sup>19</sup>. Sir Kevan Collins, who had been appointed as the government's Education Recovery Commissioner, resigned following the announcement.

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<sup>16</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-outlines-priorities-on-improving-pupil-outcomes?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=8c0f54ec-a7ad-4c60-bbed-5c872f078877&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-outlines-priorities-on-improving-pupil-outcomes?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=8c0f54ec-a7ad-4c60-bbed-5c872f078877&utm_content=daily)

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/huge-expansion-of-tutoring-in-next-step-of-education-recovery?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=d1ca4622-304e-4f9d-9228-c626288a952d&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/huge-expansion-of-tutoring-in-next-step-of-education-recovery?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=d1ca4622-304e-4f9d-9228-c626288a952d&utm_content=daily)

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-16-to-19-tuition-fund?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=4bb8492a-10a9-48c0-b9d4-37d7f0a9859b&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-16-to-19-tuition-fund?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=4bb8492a-10a9-48c0-b9d4-37d7f0a9859b&utm_content=daily)

<sup>19</sup> <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15472>

## 6 Parliament

### *The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill*

- 6.1 The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill received its second reading in the House of Lords on 15 June. There was strong support for the principles and aims of the Bill, Lords from all sides expressed some concerns:
- The Opposition were concerned that without an increase in the level of investment in Post-16 education and skills, the measures being proposed would prove meaningless. Labour wants to see local authorities recognised as strategic partners in the new arrangements (a sentiment with which some on the Conservative benches agreed), support to be provided for adults taking up a second level 3 qualification and for greater clarity over the lifetime loan entitlement.
  - A number of Lords spoke about support for qualifications below level 3, students' maintenance costs, some of the practicalities in funding a system that is increasing towards modular study and accreditation and the importance of careers advice. There were some concerns about students with SEND and how their needs would be addressed in an employer-led system. Mention was also made of the need for regulatory bodies to work more closely together in the new system.
  - Two former Secretaries of State (Lord Blunkett and Baker) talked about the artificiality of the distinction between 'academic' and 'technical' education and between FE and HE, which at the level of skills being considered by the Bill were felt to be irrelevant – and potentially “dangerous”.
  - Some Lords also mentioned how the UK's adaption in the face of climate change needed greater recognition in the Bill.
- 6.2 Having been read for a second time, the next stage in the legislative process is the Committee Stage, which starts on 6 July. Over 100 amendments to the Bill have been proposed, indicating both a high level of interest in the Bill and a desire to strengthen and 'future-proof' its measures.

### ***House of Commons***

- 6.3 On 9 June, the House of Commons voted for a Labour Party motion criticising the government's plans to help children and young people recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. The motion was agreed 224 to 0, with most Conservative MPs abstaining<sup>20</sup>.
- 6.4 At Education Questions on 21 June<sup>21</sup>, several MPs asked what steps the Department is taking to provide disadvantaged students with access to high quality tutoring support. In response, the Secretary of State said the Government is looking at how changes can be made to the whole school day to embed the tutoring "revolution" and ensure important areas of enrichment are properly incorporated. He also said the Government was keen to introduce their proposed system of post-qualification admissions, even without the need for legislation.
- 6.5 Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the House of Commons Education Select Committee proposed a debate in the House on funding for education recovery (an Estimates day debate) on 29 June<sup>22</sup>. In line with procedure, on the day after the debate the Commons approved a motion agreeing the total amounts of funding included in the DfE's Main Estimate.

### ***Education Select Committee***

- 6.6 Education Secretary Gavin Williamson appeared before the Education Committee on 23 June<sup>23</sup>. He was asked about schools wishing to demonstrate their improvement, as well as Ofsted "outstanding" schools that have not been inspected for 14 years and Mr Williamson said he is "looking at a whole range of different options including accelerated inspection". When challenged on the amount of money schools are being charged by exam boards this year, he said that he "would be expecting exam boards to be delivering a rebate to schools at the end of this process as they did last

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<sup>20</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-06-09/debates/425C384B-B262-40B6-8D2B-FE272CBDDDC4/InvestingInChildrenAndYoungPeople>

<sup>21</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-06-21/debates/55E464B3-BF64-41C2-A7B2-CE413069CAE7/OralAnswersToQuestions>

<sup>22</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2021-0103/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/4914/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/>

year". The Secretary of State also said that for the 2022 cohort, an "extensive package of measures that was intended for this year's awarding session supporting youngsters as they took their exams" would be on offer and that there would be no immediate "switching back" to 2019 assessments. He said that "in the summer, we are going to be consulting on proposals to strengthen the Baker Clause legislation", adding that schools could be "putting funding in jeopardy" if they do not offer colleges and other FE providers access to provide careers advice on vocational options to students.

6.7 Throughout the month, the Secretary of State has stressed the importance of student outcomes and improving behaviour. A call for evidence on behaviour in schools was launched on 28 June.

6.8 The Education Select Committee's report *The forgotten: how White working-class pupils have been let down, and how to change it*<sup>24</sup> highlights how White British pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) persistently underperform compared with peers in other ethnic groups, from early years through to higher education. The report's recommendations include:

- Funding needs to be tailor-made at a local level to level up educational opportunity.
- Support parental engagement & tackle multi-generational disadvantage.
- Ensure the value of vocational training and apprenticeship options while boosting access to higher education. (The report says that Ofsted must be stronger in enforcing schools' compliance with the Baker Clause, to ensure they allow vocational training and apprenticeship providers to advertise their courses to pupils. Where there is non-compliance, schools should be limited to a 'Requires Improvement' rating.)
- Attract good teachers to challenging areas.
- Find a better way to talk about racial disparities.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/203/education-committee/news/156024/forgotten-white-workingclass-pupils-let-down-by-decades-of-neglect-mps-say/>

- 6.9 In this final recommendation, the Committee agreed with the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities that discourse around the term ‘White Privilege’ can be divisive and suggested that disadvantage should be discussed without pitting different groups against each other. It said that schools should instead consider whether the promotion of politically controversial terminology, including White Privilege, is consistent with their duties under the Equality Act 2010. It added that the DfE should issue clear guidance for schools and other organisations receiving grants from the Department on how to deliver teaching on these complex issues in a balanced, impartial and age-appropriate way. This recommendation and its explanation by the Committee received a mixed reception, especially from organisations that criticised the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities’ report (this was covered in our April 2021 Policy Update).
- 6.10 Other responses within the education sector picked up on the Committee’s recommendation that schools that did not honour their obligations to provide access to providers delivering vocational courses and Apprenticeships as part of careers guidance (the “Baker Clause”) should not be able to attain the top two grades in Ofsted inspections.
- 6.11 The Education Select Committee held an evidence session on 29 June<sup>25</sup> and one of the witnesses was Sir Kevan Collins, Former Government adviser on education recovery, plus international comparisons. The session looked at how the UK dealt with education during the pandemic in comparison with other countries.

### ***House of Lords***

- 6.12 Lord Woolley of Woodford asked a question in the Lords about Education: Recovery Package and Catch-up Programme and started a debate about attainment gaps and race equality<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/5019/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-06-21/debates/15B8F6FB-63CB-43ED-805E-30E31826CECE/EducationRecoveryPackageAndCatch-UpProgramme>

- 6.13 The House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee has held several meetings in June as part of its on-going inquiry into the state of the youth jobs market<sup>27</sup>. It heard evidence on the role of Ofsted and on unemployment among young people from ethnic minority backgrounds in two sessions on 29 June<sup>28</sup>.
- 6.14 On 17 June, the House of Lords debated the urgent levelling up of opportunities available to UK children affected by the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>29</sup>, in particular with regard to:
- Education and skills.
  - Health.
  - Inequality.
  - The elimination of child poverty.
- 6.15 The House of Lords Library produced a briefing for the debate, which was put forward by Baroness Morris of Yardley (Labour), Chair of Strategy Board, Institute of Effective Education and former Secretary of State for Education. Members speaking included: Lord Bird (Crossbench), Director of the Big Issue Group, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative), former Communities and Local Government Minister, Baroness Tyler of Enfield (Liberal Democrat), Commissioner, Financial Inclusion Commission, Lord Winston (Labour), scientist and television presenter. Baroness Berridge (Conservative), Minister for the School System, responded on behalf of the government.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/506/youth-unemployment-committee/events/all/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/5038/formal-meeting/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-06-17/debates/224EB14C-D967-4072-B555-C15ACDC859CC/Covid-19Children>

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

- 7.1 The DfE published research from the Education Policy Institute on pupil learning loss<sup>30</sup>. The research examines the extent of learning loss among primary and secondary school pupils in England during the spring and autumn terms, at both a national and regional level. It provides new evidence on the impact of the pandemic on pupils' school attainment, was carried out by Education Policy Institute (EPI) and Renaissance Learning for the Department.
- 7.2 The data analysis from EPI comprises of two DfE reports, one covering pupil learning loss during the autumn term (2020), and another covering pupil learning loss during the recent spring term (2021):
- Understanding Progress in the 2020/21 Academic Year: Complete findings from the autumn term.
  - Understanding Progress in the 2020/21 Academic Year: Initial findings from the spring term”.
- 7.3 The research uses Renaissance Learning's 'Star Assessments' linked to the government's National Pupil Database (“Learning loss” refers to the months of learning pupils are behind expectations following the pandemic, compared to a typical, pre-pandemic school year.). The research finds that the amount of learning lost during the pandemic has increased long-standing gaps in educational attainment, particularly in primary schools that, unless appropriate early action is taken, will persist throughout disadvantaged young people's education.
- 7.4 *Reconnect London*<sup>31</sup>, an initiative from within London's education sector to bring about change for disadvantaged and vulnerable young Londoners quickly and make up lost ground in the wake of the pandemic. The initiative, which we also covered in our May Policy Update, launched officially in June

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-progress-in-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year-interim-report>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.reconnectlondon.org/>

and schools are encouraged to join the network, which will be opened to colleges and other providers later.

7.5 The school leaders' union NAHT<sup>32</sup> released the results of a snap poll of its members on which areas they think should be the highest priority for education recovery. The poll received 728 responses from school leaders in England and revealed that the top three areas school leaders think the government should be focusing additional funding for education recovery are:

- 1:1 / small group tutoring run by schools themselves (70%)
- Better support for pupil mental health and wellbeing (63%)
- Increased pupil premium allocations (42%)

7.6 However, the two lowest priorities were:

- The national tutoring programme (3%)
- Extending the school day for additional learning (2%).

## **8 Apprenticeships**

8.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) has launched its fourth annual Apprenticeship Survey<sup>33</sup>. The survey provides valuable information about how local government is progressing on apprenticeships, highlighting key challenges, providing evidence when lobbying government and providing information we the LGA can use to help council's benchmark their performance. Councils are asked to respond to the survey online or to contact [jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk) for a paper copy. The survey is open until 28 July.

8.2 The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)<sup>34</sup>, having reviewed the evidence that shows how Apprenticeship starts have plummeted during the pandemic from an already declining trajectory, reports

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/News/ArtMID/556/ArticleID/1009/Tutoring-is-a-top-priority-for-education-recovery-but-not-via-the-National-Tutoring-Programme-say-school-leaders>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Z33QQ8B>

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4532/nfer\\_imap\\_apprenticeships\\_report.pdf](https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4532/nfer_imap_apprenticeships_report.pdf)

that the funding system needs to be re-designed to support the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and work better for young people. Its recommendations include establishing a separate funding line for 16 to 18 year-old apprentices and better transition between traineeships and apprenticeships.

- 8.3 Multiverse, the online apprenticeship platform has entered into a partnership with Perlego – the world’s largest online library - to provide Multiverse apprentices with free access to over 600,000 textbooks<sup>35</sup>. Through Perlego’s online library of academic resources and tools, the partnership will remove financial barriers to entry and making education accessible to all.

## **9 T Levels**

- 9.1 The ESFA has confirmed that the Human Resources T Level has been pulled from the rollout after no awarding organisations could be found to develop it. No date has been given for this decision to be reviewed<sup>36</sup>.

## **10 Quality and Standards**

- 10.1 The Oak National Academy has launched its Summer Learning Support<sup>37</sup> package comprising optional lessons to be delivered face-to-face or at home during the holidays. As well as academic content, the package includes a host of art, drama and sporting activities to help boost children’s wellbeing and for their enjoyment after such a challenging year.
- 10.2 Funding from the Nuffield Foundation will look at the impact of artificial intelligence and automation technologies on work and society<sup>38</sup>. The £4.3 million research projects will look at the impact of artificial intelligence and

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<sup>35</sup> <https://blog.multiverse.io/breaking-down-barriers-to-education-multiverse-meets-perlego/>

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-register-to-deliver-t-levels-in-2023-to-2024-academic-year?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=6f48e7d2-b2db-43f0-becf-864938363d08&utm\\_content=immediately](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-register-to-deliver-t-levels-in-2023-to-2024-academic-year?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=6f48e7d2-b2db-43f0-becf-864938363d08&utm_content=immediately)

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.thenational.academy/summer-learning-support>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/news/4-3-million-research-to-shape-future-of-work-and-skills>

automation technologies on work and society, and ask how work will change, consider the inequalities that might arise, and what skills people will need for work and wellbeing in the future. Of the funding:

- £2.5 million is being given to the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) to lead a five-year strategic research partnership that will identify the essential employment skills people will need for work by 2035. The team will investigate how these skills can be developed through the education system and other mechanisms and establish which groups of people are most at risk of not acquiring the necessary skills and therefore being excluded from the labour market.
- £1.8 million has been awarded to the Institute for the Future of Work (IFOW) for the Pissarides Review, which will examine the impacts of technological disruption on people and communities across the country. The three-year project will pilot a new, cross-disciplinary approach to evaluating disruption and reducing inequalities through better work and produce the first national Disruption Index to map and track technological disruption across the UK, as well as surveying firms to explore the motives for, barriers to, and effects of, introducing automation technologies.

10.3 A new transatlantic partnership between Jisc, the UK's digital body for tertiary education, and its US equivalent EDUCASE aims to share best practice and boost technological innovation<sup>39</sup>.

10.4 The DfE announced the results of bids to deliver Sector-Led Improvement (SLI)<sup>40</sup> following revisions to the method through which SLI is delivered. These local authorities in London will deliver sector-led improvement support:

- Achieving for Children (Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead).

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/new-transatlantic-partnership-aims-to-accelerate-digital-transformation-in-fe-29-jun-2021>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authority-sector-led-improvement-programme-apply-to-be-a-partner>

- Bi-borough (Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster) with Hammersmith and Fulham.
- Islington.

10.5 In addition, subject to final grant agreements, the following local authorities in London will trial the delivery of support for local special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services

- Bi-borough.
- Islington.

10.6 The trials will take place where local authorities are experiencing cross-cutting issues.

10.7 The DfE launched the teaching school hub programme<sup>41</sup>, which was announced in 2019 and tested in early 2020. The programme is intended to create a network of 87 centres of excellence for teacher training and development, focused on some of the best schools and multi-academy trusts in the country. This programme replaces the previous network of around 750 teaching schools, which will end in August 2021. The DfE wants teaching school hubs to provide high-quality professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers. The hubs will be expected to play a significant role in delivering:

- school-based initial teacher training.
- the early career framework when it is available nationally from September 2021.
- the new specialist national professional qualifications (NPQ).
- leadership NPQs>appropriate body services for early career teachers - schools that are not currently appropriate bodies will need to register as an appropriate body after becoming teaching school hubs.

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<sup>41</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-school-hubs?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=35908f35-9109-4277-86c9-62c0423bf822&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-school-hubs?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=35908f35-9109-4277-86c9-62c0423bf822&utm_content=daily)

- 10.8 Teaching school hubs will also promote and deliver other high-quality evidence-based professional development to school leaders and teachers. They will be funded for 3 years (subject to confirmation) and will be accessible to every school in the country.
- 10.9 Further education colleges and training providers have been invited to “partner up” and submit bids for funding to develop teacher training in the FE Sector<sup>42</sup>. The DfE has announced bidding window ending in mid-July for the FE Professional Development Grants pilots (with £9.5 million funding), which will run in 2021/22. The pilots 'will make sure the sector can develop and grow and unlock even more potential' and focus on strengthening staff's skills and confidence in using technology to deliver education, as well as subject-specific development to improve curriculum design and teaching, learning, and assessment. There will also be “tailored” support for the sector’s new and inexperienced teachers to help career progression and aid retention.
- 10.10 The EPI has reported on the effect of the pandemic on teacher attrition<sup>43</sup>. The report was based on a survey of 2,000 teachers across the UK in January 2021 and concluded that teachers are now almost twice as likely to leave the profession as they were before the pandemic. They made two recommendations to Government to stop the mass exodus of teachers. First, reinstate policies related to teacher retention such as additional top-up payment. Second, review its “outdated” pay policy that “fails to account for regional differences in labour market conditions.”

## **11 Achievement**

- 11.1 Ofqual has published the results of its latest survey (wave 4) into perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications<sup>44</sup>. The headline findings are:

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/further-education-professional-development-grants-pilot>

<sup>43</sup> <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/the-pandemic-and-teacher-attrition-an-exodus-waiting-to-happen/>

<sup>44</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/998715/VTQ\\_Perceptions\\_Survey\\_Wave\\_4\\_-\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/998715/VTQ_Perceptions_Survey_Wave_4_-_Report.pdf)

- Providers were most likely to agree that in 2020 Vocational and Technical qualifications (VTQs) were trusted qualifications (64 per cent) compared with Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) being trusted (52 per cent) and end-point assessments (EPAs) being trusted (40 per cent).
- Learners agreed in similar proportions that in 2020 standards were maintained in VTQs (39 per cent) and in FSQs (37 per cent), with a lower proportion agreeing that standards were maintained in EPAs in 2020 (29 per cent).
- Almost the same proportion of employers agreed that VTQs were good preparation for work (31 per cent) and further study (29 per cent).
- Learners agreed in similar proportions that VTQs (39 per cent), FSQs (36 per cent) and EPAs (34 per cent) in 2020 were well understood by people.

11.2 Ofqual has decided to carry forward some of the changes to non-exam assessment and fieldwork agreed for 2021 for students entering qualifications in summer 2022<sup>45</sup>. The changes will mean that Ofqual will allow adjustments to the assessment and evidence requirements for a non-exam assessment in a range of subjects, which means that exam boards can permit teachers to decide how to support and assess their students.

11.3 Eleven organisations have produced a joint statement in which they urge the government not to remove funding for the majority of BTEC qualifications, as implied in the level 3 qualification review<sup>46</sup>. The joint campaign, called *Protect Student Choice* says that the move will hit the most disadvantaged young students the hardest.

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/arrangements-for-non-exam-assessment-for-qualifications-in-2022>

<sup>46</sup> <https://sfcawebsite.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/document/0621-Joint-Position-Statement-on-AGQs-Final1.pdf?t=1623331015?ts=1623331031>

## 12 Progressions - the Labour Market

12.1 Official statistics from the ONS on *Working and workless households in the UK: January to March 2021* (taken from the Labour Force Survey)<sup>47</sup> show that:

- Of the estimated 21.0 million households (where at least one member is aged 16 to 64 years) in the UK, 59.0 per cent had all household members aged 16 years and over in employment during January to March 2021; down 1.4 percentage points compared with the same period last year.
- There was an estimated 27.6 per cent of households with a mix of at least one working and one workless adult, up 1.8 percentage points compared with the same period last year.
- There was an estimated 13.4 per cent of households where no member of the household was in employment, down 0.3 percentage points compared with the same period last year.

12.2 The latest employment statistics from the ONS<sup>48</sup> show that the number of payrolled employees in the UK in May 2021 has increased compared with May 2020 for all regions, except London, but remains below pre-pandemic levels. London alone is still below the number for the same period last year.

12.3 The DfE has issued updated research that analyses the Post-16 education and labour market<sup>49</sup>. It includes detailed evidence of the long-term earnings deficit of young people who have experienced a period of care compared with those who have not.

12.4 According to CWJobs' third annual Confidence Index<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/workingandworklesshouseholds/januarytomarch2021>

<sup>48</sup>. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/regionallabourmarket/june2021>

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/post-16-education-and-labour-market-analysis-research?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=79181a87-72b0-4413-95b2-4c870d6ef520&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/post-16-education-and-labour-market-analysis-research?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=79181a87-72b0-4413-95b2-4c870d6ef520&utm_content=daily)

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.cwjobs.co.uk/recruiters/confidence-index-2021>

- Three fifths of tech workers (62 per cent) have never felt more valued than during the pandemic.
- Only one in three (29 per cent) plan to stay in their current role, with Brexit widening the skills gap even further.
- One in eight (14 per cent) tech workers want to go for a role at a different company, whilst starting a tech business (11%), going part time (11 per cent), changing locations (11 per cent) and becoming a contractor (10 per cent) are also being considered. Meanwhile, a small proportion of them (8 per cent) are contemplating leaving tech altogether.
- As the tech sector bolsters the UK economy, CWJobs urges businesses to focus on digital skills by attracting, training and retraining tech talent for long-term recovery.

- 12.5 The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is leading a new five-year research programme projecting the demand and supply of essential employment skills up until the year 2035<sup>51</sup>.
- 12.6 The National Audit Office reported on DWP's support for jobs during the pandemic, commenting that this must align with the wider government economic recovery strategy<sup>52</sup>.
- 12.7 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has confirmed that over 110 new Youth Hub<sup>53</sup>s have opened across the UK to provide specialist employment support to young people. Eventually, there will be a Youth Hub in every Jobcentre Plus district in the country and currently four are open in London (Barking, Richmond, Lambeth and Islington) but this is hoped to rise significantly in the next few weeks as lockdown restrictions are eased. (see paragraph 18.1 for information about the 'Fund the Hubs initiative).

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<sup>51</sup> <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/key-topics-expertise/education-to-employment/>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/dwp-employment-support/>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-110-new-youth-hubs-offer-job-help>

- 12.8 A paper from the Learning and Work Institute's Better Work Network<sup>54</sup> establishes that, when looking for a job, Londoners prioritise good work (including: an adequate salary, work/life balance, feeling valued at work). Based on a YouGov survey, the paper says that almost half of Londoners are currently dissatisfied with their salary and more than 40 per cent are dissatisfied with their opportunities for progression – the report indicates that this has worsened since the onset of Covid-19. The paper also says that nearly 20 per cent of London's workforce do not have a secure contract of employment that specifies a minimum set of hours – this rises to 41 per cent of low-income workers and 44 per cent of part-time workers. Moreover, 39 per cent of workers have felt unwell due to work-related stress during the last 12 months. Despite London's portrayal as a tolerant city, barriers to better work vary according to ethnicity, gender, age – highlighting inequalities in access to opportunity and individuals' experience of discrimination. Over a quarter of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Londoners identified ethnicity as a barrier to better jobs, while 15 per cent of women saw gender as a barrier. Low-income and manual workers were more likely to cite lack of access to training opportunities and qualifications as barriers to better work. With rates of in-work poverty rising, the cost of living, pay and training were at the top of Londoners' priorities for action on employment by the Mayor of London.
- 12.9 Another report by the Learning and Work Institute for The Black Stork Charity<sup>55</sup> looks at the impact of the pandemic on the employment, pay and finances of disabled people. The research found that disabled people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. By the end of 2020, disabled people were more than twice as likely to be long-term unemployed compared to non-disabled people, and that disabled people were 60% more likely to lose their job since the start of the first lockdown.

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<sup>54</sup> [https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/paved-with-gold-views-on-job-quality-in-the-capital/?vgo\\_ee=mjzlcqa4y%2F3a3WY5MtUdAKlwrtaeqmINH4www3aBP9IOV8PCHCW2SQhD%2BF%2Fb8KUK](https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/paved-with-gold-views-on-job-quality-in-the-capital/?vgo_ee=mjzlcqa4y%2F3a3WY5MtUdAKlwrtaeqmINH4www3aBP9IOV8PCHCW2SQhD%2BF%2Fb8KUK)

<sup>55</sup> <https://learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Disability-employment-from-pandemic-to-recovery.pdf>

- 12.10 Analysis by Adzuna, an online search engine and the Institute for Employment Studies (IES)<sup>56</sup> finds that there are more than five unemployed people for every job posting opening in a quarter of local areas – with ex-industrial, inner city and ‘Red Wall’ areas faring worst. The analysis found that:
- Despite a rebound in hiring, even larger rises in ‘claimant’ unemployment mean that the number of jobseekers chasing every vacancy has nearly doubled – rising from 1.2 claimants per job in March 2020 to 2.2 claimants per job in June 2021.
  - 43 local authority areas have more than eight unemployed claimants chasing every vacancy.
- 12.11 The research shows that vacancies in June have almost certainly hit their highest levels since records began, with more than a million jobs now open. Over three hundred thousand new job adverts were placed in the last week in June alone. This hiring spree is being driven by a combination of ‘pandemic’ jobs – like in warehousing, logistics, IT and public services; alongside strong bouncebacks in hospitality, sales, construction and manufacturing. However while the recovery appears to be broad based across industries and regions, the analysis shows that sharp rises in local unemployment – combined with inequalities that pre-date the crisis – means that there are wide disparities between places. In thirty local areas, the research shows that there are more than ten unemployed claimants chasing every vacancy; while in nearly a hundred places – a quarter of all areas – there are more than five claimant unemployed chasing each job. The areas with the highest numbers of claimants per vacancy are often those areas that were most disadvantaged before the crisis began – dominated by ex-industrial areas in the north of England, Welsh Valleys and central belt of Scotland; coastal areas particularly across eastern England; inner city areas in the Midlands, North and especially London; and Northern Ireland. So-called ‘Red Wall’ areas

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<sup>56</sup> <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/situations-vacant-online-job-adverts-during-crisis-and-recovery>

also continue to fare worse – with 3.4 unemployed people per vacancy, compared with 2.1 in the rest of the country.

- 12.12 The report calls for more action to help unemployed into work, and to avoid a ‘timebomb’ of labour shortages, inflationary pressure and higher long-term unemployment.
- 12.13 The Resolution Foundation’s *Labour Market Outlook Q2 2021*<sup>57</sup>, while reporting on the positive signs of the recovery in the labour market, cautions that unemployment is expected to peak later this year. It focuses on the impact on women in the workforce and also refers to youth unemployment.
- 12.14 The Skills Index 2021<sup>58</sup> produced by City and Guilds in collaboration with the British Chambers of Commerce and analysts at EMSI says that more than a quarter of employers believe there is a mismatch between the skills they need and the skills people gain through education. The report also reveals that 56 per cent of organisations face some kind of barrier to meeting their skills and talent needs when recruiting. It calls for individuals, education organisations, businesses and government to adopt a more jobs and skills-first focused mentality when it comes to education and training, to better match skills supply with demand, and drive a stronger, faster economic recovery after the pandemic.
- 12.15 *No longer managing: the rise of working poverty and fixing Britain's broken social settlement*<sup>59</sup> from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) investigates the continuing rise in working poverty in the UK this century. It looks at what factors are driving this growth; which groups of people have been most impacted and how the welfare state might adapt to address the problem. It reports that the likelihood of being in poverty for those in working households has grown across the UK, particularly in London. The report also discusses housing costs noting that poverty has increased for those in rented housing, but not for those with mortgages. It highlights that the cost of renting has increased by almost a half in real terms over the past 25 years and it further considers childcare costs and availability, noting the growing shortfall

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/labour-market-outlook-q2-2021/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.cityandguildsgroup.com/research/skills-index>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.ippr.org/files/2021-05/no-longer-managing-may21.pdf>

in income support from social security. The report finds that the households most affected by in-work poverty are single parent families, single earner couple households and those with large families. The report looks at how low-income families have fared during the Covid-19 pandemic and the social, political and economic consequences of the rise in working poverty. It considers the changes needed to address the situation such as containing housing and childcare costs as a share of income per household and improving the quality of jobs.

- 12.16 The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)'s *Learning and skills at work: survey 2021*<sup>60</sup> explores organisational approaches to learning and skills development, drawing on the findings of a survey of human resources professionals across the UK. The survey focuses on learning and development (L&D) during Covid-19, highlighting decreases in L&D budgets and headcounts and the ways in which organisations responded. It examines the use of digital technologies / solutions and the ways in which businesses revisited organisational alignment. The report looks at the ways in which organisations sought to improve clarity, connection and collaboration through their L&D programmes, addressed the need for workforce agility and reskilling/redeployment, and developed evidence and evaluation of the impact of L&D. It presents conclusions and recommendations on the ways in which organisations should support L&D in future, and outlines the methodology used in the survey.
- 12.17 *What works in youth employment partnerships: a guide to improve practice*<sup>61</sup> by the IES provides advice to stakeholders on partnership approaches to supporting young people's transition into employment, education and training opportunities. The report outlines the aims of the guidance, the way it was developed and the way it should be used. It describes the types of youth employment partnerships and the benefits of partnership-based approaches and offers advice, case studies and toolkits on good practice relating to:

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<sup>60</sup> [https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/learning-skills-work-report-2021-1\\_tcm18-95433.pdf](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/learning-skills-work-report-2021-1_tcm18-95433.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> [https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/Partnership%20\\_Guide.pdf?platform=hotsuite](https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/Partnership%20_Guide.pdf?platform=hotsuite)

developing partnerships, including establishing a no-wrong door approach, joining up resources; managing partnerships (including developing referral practices and ensuring good data governance); engaging young people (including building coherent pathways and embedding in-work support) and engaging employers (including developing long-term approaches and enhancing business and education links).

- 12.18 A report<sup>62</sup> from the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) proposes that local authorities should create skills programmes to train workers in their areas as part of the effort to tackle the UK's engineering skills shortages. The report warns that the UK economy suffers a loss of £1.5bn per year due to Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills shortages.

### **13 Progression to Further and Higher Education**

- 13.1 The Mayor of London has published the adult education roadmap for London<sup>63</sup> as a draft for consultation (the consultation closes on 8 August). The paper says that the Mayor wants to support progression and maximise the benefits of learning across the priority impact areas (that is the social and economic impact areas agreed by the Skills for Londoners Board) for learners across all levels of provision and types of learning. It confirms that the vast majority of London's devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) will be spent on provision at entry level up to level 2, especially where evidence shows positive outcomes. The intention is to help learners to progress from entry level upwards; it is thought that this focus will ensure they have the right support in place to progress whether for reasons of wellbeing, personal development or in economic terms. The paper also notes that the new National Skills Fund Level 3 Adult Offer means that Londoners without an equivalent qualification can now access a higher level of learning to support progression into work. However, the paper says that it is not believed that this offer goes far enough, which is why the Mayor has introduced a more flexible level 3 offer funded through London's AEB, enabling any eligible

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<sup>62</sup> <https://www.theiet.org/impact-society/factfiles/education-factfiles/addressing-the-stem-skills-shortage-challenge/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/publications/adult-education-roadmap-london>

unemployed or low-paid Londoner to access level 3 learning and retrain, even if they have existing qualifications. It is proposed to continue London's level 3 offer and enhance it for future years. Where appropriate, the Mayor will explore funding courses across levels 3 and 4, particularly where it can be a bridge between levels of learning and can support the most disadvantaged Londoners. This will help to support progression into higher skilled roles in sectors which are key to London's economic recovery.

13.2 The AoC authored a report<sup>64</sup> for the British Council that says that a complete return to pre-pandemic technical and vocational education and training (TVET) policy and practice is unlikely. The report outlines how TVET is innovating and changing internationally as a result of the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic. Based on research across five countries (Ghana, India, Malaysia, South Africa and the UK), the report:

- Ask how are vocational institutions innovating, evolving and changing as result of Covid-19?
- sets out key observations for digital transformation, curriculum development and work-based learning.

13.3 Findings from the study of practice and perspectives in the five countries include:

- Only 6 per cent of institutions say they will maintain pure face-to-face teaching delivery.
- 9 in 10 had to change their institutional policies since the onset of Covid-19.
- Just under half made changes to their assessment methods for the future.

13.4 The report says that change that was initially implemented as an emergency response to lockdowns and campus closures has generated efficient and sustainable practices that suggest a complete return to pre-pandemic TVET policy and practice is unlikely. The report provides recommendations for both TVET policy-makers and practitioners to solidify temporary changes into

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<sup>64</sup> <https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/skills-em>

more permanent policy in areas such as blended learning and the upskilling of teaching staff.

- 13.5 The report also highlights that TVET is vital for international social and economic advancement and that changes in institutional practice could have lasting long-term benefits. However, pre-Covid-19 challenges in TVET remain, particularly around student inclusion. TVET plays a fundamental role in the skills infrastructure of all five countries cited in the report and the impact of the pandemic between technology, staff, students, employers and the curriculum provide an opportunity for policymakers and governments to reflect on the impact of digital transformation in TVET.
- 13.6 The official *Graduate Labour Market Statistics 2020*<sup>65</sup> provides information about graduate, postgraduate and non-graduate employment rates and earnings in England.
- 13.7 Using longitudinal education outcomes (LEO) data, the DfE has published statistics at HE provider level to show students' employment and earnings outcomes for the 2018 to 2019 tax year. It is split by:
- Provider
  - subject studied
  - graduate characteristics<sup>66</sup>.
- 13.8 The HE Policy Institute published evidence on the value of qualifications at levels 4 and 5 in a blog, concluding that there was a good case for investment in these qualifications – provided they were integrated into the education system<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/graduate-labour-market-statistics-2020?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=9f6db77b-808b-47a7-9328-6cefed9a32d6&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/graduate-labour-market-statistics-2020?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=9f6db77b-808b-47a7-9328-6cefed9a32d6&utm_content=daily)

<sup>66</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/graduate-outcomes-leo-provider-level-data/2018-19>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2021/06/14/are-level-4-and-5-qualifications-a-good-investment/>

- 13.9 The Office for Students (OfS) has published its annual report and accounts for 2020-21<sup>68</sup>. The report covers the OfS's third year of operation, and its progress in delivering against its regulatory objectives.
- 13.10 Two London universities have been named in this year's top ten of the best universities in the world. Imperial College is ranked seventh and University College London eighth in the global QS World University Rankings, 2022<sup>69</sup>.

## **14 Careers Guidance**

- 14.1 The GLA launched the Grant Award Process for The Mayor's European Social Fund (ESF) Co-Financing Programme – London Careers Hubs<sup>70</sup>. This programme will establish four London Careers Hubs, one in each sub-regional partnership area, with funding allocated as follows:
- Central Project: £2,098,150
  - South Project: £1,226,900
  - West Project: £1,616,480
  - East Project: £2,039,900.
- 14.2 Each Careers Hub will build on the work of the London Enterprise Adviser Network (LEAN) in that area and be supported by employability activity for the schools and colleges in the Hub. Projects are funded by the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and European Social Funds (ESF). The deadline for submitting completed applications is 12:00 (noon) Friday 16 July 2021.
- 14.3 More than 3,700 young Londoners are expected to have linked up with top UK firms at the London Careers Festival (28 June to 2 July)<sup>71</sup>. During the week-long event, 30 leading businesses, including the Evening Standard, Bloomberg, Natwest and PWC, held a series of webinars, offering apprenticeships, online workshops, talks and Q&As. The City of London

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<sup>68</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/annual-report-and-accounts-2020-21/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2021>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/funding/european-social-fund/funding-opportunities>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.londoncareersfestival.org.uk/>

Corporation, which runs the festival, wants to connect young Londoners to the world of work, fuelling their imaginations and developing their skills. The Festival is open to primary and secondary school pupils, and students aged 16-19.

- 14.4 In a follow-up to its publication *Career Ready? How schools can better prepare young people for working life in the era of COVID-19* ( Mann, A., V. Denis and C. Percy (2020), OECD Education Working Papers, No. 241, OECD Publishing, Paris, (see our Policy Update for December 2020)), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has produced an Education Working Paper *Thinking about the future: Career readiness insights from national longitudinal surveys and from practice*<sup>72</sup>, which extends the number of countries covered in the research. This new insight confirms the original findings and identifies career certainty, alignment and ambition as relevant indicators related to career thinking. The paper also incorporates two new indicators, instrumental motivation and career concentration. The findings provide further evidence that teenage career ambition, certainty, alignment, instrumental motivation and broad occupational expectations relate to positive employment outcomes, including in periods of economic turbulence. However, this is not always the case and, on some occasions, this association is found only in specific subgroups. The paper also presents evidence from academic literature, analysis of OECD PISA data and accounts from practitioners, which focus on ways in which schools can foster students' career thinking.
- 14.5 In a report *Securing the future*<sup>73</sup>, Engineering UK and seven engineering and careers organisations call on government to invest £40 million in improving access to careers provision for students in schools and colleges in England to enable more young people to understand the opportunities available in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) careers and so support

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<sup>72</sup> [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/thinking-about-the-future\\_02a419de-en;jsessionid=d1cdn8k4V6jkidb0xfSkfngX.ip-10-240-5-74](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/thinking-about-the-future_02a419de-en;jsessionid=d1cdn8k4V6jkidb0xfSkfngX.ip-10-240-5-74)

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.engineeringuk.com/news-views/calls-for-40m-urgent-investment-in-careers-provision/>

the drive to build back better and 'level up' across the UK in a post-Covid world.

14.6 A survey by Vitreous World<sup>74</sup>, carried out in May and June 2021 and commissioned by data analysts Tableau, was conducted to gain insight into UK pupils and their understanding of employer wants and sentiment towards data analysis. The results show that pupils aged 16 to 18 feel the pandemic has impacted their workplace skills more than their academic ones and that school has not helped to prepare them for a job. They say a significant proportion of the skills employers are looking for are learnt outside of school and want to see schools work more closely with businesses so they can gain employable skills. Key findings from the research include:

- Over half (54 per cent) of pupils shared that the pandemic has impacted their skills-based learning such as data analysis more than it impacted their academic learning.
- 80 per cent of pupils want schools to work more closely with businesses to make education more relevant to employers.
- Fewer than half (47 per cent) of pupils aged 16 to 18 believe that their school education has prepared them for a job.
- With digital skills top of what employers are looking for, worryingly, nearly one in two pupils (46 per cent) say they have no experience learning data analysis at school.
- Almost two fifths (38 per cent) are unaware of the key skills for which employers are looking.
- A gender gap persists in digital skills confidence. Only 36 per cent of female pupils are confident in their programming skills, 44 per cent in their data analysis skills and 66 per cent in foundational digital skills (PowerPoint, Word, emails etc) in comparison to 58 per cent of male pupils for programming, 55 per cent for data analysis and 75 per cent for foundational skills.

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<sup>74</sup> <https://www.tableau.com/about/press-releases/2021/employability-hit-hardest-lockdown-according-uk-students>

- While pupils say foundational digital skills they have are mostly learnt in school (75 per cent), one third (34 per cent) say the computer programming skills they have were learnt somewhere else.

## 15 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- 15.1 Long standing problems in support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) “have been made even worse” by the Covid-19 crisis, Ofsted has said in a report *SEND: Old issues, new, issues, next steps*<sup>75</sup>. The report reveals the findings of joint visits to local areas by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), carried out during the autumn term of 2020 and spring term of 2021.
- 15.2 The National Senco Workforce Survey: time to review 2018-2020<sup>76</sup>, from the National Association for Special Educational Needs (Nasen) and Bath Spa University finds more than half of special educational needs co-ordinators (Sencos) say they are not given enough time to complete their role effectively. It also shows that 75 per cent of primary and 79 per cent of secondary Sencos are “routinely pulled away from their role to perform other duties”. The report warns that millions of children will miss out on vital support if the workforce is not given more time, resources and support to meet the needs of all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Nasen is calling on the government to update SEND policy through the upcoming SEND review, which was due to be published in late 2020 but has been delayed due to the pandemic.
- 15.3 Ambitious about Autism has launched a new employment toolkit to support autistic young people into the job market. The *Transition to Employment Toolkit*<sup>77</sup> has been developed to tackle the low autism employment rate, which is currently at 22 per cent and the lowest of all disabled groups. It aims to prevent autistic young people from falling out of education, employment or training when they leave school. The toolkit has sections for autistic young

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<sup>75</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-and-young-people-with-send-disproportionately-affected-by-pandemic>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/projects/senco-workload/>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/employment/toolkits>

people, careers professionals and employers. It can be downloaded as a whole or as individual sections and includes lots of editable forms and templates.

## **16 Funding**

- 16.1 The DfE has agreed that schools will now be able to claim additional pupil premium funding for children with “no recourse to public funds” who were given temporary free school meals eligibility last year<sup>78</sup>.
- 16.2 The Government has announced more than £16 million for councils to extend the role of Virtual School Heads<sup>79</sup> from September this year, meaning there will be a local champion for children with a social worker in every local authority in England. This is hoped to mean that more focus is placed on children with a social worker, targeting support earlier on in these young people’s lives and helping improve how they engage with education. A further £3 million in funding has also been confirmed for a new pilot, where Virtual School Heads will support looked-after children and care leavers in post-16 education. Launching in October, the pilot will enable Virtual School Heads to expand their work into further education settings. Both programmes are intended to build on the existing role of a Virtual School Head, who help champion and improve the educational outcomes for children in or on the edge of care, enhancing relationships between schools, colleges and local authorities so that pupils receive support from professionals that will help them develop and progress throughout their time in education.
- 16.3 The DfE is providing £3.4 million to expand the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award to support pupils in deprived schools in England taking part in volunteering and extra-curricular learning<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-no-recourse-to-public-funds-free-school-meals>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/16-million-to-support-young-people-with-a-social-worker>

<sup>80</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/34-million-to-expand-the-duke-of-edinburghs-award-in-schools?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=f38c7794-d64e-43da-b015-dc1e7dd98160&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/34-million-to-expand-the-duke-of-edinburghs-award-in-schools?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=f38c7794-d64e-43da-b015-dc1e7dd98160&utm_content=daily)

16.4 The DfE has invited local authorities to apply to run a *Pupil Premium Plus Post-16 Pilot*<sup>81</sup>. The pilot will run for two terms (from 4 October 2021 to 31 March 2022) and aims to test the proof of concept of engaging Virtual School Heads to support looked-after children and care leavers in FE by focussing the extension of financial support to looked-after children and care leavers in general FE colleges. This will enable the DfE to build an evidence base of what works, which will be used to inform any future support for this cohort.

## 17 Race Equality and Social Justice

17.1 London Councils has produced a report that shows how Covid-19's impact on London's economy is worsening inequalities in the capital. The briefing *The Levelling Up Fund, Community Renewal Fund - and the support needed for London's economic recovery*<sup>82</sup> indicates that London's economy contracted by 9.9 per cent in 2020, and the capital has the UK's highest rates of unemployed and furloughed staff. It adds that London's economy has been scarred by the pandemic and assumptions that it will simply 'bounce back' are misplaced. Government investment is needed to support the capital's most vulnerable individuals into employment and to foster new and innovative businesses. Although the government recently announced two major funds to support economic development and recovery in the UK:(the Levelling up Fund and the Community Renewal Fund, totalling over £5 billion), London Councils is concerned that the funding allocation processes for these flagship investments in economic development put London at a disadvantage.

17.2 Unicef have published a report on closing the digital divide among children and young people for good<sup>83</sup>. The report sets out a 10-point action plan for the UK Government to implement, which includes working with teachers and schools to identify gaps in skills and support. By taking a children's rights

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<sup>81</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-plus-post-16-pilot-submit-an-expression-of-interest?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=5240c1a1-5a5c-4448-a9f2-06d299037ac4&utm\\_content=immediately](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-plus-post-16-pilot-submit-an-expression-of-interest?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=5240c1a1-5a5c-4448-a9f2-06d299037ac4&utm_content=immediately)

<sup>82</sup> <https://your.londoncouncils.gov.uk/192K-7EOS9-71JL3B-4GVULV-1/c.aspx>

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.unicef.org.uk/policy/closing-the-digital-divide-uk/>

approach, the report explains that is grounding efforts to deliver digital inclusion for all in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Robert Halfon, chair of the Education Committee, and Labour MP Siobhain McDonagh penned an article for Times Red Box in support of the report and its recommendations.

- 17.3 A report published as part of the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) Deaton Review of Inequalities<sup>84</sup> finds that today's second-generation ethnic minority adults, who were born and brought up in the UK, did much better in the education system than the white majority despite much less advantaged economic backgrounds. This was true, though differentially so, for all the main minority groups. It contrasts with the experience of most ethnic minorities in other European countries. This educational success does not, however, translate fully into success in the labour market. After leaving education, they are less likely to be employed, and some ethnic groups are less likely to reach managerial/professional occupations, than the white majority. The report, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, illustrates the complexities involved in understanding ethnic inequalities. One can't simply conclude that the labour market deficits people from ethnic minorities face are explained by their less advantaged family backgrounds. Those same backgrounds do not hold them back in the education system. Nor do we have a full understanding of why they are so successful educationally.
- 17.4 The research uses linked Census data covering a 40-year period to track outcomes across generations within families. It focuses on second-generation minority ethnic groups – those whose parents were born abroad and moved to the UK as adults – and on the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and black Caribbean ethnic groups who are represented in sufficient numbers for analysis and who are sufficiently long-standing in the UK that the second generations can be tracked well into adulthood. These comprise the majority of the UK's second-generation adult ethnic minorities. Key findings include:

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<sup>84</sup> <https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/social-mobility-and-ethnicity/>

- Second-generation ethnic minority adults are much more likely to come from more disadvantaged social class origins, as measured by whether their parents were in professional or managerial occupations, compared with the white majority.
- Despite poorer family backgrounds on average, second-generation ethnic minorities are substantially more likely to achieve high educational qualifications than the white majority.
- And yet, when looking at the labour market, the position of ethnic minorities does not match what we might expect given the typical rewards associated with education.

## 18 Social Mobility

18.1 In the report *Against the odds*<sup>85</sup>, the Social Mobility Commission and the Education Observatory at the University of Wolverhampton investigate the characteristics of secondary schools able to start closing the progress gap and achieve better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Key findings include:

- There is no single strategy / intervention that can be clearly implemented in all, or even a majority of, schools to reduce the progress gap.
- A school's absence rate is the strongest predictive factor of the progress made by its pupil premium students, but in most schools, it is only a minor focus of pupil premium policy and is not currently a factor in the calculation of what schools receive.
- A school's staff culture regarding the pupil premium is an important factor in tackling socio-economic disadvantage.
- Some schools face extreme contextual challenges, which are associated with lower levels of progress among students allocated pupil premium funding.

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<sup>85</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/against-the-odds>

- Teachers believe that quality teaching and personalisation are the most effective ways to support students facing socio-economic disadvantage, but these beliefs are not always translated into practice.
- 18.2 The report contains recommendations for national policy makers and school leaders, based on its findings.
- 18.3 The report authors have also created a pupil premium primer<sup>86</sup> to help schools take a longer-term approach to tackling socio-economic disadvantage. The primer's resources enable schools to compare their contexts to other schools, learn about the journeys of similar schools, explore the attitudes of their staff, and consider the impact of policies on students' wellbeing. They do not provide a simple solution but enable school leaders to consider their pupil premium strategy more broadly, knowing that deeper, more prolonged effort is necessary to bring about lasting change.

## **19 Mental Health and Anxiety**

- 19.1 A campaign to 'Fund the hubs' has been launched by Young Minds, Youth Access, Mind, The Children's Society and Centre for Mental Health<sup>87</sup>. Early support hubs provide easy to access, local support for young people aged up to 25, without the need for a referral or an appointment. They offer psychological therapies as well as advice and guidance on other issues impacting young people's lives, such as housing and employment. These hubs are based on existing services models from the UK and internationally, such as the Youth Information Advice and Counselling Services (YIACS). The campaign is calling for proper funding in these services - at least £150million - so that every single young person in England can access a 'hub' (see paragraph 11.7 for details of the DWP's Youth Hubs).
- 19.2 *Young people's mental and emotional health: trajectories and drivers in childhood and adolescence*<sup>88</sup> by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) explores the development of mental and emotional health (MEH) in the growth of a

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<sup>86</sup> <https://educationobservatory.co.uk/pupilpremiumprimer/>

<sup>87</sup> <https://act.youngminds.org.uk/fund-the-hubs>

<sup>88</sup> [https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EPI-PT\\_Young-people%E2%80%99s-wellbeing\\_Jan2021.pdf?platform=hootsuite](https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EPI-PT_Young-people%E2%80%99s-wellbeing_Jan2021.pdf?platform=hootsuite)

child through adolescence and the various factors that impact positive and poor MEH. The report describes how poor mental health in adolescence is closely linked to poor mental health in adulthood which has a major impact on relationship building, productivity, and citizenship. It examines data gathered from a survey of 5,000 young people born around the year 2000 in England and finds that personal wellbeing and self-esteem drops as children move into secondary school, particularly among girls. The report identifies that family income, frequency of exercise and social media use, being bullied in childhood, and family health and wellbeing all play an important role in shaping young peoples' MEH. It recommends that policymakers focus on preventative measures and suggests policies such as providing a wellbeing fund for schools; increasing mental health content in the curriculum; improving school staff training on mental health; and increasing funding to local mental health providers.

## **20 Youth Work**

- 20.1 Josh MacAlister, chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care in England has published the review's first report <A Case for Change><sup>89</sup>. The report calls for major reform of and investment in support for vulnerable children and families in England, describing the current system as financially strained and risk-averse. The report says that the children's social care system in England investigates too readily but does not do enough to support families, protect teenagers or care for children who are looked after by the state. It also adds that the system is under significant strain with support for families being cut back as money is increasingly spent on crisis intervention. Its headline recommendation is for more support to be provided to keep families together as opposed to launching safeguarding and child protection investigations, noting that last year 135,000 were launched which resulted in no child protection plans.

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<sup>89</sup> <https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/case-for-change.pdf>

- 20.2 Partnership for Young London (PYL) is working with the Young Londoners Fund Local Networks to explore ways to engage young people in activities to improve their local area, the work of youth organisations, and London's COVID recovery<sup>90</sup>. A youth-led event on 14 July will hear from young people who have shown leadership in a variety of areas including, education, social action, enterprise and employment, young people with special educational needs, and young people coming through the care system. It will also hear from the youth organisations they have worked with, who will share their experience and learning supporting young people to become youth leaders.
- 20.3 The first in a series of GEN Z Young Londoners event is taking place on 21 July<sup>91</sup>. These events are hosted by young people, for young people and those working with young people. The event consists of a roundtable of inspiring gen z changemakers on zoom and seeks to celebrate the success of gen z Londoners in the past few years, with themes of social media activism, young people's safety and community building.
- 20.4 Over one hundred children's organisations wrote a letter<sup>92</sup> to the Telegraph calling on government to create a joined-up plan for children and young people that puts them at the heart of the pandemic recovery and includes investment in the services and workforce that support them. The Telegraph itself has launched a Campaign for Children<sup>93</sup>, recognising the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on children.
- 20.5 UK Youth has published its four year strategy<sup>94</sup> in which it is looking to create cross-sector mutual understanding across youth support services by 2025 to champion and improve the delivery of youth work. UK Youth is particularly focusing on the use of outdoor learning.

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<sup>90</sup> <https://www.partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk/events-1/young-londoners-fund-developing-young-leaders-exploring-methods-to-develop-youth-leadership-skills-in-young-people>

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk/events-1/GENZyoungLondoners>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.ncb.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/news-opinion/childrens-sectors-letter-telegraph-says-children-must-be-heart>

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/campaign-for-children/>

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/UKYouthStrategyPaperFINAL.pdf>

## 21 Youth Justice

- 21.1 The Association of Youth Offending Team Managers has responded to the Police and Crime Bill saying that it does not take the needs of children into account<sup>95</sup>. The Association's Chair had given evidence at the Public Bill Committee for the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill<sup>96</sup>.
- 21.2 The Children's Commissioner for England has written a briefing paper on *Children in custody during lockdown*<sup>97</sup> that explores the conditions of youth in custody during the Covid-19 lockdowns. It builds on previous reports during the first lockdown to see if conditions have improved and establishes what is still having a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing for the children. The briefing examines three particular areas that impact youth in custody: the amount of time they spend out of their cell during other activities, access to education, and ability to have visits with family. It concludes that progress has occurred since the first lockdown, however, more needs to be done to improve the conditions for children in custody in terms of expectations and standardising practices throughout facilities.
- 21.3 Ealing Council's Youth Justice Service (YJS) has teamed up with technology innovation organisation Antser<sup>98</sup> for a four-month scheme that aims to increase awareness of harmful behaviour and exploitative relationships impacting young people already involved with the service. Using virtual reality headsets and 360-degree immersive films designed by Antser, children and young people working with Ealing YJS will find themselves immersed in the experience of young people at risk of exploitation. The programme will give them the opportunity to safely explore the issues of risk, how to identify it, how to avoid it and how to protect themselves, designers said.

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<sup>95</sup> <https://aym.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/AYM-Police-and-Crime-Sentencing-Bill-Response.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> <https://aym.org.uk/2021/06/25/aym-chair-gives-masterclass-evidence-in-bill-committee/>

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/cco-children-in-custody-during-lockdown.pdf?platform=hootsuite>

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.antser.com/antser-partners-with-ealing-council-to-reduce-the-number-of-children-being-criminally-exploited/>

## 22 London

- 22.1 The GLA's *Our London Map*<sup>99</sup> is an interactive map which shows the locations of youth activities across the city. The Our London Map can be used by parents, guardians, teachers, mentors and youth and support workers to signpost young people to activities nearby.
- 22.2 City and Islington College Sixth Form College (CANDI) has won two awards and been named runner-up in another in this year's Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) Annual Awards<sup>100</sup>. The SFCA Annual Awards recognise, celebrate and reward outstanding practice by colleges and individuals across the sector. CANDI came first in the Independent Learning and Covid Above and Beyond categories, earning a special mention in the latter, and second place in the Social Mobility Category.
- 22.3 The West London Alliance has commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and Rocket Science to deliver insights into skills demand and supply in its local labour market<sup>101</sup>, particularly through an interactive dashboard<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/our-london/#top>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.sixthformcolleges.org/1132/sfca-awards-2021>

<sup>101</sup> <https://wla.london/skills-demand-and-supply/>

<sup>102</sup> <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t-gYnln8WJU7kBKrVRA9CgtyrVtEVnOHB-AzSXuFquU/edit#gid=957837314>

## **Part Two: Policy Update**

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

### **23 Honours**

23.1 We congratulate Young People's Education and Skills Board member Sam Parrett CBE, who was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in Her Majesty's Birthday Honours List<sup>103</sup>.

### **24 Qualification Reform**

24.1 Pearson, has published its interim Future of Qualifications & Assessment report<sup>104</sup> following the launch of a national consultation in February 2021. Key findings from the consultation, which will form the basis of the second phase of the project, include:

- People believe there is too much weight on exams.
- Employers think students need broader, deeper knowledge and skills.
- Academic qualifications alone aren't preparing students for jobs of the future.
- Perceived lack of choice in curriculum when it comes to the range of subjects available to study or the qualifications available.
- Qualifications are valuable.
- Career path is the biggest factor behind qualification choices.
- More innovation with technology is needed.

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<sup>103</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-queens-birthday-honours-list-2021>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/uk/documents/future-of-assessment/future-of-assessment-report.pdf>

## **25 Good for ME, Good for FE<sup>105</sup>**

25.1 Three leading principals are urging colleges around the country to join them in a new initiative to help staff connect with their local communities and collectively generate £1m of social value. Sam Parrett (London South East Colleges), Jo Maher (Loughborough College) and Stuart Rimmer (East Coast College) have launched the *Good for ME Good for FE campaign*, which they hope will create a sustainable programme of community action across the UK, while helping to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff. The three strands of this new initiative will be:

- The continuation of FE Foodbank Friday.
- Encouraging volunteering activity within and outside each college community, harnessing the huge amount of work already being undertaken by staff for good causes and encouraging others to get involved (there is a strong link between volunteering and improved mental health – a current key priority for colleges and their staff.
- Developing corporate and charitable partnerships to help sustain a longer term vision and impact.

## **26 Centre for Local Economic Strategies<sup>106</sup>**

26.1 A report by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) provides a brief history of how the UK has failed to address longstanding and persistent geographical disparities in economic and social conditions and suggests how local economic development in the UK could be reshaped to address these failings. The report highlights the disparity in economic and social conditions in different regions of the UK and outlines past government policies aimed at 'levelling-up' and decentralising power, noting that largely they have not helped end economic divides. It proposes three central tenets (devolve, redirect and democratise) and makes recommendations for national policy as well as local economic practice for each. The report proposes that a national

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<sup>105</sup> <https://www.lsec.ac.uk/news/3144-good-for-me-good-for-fe-campaign>

<sup>106</sup> <https://cles.org.uk/publications/devolve-redirect-democratise/>

constitutional convention is needed, and a new national redistribution process should be established. It considers that place-based approaches should be used to empower local areas and communities and that opportunities for citizens to shape the economic destinies of their localities should be expanded.

## 27 Trend Deck<sup>107</sup>

- 27.1 Trend Deck sets out an evidence base of long-term change for UK government officials and others to use in thinking about how to create long-term benefits for society. It is part of a suite of foresight resources developed by the Government Office for Science (its publication *A brief guide to futures thinking and foresight*<sup>108</sup> introduces what futures thinking is, the benefits, where to start, networks and capability development. The *Futures Toolkit* is a set of tools and techniques to help government officials use long-term strategic thinking in policy making. Versions of *Trend Deck* have been used across government for many years. The Spring 2021 version is the first to be made publicly available. Trend Deck does not cover weak signals of change, which are more suited to ongoing horizon scanning, or disruptors (high impact, highly uncertain events), nor does it cover the potential implications of trends or make any suggestions for a policy response. It is not a statement of government policy. The topics it covers are: climate change, demographics, economics, health, infrastructure, natural resources, skills, technology and urbanisation.
- 27.2 The Trend Deck on skills focuses on education, labour and employment trends<sup>109</sup>.

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<sup>107</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/trend-deck-spring-2021?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=b718cd9b-fcaf-4a49-8e62-ce1e1d34c36a&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/trend-deck-spring-2021?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=b718cd9b-fcaf-4a49-8e62-ce1e1d34c36a&utm_content=daily)

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/futures-thinking-and-foresight-a-brief-guide>

<sup>109</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trend-deck-2021-skills?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trend-deck-2021-skills?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-)

## 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 used<sup>110</sup>.

### 28 Participation

#### *Attendance*

28.1 The figures on schools and colleges attendance published by DfE<sup>111</sup> are as follows:

- In the week commencing 7 June (spot date 10 June) 100.0 per cent of educational settings were open and 92.4 per cent of students were in attendance.
- In the week commencing 14 June (spot date 17 June) 99.9 per cent of educational settings were open and 89.7 per cent of students were in attendance.
- In the week commencing 21 June (spot date 24 June), 99.8 per cent of educational settings were open and 87.4 per cent of students were in attendance.
- In the week commencing 28 June (spot date 1 July) 99.6 per cent of educational setting were open and 83.4 per cent of students were in attendance.

(Please note: Thursday is the 'spot' day on which weekly attendance is counted. From 7 June pupil attendance and COVID-19 related absence figures for secondary schools, special schools, alternative provision and independent schools are adjusted to exclude year 11 to 13 pupils identified as not in attendance because they are off-site for approved purposes.)

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[notifications&utm\\_source=46c90cda-e57e-4eaa-b8c2-641a62291998&utm\\_content=daily](#)

<sup>110</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/neet-statistics-annual-brief>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

28.2 The DfE has released figures on pupil absence during the first term of the academic year 2020/21<sup>112</sup>. These are based on School Census data (weekly absence reports use information from the DfE's educational settings survey, which was set up during the pandemic). The overall absence rate in Autumn Term 2020/21 was 4.7 per cent. This was similar to last year (4.9 per cent). This does not include sessions where pupils were not attending in circumstances related to Covid-19 for which a further 7.0 per cent of sessions were recorded. 60 per cent of pupils had some period where they did not attend in circumstances relating to Covid-19. Despite including illness due to positive coronavirus cases, the rate of absence due to illness, 2.5 per cent, has decreased compared to last year (2.8 per cent). This corresponds with Public Health England data<sup>113</sup> showing that cases of flu and other seasonal respiratory illnesses have decreased. Other types of absence, including holiday absence and medical appointments, have also decreased as a likely result of the pandemic. Unauthorised absence has increased in mainstream settings but decreased in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs).

***Young people not in education, employment or training***

28.3 The latest unofficial figures from the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) show that the proportion of 16 and 17 year-olds who were NEET or whose status was not known to their local authority in England was 3.0 percent and the equivalent in London was 1.8 percent.

***Participation in education, training and employment: 2020:***

28.4 Headline figures in the latest report<sup>114</sup> are:

- 82.3 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds were participating in full or part-time education or on an apprenticeship at the end of 2020 – this is the highest on record.

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<sup>112</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-term>

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports>

<sup>114</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/participation-in-education-and-training-and-employment/2020>

- 6.5 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds were NEET at the end 2020 - the lowest recorded was 6.3 per cent at the end of 2016.

28.5 The overall highlights for ages 16 to 18:

- Participation in education or apprenticeships is the highest on record.
- The age 16 to 18 NEET rate remained stable and is still one of the lowest on record.
- 4.1 per cent of the age-group were in wider training and 7.0 per cent in employment.

28.6 For ages 16-17, the report says that:

- 91.2 per cent were participating in education or apprenticeships, a record high.
- 3.9 per cent were NEET, a record low.
- 2.8 per cent were in wider training and 2.1 per cent in employment.

28.7 On age 18, the report says that:

- 64.0 per cent participating in education or apprenticeships, a record high.
- 6.1 per cent NEET, an increase compared with 2019 and the highest level since 2014 resulting from falls in employment and falls in participation in wider training.
- 6.9 per cent were in wider training and 17.0 per cent in employment.

## **29 Achievement**

29.1 The all-age statistics on vocational and other qualifications (excluding GCSEs, AS levels and A levels)<sup>115</sup> show that the overall number of certificates awarded in the year ending 31 March 2021 was 3,781,465

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<sup>115</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vocational-and-other-qualifications-quarterly-january-to-march-2021?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_source=cd7dcc49-d277-4e5b-97f7-37119690b322&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vocational-and-other-qualifications-quarterly-january-to-march-2021?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=cd7dcc49-d277-4e5b-97f7-37119690b322&utm_content=daily)

compared with 5,501,285 in the previous year (there has been a steady decline in awards over the past five years).

### **30 Intelligent London<sup>116</sup>**

- 30.1 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.
- 30.2 London Councils is hosting an online demonstration of Intelligent London to raise awareness of how it can be used to provide information about Post-16 education and training quickly and easily, please register to attend.

### **31 Recommendation**

- 31.1 Recipients are asked to note the content of this report and submit any comments by email: [peter.obrien@londoncouncils.gov.uk](mailto:peter.obrien@londoncouncils.gov.uk).

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<sup>116</sup> <http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/>

## **Annex: Sources of Official Guidance**

The general guidance on Covid-19 and the government's response<sup>117</sup>.

Specific guidance on education<sup>118</sup>.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), which supports government at all levels with relevant data and intelligence<sup>119</sup>.

NHS information on coronavirus: <sup>120</sup>.

Q&A from Public Health England on coronavirus: <sup>121</sup>. **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.

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<sup>117</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<sup>118</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-Covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics>

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<sup>121</sup> <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>