



Pearson

Policy Tracker – Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in April 2017



Main talking points

Plenty of reports and headlines but some critical areas including schools funding, the Schools White Paper, the Industrial Strategy and HE market developments now on hold while the election is on

Key headlines from the month

- Primary school places. Parents get to hear if they have their preferred choice for September
- Free Schools. Government approves 130+ as it pursues target of 500 more by 2020
- Free school meals. Labour proposes extending these to all primary school pupils
- School funding. Education Secretary puts more in for school places and repairs
- Pupil absence. Remains at around 4.6% in latest official figures
- Trainee teachers. Government allows for 25% increase in recruits for this year
- Inspection logos. Ofsted confirms these can be used by good and outstanding providers
- GCSE English/maths resits. To remain for the moment at least
- Top GCSE grades. Ofqual confirms these won't be rationed this year
- London colleges. Collab Group forms new pan London strategic group
- Industry panels. Institute for Apprenticeships announces chairs for the 15 route panels
- Apprenticeship levy. The CBI outlines six ways to improve it
- Degree apprenticeships. Government confirms 2nd round of funding
- Industrial Strategy. Consultation closes leaving government to assess post-Brexit vision
- Industrial Challenge Strategy Fund. Government confirms funding for 6 key areas
- Skill shortages. The OU and AoC agree to work together to help build lifelong learning
- Technical and FE Bill. Completes its passage through Parliament
- HE Bill. Final amendments under consideration, hoping to complete
- UCAS. New Chief Exec to take over in July
- Uni entry. Latest (March) UCAS figures show UK applications down 4%, EU applicants down 6%
- EU students. Government confirms continued HE funding for EU students for 2018/19
- Overseas students. Education Committee calls for them to be taken out of migration figures
- Election wish lists. NAHT, ASCL, University Alliance among the early releases

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Reports/Publications of the month (in order of publication)

- **Apprenticeship Accountability Statement.** The DfE spells out who's responsible for what under the new apprenticeship regime
- **Strategic Guidance to the Institute for Apprenticeships.** The DfE confirms the four core functions and wider policy agenda that the new Institute needs to take into account in its first operating year
- **Meeting the public sector apprenticeship target.** The DfE confirms how requisite public sector bodies (those in England with 250+ staff) should report progress against their apprenticeship target
- **Lifelong learning for an Ageing Workforce.** The Skills Commission turns the spotlight on to older workers (which it defines as those aged 50+) and what's needed to help them continue in employment
- **Perceptions of qualifications.** Ofqual publishes the results of its latest annual survey showing strong support for current qualifications but some concerns about awareness of new GCSE grading scale
- **How mayors can transform their cities.** The IPPR think tank outlines a menu of 30 policies mayors should adopt including wages, welfare and employment support to help transform their regions
- **Funding guidance for young people 2017 – 2018.** The Education and Skills Funding Agency issues the latest rules and regs for study programmes, English/maths and much more
- **Industrial Strategy: science and STEM skills.** The Science and Tech Committee welcomes the Strategy and its promise of extra funding but calls for it to align with emerging Brexit developments
- **Analysing family circumstances and education.** The DfE turns its attention to ordinary working families and how best to assess the impact of family circumstances on educational performance
- **Students' Well - Being.** The OECD uses 2015 PISA data to publish it first, full survey of teen well – being across OECD countries, showing concerns about testing, bullying and internet use
- **Driving the quality of apprenticeships in England.** The Institute for Apprenticeships publishes its updated operational plan showing how it'll operate in areas like regulation, funding and quality
- **A tale of 8 regions.** The NFER publishes its second report into the working of Regional School Commissioner areas showing how some need more help and support than others
- **From inadequate to outstanding.** The CIPD publishes its response to the Industrial Strategy in the form of a skills report highlighting long-standing weakness in the UK skills system
- **Wise Up: Prioritising wellbeing in schools.** The Young Minds mental health charity calls on all political parties to prioritise young people's mental health in their manifestos for the upcoming election
- **Graduate labour market stats.** The DfE publishes latest (2016) stats on grad/post graduate employment and wage returns showing increased opportunities and returns though not for all
- **Exiting the EU.** The Education Committee reports on its inquiry into the issues facing UKHE, calling for guaranteed status for EU staff and overseas students to be taken out of migration stats
- **Devo digital.** The think tank IPPR (North) calls for greater local powers and funding to raise high-level digital skill levels to help boost the growing economy in the Northern Powerhouse region
- **Capital funding for schools.** The Public Accounts Committee becomes the latest body to criticize the government's financing of new schools, calling on it to review its criteria and report back
- **Whither Teacher Education and Training?** The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) calls for fee write-offs rather than bursaries and stronger links with universities in a new report on teacher training

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Speeches of the month

- Nick Gibb's 11 April **Centre for Independent Studies speech** runs through the government's current education reforms and the perceived benefits for an audience in Australia
- Justine Greening's **13 April St Mary's speech** sets out what the government is doing to place education at the heart of its social reform plans for creating a country that works for all

Quotes of the month

- "The country is coming together but Westminster is not" – Theresa May explains why she is calling a snap general election
- "She obviously doesn't live round where I live. People just want to get on with their lives" – Labour MP Jess Phillips with an alternative view on the need for a general election
- "If you can bring that light hearted humour to it and encourage people just to speak about it, it will put a smile on people's faces" – Prince Harry encourages schools to talk about mental health issues
- "This is a key part of the jigsaw that will ensure employers get the skills their workforce needs" – the Skills Minister welcomes the first official day of the Institute for Apprenticeships
- "I'm thrilled about the opportunity to serve as UCAS' Chief Executive" – the new Chief Exec of UCAS looks forward to taking over in July
- "All this made us question how much of a grip the Dept really has in providing school places where they are needed" – the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee raises the latest questions
- "The government inherited a national curriculum stripped of knowledge and we were determined to tackle this injustice" – Schools Minister Nick Gibb explains the motivation behind current exam reforms
- "Percentage of those achieving at least a grade 7 who will be awarded a grade 9 = 7% + 0.5% x (percentage of students awarded grade 7 and above.)" Ofqual spells out the formula for awarding a GCSE grade 9
- "Volatility happens, and it happens because students are not machines that can precisely access the same information from memory every single time it is required" – researchers at Cambridge Assessment explain why it's normal for exam results to fluctuate
- "No child in the UK should go hungry at school" – the Labour leader spells out his Party's policy for free school meals for primary children

Word or phrase of the month

- Netiquette. Rules and behaviour for using the net...many parents and professionals want stricter ones

Steve Besley

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