

2015/12

18 Dec 2015

## Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in December 2015

### Main talking points

A shorter working month but no shortage of activity with Ofsted's latest Annual Report, the government's 2020 Vision for Apprenticeships, UCAS's summary report on 2015 admissions, the Social Mobility Commission's third annual report and the latest statements on school and FE funding, all making the news.

### Key headlines from the month

- Children's Services. Government announces 'failing' services will be taken over
- Coasting. Criteria to be extended to Academies
- Careers. New joint Education Committee launches another inquiry
- Intervention in underperforming schools. Consultation closes
- Appeals. Ofqual launches consultation
- ICT. Thousands sign petition to keep it at GCSE and A level
- Re-sits. Ofqual consults on proposals for re-sitting legacy qualifications
- School funding (1.) DfE announces revenue funding settlement for 2016/17
- School Funding (2.). F40 group presents petition on fair funding
- State school debt. Rises to over £50m overall according to TES survey
- Sixth Form Colleges. Guidance on applying for Academy status due in the New Year
- FE Funding (1.) BIS publishes latest funding letter and spending totals
- FE funding (2.) Public Accounts Committee raises concerns about 'future deterioration'
- Traineeships. Government invites all eligible providers to offer programmes
- Apprenticeships. Government sets out its long-term vision and plans for 2020
- UCAS. Publishes its summary report on 2015 admissions
- Voc ed. Uni of Huddersfield scoops large Gatsby grant to help improve voc ed T/L
- National Living Wage. Government lists 4 steps bosses need to take before April 2016

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

- **Annual Report.** Ofsted's latest Annual Report highlights some familiar concerns but it's the attainment gaps between secondary schools in the North and the South that grabs the headlines
- **Great Expectations.** City and Guilds looks into the career aspirations of 14-19 yr olds and raises issues about careers guidance, clarity of pathways and poorly matched aspirations
- **'Should I stay or should I go?'** The NFER becomes the latest to add its voice to the growing concerns about teacher recruitment and retention as it examines who's joining and who's leaving
- **'Patterns and Trends in UK HE 2015.'** UUK and HESA's annual data-drop reports on an increase in disadvantaged and non-EU students as the sector continues to change over time
- **Innovating Pedagogy.** The OU pushes the boundaries with its latest collection of essays on ten new teaching and learning strategies
- **Annual Report.** The Education Endowment Foundation publishes its 2014/15 Annual Report highlighting in particular its toolkits, programmes and resources helping to close the gap
- **Implementing the FE and Skills Reform Programme.** The FE Minister sends out his latest termly update on developments in the learning and skills sector
- **English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision.** The government sets out its strategy and time plan for achieving the 3m target by 2020
- **Supply and demand for higher level skills.** Universities UK argues that far from a shortage of high skilled graduates in the future, the demand for those with such skills will actually increase
- **Employability: Degrees of Value.** An Occasional Paper for HEPI looks at the issue of employability and what more could be done to help graduates in this area
- **Consultation on marking reviews, appeals and related changes.** Ofqual proposes a number of changes designed to make the system more transparent yet secure
- **Advanced Learner Loans Prospectus.** The Skills Funding Agency publishes the prospectus for eligible qualifications for the 2015/16 funding years
- **Funding Rules.** The Skills Funding Agency updates its funding rules and guidance for training and skills providers for up to August 2016

- **Skills Funding Agency funding letter.** The government leaves the SFA with some tough calls as it issues its funding priorities and limits for 2016/17 and beyond
- **Improving Schools in Scotland.** The OECD assesses the state of play in Scotland and finds much to be positive about in the new curriculum framework but also a need to push on
- **Overseeing financial sustainability in the FE sector.** The Public Accounts Committee raises further concerns about support and intervention in the FE sector
- **End of Cycle report.** UCAS issues its annual report summarising trends, data and implications coming out of this year's admissions cycle which saw a 3.1% increase in numbers accepted
- **Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain.** The Commission publishes its third annual 'State of the Nation Report with some important recommendations for education

## Speeches of the month

- Sir Michael Wilshaw's 1 December Annual Report **speech** highlights continuing improvements at primary level, sharp regional differences at secondary level and a drop in some FE areas
- Education Minister Sam Gyimah's 3 December Westminster Education Forum **speech** sketches out the government's staged approach to careers education and promises more details to come
- Business Secretary Savid Javid's 4 December Birmingham **speech** positions the Midlands Engine alongside the Northern Powerhouse as a vehicle for local growth
- The Prime Minister's 7 December 'we can deliver' **speech** outlines how the government is delivering in 5 key areas: academies, apprenticeships, housing, health and families
- Ofqual Chief Executive Glenys Stacey's 8 December Awarding Organisations **speech** highlights the importance of meeting users' needs as part of the new regulatory system
- Sir Michael Wilshaw's 11 December BCC **speech** calls on employers to work with schools and colleges on apprenticeships, employability skills and governing bodies

## Quotes of the month

- *"We have a very clear view that to give young people a good start in life, they should have the choice of an apprenticeship or a university place when they leave school."* The PM believes young people should take one of two roads when they leave school
- *"It's a moral outrage that the education system systematically fails the poorest children in the country at every level from early years on."* The social mobility tsar on education's challenge
- *"These instructions are valid through to 2020."* The FE and Skills Minister sends his priorities through to the Skills Funding Agency
- *"We will continue with a minimum funding guarantee so no school sees more than 1.5% per pupil reduction in its 2016/17 budget."* The Education Minister explains the schools' revenue settlement for 2016/17
- *"We have already shown that we are tough on underperforming academies and that RSCs take robust action where needed."* The Education Secretary gets tough and extends the coasting definition to Academies
- *"We feel that a period of consistency and stability for this sector will have greater impact than major structural reform."* The Education Minister on the Government's plans for careers
- *"We shouldn't just sit around in my office saying scrap this, scrap that."* Lucy Powell, Shadow Education Secretary, on the view from her office
- *"The current system in which teachers mark exams in their spare time for little pay is simply not able to cope with the sheer number of scripts which have to be marked each summer."* The General Secretary of one of the professional associations reacts to the latest data on appeals

## Word or phrase of the month

- *'Missing middle.'* School leavers neither going to uni or on to an apprenticeship

## Steve Besley

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