



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

The **Skills and Post-16 Education Bill** completed its ten-month journey through parliament after peers agreed to the withdrawal of **Lord Blunkett's** amendment that would have applied a three-year wait to the defunding of applied qualifications at level 3. This came after ministers clarified their position in order to address Lords' concerns. This included **Baroness Barran's** announcement that the government "*expect(s) to remove just a small proportion of the total level 3 BTEC and other applied general style qualification offer – significantly less than half*". This represents a change in position from the start of the Bill's passage when it was said only on small number of such qualifications would remain.

Ofsted published four reports on the **continuing impact of the pandemic** on education and the progress of education recovery. They looked at schools, FE colleges, early years settings, and prisons. COVID continues to cast a long shadow across all stages of learning – whether it be the impact of lost learning and lockdown, or staff absences. Providers have been working hard to develop strategies to support catch up.

In a speech at the think tank Policy Exchange, **Skills Minister Alex Burghart** announced that the **new 'Unit for Future Skills'** will start publishing data this month. The new Unit, announced in the Levelling Up White paper, will reportedly be cross-government, publicly accessible and will produce information on local skills demand, future skills needs of businesses and the pathways between training and good jobs. It will replace the DfE's skills and productivity board.

Policy Watch will return on 29th April

Top stories

Skills and Post-16 Education **Bill** completes parliamentary passage

- Education Minister Baroness Barran [moved that the Lords](#) accept the recent change made by the Commons to remove Lord Blunkett's amendment that would have applied a three-year wait to the defunding of applied qualifications at level 3, such as BTECs, and outlined the following to assuage concerns raised by fellow Peers:
 - Applied generals, such as BTECs, will have an important role to play alongside T Levels
 - The next phase of reforms will be to consider qualifications that overlap with T Levels – they anticipate they will remove funding for "just a small proportion" of the total Level 3 offer, including BTECs: "This will be significantly less than half" she added
 - Expect to publish the list in due course, and there will be an opportunity for AOs to appeal a quals inclusion on the list.
 - The new Unit for Future Skills, announced in the Levelling Up White Paper, will have a role to play in gathering evidence and regularly assessing the quality of qualifications.

- Peers welcomed the clarifications and so the Skills Bill has now completed all stages in its legislative journey and the full text of the Bill has been agreed. It will now be sent for Royal Assent and will become an Act.

Ofsted publishes series of reports on education recovery

- Ofsted has published a series of research reports on education recovery and the continuing effects of Covid-19. The reports focus on the recovery of education in schools, further education institutes, early years settings and prisons.
- **Education recovery in schools** The pandemic continues to hinder pupils' learning and personal development. Leaders also continued to mention the negative impact of the pandemic on pupils' well-being and behaviour. The pandemic has also continued to affect pupils' knowledge and skills, either because content had not been taught when schools were partially closed or because pupils did not learn well remotely. Schools were using a range of informal assessment practices to identify what knowledge pupils have (and have not) remembered from their teaching during lockdowns.
- **Education recovery in further education** Providers continue to respond to the pandemic with resilience and creativity. Collaboration between providers had increased, including sharing good practice and guaranteeing school leavers a place. Gaps in learners' practical skills are still evident. However, these have reduced, which reflected the successful catch-up strategies providers had put in place in the autumn term.
- **Education recovery in early years settings** The pandemic has continued to affect children's communication and language development, and many providers noticed delays in their speech and language progress. Providers are making more referrals for external help than before the pandemic and are waiting longer for this specialist help. The negative impact on children's personal, social and emotional development has also continued, with many children lacking confidence in group activities.
- **Education recovery in prisons** The provision of education, skills and work has been severely curtailed by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) from the start of the pandemic. Prison leaders and managers remained cautious about allowing prisoners to participate in education, skills and work. Very few prisoners were able to engage in education, but the provision for them was generally of good quality. Overall, there was not enough support for prisoners to continue learning during this period. This is especially true for those with additional learning needs.

OfS insights brief: Schools, attainment and the role of HE

- The report outlines how disparities between the attainment of pupils start in primary school, but their effects are complex and lasting. They can affect individuals' participation and performance in higher education and their prospects in later life.
- It sets out how universities and colleges can form closer partnerships with schools and groups of schools, reinforcing the regulatory role of the OfS in this area. Recommendations include:
 - **Raising the expectations** (rather than simply the aspirations) of pupils and their parents, teachers and guardians.
 - **Sponsoring local schools**
 - **Running summer school programmes** for school pupils
 - **Supporting attainment at Level 3** through Access to HE courses taught in further education colleges.

Pearson news

Pearson onscreen assessment Many teachers have been asking about our plans and thousands of students took our onscreen GCSE mocks last year. We believe in creating assessments that encourage progress, enable access and inclusion, and enrich learning. This has driven our use of onscreen assessment in over 115 countries for more than a decade and how we approach what's next. We focus on where and how we can use technology to positively impact assessments and students' lives. [Find out more about onscreen assessment](#)



Pearson tweets of the week

Pearson UK @Pearson_UK · Apr 4

Are you aged 11-30? Share your views on important youth employment issues in our national survey. Help change things for you and other young people too! #YouthVoiceCensus s.alchemer.eu/s3/Youth-Voice... #AddYourVoice @YEUK2012

What is the #YouthVoiceCensus?

- 1 It's an annual **online** survey.
- 2 1,000s of young people **take part**.
- 3 It's **anonymous**. It respects privacy.
- 4 The results? Better support for **young people** in the UK.



Pearson UK @Pearson_UK · 21h

The link between **belonging** and student success is well established. So what are the elements that can make or break a student's sense of belonging, and how do they interplay with each other?

Anna Jackson, Head of Customer Insights at Pearson, explores: spr.ly/6019KICFF



Other news

Parliamentary

- Lords: Skills and Post-16 Education Bill [HL]
- Lords: Professional Qualifications Bill [HL]
- Lords: Education: Multi Academy Trusts
- Lords: British Sign Language Bill
- Oral evidence: Children and Families Act 2014 Committee – 4 April 2022

Regulatory and funding bodies

- Ofsted: Education recovery in early years providers: spring 2022
- Ofsted: Education recovery in schools: spring 2022
- Ofsted: Education recovery in further education and skills providers: spring 2022
- Ofsted: Education recovery in prisons
- Ofqual: Awarding organisations: scope of recognition (April 2022)
- ESFA Update: 6 April 2022
- ESFA: Care to Learn Guide for the 2022 to 2023 academic year
- IfATE: Construction Route Review
- IfATE: Launch of Apprentice Panel open recruitment
- QAA publishes QAA at 25 Programme
- OfS: Schools, attainment and the role of higher education
- OfS: Key performance measure 26: Regulatory burden

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Schools

- Natural England: The Children's People and Nature Survey for England: 2021 update
- Guidance: Treating candidates fairly when you recruit trainee teachers
- Ofsted: Strong signs of recovery across education, but challenges remain
- Guidance: Recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year (updated)

Further Education & Skills

- Cash boost to transform colleges across England
- Further Education Capital Transformation Fund: stage 2 successful applicants
- Policy Paper: National Skills Fund
- Taking Teaching Further programme
- Minister for Skills addresses Policy Exchange
- IfATE: Building a safer and more sustainable future with apprenticeships and technical education
- Onward report into the apprenticeship system
- PwC and Youth Futures Foundation: Youth Employment Index 2022
- Education and Training Foundation CEO steps down after eight years at the helm

Higher Education

- Further reductions in the burden of OfS regulation
- OfS: 'Hidden hierarchies' a barrier to partnerships between universities and schools

Scotland

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) higher education, further education and community learning and development: wider harms

Wales

- How schools and colleges used the RRRS and catch-up grants for post-16 learners: government response
- Placements for Newly Qualified Teachers to continue until summer
- National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL): remit letter 2022 to 2026
- Subordinate legislation under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021
- Economy Minister announces £4.5 million funding for Flexible Skills Programme

Consultation Watch

New consultations

- Scotland: University of Strathclyde – further education teaching programme Closes: 16 May 2022
- Scotland: Children's Care and Justice Bill - consultation on policy proposals Closes: 22 June 2022
- Wales: Subordinate legislation under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 Closes: 17 May

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Ongoing consultations

- [Subject-level conditions and guidance for new French, German and Spanish GCSEs](#) Closes 19 April 2022
- [Ofqual: Regulating academic and technical qualifications at level 3](#) Closes: 20 April 2022
- [Review of post-16 qualifications at level 2 and below in England](#) Closes: 27 April 2022
- [Lifelong loan entitlement](#) Closes: 6 May 2022
- [Higher Education reform](#) Closes: 6 May 2022
- [DfT: Transport labour market and skills](#) Closes: 9 May 2022
- [Changes to Social Work England's regulatory framework](#) Closes 11 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
- [Free early education for 2-year-olds with no recourse to public funds \(NRPF\)](#) Closes 20 May 2022
- [Wales: New registration categories for the Education Workforce Council](#) Closes: 24 May 2022
- [Supporting schools that are not making necessary improvements](#) Closes 28 May 2022
- [SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time](#) Closes 29 May 2022
- [Scotland: Home education guidance](#) Closes 13 July 2022

What's happening in Parliament next week

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

The House of Lords is in recess until 25 April 2022.

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