

Debate Pack

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The spending of the Department for Education on measures to support education recovery

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Summary

Education has been hit hard by the pandemic, with schools forced to close to most pupils for extended periods, interruption to the school year, absences amongst teachers and pupils alike, and disruption and temporary abandonment of external school exams.

The Government first announced an initial package of recovery funding in June 2020, with further funding announcements following in the spring 2021 Budget and June 2021. A total of £3.1 billion has so far been announced, mainly in catch-up and tutoring funding. The funding is split between funding provided directly to schools; and central funding for programmes such as tutoring.

Before any of this announced funding can be released it needs to be included in Estimates presented to, and approved by, Parliament. The DfE's Main Estimate for 2021-22, published on 13 May, set out the DfE's spending plans for the current year, including some of this recovery funding. Further funding, announced since the Main Estimate was published, is expected to be included in the DfE's Supplementary Estimate 2021-22, to be published in early 2022.

This Estimates day debate on funding for education recovery, proposed by Robert Halfon, Chair of the Commons Education Committee, is due to take place on Tuesday 29 June, the first of two Estimates day debates that day. Following the conclusion of all Estimates day debates the following day, the House will be invited to approve a motion agreeing the total amounts of funding included in the DfE's Main Estimate, before the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Bill is put before the House. This Bill uses an accelerated process, with no further debates or committee stages, and is expected to become law before the summer recess.

1 School funding

School funding makes up the majority of the DfE's annual spending, included within its published Estimates.

For 2021-22, the total budget sought for the DfE's day-to-day spending, including education recovery, and set out in the DfE's Main Estimate, is £89.2 billion, an increase of almost £2 billion, or 2.2% over the final budget for 2020-21.

Of this year's total, £57.8 billion (some 64%) is expected to go directly in grants to schools.

How are schools funded?

Since 2018/19 a national funding formula (NFF) has been used to calculate core school funding. Local authorities receive a block grant from the DfE, called the Dedicated Schools Grant, or DSG. The DSG is currently divided into four blocks: Schools Block, High Needs Block, Central School Services Block and the Early Years Block. There are separate funding formulas for each block.

The Schools Block is the main source of revenue funding for mainstream schools in England. However, schools receive some revenue funding outside the Schools Block and the DSG, such as the pupil premium. Funding for sixth forms is determined and distributed separately.

The schools NFF is currently operating as a 'soft' formula. This means that local authorities retain a role in distributing funding and deciding how much individual schools receive in their delegated budgets. The Government has not confirmed when a 'hard' schools NFF will be introduced; this would largely cut local authorities out of the distribution process for core school funding, giving money directly to individual schools instead.

Further background information is available in the House of Commons Library briefing [School Funding in England: FAQs](#).

1.1 "Catch-up" funding

Last year (2020-21) some £0.369 billion in additional funding was provided specifically to the DfE, over and above its previous pre Covid-19 budget, for education catch-up, although the actual amount spent may have been higher or lower than this.

For 2021-22, the 2020 Spending Review allocated £0.4 billion to the DfE specifically for Covid-19 related funding (although not all of this may relate to catch-up). In addition to this, a further £0.122 billion in funding for education catch-up was included in the 2021-22 Main Estimate. Existing funding may also be diverted towards catch-up, and further funding, including some or all of the funding since announced in June 2021, is expected to be added later in the year through a supplementary Estimate.

Government announcements, to Parliament and on the gov.uk, website set out the government's intentions in relation to education catch-up funding:

In June 2020¹ the government announced £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up on missed learning caused by coronavirus (COVID19). This funding included:

- a one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for missed learning
- a £350 million National Tutoring Programme to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help, which includes:
 - a schools programme for 5 to 16-year-olds – for more information, see the National Tutoring Programme FAQs
 - a 16 to 19 tuition fund
 - an oral language intervention programme for reception-aged children

On 27 January 2021, the Prime Minister announced a new recovery package for English schools of £300 million². This was “re-announced” with details of further spending in February 2021³, including:

- A new one-off £302 million Recovery Premium for state primary and secondary schools, building on the Pupil Premium, to further support pupils who need it most. The average primary school will receive around £6,000 extra, and the average secondary school around £22,000 extra.
- £200 million (from the £300 million announced by the Prime Minister in January to expand the tutoring programmes). This will fund an £83 million expansion of the National Tutoring Programme for primary and secondary schools; a £102 million extension of the 16-19 Tuition Fund for a further year to support more students in English, maths and other vocational and academic subjects; and £18 million funding to support language development in the early years – £10m to be allocated to a pre-reception early language programme and £8m for Nuffield Foundation to deliver the Nuffield Early Language Intervention for reception children.

¹ [Catch-up premium - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

² [Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 27 January 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

³ [New education recovery package for children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

- £200 million (including the final £100 million from the Prime Minister’s announcement) will be available to secondary schools to deliver face-to-face summer schools. Schools will be able to target provision based on pupils’ needs but the government is suggesting they may want to initially target incoming year 7 pupils.

However, reports⁴ suggest that not all of this funding was “new” money, with *Schools Week* reporting that around half came from existing DfE budgets.

Finally, on 2 June 2021 there was a further announcement⁵ of £1.4 billion of funding:

- £218 million for the national tutoring programme
- £579 million for local tutoring provision
- £222 million for 16-19 tutoring
- £153 million training for early years staff
- £69 million early career framework reforms
- £184 million middle and late career national professional qualifications

EPI per pupil “catch-up” funding estimates

Following the Government announcement on 2 June 2021 (outlined above), the Education Policy Institute (EPI) estimated that the total “catch-up” funding (£3.1 billion) equated to £310 per pupil (aged 2-18) over four years in England.⁶

The EPI compared this figure with some other countries. The EPI subsequently published additional context about these estimates warning:

...it is worth stressing that national and international comparisons are always subject to some uncertainty and bias due to differences in data, systems, institutions, language and exchange rates. This particularly applies to the area of education catch-up plans, which often apply to different ages and phases of education, have different time profiles and the boundary between catch-up and general education spending is not always clear-cut. Comparisons at particular points in time can also be shaped by the precise budget cycle and timetable in each country.⁷

The EPI estimated that in Wales the “catch-up” funding per pupil (aged 3-19) was £400, around £230 per pupil in Scotland (schools only), also around £230 per pupil (aged 3-19) in Northern Ireland, £1,600 per pupil in the USA, and

⁴ [DfE admits £705m catch-up funding isn't all new money \(schoolsweek.co.uk\)](https://www.schoolsweek.co.uk/news/dfe-admits-705m-catch-up-funding-isn-t-all-new-money)

⁵ [Huge expansion of tutoring in next step of education recovery - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/huge-expansion-of-tutoring-in-next-step-of-education-recovery)

⁶ Education Policy Institute, [EPI responds to the government’s new education recovery package](https://www.epi.org.uk/education-policy-institute-responds-to-the-government-s-new-education-recovery-package), 2 June 2021

⁷ Education Policy Institute, [Comparing education catch-up spending within and outside the UK](https://www.epi.org.uk/education-policy-institute-comparing-education-catch-up-spending-within-and-outside-the-uk), 18 June 2021

£2,090 per pupil in the Netherlands⁸ (includes higher education pupils). As explained above there are comparability issues with each of these international comparisons (including between each devolved UK nation).

Reaction to additional funding

On the same day the funding was announced, Sir Kevan Collins resigned as Education Recovery Commissioner for England. He said that while he welcomed the funding, he believed it to be insufficient, and that he did “not believe it is credible that a successful recovery can be achieved with a programme of support of this size”.⁹

EPI said the money amounted to “a fraction of the level of funding required to reverse learning loss seen by pupils since March 2020”.¹⁰ The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) called Government action so far “well below par, in terms of its speed of response, the scope of its ambition and the depth of its pockets. Education recovery cannot be done on the cheap, but as things stand, that is exactly what the government is proposing.”¹¹

The Early Years Alliance said that it was encouraging to see a greater focus on, and more money for early years, than there had been in initial announcements. Additional training for early years practitioners was “particularly welcome since tight budgets leave many settings with little money to invest in upskilling the workforce.” However, it went on to say that the alliance hoped for further investment in the sector, given existing evidence on the importance of the early years in closing the attainment gap and missed opportunities for young children’s personal and social development.¹²

Recent Parliamentary debates on recovery funding

There were two Opposition Day Debates in June, on education recovery funding, following the announcement of the additional £1.4bn on 2 June:

- [Catch-up premium](#), HC Deb 15 June 2021, Vol.697.
- [Education recovery](#), HC Deb 7 June 2021, Vol. 696.

In the debate on 7 June, Labour Shadow Secretary of State, Kate Green, said that she was “frankly embarrassed to hear the Secretary of State proclaim that the funding announced last week will deliver a revolution, when what his

⁸ [Initially](#) the EPI estimated £2,500 per pupil but this was [subsequently amended](#) to £2,090

⁹ [‘Exclusive: Sir Kevan Collins resigns over catch-up plan’](#), in the TES, 2 June 2021.

¹⁰ Education Policy Institute, [‘EPI responds to the government’s new education recovery package’](#), 2 June 2021.

¹¹ National Association of Head Teachers, [‘NAHT comments on education recovery plan’](#), 9 June 2021.

¹² Early Years Alliance press release, [‘Alliance responds as DfE announces latest tranche of education recovery funding’](#), 1 June 2021.

Government announced will amount to just £50 per pupil for the next three years” and drew attention to Labour’s own [Children’s recovery plan](#).¹³ In response, Mr Williamson said that the Government was:

[D]oing a comprehensive plan, and there has been over £3 billion over the past year. We recognise that there continues to be more to do.

That is why we are doing a review of how the school day can be best used as we work up to the comprehensive spending review. Every undertaking that we have made as part of this has been based on the evidence and what we believe is going to deliver the best results for pupils.¹⁴

Contributors to the debate also raised issues of the targeting of recovery funding and the national tutoring programme, changes to the pupil premium (see below) and support for mental health.

The debate on the 15 June 2021 focused on the resignation of Sir Kevan Collins as England’s education recovery commissioner, the scope and cost of his proposals, and the disclosure of information about these. Responding, Minister, Nick Gibb MP said:

We did take the advice of Sir Kevan Collins, who supported our introduction of more funding for the national tutoring programme and the £400 million to improve the continuing professional development and training of teachers. We set up a review into the time element of the advice that Sir Kevan gave Ministers, which will report later this year in time to inform the spending review.¹⁵

1.2

What has Government funding been targeted at?

The DfE has announced several coronavirus-related funding streams for schools and pupils, since the start of the pandemic. Schools also continue to

¹³ HC Deb 7 June 2021, Col. 690

¹⁴ [HC Deb 7 June 2021](#), Col. 698

¹⁵ [HC Deb 15 June 2021](#), Col. 142.

receive their normal recurrent funding during periods when most pupils were unable to attend – i.e., in the summer 2020 term, and part of the spring 2021 term. Additional support includes:

- [Exceptional costs funding](#) for the period March to July 2020, including cleaning associated with COVID cases, some premises costs, and additional school food provided outside of the FSM voucher scheme.
- A [universal catch-up premium](#), the [National Tutoring Programme](#), [further financial support for summer schools and a recovery premium](#).¹⁶
- [Funding for digital devices and 4G routers](#), for disadvantaged children unable to attend school because of closures or self-isolation requirements.
- [£40 million funding](#) for local authorities to support school transport in the autumn 2020 term.¹⁷
- Funding for free school meals during the initial and spring 2021 lockdown, and for some holiday periods in 2020.
- A [COVID Winter Grant Scheme](#), to be run by councils in England, providing support from December 2020 to April 2021. Councils could spend this on supporting families in need, including by providing food.
- An expanded [Holiday Activities and Food Programme](#) across England in the Easter, summer, and Christmas school holidays in 2021
- The DfE [also noted](#) it is providing additional high need funding of £730 million in 2021-22, and says this will take the overall SEND budget to “more than £8 billion” in 2021-22.
- A [COVID workforce fund](#), to cover the second half of the autumn 2020 term.¹⁸

1.3

School meals during the pandemic

School meals, in particular provision of free school meals (FSM), has been a point of controversy throughout the pandemic.

¹⁶ Department for Education, ‘New education recovery package for children and young people’, 24 February 2021; [‘Huge expansion of tutoring in next step of education recovery’](#), 2 June 2021.

¹⁷ Department for Education press release, [‘Multi-million-pound funding package for school transport’](#), 8 August 2020.

¹⁸ Department for Education press release, [‘New funding to support schools and colleges during Covid pandemic’](#), 27 November 2020.

School meals during spring 2020 lockdown

Schools were expected to provide meal options for all children who were in schools, and to do so free of charge to children who would normally be eligible for FSMs.

Under normal circumstances, schools do not provide free school meals to eligible children who are not in school. But during the initial lockdown and phased reopening, the Government expected schools to continue supporting children eligible for benefits-related free school meals who were at home. This could be done through food packages, or a voucher scheme.¹⁹

Easter and May half term 2020 holidays

It was originally announced that the vouchers would operate during term-time only. [Concerns were raised](#) about this, such as by Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, who stated that “families on low incomes will need access to school meals during this [Easter] fortnight, particularly as food banks are seriously overstretched and it is much harder to shop affordably at the moment.”²⁰

In the daily Number 10 press briefing on 4 April 2020, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, announced that [the position had changed](#) and that the vouchers would be available over the Easter holidays.²¹ On 7 April, the DfE [guidance to schools](#) was amended to reflect this change.

Questions were raised in Parliament about whether the scheme would be extended to the May half term and summer holidays. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the DfE responded:

Vicky Ford: Ordinarily, provision for free school meals (FSM) is during term-time only. However, during the Easter holidays, the department met the costs of offering FSM to eligible pupils not attending school during term-time weeks. This was in recognition of the unprecedented levels of disruption and uncertainty for schools during this time.

These are rapidly developing circumstances. We will continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.²²

¹⁹ Department for Education, [Providing free school meals during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#), 28 May 2020

²⁰ [Coronavirus: Pupils won't get free school meal vouchers during Easter holidays](#), Schools Week, 31 March 2020

²¹ [Free school meal vouchers WILL now be available over Easter](#), Schools Week, 4 March 2020

²² [PQ 47497, 20 May 2020](#)

In evidence to the Education Committee on 27 May 2020, however, the Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, stated that “the cost of the voucher scheme will continue to be met by the DfE over [May] half term.”²³

Summer holidays

Attention then focused on whether support would be provided during the 2020 summer holidays. On [9 June 2020](#) the Education Secretary told the House:

We are looking not only at the summer but much more over the longer term. We have never traditionally provided free school meals all the way through the summer, but the DWP has put in an extra £6.5 billion to support those families who are most vulnerable. We will continue to work with the DWP, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to continue to support those families who are most vulnerable.²⁴

The issue of support over the summer holidays gained further prominence on 15 June 2020, when the Manchester United footballer Marcus Rashford published an [open letter to MPs](#) in support of extending the voucher scheme over the summer holidays,²⁵ followed by a further [article in the Times](#).²⁶

The Department for Education published a blog on 15 June 2020 reasserting that the [scheme would not continue](#) during the summer break. The piece drew attention to a new [£63 million local authority welfare assistance scheme](#) that has been announced to provide help to those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials during the pandemic.^{27,28}

On 16 June 2020, however, the Education Secretary announced in the House that the Government would provide additional funding to enable children who are eligible for free school meals to claim a [six-week voucher](#) over the summer holidays.²⁹

Autumn term 2020 and support in 2021

Debate about the funding of school meals continued in the autumn term of 2020, when increased coronavirus restrictions were again imposed. The immediate focus was on October half term, but also on school holidays in the longer term, with the coronavirus pandemic ongoing.

²³ Schools Week, [Rotas for primary pupils, U-turn on FSM vouchers and PPF concerns – Gibb at education committee](#), 27 May 2020

²⁴ [HC Deb 9 Jun 2020 c184-185](#)

²⁵ Marcus Rashford, [Open letter to MPs](#), 15 June 2020

²⁶ Times, [Marcus Rashford: Ending child poverty is a bigger trophy than any in football](#), 16 June 2020

²⁷ Department for Education, [Free school meal availability](#), 15 June 2020

²⁸ MHLCG, Defra, DWP, [£63 million for local authorities to assist those struggling to afford food and other essentials](#), 11 June 2020

²⁹ [HC Deb 16 Jun 2020 c715](#)

A [parliamentary petition](#) opened by Marcus Rashford, focused on ending child food poverty, expanding access to free school meals, as well as meals and activities during the holidays, received more than a million signatures.³⁰

An [Opposition day debate](#) on free school meals was held on 21 October 2020. The Opposition motion required the Government to continue directly funding provision of free school meals over the school holidays until Easter 2021. It was defeated by 322 votes to 261.³¹

On 8 November 2020, the Government announced [£170m of funding for a new £170m Covid Winter Grant Scheme](#), to be run by councils in England. The funding was ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills, and would cover the period from December 2020-March 2021. This was later extended to mid-April 2021. Councils would direct funding to families most in need, while schools continued to provide FSM during term-time.

The Government also announced that the [Holiday Activities and Food programme](#) (HAFP), which provides food and activities for disadvantaged children, would be expanded from its previous pilots to cover the whole of England, during Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2021.³²

The [guidance on HAFP](#) states that provision should be offered to all pupils eligible for and receiving benefit-based free school meals, although attendance is voluntary.

School meals during the early 2021 lockdown

When a renewed national lockdown began at the start of January 2021, the Education Secretary [announced](#) that families entitled to free school meals would again be offered food parcels or vouchers, funded by the Government:

Free school meals: extra funding will be provided to support schools to provide food parcels or meals to eligible students. The national voucher scheme will also re-open so that in the event schools cannot offer food parcels or provide an alternative local solution, every child can access free school meals while they are learning at home.³³

As during the spring 2020 national lockdown, the Government expected schools to continue supporting children eligible for benefits-related free school meals who were at home during term time, as well as those in school.

³⁰ House of Commons Petition, [End child food poverty – no child should be going hungry](#)

³¹ [HC Deb 21 October 2020 c1130-1176](#)

³² Department for Work and Pensions, [New winter package to provide further support for children and families](#), 8 November 2020

³³ Department for Education, [Education Secretary outlines plans to support young people](#), 6 January 2021

Schools were not required provide lunch parcels or vouchers during the February 2021 half-term, with support for families and children outside of term-time provided instead through the [Covid Winter Grant Scheme](#).³⁴

Extended eligibility for FSM

During the coronavirus outbreak, eligibility for free school meals has been extended to include some groups of children who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF).³⁵

1.4 Pupil Premium changes

Change in calculation

Since April 2021, allocations for mainstream and special schools have been based on the October school census. Previously, Pupil Premium allocations were based on the January school census. Allocations for alternative provision settings, pupil referral units, and hospital schools will continue to be based on the January census. Explaining [the rationale for this change](#), the DfE said:

Using the October census for the pupil premium will give schools early certainty about the additional funding they will receive the following year, helping them to plan the support that they will give to pupil premium pupils.

In this transitional year, pupil premium allocations will be confirmed to the usual timeline in June 2021. As from next year, allocations for mainstream and special schools will be published earlier in the year, giving these schools greater certainty around future funding levels earlier in the year.

Allocations for alternative provision, pupil referral units and hospital schools will continue to be published to the usual timeline as these will continue to be based on the January census.

There will be no change in the payment arrangements for the pupil premium. The pupil premium grant will continue to be paid in quarterly instalments.³⁶

³⁴ Department for Education, [Providing school meals during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#), 13 January 2021

³⁵ Department for Education, [Coronavirus: temporary extension of free school meals eligibility to NRPF groups](#), 23 September 2020

³⁶ Education Committee, [Transcript of Oral Evidence](#), 23 February 2021, Q35-37.

Response to the change

Concerns were raised that this change would involve reduced funding for schools. In May 2021, the Local Government Association stated that its survey indicated [a potential loss of £118million](#) for schools across England (£93m for primary schools, and £25m for secondary schools).³⁷ Minister Nick Gibb [wrote to the Education Committee](#) in March 2021 on this issue:

Moving to the October census brings the administration of the Pupil Premium in line with the rest of schools' core budgets (most notably the national funding formula, and local school funding formulae), which calculate schools' budgets for the coming year on the basis of the October census. The move to the October census simplifies the school funding system, and provides both schools and the Department with greater certainty around future funding levels earlier in the year. [...]

Data on the number of pupils who have become eligible for free school meals since 2 October 2020 — which is necessary to calculate any financial implications associated with the move from the January to October census — is being collected as part of the spring school census and is not yet available. This is particularly uncertain in 2021 in the context of Covid. The department publishes information annually from the January school census on the number of children eligible for free school meals and the number who claim a meal on school census day. The figures form part of the 'Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics' release and are usually published in June.³⁸

In April 2021, the Minister was asked by the Committee whether individual schools would “lose out” as a result of the change. He said:

Nick Gibb: Not as a direct consequence of the change. Whether a school gets more or less pupil premium will depend on its own circumstances, but if you take a typical school, an average school, they will see their pupil premium increase from last year to this year. We don't know the actual consequence of moving to October 2020 from January 2021 because those figures have not been calculated yet.

Q642 Chair: Individual schools are contacting us saying they are losing out.

Nick Gibb: Well, they won't know because we have not published the figures yet. All the numbers that are being bandied about are much larger than the figures I recognise. That is probably because they will not have done the matching process of ensuring the new eligibility for free school meals. If they have ever been eligible for free school meals in the

³⁷ Local Government Association, [LGA survey: £118m for disadvantaged pupils could be lost from school budgets this year](#), 21 May 2021

³⁸ Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, [Letter to the Education Committee](#), 15 March 2021

last six years, they will already be receiving the pupil premium funding for that school.³⁹

Impact of the change

On 24 June 2021, the Department for Education [published](#) the impact of changing to the October census date.

Overall, 62,216 pupils became eligible for the pupil premium between October 2020 and January 2021 in England.⁴⁰ This means that due to the change in the census date, these pupils will not attract pupil premium funding in 2021-22 (assuming eligibility requirements do not change they should attract funding from 2022-23).

This equates to a financial impact on schools of around £90 million.

In 2021-22 (based on the January census) the pupil premium in England was around £2.5 billion and around 2.1 million pupils were eligible.⁴¹

This means that if the census date change had not taken place total pupil premium funding would have increased to around £2.6 billion and around 2.2 million pupils would have been eligible.

Impact of pupil premium change			
England			
	Number of pupils (Millions)	Funding	
		Allocation (£ Billions)	Annual change
2020-21	2.03	2.45	
2021-22	2.09	2.51	+2.6%
If census date not changed:			
2021-22	2.15	2.60	+6.3%

Note: This table shows the impact on 2021-22 only, (assuming eligibility requirements do not change) the pupils which were impacted by the change should attract funding from 2022-23

Source: Department for Education, [Pupil premium: effective use and accountability](#), last updated June 2021; Department for Education, [Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant: various years](#)

School level pupil premium allocations (as well as other geographical breakdowns) for 2021-22 were [published](#) on 24 June 2021.

³⁹ Education Committee, [Oral evidence: Accountability hearings](#), HC 262, 29 April 2021, Qs 641-2

⁴⁰ Department for Education, [Pupil premium: effective use and accountability](#), last updated June 2021

⁴¹ Department for Education, [Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2021 to 2022](#), last updated June 2021

2

16-19 year olds funding

How is 16-19 education is funded?

Further education colleges, schools, academies and independent learning providers receive annual funding allocations from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for the provision of education for 16 to 19-year-olds and 19 to 24-year-olds with special educational needs and disabilities who have an Education Health and Care Plan.

In 2020/21, £6.1 billion was allocated by the ESFA to almost 2,800 schools, colleges, and independent learning providers in England for 16-19 education.⁴²

A national funding formula is used to calculate the allocation of funding that each provider receives each academic year. Several additional elements that are not part of the formula, including high needs funding and student support schemes, contribute to the total funding amount awarded to an institution.

An overview of 16-19 funding is available in an ESFA guidance document, [16 to 19 funding: how it works](#), 21 January 2021. Much more detail on the funding formula and trends in funding are included in the briefing paper [Further education funding in England](#) (30 April 2021).

16-19 Tuition Fund

In July 2020, the Government announced a [£96 million 16-to-19 tuition fund](#) to mitigate the disruption to learning arising from the pandemic. This which would be paid for out of the £350 million National Tutoring Programme. The funding is being provided to support small group tuition for 16 to 19 students.⁴³ Providers will receive £150 for each fulltime student without GCSE grade 4 or above in English and/or maths. Guidance on the allocation and use of this funding was published by the DfE in [16 to 19 funding: 16 to 19 tuition fund](#).

On 24 February 2021, the Government announced [a £102 million extension](#) of the 16-19 Tuition Fund for a further year.

The [education recovery package](#) announced on 2 June 2021 included an extension of the Tuition Fund for two further years from 2022/23 costing £222 million.⁴⁴

⁴² DfE, [16 to 19 allocation data: 2020 to 2021 academic year](#)

⁴³ [“Study staff, pastoral care, peer mentoring: spending the tuition fund”](#), FE Week, 6 November 2020 (accessed 16 April 2021)

⁴⁴ [PQ HL699](#) [on Teaching Methods: Disadvantaged] 7 June 2021

3

Early years

As set out above, to date, the Government has announced around £3.1 billion of funding to support education to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in England. This has included the following funding for the early years (not including children in reception):

- In February 2021, the DfE announced £700 million of funding to help children catch-up on lost learning due to the pandemic. This included £10 million for a pre-Reception early language continued professional development programme, to support early years staff to work with disadvantaged children who are at risk of falling behind.⁴⁵
- On 2 June 2021, the DfE announced an additional £1.4 billion to help support education recovery after the pandemic. This included £153 million to fund training for early years staff, including new programmes focusing on speech and development.⁴⁶

£1 billion of ‘catch-up funding’ was also announced in June 2020. This did not include any funding specifically for early years providers. As set out above, however, it did include £350 million for a National Tutoring Programme, which included an oral language intervention programme for reception-aged children.⁴⁷

3.1

Commentary

Sutton Trust report

On 20 May 2021, the Sutton Trust published a report, [Fairness First: Social Mobility, Covid and Education Recovery](#). The report argued that “much focus over the past year has been on what has happened in schools, but we cannot afford to forget the youngest and oldest children.”⁴⁸ It added:

The pandemic has reminded us how crucial the early years sector is for the functioning of many of our daily lives and our children’s futures. But it also laid bare the fragility of a sector which comprises many small and poorly funded private and voluntary providers, particularly those in less well-off areas. Pre-school age children have faced the same challenges

⁴⁵ DfE, [New education recovery package for children and young people](#), 25 February 2021. [PQ12949](#), 9 June 2021.

⁴⁶ DfE, [Huge expansion of tutoring in next step of education recovery](#), 2 June 2021; Schools Week, [DfE’s £1.4bn education recovery plan: what you need to know](#), 2 June 2021.

⁴⁷ DfE, [Billion pound Covid catch-up plan to tackle impact of lost teaching time](#), 19 June 2020; DfE, [Catch-up Premium](#), 27 April 2021.

⁴⁸ Sutton Trust, [Fairness First: Social Mobility, Covid and Education Recovery](#), May 2021, p2.

as those of other children: lack of access to learning, fewer opportunities to play with their friends, as well as interact with other adults. Our polling shows this has led to huge concerns among parents about the healthy development of their children, as well as widespread worries from schools about the readiness of the next generation of pupils starting reception.

With a focus in schools on providing extra supports and extra time to boost both academic learning as well as wider skills and wellbeing, pre-school age children should not be forgotten. This age group also need more time in a high quality educational setting, more time playing with other children, and more time interacting with those outside their immediate family.⁴⁹

The report stated that early years should “form a central plank of recovery” and recommended that:

- Eligibility for funded early education for three and four year olds should be increased, with a focus on those from less well-off homes. A phased introduction to a universal offer of 30 hours, similar to that being applied in Scotland, should be considered.
- An increase in the Early Years Pupil Premium to the levels of primary schools should form part of a new funding settlement that ensures small early years settings and those in less affluent areas can survive and deliver high quality provision.⁵⁰

Education Policy Institute report

On 14 May 2021, and as mentioned above, the Education Policy Institute published a report, [Education recovery and resilience in England](#). The report set out the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on early years providers and noted the role of high quality early education in raising attainment and narrowing the attainment gap.

The report recommended that:

- The Early Years Pupil Premium should be increased to the same level as the rate for primary aged pupils. The EPI estimated that this would cost £400 million over three years.
- A pilot study should fund early education and childcare at a higher rate than currently in around 200 settings in disadvantaged areas. The report

⁴⁹ Sutton Trust, [Fairness First: Social Mobility, Covid and Education Recovery](#), May 2021, p3.

⁵⁰ As above, p3.

stated that there is currently little evidence of the impact of high quality provision that is funded at a higher rate than currently.⁵¹

Further information on the early years funding during the Covid-19 pandemic is provided in the Library Briefing: [Early years funding \(England\)](#).

⁵¹ Education Policy Institute, [Education recovery and resilience in England: Phase one report](#), May 2021, pp36-8.

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Published material on education funding

Institute for Fiscal Studies

[COVID-related spending on education in England](#), May 2021

[2020 annual report on education spending in England](#), 3 November 2020.

[‘The crisis in lost learning calls for a massive national policy response’](#), 1 February 2021.

Education Policy Institute

[‘Comparing education catch-up spending within and outside the UK’](#), 18 June 2021.

[‘Education Policy Institute comments on new government figures on free school meal eligibility’](#), 17 June 2021.

[‘EPI responds to the Government’s new education recovery package’](#), 2 June 2021.

[Education recovery and resilience in England](#), 14 May 2021.

National Audit Office

[Support for children’s education during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic](#), HC 1239, 17 March 2021.

[Investigation into the free school meals voucher scheme](#), HC 1036, 2 December 2020

Department for Education

[DfE 2021-22 Main Estimate: Estimates memorandum \(May 2021\)](#)

[Pupils' progress in the 2020 to 2021 academic year](#) (Renaissance Learning and Education Policy Institute for the Department for Education)

Education Committee

[The impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services inquiry](#) – oral and written evidence, and correspondence.

House of Commons Library

[Constituency data: schools funding](#)

[Coronavirus and schools](#)

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