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## Policy Eye



### Highlights of week ending Friday 8 June 2018

*(Welcome to Policy Eye, a weekly service from Policy Watch offering a regular round up of UK education headlines and stories from over the previous 7 days.)*

#### The week summed up.

Quite a lot on higher education this week. It includes the release of the results from the latest Student Academic [Survey](#), the publication of the latest Teaching Excellence Framework ([TEF assessments](#)), an important new [report](#) on how far studying different degrees at different universities can affect labour market returns, a [report](#) from Universities UK on admissions trends, new [moves](#) on helping BAME students, all with a keynote [speech](#) by the Minister that included two new announcements thrown in.

Away from HE, this week has seen the launch of an updated [counter-terrorism strategy](#) by the Home Office with Prevent remaining as one of the four core pillars, another 'yes but' report on apprenticeships, and the first, and potentially pioneering adult learning and skills strategy in this case for London ahead of the gradual devolution of adult skill funding in some regions next year. Elsewhere, there've been a couple more reports on aspects of T Level provision, an interesting [speech on inspections](#) by the Chief Inspector and the first sighting at last of the DfE's promised teacher vacancy website.

It's also been a heavy week of exams for many young people and the comment piece by the director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IfS) on household tensions when young people are faced by other attractions, in this case the looming World Cup and well, Love Island, struck a chord with many. [Here's](#) the link on this.

But HE first and a few of this week's headlines. Arguably three summary points. First, there is clearly a mass of profile data on institutional and student performance now building up. How far it helps in making informed decisions let alone leaving the sector more liberated or restricted when it comes to innovative developments is hard to say at present. The government is preparing to do more work on making the data accessible to consumers but as the Minister underlined in his [HEPI speech](#), HE providers face a difficult balancing act. Second, whatever the headlines accompanying these and other reports say, both the TEF and Student Survey results point to a sector performing well with for example, even value for money scoring higher than previously. Third, as the IfS [report](#) indicates, value for money works better for some groups and courses than others; it may be something the current post-18 review will want to pursue.

A few headlines from some of the other developments this week.

This week's apprenticeship [report](#) came from the Learning and Work Institute in the form of a collection of essays. It perhaps needs to be read alongside the [comment piece](#) on the TES this week on 'why I don't want my child to be an apprentice.' There are still issues about pay, progression and quality. For T Levels, industry placements remain a big concern, both papers listed below deal with that. Finally, it's good to see the DfE's [teacher vacancy website](#) starting to emerge; the government hopes it'll save schools £75m pa



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## Top headlines this week

- 'Universities now admitting twice as many BTEC students as they did a decade ago.' ([Monday](#))
- 'Awarding bodies must be given a say on T Levels.' ([Tuesday](#))
- 'Universities treat students like cash machines.' ([Wednesday](#))
- 'Universities warned over expansion just for bums on seats,' ([Thursday](#))
- 'One year on: The 2017 election's impact on schools.' ([Friday](#))

## People/organisations in the news this week

### General Policy

- [New CONTEST](#). The government outlined its latest counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST,) updated following a review of procedures after last year's incidents, which will see a continuing focus on the 4 Ps of Prevent, Pursue, Protect, Prepare but with strengthened safeguards and further legislation
- [Generation poor](#). The TUC published a new report as part of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, highlighting the challenges faced by many young people at work whose pay has hardly improved over the years and where a generational pay gap has become increasingly evident
- [Social Work regulator](#). The government completed its consultation on a new regulator for Social Work in England confirming among other things that the new body will not now have the power to suspend approval of education and training courses
- [Crossing the bridge](#). The Institute for Government published a report showing that although the UK has some of the top researchers and universities in the world, governments often fail to use such expertise, and should build in stronger links as part of the policy making process accordingly

### HE

- [TEF times](#). The latest Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) assessments were published covering nearly 300 HE providers and showing which had met required metrics in teaching quality, learning environment and outcomes to gain gold, silver or bronze ratings respectively
- [The Student View](#). The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) and Advance HE published the results of their latest annual survey of how UK students view their academic experience, showing a small but noticeable increase in those believing they're getting value for money, most students prepared to work harder, many, though not all, happy with their course and continuing concerns about wellbeing
- [Degree returns](#). The DfE and Institute for Fiscal Studies (IfS) published a major new report looking at latest Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) to determine whether studying different types of degree at different types of university affect graduate earnings, confirming that they do
- [Entry trends](#). Universities UK published its latest report into university entry trends since 2010 showing that despite a demographic decline, increasing numbers of 18 yr olds have continued to apply to uni with increasingly diverse entry qualifications and with higher levels of entry qualification
- [More Oxbridge entry moves](#). Cambridge announced that it was to follow Oxford's Lady Margaret Hall and from 2020 introduce a foundation year to help encourage more bright applicants from disadvantaged areas to apply



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- **Call for evidence.** Universities UK and the NUS launched a call for evidence on barriers facing BAME students and examples of good practice as part of a new campaign to help close the attainment gap and improve the university experience for black and minority ethnic (BAME) students
- **Search service.** UCAS announced that it had launched an updated search service to help postgrads search and save courses of interest
- **Pay deals.** The Committee of University Chairs published its final, slimmer and slightly changed, voluntary but expected to be followed, code on senior staff pay which was welcomed by the Office for Students but not by the University and College Union (UCU)
- **Six of the best.** Chris Husbands, vice-chancellor of Sheffield Hallam University outlined six proposals, including replacing the current loan system with a time limited graduate contribution system, that the review team currently looking at post-18 funding might want to consider

## FE/Skills

- **Where next for apprenticeships?** The Learning and Work Institute published a collection of essays by leading contributors looking at current issues around apprenticeships under the three headings of, quality, access and the future, calling among other things for the introduction of an apprenticeship premium, greater local control and higher quality standards
- **London Skills Strategy.** The Mayor of London began the build up to next year's devolution of adult education funding with the release of an Adult Education and Skills Strategy for London promising among other things to create an all-through careers service, a review of post-16 SEND provision and a high-quality apprenticeship system
- **Take 5 Principals.** The Collab Group published a collection of essays from five leading college principals in London offering their views on the skills challenges and opportunities facing the capital with the emphasis very much on seizing opportunities, resolving funding issues and improving apprenticeships
- **T Level concerns.** The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) and City and Guilds reported on their survey among employers and providers of T Level developments, finding various levels of understanding about what T Levels were, some concerns about industry placements but also some positivity
- **Industry placements.** The first batch of guidance and resources to help T Level providers with industry placements developed by the charity The Challenge and building on the lessons learned from the pilot were published on the AoC website
- **Seamless progression.** The Collab Group of Colleges and the OU signed a new working partnership designed to help strengthen the progression route through from vocational training to higher level provision
- **Limitless opportunities.** The leading apprenticeship company MiddletonMurray launched a new 'Limitless' careers campaign at the House of Commons, aimed at improving skills progression with beefed up careers guidance and support
- **Log off, log on.** The Education and Training Foundation published the results of a small scale survey into how some colleges are managing digi developments concluding that senior leadership support, the appointment of an e-learning manager and up to date training are all important
- **Baker Clause.** FE Week reported that the DfE had called on the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) to conduct a survey into how the Baker clause which allows for FE providers



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to come in and talk to secondary school students about technical and training opportunities, is being applied in practice, amid concerns that it isn't

## Schools

- **Jobs worth.** The Education Secretary announced that the government was at last ready to launch its teacher vacancy website, starting with a pilot in Cambridgeshire and the North East with potential full roll out later this year
- **ITT places.** The DfE published guidance and deadlines for those looking to recruit candidates this autumn for initial teacher training (ITT) with a view to starting the training in 2019
- **Staying secure.** The Ministry for Justice set out its initial thinking and invited applications for the creation of so-called Secure Schools which are intended to offer a novel approach for young people in custody by focusing on the provision of education and health as part of a secure programme
- **The changing face of inspection.** Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman outlined how Ofsted inspections had changed over the years in a keynote speech at the Bryanston Education Summit, and listed some of the principles being used to help develop the proposed new inspection framework for 2019
- **School funding in the round.** The Headteachers' Roundtable group submitted its thoughts on future school budgeting to the Education Committee calling for a focus on teacher recruitment/retention and school places and making a number of proposals for a more stable and improved funding environment
- **The case for PSHE.** The PSHE's Strategic Partners Group, a group of partnership bodies and practitioners, published its completed report on why PSHE should become a statutory school subject, arguing that it would help clarify focus and support government pledges to improve children's health and wellbeing
- **Thanks a million.** As part of Volunteers Week, three leading education bodies, the NGA, NAHT and ASCL, wrote to thank governors and trustees for "their remarkable contribution"

## Tweets(s) of the week

- "I've just read that more people applied for Love Island this year than Oxford and Cambridge! What is happening to us? - [@mrdanwalker](#)
- "I don't mean to be petulant but there are over 400,000 teachers in the UK and in every conference I see it is always the same names. This can't be a healthy environment for ideas to flourish" - [@HeyMissSmith](#)
- "Lifelong learning –beware of alliteration, trips off the tongue but it's a conceit" - [@DonaldClark](#)
- "Why is there such an obsession with quantifying progress? Who's asking or it? How is the data actually used in schools to make a difference?" - [@BenyohaiPhysics](#)
- "Inspections should balance, not intensify, pressure of performance tables says@ amanda\_spielman #bryanston" - [@tes](#)



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## Other stories of the week

- Beating the stress. It is of course the height of the exam season and a stressful time for many. Education providers have been tackling it in different ways with examples of schools and colleges offering special healthy breakfasts, yoga sessions, cuddly and in some cases real animals, all to help relieve the stress. This week Wonkhe included an interesting comment piece on how some US universities were tackling exam stress with the provision of a Cry Closet, 10 minutes at a time, one of the stand-outs. A link to the piece is [here](#)
- How to be cool in 2018. For those of us trying to keep up with trends, the list of the top 20 cool, as in hip, things for 2018, listed in a new survey by the frozen yogurt maker Yoomoo, is a challenging read. Avocados are still in, as are beards and the '80s but lifestyle features heavily with fitness sessions, diet and cutting back on alcohol all prominent. For those wanting to keep up to the mark, here's the [list](#)

## Quote(s) of the week

- "I recognize the criticisms but I absolutely support it" – the Home Secretary ensures Prevent remains one of the four pillars of the counter-terrorism strategy
- "I think you get further working with people rather than simply finding a fight for the sake of it" – former Education Secretary Justine Greening reflects in an interview for the TES on her time at the DfE
- "We will now be taking forward the conclusions of that report" – Office for Students (OfS) Chief Exec Nicola Dandridge blogs about the work the OfS is doing to respond to the student unions' report on value for money
- "A common myth is that it is Ofsted that holds schools to account. We don't" – Ofsted's Chief Inspector makes clear where Ofsted fits in
- "Better procurement or reducing colour photocopying simply won't address the funding crisis" – the headteachers' roundtable group spells out school funding issues for MPs
- "For the most affected group, boys from poorer backgrounds, taking GCSEs in World Cup year could reduce grades by as much as a third of a grade per subject. That's big" – IfS director Paul Johnson highlights a disturbing side effect of the World Cup interest for some
- "In schools they have (practically) stopped teaching history and the history they do teach tends to be very sceptical of Britain's past" – Kent university professor Frank Furedi offers one reason why young people don't feel very proud to be English

## Number(s) of the week

- £95 a week. How much the average older (aged 31-64) worker is better off, compared to the average younger (aged 21-30) worker today compared to 20 years ago, according to a report from the TUC
- 73. How many higher education providers now have a gold rating following the latest Teaching Excellence Framework assessments
- 65%. The number of students happy with their choice of university course, particularly when they have longer course hours, according to latest research from HEPI and Advance HE
- 20%. How much more graduates from so-called top 'earnings' degree subjects can earn compared to those on lesser earning degree subjects, according to the latest research led by the IfS



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- 340. How many UCAS tariff points (broadly BBB grades at A' level) the average student had on entry to university last year compared to 313 in 2011, according to evidence from Universities UK
- 178. How many apprentices the DfE recruited last year according to a report by FE Week
- 80%. How many people cannot understand UK insurance policies according to a study by Nottingham University and the law firm Browne Jacobson

## What to look out for next week

- Damian Hinds and Angela Rayner address the National Governance Association (NGA) Conference (Saturday)
- Major debate on the EU Withdrawal Bill in the Commons (Tuesday)
- Festival of Higher Education (Wednesday, Thursday)