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## Policy Eye



### Highlights of week ending Friday 12 April 2019

(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.

Some signs of a slowdown for Easter but still plenty to get the teeth into this week.

First up and with only limited bite according to some, has been a new [White Paper](#) from the government on internet safety. There have been concerns for a while about the effects that some online platforms have been having on young people and in what it claims is ‘the first attempt globally to address a comprehensive spectrum of online harms in a single and coherent way,’ the government has gone for a duty of care approach with senior company managers responsible for ‘keeping UK users particularly children, safer online.’ The Paper comes with an updated Digital Charter and a series of questions for consultation. With the EU and other countries moving in a similar direction, it’s an important piece of work.

Elsewhere this week, there’s been a fair amount on health and wellbeing with the latest [annual survey](#) on workplace stress (sick days down, stress-related absence up) from the CIPD and Simplyhealth, a new [report](#) from the Children’s Commissioner in England on inequalities in mental health support for young people and the [announcement](#) of a set of projects from the Health Foundation. The latter is particularly interesting. Among the seven projects commissioned is one from the Education Policy Institute on non-academic routes for young people and one from the Mental Health Coalition and Centre for Mental Health on results-driven pressures in schools. A major report will follow this autumn.

In other news items this week, the government [set out procedures](#) for EU teachers to have their qualifications recognised so that they can work in the UK post Brexit and issued new [guidance](#) on claiming Erasmus+ and ESC funding under the government’s guarantee, in the event of a no-deal.

In FE, the first Institutes of Technology edged a step nearer with the [announcement](#) of the first 12 who’ll now move into the licensing stage. Whether any will be ready to open their doors by this September as envisaged remains to be seen. At the same time the new Commission on the [College of the Future](#) got down to business trying to make sense of the future operating context for colleges. It’ll be interesting to see how the two concepts shape up and whether there’s any connection in terms of future model.

For schools, the DfE [rolled out](#) its free teacher vacancy service, the Chair of the Education Committee set out [further thoughts](#) on knife crime, the National Literacy Trust [announced](#) a survey on how far young people are using digital technology in reading and the Education Policy Institute [reported](#) on school appeals.

Finally, away from the B word stuff, the EU Commission has been hosting a high-level [conference](#) on the future of work and the impact of the digital revolution. The future never waits.



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## Top headlines this week

- 'Four in ten UK adults regret not taking maths more seriously at school.' ([Monday](#))
- 'Ministers consider increasing the apprenticeship levy.' ([Tuesday](#))
- 'Ofsted chief accepted for settled status.' ([Wednesday](#))
- 'GCSE and A' level appeals up 42%.' ([Thursday](#))
- 'Unregistered schools given council funding.' ([Friday](#))

## People/organisations in the news this week

### General Policy

- [Do no Harm](#). The government published a White Paper consultation proposing a new duty of care on internet sites in which senior managers could be held responsible if 'online harms' arise and where an independent regulator, paid for by the online industry, would be responsible for overseeing things
- [Pension funds](#). The government reported on its recent consultation on pension increases confirming that it would cover the increased employer contribution costs for state-funded schools and FE institutions but not for independent schools and universities
- [Workplace stress](#). The HR organisation, CIPD in conjunction with Simplyhealth published its latest annual report into health and wellbeing at work noting that recorded sick days were at their lowest for nearly 20 years but that stress at work was growing
- [Different service levels](#). The Children's Commissioner for England published a new report looking at how much is spent by different regions on so-called low-level or preventative mental health support for young people and finding considerable variation in different parts of the country
- [Robots and EU labour markets](#). The EU Commission's expert group which has been looking into the effects of digital transformation on EU labour markets published the results of its deliberations highlighting three challenges including inclusion, the quality of work and skill needs and proposing among other things the adoption of digital skill personal learning accounts

### HE

- [Erasmus update](#). The government issued latest guidance for those looking to claim Erasmus+ and ESC funding under the government's guarantee which currently covers successful bids submitted before the end of 2020
- [Using LEO](#). Former Universities Minister David Willetts explained in an article in the Times Higher why he'd called for the creation of LEO (longitudinal education outcomes) but warned against using such data to determine which courses should be funded in future as had been rumoured by the Augar review
- [Implementing fee reductions](#). Nick Hillman, director of the HE Policy Institute (HEPI) examined in a new blog, the issues around implementing any cut to tuition fees, currently reportedly under consideration, suggesting that a phased approach starting with final year students might be worth considering
- [Sub-degree matters](#). Greg Walker, Chief Exec of the MillionPlus group examined some of the issues around sub-degree provision arguing that it's an important form of provision and that the government



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should consider deploying some of the apprenticeship levy funding to supporting other L4/5 provision such as HNs

- [Changes at the NUS](#). The National Union of Students agreed at its Annual Conference a number of organizational changes as part of a series of reforms and announced a new President-elect

## FE/Skills

- [12 IoTs](#). The government announced the names of the 12 Institutes of Technology that will now work with the DfE to finalise their licence and funding agreements in the hope that some might be up and running by this September
- [Developing the college of the future](#). David Hughes, chief exec of the Association of Colleges, outlined some initial thoughts and principles as the new Commission on the College of the Future got down to work with its first meeting
- [FS GLH](#). Ofqual launched a brief consultation on proposed changes to the conditions for reformed Functional Skills in light of the government's pronouncement that the guided learning hours (glh) for reformed functional skills should be 55
- [Levy funding](#). The FT reported on the latest thoughts from the Skills Minister about the apprenticeship levy where among other things she reflected on ways to grow the budget

## Schools

- [Recognition of professional qualifications](#). The government published new guidance on the recognition of professional qualifications that would enable teachers and others coming from Europe to have their qualifications recognised for working in the UK post Brexit
- [Looking for a job?](#) The Education Secretary formally launched the DfE's new free 'Teaching Vacancies' website, now live after last year's trial
- [Unregistered schools](#). Ofsted published information showing for the first time the extent of unregistered schools, generally offering alternative provision in some form but without being subject to the standard norms of inspection and oversight
- [Ofqual plans](#). Ofqual published its 2019 – 22 Corporate Plan listing work on moderation, student anxiety, the National Reference Test, technical and functional skill provision and the increased use of technology, among the actions it was planning to undertake in the coming year
- [Exam appeals](#). Ofqual published data on exam appeals for GCE and GCSE last summer showing that while more appeals were submitted, fewer grades were challenged and only a tiny percentage changed
- [Dealing with knife crime](#). The Chair of the Education Committee followed up a recent evidence session on knife crime and exclusions by calling on the Education Secretary to support schools who intervene early and to clarify arrangements with the Home Office on police involvement
- [School admissions](#). The Education Policy Institute published new research showing that the likelihood of getting into a first choice school through the appeals and waiting system tends to favour families from more affluent areas with potentially long-term implications for social mobility
- [Meeting the new PSHE requirements](#). The PSHE Association outlined what schools need to do (and how the Association can help them) in meeting the new Health and Relationships Education in primary and Sex Education in secondary which become compulsory from 2020



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- [Young people's wellbeing](#). The Health Foundation announced the names of the seven expert organisations that will further help develop its research into young people's wellbeing, on everything from exam pressures to financial pressures, with a view to publishing a major report this autumn
- [March of the 4 year olds](#). The campaign group 'More than a Score' announced that it intended to march on Downing Street on 25 April to hand in a petition calling for the reception baseline assessment which will be piloted from this September before being rolled out in September 2020, to be abandoned

## Tweets(s) of the week

- "Poorest families 'half as likely' to get top choice of school through appeals system" - [@Independent](#)
- "I (Damian Hinds) am not downplaying the importance of GCSEs & A-levels...we know that employers value them highly." In the Government's own Employer Perspectives Survey, only 46% said that academic quals were significant or critical when hiring, compared to 65% for relevant work experience" - [@ukEdge](#)
- "Once interviewed a candidate who sat for hours with their head seemingly cocked to the side (cheek leaned on her shoulder). In the feedback to offer the job, we asked tentatively if there was a disability of which we should know; she said no, my earring was stuck to my cardigan" - [@Andy\\_Buck](#)
- "It's Easter... you're bored and wondering... What IS this @TeacherTapp phenomenon that everyone is talking about? Download it and find out!" - [@miss\\_mcinerney](#)
- "Unassertive emails are full of exclamation marks, questions and qualifiers - and research suggests women send them more than men" - [@Telegraph](#)

## Other stories of the week

- 'Code-switching.' It's been around for some time but has become more visible in an era of social media. Politicians are accused of using it a lot often with unintended results but they're not the only ones. Basically it means adapting your use of language to fit in with an audience, whether it's talking down or up, adopting a local accent just trying to get down with the kids. To some it's a sign of shallowness, to others it's simply a reflection of the fluidity of language. Either way, [this article](#) in the FT by Sam Leith, author of 'You Talkin' To Me?' explains it all

## Quote(s) of the week

- "Online companies must start taking responsibility for their platforms and help restore public trust in this technology" – the PM helps launch consultation on internet safety
- "Why spend £1,000 on a service you can get for free?" – the Education Secretary formally launches the new (free) teacher recruitment service
- "I was a part-time geek, I was never a full-on geek" - the Education Secretary admits to being into computer games when younger
- "In 2019-20, funding available for investment in apprenticeships in England will be over £2.5 billion, this is double what was spent in 2010-11" – the Skills Minister answers a question in Parliament about apprenticeship funding



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- “We would welcome an update on when it will be published – or better still, the report itself” – the Chair of the Education Committee calls on the Education Secretary to shed some light on the long - awaited Timpson Review
- “Ultimately this will have to be paid for by diverting funds from other priorities” – universities express disappointment that the government will not help them with increased pension costs
- “Kim Kardashian has embarked on an apprenticeship – we should applaud her” – the TES with an unexpected headline
- “I want to reassure you and the members you represent that consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content” – the Education Secretary attempts to allay schools’ concerns about consulting parents over sex and relationship education in a letter to the General Secretary of the National Association of Head teachers

## Number(s) of the week

- 5.9 days. The average level of employee absence last year, according to a new report from the CIPD
- 158. The number of Awarding Organisations Ofqual regulates, according to Ofqual’s latest Corporate Plan
- 75. The number of bogus universities shut down in the last four years, according to a report in The Guardian
- 313,000. The number of people who have been helped by levy funds to start an apprenticeship since the levy started, according to the Skills Minister
- 0.003%. How many qualification grades awarded for GCE and GCSE last summer were changed following an appeal
- 6,000. How many children in England are suspected of being educated in unregistered schools, according to new data from Ofsted
- £14. How much was spent per child in England in 2018/19 on low-level mental health support, according to a new report by the Children’s Commissioner for England

## What to look out for next week

- National Education Union Annual Conference (Monday – Thursday)