



National recovery plan for education

- 1** Disadvantaged children and young people – and their families – must be a key priority. They must not become casualties of Covid-19.
- 2** Free school meals must be provided over the summer holidays so that disadvantaged children do not go hungry. Holiday hunger was real pre-Covid-19 – it will be worse this summer.
- 3** Local authorities must be funded to make a summer holiday offer to children and young people. They should coordinate the planning of summer holiday clubs, particularly in areas of deprivation, so that children and young people have a safe place to go to and positive activities to engage and interest them. This will help build their confidence for a successful return to school in September. Places for those on Free School Meals should be fully funded by Government.
- 4** Public buildings, such as libraries and sports halls, civic centres and religious buildings, should be used to expand the space available to schools so that social distancing can be achieved, with greater numbers of pupils being educated in non-school settings, if not in schools.
- 5** Qualified teachers who have left the profession should be encouraged to return to teaching. They will be needed as class sizes will be smaller. This will help all children who have gone through a traumatic time during the crisis and, in particular, disadvantaged children who will benefit greatly from lower pupil/teacher ratios.
- 6** GCSE and A levels must be changed to provide a fair assessment of young people's attainment. Exams cannot be expected to cover all the current syllabus because of the reduced teaching time. Proposals could involve a combination of teacher assessment and slimmed-down exams, with more choice of questions. Whatever the decisions made, teachers, pupils and their parents need to know that the emergency measures adopted for GCSE and A level exams in 2020 will not be repeated in 2021. Government needs to reassure all those involved that this will be a fair process that will not disadvantage young people and their futures. Primary SATs should not take place – they are mainly a school accountability measure and will not be comparable to previous or subsequent years.
- 7** Plans must be made for blended learning – pupils learning at school and at home – from September and into the next academic year, with all pupils having both face-to-face contact and remote learning when this is safe. These plans will be needed in case of a second spike or a rise in a local R rate. This must be resourced by Government and teachers supported to develop blended learning as has happened in Scotland.
- 8** Children and young people living in poverty and low-income households must be given the resources they need to learn at home, including access to books and creative resources, as well as technology. Seven hundred thousand children live in homes without internet access. This must be provided by Government so that they are able to access on-line learning. Free laptops must be provided for children who do not have them so that they are able to access online learning at home.
- 9** Childhood poverty and inequality limits life chances and is a significant factor in school achievement. We must not lose a generation because the pandemic makes even more children poor. This requires a 'can do' mentality – around unemployment, training and benefits as well as direct support to schools.
- 10** A fully resourced national plan for children's wellbeing should be launched to support children who suffered trauma in the pandemic. Students' wellbeing must be placed at the centre of how we adapt education to meet the needs of children and young people.

