



Pearson

Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



The week in a nutshell

Apprenticeships have been centre stage as it has been National Apprenticeship Week. To mark the occasion, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, **Gillian Keegan** announced new sector specific traineeship pilots in construction and rail which will start this summer. Analysis by **UCAS** revealed that over half (54%) of parents and carers they surveyed said that their child had considered an apprenticeship rather than a traditional university degree. Meanwhile, the **Labour Party** reiterated its call for the Government to use a wage subsidy to create new apprenticeships. Shadow Education Secretary **Kate Green** and Shadow FE and Skills Minister **Toby Perkins** called on the Government to use unspent funds from the apprenticeships levy to fund 85,000 new apprenticeships for 16-24 year-olds this year. Elsewhere, the **Public Accounts Committee** has launched a new inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on schools. The Committee will question senior officials at **DfE** on how well it managed its overall response in the first lockdown. **DfE** announced new **teaching school hubs** to go live in September in support of new and existing members of the profession. Finally, research by **NEON** suggests proposed reforms to Level 3 qualifications may set back efforts to widen access to higher education by at least five years.

Our **Policy Blogs this week** cover National Apprenticeship week and share the stories of three Pearson apprentices.

As well as including all previous editions of Policy Watch, our **Policy Hub** includes our latest **policy blogs** and recordings of **events**.

Top stories

The Public Accounts Committee has launched a new inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on schools.

- The Committee will question senior officials at DfE on how well it managed its overall response in the first lockdown, including: whether it effectively supported schools and pupils in England during this period, whether it managed the move to home-learning effectively and whether it supported vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The deadline for submissions is 18 March 2021.

The Department for Education has announced new teaching school hubs.

- 81 Hubs will be across England to provide access to expert teacher training to teachers and leaders of all levels, as well as trainee teachers. They will be operational this September, serving on average around 250 schools each, from £65m of new funding set to run for an initial three years.

To launch National Apprenticeship Week 2021, the Government has announced sector specific traineeship pilots in construction and rail to start this summer.

- The Government says the experience from these traineeships will enable more young people to fast track their career, with many able to potentially complete their apprenticeship more quickly as a result of prior learning covered in the traineeship programme.

Labour has reiterated its call for the Government to use a wage subsidy to create new apprenticeships, as new data the Government's Plan for Jobs has created less than a fifth of the promised opportunities.

- Shadow Education Secretary Kate Green and Shadow FE and Skills Minister Toby Perkins called on the Government to use unspent funds from the apprenticeships levy to fund 85,000 new apprenticeships for 16-24 year-olds this year.

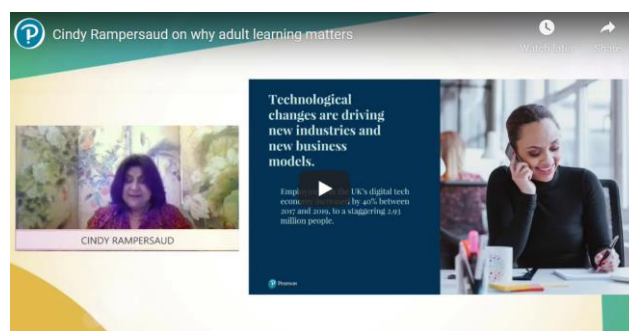
Evidence published by National Education Opportunities Network shows that the proposed reforms to Level 3 qualifications may set back government efforts to widen access to higher education by at least five years.

- A survey of nearly 50 universities and Uni-Connect partnerships shows that over 90% feel the BTEC option is crucial for students from widening access backgrounds and that the new system will have a 'devastating' impact on social mobility.
- If only half of students presently entering with BTECs from low participation areas are unable to do so, then the numbers entering from these areas will go back to 2015 levels.

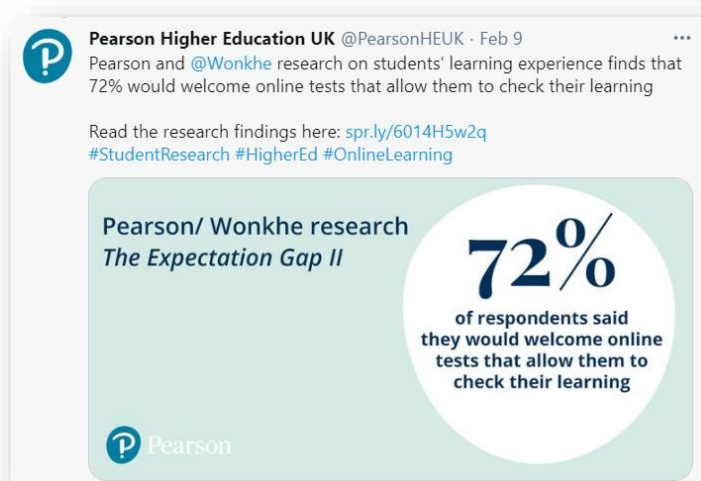
Pearson news

Why adult learning matters At this week's AoC conference, Cindy Rampersaud (SVP, BTEC & Apprenticeships) led a keynote speech on the importance of adult learning. Cindy explored the crucial role of lifelong learning post-pandemic to help us keep up with rapid and unpredictable changes in skills demand, technology and shifts in industry. [Click here](#)

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Pearson tweet of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Secretary of state speech to AoC conference 2021
- Education Committee – Left behind white pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and Accountability hearing (Nick Gibb & Vicky Ford)
- Public Accounts Committee Inquiry - COVID-19: Education. Committee to question DfE ministers on reaction to lockdown. Closing date for evidence 18 March
- Ministerial statement – schools publishing information on remote education
- Debate - Essay Mills (Prohibition) Chris Skidmore MP

Schools

- Department for Education - New Teaching School Hubs to be rolled out across the country
- NAHT - Covid-19 and schools - what needs to happen next

FE & skills

- NEON - New report shows Level 3 qualification reform will set access to HE back at least 5 years
- AOC - Letter to new Education Recovery Commissioner
- Department for Education - Building back better with apprenticeships (National Apprenticeship Week)
- UCAS - Supporting parents is key to unlocking the UK's next generation of apprentices
- Labour Party - Labour calls for wage subsidy to boost apprenticeships as Government incentive fails to create opportunities

Higher Education

- Department for Education - Measures announced to boost international study and global opportunities
- Department for Education - Estimating the impact of EU exit on UK higher education

Scotland

- The Scottish Government - Healthy eating in schools: guidance 2020

Wales

- Welsh Government - £9.8 million of extra funding to support learners with Additional Learning Needs during coronavirus
- Welsh Government - £29 million extra support for further education students

Consultation Watch

New consultation

- Closing: 03/05/2021
New Consultation: Introducing international qualified teacher status (iQTS)

Policy Watch

Week ending Friday 12 February 2021

What's happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons

- The House of Commons is in recess until 22 February 2021

House of Lords

- The House of Lords is in recess until 22 February 2021