



**Evidence for
Excellence in
Education**

In the News

12 January 2016



Tuesday 15 December 2015 – Monday 11 January 2016

The status of PSHE in the curriculum

Friday 8 January 2016

In a letter to the Education Secretary, the Chairs of the Education, Health, Home Affairs, and Business, Innovation, and Skills Committees, have jointly called for PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) to be made statutory in all schools.

The Government had set a deadline of the end of 2015 to respond to the Education Committee's February 2015 report [Life Lessons: PSHE and SRE in Schools](#), but this has not been met.

At the same time, the House of Commons Library has published two briefings, one on PSHE in schools and the other on sex and relationships education (SRE) in schools. The briefing on PSHE sets out the rules relating to its provision, as well as introducing the debates about the quality of provision and the subject's statutory status. The briefing on SRE provides an overview of the legislation and guidance currently in place regarding provision and also outlines related reviews and proposals in Parliament.

Source: UK Parliament. *PSHE to be statutory in all schools Chairs' letter urges*

[Letter](#)

[PSHE briefing](#)

[SRE briefing](#)

[BBC news item](#)

New National Schools Commissioner appointed

Tuesday 5 January 2016

The Department for Education has made a new appointment to the role of National Schools Commissioner.

Sir David Carter, currently the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for the South West, will succeed Frank Green who completes his term at the end of January 2016.

Sir David will play a key role in the Government's education reforms, leading the team of eight RSCs to tackle underperformance and ensure all schools across the country are providing their pupils with an excellent education. This will include:

- supporting the creation of new academies and free schools
- intervening in failing and coasting local authority schools, exercising the new powers to be introduced through the Education and Adoption Bill, currently before Parliament
- recruiting high-quality academy sponsors
- improving the performance of underperforming academies and free schools.

Source: GOV.UK (DfE). *Sir David Carter appointed as new National Schools Commissioner*

[Press release](#)

Counter-extremism in schools

Wednesday 23 December 2015

The House of Commons Library has published a briefing giving an overview of the role of schools in countering extremist ideology and the potential for pupils to be radicalised.

Schools, both state-funded and independent, have a range of duties in relation to safeguarding children from extremism. The protection of children from radicalisation and the promotion of British values are part of the inspection regime to which schools are subject.

Source: UK Parliament. *Counter-extremism policy in English schools*

[Details](#)

Keeping children safe in education consultation

Tuesday 22 December 2015

The Department for Education is consulting on revised statutory guidance on keeping children safe in education.

Under the proposals, schools will be required to put in place strengthened measures to protect children from online harm, such as cyberbullying, pornography and the risk of radicalisation. Specifically, schools will:

- need to have appropriate filters and monitoring systems, so that no child can access harmful content via the school's IT systems and concerns can be identified quickly
- be required to ensure that they teach their pupils about safeguarding, including online safety.

Responses should be made by 16 February 2016.

Source: GOV.UK (DfE). *New measures to keep children safe online at school and at home*

[Press release](#)

[Consultation documents](#)

[BBC news item](#)

State of the Nation 2015

Thursday 17 December 2015

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission has issued a new report assessing progress in tackling child poverty and improving social mobility in the United Kingdom.

Child poverty has fallen by a third since 1997. There are fewer children in workless households than at any time in two decades. Employment is at record levels and educational inequalities, though wide, have slowly narrowed. More working class young people are benefiting from higher education than at any point in history.

Nonetheless, the report concludes that progress to date has been too limited and too slow and a dramatic change in the approach to tackling child poverty and social mobility is required of governments, employers and educators.

The recommendations of the report include:

- The Government should set out a long-term early years strategy with two clear, stretching objectives: to halve the child development gap by 2025 (currently better-off children do 42 per cent better than poorer children) and to halve the gap in maternal employment between England and the best-performing nations by 2025.
- The confusion that exists about the concept of school-readiness should be removed by the introduction of a single, national, easy-to-use definition.
- The Government should adopt a new zero tolerance approach to schools which fail their pupils and their communities for more than five years in a row.
- Pay and reward for new teachers should be overhauled and new incentives introduced to get more good teachers into the most challenging schools.
- Failing further education (FE) colleges should become FE academies, along the lines of the initial city academies, with an external business sponsor.
- New apprenticeships should be targeted at higher-level courses and young people: there should be 30,000 young people starting a higher-level apprenticeship a year by 2020.

Source: GOV.UK (SMCPC). *State of the Nation 2015 report published*

[Details](#)

Advice on staffing and employment for schools

Thursday 17 December 2015

The Department for Education is consulting on proposed non-statutory advice for schools on staffing and employment.

The advice is designed to provide consistency in the information given to all schools and support an even approach to handling staffing and employment matters between schools. It will replace the department's statutory [Guidance on Managing Staff Employment in Schools](#).

Responses to the proposals should be made by 10 February 2016.

Source: GOV.UK (DfE). *Staffing and employment advice for schools*

[Consultation documents](#)

Call for evidence on life chances strategy

Thursday 17 December 2015

The House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee and the Education Select Committee have launched a joint inquiry into the Government's life chances strategy and the role that early or foundation years intervention plays in shaping people's lives.

The Government has announced that it intends to track child poverty by monitoring educational attainment at 16 and the number of children living in workless households. It also intends to set out a range of other indicators, including family breakdown, debt and addiction in a children's life chances strategy. The inquiry will examine the proposals to introduce new life chances indicators and inform the development of the Government's life chances strategy.

The Committees are inviting written submissions of evidence on:

- the relationship between early years education and the life chances strategy
- cross-departmental coordination on early years interventions and interaction with the benefits system and public services.

The deadline for submissions is 29 February 2016.

Source: UK Parliament. *Foundation years and UK Government's life chances strategy: joint inquiry*

[Details](#)

Financial sustainability of further education

Wednesday 16 December 2015

The Public Accounts Committee has published a report voicing serious concerns about the financial sustainability and future of further education (FE) in England.

In its 13th report of the 2015–2016 session, the Committee warns that the declining financial health of many FE colleges has 'potentially serious consequences for learners and local economies'. It finds that funding and oversight bodies have been slow to address emerging financial and educational risks, with current oversight arrangements leading to confusion over who should intervene and when.

The Committee:

- urges the Government to simplify arrangements for oversight and intervention, and to ensure that the Further Education Commissioner has adequate resources to intervene when colleges are struggling
- calls for a more proactive approach in helping FE colleges prepare for the 'significant financial challenges they face in the likely event of further funding cuts'
- expresses concern about the effectiveness of area-based reviews of post-16 education, announced in July 2015, which it describes as 'limited in scope' and having 'the potential to be haphazard'.

Source: UK Parliament. *Serious concerns about future of further education*

[Details](#)

SPEECHES

Life chances

Speech by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, on life chances
London, 11 January 2016

'I can announce that we are going to launch a new national campaign led by Christine Hodgson, Chair of Capgemini UK and of the Careers and Enterprise Company, and it will work with business, charities and the public sector to build a new generation of high-quality mentors.

We'll direct £70m towards careers in this Parliament, principally to the Careers and Enterprise Company, who will lead this major new effort to recruit mentors for young teenagers, with a focus on the 25,000 about to start their GCSEs who we know are underachieving or at risk of dropping out.'

[View speech](#)

[Press release](#)

IN THE PAPERS

TES 8/1/2016 *

[Desperate heads gamble on early recruitment](#): Stiff competition for teachers means schools fast-tracking appointments for September (pp 6–7)

Why the new multiplication tests are dividing opinion: Top Pisa systems don't use times table assessments, but supporters say they could reinforce the basics (pp 18–19)

How America fell in (and out of) love with testing: As the number of tests ballooned, attitudes began to change (pp 24–30)

[College groups could face more inspections](#): With mergers looming, inspectorate moots monitoring provision at campus level (pp 44–45)

TES 1/1/2016

[The three test scores that will shape UK education](#): Pisa results will also assess students' teamworking abilities for the first time (pp 6–7)

The biggest change to the schools system in 50 years: Ministers want to fast-track their plans to turn all state schools into academies – but union warns of 'disaster' (pp 8–9)

'This year research will be a tool at the chalkface': More teachers are utilising research evidence, but it must be accessible and jargon-free, say campaigners (p 10)

[After an anxious year, what will 2016 bring?](#) There were sighs of relief over the spending review, but major change still lies ahead (pp 44–45)

* Only summaries of a small number of articles are available on the TES website. Consult the print edition for the full articles.

'In the News' is one of the current awareness bulletins produced by NFER's [Centre for Information and Reviews](#).

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