



Pearson

Policy Tracker – Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in March 2019



Main talking points

It's been a month in which the Chancellor set out the financial landscape in his Spring Statement and schools and colleges continued to campaign for extra investment. Elsewhere youth knife crime and its possible causation attracted considerable debate, the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) held the first of the big Spring teacher Conferences, teachers were promised an Advisory Wellbeing Group, apprenticeships were celebrated in style at the annual National Apprenticeship Week, the government launched an important consultation on Level 3 and below qualifications and published a new Strategy for International Education while future skills, artificial intelligence and the use of social media have all continued to provide the backdrop to many developments

Key headlines from the month

- Jessie and friends. 4-7 yr olds get new cartoon to help spread the word about online risks
- Knife crime. Ofsted warns against drawing links with school exclusions
- Test anxiety. Ofqual issues blogs intended to soothe
- GCSE English Language. ASCL's Commission issues interim report
- Teacher wellbeing. Government announces new Advisory Group
- 21stc system. Lib-Dems set up an independent Commission to consider
- SEND review. Judge rules parents can take case of cuts to SEND funding to High Court
- T level contracts. IfATE launches next bidding round
- L3 and below qualifications. Government launches initial consultation
- National Apprenticeship Week. Heralds a range of activities and announcements
- Apprenticeships. National Audit Office questions value for money
- Devolved adult education budget. Government issues grants for August 2019 – July 2020
- College of the Future. Independent Commission begins to consider
- Skills system. Skills Commission announces new review
- Office for Students. Number of reflections as it reaches its first birthday
- Student mental health. Government announces new taskforce
- International education. Government publishes new Strategy
- Spending Review 2019. The Chancellor confirms this will be launched before the summer recess

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

- **Local Accountability in the National Education Service.** The Labour Party launches consultation on how local accountability should operate under its proposed National Education Service
- **Nursing Degree Apprenticeships.** The government issues its response to the Education Committee Inquiry into Nursing Degree Apprenticeships with no change to the time limit for the use of levy funds
- **Post 16 institutions and providers Omnibus Survey.** The DfE publishes the findings from its latest user survey focusing this time on the work of post-16 providers and the different forms of provision
- **The apprenticeships programme.** The NAO reports on latest developments suggesting that value for money is still some way off and that concerns about quality, reach and overspends remain
- **Funding Impact Survey.** The Sixth Form Colleges Association reports on its latest funding survey of members finding many having to drop subjects, increase class sizes and cut back on levels of support
- **Students' views on the financial health of universities.** The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) reports on students views on financial health of universities finding most would want to know if there were issues
- **Where is the money going?** The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IfS) examines the variations in how government grants and subsidies are distributed across courses and institutions in higher education
- **Draft AEB funding rules for 2019/20.** The Education and Skills Funding Agency publishes the draft funding rules for the adult education budget (AEB) for the coming year
- **Degree Apprenticeships.** The Office for Students (OfS) points to a slow burn with Degree Apprenticeships but notes the potential for growth and for supporting social mobility
- **T levels accountability statement.** The DfE publishes the latest version of who's responsible for what in the T level system
- **Time for Action.** The Learning and Work Institute reports on UK skill developments calling for a more ambitious approach for the future as other countries continue to outperform the UK
- **Safeguarding children from knife crime.** Ofsted draws conclusions from its research into schools in London, calling for better support, partnership working and information-sharing generally
- **Unlocking digital competition.** The Expert Panel issues its final report calling for a more open market, simpler data transfers and a new code of conduct overseen by a new digital markets unit
- **Advanced learner loans prospectus.** The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) issues the prospectus for the 2019/20 financial year with only minor modifications
- **Spring Statement.** The Chancellor delivers his latest report on the economy, suggesting a possible Brexit dividend which could allow for increased public spending in the forthcoming Spending Review
- **A new system for student visas.** The MillionPlus group calls for a reduction in some of the bureaucracy around the current system and a possible 'approval in principle' system for student visas
- **Understanding maths anxiety.** The Nuffield Foundation reports on its work looking into maths anxiety, finding many people experience it and teachers and parents often make it worse
- **The True Cost of Education.** The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) spells out the true cost of education currently facing a £5.7bn funding gap, in a report at its Annual Conference
- **Forgotten third.** The ASCL Commission of Enquiry looking into the 30+% of students who fail to achieve the standard pass in GCSE Eng Lang considers options in an interim report

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- **Report into the impact of social media on young people's health and wellbeing.** The All Party Parliamentary Group reports on its research with a call for a levy to fund a supervisory Body
- **Pick up the pace.** The Resolution Foundation argues that the increase in skill and attainment levels over the last 25 years has slowed and that Brexit and other factors may trigger a new drive for skills
- **International Education Strategy.** The government publishes its new international strategy pledging to increase the value of outgoing education exports as well as the numbers of international students
- **Review of post-16 qualifications at L3 and below in England.** The government launches its consultation on proposed funding criteria for L3 and below qualifications in the future
- **Independent Commission on Lifelong Learning.** The Commission, set up by Vince Cable, publishes its report calling for a system of top-up Personal Education and Skill Accounts
- **A sustainable future funding model for apprenticeships.** The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) call for degree apprenticeship funding to be removed from the levy system
- **FE Workforce Data Collection.** The government launches a consultation on developing a simpler but more effective system of collecting appropriate workforce data
- **UK tax revenues from international students post-graduation.** The HE Policy Institute and Kaplan highlight how much international graduates who stay on and work actually contribute in tax and work
- **Quality Strategy.** The Quality Alliance of regulatory bodies outlines a set of before, during and after best practice procedures for apprenticeships
- **Industry placements.** The DfE issues guidance for employers on how these are supposed to operate in forthcoming T level programmes
- **Which occupations are most at risk of being automated?** The Office for National Statistics (ONS) suggests low low-skilled, routine jobs are most at risk while professional jobs like teaching are less so
- **Only the lonely.** Wonkhe publishes the results of its commissioned survey into student loneliness and its effect on student wellbeing, indicating that many young people find the transition difficult
- **Making apprenticeships work.** The Social Market Foundation highlights concerns about wage differentials and quality in some sectors and calls for a new titling and new quality ratings system

Speeches of the month

- Damian Hinds' **9 March Diversity Network speech** outlines what the government is doing to try and encourage more people from minority ethnic backgrounds to become teachers or school governors
- The Chancellor's **13 March Spring Statement** points to a robust economy with the potential for growth and increased spending but dependent on a successful Brexit and transition phase
- Damian Hinds' **15 March ASCL speech** acknowledges concerns about school funding, reports on the teacher recruitment/retention strategy and announces the creation of an advisory wellbeing group
- Amanda Spielman's **16 March ASCL speech** talks through some of the issues emerging from Ofsted's consultation on its revised inspection framework and the thinking behind them
- Geoff Barton's **16 March ASCL speech** highlights the challenges facing today's education leaders and pinpoints funding, accountability and young people as features of a more positive system

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- Chris Skidmore's [25 March Wonkhe speech](#) outlines the concept of the STEP cycle (student transition, experience, progression) for uni students and what's needed to support each step
- Amanda Spielman's [27 March Apprenticeships Conference speech](#) reports on the changing nature of apprenticeship provision and what Ofsted is doing to assure quality provision
- Chris Skidmore's [27 March International HE speech](#) sets out four principles to help promote and support international; education as indicated in the recent government strategy

Quotes of the month

- "We are committed to returning technical and vocational skills to the heart of our educational system" – the Chancellor raises the profile in his Spring Statement
- "We should not draw a simple causal link from exclusions to crime" – the Education Secretary warns against linking school exclusions to gang crime
- "I want to see paintbrushes in their hands, not knives" – Sir Lenny Henry highlights the importance of the creative arts in helping young people engage rather than turn to crime
- "We've transformed apprenticeships in this country" – the Education Secretary helps launch this year's National Apprenticeship Week
- "Barely anybody in No.10, the Treasury of the Dept for Education has much time for us" – Sir Anthony Seldon laments what's happening to UKHE
- "There are concerns about the long-term sustainability of the programme" – the National Audit Office reports on the apprenticeships programme
- "We want all post-16 qualifications that we approve for public funding in future to follow our key principles of quality, purpose, necessity and progression" – the government launches its review of L3 and below qualifications in England
- "Careers advice has thankfully moved on from my school days, where I once did a multiple-choice test and was told I should work in catering" – the Education Secretary on the changing face of careers advice
- "To a non-Brit it might seem like a hilarious pastiche of old England's enlightened high society" – a New Statesman columnist calls for University Challenge to be modernized
- "I'm not going to leave the kids in the lurch when they've got exams coming up" – an English teacher from Birmingham wins the second highest prize in Who Wants to be a Millionaire

Word or phrase of the month

- Fire. (Financially independent, retire early.) What many people are aspiring to apparently

Steve Besley

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