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17 November 2021

Education spending in the UK

Summary

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- 2 UK public expenditure on education since 1979
- 3 International comparisons
- 4 Spending plans for England
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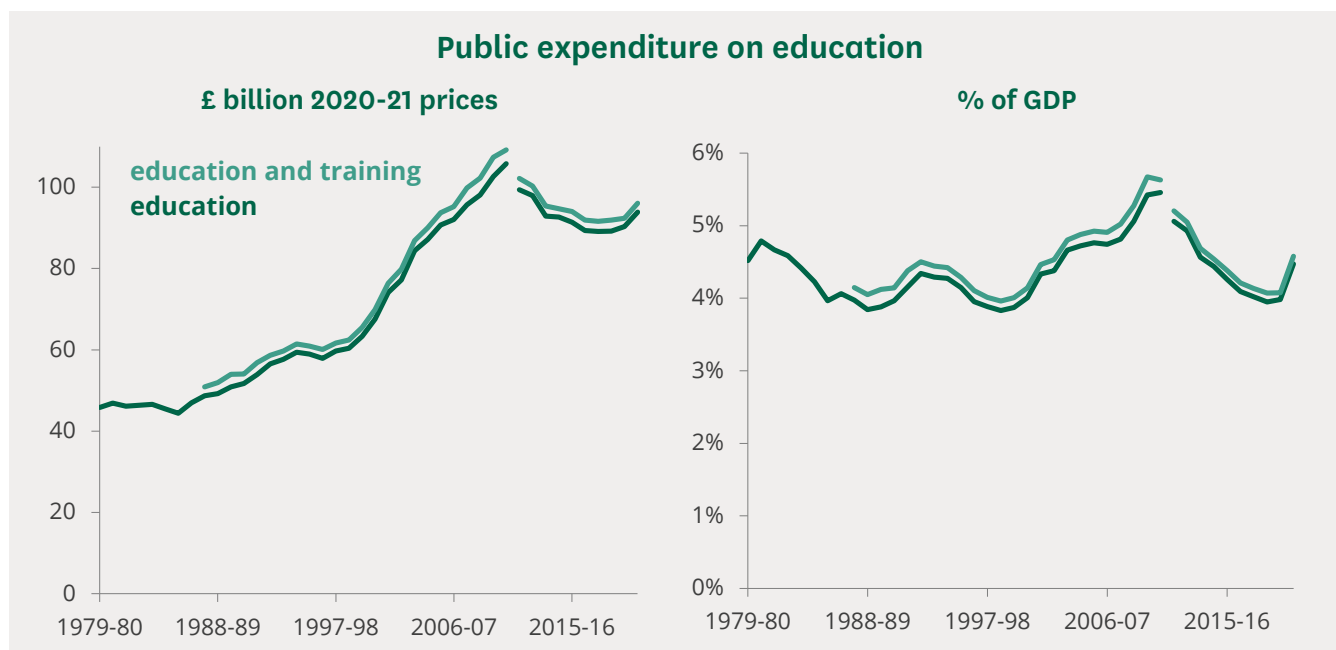
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Summary

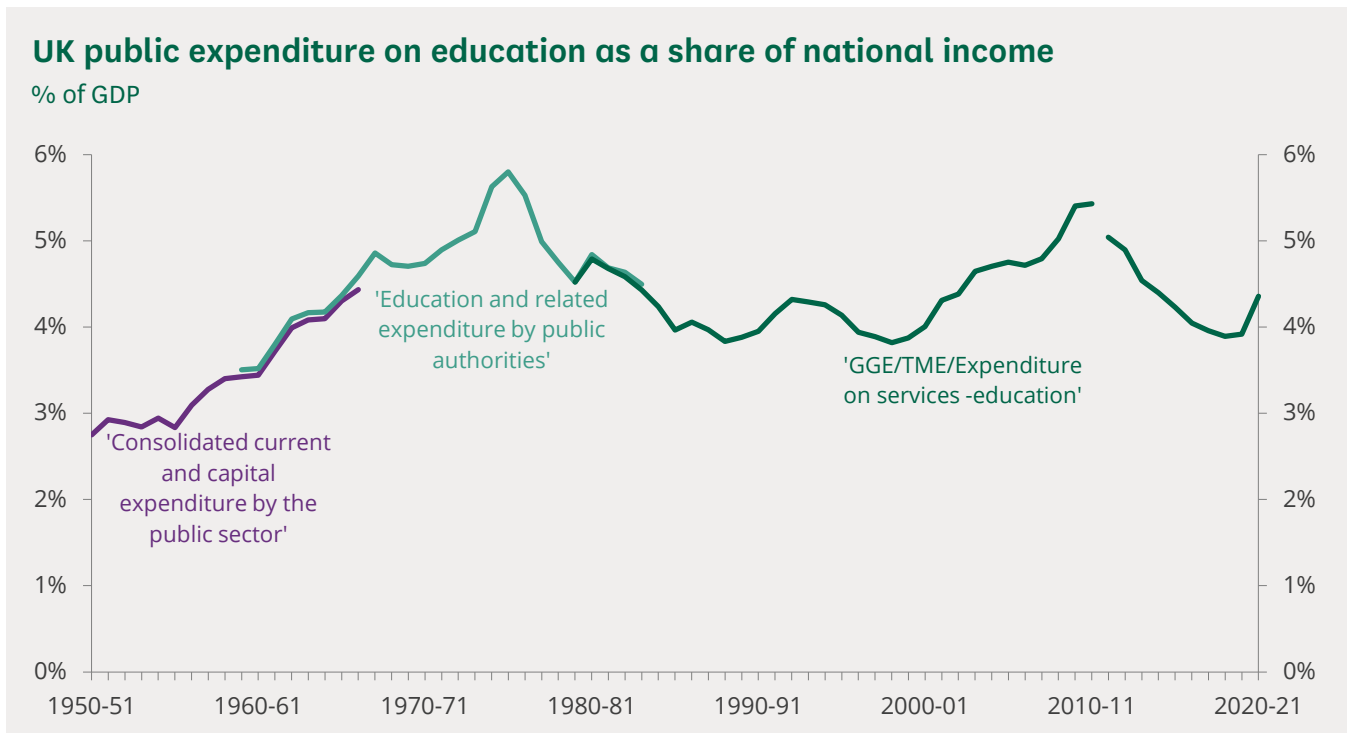
Since 1979...



The real level of public spending on education in the UK was static in the early 1980s. It increased gradually from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s before falling slightly in 1995-96 and 1996-97. After then it increased to new record levels in each year to the peak in 2010-11. The spending data excludes the subsidy element of student loans from 2011-12 onwards. Despite this break in the series **there was a clear decline in spending in the five years from 2012-13 to 2017-18. The increase in 2019-20 was the first since 2010-11.** The increase in 2020-21 took real spending to its **highest level since 2012-13.**

When expressed as a proportion of GDP, **education spending peaked in 2009-10 and 2010-11 at around 5.4%**, its highest since the mid-1970s. **The subsequent decline took it down to below 3.9% in 2018-19, its lowest level for almost two decades.** There was a small increase in 2019-20, the first since 2010-11. Higher education spending in 2020-21 combined with the sharp cut in GDP due to the pandemic meant there was a **sharp increase in spending as a percentage of GDP in 2020-21 of almost 0.5 percentage points to 4.4%.**

Since 1950...



Public expenditure on education increased as a proportion of GDP throughout the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. It peaked at 5.8% in 1975-76 before declining for the rest of the decade and much of the 1980s. It briefly increased in the early 1990s before falling back to a recent low of 3.9% in the late 1990s. **From the late 1990s it increased in each of the next 12 years to 5.5% in 2010-11.** A break in the series in 2011-12 limits the comparisons with later years, however, it is clear that **education spending fell as a % of GDP in each year from 2011-12 to 2018-19. This was the longest continuous period of decline in this measure for the period covered here.**

By level...

Where did spending go in 2020-21?		
	£bn	% of total
Pre-primary	4.3	5%
Primary	27.4	29%
Secondary	48.1	50%
Tertiary	4.9	5%
Subsidiary services	4.8	5%
R&D	2.7	3%
Training	2.2	2%
Other	1.7	2%
Total	96.1	100%

79% of education spending went on schools - primary and secondary education. The relatively low share going on tertiary (higher) education reflects the fact that the data exclude the subsidy element of student loans which forms the large majority of higher education spending in England.

Within the UK...

Public spending per head on education in 2019-20 was highest in Scotland at around £1,690, followed by £1,530 in Northern Ireland and £1,480 in London. **It was lowest in the South East and South West of England at around £1,230.**

Compared to other countries...

OECD analysis puts UK public spending on education at 3.9% of GDP in 2018. This was 19th highest out of the 37 OECD members with data on this measure and below than the OECD average of 4.1%. If private expenditure on education is included then **the UK's total spending on education in 2018 was 6.1% of GDP, Only Norway (6.6%), Chile (6.6%), New Zealand and Israel (both 6.2%) had higher figures.**

In the future...

Spending plans for England (only) show an increase in day-to-day spending in of £9.9 billion between 2021-22 and 2024-25 or 2.2% per year on average in real terms. Capital spending is planned to increase by £0.5 billion over the same period or 0.5% per year in real terms. These plans exclude spending directly related to the coronavirus pandemic but do include funding for post-pandemic 'education recovery'.

If spending on loans was added back in...

Spending still fell in real terms and as a percentage of GDP after 2010, but by a smaller amount than official figures show. Real spending levels have stabilised in the middle of the decade and increased since 2016-17.

This paper looks at trends in public sector education expenditure in the UK. Some more detail can be found in [Public expenditure statistical analysis 2021](#) including a breakdown of total expenditure by type of education and spending in total and per head in the different parts of the UK. The annual report and accounts of the [Department for Education](#) includes more technical detail of spending in the most recent year and, in appendices, plans to the end of the current spending review period. Chapter C of the [OECD's Education at a Glance 2021](#) compares education spending across OECD and other countries.

Readers may also be interested in the latest annual report from the IFS on [Education Spending in England](#) which focus trends in spending, including per pupil/student, at different levels/phases of education from early years to higher education. This has been updated with briefing notes on [School Spending in England](#) and [Further education and sixth form spending in England](#).

The briefing paper [Higher education funding in England](#) looks in detail at spending on higher education in England. The articles [An introduction to student finance in England](#) and [Student finance in England: How much do graduates pay back?](#) Look at the size of financial flows in the student finance system. Details of policy changes and spending levels are given in the briefing [Further education funding in England](#).

The Department for Education publishes a wide range of data and analysis on school funding and expenditure in England under different headings. The most useful can be found at: [Statistics: local authority/school finance data](#), [School and college funding and finance](#) and [Section 251 documents](#)

1 Definitions of education spending and breaks in time series

[Section 2](#) of this paper looks at two main series; total UK public expenditure on education and total UK public spending on education *and training*. These have not been explicitly distinguished in recent official statistics on public spending, but this note uses the former descriptions where ‘education’ excludes the ‘education not elsewhere classified’ sub-function¹ and ‘education and training’ includes it. The definition of this sub-function has not changed, but official statistics now use education to refer to what was known as education and training in the past.

This paper retains the distinction between the terms for two reasons. First the education and training series only goes back to the late 1980s, while the education series goes back much further, even with some breaks in the series the concept remains the same. Second the education and training series is more consistent over the period it is available for. The spending data are regularly revised. These revisions can change the total figure, or move items of expenditure from one sub-function to another. The detailed breakdown by sub-function is only revised back five years. This presents a problem with consistency when trying to compile long-term series based on sub-functions and the authors warn against simply splicing one set of data with another pre and post-revision. The education and training series in this paper is therefore consistent for its entire length, other than the break in 2011-12 detailed below. The education series is not and although revisions are generally quite small, readers should be careful when drawing conclusions from this data, especially those based on small differences.

In 2016 Government removed the subsidy element of student loans from its public spending data. Previously a proportion of the face value of loans made each year² counted towards public spending. This causes a break in the series in 2011-12, but also means that trends afterwards are affected due to increased amounts of higher education funding in England shifting from direct public spending to loans. More recently the economic costs of loans have been included in the overall fiscal deficit figures, but they are still excluded from public spending data. [Section 3](#) looks at the issue in more detail.

The detailed breakdown of education spending by level includes all expenditure on academies in England under ‘secondary education’ despite many academies being primary or special schools. This skews trends in spending by level and affects comparisons within the UK.

¹ The Government uses the UN Classifications of the Functions of Government to classify spending by function and sub-function.

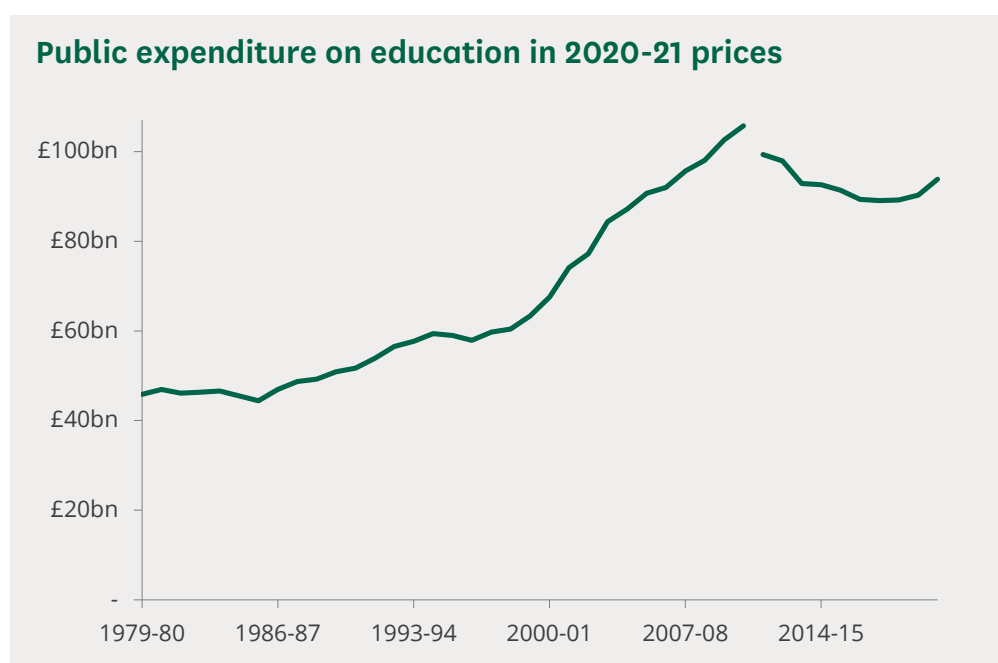
² The present value of the amount the Government forecast would not be repaid.

2 UK public expenditure on education since 1979

2.1 Education expenditure since 1979

Real spending levels have gone through five distinct phases as illustrated below; no change in the early 1980s, growth through to the mid-1990s, no change to the end of the 1990s, rapid growth in spending to 2010-11 and cuts in real spending from 2011-12 to 2018-19. The recent falls in spending were the first since the mid-1990s, but despite spending falling from its peak, levels in 2018-19 were still higher than in 2004-05 or any previous year. The real increase in 2019-20 was the first since 2010-11.

The growth in spending from 1998-99 to 2010-11 is very clear, as is the fact that absolute annual increases were much larger than in the previous sustained period of increase (mid 1980s to mid 1990s). The only periods where real spending fell for two consecutive years were 1983-84 to 1985-86, 1994-95 to 1997-98 and 2012-13 to 2017-18. Spending in 2020-21 was £93.8 billion; more than double the level seen in the mid-1980s.



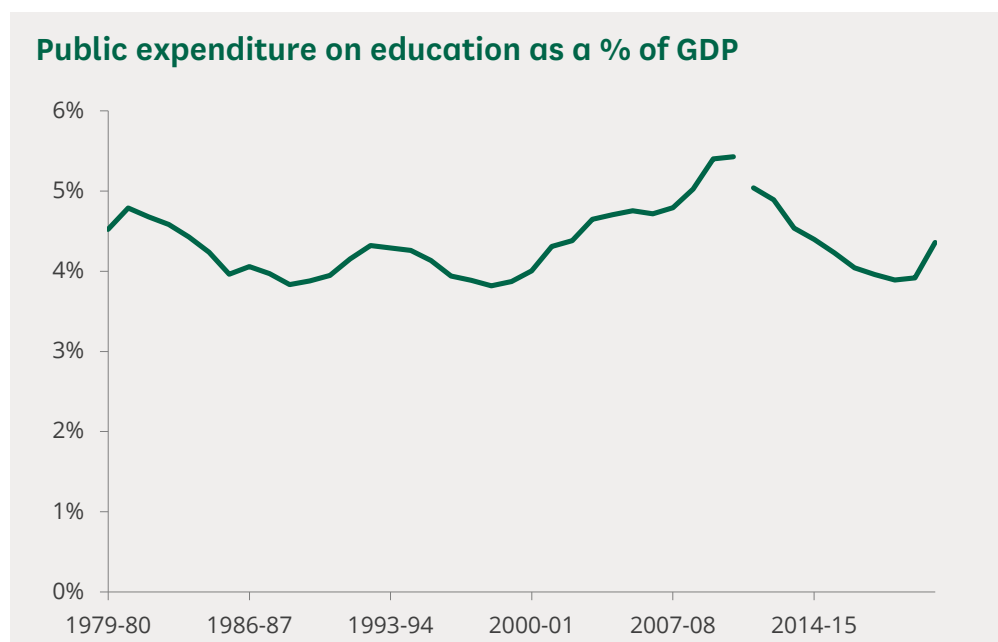
Source: See [table 1](#)

Table 1 at the end of this note shows education spending in cash and real terms and as a percentage of GDP for each financial year since 1979-80 and education and training expenditure since 1987-88.

Peak spending in real terms was in 2010-11 at £105.8 billion (2020-21 prices). This figure is inflated to a certain extent by some one-off accounting adjustments to the subsidy element of student loans. These adjustments were to revalue the existing stock of loans to reflect lower than expected repayments.³ The additional expenditure was ‘scored’ against the year in which these decisions were made, despite the facts that lower repayments will often not be realised for many years to come and the loans in question were taken out from the end of the 1990s onwards. Spending on tertiary education was (at the time) recorded as £15.8 billion in 2010-11 compared to £13.2 billion in 2009-10 and £13.1 billion in 2011-12.

These accounting adjustments are large enough to have a noticeable impact on the trend in overall public spending on education. Reducing these variations was one reason given for removing the cost of loans from public spending data.

Spending has varied less when expressed as a proportion of GDP (below). It fell for much of the 1980s from 4.8% in 1980-81 to 3.8% in 1988-89. It increased to more than 4.4% again in the early 1990s due to increased spending and falling GDP. The lowest level since the late 1980s was in 1998-99 at 3.8% due to several years of little or no real spending increases and a strong economy. The increases since then have been less dramatic than in absolute spending levels. Education spending exceeded 5.0% of GDP in 2008-09 and peaked at 5.4% in 2010-11. These particularly high figures reflect increases in spending during a recession and the accounting adjustments for student loans (2010-11) mentioned earlier.



Source: See [table 1](#)

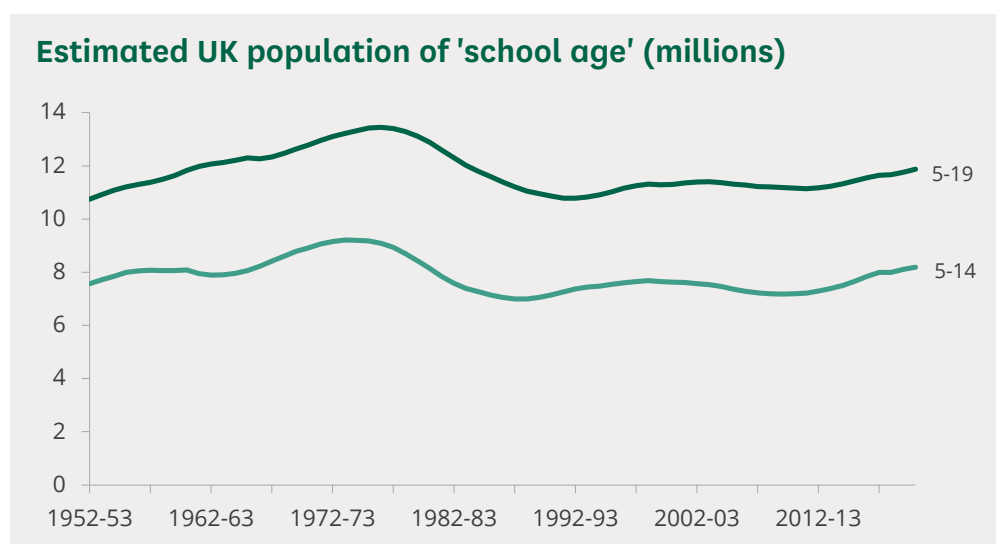
³ For revised assumptions regarding the base rate cap and the decision to use OBR data on short term earnings and RPI, rather than long term assumptions.

Education spending fell as a proportion of GDP after the break in the series up to 2018-19. It increased slightly in 2019-20. Real increases in spending in 2020-21 combined with a large fall in GDP due to the pandemic meant spending increased sharply as a percentage of GDP to just under 4.4%.

While the 2010-11 figure was a post-1979 high, earlier data, summarised later in this paper, suggest that spending was higher in the mid-1970s. International comparisons of spending as a share of GDP are given later in this paper.

2.2 Education spending and population change

The time periods covered in this section and particularly in [section 5](#) include times when the school age population increased and decreased. The scale of these changes can be large -more than one million in less than a decade- so it is important context to help us better understand the significance of differences in spending levels. Trends in the size of the 'school age' population are illustrated below. For 5-14 and 5-19 year olds.

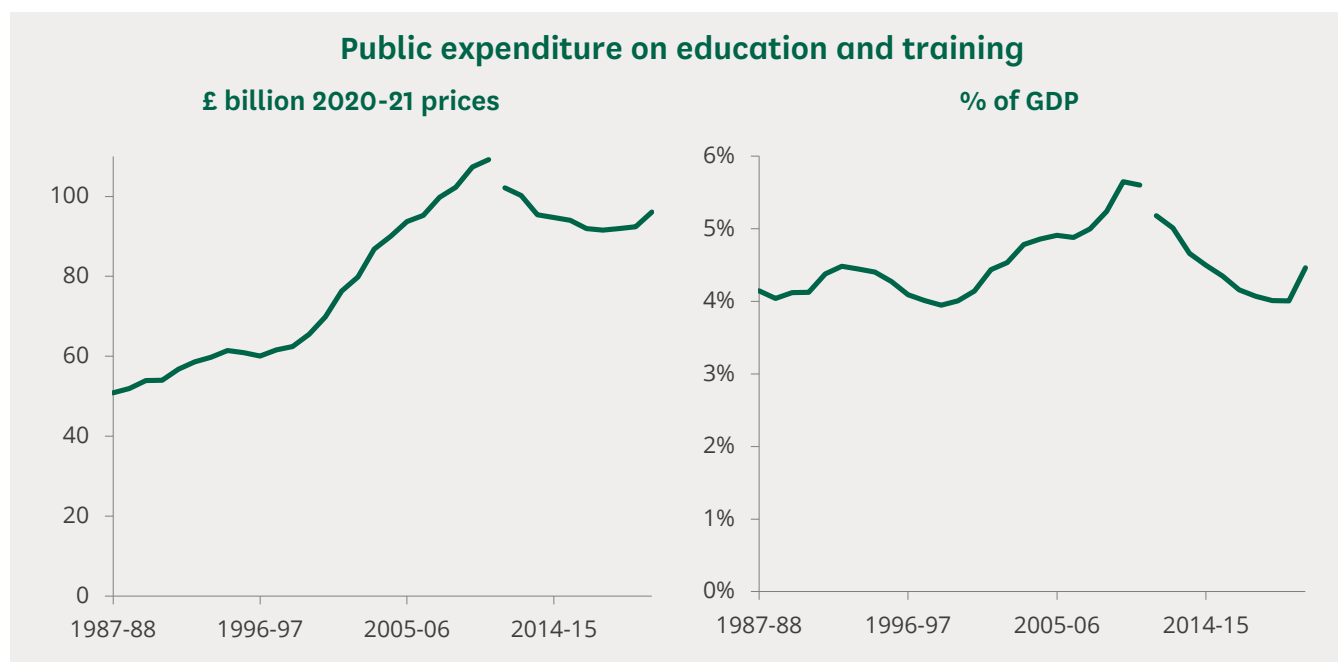


Source: [UK mid year population estimates](#), ONS

The 'school age' population increased during the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, before falling quite rapidly during the late 1970s and 1980s. Changes since then have been slower, but there has been a clear increase since 2010, particularly in the 5-14 which was larger in 2020 than at any time since 1981.

2.3 Education and training expenditure since 1987

Trends in expenditure on education and training are also given in Table 1 at the end of this note and illustrated below.



Source: See [table 1](#)

The inclusion of training expenditure has little impact on the ‘shape’ of either trend. Real spending on education and training peaked at £109 billion (2020-21 prices) in 2010-11 and at 5.6% of GDP in 2009-10.

The following table compares indicators of expenditure and expenditure growth for various time periods since 1987. As student loan subsidy spending is excluded from 2011-12 it is not possible to make direct comparisons in the *level* of spending from before and after this point. Comparisons of *change* can be made.

How did education & training expenditure vary in selected periods?

	Average £ billion at 2020-21 prices ^(a)	Average % of GDP	Average real annual change	
			percentage	£ billion
1987-88 to 1996-97	57.4	4.26%	+1.87%	+1.04
1992-93 to 1996-97	60.8	4.33%	+0.62%	+0.37
1997-98 to 2010-11	86.5	4.80%	+4.50%	+3.69
2007-08 to 2010-11	105.7	5.37%	+3.04%	+3.16
2011-12 to 2020-21 ^(b)	95.9	4.41%	-0.79%	-0.79

(a) Adjusted to 2020-21 prices using HM Treasury GDP deflators from October 2021. The 2020-21 deflator is derived from the OBR’s forecast for 2020-21 and 2021-22, averaged across the two years to smooth the distortions caused by pandemic-related factors.

(b) Excludes the subsidy element of student loans

Source: See [table 1](#)

The average percentages of GDP spent on education were lower in the first two periods than in the following two (which overlap). The average annual increase across the whole of the period 1997-98 to 2010-11 at 4.4% was well above the earlier two periods. It was also higher than the 2007-08 to 2010-11 period (covered by the 2007 spending review). The periods overlap and hence this illustrates the lower than average increases from 2007-08 onwards.

The relatively large difference seen in the pre- and post-1997 average increases may seem at odds with the relatively small difference in the percentage of GDP figures. The same could be said about the real cuts/relatively high percentage of GDP from 2010-11 compared to large real increases/lower share of GDP from 1997 to 2010. However, as the charts on the previous pages showed, spending as a percentage of GDP was relatively high at the start of the 1980s, but fell in fourteen of the next twenty years. Therefore the average percentage of GDP over this period was relatively high; despite smaller average increases in spending. The reverse is true for the period from 1999-00; it took large real increases in spending to increase the proportion of GDP figure from its low level. The overall cuts in real spending from 2011 reduce the share of GDP going on education, but from a high starting point.

2.4

Expenditure by region and nation

The following charts look at education spending per head in the different parts of the UK in 2019-20. The underlying data is from an annual exercise where departments and devolved administrations assign spending to the regions and nations of the UK based on who it benefits/where it is spent.

Total education and training expenditure was £1,432 per head for the UK as a whole in 2019-20. It was highest in Scotland at £1,685 and well above average in London and Northern Ireland. The South West had the lowest level at £1,231 per head. Comparisons will be affected by demographics –the relative size of the school/college/university age population in each region as well as the propensity for pupils in a given area to attend independent schools.

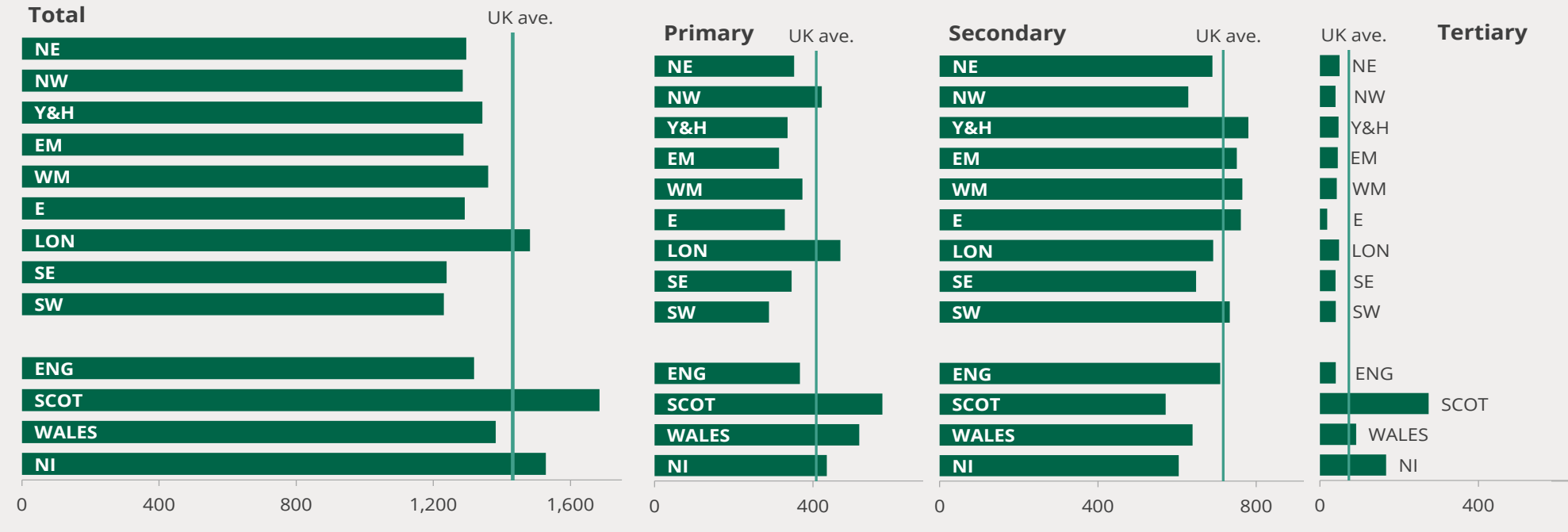
Comparisons of spending at primary and secondary level are limited because all academy spending is included under ‘secondary’ in England.

Spending per head on primary education was an average of £408 across the UK. Again, it was highest in Scotland at £575, lowest in the South West at £289. There was less variation in spending at secondary level. It was highest in Yorkshire and the Humber, here £780 per head, but levels in several other English regions were not far behind.

Relative gaps were largest in tertiary education; from £274 per head in Scotland to around £40 in some English regions and as low as £18 per head in the East of England. This comparison is affected by the exclusion of the subsidy element of loans which plays such an important part in support for higher education in England.

Education and training spending within the UK

£ per head 2019-20



Source: [PESA 2021](#), HM Treasury (Chapters 9 and 10)

2.5

Breakdown of spending in recent years

The Government uses the UN Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) to breakdown spending within higher level categories such as education. These are:

- **Pre-primary** -under fives education
- **Primary education**
- **Secondary education** -includes 16-18 and similar levels
- **Post-secondary non-tertiary** – education beyond secondary level, but not at tertiary level
- **Tertiary** -higher education, first degree and above
- **Education not definable by level** -mainly adult and community learning that does not need any prior qualification
- **Subsidiary services to education** -spending to support education/students regardless of level, such as general administration and inspection costs.
- **R&D education**
- **Education not elsewhere classified** -here described as training

Definitions of the terms used here can be found on the [UN Statistics Division website](#).

It is important to note that **the Department for Education currently records all spending on academies under secondary education**. Secondary schools account for most of the spending on academies, but there are also include large numbers of primary and special academies. They are looking to improve the separation of spending across the education categories in the future. This skews the primary/secondary breakdown somewhat and limits the comparisons of primary and secondary spending between the home countries of the UK

The table looks at the component parts of education spending from 2013-14 in real terms. Some of the main patterns were:

- Spending on primary and secondary education made up 79% of the total in 2020-21
- Tertiary spending fell by more than 40% despite the increase in student numbers. This reflects the shift from direct funding to loans in England.
- Spending on R&D increased in real terms by almost one half.

Major component parts of education spending

£ billion 2020-21 prices

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Change 13-14 to 20-21
Pre-primary	3.9	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.8	4.1	4.3	4.3	+12.5%
Primary	30.8	31.3	31.4	30.5	29.1	28.1	27.7	27.4	-11.1%
Secondary	42.6	44.0	43.6	42.6	44.0	45.4	46.4	48.1	+12.7%
Tertiary	8.6	7.5	6.9	6.6	5.8	4.9	4.5	4.9	-43.2%
Subsidiary services	4.8	4.2	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.8	4.3	4.8	-0.9%
Training	2.6	2.1	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.1	2.2	-13.2%
R&D	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.4	2.4	2.7	+49.3%
Other	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.7	+35.0%
Total	96.3	95.6	94.9	92.8	92.5	92.8	93.3	96.1	-0.3%

Note: Total also includes spending on education not definable by level and post secondary non-tertiary education

Source: [PESA 2021](#) (and earlier), HM Treasury (Table 5.2)

The final table in this section breaks spending down into current and capital. This shows that current spending fell gradually in real terms to 2017-18 before reversing these falls up to 2020-21. Capital spending has been more erratic with a large cut in 2016-17 and a large increase in 2017-18.

Current and capital spending on education and training

£ billion 2020-21 prices

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Change 13-14 to 20-21
Current	86.3	85.0	84.5	84.5	82.8	83.3	84.7	86.4	+0.1%
Capital	10.0	10.6	10.4	8.3	9.6	9.5	8.6	9.6	-3.9%
Total	96.3	95.6	94.9	92.8	92.5	92.8	93.3	96.1	-0.3%

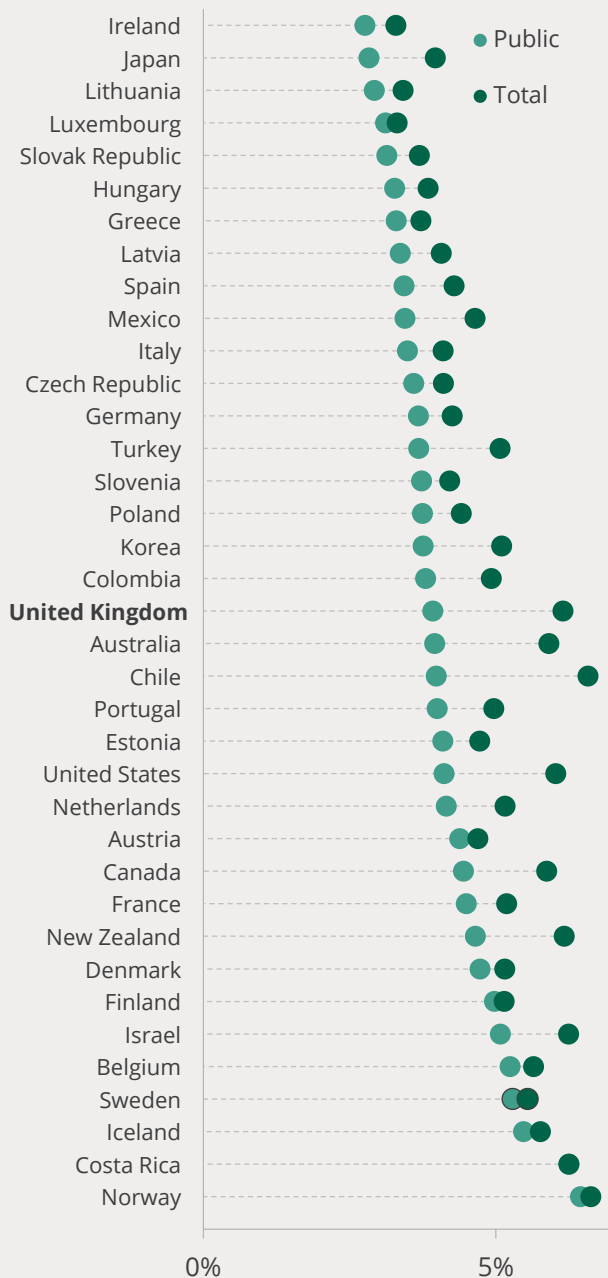
Source: [PESA 2021](#) (and earlier), HM Treasury (Table 5.4)

3

International comparisons

Expenditure on education institutions

Percentage of GDP, OECD nations 2018

Source: [Education at a Glance 2021](#), OECD (Table C2.4)

The chart opposite illustrates differences in education expenditure⁴ as a proportion of GDP across the OECD. 2018 are the latest available data. These figures cover public and private spending and the public total is indicated in the chart.

Overall spending on this measure in the UK was 6.1%; above the OECD average of 4.9%, above the figure other EU countries and only below Norway, Chile, New Zealand and Israel. Public spending in the UK at 3.9% was below the OECD average of 4.1%..

Private education expenditure in the UK at 2.1% of GDP was well above average. It was similar to levels in Australia and the US; only Chile had a higher rate.

The definition of source of funds used here looks at their final source and hence apports expenditure funded by student loans to the private rather than the public sector. If this is changed to the initial source of fund (before transfers) the UK public spending figure increases from 3.9% to 4.5%.

⁴ Expenditure on institutions. This excludes some spending which directly benefits pupils/students such as maintenance support

4

Spending plans for England

This section only looks at planned future spending in England, unlike the rest of the paper which covers the UK as a whole.

The latest high level spending plans were published as part of the [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#). These set the broad spending envelope for the Department for the three years up to 2024-25 and showed:

- Overall funding increases by an annual average of 2.0% in real terms to reach £86.7 billion in 2024-25.
- Resource (day-to-day) spending increases by an annual average of 2.2% in real terms. Within this the ‘core schools budget’ also increases by the same percentage to reach £56.8 billion in 2024-25.
- Total spending on skills will increase by 26% in real terms in the five years to 2024-25. Within this funding for 16-19 education increases by 28% in real terms over five years and adult skills funding by 29%.
- Capital spending increases at a slower than average rate, 0.5% per year in real terms.
- No details are given of higher education spending. Details are expected to be published alongside the long-overdue response to the Augar report⁵ “...in the coming weeks”.

⁵ The [Independent panel report to the review of post-18 review of education and funding](#) (May 2019)

5 Expenditure on student loans

Expenditure on the subsidy element of student loans has been excluded from public spending figures since 2016. In that year data back to 2011-12 excluded these costs and this break in the spending data has remained since then. This is shown in all the charts in this paper with a break in the series between 2010-11 and 2011-12. The impact of this change will have been both a one off (apparent) drop in spending in 2011-12, plus an ongoing reduction in spending as more funding was shifted from direct spending to loans from 2012 onwards. **The change will have exaggerated the cuts in spending after the break in series.**

5.1 ONS review

In December 2018 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) [announced](#) that it would change the way that loans are included in public spending figures. In summary this will mean treating the amount which is expected to be repaid as a loan. The remainder will be reclassified as public spending and count towards the deficit.⁶ For more detail on the impact of these changes see the blog [Student loans: ONS changes accounting rules](#).

[In June 2019 the ONS published Student loans in the public sector finances: a methodological guide](#) which gave a detailed account of the reasons behind the change and how they planned to implement it.

The [August 2019 Public sector finances](#) release was the first to include the revised student loan expenditure figures and their impact on borrowing. The revisions were made from 1997-98 to 2018-19. In 1999-00 the new treatment of loans increased spending by 0.1 billion, rising to £7.5 billion in 2016-17. The revisions for 2017-18 and 2018-19 also include the impact of loan sell offs as these were below the asset value recorded in the national accounts. The difference was £1.2 billion in 2017-18 and £1.5 billion in 2018-19. These amounts affect Government borrowing but are not a direct reflection of annual expenditure on student loans. Without these loan sale 'costs' spending on loans was £8.7 billion in 2017-18 and £10.9 billion in 2018-19 under the new rules.

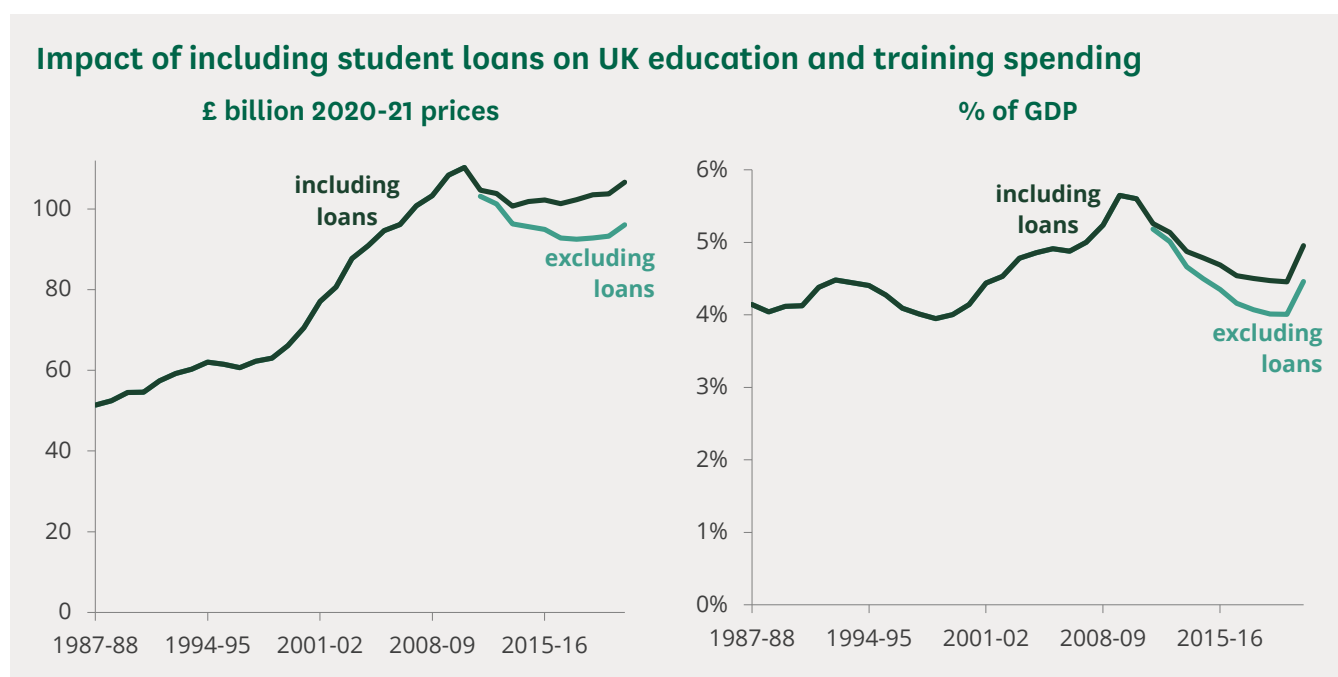
While the economic costs of loans are now included in overall public sector borrowing data, they have not been added back into the data on public spending on services. This is why there is still a break in the series in the earlier chart and tables. The next section adds the figures the ONS (and from

⁶ [New treatment of student loans in the public sector finances and national accounts](#), ONS

2019-20 the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has produced on the impact of loans on borrowing to the public spending on services data.

5.2 The Impact of including spending on loans from 2011-12

This section simply adds the ONS/OBR loan expenditure figures to the existing public spending data from 2011-12 to get a more meaningful time series without the break in series described earlier. It does not include the impact of loan sales in 2017-18 and 2018-19. The ONS estimates of the cost of loan sales look at the impact on public finances rather than annual education spending. The results for the education and training series are shown below. The series “excluding loans” is the original referred to throughout the rest of this paper for the years 2011-12.



Source: See [table 1](#) and [Economic and fiscal outlook – October 2021](#) (and earlier), Office for Budget Responsibility (Table 3.14)

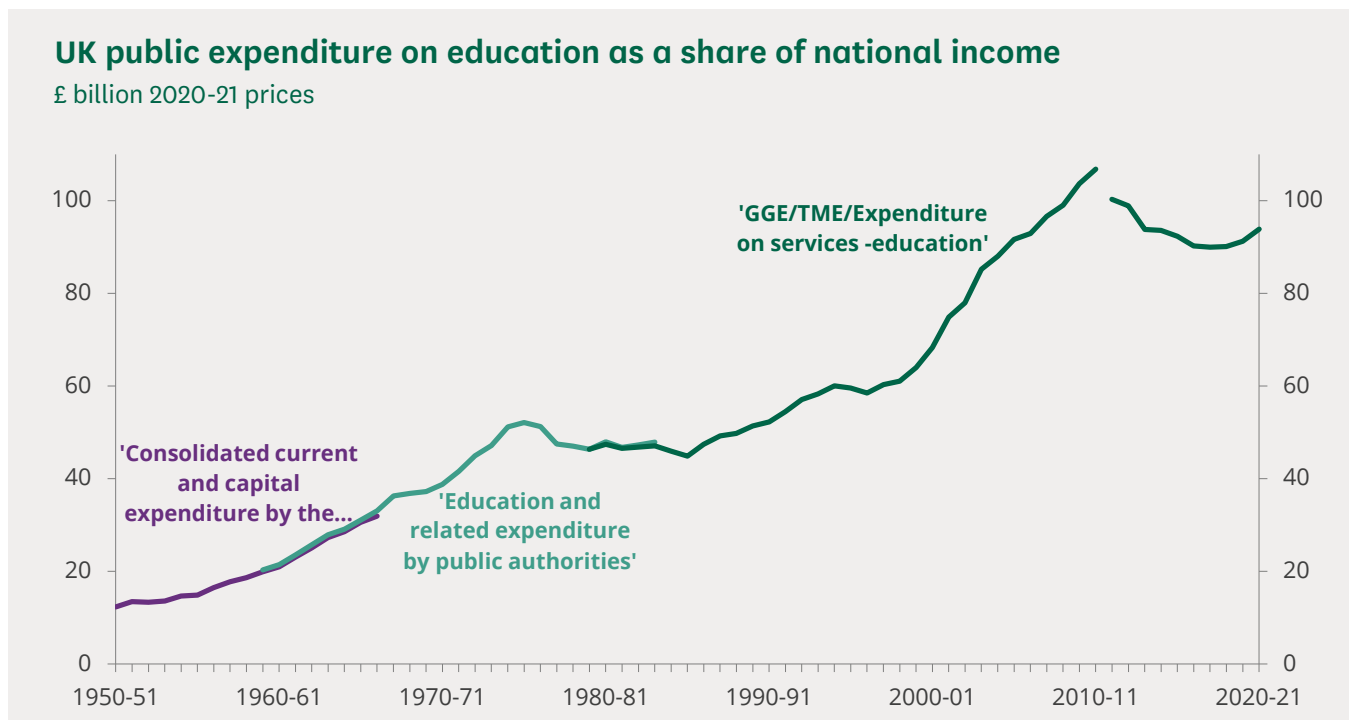
Adding loan spending back in still results in a cut in real spending in 2011-12, but the new series levels off soon after then and in the years up to 2017-18. It increases from 2018-19 to a level in 2020-21 which was 3.2% below the 2010-11 peak in real terms. The revised percentage of GDP series still falls after 2010-11, but including loans slows this fall. The pandemic led to a sharp fall in GDP which helped to increase education spending as a percentage of GDP. The 2020-21 level, including loans, was 5.0% of GDP; still well below its 5.6% peak in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

6 Long term trends in public expenditure

The data included earlier in this note is the most consistent time series available. To go further back in time means using more than one series and introducing some inconsistencies. Table 2 at the end of this note gives various public education expenditure series back to the early 1950s. Where there is overlap in years the series show little variation, so we can be confident that the overall pattern of change over this period is broadly accurate. See the table footnotes for more detail.

The first chart looks at education spending in real terms. This shows the post 1979 series in context.

The period immediately before this was the most atypical of all. Real spending levels fell in each year from 1976-77 to 1979-80 and together with fairly flat levels of real spending in the early and mid-1980s meant that real spending did not return to its mid-1970s level until the late 1980s. Before then real spending had increased in each and every year from the early 1950s to the mid 1970s –the longest continuous period of increase.



Source: See [table 2](#)

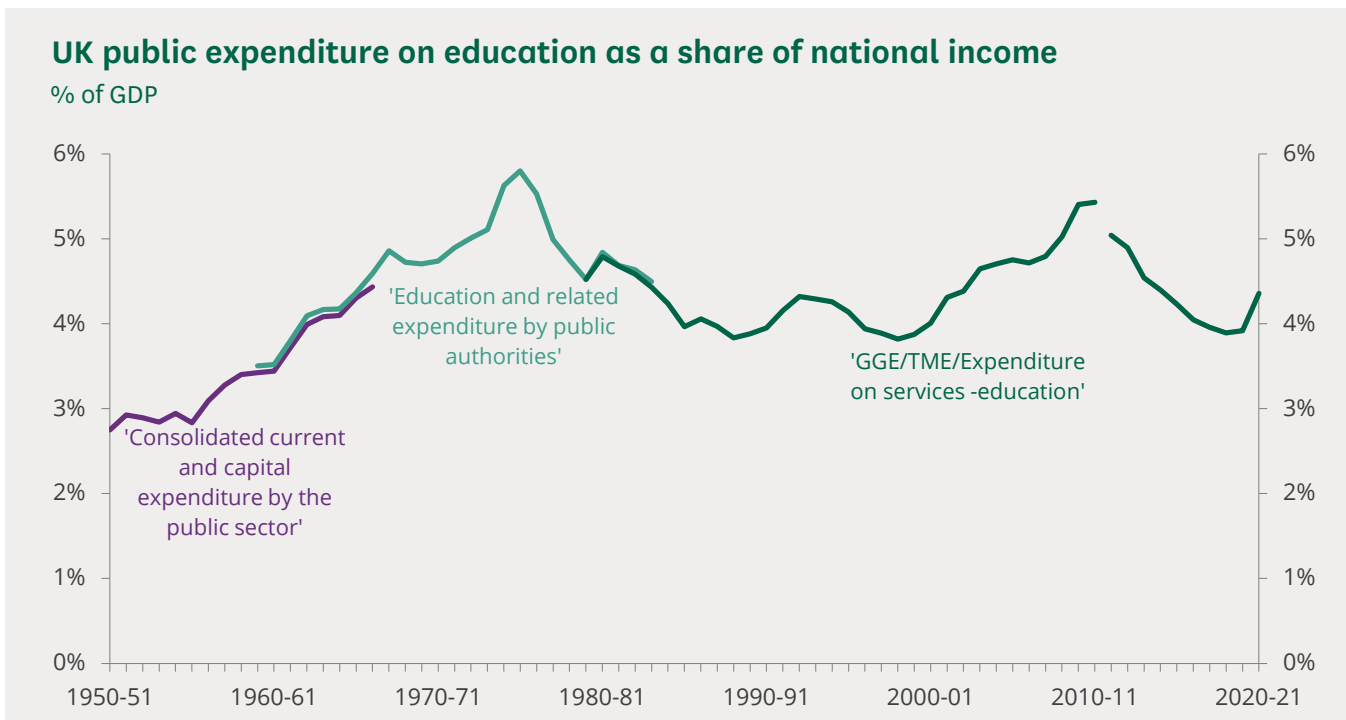
The increases shown in the 1950s and 1960s are not surprising given the changes to public sector education at the time. These are summarised in the paper [Education: Historical Statistics](#). During the 1950s and 1960s:

- The number of primary school pupils increased by 20% and primary teachers by 30%
- The number of public sector secondary school pupils doubled and the number of secondary teachers increased by 150%
- The number of students gaining university qualifications more than tripled

More detail is given in that paper.

The chart shows that the largest annual increases occurred in the 2000s. The fastest *rate* of increase was in the 1950s and early 1960s; spending doubled in real terms in the 11 years between 1952-53 and 1963-64. The real increase in the 11 years to 2009-10 was just over two-thirds.

The next chart gives spending as a proportion of GDP. This produces a slightly more erratic trend, although again the main period of increase was in the two decades from the mid-1950s. The increases since the late 1990s were much smaller in comparison and did not take spending to a greater share of national income than the 1975-76 peak of 5.8%. The fall from this peak to 4.5% in 1979-80 was the fastest rate of change in the whole period.



Source: See [table 2](#)

When such a long period is covered it inevitably includes a number of different economic cycles beyond the memory of most readers. GDP fell in 1974-76, 1980-81, 1991-92, 2008-10 and 2020-21. The fastest periods of growth were the early 1960s, early 1970s, late 1980s and mid-1990s.

Before the Second World War the scale of public sector education was much smaller than even that of the early 1950s. During the late 1920s and most of the 1930s public spending on education was 2.2% to 2.4% of GDP. The only

exception was in 1931-33 when sharp falls in GDP meant education spending increased to 2.5-2.6%.^{7 8}

⁷ These figures are intended to be indicative only as the coverage of the spending data is different from any included in Table 2

⁸ *Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom 1924-1938*, Board of Trade; B R Mitchell *British Historical Statistics* (1988)

7

Reference tables

Table 1

Total public expenditure on education in the UK^(a)

	Education only			Education and training		
	Cash prices £ billion	2020-21 prices ^(b) £ billion	Percent of GDP ^(c)	Cash prices £ billion	2020-21 prices ^(b) £ billion	Percent of GDP ^(c)
1979-80	10.5	46.3	4.52%	..	..	..
1980-81	12.8	47.4	4.79%	..	..	..
1981-82	13.9	46.5	4.68%	..	..	..
1982-83	15.0	46.8	4.58%	..	..	..
1983-84	15.8	47.0	4.43%	..	..	..
1984-85	16.3	45.9	4.24%	..	..	..
1985-86	16.8	44.8	3.96%	..	..	..
1986-87	18.5	47.4	4.06%	..	..	..
1987-88	20.3	49.2	3.97%	21.2	51.4	4.14%
1988-89	21.9	49.7	3.83%	23.1	52.5	4.04%
1989-90	24.4	51.3	3.88%	25.9	54.5	4.12%
1990-91	26.9	52.2	3.95%	28.1	54.6	4.13%
1991-92	29.7	54.4	4.15%	31.3	57.4	4.38%
1992-93	32.0	57.1	4.32%	33.2	59.2	4.48%
1993-94	33.5	58.2	4.29%	34.7	60.3	4.44%
1994-95	35.0	60.0	4.26%	36.2	62.0	4.41%
1995-96	35.8	59.5	4.14%	37.0	61.5	4.27%
1996-97	36.4	58.4	3.94%	37.8	60.7	4.09%
1997-98	37.4	60.3	3.89%	38.6	62.2	4.01%
1998-99	38.7	61.0	3.82%	40.0	63.0	3.95%
1999-00	40.8	63.9	3.87%	42.2	66.1	4.00%
2000-01	44.4	68.2	4.01%	45.9	70.5	4.14%
2001-02	49.7	74.8	4.31%	51.2	77.1	4.44%
2002-03	52.9	77.9	4.38%	54.7	80.6	4.53%
2003-04	59.2	85.2	4.65%	61.0	87.7	4.78%
2004-05	63.0	88.0	4.70%	65.1	90.9	4.86%
2005-06	67.6	91.6	4.75%	69.8	94.6	4.91%
2006-07	70.6	92.9	4.72%	73.0	96.1	4.88%
2007-08	75.4	96.6	4.79%	78.7	100.8	5.00%
2008-09	79.6	99.0	5.02%	83.0	103.3	5.24%
2009-10	84.6	103.6	5.40%	88.5	108.4	5.65%
2010-11	88.6	106.8	5.43%	91.5	110.2	5.60%
2011-12	84.5	100.3	5.04%	86.9	103.1	5.18%
2012-13	85.0	98.9	4.89%	87.0	101.2	5.01%
2013-14	82.4	93.8	4.54%	84.7	96.3	4.66%
2014-15	83.2	93.5	4.40%	85.1	95.6	4.50%
2015-16	82.6	92.3	4.23%	84.9	94.9	4.35%
2016-17	82.5	90.2	4.04%	84.9	92.8	4.16%
2017-18	83.7	90.0	3.96%	86.1	92.5	4.07%
2018-19	85.5	90.1	3.89%	88.1	92.8	4.01%
2019-20	88.6	91.2	3.92%	90.6	93.3	4.01%
2020-21	93.8	93.8	4.36%	96.1	96.1	4.46%

Notes: Figures from 2011-12 exclude the subsidy element of student loans and are therefore not comparable to earlier figures. Expenditure calculated on a resource basis from 2000-01 onwards. These figures may not be directly comparable with earlier years that were calculated on a cash basis.

.. Not available

(a) General Government Expenditure to 1982-83. Total Managed Expenditure to 1987-88, total expenditure on services thereafter.

(b) Adjusted to 2020-21 prices using HM Treasury GDP deflators from October 2021. The 2020-21 deflator is derived from the OBR's forecast for 2020-21 and 2021-22, averaged across the two years to smooth the distortions caused by pandemic-related factors.

(c) Calculated using GDP figures revised after September 2014 changes to National Accounts methodologies

Sources: HM Treasury, PESA 2020, and earlier editions
ONS series YBHA
HM Treasury GDP deflators

Table 2

UK public expenditure on education						
	£ billion 2020-21 prices ^a			% of GDP		
	Series 1	Series 2	Series 3	Series 1	Series 2	Series 3
1950-51 ^b	12.3	..	..	2.75%	..	..
1955-56	14.8	..	..	2.87%	..	..
1960-61	21.0	21.4	..	3.48%	3.56%	..
1965-66	30.5	31.0	..	4.33%	4.39%	..
1970-71	..	38.7	..	..	4.75%	..
1975-56	..	52.1	..	..	5.81%	..
1980-81	..	47.9	47.4	..	4.85%	4.79%
1985-86	..	47.8	44.8	..	4.08%	3.96%
1990-91	52.2	..	..	3.95%
1995-96	59.5	..	..	4.14%
2000-01	68.2	..	..	4.01%
2005-06	91.6	..	..	4.75%
2010-11	106.8	..	..	5.43%
2011-12	100.3	..	..	5.04%
2012-13	98.9	..	..	4.89%
2013-14	93.8	..	..	4.54%
2014-15	93.5	..	..	4.40%
2015-16	92.3	..	..	4.23%
2016-17	90.2	..	..	4.04%
2017-18	90.0	..	..	3.96%
2018-19	90.1	..	..	3.89%
2019-20	91.2	..	..	3.92%
2020-21	93.8	..	..	4.36%

Notes:

Series 1 Annual abstract series 'Consolidated current and capital expenditure by the public sector'.[□] Excludes spending on school meals and milk

Series 2 Education in the UK series 'Education and related expenditure by public authorities'.[□] Includes expenditure on teacher training and the youth service

Series 3 Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis series. General Government Expenditure to 1982-83. Total Managed Expenditure to 1987-88, total expenditure on services thereafter. Expenditure calculated on a resource basis from 2000-01. Excludes the subsidy element of student loans from 2011-12 onwards

(a) Adjusted to 2020-21 prices using HM Treasury GDP deflators from October 2021. The 2020-21 deflator is derived from the OBR's forecast for 2020-21 and 2021- 22, averaged across the two years to smooth the distortions caused by pandemic-related factors.

(b) GDP and GDP deflator data before 1955-56 is on a calendar year basis

Sources: Annual abstract of statistics 1967, and earlier editions, CSO
Education statistics for the United Kingdom, various years, DES
HM Treasury, PESA 2018, and earlier editions
ONS series ADIE and YBHA

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