

2014/4

30 April 2014

## Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in April 2014

### Main talking points

The poet Robert Browning wrote that it was good to be back in England now that April was here. Others may look at how busy things have been in the world of education over the last month from exam reform, to skills training to student loans and wonder how true that is.

### Key headlines from the month

- Problem-solving. 15 yr olds in England score highly in the latest PISA test results
- PSHE. Education Committee announce new inquiry
- GCSEs. Consultation on new grading scale published
- GCSEs. Latest content requirements, assessment and scheduling all published
- A levels. Latest developments for AS and A level also published
- Tech Levels. 77 new ones announced for this Sept
- Core Maths. Consultation on proposed technical guidance published
- Exam reform. Education Committee announce new short sharp inquiry
- UCAS. Launches proposals for new tariff
- Careers. DfE publish latest statutory guidance
- iDEA. New digital enterprise award for young people launched by the Duke of York
- Regional Schools Commissioners. The first six now appointed
- School teachers. Record numbers now working in schools
- Head teachers. Work begins on new set of standards
- Maths teachers. New Golden Hello scheme launched for FE
- NAHT edge. NAHT's new affiliate union announced
- FE. Minister writes detailed end of term report
- Adult literacy and numeracy. New research centre announced
- LEPs. Labour promise support as part of new local growth plans
- Student Loans. New student panel inquiry launched by Universities UK

### Reports/Publications of the month (in order of publication)

- **European Jobs and Skills.** The think tank IPPR highlights the changing labour market facing young people across Europe as it continues to examine lessons from abroad
- **The Impact of Universities on the UK Economy.** UUK's latest analysis suggests that UKHE generates £73bn for the economy and contributes 2.8% to our GDP
- **Consultation on setting the grade standards of new GCSEs in England.** Ofqual launches consultation on some of the main anchor points for the new GCSE grading scale
- **National strategy for access and student success in HE.** BIS pulls together the extensive work done by HEFCE, OFFA and others to create a more coherent system
- **A statement of support for VQs offered outside the UK by recognised AOs.** BIS sets out the latest voluntary guiding principles for offshore provision
- **The geography of youth unemployment.** The Work Foundation colours in the ever changing map of youth unemployment danger spots ranging from old coal-mining towns to coastal towns
- **An Update on the reforms being made to GCSEs.** Ofqual does what it says on the tin
- **An Update on the reforms being made to AS and A levels.** Ofqual does the same for AS/A
- **Consultation on reforming GCSE modern foreign and ancient languages.** Ofqual launches a short consultation on assessment and tiering principles for new GCSEs in languages
- **Payback time?** The Institute for Fiscal Studies analyses what the 2012 tuition fees means for graduates and concludes that most will still be paying back in their fifties
- **Global demand for English HE.** Research from HEFCE shows demand for transnational education growing but a downturn in student enrolments in 2012/13
- **HE in England in 2014.** HEFCE crunches the numbers, trends and data on UKHE in 2014
- **Careers guidance and inspiration in schools.** The DfE publishes the latest statutory guidance for schools and their governing bodies
- **Teaching Schools Evaluation.** The National College for School Leadership highlights the importance of alliances in the development of Teaching Schools
- **Introducing a new Tariff.** UCAS invites comments on its proposed new tariff model

- **Core Maths.** The DfE publishes the latest technical guidance proposals to be used in the design of this new 16+ qualification
- **Structure and Prospects Appraisals.** BIS updates guidance for colleges considering significant structural change
- **Industrial Strategy.** The Government assesses the impact of its strategy one year on with progress reports from each of the major sectors
- **A comparison of student loans in England and Australia.** HEPI considers what lessons can be learned from Australia on matters like repayment and financial support

### Speeches of the month

- Liam Byrne's 1<sup>st</sup> April Robbins Rebooted speech sets out the five standard principles guiding Labour's review of HE funding
- Matthew Hancock's 1<sup>st</sup> April European Jobs and Skills Summit speech extols the current vocational reforms and calls for more research on the links between education and employment
- Michael Gove's 1<sup>st</sup> April British Chambers of Commerce speech sets a new ambition to eradicate illiteracy and innumeracy
- David Willetts 3<sup>rd</sup> April Universities UK conference speech stresses the brighter side of UKHE with opportunities for growth, research, wider participation and economic returns all stressed
- Ed Miliband's 7<sup>th</sup> April local growth speech pledges a massive devolvement of responsibility to new city regions in a bid to stimulate local growth
- Elizabeth Truss's 7<sup>th</sup> April early years speech stresses the importance of Schools Direct and Teach First in helping raise the quality of early years provision
- Elizabeth Truss's 10 April Reform speech points to how some of the Government's reforms are contributing to a self-improving system
- Vince Cable's 23<sup>rd</sup> April Cambridge Lecture proposes a strengthened high-level technician route

### Quotes of the month

- *"Our message is clear. There are no barriers to setting up a higher education campus. If this is your town's dream we want you to pursue it."* The HE Minister supports those who dare to dream
- *"It's now clear that what is proposed is a system that combines the worst of a free for all and a money pit."* Labour's Liam Byrne on the HE funding system
- *"Let us now move away from our snobbish caste-ridden hierarchical obsession with university status."* Vince Cable on the Crosland vision for a high-level technical sector
- *"I believe the sector deserves credit for consistently improving performance as measured by Ofsted."* The FE Minister on an improving FE sector
- *Today's 15 year olds are the Robinson Crusoes of a future that remains largely unknown to us."* The OECD on the journey for modern 15 year olds
- *"We must ensure no child grows up in modern Britain with their futures irredeemably blighted by illiteracy and innumeracy."* Michael Gove on a new mission
- *"We have had discussions with the Secretary of State and the exam boards holding the ring really on what is a manageable next phase of reform."* The Chief Executive of Ofqual on the latest wave of exam reforms

### Word or phrase of the month

- *'Adultifying.'* What critics claim is being done to nursery education
- *"An individual's capacity to engage in cognitive processing to understand and resolve problem situations where a method of solution is not immediately obvious."* PISA definition of problem-solving competence

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Policy Tracker on what happened in April 2014

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