

Written evidence submitted by the Fair Education Alliance

Date of submission: 02-06-2020

RESPONSE TO THE EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION

Who we are:

[The Fair Education Alliance](#) is a coalition of ~170 organisations including schools, universities, businesses, charities, unions and the third sector all working together to end inequalities in education.

The causes of educational inequalities are complex, and the education gap is growing, not shrinking. Projections from 2019 show that it would take 500 years to close it at current rates.¹ We are working together to change this with defined goals, pooled expertise and collaboration, so that change happens faster and spreads further across the whole of England.

Even withstanding the impact of COVID-19 on education, we believe a fairer education system would be one that:

- Builds essential life skills such as teamwork and problem solving through implementation of [Skills Builder](#): a shared framework for the development of essential skills.
- Prioritises and promotes wellbeing as an outcome itself and as a precursor to academic achievement.
- Incentivises and supports teachers and leaders to work and thrive in the disadvantaged communities that need them most.
- Engages and involves parents and communities in education for increased development beyond the school gates.
- Provides support for all post-16 routes, ensuring all young people have the information and support to make the best decisions for them on life after school.

This submission addresses the issues raised in the Education Select Committee Inquiry on the Impact of COVID-19 on Education and Children's Services. It does not reflect the total action required to end educational inequality.

¹ Hutchinson, J.H., Bonetti, S., Crenna-Jennings, W. and Akhal, A. (2019). *Education in England Annual Report*. [online] *Fair Education Alliance*, EPI and Fair Education Alliance, p.11. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/543e665de4b0fbb2b140b291/t/5d3fcdab5aeea7000104ac0f/1564462514009/EPI-Annual-Report-2019.pdf>

Submission Summary:

- 1 As an alliance, we believe that COVID-19 has only exacerbated and highlighted the existing inequalities in education.
- 2 Data from our 2019 report card showed that poorer pupils are on average a year and a half behind their wealthier peers in attainment by the time they leave school. There are also large geographic variations with a gap of over 2 years in some parts of the country and 6 months in others.² Although in 2011-2017 we had started to see this attainment gap close, in recent years progress has stalled. With schools closed due to COVID-19 and young people struggling to access education, a widening of the gap due to lost time in formal education is now an expected reality that we must seek to mitigate.
- 3 However, whilst closing the attainment gap is important in the long-term, we must not underestimate the emotional impact of the extraordinary circumstances we are living through. It is critical that provision for pastoral and mental health support is prioritised. A recent study into school organisational culture found that: 'resilience is more than an individual trait. It is a capacity which arises through interactions between people within organisational contexts.'³ We therefore need to focus on the environment in which children and young people are learning in order to provide a safe space for young people who have suffered safeguarding issues, anxiety or bereavement during this time.
- 4 In this situation, it is critical that we do not overburden children and young people to immediately catch-up. We recognise that the disadvantage gap has been widely reported in the last few months, and there is increased concern that disadvantaged young people will fall even further behind. However, we see an equally significant risk in the most disadvantaged young people being given extra work and an increased pressure placed on them when they return to classrooms. As an alliance we believe that the initial focus of schools, even above academic attainment needs to be on pupils' mental health and wellbeing, wherein schools are supported to provide extra academic support to pupils when appropriate.
- 5 It is also important that we take into consideration the students that would have been taking exams this year and ensure that the qualifications that they are awarded are fair. Students in key transition phases (notably GCSE, A-level and university leavers) should have increased access to advice and support at this difficult time to help them to understand the options available to them.

² Hutchinson, J.H., Bonetti, S., Crenna-Jennings, W. and Akhal, A. (2019). *Education in England Annual Report*. [online] *Fair Education Alliance*, EPI and Fair Education Alliance, p.15. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/543e665de4b0fbb2b140b291/t/5d3fcdab5aeea7000104ac0f/1564462514009/EPI-Annual-Report-2019.pdf>

³ Day, C. (2014). *Beyond Survival: Teachers and Resilience*.

6 This submission sets out what the Fair Education Alliance believes can be done to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on education, with particular emphasis on those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Throughout this report, we use the term “disadvantaged” to refer to pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds. However, we also include in this definition all children and young people that are eligible for Free School Meals, are in care, have special educational needs or who face hardship because of their geographical location.

7 We have shaped our response to include both the short-term and long-term changes that we would like to see made and have provided recommendations on how this could work in practice.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

How we can mitigate educational inequality in the short-term

8 *In 2019 we saw the attainment gap stall and even widen in some areas.⁴ Time spent away from formal education settings, especially during the summer holidays, has been proven to cause this gap to increase.⁵ Taking into account how long schools have already been closed for and the proximity of the summer holidays, closing the disadvantage gap now presents even more of a challenge.*

1. A catch-up premium should be introduced for all pupils

9 *In February 2020, a catch-up premium was implemented for Year 7s who did not achieve the expected standard in English and Maths in Key Stage 2.⁶ We suggest that this catch-up premium is extended to all disadvantaged young people, especially those who are vulnerable and from low income households.⁷ Although we believe that a proportion of the catch-up premium should be spent on closing the attainment gap, it is critical that the scope is extended to support whole school approaches to mental health and wellbeing.*

10 It is critical that schools are given the resources needed to support the most disadvantaged young people, and there is a great need for Government action and funding to support this. Although schools are going above and beyond for their students, extra support, external to schools will be

⁴ Hutchinson, J.H., Bonetti, S., Crenna-Jennings, W. and Akhal, A. (2019). *Education in England Annual Report*. [online] Fair Education Alliance, EPI and Fair Education Alliance. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/543e665de4b0fbb2b140b291/t/5d3fcdab5aeea7000104ac0f/1564462514009/EPI-Annual-Report-2019.pdf>

⁵ H. Stewart, N. Watson & M. Campbell (2018) The cost of school holidays for children from low income families. *Childhood*, 25 (4), 516-529. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0907568218779130>

⁶ Department for Education. *Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium: guide for schools*. [online] GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/year-7-literacy-and-numeracy-catch-up-premium-guide-for-schools>

⁷ * Although we support the open letter to Gavin Williamson MP wherein the Northern Powerhouse Partnership called for a catch-up premium for secondary schools, we believe that this should be extended to primary schools as well. (Northern Powerhouse All Party Parliamentary Group Open Letter: COVID-19: Catch-up premium for disadvantaged pupils)

needed in the coming months. Without the additional funding to pay for additional specialised interventions or support coming out of this pandemic, the impact of young people's health and future wellbeing could be at stake.

11 We therefore believe that the catch-up premium would help to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people, especially if used to support efforts in implementing a National Tutor Service, enhanced mental health and wellbeing for schools, and to provide additional support to pupils in transition years. To be impactful, the catch-up premium would need to be put in place for at least 2-3 years minimum so that interventions are sustained and effective.

2. Implementing a National Tutor Service to support the most disadvantaged young people in catching-up

12 ***We are calling on the Government to introduce a National Tutoring Service to make up for the lost months of formal education that young people have faced, with particular emphasis on the students most at risk of falling behind. We are calling for every school and college in the country to receive additional funding as part of the catch-up premium, to help them secure extra hours of tuition for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.***

13 Research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows that during the lockdown to date, students in the best-off families will have done more than 7 full days' worth of extra learning than those in the poorest families.⁸ For those children and young people who do not go back until September, this gap will double.

14 For many, the gap in education means they will find it harder to secure key qualifications. This will have far-reaching consequences for their life chances, including the increased risk of being not in education, employment or training at 18. Regardless of whether they are invited to return to school or college before the Autumn, each of these students will have lost between 200 and 400 hours of education by then. Not only could this have long-lasting consequences for these students individually, but it also presents a heavy cost to our country as a whole, which could lose out on the talents of so many young people if this lost learning is never addressed.

3. Schools must be supported to deal with trauma and trauma-related behaviour as a result of COVID-19

15 ***We cannot underestimate the varied and possibly complex needs of pupils returning to school and believe that additional funding will help schools to mitigate the trauma and trauma-related behavioural issues caused by the pandemic. A proportion of the catch-up premium should be set aside to enable teachers to access tools or resources that can be used with children and young people to support their mental health and fund whole school approaches to wellbeing.***

⁸ Andrew, A., Cattan, S., Costa-Dias, M., Farquharson, C., Kraftman, L., Krutikova, S., Phimister, A. and Sevilla, A. (n.d.). (2020) *Learning during the lockdown: real-time data on children's experiences during home learning IFS Briefing Note BN288*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN288-Learning-during-the-lockdown-1.pdf>

16 Currently, the most common experience of young people is loss. Loss of structure, loss of interaction and for some, loss of family members and friends. Voluntary organisations are also continually receiving direct reports of the rise in domestic abuse and safeguarding cases. According to a report by Young Minds, 1 in 3 adult mental health conditions relate directly to adverse childhood experiences like those previously mentioned. It is therefore vital that we understand the impact that this pandemic will have on the mental health and wellbeing of young people.⁹

17 A member of UK Youth Voice shared the following:

“So many people are reading the news all day as we are just at home, some of it is fake news and we’re getting so scared, some people I know are having panic attacks. We’re trying to figure out how to stay safe while still staying mentally healthy. Depression is going to go up during this outbreak; you don’t realise it’s here until it’s too late.”

18 Coming out of this pandemic, we expect to see trauma-related behavioural issues increase. As a sector, we need to ensure that schools have the tools, knowledge and support to manage this, and a heightened awareness of how much this could impact young people in the future. There are also fears across the Fair Education Alliance network that there may be a further spike in exclusions following the return to school because of the trauma suffered.

19 We therefore support Young Minds' call to diversify access to mental health and wellbeing services to ensure that all young people can access them easily, rather than it having to be through a doctor or clinic, which can be challenging to access. We also want to see more training and support given to schools so that teachers can understand behavioural issues better in order to help young people get the support they need early on. Early intervention is necessary to prevent an escalation of need or to avoid preventable exposure to further trauma post COVID-19.

20 Barnardo's recently released a research paper that asked teachers what they needed to effectively support children when schools reopened. 71% said that they need access to tools or resources that can be used with children to support their mental health and well being, 67% said more support for school staff with their own mental health and wellbeing, and 62% said an increase in funding to support mental health and wellbeing initiatives.¹⁰

21 With only one third of pupils taking part in online lessons while schools are closed, young people are missing out on critical learning time.¹¹ However, re-engaging students' needs to be carefully thought out. According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 1 in 4 children attending school were exposed to a traumatic event that can affect learning and behaviour pre-COVID-19.¹² Coming out of this pandemic, we expect to see this number increase. Without proper emotional support, this pandemic could impact the learning of young people for years to come.

⁹ Bush, M. (2016). *Beyond Adversity: Addressing the mental health needs of young people who face complexity and adversity in their lives*. [online] Young Minds. Available at: https://youngminds.org.uk/media/1241/report_-_beyond_adversity.pdf.

¹⁰ Barnardos (2020). *Time for a Clean Slate*. [online] Barnardo's. Available at: <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/time-clean-slate-mental-health-heart-education-report>

¹¹ Cullinane, C. and Montacute, R. (2020). *COVID-19 Impacts: School Shutdown*. [online] Sutton Trust. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/covid-19-and-social-mobility-impact-brief/>.

¹² nctsnadmin (2018). *Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators*. [online] The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Available at: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-trauma-toolkit-educators>.

4. The Government's technology support scheme should be extended

22 In March this year, Teach First carried out a survey of over 6,000 teachers. They found that just 2% of teachers working in the poorest communities believed that their pupils could benefit from online education.¹³ The main reason cited is the lack of access to suitable devices or a stable internet connection. It is therefore crucial that the Government's technology support scheme is extended to all age groups from low-income families until schools reopen fully so that all young people have access to technology and the ability to learn.¹⁴

23 Although an incredible amount of work has been done by teachers and the sector as a whole to ensure that young people are continuing to learn from home (for example the Oak Academy and BBC Bitesize resources for families available on TV and online), many young people are unintentionally being missed by these provisions due to problems with access.

24 We have seen first-hand the struggles that those without technology are facing during this time. Concerned parents have contacted the Fair Education Alliance directly asking if we can support them in sourcing technology because they are worried about their children missing out. We have also repeatedly heard from alliance members that they are unable to reach the students that are in most need, as students do not have sufficient access to the internet or technology to stay in touch. Whilst teachers have been doing their best to reach these young people through phone calls and engaging parents in their children's learning, these young people are still missing out in comparison to their peers.

25 A survey carried out by Teacher Tap before the school closures showed that teachers in the most disadvantaged schools were significantly less likely than those in more advantaged areas to be able to set class work remotely or give a video lesson.¹⁵ From research published by the Sutton Trust on the 20th April, we can see that a major factor of this is that many pupils across the country do not have adequate access to suitable technology or stable internet access to enable them to learn online. When we compare the fact that this report shows that 15% of teachers in the most deprived schools thought more than a third of their students would not have adequate access to a device, compared to only 2% in the most affluent state schools, the contrast is stark.¹⁶ If we are to support all young people to learn during this pandemic, this needs to be addressed, especially whilst schools are closed.

26 We therefore support the Government's move to implement the technology support scheme for Year 10s. However, we urge that this is extended to all year groups from low-income families so that

¹³Teach First (2020). *Only 2% of teachers working in the most disadvantaged communities believe all their pupils have adequate access to devices for home learning* | Teach First. [online] www.teachfirst.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/press-release/only-2-teachers-working-most-disadvantaged-communities-believe-all-their-pupils-have>

¹⁴Education Endowment Foundation (n.d.). *Rapid evidence assessment Distance learning Key findings and implications*. [online] Available at:https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19_Resources/Remote_learning_evidence_review/Rapid_Evidence_Assessment_summary.pdf?mc_cid=7dede45ca9&mc_eid=77d4a26be1

¹⁵Teacher Tapp (2020). *Monitoring COVID-19 readiness in schools*. [online] Teacher Tapp : Ask · Answer · Learn. Available at: <https://teachertapp.co.uk/monitoring-covid-19-readiness-in-schools/>

¹⁶Cullinane, C. and Montacute, R. (2020). *COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #1: School Shutdown KEY FINDINGS*. [online] Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-Impact-Brief-School-Shutdown.pdf>.

they have access to technology. Without each child across England having proper access to a device and a stable internet connection, any disruption to formal education settings will result in them missing out on key learning. With the future of education uncertain for many year groups, this is critical in ensuring that no child gets left behind due to COVID-19.

5. Ofqual should monitor the attainment gap and be prepared to step in if any discrepancies are seen

27 There is no evidence to suggest that this year would have seen a significant change to the attainment gap had exams gone ahead, any fair grading process must also result in a similar attainment gap. It should also take into account fast improving schools when awarding grades, as not doing so would disproportionately impact schools and students in lower socio-economic areas.

28 With many students that would have taken key exams this summer unable to because of COVID-19, we need to ensure that the grades they are given are fair and representative of their hard work. We also need to take into consideration how much they would have progressed if they had been in a formal education setting these past months and for these results to be given without any bias.

29 Although Ofqual have released booklets and guidance for teachers to ensure objectivity in their grading this year, we do not believe that sufficient measures have been put in place to ensure that awarded grades are fair. As an alliance we believe that it is critical that more is done.

30 In April 2020, University applicants studying for A-levels (or equivalent exams) were asked how they thought the new grading system would impact on their own grades. Just under half (43%) said the new procedure would have a negative impact.¹⁷ We need to make sure that this is not the case. One way that we can do this is to review the attainment gap. There is no evidence to suggest that this year would have seen a significant change to the attainment gap had exams gone ahead. Therefore, any fair grading process must also result in a similar attainment gap.

31 The process for awarding grades should also take into consideration the notable differences that fast-improving schools would have seen in their achieved grades this year. Schools that may be on track to outperform their previous years' results should be given extra attention when awarding grades, otherwise students could be awarded lower grades than they would have received if exams had gone ahead. This would disproportionately impact schools and students in lower socio-economic areas, who were already more likely to be NEET or underemployed than their peers before COVID-19.¹⁸ If bias at an individual or system level is seen in awarded qualifications, we need to ensure that there are systems in place that can recognise and mitigate against this.

¹⁷Montacute, R. and Holt-White, E. (2020). *COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #2: University Access & Student Finance*. [online] Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-and-Social-Mobility-Impact-Brief-2.pdf>.

¹⁸ Impetus (2020). *Young, vulnerable, and increasing - why we need to start worrying more about youth unemployment*. [online] Available at: https://impetus.org.uk/assets/publications/Impetus_YFF_NEET_Report.pdf

6. Extra support should be given to young people in transition phases through their schools or colleges. This includes pupils in year 6, year 11, year 13 and university graduates

32 We are calling for every school and college in the country to receive additional funding to ensure that students in transition phases are given adequate advice in deciding their next steps, and are given clear guidance on any future application processes. This support needs to not only be aimed at those in post-16 routes looking at further and higher education, but also Year 6s and year 11s.

33 Access to further education and higher education routes has never been so uncertain. Evidence has shown that the support that schools would ordinarily offer during this time is crucial, particularly for young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Yet, many students do not feel they are receiving enough support from their school for their university applications (35% are not satisfied overall).¹⁹

34 It is critical now more than ever that young people are supported in making key decisions about their future and are able to ask for support. Given the huge financial implications of COVID-19, many may have changed their mind regarding what they want to go on to do, and they need to be aware of all possible options and routes open to them.

35 We also need to pay special attention to Year 11s. There are indications that the biggest gap in support when it comes to education is for this year group, and whilst exams will not be happening this summer, grades will still be given.

36 A big concern we have as an alliance is that students in this year group will have missed out on critical learning, especially as some of the fantastic resources that have been made available (for example the Oak Academy) only provide lessons up to Year 10. Not only will these students need to navigate re-sits (1/3 – around 200,000 young people – will not achieve a “pass” for GCSE English and Maths and will need to retake these in Autumn), but they will also be catapulted into college with little hope of making up for missed time and without sufficient support in this transition stage.

37 To mitigate this, we are supporting the Education Policy Institute’s call to increase the catch-up premium for pupils in Year 12, for a minimum of a year, and call for increased pastoral support in all post-16 and post-18 routes.²⁰ However, we believe that for this to be truly impactful, any catch-up premiums should be implemented for at least 3 years, rather than just 1 to ensure that we can mitigate the long term impact of this pandemic as well as the immediate aftereffects.

¹⁹Montacute, R. and Holt-White, E. (2020). *COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #2: University Access & Student Finance*. [online] Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-and-Social-Mobility-Impact-Brief-2.pdf>.

²⁰ EPI (2020). *About the Education Policy Institute*. [online] Available at: https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EPI-Policy-paper-Impact-of-Covid-19_docx.pdf

7. The Government should support and encourage the completion of existing apprenticeships and funding should be made available to support digital outreach and provision of existing apprenticeship and training programmes

38 *If an apprentice is made redundant, we believe it should not mark the end of an apprenticeship programme. Instead, they should be supported by the Government in finding alternative ways to finish their course. We also know that a crucial part of delivering high-quality apprenticeships is to ensure that young people are accessing training and support. Enabling employers to expand their reach and provision digitally could be critical to the continuation of existing apprenticeship and training programmes and should be made a priority.*

39 So far during the 2019/20 academic year, 1/2 of all 16-24 year olds starting apprenticeships in England were doing so in construction, manufacturing and engineering, leisure and travel, and retail and hospitality.²¹ These are industries that have already been impacted by COVID-19 and will continue to be impacted into 2021.

40 We therefore support the Government's ambition for employers to retain their apprentices and for learning providers to be flexible in their training and end-point assessments.²² Part of this includes apprenticeship providers being able to furlough employees and apply for a grant that covers 80% of their usual monthly wage costs and continue to train them under the Job Retention Scheme.²³

41 However, we are concerned that if businesses have to use this scheme, they may not have the adequate resources in place to be able to provide high quality training and support to apprentices. We also recognise that in times of financial hardship, redundancies are commonplace, especially in organisations where work has halted.

42 Whilst there is a need for Government, schools and colleges to ensure that 16-17 year olds who are currently on or had plans to start an apprenticeship that has now been put on hold are given suitable alternatives, the alliance sees the risk in those at post-18 being missed out altogether. We believe that the Government should step in to mitigate this and help apprentices that have started and would have started apprenticeship routes this year to find suitable alternatives.

43 It is also a concern that some apprenticeship routes have been hit harder than others. For example, the Resolution Foundation Report shows that particular forms of technical education and apprenticeship training are poorly suited to a remote environment and that even when it is given, the amount and quality appears to be very unevenly distributed.²⁴ We want to ensure that all

²¹ Henehan, K. (2020). *Class of 2020 Education leavers in the current crisis*. [online] Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/05/Class-of-2020.pdf>

²² GOV.UK. (2020). *Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers, end-point assessment organisations and external quality assurance providers*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-apprentices-employers-training-providers-end-point-assessment-organisations-and-external-quality-assurance-pro>.

²³ HM Revenue & Customs (2020). *Claim for your employees' wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme*. [online] GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

²⁴ Henehan, K. (2020). *Class of 2020 Education leavers in the current crisis*. [online] Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/05/Class-of-2020.pdf>

apprentices are given the support they need to complete existing apprenticeships.

How we can mitigate educational inequality in the long-term

44 *It is undeniable that COVID-19 is likely to result in an economic crisis for the UK and beyond. We already know that recovery will not be straightforward, and that young people leaving school without the necessary grades will be hardest hit. We also know that this pandemic is likely to have a lasting impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing if we do not act now, therefore we need to ensure that measures are put in place to mitigate educational inequality in the long-term as well as in the short-term.*

1. Clear guidance and support should be given to students that have been allocated grades, particularly those taking A-levels this year

45 *All students that would have taken exams this summer but have been unable to should have access to clear advice and support regarding re-sitting or challenging the grades that they are given. If this support is not put in place, it may negatively impact long-term access to further education opportunities for the most disadvantaged young people, particularly those who do not have support networks in place.*

46 If a higher number of students than usual opt to defer their university place because of uncertainty around grades or finances, then access to universities will be more competitive in the coming years. Research carried out by the Sutton Trust shows that a fifth of university applicants (19%) have already changed their mind about their university attendance this Autumn or have yet to decide.²⁵ The knock-on effect of this is that universities will have less places to offer students in the coming years.

47 Our main concern with this is that increased competitiveness will disproportionately impact the most disadvantaged young people. This is especially true if those opting to defer are being offered places through widening participation, as this means that less places will be available through this route in 2021. Clear guidance and support from schools and universities needs to be offered to students that will be allocated grades this summer.

2. Employers should be encouraged to offer apprenticeships for those under 25 through an updated apprenticeship levy

48 *The temporary shutdown of a large proportion of industries, in combination with furloughing and job losses across the economy, has raised concerns that employers will soon be unable to provide as many apprenticeships or work-based learning programmes as they had in recent years.²⁶ We support the call from Prince's Trust and Impetus for the Government to update the apprenticeship levy to enable employers to spend it on pre-employability support and prioritise new starters over*

²⁵Montacute, R. and Holt-White, E. (2020). *COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #2: University Access & Student Finance*. [online] Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-and-Social-Mobility-Impact-Brief-2.pdf>.

²⁶ Henehan, K. (2020). *Class of 2020 Education leavers in the current crisis*. [online] Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/05/Class-of-2020.pdf>

*existing employees.*²⁷

49 The economic recovery from COVID-19 will not be straightforward. Restrictions are likely to continue in many sectors, and businesses that had previously been financially viable will struggle to survive. As an alliance, we know that this will have a direct impact on apprenticeships, particularly for those young people who would have started an apprenticeship later this year or next. In order to help young people, more than a quarter of whom have already expressed concern that their future prospects of employment have been damaged, the Government should incentivise companies to provide apprenticeship vacancies for those under 25, giving special attention to the industries most impacted by COVID-19.²⁸ Without an intervention, it is likely that routes into the aforementioned industries will drastically reduce in the coming years, blocking training pathways for post-16 and post-18 education leavers for years to come.

50 Worryingly, a recent survey of apprenticeship providers found that just 20% of apprenticeships due to start in April came to fruition, with popular sectors for young people like hospitality and construction among those affected.²⁹ According to the Resolution Foundation's predictions, this impacts roughly 160,000 16-17-year-olds who might otherwise have been on, or going into, an apprenticeship, traineeship or other form of work-based learning.³⁰ If employers are unable to offer as many apprenticeship routes this year and next, this will have a knock-on effect on unemployment figures, and it is imperative that the Government puts contingency plans in place so that these young people are not left behind.

3. An increase in investment in teacher development and wellbeing, either as part of an enhanced version of the pupil premium or additional funding

51 *If we want to ensure that all children are able to catch up after this pandemic, we need to ensure that teachers are supported to thrive and their development is invested in, in a long-term effort to equip teachers to be able to adapt and support pupils effectively.*

²⁷ Impetus, Youth Employment UK, Youth Futures Foundation, IES and Prince's Trust (n.d.). *Securing a place for young people in the nation's economic recovery A rapid response to COVID-19*. [online] Available at: <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Youth-Employment-Covid19-Response-FINAL.pdf>

²⁸ Prince's Trust (n.d.). *Young people's anxiety increases as fears for future employment prospects mount, warns the prince's trust | News and views | About The Trust | The Prince's Trust*. [online] www.princes-trust.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/young-people-in-lockdown>

²⁹ Linford, N. (2020). *Revealed: Covid-19 hit to apprenticeship starts*. [online] FE Week. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/2020/04/30/revealed-covid-19-hit-to-apprenticeship-starts/>

³⁰ Henehan, K. (2020). *Class of 2020 Education leavers in the current crisis*. [online] Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/05/Class-of-2020.pdf>

52 Children from disadvantaged backgrounds leave school on average 18 months behind their more affluent peers.³¹ The impact of school closures will only make this worse. However, having great teachers can change this. A report on the impact of teachers on pupil achievement published by the Sutton Trust shows that “the effects of high-quality teaching are especially significant for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds: over a school year, these pupils gain 1.5 years’ worth of learning with very effective teachers”.³²

53 In addition, The Education Endowment Foundation’s Guide to Pupil Premium shows that in England, the attainment gap has closed in both primary and secondary schools since the introduction of the Pupil Premium. It also shows that in every part of the country, schools have demonstrated how great teaching and careful planning can make a huge impact on the outcomes of disadvantaged children, particularly when a proportion of this money is spent on ensuring that every teacher is supported in developing throughout their career.³³

54 Evidence shows that high quality professional development for teachers has a significant effect on pupils’ learning outcomes, and a greater effect on attainment than other interventions schools may consider.³⁴ Therefore, additional investment should be given to teacher development as part of the schools reopening strategy, either as part of an enhanced pupil premium or additionally. By investing in this now, schools will be able to achieve sustainable changes and build expertise across their teams, helping schools in the short-term to reverse the impact of COVID-19 on education, and improve overall academic outcomes going forward.

55 As an alliance, we believe in creating a fairer education for all. COVID-19 has only revealed and exacerbated the existing inequalities already present in the education system. However, we are continuously seeking to address these inequalities.

56 We believe a fairer education system would be one that:

- Builds essential life skills such as teamwork and problem solving through implementation of Skills Builder: a shared framework for the development of essential skills.

³¹ Hutchinson, J.H., Bonetti, S., Crenna-Jennings, W. and Akhal, A. (2019). *Education in England Annual Report*. [online] *Fair Education Alliance*, EPI and Fair Education Alliance. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/543e665de4b0fbb2b140b291/t/5d3fcdab5aeea7000104ac0f/1564462514009/EPI-Annual-Report-2019.pdf>

³² The Sutton Trust (2011). *Improving the impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK -interim findings*. [online] Available at: <https://www.irisconnect.com/us/wp-content/uploads/sites/3//2014/08/sutton-trust-teachers-impact-35.pdf>

³³ Education Endowment Foundation (n.d.). *THE EEF GUIDE TO THE PUPIL PREMIUM*. [online] Available at: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Pupil_Premium_Guidance_iPDF.pdf.

³⁴ Fletcher-Wood, H. and Zuccollo, J. (2020). *The effects of high-quality professional development on teaching - A rapid review and meta-analysis*. [online] Available at: https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/EPI-Wellcome_CPD-Review__2020.pdf

- Prioritises and promotes wellbeing as an outcome itself and as a precursor to academic achievement.
- Incentivises and supports teachers and leaders to work and thrive in the disadvantaged communities that need them most.
- Engages and involves parents and communities in education for increased development beyond the school gates.
- Provides support for all post-16 routes, ensuring all young people have the information and support to make the best decisions for them on life after school.

57 We are driven by a collective voice that believes in the power of education, of teachers and leaders, schools and providers across the country to look after and support the interests of children and young people now and in the future. We can still create a fairer education for all post COVID-19 if we work together and focus on what's important - supporting those that need it most when they need it most - and that time is now.