b j

CES Newsletter: Issue 22

Gordon.ceslondon@gmail.com www.ceslondon.com



[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.

CONTENT

**The schools section contains articles on;**

* Online resources for children and adults
* Esports are go
* Autumn exams may be shortened but they will go ahead
* May need to adjust next years exams
* Resit of maths and English is largely a waste of time
* We will open in a phased manner
* Private schools are warned not to price fix
* Need a catch-up premium to prevent the education gap widening
* Vulnerable children face huge difficulties during school lockdown
* Attainment gap will grow
* Estimating vocational qualifications

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

* Should be able to take the year again for free or be reimbursed
* No university should be allowed to close

**The employment section contains articles on;**

* Nurse burnout
* Should be doing online digital course to improve your skills
* BA is to cut up to 12,000 jobs
* Overseas medics to have their visa extended
* Wetherspoons want to reopen in June

**The miscellaneous section contains articles on;**

* Air pollution has dropped significantly during lockdown

**SNIPPETS**

**SCHOOLS**

**ONLINE RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS**

The following is a precis of the excellent SecEd bulletin article. .

The UK Council for Subject Associations is launching a directory to support educators, signposting teachers to a range of resources and support from individual subject associations. Many contain links to wider learning programmes. The new directory includes details of 25 subject associations as well as other organisations that can offer support.

[www.subjectassociations.org.uk/the-cfsa-directory](http://www.subjectassociations.org.uk/the-cfsa-directory). The consolidated guide to home-schooling resources is available at: [www.subjectassociations.org.uk/cfsa-covid-19-response/](https://www.subjectassociations.org.uk/cfsa-covid-19-response/)

**Mental health & wellbeing**

* Anna Freud National Centre: Wellbeing advice for those supporting children and young people: [www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/](http://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/)
* BBFC: Resources to help parents with home-schooling, including teaching children about what content online is appropriate for them: [www.cbbfc.co.uk](http://www.cbbfc.co.uk/)
* British Psychological Society: Advice on dealing with lockdown and talking to children about Covid-19: [www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-offers-advice-schools-parents-and-carers-help-children-through-uncertainty](http://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-offers-advice-schools-parents-and-carers-help-children-through-uncertainty)
* Child Bereavement Network: Advice on supporting grieving children during the outbreak: [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/covid-19](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/covid-19)
* Education Support: A charity for teachers offering a range of wellbeing support, including online advice, a free helpline, counselling services and financial grants: [www.educationsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-support](http://www.educationsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-support)
* Internet Matters: A not-for-profit organisation offering a wealth of resources to help parents keep children safe online: [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org/)
* MindEd: A resource for all adults offering advice and guidance on children and young people’s mental health: [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk/)
* Rise Above: Videos with tips on gaining confidence, dealing with anxiety and coping strategies from other young people. KS3-5: <https://riseabove.org.uk/topic/my-mind/>

**Cross-curricular & whole-school**

* Countryside Classroom: Free resources from LEAF Education to help children learn about food, farming and the natural environment: [www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/home-education](http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/home-education)
* HP: Print: A free resource which curates weekly literacy content as well as worksheets, colouring pages, puzzles and other learning printables for children aged 2-12: [www8.hp.com/us/en/printers/printandplay](https://www8.hp.com/us/en/printers/printandplay.html)
* Kerboodle: Online resources, assessment, digital books and other tools. Free access to Kerboodle and its MyMaths digital service for new secondary school subscriptions until September: <https://bit.ly/3czMNaO>
* Khan Academy: A non-profit online learning platform. Daily learning schedules for students aged 2-18 [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)
* Kialo Edu: A critical-thinking support tool. Kialo promote well-reasoned discussion online. Free for educators: [www.kialo-edu.com](http://www.kialo-edu.com/)
* Prezi: Teachers are being given free access to Prezi Video with full privacy settings for all remote learning content they create: [www.prezi.com/video](http://www.prezi.com/video)

**English & literacy**

* Authorfy: Masterclasses from a range of authors, including videos from the authors and activities linked to novels. Early years to KS2: [https://authorfy.com](https://authorfy.com/)
* BookTrust: Recommended booklists, categorised by age range (from 0 to 12+) and topic, including fiction and non-fiction. A range of family activities in the “Home Time” section: [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/)
* Children’s Poetry Archive: Poems read aloud. Early years to KS3: <https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/>
* English Mastery: Downloadable resource books providing eight weeks of activities for KS1&2, and 12 weeks of activities for KS3: [www.englishmastery.org](http://www.englishmastery.org/)
* Literacy Shed: Downloadable resource packs with tasks based on video clips on YouTube. KS1&2: :[www.literacyshedplus.com/en-gb/browse/free-resources](http://www.literacyshedplus.com/en-gb/browse/free-resources)
* Love Reading 4 Kids: Recommended booklists, categorised by age range and topic, covering fiction and non-fiction. Early years and primary: [www.lovereading4kids.co.uk/](http://www.lovereading4kids.co.uk/)
* Letters and Sounds: Online phonics lessons for Reception and primary pupils that follow Phases 2-5 of the Letters and Sounds programme via YouTube videos: <https://bit.ly/2VUu2bm>
* National Literacy Trust: New support added to the charity’s Family Zone includes an ‘Author of the Week’ series of videos, activities and digital books. There is also a challenge for children to write their own superhero story: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/family-zone/>
* Spelling Beats: Uses gaming elements and catchy beats to engage children in learning how to spell. Access is free for schools in the North of England with above-average Pupil Premium intakes: [www.spellingbeats.com](http://www.spellingbeats.com/)

**Mathematics & numeracy**

* Bowland Maths Resources: Downloadable assessments on a range of subjects, including sample answers and assessment tips. KS3: [www.bowlandmaths.org.uk](http://www.bowlandmaths.org.uk/)
* Corbett Maths: A range of videos and downloadable questions categorised by topic and predicted grade. KS3: <https://corbettmaths.com/contents/>
* Dox Direct: Has a maths test pdf generator, with customisable sheets that can be downloaded. They also print and post packs for free. Primary phase: [www.doxdirect.com/maths](http://www.doxdirect.com/maths)
* Hamilton Trust: Downloadable resource packs with teacher guidance. A week’s worth of resources is provided for each year group. KS1&2: [www.hamilton-trust.org.uk/blog/learning-home-packs...](http://www.hamilton-trust.org.uk/blog/learning-home-packs/)
* Mathematics Mastery: Downloadable guidance and resource packs for parents and pupils. From early years to KS3&4: [www.mathematicsmastery.org/free-resources](http://www.mathematicsmastery.org/free-resources)
* Mathigon: Interactive maths resources that allow teachers and parents to track student progress and set activities. KS3&4: <https://mathigon.org/>
* Maths Kitchen: An interactive GCSE revision website. Resources are categorised by topic, including video lessons and practice questions: <https://mathskitchen.com/topics>
* Matific: 60 days’ free access for all schools. Curriculum-aligned activities, worksheets and word problems: [www.matific.com/gb/en-gb/home/complimentary-teacher/](http://www.matific.com/gb/en-gb/home/complimentary-teacher/)
* Mr Barton Maths: Free maths resources from KS2-5: <http://mrbartonmaths.com/index.html>
* Nrich: Various activities, some interactive, some for completion offline. Early years to KS4: <https://nrich.maths.org/>
* STEP Support Programme: Cambridge University help university applicants develop their advanced mathematical problem-solving skills. Assessments are downloadable. KS5: <https://maths.org/step/welcome>
* Timely Practice: A free ‘bank current maths’ learning service to help prevent learning loss during lockdown for low-attaining students: <https://bit.ly/2VwmaxG>
* Top Marks: Interactive maths games. Early years to KS3: [www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games](http://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games)

**Science & computing**

* British Science Week: A range of education packs and activities are still available. Covering early years, primary and KS3: [www.britishscienceweek.org/plan-your-activities/activity-packs/](http://www.britishscienceweek.org/plan-your-activities/activity-packs/)
* Computing at School/BT: Various activities designed to support parents with their children’s digital skills, computing and IT learning. [www.bt.com/skillsfortomorrow/](http://www.bt.com/skillsfortomorrow/)
* DFRobot: Various free STEM resources, including tutorials that help students experience real-world applications of science. Topics include the Internet of Things, robotics and AI. Includes project-based learning activities. Ages 8+: <https://edu.dfrobot.com/>
* Institute of Physics: Articles and resources designed to support teachers teaching remotely. KS3&4: <https://spark.iop.org/supporting-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-19>
* Isaac Physics: Online problem-solving activities and regular live video tuition to support teachers and students. Also covers some maths and chemistry. KS4&5 <https://isaacphysics.org/>
* Royal Society of Chemistry: A set of articles and resources to support teachers who are teaching remotely. Key stages 3 to 5: <https://edu.rsc.org/remote-teaching-support>
* WWT: Wildlife charity WWT has a home learning hub to help teach primary pupils key parts of the science curriculum. New resources, covering different conservation science themes, will be released weekly on a Monday morning: [www.wwt.org.uk/discover-wetlands/home-learning-and-family-fun](http://www.wwt.org.uk/discover-wetlands/home-learning-and-family-fun)

**Sports & exercise**

* Disney 10 Minute Shakeups: 10m activities based on Disney films that count towards a child’s 60 active minutes per day. Early years to KS2: [www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups](http://www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups)
* Fitness Blender: Videos featuring a range of exercises and workouts. You can choose by degree of difficulty, type, gender and whether equipment is needed or not. KS3-5: [www.fitnessblender.com](http://www.fitnessblender.com/)
* Super Movers: Videos which help children move while they learn. They support curriculum subjects, including maths and English. S1&2: [www.bbc.co.uk/teach/supermovers](http://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/supermovers)
* #ThisIsPE: Videos focusing on the PE curriculum and accessible on YouTube. KS1-4: [www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/thisispe-supporting-parents-to-teach-pe-at-home/](http://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/thisispe-supporting-parents-to-teach-pe-at-home/)
* ukactive Kids & Nike: Move Crew is a set of activity missions designed to help primary school pupils get 60 minutes of daily activity. Each Monday an athlete will launch a weekly theme with daily missions: [www.ukactive.com/movecrew](http://www.ukactive.com/movecrew)

**The arts**

* Blackeyed Theatre: The 2018 recording of Teechers is being made available to schools free of charge. Teachers need to email info@blackeyedtheatre.co.uk from their official school email. Education packs are available: <https://bit.ly/2yDtvCC>
* Bristol Plays Music: Tutors deliver online sessions of 20m for primary and 30m for secondary children. There is a charge, but children of key workers or those who are suffering financially because of the outbreak can apply for bursary places: [www.bristolplaysmusic.org/learn/instrumental/virtual-academy/](http://www.bristolplaysmusic.org/learn/instrumental/virtual-academy/)
* Digital Theatre+: 6 free-to-access ‘Master Cast’ education videos. Topics include What prompts a playwright to write? How do ideas emerge? How do performers bring text to life? Aimed at 16- 20-year-olds: [www.facebook.com/DigitalTheatrePlus/](http://www.facebook.com/DigitalTheatrePlus/)
* Discover! A creative careers website offering a range of activities and virtual careers experiences and tours covering hundreds of careers across the creative industries. Around 500 job profiles for students and content and resources for schools: <https://discovercreative.careers/#/>
* National Theatre: 6 new productions are available for teachers and pupils to access via the National Theatre Collection. These are A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat on A Hot Tin Roof, Consent, Small Island, Translations, wonder.land: [www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/ntcollection](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/ntcollection)
* Primary Shakespeare Company: Shakespeare at Home campaign brings together activities and curriculum-based resources including games, films, arts and crafts, along with lesson plans for parents: [www.primaryshakespearecompany.org](http://www.primaryshakespearecompany.org/)

**Other subjects**

* Amnesty International: Materials focusing on issues relating to human rights with 3 new activities every week: [www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/classroom-community](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/classroom-community)
* Association for Citizenship Teaching: Members have created a range of resources covering KS2-4. Membership is free until September: [www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/resource/citizenship-teaching-resources-distance-learning](http://www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/resource/citizenship-teaching-resources-distance-learning)
* Built environment: The Learning in Lockdown programme has 30 hours of free virtual work experience focused on the construction industry for students in year 10. Running from May 18-22, it will include daily sessions with industry experts, career insights, and mentoring: [www.scapegroup.co.uk/learning-in-lockdown](http://www.scapegroup.co.uk/learning-in-lockdown)
* Dig School: A series of free archaeology-themed workshops to help secondary pupils explore history. Offer 20 cross-curricular online enquiries. <http://digschool.org.uk/>
* Encyclopaedia Britannica: Free access until September to its LaunchPacks, offering curriculum-aligned multimedia content across a range of subjects. The humanities and social sciences resources can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/2VE9DIE>
* Food for Life: The healthy eating programme is offering free membership to primary schools. It supports pupils to eat healthy food with curriculum tools and materials, including Jamie Oliver Kitchen Garden Project resources. Use the code COVIDFREEMEM: [www.foodforlife.org.uk/registration/enrol](http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/registration/enrol)
* History Unlocked: Warwick Castle has free resources and educational activities including printable colouring sheets, word searches and quizzes as well as videos that explain key periods in the castle’s 1000-year history. Includes virtual narrated tours: [www.warwick-castle.com/history-unlocked](http://www.warwick-castle.com/history-unlocked)
* Royal Academy of Engineering: Engineers in the Making competition for UK school children aged 7-14. Challenges to test students’ creativity, imagination and problem-solving skills: [www.raeng.org.uk/education/stem-at-home/competition-engineers-in-the-making](http://www.raeng.org.uk/education/stem-at-home/competition-engineers-in-the-making)
* Royal Armouries Museum: A resource bringing history to life through interactive videos and downloadable resources. A new lesson will be posted twice a week. Topics include Viking warriors, Tudor knights, Romans soldiers and Greek heroes: <https://royalarmouries.org/royal-armouries-from-home/>
* UK Parliament: Resources for children aged 5-16, including videos, games and downloadable packs. There are virtual tours of the Houses of Parliament and video sessions. Topics include votes for women, how Parliament works, how laws are made and campaigning: <https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/>

**ESPORTS ARE GO**

Pearson, who own Edexcel, has launched a level 3 BTEC in ‘[esports](https://inews.co.uk/topic/esports)’, covering areas Bottom of Form

from organising competitions to coaching players and commentating on games. Pearson has partnered with the British Esports Association to design the course. Students will be able to take it from September 2020, with funding confirmed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The course contains 20 units, including entrepreneurship, strategy and analysis, events management, live-streamed broadcasting, video production, ‘shoutcasting’ (commentating over video games), coaching, health and wellbeing, the law, and computer networking. There are optional units in areas such as psychology for esports performance and ‘nutrition for esports performance’. The specification notes that “a healthy balanced diet and its links to good health and improved performance is now a key aspect of the esports player’s lifestyle”.

Cindy Rampersaud, senior vice president for BTEC, said Pearson was “constantly looking at our offer and our curriculum in “a world where job roles are changing, and the careers young people will go into may not even exist”. She said [esports was a $1.1bn global industry](https://inews.co.uk/culture/gaming/esports-coronavirus-outbreak-rise-video-games-sport-postponed-2504222), with an audience approaching 500m, and the qualification had been designed to "support people who want to work in that industry”. She said, “I think there will be a huge take up because I think there are real careers and real progression in this sector, also because it’s growing, it’s massive.”

Asked what she would say to parents sceptical of the qualification, Ms Rampersaud said that the Covid-19 crisis highlighted how more activities are moving online. She said, “Post-Covid there’s going to be more learning online, but there’s also going to be more social interaction.” Andy Payne, chair of the British Esports Association, said: “Esports is a growing, exciting industry that many young people are looking at with interest and it’s important they have the opportunity to unlock their potential and be the leaders of tomorrow. The industry is still finding its feet, but with big names like Pearson coming on board to bring learning and curriculum design expertise, this bodes well for the future workforce.”

**MAY SIT SHORTENED AUTUMN EXAMS (but they will go ahead)**

Gavin Williamson has said that "best form of assessment is an exam" and that he “particularly wanted children, if they did not think that the grade was a true and fair reflection on the work or what they were able to achieve, to have the opportunity to take an exam, and that’s why we’ve been working with Ofqual and the exam boards to provide an autumn serial of exams. Because I think if people do not feel as if this is the right qualification that they truly deserve, the best way is giving them the opportunity to sit a shortened exam paper and have the opportunity to sit that exam paper, to get the grade they truly believe is what they can achieve."

Mr Williamson also said that he hoped bodies representing disadvantaged and BME pupils had used Ofqual's consultation process (just closed), to "make their voices heard" regarding concerns that BME pupils would be disadvantaged by the process of awarding teacher-assessed grades. He said, "Right at the start of the process we highlighted this as a particular area of concern and in everything that Ofqual did in terms of the creation of the system of the awarding of grades, they had to be conscious of the fact that there was evidence that a number of youngsters within those communities were in danger of not realising the grade that they would have been achieving if there’d been a traditional exam."

**MAY NEED TO ADJUST NEXT YEAR’S EXAMS**

Geoff Barton, ASCL head, has said that next year's GCSE and A level exams may need to be "tailored" to recognise the disruption caused to teaching, and we must accept that “it may not be possible to cover all content in the normal way". He said that while "we must be careful not to over-react", one way of addressing learning gaps might be to "pare down the content of qualifications". He said, "They are very content-heavy following the reforms of recent years, and we may need to accept that it is just not possible to deliver all of this in these circumstances. Exactly how to do this in the best interests of all students would clearly need careful thought." Mr Barton was responding to comments made by former Ofsted chief Sir Michael Wilshaw, who suggested that teachers work weekends and evenings to remedy the impact of school closures, and, if that doesn’t happen, he could see "no alternative but to repeat a year".

Mr Barton said if it is safe to do so, some year groups could be sent back to school in the second half of the summer term to help them catch up, and there "may be a role for activities such as summer schools to cover lost ground”. However, he stressed that "we cannot predicate our response on this sort of provision", and staff and students must be given the opportunity to rest after an "intense and demanding" period. He said, "Sir Michael has the right intentions at heart, but his premise that there are only two options, either for schools to open at weekends and during holidays to help children catch up, or to repeat a year, is too simplistic. We don't yet know what the learning gaps will be as a result of the coronavirus lockdown, and we will need to gear our response accordingly. Repeating a year is not really a credible option, as it would create a logistical nightmare in a system which is built upon children progressing from one stage to the next." He stressed, “We will clearly need to put a particular focus on identifying learning gaps for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and identify extra support”.

An Ofqual spokesperson said: "We know the Covid-19 outbreak will have caused stress and uncertainty for many students, regardless of whether or not they were expecting to take exams this year. Students who are studying GCSE, AS or A level courses, but are not due to take exams until 2021, will have had their teaching and learning disrupted. We do not yet know for how long this disruption will continue. We are working with the DfE, the wider sector and exam boards to consider the options for next year."

**RESIT OF MATHS AND ENGLISH IS LARGELY A WASTE OF TIME**

Over 70% of learners who did not have GCSE English and/or maths at aged 16 had not achieved one or both qualifications by 19, [new DfE data has revealed.](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881199/Level_2_and_3_attainment_by_19_2019_statistical_commentary.pdf) Just 29% of students who resat GCSE English and/or maths after not achieving a grade 4 in year 11 had passed by the time they were 19. When broken down into the individual subjects, the data shows that 34% passed English by age 19, and 24% passed maths. The condition of funding introduced in 2014-15 means students who have not gained that grade 4 in English and/or maths in secondary school have to resit the qualifications at college.

**WE WILL OPEN IN A PHASED MANNER**

Gavin Williamson told the Education Select Committee that the date for opening would depend on scientific advice, but schools would get "as much notice as possible" and be opened in a "phased manner". He said, "All schools returning on day one with a full complement of pupils would not be realistic." Committee chair, Robert Halfon, warned of a "wave of educational poverty" that could come from the lockdown. Mr Williamson said he did not expect this term to be extended into the summer holidays and the experience of other countries going back to school, such as Germany and Denmark, would be taken into consideration. Committee member David Simmonds suggested some schools were already planning to open over the summer to help pupils catch up.

Geoff Barton, head of the ASCL, has suggested that Years 6, 10 and 12 might go back first, with 1 June the earliest realistic date. He said a limit on pupil numbers in school would be necessary to maintain social distancing, which could mean only some year groups going back or pupils rotating between studying at home and in school. Mary Bousted, joint leader of the NEU, highlighted ongoing challenges for staffing in schools when it was safe to re-open. She said, "All staff with underlying health conditions or who are vulnerable will need to be at home so timetables will be tricky and the full curriculum simply impossible. We will need an extended, flexible recovery plan, and no one should be under any illusion that there is some catch-up magic bullet."

Mr Williamson gave more details on the scheme to lend laptops to disadvantaged pupils, saying there would be 200,000 available, with the first expected to be delivered by the end of May and most arriving in June. He also said that he had been in discussion with the BBC about putting school programmes on television, which could help those without internet connections or unable to afford mobile phone data. Mr Williamson was challenged by MPs on failings [with the school meal voucher scheme](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-52325332). Ian Mearns said school staff were spending "hours and hours" trying to resolve problems with the voucher system. He said there were "horror stories" from schools about a computer system that did not seem to have capacity to cope, with teachers having to find their own ways to get food to young people. Mr Williamson admitted that there had been "big challenges" and the level of service was not as expected.

**PRIVATE SCHOOLS ARE WARNED NOT TO PRICE FIX**

The [Competition and Markets Authority](https://www.theguardian.com/business/competition-commission) (CMA) said it had been made aware that a number of independent schools “may be engaging in discussions with each other about the level of discounts and/or refunds on school fees”. They have sent a letter to the ISC and other bodies representing the sector warned that moves to agree prices and exchange commercially sensitive information would infringe competition law and could result in fines of up to 10% of total turnover. Many schools have already offered discounts and refunds to try to keep families onboard and stay afloat. While the bigger, more established, schools will most likely survive, there are fears that smaller schools, which may have already been facing difficulties, will go to the wall as a result of the crisis.

The CMA letter, written by its senior director Howard Cartlidge, and obtained by the Private School Policy Reform thinktank, acknowledged that in the current crisis there may be a need for increased cooperation between businesses to ensure the supply of scarce products and services. But it said that this did not give businesses a “free pass” to engage in non-essential collusion. It said, “We are sure that you share our concerns not just about the unacceptability of anti-competitive practices in the current circumstances, but also the risk of undermining public trust more widely across the independent school sector. It is therefore vital that any poor behaviour is nipped in the bud now.” In 2006 the Office of Fair Trading, which preceded the CMA, ruled that50 fee-paying schools, including Eton, Harrow and Winchester, [had breached competition law](https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/independent-schools-exchange-of-information-on-future-fees) by systematically exchanging information about pricing intentions.

Robert Verkaik, co-founder of Private School Policy Reform, said, “Those parents who have spent tens of thousands of pounds to send their children to an independent school will be rightly very angry if some of the schools are working against their interests by setting uncompetitive fees.” A CMA spokesperson said: “Where cooperation amongst businesses or other organisations is necessary to protect consumers in the coronavirus outbreak, the CMA will not take enforcement action. But we will not tolerate organisations agreeing prices or exchanging commercially sensitive information on future pricing or business strategies with their competitors, where this is not necessary to meet the needs of the current situation”. The ISC’s chief executive Julie Robinson responded: “We know of no evidence that schools are deliberately sharing information with each other and the CMA acknowledges that schools are striving to do the right thing.”

**NEED A CATCH- UP PREMIUM TO PREVENT EDUCATION GAP GROWING WIDER**

A catch-up premium of £700 for every pupil on free school meals should be given to secondary schools when they reopen to help prevent poorer children falling behind their peers, say MPs and peers from the Northern Powerhouse Programme (NPP). Fifty MPs from the North have written to Gavin Williamson to make the case. Mr Williamson is due to appear before the Education Select Committee to face questions about the DfE response to the coronavirus outbreak. Two MPs who sit on the committee have signed the letter, Ian Mearns, Labour MP for Gateshead, and Christian Wakeford, Conservative MP for Bury South, will raise the issue at the hearing. Robert Halfon, who chairs the committee, has already called for a such catch-up premium.

The letter states, "The most disadvantaged children fall behind their peers over a long summer holiday, and the shutdown will widen the North's disadvantage gap, and with it the North-South education divide. We need to deal with the consequences of this crisis for the most vulnerable in our society, and that must include children from low-income households." It says that children from the North of England are particularly likely to be from economic and ethnic groups that make the slowest progress at secondary school, including white working-class pupils. It says, "A catch-up premium of £300m across England is what is required, an entitlement of at least £700 for every secondary school pupil on free school meals, to fund timely interventions which would require around 30 minutes of tuition, three to five times a week over a six to 12-week period."

The North East has the highest percentage of children on free school meals at 18.7%, followed by London 17.4% and the North West 16.8%, while the South East has only 9.5%. This compares with an average in England of 14.1%. Lord O'Neill, chair of the NPP, said, "Schoolchildren in the North from longstanding disadvantaged backgrounds were already falling behind their peers in other parts of the country, widening the North-South divide in educational attainment. The Covid-19 crisis has made that situation even worse, as many children have little or no learning resources at home. The catch-up premium today supported by so many of our MPs and peers from all parties is vital to allow children all over the North, and the whole of the nation, to have the same chances as everyone else. Otherwise we risk those affected falling even further behind, possibly never to catch-up."

A DfE spokeswoman said: "We will do everything possible to make sure no child, whatever their background, falls behind as a result of coronavirus. The government has already committed over £100m to support remote education, including providing devices and internet access to those children who need it most." She added, "The department is considering, with a range of partner organisations, how best to support all pupils to make up for time out of school."

**VULNERABLE CHILDREN FACING HUGE DIFFICULTIES DURING LOCKDOWN**

The Children's Commissioner for England, Anne Longfield, has said that around 2m children face a range of vulnerabilities likely to worsen during the Covid-19 crisis. A report for her office has mapped out, by local area, the challenges faced by the schools and councils supporting them in lockdown. The risks range from mentally ill parents and substance abuse, to cramped housing and domestic abuse. She said, "We estimate that 2m children in England are in homes where there is either a problem with drug or alcohol abuse, domestic violence or serious mental health problems. There are also 128,000 children living in temporary accommodation, nearly 200,000 children are referred to social services but not getting help, and 100,000 children caring for other family members."

She praised the huge efforts made by teachers and council social care staff to stay in touch with struggling children. But she highlighted how only a small proportion of at-risk children were attending schools during lockdown, saying: "Reaching out to these children and helping them during the lockdown, and beyond, must be a priority for national and local government." DfE figures show that less than 5% of vulnerable children, which includes those with severe special educational needs, were attending school over the past few weeks. Ms Longfield said the figures lay bare the extent of vulnerability in each area, and the extraordinary pressures on some councils to try to protect these children.

Sam Royston, from the Children's Society, said children's lives may be worsened and they may be exposed to new dangers, such as being groomed online for sexual abuse to county lines exploitation. She called for all vulnerable children to have a named professional to whom they could turn, saying, "This should be someone who can check regularly that they are safe, whom they can ask for help and who can ensure they have opportunities to learn from home." The DfE said it was investing £12m on 14 projects to tackle the increased risk that children may be facing from staying at home. Children's minister, Vicky Ford, said, "We are working hand-in-hand with all the professionals supporting these children, to prioritise their wellbeing during this unprecedented time." The Children's Commissioner called for more effort to get children into school and an expansion of the numbers of those working with children, as well as a temporary increase in child benefit and better accommodation for homeless families.

**ATTAINMENT GAP WILL RISE BECAUSE OF LOCKDOWN**

[Amanda Spielman](https://www.theguardian.com/education/amanda-spielman), head of Ofsted, told the education select committee that the attainment gap between deprived pupils and their wealthier peers will widen as a result of school closures and it is in children’s interests to get back to school as quickly as possible. She said, “Whether we like it or not, it is going to widen gaps, especially in the short term.” She said that she was “seriously concerned” about the impact of school closures on the most disadvantaged children, adding, “The longer the closure, or almost closure, the greater the problems for those children.” She said, “We know that home and online learning are very imperfect substitutes for the school experience. We know that children are losing education. It is not just children who are disadvantaged or academically behind, it is children without motivation. So, it is in children’s interests to get back into school as soon as possible.”

Robert Halfon, committee chair, challenged Ms Spielman on a number of issues and asked her what Ofsted would do to ensure vulnerable children get the education and support they need to catch up. He said, “My concern, from what you have said so far, is that there doesn’t seem to be from Ofsted a special focus on the left-behind children and a special effort to make sure they catch up when schools reopen.” She said that the inspection framework already focused on children who face the greatest difficulties in their education. Ms Spielman clashed with Mr Halfon over the censorship of history classes at the state funded Yesodey Hatorah girls’ school, when he appeared to defend their practice of airbrushing out women in history.

**ESTIMATING VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Ofqual has put forward plans to replace vocational exams. They said that qualifications that require a practical, hands-on test might have to be delayed, but where possible students should not be "prevented from progressing". There are 14,000 different qualifications and 160 awarding organisations, and Ofqual says it is too complex to provide a "one-size-fits-all", standardised approach. Some qualifications, such as BTecs, that are used for entry to FE colleges or higher education will have an estimated grade, based on the evidence of assignments, modules or class work carried out during the course, before the lockdown stopped students attending classes. This will give students time to make their applications for courses in the autumn, with the deadline for making decisions about choosing a university course being pushed back to mid-June this year. But qualifications for practical, work-based skills could be delayed.

In the first instance there will be an attempt to adapt assessments so they can be done online. But if that is not practical, tests would be deferred until they could be taken in person. There will be qualifications which include both theoretical and practical tests, and the awarding body will have to decide whether it "more closely aligns" with those trying to go on to another stage of education or is primarily for a practical workplace skill. Sally Collier, head of Ofqual, said, "It is vitally important that learners taking vocational or technical qualifications are not prevented from progressing in their studies or careers because of the unprecedented challenges this summer." David Hughes, head of the AoC, said the proposals would "help to reassure students and colleges".

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE THE YEAR AGAIN FOR FREE OR BE REIMBURSED**

The NUS has said that a survey of nearly 10,000 student union members shows:

* 81% are worried about their future job prospects
* 33% are at critical risk of being unable to access their education
* 74% are worried about the risk to their final qualifications
* 95% expressed fears about the impact of the virus on the wider economy
* 71% worry about the impact the pandemic will have on their employability
* 85% of working students may need additional financial support as incomes drop.

The NUS is urging the government to provide ‘comprehensive, urgent support’, saying a £60m national hardship fund should be made available to all students currently in further or higher education. It wants an economic package for those who complete their qualifications during the current pandemic, providing access to a grant which can be used for training, reskilling or development. It also wants the option for "every student, in every part of education, to re-do this year at no further cost, with full maintenance support - while ensuring those returning to education next year receive high-quality education, training and support". It wants reimbursement of one year's course, college or tuition fees for students who have paid upfront, or a write-off of one year's debt for those who have paid through loans.

NUS President Zamzam Ibrahim said, "Face-to-face teaching and assessments have had to be hurriedly moved online, and placement and other practical activity has had to be cancelled. Students have lacked access to key resources, such as libraries and spaces, disabled students have been left unsupported, and students and staff have been struggling with other demands on their finances, welfare and wider lives as lockdown restrictions are enforced. The impact of this disruption will not be felt equally, with those on placements and disabled students feeling the impact particularly severely. Students are being forgotten during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are the future workforce that will have to help to rebuild our economy over the coming years”.

A DfE spokeswoman said: "We understand that this is a difficult time and we are working tirelessly with the sector to ensure students are supported and able to complete their studies. Students will continue to receive payments of maintenance loans for the remainder of the current academic year and where students are experiencing particular hardship, many universities will already have hardship funds to support students most in need. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme may also be available for those with a part-time employment contract."

**NO UNIVERSITY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CLOSE**

Shadow universities minister, Emma Hardy, has written to universities minister Michelle Donelan calling on the government to underwrite HE funding and prevent institutions from going bankrupt following an “unprecedented set of challenges”. She said that institutional closures or massive cuts could cause harm to students, social mobility and the chances of economic recovery. She said, “Our universities are not just businesses and should not be treated as such. Labour is calling on the government to guarantee that no university will be allowed to go bankrupt”.

A report in the [FT](https://www.ft.com/content/dc8e2aa4-1c8f-43b9-99c1-e1f87b369b43) said the Treasury is resisting calls from UUK for a £2bn rescue package to help higher education institutions during the coronavirus crisis. A [report](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/uk-universities-face-ps26bn-coronavirus-hit-30k-jobs-risk) by the LSE says that UK universities are facing a £2.6bn shortfall in the next academic year, which could result in 30,000 job losses in higher education and another 30,000 in local communities. Ms Hardy said, “Allowing any higher education institution to fall hinders the ability of our economy to bounce back from this crisis and denies UK citizens the equality of opportunity that should be a given right. My greatest concern is that a failure to provide timely and comprehensive support to our universities in the face of this crisis will create ‘cold spots’ in the country for access to higher education to those who benefit from it the most.” She added that “students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and part-time and mature students will suffer disproportionately if regional HE institutions close.” Ms Hardy also warned of the loss of income from international students and called for a “joined-up approach in promoting our UK universities abroad” as well as “increased clarity from the Home Office about student visas”.

Ms Hardy also asked the universities minister to provide additional support for students, particularly those “who relied on part-time work that can no longer support themselves”. She also raised concerns about an “increased dropout rate when the semester starts again and further decline in the number of students from lower economic social groups attending university because of the cancellation of face-to-face widening participation events and visits”. She said, “Universities bring significant benefits to their local communities, have a central role in supporting local economies, employ large numbers of staff and contribute enormously through volunteering, cultural events and community activities. If these institutions were to disappear, the damaging consequences would extend beyond the classroom and impact locally and nationally.”

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**EMPLOYMENT**

**NURSE BURNOUT**

Healthcare experts are concerned that the stress from coping with the [Covid-19](https://inews.co.uk/topic/covid-19) pandemic could lead to a generation of "burnt-out" [nurses](https://inews.co.uk/topic/nurses), who will want to leave the profession once the crisis abates. Bottom of Form

Jill Maben, professor of health services research and nursing at Surrey University, said: "Nurses are on the front line of care delivery, experiencing intense emotional, social and ethical difficulties as they rise to the challenge of caring for patients in such unprecedented times. If we are to avoid a generation of burnt-out nurses, their physiological, psychological and safety needs must be prioritised. Nurses injured by stress may be the last to recognise it; they are 'wired' to look after others and not self and they therefore need colleagues, friends and managers to remind them to think of themselves. If nursing staff are not supported during this time, there is the danger that once this is all over, they will leave the profession, which will put enormous strain on an already overstretched health service." There were [44,000 registered nurse vacancies in the UK prior to the crisis.](https://inews.co.uk/news/health/nhs-crisis-gps-falls-nursing-vacancies-rise-uk-1327504)

Surrey, along with Southampton University, has developed a wellbeing package which focuses on physiological and safety needs for nurses, including the importance of ensuring they have enough food, drink, rest and recovery, as well as [protection from infection](https://inews.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-nurses-refuse-treat-patients-ppe-government-row-2536726) as well as making sure that managers are "highly visible and approachable". Jackie Bridges, professor of older people's care at Southampton University, said: "When we're caught up in trying to manage a crisis like Covid-19, it can be easy to be distracted from the price that is paid by nurses providing patient care. By making sure staff wellbeing is a priority and putting active measures in place to support nursing staff, employers in all relevant health and social care settings can reduce staff stress and distress and help ward off the development of longer-term mental health problems."

**SHOULD BE DOING ONLINE DIGITAL COURSES TO IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS**

The DfE has launched job-related online courses, teaching numeracy, coding and internet skills, with the Open University and Google among the providers. Gavin Williamson said businesses should encourage staff to "boost their skills" and urged furloughed employees to "improve their knowledge, build their confidence and support their mental health so they have skills they need to succeed after the coronavirus outbreak".

The Open University offer courses on basic maths and how to write computer code; Futurelearn offer courses in digital skills and producing online content; Google has a course in digital marketing and the Digital-inclusion charity ‘the Good Things Foundation’ has resources to help people get started online. Good Things Foundation CEO Helen Milner said almost 12 million people in the UK were "without the essential digital skills for life and work".

**BA TO CUT UP TO 12,000 JOBS**

BA is to cut up to 12,000 jobs. Their parent company, IAG, said it needed to impose a "restructuring and redundancy programme" until demand for air travel returns to 2019 levels. IAG said it will take several years for air travel to return to pre-virus levels, a warning that has been echoed by other airlines. BA CEO Alex Cruz wrote to staff saying, "In the last few weeks, the outlook for the aviation industry has worsened further and we must take action now. We are a strong, well-managed business that has faced into, and overcome, many crises in our hundred-year history. We must overcome this crisis ourselves, too. There is no government bailout standing by for BA and we cannot expect the taxpayer to offset salaries indefinitely. We will see some airlines go out of business." Unions accuse IAG of over-reacting and taking advantage of the crisis in order to reduce its cost base

About 4,500 pilots and 16,000 cabin crew work for BA, which has already put 23,000 staff on furlough. Balpa (the pilots union) said: "This has come as a bolt out of the blue from an airline that said it was wealthy enough to weather the Covid storm and declined any government support. Balpa does not accept that a case has been made for these job losses and we will be fighting to save every single one." EasyJet has laid off its 4,000 UK-based cabin crew for two months, while Richard Branson has appealed to the government to help bail out his Virgin Atlantic airline with a loan thought to be up to £500m. Qantas has put 20,000 staff on leave, while Air Canada has done the same for 15,200 employees. Norwegian Air has said it could run out of cash by mid-May. At American Airlines, about 4,800 pilots have agreed to take short-term leave on reduced pay and more than 700 are taking early retirement.

**OVERSEAS MEDICS TO HAVE THEIR VISAS EXTENDED**

Priti Patel has said that overseas doctors, nurses and paramedics with visas due to expire before 1 October 2020 will have them automatically extended for one year free of charge. The ruling will apply to around 2,800 migrant doctors, nurses and paramedics, as well as their family members. The Home Office has also lifted the restriction on the amount of hours student nurses and doctors can work. In addition, pre-registered nurses currently required to sit their first skills test within 3 months and to pass the test within 8 months, will now have this deadline extended to the end of the year . This will give overseas nurses more time to pass their exams, whilst they spend term working on the frontline.

**WETHERSPOONS TO REOPEN IN JUNE?**

Tim Martin has said that he plans to reopen his Wetherspoons bars and hotels in June. He said, “The company is likely to make some changes to its operating model, assuming increased social distancing, and anticipates a gradual recovery in customer numbers. Wetherspoon pubs are substantially larger than average, and most have outside facilities. The company believes these factors are likely to assist if social distancing measures apply.”

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**AIR POLLUTION HAS DROPPED SIGNIFICANTLY DURING LOCKDOWN**

A national study by scientists from York University has found a significant reduction in air pollution during the lockdown. The level of nitrogen dioxide was down by 48% in Leeds compared with the five-year average for the time of year, Newcastle and Cardiff saw drops of 45%, Glasgow 44%, Birmingham 42%, Manchester 39%, London 36%, Bristol 31% and Belfast 30%.  Nitrogen dioxide is primarily emitted from vehicle exhausts, so this reduction is likely to be caused by lower levels of traffic.

Satellite images have revealed dramatic reductions in levels of nitrogen dioxide in China and northern Italy. Levels of traffic pollution have plummeted in all countries in lockdown, while exposure to pollutants will also be reduced by people staying off the streets. Air pollution causes an estimated 40,000 early deaths in the UK each year. It is linked to health problems including stroke, heart disease, lung cancer and respiratory diseases and infections, as well as stunting the growth of children’s lungs. Scientists caution that the data requires detailed analysis before they can pinpoint the exact causes of the pollution decline. There are many factors that affect pollution levels, including local weather, new regulations and human activity.

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**SNIPPETS**

* Some heads are being forced to use their budgets to repay parents for cancelled trips, after PGL Travel, a firm that runs short-stay school trips in the UK and France, said it would not be offering refunds.
* The NSPCC is advising parents to only allow their children to use online platform Zoom with adult supervision, amid inquiries into alleged security breaches.
* The DfE has appointed Nick Timothy, Theresa May's former chief of staff, as a non-executive director.
* Researchers from Oxford University have analysed UK population movement using mobile phone location and found that it has dropped by 98% since the beginning of March (but car journeys are starting to rise).
* The [average hourly wage for sales and customer services](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/grossweeklyearningsbyoccupationearn06) workers is £9.77, according to the ONS. It is £15.26 across all professions. The national minimum wage for workers over the age of 25 is £8.72 per hour.
* [Abbey College in Malvern](https://independentschoolscouncil.cmail20.com/t/t-l-nukkjul-kuaykiil-d/) plan to run its third term throughout the summer months to ensure pupils can catch up on their education. They are also offering up to 30 free places to children of NHS staff.
* After a huge outcry from academics and students, Durham University have rowed back on their intention to move large parts of their teaching online for next year and are just ‘reviewing’ the option for the longer term.
* The VC of Manchester [University](https://www.theguardian.com/education/universityofmanchester) has said the institution faces losses in excess of £270m next year if students cancel their studies because of the coronavirus pandemic.
* Professor Brian Cox has suggested that the coronavirus crisis could inspire a new generation of young people to become scientists.
* The chancellor is offering a new loan scheme for small businesses offering up to £50k with 100% of it backed by the government and paid out within 24 hours. There will be no repayments for a year.
* Professor Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer for England, has said there is "no doubt" that opening schools would contribute to increasing the rate of infection.
* Chinese investors have bought Abbots Bromley School, an independent school forced to close last summer due to financial difficulties, which they hope to restore to its "former glory"
* Elon Musk (CEO of Tesla) has described lockdowns as "forcibly imprisoning people in their homes" and "fascist". Tesla resisted efforts to shut its San Francisco plant until forced to do so by the authorities.
* [The Times](https://independentschoolscouncil.cmail19.com/t/t-l-plizht-kuaykiil-p/) has said that thousands of children who are home-educated on a permanent basis may not receive any GCSEs or A-levels this year, with some schools refusing to award an assessment grade on their behalf.
* The actress Lily Cole has said that teachers often overlook bullying on the grounds of hair colour because it is not considered as serious as other forms of discrimination.
* Paris St-Germain are preparing a new deal until 2025 for Brazil forward Neymar. It would see the 28-year-old earn 38m euros (£33m) per year.
* Amazon is facing huge criticism after shoppers complain about dirty and broken PPE for sale. Many had the UK flag on them but were actually rejected stock from China.
* In normal times 35% of food eaten is outside the home in restaurants and other outlets.
* New findings suggest that air pollution levels around schools during drop-off and pick-up times are three times greater than in the off-peak period.
* The NEU is calling for lesson material on the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower's voyage to America to be "withdrawn and reviewed" amid concerns it could undermine efforts to educate about colonialism.

Visit Britain, the official national tourist agency, has apologised after a literary map of the UK aimed at encouraging visitors showed no sites in Wales or Scotland.