



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

This week the **Skills and Post-16 Education Bill** returned to the Lords. When the Commons, the Government were able to overturn amendments made by Peers, namely a four-year funding removal delay to those qualifications deemed to overlap with T Levels. Once again, the Lords defeated the Government, this time voting through an amendment that would see a three-year delay to the removal of funding, with a fourth should there be no employer consultation on the decision). The Bill makes its way back to the Commons on Monday for MPs to consider the change. The Lords accepted a Government proposal to increase the number of careers advice interactions. We await to see the response to the latest Lords' amendment relating to the defunding of qualifications and whether there is scope for compromise, as there was on careers advice.

In his **Spring Statement**, the **Chancellor Rishi Sunak** announced he was considering whether the current tax system, including the operation of the **Apprenticeship Levy**, is doing enough to incentivise businesses to invest in right kind of training.

In a speech to the **Bett conference**, **Secretary of State Nadhim Zahawi** announced that all schools will have high speed internet access by 2025. He also praised the work of the UK's Edtech sector.

A joint investigation into the **teaching of reading in prisons** found significant failings. Research by **Ofsted and HMI Prisons** suggests failing to teach prisoners to read leaves up to half unable to access vital rehabilitative education while in prison.

Finally, **Pearson** published a significant report into the **future of qualifications and assessment**. Based on significant public consultation and supported by a panel of experts including former Education Secretary, Lord Blunkett, the report set out its findings and recommendations on how to shape a system that better serves the needs of young people today.

Top stories

Person publishes [Qualified to succeed](#): Building a 14 -19 education system of choice, diversity and Opportunity

- Following a year long study, which included the input of 6,000 teachers, learners, parents and employers, and a steering group of experts from across education, academia, and politics (including four former Education Secretaries), Pearson has published its final report into the future of qualifications and assessment in England.
- The seven key findings are:
 - Make GCSEs work better for all learners
 - Set out a coherent curriculum framework

- Shift wholesale curriculum and qualification reform to a model of continuous, evidence-based improvement
- Create greater diversity and representation in curriculum that reflects young people's lives, to better engage them in learning
- Assess the right skills in the right way, enabling learners to highlight their strengths and successes
- Provide more incentives for employers to engage with educators and strengthen teachers' capacity to bring work themes into the classroom
- Accelerate the digital transformation programme, bringing all parts of the system together to realise the opportunities that technology can bring to the education experience
- Read the [report here](#)

House of Lords consideration of the Commons amendments to the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill

- This week the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill returned to the Lords. Following the debate there were two important things to note:
 - The Government were defeated on an amendment tabled by Lord Blunkett, the former Labour home secretary. Peers **voted in favour of adding conditions for the withdrawal of approved level 3 technical qualifications** (e.g. BTECs) that would mean funding couldn't be withdrawn for at least 3 years and not without consultation with public and ERBs by the Institute.
 - On careers guidance, the Government proposed a compromise amendment. Whereas initially they were standing firm on legislating for **one careers advice interaction** for each of the three key phases of education (meaning three in total over the course of a pupils' education), they **proposed to increase this to two interactions** for each key phase (giving six in total), after listening to cross-party concerns in the Commons and Lords. This amendment was passed.
- The Bill will now return to the Commons for MPs to consider amendments made by the Lords. This is due to take place on Monday 28 March.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi announces [every school will have to access high-speed internet by 2025](#)

- Speaking at the Bett Show in London, Zahawi announced:
 - A £150m fund to support schools most in need to upgrade their WiFi connections, including those in the 55 Education Investment Areas identified in the Levelling Up White Paper.
 - Over the course of the next three years, the DfE will reach out to schools in priority areas to facilitate the introduction of faster and more reliable connectivity.
 - The department is also publishing its first set of technology standards, aimed at supporting schools and colleges in understanding which technologies they should have in place to best support effective teaching.

Ofsted and HM Inspectorate of Prisons [publish research](#) highlighting the barriers preventing prisoners from receiving the support they need to learn how to read or improve their reading skills

- Following concerns about the poor state of prison education, Ofsted and HMIP looked at the teaching of reading skills.
- They found that reading education is not given sufficient priority in the prison regime, that provision was not organised in a way that supports prisoners to improve their reading, and that the curriculum was not well designed to improve reading. Prisoners with the greatest need to improve their reading generally received the least support.

- The report makes recommendations for the Prison Service and Governors as to how to improve the improve prisoners' reading skills, including developing an “ambitious strategy”.

Public Accounts Committee examine the financial sustainability of the higher education sector in England

- The committee of MPs heard evidence from the Department for Education and the Office for Students on the financial sustainability of the higher education sector in England . It discussed grade inflation, international students, low value degree courses, financial support, risk modelling, student satisfaction and outcomes, regulation, value for money, student protection plans, striking, minimum entry requirements, and new loan terms.

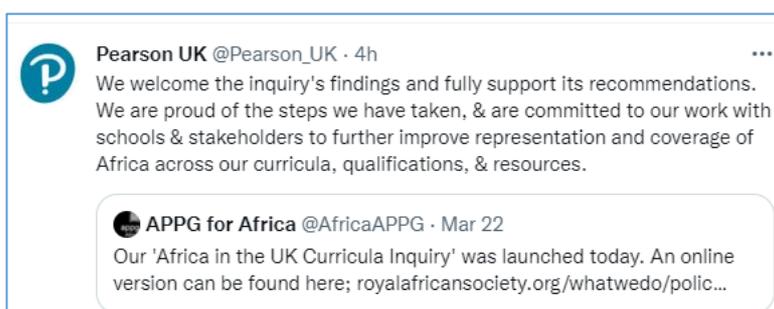
Pearson news

Future of Qualifications & Assessment final report

What does a good education and assessment system in England for 14–19-year-olds look like? Together with 6,000 teachers, learners, parents and employers, and an expert panel, we've sought to find the answers. You'll find the results of our year-long research project and recommendations in the report we launched this week: **Qualified to Succeed: Building a 14-19 education system of choice, diversity and opportunity**. [Click here to find out more](#)



Pearson tweet of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Lords: Skills and Post-16 Education Bill [HL] – Commons reasons and amendments
- Commons: Mental Health Provision (Children and Young People) Bill - second reading
- Commons: British Sign Language Bill – third reading
- Westminster Hall: School Rebuilding Programme
- Westminster Hall: Physical Education

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- WMS: Children with No Recourse to Public Funds - free school meal eligibility
- Public Accounts Committee: Academies Sector Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20
- Education Committee: Oral evidence: Universities and Higher Education, HC 1213

Regulatory and funding bodies

- Ofsted: Prison education: a review of reading education in prisons
- Ofsted: Amanda Spielman at the Annual Apprenticeship Conference 2022
- Ofsted: Schools and early education update: March 2022
- Ofqual: EQA transition update: March 2022
- Ofqual: Subject-level conditions and guidance for new French, German and Spanish GCSEs
- Ofqual: Catherine Large's speech: Annual Apprenticeship Conference 2022
- ESFA Update: 23 March 2022
- ESFA: Higher education short courses
- ESFA: Maximum loan amounts for advanced learner loans designated qualifications 2022 to 2023
- ESFA: Advanced learner loans funding rules 2022 to 2023
- ESFA: Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2021 to 2022
- Office for Students strategy 2022 to 2025
- Consultation on OfS strategy 2022-25: Analysis of responses to consultation and decisions
- OfS: Published statistics, March 2022
- IfATE: 'Quality' keynote speech from Institute chief executive
- UKRI: Open access policy update
- SLC: Advanced Learner Loans paid in England, AY 2021/22, Aug to Jan

Schools

- Zahawi: All schools to have high speed internet by 2025
- Education Secretary delivers speech at BETT show
- DfE: Secondary accountability measures – update
- PAC: Tens of millions of public money used to “prop up” poorly managed academy schools with potentially excessive levels of pay
- ONS: Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in school pupils, England: up to 22 December 2021
- School capacity in England: academic year 2020 to 2021
- Pupil absence in schools in England: 2020 to 2021
- EPI: A spotlight on Design and Technology study in England

Further Education & Skills

- Education Committee: Post-16 education inquiry evidence session investigating how UK compares to other OECD countries
- Ofsted: Failing to teach prisoners to read is 'huge missed opportunity'

Higher Education

- HEPI: New English Social Mobility Index for 2022
- NCUB: Future economy relies on business-university interaction but untapped opportunities for collaboration remain, according to new survey of nearly 4,000 businesses

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- Universities UK: Local communities facing skills, training, and jobs setbacks
- ONS: Coronavirus and higher education students: 25 February to 7 March 2022

Scotland

- Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26
- Investment in tackling child poverty

Wales

- £25m investment in Community Focused Schools to tackle the impact of poverty
- Oral Statement: High Standards and Aspirations for All
- Estyn annual remit: 2022 to 2023
- Extra £4.5m to support children and young people with additional learning needs
- Written Statement: Additional funding for Additional Learning Needs provision
- Written Statement: Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018 Implementation
- Written Statement: Numeracy (Reasoning) personalised assessments
- Funding for staff well-being trebled as part of 'whole school approach' to mental health

Northern Ireland

- Lyons launches new Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland
- Higher Education statistics published

Consultation Watch

New consultations

- Subject-level conditions and guidance for new French, German and Spanish GCSEs Closes 19 April 2022
- Changes to Social Work England's regulatory framework Closes 11 May 2022
- Free early education for 2-year-olds with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) Closes 20 May 2022

Closing consultations

- Department for Education: School attendance: improving consistency of support Closes: 28 March 2022
- DfE: Revised behaviour in schools guidance and suspension and permanent exclusions guidance Closes: 31 March 2022
- Wales: Changes to current school assessment arrangements and local authority prospectus Closes: 1 April

Ongoing consultations

- DfE: Changes to the School Admission Appeals Code Closes: 3 April 2022
- Wales: Statutory induction of newly qualified teachers in Wales Closes: 8 April 2022
- Ofqual: Regulating academic and technical qualifications at level 3 Closes: 20 April 2022
- Review of post-15 qualifications at level 2 and below in England Closes: 27 April 2022
- Lifelong loan entitlement Closes: 6 May 2022

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- [Higher Education reform](#) Closes: 6 May 2022
- [DfT: Transport labour market and skills](#) Closes: 9 May 2022
- [Wales: Draft framework for Welsh in English medium education](#) Closes: 13 May 2022
- [Office for Students: Working in partnership to improve international student integration and experience](#) Closes: 16 May 2022
- [Wales: New registration categories for the Education Workforce Council](#) Closes: 24 May 2022

What's happening in Parliament next week

Monday 28 March

House of Commons

- Skills and Post-16 Education Bill [HL] - Consideration of Lords Amendments

House of Lords

- Lord Godson (Con) to ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reporting in 'The Trojan Horse Affair' podcast, published by the New York Times on 4 February; and what steps they are taking to prevent extremism and intolerance from gaining a foothold in schools in England

Lords Committees

- Children and Families Act 2014 Committee: Oral evidence

Tuesday 29 March

House of Lords

- Lord Storey (Lib Dem) to ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the teaching of creative subjects in schools since the introduction of the English Baccalaureate

Lords Committees

- Science and Technology Committee: Delivering and UK science and technology strategy

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG for Digital Skills. Subject: Digital skills and work: 'Level-Up Digital' – SMEs and Digital skills.
- APPG for Race Equality in Education. Subject: Tackling Afro hair discrimination in schools.

Wednesday 30 March

Westminster Hall

- NHS Special Schools Eye Care Service (Siobhain McDonagh, Lab, Mitcham and Morden)

Commons Committees

- Education Committee: The future of post-16 qualifications

Lords Committees:

- Public Services Committee: Designing a public services workforce fit for the future

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All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG on Performing Arts Education and Training. EGM.
- APPG on Eye Health and Visual Impairment. Subject: The education of children and young people with a vision impairment, in the context of the pandemic and the SEND review

Thursday 31 March

Lords Committees

- Public Services Committee: Designing a public services workforce fit for the future

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG on Modern Languages. AGM.

Friday 25 March

The House of Commons is in recess until 19 April 2022.