



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

We saw the **Skills and Post-16 Bill** begin its passage through Parliament, starting life in the House of Lords. The aim of the Bill is to bring greater parity between further and higher education and deliver the [Prime Minister's Lifetime Skills Guarantee](#) set out earlier this year. Linked [research](#) finds that only four percent of people by the age of 25 have intermediate or Higher Technical Qualifications many employers are demanding. Evidence shows that these qualifications [can lead to higher-paid jobs than degrees](#).

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has published new analysis that suggests that 30% of COVID related spending on education is due to come from existing budgets. Author of the analysis Dr Luke Sibieta stated that the real terms figure in additional spending is "likely to be insufficient to meet the scale of the challenge."

A survey carried out by the **Early Years Alliance** has found that nearly half of early years providers believe there has been a widening in the attainment gap between disadvantaged young children and their peers since the start of the pandemic.

Ofqual has published its latest literature review on discrepancies between academic results from teacher and test-based assessments, finding that teacher assessments are often biased against disadvantaged and special educational needs (SEN) students, raising concerns about their use in this summer's awarding of grades.

As well as including all previous editions of Policy Watch, our [Policy Hub](#) includes our latest [policy blogs](#).

Top stories

The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill was published and received its First Reading in the House of Lords.

The Bill includes measures that:

- Provide for a **statutory underpinning for local skills improvement plans**, introducing a power for the Secretary of State for Education to designate employer representative bodies to lead the development of the plans with duties on providers to co-operate in the development of and then have regard to the plans;
- Introduce a **duty for all further education corporations, sixth form college corporations and designated institutions** to review how well the education or training provided by the institution meets local needs, and assess what action the institution might take to ensure it is best placed to meet local needs;
- Introduce additional functions to enable the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to define and approve new categories of technical qualifications that relate to employer-led standards and occupations in different ways, and to have an oversight role for the technical education offer in each occupational route, including mechanisms to manage proliferation;

- Ensure that the Institute and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation maintain a streamlined collaborative system for **approval and regulation of technical qualifications**;
- Introduce specific **provision reflecting lifelong learning entitlement policy** which aims to make it easier for adults and young people to study more flexibly - allowing them to space out their studies, transfer credits between institutions, and take up more part-time study;
- Cover the **Office for Students' ability to assess the quality of higher education providers** in England, and make decisions on compliance and registration by reference to minimum requirements for quality;
- Enable the Secretary of State for Education to **make regulations to provide for a list of post-16 education or training providers**, in particular Independent Training Providers;
- Extend statutory intervention powers applicable to further education corporations, sixth form college corporations and designated institutions under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The Secretary of State for Education will be able to **intervene where there has been a failure to meet local needs**, and to direct structural change where that is required to secure improvement.

Alongside the Bill, the Government announced a new, £83 million Post-16 Capacity Fund and published figures showing the economic value of further and technical education.

- The aim of the new fund is to “protect” post-16 provision. Providers will be invited to bid for a share, supporting projects in areas due to see an increase in 16–19-year-olds in 2022/23.
- **New figures** show that further and technical education provision is already estimated to boost the economy by £26 billion.

New analysis from the IfS has suggested that 30% of COVID related spending on education is due to come from existing budgets.

- The Government has committed to spending around £4.3bn on education in England as a response to the pandemic over the two years 2020-22, however, £1.3bn of this is due to come from underspending elsewhere or from existing budgets. The figures were revealed when it was established that the Treasury would be providing the DfE with an additional £3bn in funding to pay for the extra spending.

A new report from the Education Policy Institute examines the current supply of teachers in England and considers whether pay reforms would improve trends in recruitment and retention.

- The report highlights the surge in teacher numbers over the last year during the pandemic but there is a risk that subsequent economic recovery could result in a proportion of the new intake leaving to take up other jobs

A letter, undersigned by Peter Aldous, chair of the APPG on FE and Life Long Learning has been sent to the Secretary of State for Education urging him to “combat the severe effects the pandemic has had on teaching and learning in colleges.”

- The letter responds to a recent EPI report which revealed that it would take £13.5bn to make up for lost learning time during the pandemic.
- The cross-party group of MPs recommended three policies that they believe to be essential to ensure an effective recovery. These are: reversing ESFA cuts to the Adult Education Budget, giving college leavers a fully funded extra year of study if required and provide colleges with targeted support through a 16-19 student premium.

Pearson news

National Tutoring Programme We're passionate about helping every child succeed and achieve their full potential through learning. That's why we're excited to have been chosen as a Tuition Partner for the National Tutoring Programme (NTP). There is limited time to secure 75% subsidised tutoring for your pupils. We can offer tuition from qualified UK teachers. Get intensive tuition in the weeks leading up to the end of term [Book now](#)



Pearson tweet of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Department for Education - New legislation to help transform opportunities for all.
- Skills and Post-16 Education Bill introduced into the House of Lords
- Youth Unemployment Committee - Youth Unemployment - Department for Education (Sir Kevan Collins)
- Education Select Committee - Accountability Hearings - Gillian Keegan MP
- Education Committee - Left behind white pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- House of Lords - Refocus 'levelling up' strategy and funds, peers tell government.

Regulators

- OFSTED - Nearly nine out of 10 parents say their child's school handled COVID-19 well.
- OFSTED - Evaluating the education inspection framework: for schools and further education and skills providers
- Labour Party - Labour responds to report from Ofqual on concerns of biased grading.

Schools

Policy Watch

Week ending Friday 21 May 2021

- Labour Party - New data reveals Government summer schools will reach just 8% of pupils as Labour demands Ministers be ambitious for children's recovery on National Children's Day
- Human Rights Watch - Pandemic's Dire Global Impact on Education
- Department for Education - Education Secretary addresses Centre for Social Justice
- Institute for Fiscal Studies - 30% of COVID-related spending on education in England to come from existing budgets.
- Education Policy Institute (EPI) - Local pay and teacher retention in England
- Early Years Alliance - Concern for disadvantaged children as Covid-19 disruption risks widening attainment gap, survey finds.
- Sutton Trust - Sutton Trust calls for early years to be at heart of education recovery plan.
- Disability Rights UK - SEND education in crisis as Ofsted and Observer highlight provision and budget shortfalls of over £0.5 billion.

Further Education & Skills

- Department for Education - Skills and Post-16 Education Bill: impact assessment and JCHR memorandum
- Department for Education - Destinations of key stage 4 and 5 students: 2019 (Updated)
- Labour Party - Kate Green speaks at the International Skills Summit
- Labour Party - Conservative failures on further education see rising vacancies in key industries.
- UCAS - response to publication of Skills and Post-16 Education Bill

Higher Education

- Department for Education - Graduate outcomes (LEO): postgraduate outcomes in 2018 to 2019
- House of Commons Library - Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill 2021
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) - HESA widening participation and non-continuation statistics to lose 'Performance Indicator' branding
- HESA - Measure for measures
- HESA - Graduate Outcomes SOC 2020 update
- AOC - Cross-party MPs urge Education Secretary to announce Covid catch-up plan for students
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) - HESA widening participation and non-continuation statistics to lose 'Performance Indicator' branding

Northern Ireland

- CCEA - Education Minister Makes Announcement on Summer 2022 Assessment
- CCEA Qualifications in the 2021-22 Academic Year: Awarding Arrangements

What's happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons

Tuesday 25th May 2021

- Health and Social Care Committee - Children and young people's mental health (oral evidence session)
- Education Committee – Prison Education (oral evidence session)

Wednesday 26th May 2021

- Westminster Hall Debate - Support for children entitled to free school meals (2:30pm) - Catherine West MP

Thursday 27th May 2021

- Youth Unemployment Committee – Youth Unemployment (Oral evidence session)
- HOUSE RISES FOR RECESS (Returns Monday 7 June)

House of Lords

Tuesday 25th May 2021

- Professional Qualifications Bill – Second Reading
- COVID-19 Committee - The long-term impact of the pandemic on parents and families (Oral evidence)

Thursday 27th May 2021

- HOUSE RISES FOR RECESS (Returns Monday 7 June)