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Policy Tracker – Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in November 2019



Main talking points

A month increasingly dominated by election manoeuvres as all the major parties release their manifestos and head out on the campaign and media trail. Education and skills has featured prominently in the campaign so far with early years' provision, school funding, support for teachers, skills training and lifelong learning all the subject of big headline pledges. Away from the election, employers, colleges, independent and girls schools have all held important conferences while important reports have been published on mental health, the College of the Future, adult learning and levels of adult numeracy

Key headlines from the month

- SATs. Labour and Lib-Dems vow to replace
- Ofsted. Labour and Lib-Dems promise alternative inspection system
- Character education. DfE issues guidance
- MFL. DfE announces review into content at GCSE
- iGCSEs. DfE releases comparability report on alignment with GCSE
- Teacher wellbeing. New report finds teachers increasingly under stress
- 16-19 funding. DfE directs part of the 'new' money to high cost, high value courses
- Voc students. Education Policy Institute reports on 'life outcomes' for voc students
- Subcontracting. Ofsted launches new research into how subcontracting works
- College of the Future. Commission issues half-time progress report
- Climate apprenticeships. Labour promises a major new programme
- Apprenticeship levy. Labour and Lib-Dems promise wider skills levy
- Adult learning. Centenary Commission publishes final report
- Lifelong learning. Lib-Dems propose system of adult skills wallets
- FE. Conservatives promise £3bn National Skills Fund
- HE funding. Labour and Lib-Dems promise to restore maintenance grants
- Uni entry 2019. UCAS releases the first of its 2019 End of Cycle summary reports
- HE. UCU announces eight days of strike action over pensions, pay and working conditions
- Student funding support. Reaches £17.1bn for students in England in 2018/19
- Climate change. College and University set up new Commission to help develop strategic response

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

- **National Governance Association manifesto.** The school governors association outlines 12 priorities including better funding and support in its manifesto for the general election
- **Election 2019. A manifesto for sixth form education.** The Sixth Form Colleges Association lists four proposals in a manifesto for political parties to consider ahead of the general election
- **Mental health: Are all students being properly supported?** The Office for Students highlights issues faced by students with declared mental health conditions who often fail to finish courses
- **Comparing iGCSEs and GCSEs in England 2018.** The DfE reports on its latest study noting a mixed picture in terms of outcomes and progression at KS4 and on to KS5
- **Defending democracy in an age of autocracies.** The Foreign Affairs Committee reports on the dangers of autocratic states attempting to infiltrate UK universities and calls for a response strategy
- **Digital experience survey.** JISC reports on the digital experience of staff in universities and colleges finding access improving but concerns about a lack of training and recognition for innovation
- **Character education.** The DfE publishes non-statutory guidance for schools on the provision of character education listing six benchmarks for establishing quality provision
- **Schools and college security.** The DfE issues guidance for schools and colleges on planning for and managing security related incidents, calling for a clear overall policy
- **MFL standards.** Ofqual reports on its research into comparability across GCSE modern foreign languages confirming that grading will be aligned for 2020
- **Security sensitive research material.** Universities UK updates its guidance to institutions on security sensitive research material pointing to the need for clear procedures, use of servers, and training
- **The scale of UK TNE 2017/18.** Universities UK publishes its third report on UK HE transnational education showing an increase in the number of providers but fall in the numbers of students
- **Securing a successful and healthy life after education.** The Education Policy Institute in a report commissioned by the Health Foundation, examines the life outcomes for those taking voc quals
- **Election 2019: A manifesto from the ASCL.** The Association of School and College Leaders lists 10 priorities including not talking down education in a manifesto for the general election
- **Social Mobility Manifesto.** The Sutton Trust publishes a social mobility manifesto with proposals to open out independent schools, introduce PQA and ban unpaid internships
- **Guide to employing international students.** Universities UK and Fragomen LLP publish guidance for employers on what they need to do to employ international graduates
- **A manifesto for colleges.** The Association of Colleges (AoC) publishes its manifesto ahead of the election calling for colleges to be at the heart of a new regulated regime
- **Review of the value of Voc Quals 2019.** NFER publishes a commissioned report looking into the value of VQs finding these broadly beneficial particularly for those on higher levels
- **Education and Employment Support for Young People.** The Learning and Work publishes the latest report from the Youth Commission indicating a system that lacks integration and coherence
- **Academic freedom in the UK.** The Policy Exchange think tank reports on concerns that campus free speech is being stifled and calls for a new set of principles and institutional champions to be set up

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- **Annual bullying survey 2019.** The anti-bullying charity Ditch the Label publishes its latest annual report on bullying indicating that 20% of young people had been a victim of bullying over the last year
- **Challenging school exclusions.** The law reform group Justice reviews the system of school exclusions recommending an independent reviewer system and subsequent appeals system
- **Teacher wellbeing index 2019.** The charity Education Support along with YouGov publishes the results of its latest annual survey into teacher wellbeing finding a rise in health and mental concerns
- **Skills shortages in the UK.** The Edge Foundation publishes the latest in its series on skills shortages looking particularly at the construction industry but also at messages from previous bulletins
- **A manifesto for apprenticeships.** The Collab Group of colleges issues a manifesto for apprenticeships with four asks including reviewing the way higher level apprenticeships are funded
- **The future is ours to learn.** Labour's Lifelong learning Commission publishes its final report calling among other things for six years of entitlement for L4 and above and fully funded study at L3
- **Commission on the College of the Future.** The Commission issues a half-way progress report, outlining the key themes that have emerged and the others that need tackling
- **Living away from home.** The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) and University Partnerships Programme (UPP) report on the UKHE model of residential campuses, the costs, benefits, purpose and future
- **Programme for prosperity.** The CBI launches its business vision for a future government built around four measures including reform and investment in skills training
- **Headteachers' Roundtable.** The Headteachers' roundtable group publishes its election manifesto highlighting five themes including long-term investment and reform of accountability
- **Adult education and lifelong learning for 21st c Britain.** The Centenary Commission publishes the results of its year-long report into adult learning calling for a dedicated minister and clear strategy
- **Finding the humanity in higher education leadership.** Wonkhe and Minerva reflect on the changing, and increasingly demanding, role of the university V.C.
- **Green Party manifesto.** The Green Party launches its election manifesto calling for a Green New Deal along with a number of measures for education including scrapping national tests and Ofsted
- **Young Person's Money Index.** The London Institute of Banking and Finance publishes its latest survey of young people and financial literacy suggesting most still turn to parents or online
- **Chartered College of Teaching manifesto.** The Chartered College of Teaching publishes its election manifesto with four themes including improved quality of teacher CPD and job satisfaction
- **Reaching Out.** The Children's Society publishes a new report showing that young people tend to turn to their family rather than professionals for help when they have anxieties and concerns
- **Lib-Dem election manifesto.** The Lib-Dems release their election manifesto with a large chunk directed at education and skills including increased investment, more teachers, and system reform
- **Labour Party election manifesto.** The Labour Party publishes its election manifesto promising new hope and investment and with the National Education Service featuring prominently
- **Funding real change.** The Labour Party sets out how it intends to pay for its manifesto proposals pointing to increases in higher rate income tax, corporation tax and other tax measures

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- **Student Support for HE in England.** The Student Loans Company publishes the latest set of data on how much had been paid out across all study modes in 2018/19 showing a 3.1% rise
- **A manifesto for the 21st c university.** The University of Lincoln's 21st c Lab reports on its work assessing the university of the future proposing a permeable model as a way forward
- **Conservative Party manifesto.** The Conservative party releases its 2019 election manifesto with six personal guarantees from Boris Johnson as well as pledges on tax/VAT, public services and Brexit
- **Costings document.** The Conservative Party sets out its manifesto spending commitments including its recent spending round announcements
- **Building a numerate nation.** The charity National Numeracy and global firm TP ICAP report on adult numeracy finding no great progress made since the landmark Moser report 20 years ago
- **Annual Review 2018/19.** The HE Policy Institute works up towards its 18th birthday next year with a brief look at its work and reach over the last year
- **Race and Faith manifesto.** The Labour Party releases a special manifesto update focusing on issues of race and faith including proposals to review the approach to history in the curriculum
- **Education and Skills briefing.** LSE's Centre for Economic Performance highlights the issue of the forgotten 30% in education and suggests that once again election manifestos have little to offer them

Speeches of the month

- Jeremy Corbyn's **12 November National Education Service speech** highlights what's in the Party's proposed new model of education
- Angela Rayner's **12 November lifelong learning speech** spells out the Party's plans on lifelong learning and how important such learning had been to her
- Boris Johnson's **18 November CBI speech** highlights education, infrastructure and technology as the core elements for future growth
- Jeremy Corbyn's **18 November CBI speech** includes calls for an end to snobbery over skills training and to cuts in FE and announces a new scheme of climate apprenticeships
- Jo Swinson's **20 November Camden speech** launches her party's election manifesto highlighting five key pledges including supporting education and tackling climate change
- Jeremy Corbyn's **21 November Birmingham City university speech** launches his party's election manifesto, offering what he calls 'a manifesto of hope'
- Boris Johnson's **24 November Telford speech** launches his party's election manifesto promising to make the country the greatest place in which to live

Quotes of the month

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- “Statistics can be a powerful support for an argument but misuse damages their integrity, causes confusion and undermines trust” – the UK Statistical Authority calls on Party leaders to use statistics appropriately as election campaigning gets under way
- “For the last three and a half years, this country has felt trapped, like a lion in a cage” – Boris Johnson launches the Conservative Party manifesto
- “The National Education Service will allow you to pursue your dreams” – Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn extols the virtues of his Party’s plans for education
- “We will increase teacher numbers by 20,000 and let them get on with their jobs instead of worrying about budgeting for the basics” – the Lib-Dems promise more teachers in their election manifesto
- “There is a risk that reputation, ambition or narcissism are better predictors of being appointed to a leadership role than clear evidence of the capability to lead a complex organization and safeguard the wellbeing of the university community” – Wonkhe and Minerva report on university leadership
- “Good teaching requires the highest levels of physical, social and emotional energy. That is why the mental health and wellbeing of this workforce is so critical” – the charity Education Support introduces its latest Teacher Wellbeing Index
- “We need to question whether our ability to “search’ quickly for answers online means we are in danger of losing our ability to read and digest material slowly and in linear fashion” – the president of the Girls Schools Association on the dangers of relying on google learning

Word or phrase of the month

- ‘Adaptive leadership:’ ‘the ability to take a higher-level view on the balcony of what is going on, as well as getting immersed in the work itself on the dance floor,’ according to this rather neat definition from FE college leadership trainers

Steve Besley

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