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Policy Tracker – Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in March 2018



Main talking points

A month which has included an update on the economy from the Chancellor, lots of talk about teacher workloads, a busy National Apprenticeships Week and plenty of reports around higher education.

Key headlines from the month

- Breakfast clubs. Government uses soft drinks levy funding to extend the reach
- Academy trusts. Government shifts trusts on to 3-year budget planning cycle
- Alternative provision. Government launches new review and new fund
- School finances. EPI report highlights extent of the problem
- Troops to Teachers. Government announces new bursary scheme for this September
- Teacher retention. Government announces range of measures
- Teachers as examiners. Ofqual consults on stronger regulatory arrangements
- Returning teachers. Government announces new pilot scheme
- Accountability. NAHT launches major new review
- 16-19. Government confirms internal funding review
- T levels. Government outlines some next steps for providers
- Apprenticeships. Chancellor confirms funding to help small businesses
- Subcontracting. FE bodies issue good practice guidelines
- JISC. Moving to a subscription service for FE providers in England from August 2019
- College funding. The AoC spells it out ahead of the Spring Statement
- Millennial rail cards. Small-scale launch begins
- Youth employment. PM launches new programme of action
- National Retraining Scheme. Government and others start to consider the format
- Devolved adult education budgets. Government spells out how much it's putting on the table
- Online undergrad degree. University of London teams up with Coursera to offer first one
- Subject level TEF. Government launches consultation
- Uni places. HEPI scopes out future trends in demand over the next decade
- Post-18 Funding Review. Review Group launches call for evidence

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

- **Access to special schools in England.** The Education Policy Institute finds those who need to attend special schools often have to travel much further than those who attend mainstream schools
- **Primary school accountability.** The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) puts forward a number of recommendations including using a wider range of measures over a longer period
- **The monitoring, inspection and funding of Learndirect Ltd.** The Public Accounts Committee publishes the results of its inquiry into Learndirect raising a number of concerns about 'big' companies
- **Apprenticeships: a parents' guide.** The Association for Project Management spells it out for parents complete with case studies and summary basics
- **UK participation in Horizon 2020.** The government confirms that it will continue to support UK participation in this leading EU science and innovation programme for the duration of projects
- **T levels: next steps.** The government outlines what lies ahead for providers including some further announcements in May and the launch of a number of readiness surveys over coming months
- **Alternative higher education providers.** The Public Accounts Committee highlights continuing concerns over student retention and financial controls in a new report on alternative providers
- **Subcontracting guidance.** Three leading FE sector organisations issue best practice guidance on contract management, fee levels and quality monitoring for training and skills providers
- **Future Focus.** UCAS sets out a strategy to 2020 designed to be more aligned to user needs and responsive to current changes in the higher education sector
- **Global Parents' Survey.** The Varkey Foundation reports on its extensive survey of parental attitudes towards education across 29 countries finding those in the UK generally happy with most aspects
- **Delivering on the promise of the 2014 National Curriculum.** John Blake, education lead at the Policy Exchange think tank calls for more quality learning resources to take the pressure off teachers
- **Teaching Excellence Framework.** The government launches consultation on the metrics to be used to rate teaching quality and outcomes at a subject level
- **Factors affecting teacher retention.** The DfE publishes commissioned research showing that workload remains the main cause of teachers wishing to leave the profession
- **College finances.** The Association of Colleges (AoC) submit their thoughts ahead of the Chancellor's Spring Statement pointing to financial health deteriorating in some colleges
- **Value for money.** The Office for Students reports on a commissioned survey on how higher ed students perceive value for money finding the quality of teaching and resources featuring highly
- **Shaping the National Retraining Scheme.** The Campaign for Learning and NCFE investigate what form the National Retraining Scheme should take in a new report
- **Economic and fiscal outlook.** The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) issues its latest outlook report on the economy pointing to a slight increase in short-term growth but little change beyond that
- **Integrated Communities.** The government issues a consultative Green Paper to help build more integrated communities proposing a range of measures including housing, schools and ESOL

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- **The early years workforce.** The Education Policy Institute highlights low status, low pay and a downward trend in qualification levels in its survey of the early years workforce
- **Forgotten learners.** The Million Plus group of modern universities calls for maintenance grants to be restored among other measures to help reverse a decline in mature and part-time learners
- **Teachers as examiners.** Ofqual consults on new measures to help prevent problems when teachers also act as developers of exam and assessment materials
- **Leading together.** Teach First launches a new initiative with the DfE and 'lead' schools to help provide training and support for teachers hoping to become school leaders
- **The Lost Part-Timers.** The Sutton Trust charts the decline of part-time students and calls among other things for the issue to be tackled as part of the new post-18 funding review
- **Demand for HE to 2030.** The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) assesses the impact of increased participation and demography suggesting 300,000 more places will be needed in English HE by 2030
- **The Future Landscape for Technical and Professional Education (TPE.)** The Collab Group and consultancy PublicCo scope out the potential future landscape and implications for TPE
- **School funding pressures in England.** The Education Policy Institute highlights the number of state schools in deficit suggesting many will struggle to meet the costs of any new pay award
- **Creating Opportunity For All.** The government sets out its vision for Alternative Provision in schools as it launches a major review of the extent of the issue and how best to tackle it
- **Exclusions Review: Call for Evidence.** The government launches a call for evidence from both practitioners and pupils to help inform the recently announced Timpson Review
- **Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background.** The OECD reports on their performance and wellbeing, finding them doing well in UK education but not always happy with life
- **Bercow: Ten Years On.** The Group looking into young people's speech, language and communication needs, chaired by John Bercow, reviews progress 10 years on from its major report
- **How do teachers compare to nurses and police officers?** The NFER reports that teachers work as long hours and their average pay has fallen but generally are satisfied with their lot
- **SATs procedures for summer 2018.** The Standards and Testing Agency publishes its latest set of admin guidance and arrangements for this year's SATs tests
- **Call for evidence.** The review group, supporting the government's major review of Post – 18 funding, launches a call for evidence by 2 May 2018 under the four core themes of its remit
- **Adult education budget.** The Education and Skills Funding Agency publishes Version1 of the broadly unchanged funding rates and formula for August 2018 – July 2019
- **The Future of the Social Mobility Commission.** The Education Committee calls on the government to appoint a Cabinet Minister to lead on the issue with a new Commission to focus on social justice

Speeches of the month

- Damian Hinds **10 March ASCL speech** focuses primarily on the issue of teacher workload and how this is being tackled but also confirms there'll be no new curriculum changes during this Parliament

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- Amanda Spielman's **10 March ASCL speech** also tackles the issue of teacher workload and sets out what Ofsted is doing from its side
- The Chancellor's **13 March Spring Statement speech** spells out the latest position on the economy and announces a few developments including a new Spending Review being lined up for 2019
- Anne Milton's **14 March AoC College Governors Summit speech** praises the work of governors and announces that new guidance is on the way

Quotes of the month

- “Conservatives created the GCSE, the National Curriculum and Free Schools” – the Prime Minister tells the Party's Spring Forum what the Conservatives have done for education
- “Our tech sector is attracting skills and capital from the four corners of the earth, producing world-class products including apps like TransferWise, CityMapper and Matt Hancock” – the Chancellor joins in the fun about the Digi Minister in his Spring Statement
- “It's so compelling that other universities will have to follow” – the CEO of the online course platform Coursera on its new link-up with the University of London
- “In the age of the student, universities will no longer be able to hide if their teaching quality is not up to the world-class standard we expect” – the HE Minister launches consultation on new subject level performance measures
- “It is one of the great unsolved issues in our schools” – the Education Secretary singles out teacher workload as the big it
- “We are trying to make sure that the process of inspections is as painless as possible” – the Chief Inspector offers her support on trying to reduce teacher workload
- “By 2019/20, about half of schools will be in the impossible position of having to choose between a 1% pay rise for their teachers or being pushed further into deficit” – the Lib Dems respond to a think tank report on school funding
- “Children spend longer in primary school than most governments spend in office” – the ASCL President calls for less chopping and changing around education policy making
- “I have confidence that we can come up with an alternative vision for accountability that everyone can all have faith in” – the National Association of Head Teachers launches a commission on accountability
- “Relationships and sex are good gifts of God and should bring joy” – the Church of England responds to the government consultation on Relationships and Sex Education

Word or phrase of the month

- ‘Forecasts are there to be beaten.’ The Chancellor in his Spring Statement but perhaps apt for other areas of public policy as well

Steve Besley

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