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**151 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Jan 15-21 2022**

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**Early years and primary**

* The DfE has issued “**Choosing a phonics teaching programme**”. This sets out what the government is doing to help schools choose a phonics teaching programme. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/choosing-a-phonics-teaching-programme> and “**Systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) teaching programme validation**. Guidance on how to complete the self- assessment form with the essential core criteria and supporting information”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-teaching-materials-core-criteria-and-self-assessment>
* Academics want “urgent reform” of how young pupils are taught to read, warning a “**narrower focus” on phonics** in the last decade has made English schools “less successful”.
* **A report from UCL** found synthetic phonics – the practice of breaking words up into units of sound – has become the “dominant approach” in England after reforms introduced in 2012 by education secretary Michael Gove. Schools previously favoured a “more balanced approach”, the report said, including the use of passages of words. However the UCL study claimed that teaching reading in England “has been less successful” under the new approach. The conclusion was based on an analysis of 55 “robust” longitudinal experimental trials. Researchers said their findings “do not support a synthetic phonics orientation to the teaching of reading: they suggest that a balanced instruction approach is most likely to be successful”. The analysis of other studies found that phonics teaching was “likely to be effective” if it was “carefully connected” with reading actual books and taught for between 36 and 60 hours in a single school year. See <https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/rev3.3314> See also <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jan/19/ministers-obsessed-teaching-children-phonics-nonsense-words>
* In an **open letter sent to the education secretary**, reading experts call on the government to "discontinue its vetting of phonics schemes" and increase the time that pupils are required to spend reading overall. Teachers should be given control over what resources they use to teach reading, the letter says. It has more than 250 signatories, including primary heads, heads of department, policymakers, academics and children's author Michael Rosen. The letter argues that the "most robust research…strongly suggests that changes to policy and guidance are needed". It says that teachers should be encouraged to "focus first and foremost" on pupils "making sense of texts", with the teaching of phonics then "carefully linked" with the reading of "whole texts". See <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1o_K8UXCfw_7VVwX8tQHLQcuUeQLNL9Pw>

**Not all agree**:

* **Julia Carroll**, who is professor of child development and education at Coventry University, said that it's "disappointing" the research does not consider the needs of "at-risk" readers and that it fails to make "a clear distinction" between early and later literacy teaching. "A key part of the 'phonics first and foremost' approach is that most learners should then be able to move on from phonics tuition during Year 2 or Year 3, when the focus on whole texts and comprehension begins (though, of course, there should be book reading before that). "Focusing research only on Year 1 and Year 2 does focus on a point in literacy teaching when there is a lot of phonics teaching, to the exclusion of comprehension to a certain extent, because learners need to be able to read individual words to read whole texts," says Professor Carroll, who also comments that combining reading skills teaching is likely to "overwhelm" younger pupils
* The **DfE** said, "We are committed to raising literacy standards by following the evidence. Systematic phonics teaching has been proven the world-over to be the most effective method of teaching children to read.
* To find out if a person’s qualifications **allow them to work in an early years setting**, and if you can include them in staff/child ratios, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-qualifications-finder>
* The DfE has issued “**Early years level 3 SENCO**. Role description and qualification specification for early years special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs)”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-level-3-senco>
* For how to **make a complaint about the Standards and Testing Agency’s** service, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/standards-and-testing-agency/about/complaints-procedure>
* The DfE has updated its **Early Years census manual**. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-early-years-census>
* Around a third of teachers fear pupils are **at least 18 months behind on learning** due to the pandemic, a new survey from Teacher Tapp shows. Some 36 per cent of primary teachers in state schools who responded to a survey said they thought closing the learning gap would take 18 months or more, while 32 per cent of secondary state school teachers thought the same. Overall, classroom teachers were slightly more pessimistic about how long it would take to close the learning gap than headteachers or members of the senior leadership teams (SLT). Just under a third (32 per cent) of teachers surveyed thought it would take 18 months or more, compared with 31 per cent of SLT and 28 per cent of heads.

**Covid related issues**

* With the **imminent ending of Plan B restrictions**, the government lifted its recommendation that **masks** be worn in secondary classrooms from 20.1.22, and the rule on their use in communal areas will be removed on Jan 27, and the **DfE has issued new guidance**, (**see the Appendix to this Update**). The advice to **work at home** is also being removed. Local directors of public health will be able to recommend the use of face coverings where this is judged to be necessary in individual schools or in the wider local area, although they may do so for a limited time only. Measures requiring **self-isolation** for those who test positive will remain in place, the PM said. But he added there would “soon come a time when we can remove the legal requirement to self-isolate altogether”. He said self-isolation regulations were due to expire on March 24 “at which point I very much expect not to renew them”.

However unions have warned **schools are still suffering huge disruption**, with one in ten primary pupils having Covid last week. The **NAHT** said the prime minister’s statement “will feel, to many school leaders, at odds with the current situation on the ground”. The **NEU** said, “The danger is we lift restrictions too quickly before the effects of returning to school are clear. This will result in more education disruption.” Schools in multiple parts of **England have kept masks in classrooms**, with heads saying they had been left in a “difficult decision” because of a lack of notice from the Government.

* ONS data estimates that in the week to January 12, around **one in 10 primary** age pupils and **one in 20 secondary** age pupils tested positive for Covid-19.
* In the week ending January 16 there were 123 **confirmed Covid outbreaks at primary schools** in England, according to the UK Health Security Agency. An outbreak is defined as two or more test-confirmed cases of Covid. There were 100 outbreaks at special schools and 17 at secondary. There are very high rates of covid among the children in many **nursery** settings
* More than a third of rapid Covid test deliveries to schools this **term have been late, incomplete or have failed to arrive** at all despite promises of a “priority supply route”. A Teacher Tapp survey of around 1,800 senior leaders found that just over a third of LFT deliveries had arrived on time this term. In contrast, 17 per cent of schools reported that none had arrived and they were still waiting, 13 per cent said only some kits had arrived and 5 per cent said they were delivered late. The remaining third either did not know or could not answer. Schools fear a lack of lateral flow tests (LFTs) could lead to closures and spiralling supply costs as guidance changes mean they become more reliant on the tests than before.
* Ministers have drawn up a back-up plan to provide **free school meal vouchers** in case schools are forced to close again over the coming year. Wonde, an edtech firm, won the year-long contract in December to provide a “contingency scheme” for the DfE in the event of Covid-19 attendance restrictions or national school closures. It means multinational company Edenred, which won contracts totalling £425 million to run the scheme during earlier lockdowns, is no longer involved. Edenred stopped providing vouchers on behalf of DfE in July, and a new competitive procurement round began in October. It is not clear if Edenred bid.
* **The reduction of the Covid isolation period to 5 days** "doesn't solve" the staff shortage problem being seen in schools, the NAHT school leaders' union has warned. The NAHT, said that, while the new rules could "very slightly reduce the pressure on schools", the only way to properly resolve the problem would be to reduce the number of people catching the virus. ASCL said that school leaders will be concerned that the rule changes may mean staff returning to the classroom before they're "fully fit to do so". People would only be able to leave self-isolation after five full days if they tested negative for the virus via lateral flow tests on consecutive days, starting no earlier than day five of their self-isolation period. This means the earliest someone could leave isolation would be day six.
* **The first 16 and 17-year-olds were able to book their booster jabs** or attend a walk-in vaccination centre as from last from Monday. Invitations will initially be sent to the 40,000 teens who had a second vaccine dose at least three months ago. The NHS will not give a booster jab to 16- and 17-year-olds within 12 weeks of a positive Covid-19 test. Eventually more than 600,000 people aged 16 and 17 who have had two doses will be eligible for the booster. More than seven in 10 people in this age group in England have had at least one dose - 889,700 in total.
* **Deaf children** have been left struggling to communicate with friends and are "falling behind" with schoolwork **after the return of face coverings** in secondary school classrooms, a charity has warned. The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) has called on parents of deaf children across England to email education secretary Nadhim Zahawi about the impact that face coverings are having on their children. It says that face masks make lip-reading "impossible" and cover up "crucial" facial expressions. The NDCS added that the government should provide clear face coverings to schools and colleges with deaf students and set up a dedicated fund to pay for extra support, like radio aids and speech-to-text reporters for deaf students, while the wearing of masks continues

**Ofsted**

* **Primary schools previously graded as "outstanding" were "more likely" to be downgraded than secondaries** under the new Ofsted inspection regime, an analysis of reports published by Ofsted this week shows. The reports, which were analysed by FFT Education Datalab, show that 84 per cent of the 68 previously "outstanding" primary schools inspected in the autumn 2021 term were downgraded. This is almost double the rate of previously "outstanding" downgraded secondary schools, which saw just under half (47 per cent) of the 15 inspected receive a lower grade. Results also showed there were proportionately more primary schools with "concerns" raised in section 8 inspections in the 2021 round when compared with 2019. See <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2022/01/inspection-has-become-tougher-for-primary-schools/>
* Ofsted has issued “Management information for **further education and skills**, showing in-year and most recent inspection outcomes”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information-from-september-2021-to-august-2022>
* Ofsted has issued “**Contracting as an Ofsted inspector**. How you can become a contracted Ofsted inspector. You can find out about the process, requirements and rewards of this role”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/contracting-as-an-ofsted-inspector>
* **Ofsted will be back to business as usual from end of January** and will have its full team of inspectors back in schools from January 31. Ofsted says that it will be for school leaders to decide whether to offer their services to Ofsted, "as has always been the case". Ofsted’s deferral policy “remains in place and Ofsted will continue to remind providers about it for the remainder of this half-term”.

**Student health and well-being**

* Thousands of **student gambling addicts** are spending an average of £30 a week on betting, racking up debts and missing out on university life to fund their habit, research has found. In a survey of 2,000 students, 80% said they gambled, with 35% of those who did admitting using their student loan, bank overdrafts, borrowing from friends or taking out payday loans. Of those who gambled, 41% said it had led to them missing lectures, assignment deadlines or social activities. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jan/18/thousands-of-student-gambling-addicts-spending-30-a-week-on-habit>
* The number of UK children **growing up in "very deep poverty**" has risen to 1.8 million, a leading charity has warned, <https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/rising-energy-bills-devastate-poorest-families> . The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) said the figure had increased by 500,000 since 2012 and soaring energy prices rises could hit more families. A family is regarded as being in very deep poverty if it has an annual income of £9,900 or less, after housing costs and taxes are deducted, although that can vary depending on the family type, the JRF said. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-60026125>
* **Thousands of children have “fallen off the radar**” according to the Children’s Commissioner as she started an inquiry to find youngsters who have not returned to classrooms after lockdown. School attendance has dropped after closures and is a big “red flag” according to Dame Rachel de Souza. After two prolonged periods of closure, some children have dropped off the school roll altogether, so they are not even captured in official data. meaning they are not even captured in data from the Department for Education (DFE) Dame Rachel said that one of the problems was that there was no national database of children who are not on the school register. “A rough number that has been bandied around of children that we are not sure we can account for is about 80,000 to 100,000
* **Meningitis B cases** among students in England are rising sharply and exceeding pre-pandemic levels, according to a report by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). “Between September and November 2021, IMD [invasive meningococcal disease] cases increased with group B disease in adolescents/young adults rising sharply and exceeding pre-pandemic levels,” the 11-page analysis of the most recent data available says. During that period, 41.5% of meningitis cases occurred among those aged 15 to 19, compared with 11.8% and 14.3% during the same period in 2018 and 2019 respectively, it adds. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jan/19/meningitis-b-cases-rising-students-england-study>
* Schools are using **“misleading and biased” information materials funded by the alcohol industry** to educate pupils as young as nine about drinking, according to a study. Teachers in thousands of UK schools employ lesson plans, factsheets and films produced by bodies with close ties to the drinks trade even though they “portray alcohol as a normal consumer product to impressionable young minds”, the researchers found. The materials are intended to deter young people from underage drinking, but they are potentially harmful because they downplay the harms drink can cause and seek to “blame-shift” responsibility for problems from manufacturers on to young people, the researchers say. Academics from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine analysed teaching materials about alcohol and its health impact put together for use in schools by three bodies: Drinkaware for Education, Smashed and Talk About Alcohol. See <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0259560#references> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jan/20/uk-pupils-taught-about-alcohol-with-misleading-industry-funded-resources>
* **Children's Mental Health Week** runs from 7 to 13 February 2022. It is being organised by the children's health charity Place2Be. For activities and resources, see <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/schools-and-youth-groups/>
* Staff in schools in England and Wales are for the first time to be included in draft guidance on how to identify people who have **self-harmed**. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-60026475> The experts behind it said everyone was responsible for tackling the growing problem of self-harm - not just mental health professionals. These are the first new guidelines on self-harm produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) for 11 years, and a public consultation on the guidance will run until 1 March, <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/indevelopment/gid-ng10148/consultation/html-content-2>

**Academies, Trusts, free schools, UTCs**

* **The local government ombudsman wants the power to investigate academy admissions and exclusion complaints**, claiming that it could boost public trust. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is an independent investigatory body which acts as the final stage for complaints about council services, including admission and exclusion concerns in maintained schools. It publishes reports that make recommendations, but it cannot enforce action. Its powers do not cover academies however, whose trusts are their admission authorities. Any complaints relating to academies are investigated by the Education, Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA).
* Some Large academy trusts **have built up multi-million-pound surpluses** during the pandemic, as savings from school closures and extra DfE cash boosted reserves. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/silver-linings-big-academy-trusts-see-reserves-boosted-by-covid-windfalls/>
* For **Letters to academy trusts about poor performance**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/letters-to-academies-about-poor-performance>
* ESFA has issued its **guide for newly opened academies, academy trusts and free schools.** See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guide-for-newly-opened-academies-academy-trusts-and-free-schools>
* ESFA has updated “**Academies planning calendar**. A planner showing key dates for payments, publications and academy actions, for the 2021 to 2022 academic year”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-planning-calendar>
* For information to help **academy trusts submit their budget forecast return** to the ESFA, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-budget-forecast-return>
* More than 50 **UTCs** have opened since they were launched in 2010. Many of the colleges have, however, faced difficulties recruiting students and staying afloat financially. Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC will be the twelfth of its kind to close to date. To mitigate low student numbers, a number of UTCs have begun recruiting students at age 13 or even 11, rather than their traditional starting age of 14. Many have also joined multi-academy trusts to ease financial troubles.
* Ofsted has issued **Pre-registration advice notes** for free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges 2021. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-registration-advice-notes-for-free-schools-studio-schools-and-university-technical-colleges-2021>
* The DfE has issued guidance for **academy trusts planning to make organisational changes** or close an academy by mutual agreement with the Secretary of State. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-significant-changes-to-an-existing-academy>

**Learning recovery**

* ESFA has updated “**Get help with technology**: conditions of internet access and device grants. Information about the eligibility criteria and payment process for connectivity and device funding”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-help-with-technology-conditions-of-internet-access-and-device-grants>
* **Nation**al Tutoring Programme (NTP) tutors are running sessions for "ghost pupils" who don't turn up due to confusion over whether students who repeatedly fail to show up for sessions are allowed to be removed from the programme. Senior school leaders say Tes that NTP tuition providers are saying they cannot remove students that have started a block of tuition from the scheme and replace them with another pupil, even when the initial student refuses to attend sessions. The Tutors' Association (TTA), say that some providers are keen to avoid swapping students partway through a block of tuition because they are worried about missing targets set for them by the firm contracted by Randstad which has asked providers to hit a key performance indicator (KPI) that states that at least 95 per cent of pupils who start a tuition block under the scheme follow it through to completion of a 15-hour block. However, the DfE said that students could be swapped out of their sessions if there was a "good reason" for them not to complete a package, and said that this should be assessed on a case by case basis. It also said funding should only be received for a session if a pupil receives tuition

**Public examinations**

* **The International Baccalaureate Organisation** (IBO) has announced it will use the same dual assessment route for exams this summer in recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19. The IB said although it "strongly believes" exams are the best method for assessing students' learning, it recognises some settings may not be able to sit exams this summer and so past methods used to award results without exams will be required. "Where this happens, the IB will use processes that we have refined over the course of the pandemic to award grades without exams." This process chiefly involves awarding final grades using internal coursework marks and teacher-submitted predicted grades - something that IB has previously said it believes is the best way to achieve a fair outcome for students
* The DfE has once again updated "**Responsibility for exams**”. Guidance for schools, colleges and exam centres on who should enter students for exams, the health arrangements for exams and the support DfE is providing. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series>
* For the latest **Ofqual: rolling update**, Information on qualifications which have been disrupted by coronavirus (COVID-19), see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-rolling-update>

**ITT**

* The DfE has issued “How accredited initial teacher training (ITT) providers can **recruit trainees who are not UK or Irish nationals**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/recruit-trainee-teachers-from-overseas-accredited-itt-providers>
* The DfE has issued **“Monthly statistics on initial teacher training** (ITT) recruitment Numbers of candidates and applications for initial teacher training (ITT) for the 2022 to 2023 academic year”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monthly-statistics-on-initial-teacher-training-itt-recruitment>
* The DfE has issued “**Guidance for FE ITE providers about bursary funding** for the 2022 to 2023 academic year”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fe-funding-initial-teacher-education-ite-bursaries-2022-to-2023>

**Careers**

* ESFA has issued “Get help to explore different careers and understand what employers in your area are looking for”. This is details about the **National Careers Service career workshops** for expert advice about what’s happening in your local area. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/get-help-to-explore-different-careers-and-understand-what-employers-in-your-area-are-looking-for>
* Boys are put off traditionally “female” career paths because they are influenced by **gender stereotyping**, but girls are more likely to reject this, research has found. The research, published in the British Journal of Social Psychology, found that girls rejected gender stereotypes around 50 per cent of the time, in comparison to only around 25 per cent for boys. Boys selected just one traditionally female subject for every three traditionally male subjects picked, while girls chose a similar proportion from each group. The researchers said it was time to advance gender equality by encouraging more men into traditionally female jobs
* ESFA has issued “**Get the Jump**: 'Skills for Life' campaign toolkit” This resource can be used to support the new campaign and raise awareness and understanding of the full range of education and training choices available to young people aged 14-19. See https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/get-the-jump-skills-for-life-campaign-toolkit

**School management**

* The DfE has issued “**School census 2021 to 2022**: technical information. Technical specification and validation rules for submitting 2021 to 2022 school census data”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2021-to-2022-technical-information>
* For the latest edition of **ESFA Inform**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-inform>
* ESFA has updated “Coronavirus (COVID-19) 2021 **qualifications fund** for schools and colleges. How to submit a claim for eligible costs related to the qualifications fund for the period October 2021 to March 2022”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfe-exam-support-service-claiming-costs>
* ESFA has issued “**High needs funding arrangements: 2022 to 2023**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2022-to-2023>
* Ministers’ efforts to close the attainment gap could be set back as a **surge in the number of children eligible for free school meals makes tracking poorer pupils’ progress “increasingly difficult”**. A widening of free school meals eligibility following the move to universal credit in 2018, coupled with increased levels of poverty during the pandemic means hundreds of thousands more children now count as disadvantaged. As a result, a report by the National Foundation for Educational Research has warned that the government’s flagship attainment gap measure will “not provide a meaningful indication of how the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is changing over time”. ASCL has called for an “urgent review” of free school meals eligibility and the pupil premium grant “to ensure disadvantage among children and young people is correctly identified”. See <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/4762/nfer_investigating_the_changing_landscape_of_pupil_disadvantage.pdf>
* The DfE has updated yet again “**Senior mental health lead training**. Find out how to apply for a grant and access DfE quality assured training to help develop a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/senior-mental-health-lead-training>
* Schools are being hit with "**astronomical" gas and electricity bills** that are swamping their budgets. In one particularly shocking example, bills sent to a school totalling £50,000 for one month's electricity use and £13,000 for gas - a staggering £54,000 higher than the amount the school budgeted for energy each month. One school said its energy bill had increased by £67,000 for the current financial year, while another is bracing for costs to double from £85,000 to £170,000 when it finalises a new deal. Making a bad situation a whole lot worse is the fact that schools are currently being advised to improve ventilation by leaving windows open - meaning even more is being spent on heating buildings. Some schools are somewhat shielded from this situation because they are on long-term energy deals lasting many years into the future. However, schools on more medium-term deals with around 18 months or fewer left to run may not be so lucky, after Centrica warned last week that the huge price rises could last throughout 2022 and beyond.
* The DfE has issued a report on the **2017 schools’ buying strategy** and how it has performed. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-buying-performance-of-initiatives>
* The DfE has updated “**Providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus** (COVID-19) pandemic. Find out how apprenticeships will continue during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response>
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-19-january-2022>
* Forest Gate community school has moved to a **four-and-a-half-day week**, with school finishing at 1pm on Fridays. To achieve this, it removed two pastoral periods from the schedule on Friday and added the four other 50-minute lessons on to weekdays. Children can stay on site to do homework or extracurricular activities. The initiative has been so successful in terms of reducing teacher stress that the school is now consulting on whether to reduce the week further, to four days. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/jan/16/happier-teachers-and-higher-grades-the-london-school-that-shortened-the-week>
* The government is urging schools and trusts to seek help overcoming Covid disruption, under a **scheme offering improvement support from experienced leaders and trusts**. The DfE has now opened up its improvement offer to all schools and trusts. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/trust-and-school-improvement-offer?utm_source=20%20January%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19> Eligibility was previously limited to schools and trusts running schools with a “requires improvement” rating. The programme offers extra funding for “up to three days’ support and advice from a national leader of education or equivalent” senior leader. Their role is typically to “help your leadership team identify and implement improvements within the school and support the building of relationships with a MAT, where appropriate”. It also offers up to £10,000 towards a trust partnership, “where a suitable partner MAT is identified, and subject to the availability of funds”. But the DfE said that the offer had been widened “to any school that would benefit from it due to disruption caused by Covid-19”. Examples of issues they could help tackle include difficulties delivering remote education, low attendance, significant staff shortages, and “any other factors which would put schools or trusts at risk of disruption” linked to Covid.
* For the latest **STEM monthly newsletter**, see <http://email.stem.org.uk/q/11oBrIRcWSht1iPnyHmw0QL/wv>

**Post 16**

* The DfE has issued “**T Levels capital fund**. Details on the fund and how to apply”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-levels-capital-fund>
* ESFA has issued “**Qualification achievement rates** (QAR) 2020 to 2021. Explains how qualification achievement rates are calculated”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-achievement-rates-qar-2020-to-2021>
* The Covid pandemic has inspired **record numbers of people to become nurses**, with more than 56,000 signing up to nursing courses or apprenticeships in England since the outbreak in early 2020, according to a report. Figures from the UCAS show that more 18-year-old school leavers are applying for and accepting places to study nursing than before the pandemic, with applications up by 38% since 2019, while applications from those over the age of 21 have also risen by more than a third. Nursing is now the fifth most popular subject studied at higher education in England.
* The Office for Students (OfS) has published a consultation detailing its **minimum acceptable outcomes** for students, which sets thresholds for drop-out rates, course completion and graduate employment that universities and colleges will have to pass to avoid further investigation The consultation document from the OfS says that more than 60,000 students on full-time undergraduate courses are currently or recently enrolled at institutions in England that could fail to meet its minimum standards, as have more than 150,000 part-time undergraduates. The new regulations would mean that universities, colleges and other providers are likely to be sanctioned if fewer than 80% of students studying full-time for their first degree continue past their first year, or if fewer than 75% complete their degree, over the previous four years. Institutions could also be investigated and penalised by the OfS if fewer than 60% of their graduates go on to work in what it classifies as skilled employment. See <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/student-outcomes-and-teaching-excellence-consultations/>
* ESFA has issued “**Share Your Skills**: Teach in Further Education stakeholder toolkit and resources”. This collection features resources you can use to promote teaching in further education. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/share-your-skills-teach-in-further-education-stakeholder-toolkit-and-resources>

**Appendix**

**Revised covid documentation**

* These only reflect the **end of Plan B** as from 27.1.22, as announced by the PM. **Where the changes are outlined then these are shown with each document**
* **Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak,** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak> Changes:
  + update to tracing close contacts and isolation section to clarify the advice for under5s
  + update to face coverings section to reflect removal of recommendation to wear face coverings in classrooms and communal areas
  + update to when an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test section to clarify isolation expectations in boarding schools
  + update to mandatory certification section to reflect that this will no longer be in place from 27 January
  + update to workforce section to reflect that government is no longer advising people to work from home if they can
* **Special schools and other specialist settings: coronavirus (COVID-19),** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings> Changes:
  + change in ordering, moving protection measure to the beginning to the document to enable easier comparison with other guidance documents
  + update to tracing close contacts and isolation section to clarify the advice for under 5s
  + update to face coverings section to reflect removal of recommendation to wear face coverings in classrooms and communal areas
  + update to when an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test section to clarify isolation expectations in a residential setting
  + update to mandatory certification section to reflect that this will no longer be in place from 27 January
  + update to education recovery section to confirm that recovery programmes should continue to be delivered
  + update to workforce section to reflect that from 27 January government is no longer advising people to work from home if they can
* **Actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus pandemic**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision> Changes:
  + update to face coverings section to reflect removal of recommendation
  + to wear face coverings in classrooms and communal areas
  + update to mandatory certification section to reflect that this will no longer in place from 27 January
  + update to workforce section to reflect that from 27 January government is no longer advising people to work from home if they can
* **Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak> Changes:
  + update to tracing close contacts and isolation section to clarify the advice for under 5s
  + update to face coverings section to reflect removal of recommendation to wear face coverings in classrooms and communal areas
  + update to mandatory certification section to reflect that this is no longer in place from 27 January
  + update to workforce section to reflect that government is no longer advising people to work from home if they can
* **Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak,** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak> Changes:
  + update to tracing close contacts and isolation section to clarify the advice for under 5s
  + update to face coverings section to reflect removal of recommendation to wear face coverings in classrooms and communal areas
  + • update to mandatory certification section to reflect that this is no longer in place from 27 January
  + update to workforce section to reflect that government is no longer advising people to work from home if they can
* **What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19,** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>
* **Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures> Changes:

added advice on:

* + staff deployment and staff shortages in workforce
  + using rapid lateral flow tests to end self-isolation early in when an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test
  + prioritising early years places

amended:

* + advice to report ‘positive’ cases to Ofsted instead of ‘confirmed’ cases in reporting COVID-19 cases to Ofsted to reflect change in confirmatory PCR testing advice
  + hyperlink to additional guidance for childminders in other guidance available

amended advice to reflect removal of Plan B measures in:

* + overview
  + workforce - working from home advice updated to reflected government no longer
  + advising people to work from home if they can
  + mandatory certification - no longer in place from 27 January 2022
  + face coverings - no longer recommended in communal areas
  + In circumstances where face coverings are recommended
  + parent and child groups – discontinuation of face coverings exemption from 27January 2022

added:

* + additional advice on when children and staff should return to the setting

updated:

* + confirmatory PCR tests
  + testing for children aged under 5 years for household contacts in tracing close contacts and self-isolation
* **Managing coronavirus (COVID-19) in education and childcare settings, (Contingency)**. What measures education and childcare settings should be prepared to introduce to manage coronavirus (COVID-19), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings> Changes:
  + - changes to the Actions to consider section
    - updated advice on Face coverings

**Tony Stephens**