ISSUE SPOTLIGHT
AUGAR REVIEW

Policy background

The 'Review of Post-18 Education and Funding' was launched by Prime Minister Theresa May on 19 February 2018 as part of her plan to break down the barriers between further and higher education and create a "system which is truly joined up". Led by a panel of experts and chaired by Philip Augar, a businessman and former non-executive director of the Department for Education, the Review sets out to address sector issues surrounding choice, skills and value for money.

Augar is the first significant review of tertiary education since 2010, when the Browne Review introduced major reforms to the student finance system. These included uncapping tuition fees from £3,000 and raising the student loan repayment threshold to £21,000.

Since then, there have been a multitude of changes in the sector including the increase in fees from £3,000 to £9,000 in just two years following Browne's recommendations, the removal of student maintenance grants in 2016, and the UK's exit of the European Union. Brexit alongside the future automation of work has meant that a workforce highly skilled in STEM areas will be essential in order to boost the UK's productivity and ensure its future development outside of the European Union.

The future automation of work will bring new challenges for the adult, distance, and part-time learning population. Currently, adult learners face a number of obstacles when it comes to retraining or up-skilling later in life. Despite relevant experience and a desire to learn, the secondary education qualifications they hold might not fit the entry requirements for vocational or degree study. The Review's recommendations to improve the fluidity between further education and higher education programmes could mean more partnerships which see universities, colleges and local businesses collaborating together, such as the recently announced Institutes of Technology.

The Review has recommended to lower tuition fees from £9,250 to £7,500 with the aim to encourage more students from disadvantaged backgrounds to apply for undergraduate degrees. The lost funding is to be topped up by extended teaching grants, proportionate to subject-specific costs and socio-economic value to students and taxpayers. The anticipated 'two-tiered' system of charging higher fees for STEM vs Arts subjects has been reconsidered, following stakeholder reactions suggesting that differential fees could act as a deterrent for students making their post-18 education choices. Instead, the Review recommends altering the way in which subject-specific funding is approached through the differential teaching grants.

Skills

Delivering technical education at Level 4 and above

- The UK's small number of Level 4/5 students means there are persistent skills gaps at technician level and a reduction in opportunities for people who are unable to progress directly from Level 3 to Level 6.
- In 2009/10, there were approximately 510,000 learners enrolled on a sub-bachelor (Level 4 5) course; by 2014/15 this had reduced to 240,000 and by 2016/17 to 190,000.
- The decline in numbers is caused by the way in which post-18 funding is currently organised.
- Changes in the funding rules for degrees have forced changes in the type of Higher Education (HE) course taken, as well as reducing total numbers at sub-degree levels.
- Only a small minority of Level 4/5 learners are found in the STEM-related technical areas, where skills gaps are especially evident.
- Students studying individual institutional modules or short courses of less intensity are not eligible for loans.
- Current funding arrangements drive providers away from higher technical provision.

Recommendations

1. The Government should introduce a single lifelong learning loan allowance for tuition loans at Levels 4, 5 and 6, available for adults aged 18 or over, without a publicly funded degree. This should be set as it is now, as a financial amount equivalent to four years' full-time undergraduate degree funding.
2. Learners should be able to access student finance for tuition fee and maintenance support for modules of credit-based Level 4, 5 and 6 qualifications.
3. Equivalent or Lower Qualification (ELQ) rules should be scrapped for those taking out loans for Levels 4, 5 and 6.
4. Individuals should be able to access funding for one module at a time, without having to sign up to a full qualification.
5. Maintenance should be drawn down on a prorated basis, as currently happens for part-time students.
6. Institutions should award at least one interim qualification to all students who are following a Level 6 course successfully.
7. The number of Level 4/5 qualifications should be streamlined and their status improved.
8. The Office for Students (OfS) should become the national regulator of all non-apprenticeship provision at Levels 4 and above.
9. Government should provide additional support and capital funding to specific Further Education colleges (FECs) in order to ensure that a national network of high quality technical provision is available.
10. Government should work with the OfS to determine how best to allocate technical provision (for example, quality indicators and analysis of geographic coverage).
11. From 2021-22 the fee cap for Level 4 and 5 qualifications currently prescribed by the OfS should be £7,500 – the same as that proposed for Level 6 qualifications and in line with current arrangements for prescribed HE qualifications. Longer term, only kitemarked Level 4 and 5 qualifications that meet the new employer-led national standards should be able to

charge fees up to the Level 6 cap and be eligible for teaching grant. From that point, any other Level 4 and 5 courses should have a lower fee cap.

Retraining and funding for adults

- Most persistent skills shortages are in skilled trades.
- Level 3 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) offered a 15% return for men and 9% return for women.
- Participation by adults in Level 3 study has fallen in recent years.
- The drop in the number of participants is mainly a consequence of changes in funding.
- Since 2013, anyone aged 24 or over and employed who wants to obtain a Level 3 award has had to either pay from their own resources or take out an Advanced Learner Loan – or persuade their employers to fund them.
- Enrolments at Level 3 dropped by 31% in 2013/14 (the first year of the funding change).
- Cost issues are the most frequently cited reasons that put adults off studying.

Recommendations

1. The current age cap should be removed so that a first 'full' Level 3 is available free to all learners whether they are in work or not.
2. Full funding for the first 'full' Level 2 qualification, for those who are 24 and over and who are employed, should be restored.

Information, advice and guidance to support informed choices

- A young person who has four or more encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be not in education, employment or training and can earn up to 22% more during their career, compared to those who did not have any such encounters.

Recommendations

1. The careers strategy should be rolled out nationally so that every secondary school is able to be part of a careers hub, that training is available to all careers leaders and that more young people have access to meaningful careers activities and encounters with employers.

Apprenticeships

- The literature on apprenticeships confirms that 'good' apprenticeships, which combine the acquisition of new skills with work experience, are good both for the apprentice and for enterprise productivity.
- Results show that average earnings differentials across the 3-5 years after the apprenticeship are 16% at Level 3 and 11% at Level 2 for apprentices who complete compared to starters who do not complete.
- Research has found that the earnings returns to apprenticeships for those aged 19-24 is around twice that of those aged 25+.
- Apprenticeships are mainly in the areas of Business Administration, Law, and Health, Public Services and Care.
- Apprenticeships remain heavily concentrated in a few sectors with low average returns.
- There are very few apprenticeships at Levels 4 and above.
- The higher technical level crucial to the economy's current skills needs account for only 10% of the total number of apprenticeships.
- In construction, where there are major skill shortages, growth is characterised as very low.
- The low number of apprenticeships in the priority areas in the Industrial Strategy, and the small numbers at Levels 4 and above, indicates a clear mismatch between the economy's strategic demands and current apprenticeship starts and employer activity.

Level 6 and above degree apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships at Level 4 and above include Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 (Masters level). They are very small in number, other than in Business, Administration and Law, and Health and Social Care.
- At Level 6, in 2017/18, the most popular subjects are Chartered Manager (36% of starts), Digital & Technology Solutions Professional (21%) and Chartered Surveyor (13%).
- At Level 7, in 2017/18, starts are dominated by the Accountancy and Tax Professional standards (over 80% of 4,500 starts).
- In some cases, employers rebadge existing training activity, including graduate schemes, to claim apprenticeship funding. This may not an effective use of public money.
- Degree-level apprenticeships could be an expensive draw on the levy fund – 89% of standards at this level are in the £15,000 funding band or higher, compared to 33% at Level 4 and 5 and 23% of Level 2 and 3 standards.

Recommendations

1. The Government should monitor closely the extent to which apprenticeship take up reflects the priorities of the Industrial Strategy, both in content – including the need for specific skills at Levels 3 through 5 – and geographically. If funding is inadequate for demand, apprenticeships should be prioritised in line with Industrial Strategy requirements.
2. The Government should use data on apprenticeships wage returns to provide accessible system-wide information for learners with a potential interest in apprenticeships.
3. Funding for Level 6 and above apprenticeships should normally be available only for apprentices who have not previously undertaken a publicly-supported degree.

4. Ofsted should become the lead responsible body for the inspection of the quality of apprenticeships at all levels.
5. No provider without an acceptable Ofsted rating should receive a contract to deliver training.
6. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical education (IfATE) and the DfE, through the Education and Skills Funding Agency, should try to gain a better understanding of the barriers that SMEs face in engaging with the apprenticeship system. They should put in place mechanisms to address these barriers, (including raising awareness of the programme and making the system easier to navigate).
7. The IfATE should improve transparency when processing standards that have been submitted for approval. Apprenticeship providers should have a clear indication of progress, available online, so they can start to plan, recruit and invest within workable timelines.
8. All approved providers of Government-funded training, including apprenticeship training, must make clear provision for the protection of learners in the case of closure or insolvency.

Higher Education

University Finances

- Writing off the unpaid portion of student loans has resulted in implicit subsidy by the state.
- Fee levels in England are high by international standards.
- The distribution of funding between subjects is out of line with teaching costs, causing overfunding of low-cost subjects and underfunding of high-cost subjects.

Understanding University spending

- Higher tuition fees have resulted in an increased spend on humanities subjects compared to some STEM subjects.
- POLAR (the measure for disadvantaged students in HE) focuses on residential areas with low HE participation. It does not provide a good direct measure of an individual student's disadvantaged circumstances.

Market Competition

- Some universities are spending in excess of £1million (with one reported to have spent over £3million) on marketing due to the government policy of creating a more vibrant marketplace which promotes student choice.
- The highly competitive market is the result of the removal of student number controls combined with a high fee cap. Consequences of this market competition include:
  - Grade inflation
  - Lower entry requirements
  - Unconditional offers

The Case for Change: Students

- The current resourcing of Access and Participation Plans for disadvantaged students through fee income does not reflect the additional costs faced by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with large numbers of disadvantaged students.
- HEIs are likely to use a greater proportion of their overall fee income to support disadvantaged students, leaving a lower level of core funding for other purposes.
- Graduate premiums vary for men and women and by institution. The graduates of pre-1992 universities generally benefit from an earnings premium whereas most institutions and courses associated with a negative return in earnings are found within the post-1992 group.
- BTEC (Level 3) assessment is not standardised and has been subject to grade inflation, which has affected entry to post-18 education. BTEC assessment needs more regulation.

Recommendations

1. A fee cap of £7,500 to be frozen until 2022/23 and then increased in line with inflation from 2023/24.
2. Increase the teaching grant to replace the income lost by lower fees in full. The Government should adjust the grant per subject to reflect the subject's costs and socioeconomic value to students and taxpayers.
3. The HE sector should absorb a further freeze on per student resources to help fund investment by extending the 2018/19 and 2019/20 freeze of the average per-student resource for a further three years. £500 million of annual extra income for universities is expected by 2025 due to an increasing number of 18-year olds over the next 5 years.
4. The panel supports differentiated provider offers by HEIs such as:
    - Lower degree costs
    - Accelerated degrees
    - Employability schemes
    - Industry partnerships
5. Change the POLAR measure of disadvantage used in the Student Premium to reflect Free School Meal entitlement and increase teaching grant funding for disadvantaged students.
6. Hold HEI providers accountable for their use of Student Premium grants and Access and Participation Plans.
7. The Government should implement a minimum contextualised entry threshold, selective numbers cap, or both, after 2022/23 unless the sector addresses poor graduate employability, poor long-term earnings benefits and recruitment issues for courses with poor retention rates.
8. Withdraw financial support to foundation year courses (not foundation degrees) attached to degree courses with a notice period of two academic years. During this period, universities may wish to develop their own Access Diplomas or collaborate with FECs in their creation.

Further Education

Future vision

- FECs will collaborate nationally to deliver high quality Level 3, 4 and 5 professional and technical education. This education will be delivered flexibly and in line with the needs of local economies. FECs will also provide community learning, reskilling and upskilling opportunities for adults leading to sustainable career opportunities.

Further Education Finances

- Funding for adult learners in Further Education (FE) sits at a much lower level per learner than both HE and 16-18 funding, with total spending on adult skills falling by approximately 45% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2017/18.
- Financial support for FE learners is limited and subject to strict eligibility criteria. It is allocated by providers.
- 40% of FECs were in deficit in 2016/17.

The case for change

- Government policy to increase competition in post-school skills provision has resulted in FECs competing in different markets with Independent Training Providers, post-92 universities, local authority providers and sixth form schools and colleges to deliver their programmes.
- Incentives in the current system encourage FECs to deliver high volumes of learning at low levels to the partial exclusion of the higher-level qualifications wanted by the labour market. The highest number of FE learners currently study level 2 or below qualifications.
- Funding rules discourage providers from seeking to stretch learners to move to the next level, as the Adult Education Budget's (AEB) learners' payments are related to whether learners complete qualifications, rather than whether they enrol.
- Competition between FECs results in a narrower range of courses offered for learners, as applicants are spread so thinly that new courses do not end up running.
- In less- populated areas, learners have limited access to 'high return' courses at Levels 3, 4 or 5.
- Recruitment of high quality teachers and leaders is made challenging by direct competition from schools, HEIs and business, all of which typically offer more attractive rates of pay for comparable roles.

Recommendations

1. Increase the Unity funding rate for economically valuable adult education courses based on Industrial Strategy priorities.
2. Increase the funding rate for 18-year-olds.
3. The Government should commit to providing an indicative AEB that allows individual FECs to plan and budget over a three-year period. It should also explore providing FECs with increased flexibility to transfer their budgets between years.
4. In line with the Industrial Strategy, the Government should provide FECs with a capital investment of at least £1bn over the next Spending Review period. This should be used to grow capacity for higher technical provision in FECs.

5. Course duplication should be minimised in the FEC network, particularly in large cities.
6. Small FECs in rural areas should form groups to ensure sustainable long-term quality provision. There should be efficient distribution of Level 3, 4 and 5 provision within reasonable travel-to-learn areas.
7. More investment in the workforce to improve recruitment and retention and strengthen professional development.
8. More data collection across the FE sector.
9. Reduce regulatory complexity by March 2020 through establishing a joint working party co-chaired by OfS and ESFA chairs to align requirements and exchange information.
10. Give FECs a protected title to instil confidence in potential learners.

Finance

Student Contribution System

- The Review sets out proposals to recalibrate the student finance system, keeping the balance between students and taxpayers fair.
- By reducing the maximum student fee to £7500, increasing the Government's grant to Higher Education institutions and introducing a maintenance grant for low-income households, the share of debt taken on by students will fall and the Government will take on more of the upfront costs.
- Evidence given shows concerns about the fairness of charging interest while students are studying, and the level of interest charged, as well as the way the system is communicated.
- Many concerns raised by those calling for fees and interest rates to be reduced were based on misunderstandings, as the system is more 'like a 30-year tax' for many, after which their debt is written off, and repayments are not made by those who are not earning. Thus, lowering these would have 'a very limited impact on learners with the lowest or even middle incomes'.
- Too many students will pay back too little – only 55% of the total value of loans will be repaid; 70% of borrowers will not clear their loans. A new package is proposed for new students from 2021/22, which will not affect existing students, to be known as the Student Contribution System.

Recommendations

1. There should be a lower repayment threshold, cut by £2000 in 2018/19 prices to £23,000 but to be introduced in 2021/22 when it would be around £25,000 (the current threshold). By the time the average students starts repayments (2025/26) it would be around £28,000 and would continue to increase in line with average earnings. This level has been reached by comparing average earnings of graduates and non-graduates. Interest thresholds should be adjusted in the same way.
2. The loan repayment period should increase so that borrowers continue to repay their loan for as long as they benefit, which is a period of 40 years rather than the current 30.
3. Loan balances should track inflation during study, with the current interest rate of 3% above inflation levels removed as it increases 'all borrowers' debt balances when most borrowers are in no position to make payments, adding to concerns about rising debt levels'. While it is

mostly paid back only by higher-earners, it is often repaid by those taking out smaller Advanced Learner Loans.

4. As it would be 'it would be imprudent and wasteful for government to provide entirely costless finance', the current post-study variable interest rate of up to inflation plus 3% should be retained.
5. The Review notes concerns about the use of RPI to measure inflation, but says that this is a wider issue. However, it does raise concerns that the current interest system means that middle to higher earners may end up paying more than the very highest earners who are not exposed to interest for as long. Therefore, there should be a cap on real-terms total repayments of 1.2 times the value of the original loan in real-terms. This should also apply to those on the current system.
6. The Review expresses concern that the current terminology used to describe the system 'can be unhelpful and misleading' as it actually operates as an 'additional tax' for more borrowers. Instead it should be called a 'student contributions system', with a public engagement campaign to explain the changes and the potential renaming of the Student Loans Company.
7. As a result of these changes, borrowers would end up repaying 70% of their loans on average, but the loans would be smaller, resulting in a 50% student contribution to Higher Education costs. No borrower would have a change in repayments of more than £15 a month, with this being lower for those earning under £25,000 and non-existent for those under £23,000. In all cases payments would be lower than under the pre-2018 system. The overall outcome would continue to be 'very progressive', with those who earn more paying back more.

Post-18 Maintenance System

- Maintenance should be available on the same terms to those in Higher Education and those in Further Education at higher levels of study (Levels 4 to 6); the current provision is a 'patchwork' which leads people to favour full-time degrees.
- There should be a single maintenance offer for those taking post-18 qualifications at Level 4 and above
- Lower-income households are the most debt-adverse, which appears to deter students from this background from entering Higher Education
- Disadvantaged students leave with higher debt levels and there are rising concerns about the cost of living.

Recommendations

1. Reintroduce maintenance grants for students from low-income households in order to reduce debt levels on graduation, with a minimum grant of £3000 a year for those with the maximum entitlement. This would see the maximum debt for a graduating disadvantaged student cut from around £60,000 to around £45,000.
2. The Student Loans Company should be clearer about the expected parental contributions.
3. The level of maintenance support should be linked to the national minimum wage for those aged 21 to 24, on the basis of 37.5 hours a week and 30 weeks a year as students should not receive more than those in full-time employment.
4. Thresholds for grants and loans should increase in line with inflation. While increasing the minimum level 'significantly' was considered as evidence shows that parents frequently

provide less than assumed, this was felt not to be a high priority. The level of grant should be as high as possible to minimise or eliminate the additional loan amount for disadvantaged students.

5. All students at Levels 4 to 6 should have a single system of maintenance. The current system means that those studying 'non-prescribed' courses are 'much less supported', even if they are at the same institution and in the same circumstances as those taking other courses.
6. Support should be provided to those studying at above a minimum rate of intensity and the Government should consider the support for 'kitemarked' and 'non-kitemarked' qualifications once these have been rolled out.
7. Some elements of the system need further enquiry, including London-weighting (other places have high living costs too), support for students with children, how best to support commuter students, and whether it is in the taxpayers' interest to continue providing standard loans up to age 60. In particular, there are concerns about the cost of student accommodation, and the Office for Students should work with Higher Education Institutions to give more data to students on the range and cost of accommodation, improve transparency about rent models and profit levels, and devise benchmarks for the proportion of maintenance spent on accommodation.

Level 3 and below

- For those taking courses at Level 3 and below there should not be a centrally-administered national maintenance system. Instead, individual Further Education Colleges should continue to run their own schemes in line with Government guidelines.

Recommendations

1. The Government should increase bursary funding given the likely growth in students at Levels 2 & 3.
2. The Government and individual colleges should make the support on offer clearer.

Cost of the proposals

1. A one-off capital investment of £1bn over multiple years
2. An ongoing cost to the deficit of £0.3bn-£0.6bn a year
3. An ongoing cost to debt of -£0.1bn-£0.5bn a year
4. As a result of the Barnett formula which allocates funding of devolved administrations, an additional cost of about £0.9bn will be added.

- As the Office for National Statistics is reclassifying the treatment of student loans in the national accounts to include some of the money lent to students in the deficit at the point of lending, rather than at the point of maturity, and the work on this is ongoing, there will be 'significant uncertainty' over the cost of the recommendations until this change is implemented in September 2019.
- There is also more work needed on the incentive effect on students and institutions, and on the implementation and ongoing administrative costs of the reforms.

Implementation

- There needs to be ‘adequate consultation and transition time’ before the recommendations are implemented, and that many will need to be implemented together to avoid unduly penalising or rewarding students during the transition period.
- While many students would pay ‘marginally more’ under the proposals than under the current system, the difference is small, students don’t know how much they will earn in the future, and thus students should ignore these concerns and base their decision on when to start studying ‘in the light of trusted advice and their own personal circumstances and interests’.

Stakeholder reaction

Sector Reaction

[Association of Colleges]

- "We live in a country with 9 million adults with poor basic skills, even more lacking strong digital literacy, skills gaps widening particularly in intermediate skills. Our education and training system is not delivering to meet these needs now, so changes and fairer investment are vital. Universities are vitally important, but many people seem to need reminding that they are not the only part of the post-18 education and training system. In fact, more than half of the population have never been and never will go to university. Their education and life chances have been ignored for far too long."

L&W LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE

[Learning and Work Institute]

- "Most will focus on tuition fees and higher education, but it is great to see this long-awaited report recognising the compelling economic and social case for better investment in further education. The drive to increase participation in higher education has paid dividends, but we are too focused on full-time undergraduate degrees for young people. The review is right that we need a clearer higher technical education route for learning throughout life. With productivity and social mobility having stalled, with rapidly advancing technology transforming the world of work, and with Brexit on the horizon, investing in lifelong learning has never been more important."

Universities UK

[Universities UK]

- "Our message to the government therefore is clear; there must be a cast-iron guarantee that the Treasury will cover the funding shortfall, including sufficient grant funding to support the forecast increase in student numbers from 2021 as the 18-year-old population increases. If this funding cannot be guaranteed then you cannot cut tuition fees without causing damage."

national union of **students**

National Union of Students

- "The Augar Review is a genuine opportunity to address the barriers to access in FE and HE, including the debt aversion caused by high fees, high living costs and the lack of maintenance grants. We fought hard for this Review to happen and are pleased that the panel has responded to our concerns and those of the millions of students and prospective students who have or will face these challenges. We reject the premise of "low value" and "high value" courses and are concerned about the proposed rationalisation of further education provision – we must ensure courses, campuses and institutions across HE and FE remain viable and society doesn't become exclusively focused on narrow economic returns."

GuildHE

- "GuildHE welcomes the emphasis placed by the Augar panel on boosting lifelong learning. We are particularly pleased that the panel have responded to our arguments for a more flexible student finance package that allows students to step on and off education at their own pace meaning more students will be able to access whatever qualifications help them succeed in their chosen professions. This should help incentivise level 4 and 5 qualifications in both FE and HE – our members have a strong history of delivering industry-relevant, professional and technical higher education and are key to delivering the new technical education landscape."

RUSSELL GROUP

Russell Group

- "it's imperative the next PM provides students, businesses & universities with a cast-iron guarantee that, in the event of a fee cut, teaching grants will fully cover the funding shortfall & meet future demand for higher education places."

Office for Students

- "Philip Augar has produced a thoughtful and important report on the future of further and higher education in England. We will now review his detailed proposals and will look forward to the government's response."

MillionPlus

- "Reduced investment in future generations of students would stifle our ability to rise to the challenge of boosting our productivity and creativity as a nation."

Industry Reaction

CBI

- "The stark lack of technical and vocational options for people often frustrates employers. Ending the financial and political neglect of the further education sector is therefore long overdue. With further education funding squeezed significantly in recent years, the Government's Spending Review is as an opportunity to make the much-needed investment… The Review rightly reflects the call from business to bring back maintenance grants to cover living costs while studying. The evidence is clear that businesses that employ people from a diverse range of backgrounds are more successful. Means-tested maintenance grants will help make sure going to university or college isn't based on the ability to pay."

TUC

- "Everyone should have access to quality education and training whatever stage of life they are at. But our further education sector has been cut to the bone by years of devastating cuts. This review is right to call for more support for our colleges. And for maintenance grants to be brought back. The government must repair the damage austerity has caused and properly invest in adult learning. As the world of work changes working people will need to keep gaining new skills throughout their career."

UNISON

- “All too often, the focus falls on the university sector to the exclusion of other vital areas, so the proposals to increase further education funding and support for colleges are to be welcomed. Lowering fees for HE must be accompanied by further government funding to make up the gap that will hit universities that provide the more expensive science and medicine courses. Lengthening the period of loans will also deepen the misery for many students, saddling them with a lifetime of debt, and with no reduction in the punishing interest rates, that financial burden will continue to build. Ultimately the Brexit impasse, which is stalling so many important areas of policy, means this detailed, well-researched review is doomed to sit in a pile with many other reports. The points that fit the government’s agenda will be welcomed but everything else will no doubt carry on as before.”

CMI

- “The Augar review of post-18 education in England is a step in the right direction when it comes to helping more young people into #highered. We want it to help develop a strong technical and #voced system that delivers the skills employers need. #AugarReview #BetterManagers”

CaSE Campaign for Science and Engineering

CaSE

- "Universities tell us that cuts to funding for university teaching are likely to create a drain on resources for research. The impact of this would reverberate far beyond university walls and would be felt by engineering, tech, medical businesses and charities in the UK and abroad. Any policy changes resulting from the Augar Review must be assessed for their impact on the UK's research capability and its attractiveness as a global destination for science."

Institute for Fiscal Studies

IFS

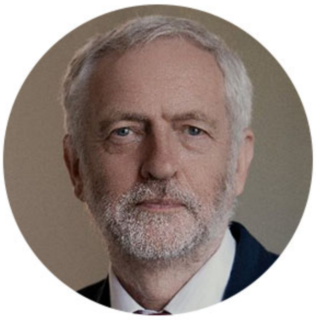
- "The recommendations for higher education are a move to a more tightly regulated system. The increased control over government spending on HE is welcome, but the changes come at the cost of reducing the progressivity of the student loan system, with the highest earning graduates benefiting the most from the proposed changes, while lower and middle earning graduates will be squeezed."

Key influencers

Theresa May MP, Prime Minister

- "So as we look ahead to the spending review and beyond, I believe the Government will need to take very seriously the report's proposals to boost Further Education spending and put right the errors of the past…To restore higher education maintenance grants, so students from the poorest backgrounds no longer leave university with a higher level of headline debt than the richest……And to cut tuition fees, so students pay a fairer price for their education."

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party



- "Education is a right, not a privilege. Labour will abolish tuition fees and bring back maintenance grants for those from disadvantaged backgrounds."

Damian Hinds MP, Secretary of State for Education

- "Our progressive student finance system has seen record student numbers and widened access – but we must ensure it continues to work for our whole society to help everyone, regardless of background, have the best opportunity to learn and succeed."

Angela Rayner MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education

- “The report alone does nothing to address the burning injustices facing our education system. With no formal Government response, no extra funding and no guarantee that the recommendations will be implemented by her successor the Augar review epitomises May’s legacy as Prime Minister and this shambolic Tory government – all talk, empty promises and very little action.”

Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee

- “I welcome the #AugarReview recommendation on maintenance grants. My @CommonsEd committee called for the means-tested system of loans and maintenance grants to be reinstated.”

Caroline Lucas MP for Brighton, Pavilion

- “I doubt many of those tinkering with student loans paid any fees at all. Greens would scrap fees & replace with #BusinessEducationTax where large companies pay fair share If #Augar goes ahead, Govt must make up funding gap on *all* courses.”

Conor Burns MP for Bournemouth

- “Having two Universities in my constituency (@bournemouthuni and @inspiredAUB) I have major reservations about today's funding review. Grants for poorest makes sense. But cutting fees will just reduce funding and not win student vote - Labour retail offer will still look better”

Justine Greening MP for Putney and former Secretary of State for Education (2016-2018)

- “#Augur review risks backwards step on soc mobility & access to uni. Paying back debt for 40 yrs on lower earnings threshold = regressive. We need a long term, radical overhaul. Let’s scrap the fees/loans system & switch to fairer grad contribution approach”

This issue spotlight was created by Natalie Pla, Political Content Officer (Education), using the Vuelio political platform.