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CES Newsletter: Issue 20

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[Date]

[Company name]

This newsletter should be of interest to all teachers, Because of the crisis it will be issued on a weekly basis from now on. This will hopefully mean I can pass on whatever useful information I find and, to be honest, because I am time rich, if income poorer. It will of course be shorter than the usual fortnightly edition.

Coronaquiz 2 has been issued. If you want to form a team and have not already registered with me please send me your email. [Gordon.ceslondon@gmail.com](mailto:Gordon.ceslondon@gmail.com).

CONTENT

**The schools section contains articles on;**

**The higher education section contains articles on;**

**The employment section contains articles on;**

**The miscellaneous section contains articles on;**

**SNIPPETS**

**SCHOOLS**

**ONLINE SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS**

The following is taken from the excellent SecEd publication, which is highly recommended.

BBC Bitesize Daily offer 14 weeks of curriculum-related learning for children aged 5-14. It includes daily programmes and online lessons as well as further online content, including videos, quizzes, podcasts and articles. The material is spread across BBC iPlayer, Red Button, BBC Bitesize website and app, BBC Four, and BBC Sounds. Each day, various 20-minute programmes will be available on BBC iPlayer or BBC Red Button, from where parents are directed to resources available that day. Content is divided into age groups. BBC Bitesize online has a daily maths and English lesson for every child with more subjects to follow and will house podcasts, videos, quizzes and lessons. BBC Sounds will offer two daily education podcasts while BBC Four will have evening programming to support the GCSE and A level curriculums. Visit [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize).

**Cross-curricular resources**

* Adventures in Familyhood: A collection of 20 virtual field trips: <https://adventuresinfamilyhood.com/20-virtual-field-trips-to-take-with-your-kids.html>
* British Museum: Free access to its online collection, offering over 2m records, many of which include images: <https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx>
* Classoos: Offer access to its textbook archive free for 90 days. Available online or via apps, the textbooks are searchable by curriculum, subject and language: [www.classoos.com/free-textbooks-for-90-days/](https://www.classoos.com/free-textbooks-for-90-days/)
* Ed Place: Home education app offering resources and activities from year 1 to GCSE. Subscription, but offering a £1 trial period: [www.edplace.com](http://www.edplace.com/)
* First News: Free online learning resources for schools focused on KS2/3. Registration required. Also offer current issues of its newspaper and activity sheets for free and has launched a free six-week trial of iHub, which has weekly, news-based learning resources: <https://schools.firstnews.co.uk/remote-learning-resources/>
* HelpKidzLearn: Software for young children and those with learning difficulties to play online. A home access licence is being offered on a monthly basis at a ‘reduced, manageable cost’. There are free downloads available for its ChooseIt Maker 3 activities app: [www.helpkidzlearn.com/updates/school-closure.html](http://www.helpkidzlearn.com/updates/school-closure.html)
* PlayHooray: A range of play ideas to keep young children entertained available for free, many using household items: <https://playhooray.co.uk/blogs/news/play-for-all-ages>
* Speakers for Schools: A Virtual Talks programme to allow young people to access careers advice and inspiration: [www.speakersforschools.org](http://www.speakersforschools.org/)
* Teacher’s Pet: Free home learning resource pack. Early years to age 11: <https://tpet.co.uk/tpet-news/how-to-create-your-free-account-and-download-our-free-home-learning-resource-packs/>
* Ted Ed: Educational videos on a range of subjects and topics: <https://ed.ted.com/>
* Twitter: There are a range of hashtags on Twitter linking to home learning resources, activities and ideas. These include #MathsAtHome, #geographyathome, #ScienceAtHome and #ScienceFromHome, as well as more general hashtags such as #HomeschoolingUK: [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com/)
* Virtual museum tours: Travel and Leisure has published links to museums around the world that offer virtual tours online: [www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours](http://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours)

**English, maths & science**

* 3P Learning: A Digital Accelerator Support Package covering maths and literacy for students aged 4-14. Includes the Mathletics challenge and reward resource, Reading Eggs; online reading lessons, activities and ebooks, as well as science activities. Free 30-day trial available: [www.mathletics.com/uk/digital-accelerator-support-package/](http://www.mathletics.com/uk/digital-accelerator-support-package/)
* Abingdon Science Partnership: Abingdon School has worked with neighbouring schools to produce home learning resources, short lesson ideas, longer project ideas, and more. Covers primary, secondary and beyond: [www.abingdonsciencepartnership.org/useful-links/](http://www.abingdonsciencepartnership.org/useful-links/)
* Ark Curriculum Plus (English Mastery): Free resources and guidance to help provide daily sessions for learners in Reception and KS1/2/3: [www.englishmastery.org/our-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.englishmastery.org/our-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19/)
* Ark Curriculum Plus (Maths Mastery): Free resources and guidance to help provide sessions for learners, covering Reception and KS1/2/3: [www.mathematicsmastery.org/free-resources](http://www.mathematicsmastery.org/free-resources)
* Explore Learning: Mathematician Bobby Seagull will be running free Mid-Morning Maths sessions live streamed via Explore Learning’s Facebook channel. Meanwhile, Explore at Home is an online service for pupils aged 4-14 offering 1-1 tutoring: [www.explorelearning.co.uk/keepeducationgoing/](http://www.explorelearning.co.uk/keepeducationgoing/)
* Frontiers for Young Minds: An open-access journal written by foremost scientists and specifically for young people. Topics include astronomy and space science, biodiversity, neuroscience, pollution, and mental health: <https://kids.frontiersin.org/>
* Maths on Toast: Free resources and activities to support young children: [www.mathsontoast.org.uk/fun-maths-at-home/](https://www.mathsontoast.org.uk/fun-maths-at-home/)
* Maths Factor (Carol Vorderman): Free for the duration of the UK schools closure. Ages 4 to 12. Curriculum-linked: [www.themathsfactor.com](http://www.themathsfactor.com/)
* Mystery Science: Free collection of science lessons for early years and primary pupils: <https://mysteryscience.com/school-closure-planning>
* MyTutor: A free online school for GCSE students offering live tutorials and educational resources. It covers all subjects, but is currently focusing on English, maths and science. Free access while schools are shut: <https://m.mytutor.co.uk/online-school/>
* Nanogirl’s Lab: Offers a daily science activity with related worksheets and resources for children aged 7-11. Also includes weekly parent webinars. A small subscription fee is charged with Nanogirl offering free access to a disadvantaged family for every subscription sold: <https://nanogirlslab.com/>
* National Numeracy: A pack offering 28 free activities for young children: [www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/news/free-family-maths-activities-children-aged-4-11-0](http://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/news/free-family-maths-activities-children-aged-4-11-0)
* Nurturey: The Mental Maths feature of the Nurturey App has been made free for all users during the period of school closures: [www.nurturey.com/uk](http://www.nurturey.com/uk)
* Royal Society: Its Science at Home section offers experiments, videos and lesson plans, covering curriculum themes, with support from the likes of Professor Brian Cox. It also offers STEM resources, including activity sheets and simple experiments for primary pupils and careers information and more in-depth scientific questions and techniques for secondary students: <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/education-skills/teacher-resources-and-opportunities/science-at-home/>
* Scratch Scratch: A programming language and an online community where children can program and share interactive media such as stories, games and animation. Ages 8-16 (or a junior version for ages 5-7 <https://scratch.mit.edu/parents/>
* STEM Learning: A range of home-schooling pages include pupil activities, family activities and ideas and materials for teachers working in schools. Includes a primary and secondary ‘resource of the day’ feature: [www.stem.org.uk/home-learning](http://www.stem.org.uk/home-learning)
* University of Kent: Downloadable materials for primary and secondary students focused on human evolution and the history of human ancestors. Includes activity books and a ‘Find your path of evolution’ board game. Printable files available via Dropbox: <https://bit.ly/3e00zVO>

**The arts**

* Climb the Walls: Online dance classes: <http://islandmovingco.org/climb-the-walls-and-dance-with-imc-nab/>
* Dance Warriors: Dance with Strictly Come Dancing and The Greatest Dancers' Oti Mabuse: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Btxws8qvYAA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Btxws8qvYAA)
* Disney Theatrical Productions: Free downloadable creative activities for educators and parents based on the West End shows The Lion King, Mary Poppins, Frozen and Aladdin. Ages 6-14. There is also a podcast series featuring careers advice from the West End, including technical production, carpentry, wardrobe, and make-up: <https://disneyonstage.co.uk/education/>
* Little Angel Theatre: Free daily story readings and activity packs for age 3-11: <https://littleangeltheatre.com/schools-and-community/at-home-resources/>
* National Theatre: Their Collection is available via remote access. Schools and colleges can share log-in details with pupils. Includes recordings of 24 productions and counting. Includes Shakespeare set texts, novels such as Frankenstein and Peter Pan, and more: [www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/ntcollection](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/ntcollection)
* Nature Detectives: A range of activities, some which can be done from a garden: <https://naturedetectives.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives>
* Poetry Society: Poetry learning resources for teachers, parents, carers and students: <https://poetrysociety.org.uk/education/learning-from-home/>
* Red Ted Art: Art and craft activities: [www.redtedart.com](http://www.redtedart.com/)
* Royal Shakespeare Company: Games, ideas, exercises, images, videos, galleries and more in the Shakespeare Learning Zone: [www.rsc.org.uk/education/about-rsc-education/home-learning-with-the-rsc](http://www.rsc.org.uk/education/about-rsc-education/home-learning-with-the-rsc)
* Shakespeare’s Globe: Digital content, six free films, and Mark Rylance's “Shakespeare Walks” among other materials: [www.shakespearesglobe.com](http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/)
* Tate Galleries: Students can explore the Tate Galleries online or find out more about particular artists. Includes a regular podcast: [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk/)
* Wind in the Willows: The West End musical is available to stream for free during the lockdown period: [www.willowsmusical.com](http://www.willowsmusical.com/)

**Other subjects**

* Anne Frank: Gillian Walnes Perry, co-founder of the Anne Frank Trust, has converted two of her talks into an online illustrated presentation with her own narration. Entitled The Life and Surprising Legacy of Anne Frank, it is suitable for students aged 10+. There is a nominal fee of £3.50: <http://gillianwalnesperry.com/>
* Commonwealth War Graves Foundation: Downloadable, curriculum-linked resources examining the scale of the world wars and how we commemorate those who died. A new resource on the life of Second World War secret agent Noor Inayat-Khan is available: [www.cwgc.org/learn/resources/learning-resources](http://www.cwgc.org/learn/resources/learning-resources)
* Economist Foundation: A free weekly bulletin and critical thinking resources for secondary students: <https://economistfoundation.org/resources/>
* British Nutrition Foundation: The Food for Life Classroom is an online hub offering activity ideas and resources for pupils aged 3-16: [www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/whole-school/remote-learning/](http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/whole-school/remote-learning/)
* Geographical Association: Geography from Home offers schools, parents and students access to geographical ideas, activities and quizzes. Teachers will also find resources for setting remote work for students of all ages: [www.geography.org.uk/geography-from-home](http://www.geography.org.uk/geography-from-home)
* Jubilee Centre for Character & Virtues: As well as its usual resources, the Jubilee Centre is offering parents reading and writing resources and activities focused on character education traits, such as empathy, courage and bravery, compassion and kindness: [www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1777/character-education/parent-resources](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1777/character-education/parent-resources)
* National Geographic for Kids: Resources and activities covering geography, science, history, the animal world and more. Ages 6-13: [www.natgeokids.com/uk/](http://www.natgeokids.com/uk/)
* Ocean Wise Conservation Association: A free online ocean-literacy resource called Online Oceans. Includes ocean-inspired crafts, activities, DIY videos, live-streamed learning, and animal content: [https://ocean.org/learnonline/](https://ocean.org/learnonline/%20%20)
* Royal Geographical Society: Online resources for everything from colouring in sheets on weather for KS1 1 pupils to podcasts for A level geographers. There is also online CPD for teachers: [www.rgs.org/resources](http://www.rgs.org/resources)

**Mental health and wellbeing**

* Alcohol Education Trust: Online PSHE alcohol awareness resources, games and activities for age 11-18:  [www.alcoholeducationtrust.org](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/oE2tC8qmqcjkqnPH1kzIN?domain=alcoholeducationtrust.org) (teachers and parents); [www.talkaboutalcohol.com](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/P4bIC0g4gU2yB6gFW5M-Z?domain=talkaboutalcohol.com) (pupils)
* Bounce Forward: Online lessons to help parents learn how to help teenage children maintain a positive mental attitude during the lockdown: <https://bounceforward.com/>
* EduCare: Safeguarding training company with some online courses and resources available for free. Includes CPD courses for teachers as well as wellbeing resources aimed at families: [www.educare.co.uk/coronavirus](http://www.educare.co.uk/coronavirus)
* Focus Games: A free online Covid-19 game offers facts and challenges myths: <https://focusgames.com/index.html>
* Mentally Healthy Schools: Quality-assured resources to help primary schools promote children’s mental health and wellbeing. Specific resources on the Covid-19 outbreak: [www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk](http://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/)
* World Health Organisation: Advice for parents on how they can best support their children, including ideas for 1-1 time, advice on ‘keeping it positive’, how to manage stress, talking about Covid-19 and behaviour tips: [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting)
* Zoo webcams: The Holiday Pirates website has compiled a list of zoos with live animal webcams: [www.holidaypirates.com/travel-magazine/13-zoos-that-offer-live-streams-see-giraffes-koalas-pandas-tigers-penguins-more\_35765](http://www.holidaypirates.com/travel-magazine/13-zoos-that-offer-live-streams-see-giraffes-koalas-pandas-tigers-penguins-more_35765)

**Other support**

* NEU has a website for parents with advice on exams and assessment, learning outside of school, child wellbeing and mental health, SEND, and communication with schools. Also has recommended resources for parents and tips from its members for home learning: <https://coronavirusandschools.org.uk/>
* Parentkind: Information to help families, with tips for reading with children, games that support maths, supporting homework and more: [www.parentkind.org.uk/For-Parents/Parent-Hub/Supporting-Learning](http://www.parentkind.org.uk/For-Parents/Parent-Hub/Supporting-Learning)-
* Teacher or school support
* ASCL: Compilation of latest government information and other essential advice and guidance for school leaders: <https://ascl.org.uk/Help-and-Advice/Leadership-and-governance/Health,-safety-and-safeguarding/Coronavirus-essential-information>
* BTS Spark: Free leadership coaching/CPD course on leading schools during this time of uncertainty. Open to all those in leadership roles in state-funded schools or colleges. Includes 1-1 support: [www.bts.com/en-gb/spark/our-programs/coaching-through-covid-19](http://www.bts.com/en-gb/spark/our-programs/coaching-through-covid-19)
* Impero Backdrop is a free digital safeguarding tool to aid recording and management of pupil wellbeing which is being offered free during the crisis. The software enables teachers and safeguarding staff to access a history for each student and can flag warning signs: [www.imperosoftware.com/uk/impero-backdrop/](http://www.imperosoftware.com/uk/impero-backdrop/)
* NAHT: Frequently asked questions for school leaders, includes latest government advice: [www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/news/leadership-news/frequently-asked-questions-about-coronavirus/](http://www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/news/leadership-news/frequently-asked-questions-about-coronavirus/)
* NEU: Remote learning guidance for school staff: <https://neu.org.uk/what-you-need-know-distance-tea.>
* NetSupport: Offering free use of its remote support software to all education establishments for free for the next few months. NetSupport Manager can support staff working at home, while home workers can use it to access resources and desktop apps: [www.netsupportsoftware.com/NSM-offer](http://www.netsupportsoftware.com/NSM-offer)
* NordVPN: Free cyber-security products. Educators facing lockdown can apply for six months of free services from NordVPN, NordLocker and NordPass: <https://nordvpn.com/social-responsibility/educators/>
* One Team Logic: Free access to the MyConcern Safeguarding Software to all schools that do not currently have an electronic recording system. Allows staff, remote or on-site, to record safeguarding concerns, with notifications for safeguarding leads: [www.myconcern.co.uk/national-safeguarding-emergency-response](http://www.myconcern.co.uk/national-safeguarding-emergency-response)

**WORKING CLASS PARENTS LESS CONFIDENT WITH HOME TEACHING**

A poll of over 1,500 parents by Sutton Trust and Public First found that only 37% of parents in the C2DE social grade were confident teaching their children and explaining things when they are learning from home, compared with 47% of those in the ABC1 grade. Overall, 42% of parents feel confident teaching their children at home, while 36% were “neither confident nor unconfident”.

The Sutton Trust has called for a “level playing field” and for high quality online tuition to be available for disadvantaged pupils. They said that this could be funded through a voucher scheme or through a network of quality-assured tutoring providers. The Education Endowment Foundation, the trust’s sister charity, has also said that it will provide support for schools through guidance and resources. Sir Peter Lampl, chair of both organisations, said: “Parents across the country are grappling with the challenge of home-schooling their children. The home learning environment has never been more important, but as today’s polling shows less than half of parents feel confident about teaching their child at home. Better-off parents are more able than poorer families to spend money on resources and support for their children.” He added: “To reduce the impact of school closures on the most disadvantaged pupils, we’d like to see high-quality online tuition available to the most disadvantaged pupils.”

The survey also found that children from working-class families were more likely to have had nothing spent on their home education, 60%, compared with 45% of middle-class children. Teach First has called on [tech firms and internet providers](https://schoolsweek.co.uk/coronavirus-help-poorer-children-access-online-learning-charity-begs-tech-firms/)to help poorer children get online, after a survey discovered that only 2% of teachers working in the poorest communities believed all their pupils can access the internet when at home. The Sutton Trust survey found that 49% of middle-class parents reported being satisfied with the learning support provided for their children, while 40% of working-class parents felt the same.

**SCHOOLS SHOULD OPEN DURING THE SUMMER**

Anne Longfield, the children’s commissioner, has said that [schools](https://www.theguardian.com/education/schools) should consider opening in some form over the summer holidays to help children catch up with the curriculum and to provide childcare for families who need to get back to work. She said: “It would be really valuable, if the scientific advice says they can, to have schools consider opening in some form over the summer holidays to help children learn and catch up but also to offer them a safe place to play and socialise with friends. It would also provide vital childcare for families who need to get their incomes back up as they, hopefully, return to work.” She added that schools could bring in play, sports and youth workers to help supervise pupils, saying, ‘It would be really valuable to have schools consider opening to help children learn and catch up but also offer a safe place to play and socialise”.

In a recent exercise to explore the public’s coronavirus concerns, the Commons petitions committee received numerous questions about whether schools should open in the summer holidays. Catherine McKinnell, committee chair, said: “Members of the public have been particularly concerned about education, how long schools will be closed, and some have queried whether school summer holidays will be changed as a result.”

The NEU immediately vetoed the idea. They said that cutting short the holidays mean little or no break for staff in schools that have remained open for key worker and vulnerable children, and for teachers running online provision.

Margaret Morrissey, founder of the pressure group [Parents Outloud](http://www.parentsoutloud.com/), was also opposed, saying: “At the moment schools are open and providing online work. After this is over, we all, including children, need real holidays. Cancelling the summer holidays will cause more confusion and disruption. We should aim for term starting in the first week in September and life going back to normal.”

**CHINESE INVESTORS BUYING UK INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ON THE CHEAP**

The TES has said that Chinese investors are lining up in a "feeding frenzy" over takeovers of English private schools while the pound is weak. Julian Fisher, from Beijing-based education consultancy Venture Education, said: “Chinese investors have not been put off by the current pandemic, if anything, it has accelerated the process. We were approached two weeks ago by a large property company from the south of China with explicit interest in purchasing a UK school and again this morning from a company in the north. The pound is weak, many UK schools seem open to sale and, like many things in China, it seems that the high-profile purchase of a few UK schools in 2019 has set a precedent for investors that may become something of a feeding frenzy. In most cases, the purchase of UK schools is mainly about the potential to expand the brand back in China with full control."

Long before the coronavirus pandemic Chinese investors have been seen [as the ‘salvation’ of struggling private schools](https://www.tes.com/news/private-schools-jolly-pleased-chinese-take-overs)without being in danger of ‘diluting’ their English character. The Independent Schools Association (ISA), which represents 540 schools, says schools nearer London are seen as more favourable. ISA deputy chief executive Peter Woodroffe said: "They'll do a business case, especially if a school has facilities for boarding and is within a couple of hours of London." Mr Woodroffe said the 80% of independent schools which were charitable trusts "might not be as quick to adapt" to business challenges as those run as private businesses. He said, “The charities are not as willing to make the hard decisions whereas the private businesses have stakeholders.”

**WE WILL NOT HAVE ENOUGH SCHOOL PLACES DUE TO BUIDING PROJECTS BEING PAUSED**

The DfE is investigating whether Covid-19 could lead to insufficient school places as building projects are delayed or paused. The national schools’ commissioner, Dominic Herrington, has written to local councils asking them to provide information "on the level of risk to your own school building projects". The letter says: "We will join up this information with our own intelligence about the delivery of free schools and Priority School Building projects due to open or move into permanent buildings in September 2020. This, in turn, will allow us to identify which local authorities require support in meeting their duty to provide sufficient school places and to engage with them on mitigations and contingency planning."

**NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH AIMED AT HELPING TEACHER TRAINING**

Julia Harrington, head of Queen Anne’s School in Caversham, has commissioned Professor Patricia Riddell, a neuroscience specialist at Reading University, to design a course in educational neuroscience to fill a perceived ‘gap’ in conventional teacher training. The Neuroscience for Teachers course, which will recruit up to 30 teachers from state and independent secondary schools, will focus on how children’s brains develop throughout the teenage years, and will be piloted in 2020-21. The course will involve six interactive days of workshops on topics including motivation and engagement; learning and technology; memory; decision-making and leadership; mental health and wellbeing; and action research project planning.

There has been rising interest in the way [neuroscience can be applied in schools.](https://www.tes.com/news/brain-scan-lesson-plan-millions-neuroscience-research-uk-classrooms) However, some academics [doubt that meaningful links can be drawn between neuroscience and education.](https://www.tes.com/news/schools-should-be-wary-about-using-neuroscience-nonsense-classroom-academic-says) Ms Harrington said the application of educational neuroscience and cognitive psychology at her own school had led to improved emotional wellbeing and academic performance. She said, "I believe that learning to become a teacher is incomplete without some understanding of what’s happening in the teenage brain. We used to think that the brain stopped developing at age 11 but we now know that it continues to adapt well into adolescence. It’s obvious to me that both classroom teaching and pastoral care need to reflect this aspect of children’s growth." Professor Riddell said: "I am very excited to be given this opportunity by Julia and BrainCanDo to bring my expertise to the educational sector. There is so much that we now know about how children’s brains develop that can help teachers, both by designing teaching and learning which works with our brains and increasing motivation in children to learn."

Teachers wishing to take part must have 3-5 years’ experience and will also need the support of their head. They will be recruited over the spring and summer of 2020 to take part in the pilot, which will start in September 2020 and finish in June 2021. The course will be free to participants as training costs will be covered by Ms Harrington's research centre BrainCanDo. Heads interested in nominating a teacher should contact [info@braincando.com](mailto:info@braincando.com)

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**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**SOME UNIVERSITIES WILL GO BUST WITHOUT A FINANCIAL BALEOUT**

Alistair Jarvis, chief executive of UUK, has said, "Without government support, some universities will face financial failure, others will come close to financial failure and be forced to reduce provision." UUK say that the coronavirus pandemic is threatening to sharply cut overseas student numbers and put universities in financial danger. He is calling for an extra £2bn in research funding as well as emergency loans for universities that faced "significant income losses". Universities receive almost £7bn in fees from overseas students.

The university sector says it has already lost £790m in cancelled business activities, such as conferences, catering and student accommodation. There is also uncertainty about whether campuses will be able to re-open in the autumn and how many UK students will defer entry. In response, UUK is asking for controls on the number of students each university in England and Wales recruit this year, keeping them to levels expected before the coronavirus outbreak, to stop financially unsustainable swings in numbers. One leaked email from a Russell Group university warned that they could lose a quarter of its income next year. UUK are also calling to push back by a year the point at which European Union students are categorised as overseas students, when they will face higher fees and visa restrictions.

Jo Grady of the UCU lecturers' union said the UUK plan was a "piecemeal approach that fails to recognise the size of the problem, or the damage we risk doing to our academic capacity". Eva Crossan Jory, vice president of the NUS, said any extra funding must support students, "especially considering the mounting discontent that courses are not being delivered as promised and demands for refunds". She backed calls for the government to step in to protect higher education but said it should include "refunding or all or part of the fees". A DfE spokeswoman said: "The outbreak poses significant challenges to the sector and the government is working closely with universities to understand the financial risks and implications they might face at this uncertain time."

**WHAT GRADUATE JOBS?**The Institute of Student Employers (ISE) has said that many firms have scaled down their recruitment of entry-level staff and more than a quarter of businesses are reducing the number of graduates they hire this year. Stephen Isherwood, chief executive of the ISE, said, “Thousands of young people are supposed to be entering the labour market from July and they could be left without work and nothing to do while coronavirus is sorted out. We need to make sure that a whole generation isn’t lost.” One major recruiter said, “Firms are being realistic, and most are putting recruitment on hold. No one wants to offer an opportunity which might not be there in three months’ time.”

Routes into graduate jobs have also been affected, with internships and placements reduced by almost a third, say the ISE, and 68% of firms have cancelled work experience and taster opportunities. James Turner, CEO of the Sutton Trust, said that shrinking opportunities tend to be bad for social mobility, with students unable to access internships and other work experience placements. He said: “Internships are increasingly necessary for many graduate jobs, and there is a risk that young people with professional connections may be able to find work experience while other, openly-advertised, opportunities cease to exist.” Nick Hillman, director of HEPI, said that although most companies will feel the impact, there will be some big winners and some losers depending on the sector. He said, “Even in this crisis, some employers are booming. Technology companies, the food sector and logistics firms are busier than ever.” He added, “You might not end up with the job you hoped for, but you can get a job.”

One likely outcome of the current crisis is that more students decide to take master’s degrees or further courses of study. Mr Hillman mooted this option, saying. “You can get government-backed loans for postgraduate study, and unis will be falling over themselves to recruit home students as international numbers will be down significantly.”

**WE DO NOT WANT TO PAY FOR OUR ACCOMMODATION**

Hundreds of students have signed up to a rent strike in protest at having to pay for accommodation where they have become trapped as a result of Covid-19. Many complain that they are stuck on near-deserted campuses where facilities and services have closed. Others say they cannot afford to pay because they have lost jobs vital to fund their living costs during their studies.

Jamsheed Cooper, a 27yr old masters student, is stranded in his £650-a-month student accommodation on the [Sussex University](https://www.theguardian.com/education/universityofsussex) campus, unable to get home to Dubai. He is one of about 150 supporting the rent strike at Sussex. He said, “We are stuck between a rock and a hard place. I’ve decided to withhold my rent. We can’t leave even if we wanted to. Almost all the campus services are absolutely closed. What are we paying for? The cleaners are not even coming. It’s a ghost town right now.” Also stuck and withholding his rent is George Grammer-Taylor, 23, a first-year law student, who lost his job in a seafront bar and is now relying on savings to survive. He said, “I’m refusing to pay because it almost feels like forced imprisonment. There’s nothing I can do. There’s just nothing on campus. It’s desolate. A lot of people are struggling. I just feel there’s no support for students when this should be the time when the university is supporting us the most. I’m very disappointed.”

A Sussex University spokesperson said students were told in March that rental payments for the final term would not apply for those who were no longer living on campus, costing the institution more than £5m in lost rent. While many [students](https://www.theguardian.com/education/students) were able to get out, others found themselves stuck after the universities minister, [Michelle Donelan, wrote to them urging them to stay put](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/university-students-england-told-not-travel-home) and not attempt to travel. The Sussex spokesperson said, “Providing these students with the many services required to enable them to live on campus and support their welfare at this very difficult time has, and will continue to be, our overwhelming priority.” They said that reception and security services were available 24/7, as well as catering, a supermarket, wellbeing services and regular cleaning and maintenance. They added, “We do appreciate this is an extremely unsettling time for our students on campus and we wish their time at Sussex could be different. We hope that our students know we will continue to do everything we can to respond to their needs.”

[Students](https://www.theguardian.com/education/students) at Warwick University have also started a rent strike. While the university has waived rent and cancelled contracts for students on campus, many renting off-campus from private landlords are still obliged to pay, though many of the rentals will have been arranged via the university’s property management agency. A Facebook group in support of the strike has gathered more than 650 members. Management student Alfie Brepotra told the [student newspaper, the Boar](https://theboar.org/2020/04/university-of-warwick-students-organise-rent-strike-against-private-landlords/): “Student tenants are already in a precarious position where it is easy for landlords to manipulate us and this crisis only highlights that, especially for working-class students and those who rely on part-time work who are now temporarily unemployed.” A Warwick spokesperson said, “Off-campus renting during the current situation continues to present complex challenges to everyone concerned. Our principal and immediate focus is on student hardship, ensuring that students with real financial support needs can access the support they need through the university’s students hardship scheme, rather than taking any other action that could lead them into potentially costly, and lengthy, legal disputes, particularly with private sector landlords.”

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**EMPLOYMENT**

**ROYAL MAIL PUTTING PROFITS BEFORE SAFETY**

Royal Mail is putting "profits before safety" say postal workers, who say that there is a shortage of gloves, masks and hand sanitiser and social distancing at work is "almost impossible". Over the last two weeks, staff at eight Royal Mail sites have walked out over safety concerns, with videos showing employees working shoulder-to-shoulder in a sorting office. A supervisor based in the north of England said that staff feel as though they are "forced to choose between their jobs and their health". He said, "I'm scared that my job will be in danger if I refuse to do a task because I believe it puts me in an unsafe position." One postman said: "The buildings we work in aren't designed for people to be able to space out. Everyone's gathered together, we're under each other’s skin. It's just completely impossible. When this was all kicking off, we were saying [to management] we need this stuff. But our big boss upstairs just said 'no you just need to wash your hands'. I'd love to wash my hands, but everything's shut. It's ridiculous." Another postman said: "We are touching 850 letterboxes with no protection. Coronavirus is spoken about like a nuisance at my office. It's not too much to ask to be equipped for the job."

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) accused Royal Mail of being slow to act in response to the crisis.

North West divisional rep Ian Taylor said it had been "busier than Christmas" with parcels and said it was imperative that protective equipment reached frontline staff. The CWU estimate that 20% of Royal Mail staff are currently off work. That equates to around 26,000 postmen and postwomen who are either sick or self-isolating. Postal workers have said that they were' exhausted by the extra workload, delivering items like home gym kits and garden furniture, as well as junk or advertising mail. Mr Taylor said, "People really do need to think about what they are buying at this particular time, it's placing incredible strain on frontline posties."

An apologist (presumably with their fingers crossed behind their back) for the company said they refute the union's claims and "wherever possible" workers were being kept at least two metres apart. Regular handwashing with soap and water is promoted amongst staff and there is "enhanced disinfectant cleaning of communal areas." The apologist said, "In assessing the risks to our people and making the necessary operational changes to protect them, we take professional medical and health and safety advice on a daily basis. We have already made a series of adjustments to our parcel-handling procedures to protect our colleagues and our customers."

**FLYING IN FARM WORKERS**

A group of farmers are using Air Charter Service to fly in seasonal workers from eastern Europe. Passengers will undergo health checks before departure. Anyone who displays symptoms of Covid-19 will not be allowed on board. The first flight from Rumania is full. On arrival the workers will be bussed to farms in the east of England. Further missions from Romania and Bulgaria are planned.

Another airline, Loganair, is connecting Aberdeen, Gdansk and Riga. CEO Jonathan Hinkles said: “There are still a lot of essential oil workers who need to move.” They also operate flights to Scotland’s islands, as well as Royal Mail services and a new passenger link between Heathrow and the Isle of Man on behalf of [British Airways](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/BritishAirways). Mr Hinkles said, “With half the fleet flying, we’re probably flying more of our aircraft than any other UK airline.”

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**FRENCH REALITY TV SHOW ON HELPING ‘DUNCES’**

A new reality TV show in France [Les Cancres (The Dunces)](https://www.programme-television.org/news-tv/Les-Cancres-RMC-Story-quand-des-stars-qui-ont-connu-l-echec-scolaire-rencontrent-des-lyceens-un-peu-perdus-4657073) features a group of pupils who have failed in the education system being coached by French celebrities who also struggled at school. The shows feature French-Moroccan stand-up comic [Gad Elmaleh](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/french-comedian-gad-elmaleh-netflix-comedy-series-huge-france-1198794), rapper [Black M](http://www.rfi.fr/en/culture/20160514-french-rapper-black-m-banned-world-war-centenary-verdun), businessman [Adrien Aumont](https://www.widoobiz.com/2019/09/25/interview-adrien-aumont-co-fondateur-de-kisskissbankbank-a-14-ans-jai-decide-de-ne-plus-jamais-alle-a-lecole/), co-founder of the crowdfunding site KissKissBankBank, novelist Cécile Ladjali and [Joël Bouraïma](https://www.instagram.com/coachjoe.paris/?hl=fr), a sports coach for Kim Kardashian and Kanye West. Bouraïma said, “Anything is possible, that’s the message we’re trying to get across but that doesn’t mean anything is easy. Of course, part of it is luck, but more important is work and determination, that’s how the celebrities we feature on the programme succeeded.” Cécile Ladjali said, “I’m a former dunce and I was told I’d be a salesperson in a clothes shop, in the end I have a doctorate, I’m a novelist and also a professor.”

The programme is the brainchild of the author [Peter Gumbel.](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/05/french-schools-pupils-feel-worthless) In his 2010 book, On Achève bien les Écoliers (They Shoot School Kids, Don’t They?) he asks: “Why is France the only country in the world that discourages children because of what they cannot do, rather than encouraging them to do what they can?” He said, “The whole French hierarchy, political and business, is predicated on people who have done well at school and who go on to the grandes écoles. More than anywhere else, it is the bac that is going to determine what your career choices are. It’s very difficult to make a success of life in [France](https://www.theguardian.com/world/france) if you don’t have it. The marking system is not designed to encourage students or improve their work, it is about competing. How you do at school follows you for life and it’s very hard to break away from that. If you don’t have the bac you’re considered on the heap.”

Nicolas Cennac, the producer, said the aim of Les Cancres was to “represent people who have a different experience at school but who have enormous gifts”. He said he wanted to avoid stigmatising the pupils while at the same time not “glamourising” failure. The French education minister, Jean-Michel Blanquer, has said that the baccaluaréat exams would not take place this year and pupils would be awarded the diploma on the basis of continued evaluation of their work at school. It is the first time that the exam, which was created in 1808 and has been sat every year since even through the Nazi occupation, has been cancelled. French pupils are being expected to follow a full programme of online classes during the closures. However, Gumbel said the French education minister was “in a tight corner” because the French system was not adapted to home working. He said, “In France teaching methods don’t lend themselves well to being done online. Normally the teacher is at the front of the class talking and everyone else is taking notes. It doesn’t work when it has to be interactive.”

**MPs NEED MORE MONEY TO COPE WITH HOME WORKING**

The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) has said that MPs can claim £10,000 for additional office costs incurred as a result of the coronavirus. The money can be used to buy additional equipment such as laptops and printers for staff having to work from home. This comes on top of the £26,000 MPs can claim to cover office costs.

IPSA said it was “committed to supporting MPs and their staff to carry on with their work as far as possible” during this "uncertain and challenging time for the country". In addition to the extra money, the authority is also suspending the 90-day limit for claiming costs and relaxing the requirements on producing evidence of money spent. The monthly credit limit on MPs' payment card has been increased to £10,000 and the single transaction limit raised to £5,000.

Labour MP Andrew Gwynne said: “Casework has exploded (understandably too) so it’s right our offices remain open remotely at this time”. However, he said that it would have been better if IPSA had done “an equipment loan scheme instead”. Conservative MP Julie Marson said “No MP will see an extra penny of this in their bank accounts. IPSA increased the office budget to provide staff who primarily work from the office the ability to work from home, and to produce and distribute COVID19 information.” Former Conservative MP Charlotte Leslie said: “Someone really needs to look at IPSA. They decide what public money goes to MPs, so amazed they don’t get more scrutiny, accountability and the head of IPSA isn’t a household name. Guess bashing MPs is a low-hanging fruit.”

**PUBLIC CATERERS PLEDGE TO USE LESS MEAT**

Public sector caterers serving billions of meals a year in schools, universities, hospitals and care homes, have pledged to cut the amount of meat they serve by 20%. The meals are eaten by a quarter of the population and they said they want to reduce environmental impact and improving the healthiness of meals. Experts say that [meat consumption](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/10/huge-reduction-in-meat-eating-essential-to-avoid-climate-breakdown) should be slashed to tackle the climate emergency and other [environmental crises](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/31/avoiding-meat-and-dairy-is-single-biggest-way-to-reduce-your-impact-on-earth) such as water pollution arising from the high impact of livestock. International studies suggest cuts of up to 90% are needed, but in January the UK’s official climate change advisers [recommended a 20%](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/23/make-big-polluters-pay-for-mass-tree-planting-officials-say)consumption reduction. The [#20percentlessmeat](http://20percentlessmeat.co.uk/) pledge was launched in the [trade magazine Public Sector Catering](https://secure.viewer.zmags.com/publication/0b5583a8#/0b5583a8/68).

David Foad, editor-in-chief of the magazine, said: “It represents a bold move, because it is not being mandated. It would have been much easier to sit back and wait until they were either prompted or forced into action like this by government.” He said that attaining the 20% target would remove 9m kg of meat from plates every year, equivalent to 45,000 cows or 16 million chickens. Andy Jones, who chairs the [PSC100 group](https://www.publicsectorcatering.co.uk/psc100) of caterers and suppliers, and is a former chair of the Hospital Caterers Association (HCA), said: “The carbon emissions savings and the potential benefit to people’s health can play a part in tackling climate change and shortening NHS queues. The huge range of people we feed every day means we can influence the diet of the nation. I, for one, don’t want to be known as part of the generation that could have acted, even in a small way, but did nothing.” The HCA has signed up to the pledge. Craig Smith, HCA chair, said that the people it served were already moving away from meat.

Matt White, chair of the University Caterers Organisation, said: “We are fully committed to the #20percentlessmeat initiative. We have a very short window of opportunity to make changes in the way we all eat, or we will have done irreparable damage to our planet and to future generations.” The National Association of Care Catering back the move, but its chair, Sue Cawthray, said, “I would say our biggest challenge to meeting the 20% target is the mindset of many of those currently in care homes. The majority would have been brought up on a staple diet of meat and veg and will be resistant to change.” Stephen Forster, chair of the Local Authority Caterers Association, which represents 3,300 school food providers, said: “The school food industry is leading the way on meat reduction. [Schools](https://www.theguardian.com/education/schools) across the country have meat-free days and are increasingly introducing plant-based vegetarian and vegan options. We therefore support the campaign.” Philip Mansbridge, director at the campaign group ProVeg UK, said: “Never has the public sector made a commitment of this magnitude. By making simple and effective adaptations, all public sector caterers will soon find more of their meals are healthier, more planet-friendly and equally or more delicious.”

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**SNIPPETS**

* Singapore has stopped the use of Zoom by its teachers, after a "very serious incident" during a home-based lesson. It was reported that obscene images appeared on screen, before two men asked girls to "flash".
* Tesco said paying a £635m dividend was ‘the right thing to do’ despite accepting a business rates holiday worth £585m from the government.
* The **average salary** for a Premier League footballer was over **£3m a year** in 2019 according to the latest Global Sports Salary Survey. Despite this a number of clubs have applied for the government scheme to pay furloughed (non-playing) staff.
* Research suggests that more than a third of patients who are critically ill in hospital with Covid 19 the virus are from a BME background.
* Stephen Lehec, head of [Kingston Grammar School](https://independentschoolscouncil.cmail20.com/t/t-l-nutvyk-kuaykiil-u/), has asked parents to pay the summer term fees in full, warning competition over offering fee discounts 'could see schools, especially those who are already operating on very tight margins, closing'
* A survey by the Martin Lewis website of 77,000 people on the financial affects for them of the lockdown found that 39% said they'd be worse off, 36% no change, while 25% thought it would improve their finances.
* Approximately 117m children around the world could be at risk of missing out on measles vaccinations as immunisation campaigns are halted to slow the spread of coronavirus.
* The government has formally approved the construction of the new [HS2](http://independent.co.uk/topic/hs2) railway line, with the main works set to start immediately.
* Dr Patrick Loach, general secretary of the NASUWT, has said teachers and support staff must have access to PPE as a "pre-condition" for schools reopening.
* The DfE has confirmed that students will receive their A-level and GCSE results on August 13 and August 20.
* Schools will find out in June how they can apply for government funding to cover additional costs resulting from the coronavirus lockdown