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



Main talking points

A month dominated by unravelling political events leading to an impending general election. In education, funding has continued to be a talking point with the government issuing its response to the Education Committee Inquiry on school and college funding and the Office for Students launching a Value for Money strategy. Elsewhere, provisional exam results for this summer were released, a new T level Action Plan published and Free Schools, UTCs, Home Education, special needs and apprenticeships all the subject of major new reports

Key headlines from the month

- Primary schools. The Inspiring the Future project expands its speakers into schools campaign
- Relationships Education. DfE issues guidance for primary schools on consulting with parents
- Children's wellbeing. Government publishes first major annual report
- Special educational needs. Education Committee publishes critical report
- School buildings. Government invites latest bids under the Condition Improvement Fund
- School exclusions. Economic and Social Research Council launches major 4-year study
- Home schooling. Ofsted highlights the issues in a new research report
- Free Schools. Education Policy Institute publishes new report
- UTCs. National Audit Office issues 'challenging' new report
- Trainee teachers. DfE announces early career deals for 2020/21
- 2019 summer exam results. DfE releases provisional data
- Technical Awards at KS4. Ofqual consults on strengthening regulations
- T levels. DfE publishes latest Action Plan
- T level Transition Programme. DfE sets out expected approach for 2020/21
- Creative industries. CBI highlights their importance in a new report
- Funding. Government responds to Education Committee report on school and college funding
- Students. NUS launches 10-point Action Plan
- HE providers. Office for Students publishes report on first year of registration
- Value for Money. Office for Students publishes new Strategy
- Racial harassment. Equality and Human Rights Commission calls for changes in HE culture

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

- **Upper Sixths and Higher Education 2019 survey.** The independent school bodies HMC and GSA report on how their students view going to university pointing to a mix of excitement and anxiety
- **Subcontracting arrangements.** The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) calls on post-16 providers to confirm they are working to agreed rules, ahead of a review of further changes
- **High Needs Funding.** The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) updates its guidance for high needs funding for 2020/21
- **Crunched by numbers? How effective data can reduce teacher workload.** GL Assessment reports on how much time teachers spend marking, assessing and managing data
- **The future shape of the education system in England.** The Confederation of School Trusts sets out a long-term plan to bring schools within a uniform Trust system under a single regulator
- **Unrealised Potential.** The Association of Employment and Learning Providers along with the British Council highlight the role and work of independent training providers both in the UK and abroad
- **T level Action Plan.** The government publishes the latest version of its T level action plan with updated detail on the delivery schedule, funding, grading and results procedures and more
- **T level Transition Programme.** The government sets out how Transition Programmes should operate from 2020/21 for students not yet ready to access a full T level programme
- **Green Budget 2019.** The Institute for Fiscal Studies with Citi and the Nuffield Foundation assess the economy and options facing the Chancellor ahead of any likely Budget
- **Taking Regulatory Action.** Ofqual launches a new consultation on updating its regulatory action policy with proposals to clarify action taken and introduce such measures as rebukes and penalties
- **Future Proofing Apprenticeship Funding for the 2020s.** The Campaign for Learning and NCFE publish a collection of essays from leading experts on how best to strengthen apprenticeship funding
- **Changing the Culture.** Universities UK reports on progress in its 'Changing the Culture' programme noting improvements in tackling sexual harassment but less so in tackling hate crime
- **College Readiness Pack.** The Association of Colleges (AoC) publishes a helpful pack of guidance for college leaders in the event of a no-deal Brexit covering everything from finances to food supplies
- **Parental Engagement on Relationships Education.** The DfE issues guidance for primary schools on consulting with parents about Relationships Education
- **At what cost?** The HE Policy Institute and YouthSight publish the latest set of views from students on Augar, funding and the cost of living with concerns about the latter emerging as a key issue
- **Clarifying some changes to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG.)** The DfE consults on some changes to the DSG regulations intended to clarify its position as a ring-fenced specific grant
- **Children's Wellbeing.** The government issues the first of its annual reports into children and young people's wellbeing showing most happy with their lives but young females as the most anxious
- **Teacher Workload Survey 2019.** The DfE reports on its latest commissioned survey into teacher workloads suggesting some improvement but it still remaining an issue for many
- **Exploring the impact of guest speakers in schools.** The Education and Employers charity along with Speakers for Schools report on the positive impact of the guest speaker programme for schools

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- **The curriculum programme pilot.** The DfE publishes some commissioned early research on its curriculum programme pilot noting some positive vibes about reducing teacher workloads
- **Unexplained pupil exits.** The Education Policy Institute examines the growing number of unexplained pupil exits finding certain school and pupil groups more vulnerable than others
- **Meeting the needs of 16-19 yr olds who were not in school for part of KS4.** The AoC reports on alternative provision potential for young people highlighting the need for better systems and funding
- **Exploring moving to home education in secondary schools.** Ofsted examines the issues and incidences behind home schooling in a new research report, calling for clearer processes all round
- **Free Schools in England.** The Education Policy Institute publishes a further assessment of Free Schools in England noting that some are performing well but that much depends on intake
- **The impact of Erasmus+ in UK FE colleges.** The Association of Colleges reports on the importance of the Erasmus student exchange programme and the need to replace it if it's lost post-Brexit
- **Provisional A level results 2018/19.** The government releases provisional data on this summer's A level and related results showing a slight drop in top grades awarded
- **Provisional Key Stage 4 performance 2019.** The government releases provisional data on this summer's KS4 results showing EBacc entries up and no change for English and maths outcomes
- **Delayed admission for summer born pupils.** The DfE publishes its latest commissioned research into delayed entry for summer born pupils finding local authorities continuing to exercise flexibility
- **Value for money strategy.** The Office for Students (OfS) publishes its Value for Money strategy listing four core factors: teaching quality, consumer protection, transparency, outcomes
- **About Time.** The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) publishes the results of its survey into school middle leaders showing many squeezed for time and under pressure to deliver
- **Regulating Performance Table Qualifications.** Ofqual launches consultation on strengthening the regulations around Technical Awards used in Key Stage 4 qualifications
- **Gaming the system.** The Children's Commissioner reports on the extent of online gaming and gambling by children in the UK calling for tighter limits and controls generally
- **The return to a degree.** The HE Statistics Authority (HESA) and Warwick University examine the financial return to degrees to two different age groups indicating a drop over time
- **EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill.** The government publishes its hefty EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill indicating little change to the recognition of professional qualifications for EU nationals
- **Referencing the Qualifications Frameworks.** Ofqual reports on changing qualification frameworks in England and Northern Ireland and how they relate to European Qualification Framework descriptors
- **Special educational needs and disabilities.** The Education Committee reports on its Inquiry into special educational needs finding a system letting many people down and in urgent need of repair
- **National population projections.** The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes its projections for the next 25 years or so indicating a 3m increase over the next decade
- **UK Skills Mismatch in 2030.** The Industrial Strategy Council examines the UK's potential skills mismatch by 2030 raising concerns about how far this can be met with a notable gap in digi skills

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- **Presenting institutional financial information to students.** Universities UK produces a guide to help universities explain to students and others where the fee money goes
- **Centre stage.** The CBI publishes a new report on UK creative industries highlighting their importance to both the economy and society as a whole and calling for continued government support
- **Emotional intelligence – the essential skillset for AI.** The consultancy Capgemini reports on the importance of emotional intelligence particularly in a post-automation world
- **Tackling racial harassment in higher education.** The Equality and Human Rights Commission reports on racial harassment in British universities calling for changes to culture and effective redress
- **Employer satisfaction.** The DfE publishes the results from its latest employer satisfaction survey showing most employers happy with the trainer and training received over the year
- **Government response to Education Committee funding report.** The government responds to the Education Committee's earlier report outlining some of the steps it was taking
- **School Exclusions and Knife Crime.** The All Party Parliamentary Group reports on its survey on knife crime calling for better training and support and clear lines of accountability
- **An Upskill Battle.** The CBI highlights the importance of lifelong learning, calling for an expansion of the National Retraining Scheme to help drive this
- **Bridging the Gap.** The Learning and Work Institute sets out a range of options from top-up funding to budget changes for dealing with the likely funding gap in apprenticeships
- **Understanding school revenue expenditure.** The Education Policy Institute issues a further paper in its school spending series looking at expenditure in different types of school
- **Adjusted Progress 8.** The University of Bristol, in a report commissioned by the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, highlights the importance of including contextual factors in Progress 8
- **Proposals for the next government.** The Russell Group sets out its proposals for Party manifestos calling for maintained levels of per student funding and continuing close relationships with EU partners
- **Investigation into university technical colleges (UTCs.)** The National Audit Office reports on UTCs highlighting concerns about some performance and future financial viability
- **Office for Students registration process and outcomes 2019-20.** The Office for Students reports on the 1st year of its provider registration process and the number of regulatory challenges undertaken

Speeches of the month

- The Prime Minister's **2 October Conference speech** briefly references education and in particular levelling up school funding and supporting FE
- Chris Skidmore's **9 October British Academy speech** highlights the strength of international partnership within HE and stresses his commitment to keeping that going after Brexit
- Jeremy Corbyn's **10 October alternative Queen's Speech** outlines Labour Party plans around climate change, social care, housing, education and employment rights
- The Queen's **14 October Speech** to Parliament lists 26 Bills and a number of already announced proposals intended to create the legislative programme for the future

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- Lord Agnew's **10 October Schools North East Summit speech** sets out some of the work that the government is doing in this region and how important the government considers it to be
- Sally Collier's **10 October Federation of Awarding Bodies speech** runs through opportunities and risks around qualifications including specifically malpractice and centre assessment

Quotes of the month

- “We will be levelling up school funding” – the Prime Minister lays down some Party lines for the forthcoming election
- “This is a programme that will set our country on a new, upwards trajectory” – the government sets out its plans for the future in the latest Queen’s Speech
- “We’ll scrap university tuition fees, give our schools the funding they need, end the academies and free schools programme and bring all schools into a democratically accountable system” – Jeremy Corbyn sets out a sweeping education stall in his alternative Queen’s Speech
- “Anyone who says there’s nothing you could’ve done better is a big old fibber or self-deluded”- former Education Secretary Damian Hinds looks back on his time as Secretary of State
- “T levels are a complete game changer” – The Education Secretary launches the latest T level Action Plan
- “It’s time to shift the narrative from talking about accountability to responsibility” – ASCL general secretary Geoff Barton argues that the ‘new’ inspection framework may prove a step in the right direction
- “The distance between young people’s lived experience, their families’ struggles and Ministers’ desks is just too far” – the Education Committee publishes a damning report on the system for special educational needs
- “In some cases children can lose control of their spending on loot boxes and attempt to chase losses by spending more” – the Children’s Commissioner reports on the dangers of online games for children

Word or phrase of the month

- ‘Policy whiplash.’ Used to describe policy behaviour

Steve Besley

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