



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

The Government announced all students yet to return to campus and in-person teaching will be able to do so from 17 May at the earliest – in line with Step 3 of the Government's roadmap. **Russell Group's** chief executive, Dr Tim Bradshaw described the decision to delay the full return to HE as “a major blow”.

The **Association of Colleges** published results from a survey of colleges revealing the extent of damage to students' education during the pandemic – finding that 77% of 16-18-year olds are performing below normal expectations. To combat this, the AoC has called for a guaranteed fully funded extra year of study if college leavers require it.

A report by the **Resolution Foundation** shows unemployment rates have risen fastest amongst recent education leavers and young Black citizens. The report, 'Uneven Steps', highlights youth unemployment is not just about those losing their jobs but also young people who struggle to enter the jobs market.

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Top stories

The Association of Colleges has published results from a survey of colleges revealing the extent of damage to students' education during the pandemic. It found that 77% of 16-18-year olds are performing below normal expectations.

- To combat the effects of the pandemic, the AoC is calling for a guaranteed fully funded extra year of study if college leavers require it. This would need a bursary to support students to participate.
- Additionally, for students who are continuing study in college as well as those moving to college from school, this should be funded at the same rate as 16- and 17-year olds. This would mean removing the 17.5% fall in funding at 18 that currently exists.
- **Chief executive at the AoC David Hughes stated**, “The latest data from colleges paints a stark picture of the pandemic's impact on learning for young people and adults. The government needs to act swiftly.”

A new report published by the Resolution Foundation shows that unemployment rates have risen fastest amongst recent education leavers and young Black citizens.

- The report, '**Uneven Steps**', highlights the fact that youth unemployment is not just about those losing their jobs but also young people who struggle to enter the jobs market. This is prevalent amongst the “class of 2020”.

- Among non-graduates who left education one year ago, unemployment rose from 14 to 18% between 2019 and 2020 an increase of 28%. Among graduates, it rose from 10 to 14% a 40% increase.
- The analysis also shows that the pandemic has “widened pre-existing unemployment gaps between different ethnic groups after decades of progress”. The unemployment rate amongst young Black citizens was 25% pre-pandemic and has risen to 35%. This is compared to 13% for White citizens.

The Campaign for Learning and NCFE have [published](#) a paper which calls on the Government to develop a post-16 education, training and jobs plan by June so that it can be rolled out for the new academic year beginning in September.

- The plan should maximise participation in full time FE courses, expand traineeships and create an education and apprenticeship participation budget.
- For 18-24-year-olds specifically, the plan should enable as many as possible to enter full time HE courses and resist any cap on student numbers. The Government should also fully fund Level 2 and 2 apprenticeships for non-levy payers.
- For adult education, the plan should extend the entitlement to free adult education for first full Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications from 19-24 year olds to adults of any age and remove the ELQ rule in higher education and bring forward to this year the £600m National Skills Fund to promote up-skilling and re-skilling.

The Government [announced](#) that all students who have not yet returned to campus and in-person teaching will be able to do so from 17 May at the earliest in line with Step 3 of the Government’s roadmap.

- **The Russell Group’s chief executive, Dr Tim Bradshaw** [described](#) the decision as “a major blow”. He called on the Government to “reconsider” and to “ensure these students are not forgotten”.
- **Universities UK’s president Prof. Julia Buckingham** [responded](#) by stating it was “hugely disappointing”. UUK called on the Government to “urgently explain” how it reached the decision.
- **Chief executive of University Alliance, Vanessa Wilson** [stated](#) that the organisation was “bitterly disappointed that the government have not stood by their commitment to prioritise the re-opening of education following the easing of lockdown”. Ms Wilson described the Government’s actions as both “nonsensical and deeply disingenuous to the nation’s future workforce.”

Pearson news



Digital Live: Evolving Education 26–29 April 2021 Our free #PearsonDigitalLive conference is back by popular demand from 26–29 April 2021. Join fellow educators and industry experts as we reflect on a year of digital transformation and what's next for edtech – from practical ideas and discussions to support blended teaching and learning, to exploring the latest innovations. [Find out more and book your place](#)

In our latest [policy blog](#), Mickey Revenaugh discusses what the pandemic has taught us about the essence of school.

Pearson tweets of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Adult Skills and Lifelong Learning debate
- Further Education Capital Transformation Fund: Next Phase (Gillian Keegan statement)
- High Needs Provision Capital Update (Nick Gibb statement)
- Higher Education Update (Michelle Donelan statement)
- NEU - comment on Ofsted inspections from September

Schools

- EDSK - Re-Assessing the Future (Part 2)

Further Education & Skills

- Campaign for Learning - No Time to Lose on Post-16 Education, Training and Jobs

Policy Watch

Week ending Friday 16 April 2021

- AoC - Give students an extra year of study to avoid a lost generation, say education leaders
- AoC - CATCH-UP: Education Recovery Plan
- Resolution Foundation - Recent education leavers and young Black workers hardest hit by Covid-19 job shock

Higher Education

- Department for Education - Remaining university students to return to campus from Step 3 of the roadmap, no earlier than 17 May
- Universities UK - Joint letter from UUK, Student Minds and NUS on student returns
- Universities UK - Government decision on student returns in England 'hugely disappointing for students'
- Russell Group - Response to Government announcement on return of students to in-person teaching
- Higher Education Policy Institute - HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, and his support for higher education by Professor Sir Roderick Floud

What's happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons

- Tuesday 20th April: Education Committee - Prison Education

Witnesses: Dame Sally Coates DBE, Rod Clark, former Chief Executive Officer, Prisoners' Education Trust and panel member at Coates Review, Peter Stanford, Director, Longford Trust, and panel member at Coates Review